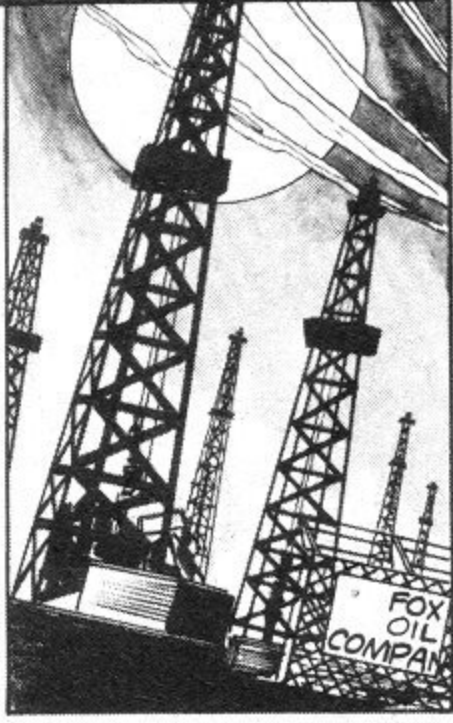


OIL! ONCE YOU WOULD HAVE STUDIED THIS SUBSTANCE IN MINUTEST DETAIL, AS YOU WOULD HAVE ANY ALIEN WORLD'S NATURAL RESOURCES.

YOU WOULD HAVE RECORDED THE INHABITANTS' USE OF IT-- DOCUMENTED THEIR CONSTANT SEARCHING FOR IT.

-- FREEDOM TO STALK THIS STRANGE WORLD AGAIN--



WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

THE RIG JUST STARTED SHAKIN' -- LIKE IT WAS GETTIN' READY TO!!!

BUT NOW ALL THEIR QUEST FOR 'BLACK GOLD' MEANS TO YOU IS FREEDOM--

-- AND CLAIM THE REVENGE WHICH HAS BEEN DENIED YOU FOR A THOUSAND YEARS!

VENGEANCE CRUDE

OH MY LORD!



A THOUSAND YEARS! WHAT STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT DID YOU LAST RECORD THESE CREATURES TO BE IN?



THEY DID NOT POSSESS THESE METAL-HURLING THINGS THEN, DID THEY? BUT THEY WERE FEARFUL THEN.

A THOUSAND YEARS! AND THEY HAVE NOT LOST THEIR FEAR



YOU BRUSH THEM ASIDE, MORE IN SORROW THAN ANNOYANCE.

THEY DO NOT STOP TO REALIZE THAT THE STRENGTH WHICH FREED YOU FROM THEIR OIL-GATHERING MACHINE COULD HAVE RAISED FAR WORSE THAN BRUISES ON THEIR FRAGILE FORMS.

INSTEAD, THEY WILL DEEM THEIR CONTINUED EXISTENCE AFTER FACING YOU "MIRACULOUS"--



-- AND THEY WILL CALL YOU...

MONSTER!

THAT'S WHAT YOU'VE BECOME, MR. AARON FOX-- AND YOU CAN'T EVEN SEE IT!



THERE ARE WORSE NAMES, MY DEAR WIFE.

WHAT WOULD YOU CALL A GROWN WOMAN WHO STOOPS TO SEDUCING TEEN-AGE BOYS?

YOU PIG!

ONLY YOU COULD TAKE A SIMPLE FRIENDSHIP--

SLAP!

AND TURN IT INTO SOMETHING SORDID!



FENTON! TAKE ME TO THE AIRPORT!

I'M LEAVING THAT ANIMAL!

AS YOU WISH, MADAM.



WHEN WILL YOU LEARN, BETH?

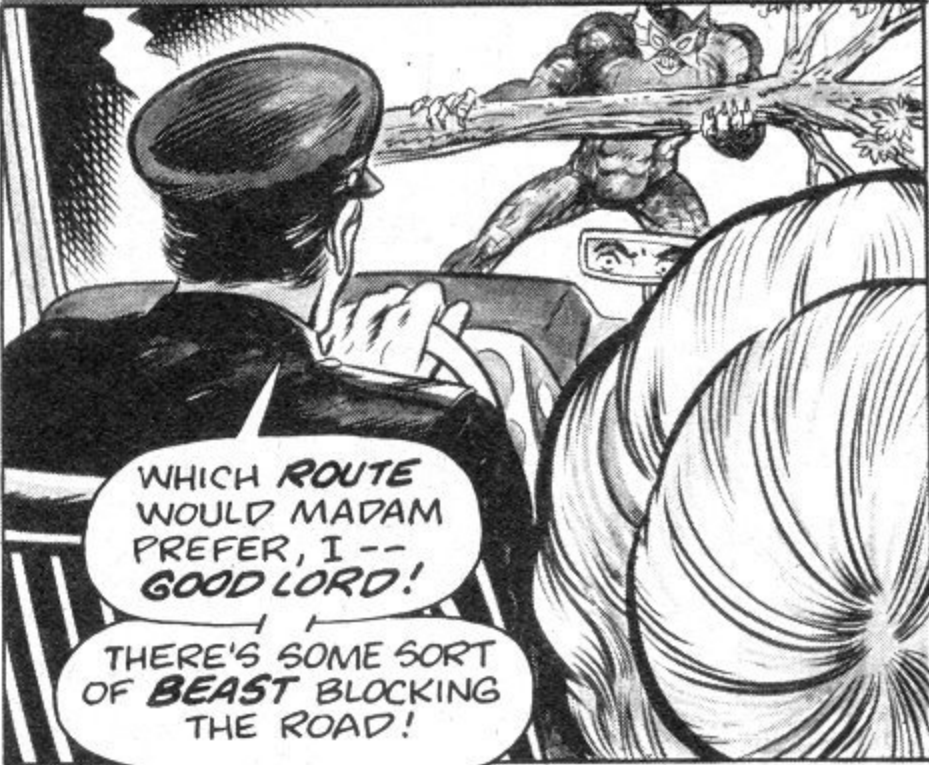
I PAY FENTON'S SALARY!

OH, HE'LL DRIVE YOU AROUND FOR AN HOUR OR TWO --

-- BUT THEN HE'LL BRING YOU RIGHT BACK HERE TO ME.



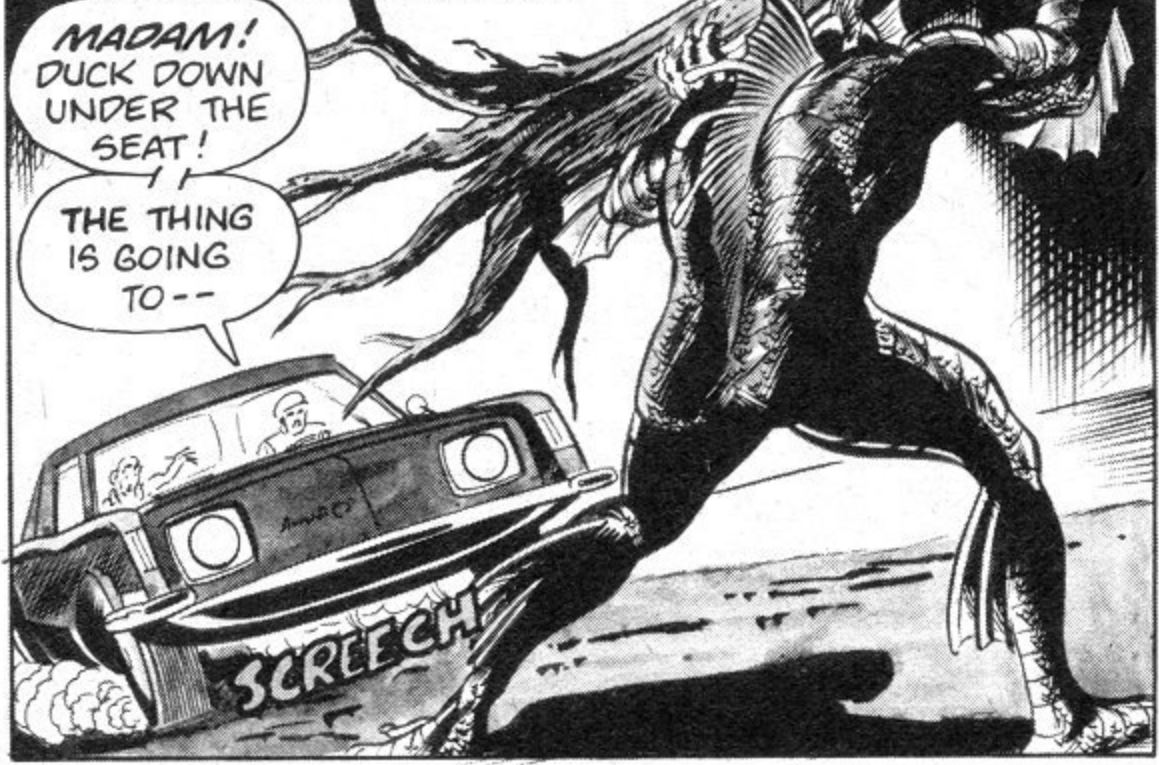
"IT'S RATHER AMUSING, YOU KNOW, BECAUSE YOU'RE PROBABLY THE ONLY HUMAN BEING I CARE FOR ON THIS MUDBALL OF A PLANET. I DON'T RELISH TREATING YOU LIKE ONE OF MY HOLDINGS."



WHICH ROUTE WOULD MADAM PREFER, I --
GOOD LORD!

THERE'S SOME SORT OF **BEAST** BLOCKING THE ROAD!

"BUT AS LONG AS YOU SO STRONGLY DISAPPROVE OF MY CURRENT 'INVESTMENTS' -- AND TALK ABOUT THEM TO IDEALISTIC LITTLE BOYS --



MADAM!
DUCK DOWN UNDER THE SEAT!

THE THING IS GOING TO --

SCREECH

"-- I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO KEEP YOU A VIRTUAL PRISONER IN YOUR OWN HOME!"



KRASH

OUR ONLY HOPE IS TO MAKE A RUN...



AYEEEEEEEE

WOOO



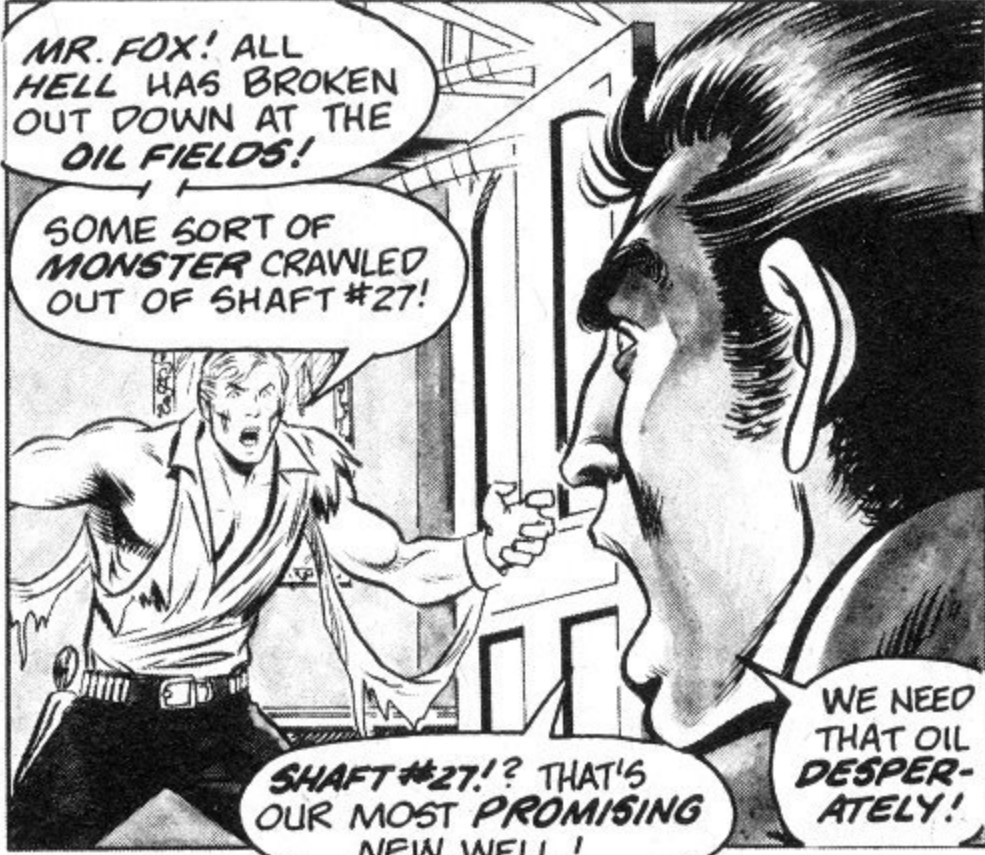
YOU HAVE FOUND HIM.



RING-GG

SO SOON?

FENTON COULD HAVE HUMORED HER A BIT LONGER.



MR. FOX! ALL HELL HAS BROKEN OUT DOWN AT THE OIL FIELDS!

SOME SORT OF MONSTER CRAWLED OUT OF SHAFT #27!

SHAFT #27!? THAT'S OUR MOST PROMISING NEW WELL!

WE NEED THAT OIL DESPERATELY!



ATWOOD! READY THE SPECIAL 'COPTER IMMEDIATELY!

HANG THE RISK, MAN! THIS IS AN EMERGENCY!



HE IS INSANE, OF COURSE.

YOU HAVE KNOWN THIS SINCE THE MOMENT--



-- HE ENTERED YOUR LIFE --

-- AND TOOK FROM IT --

-- ALL THAT MADE IT WORTHWHILE.



HE WAS THE FIRST OF YOUR KIND TO RAISE HAND OR WEAPON AGAINST ANOTHER IN UNTOLD EONS.



AND YOU--





-- PRIME MOVER FORGIVE YOU--

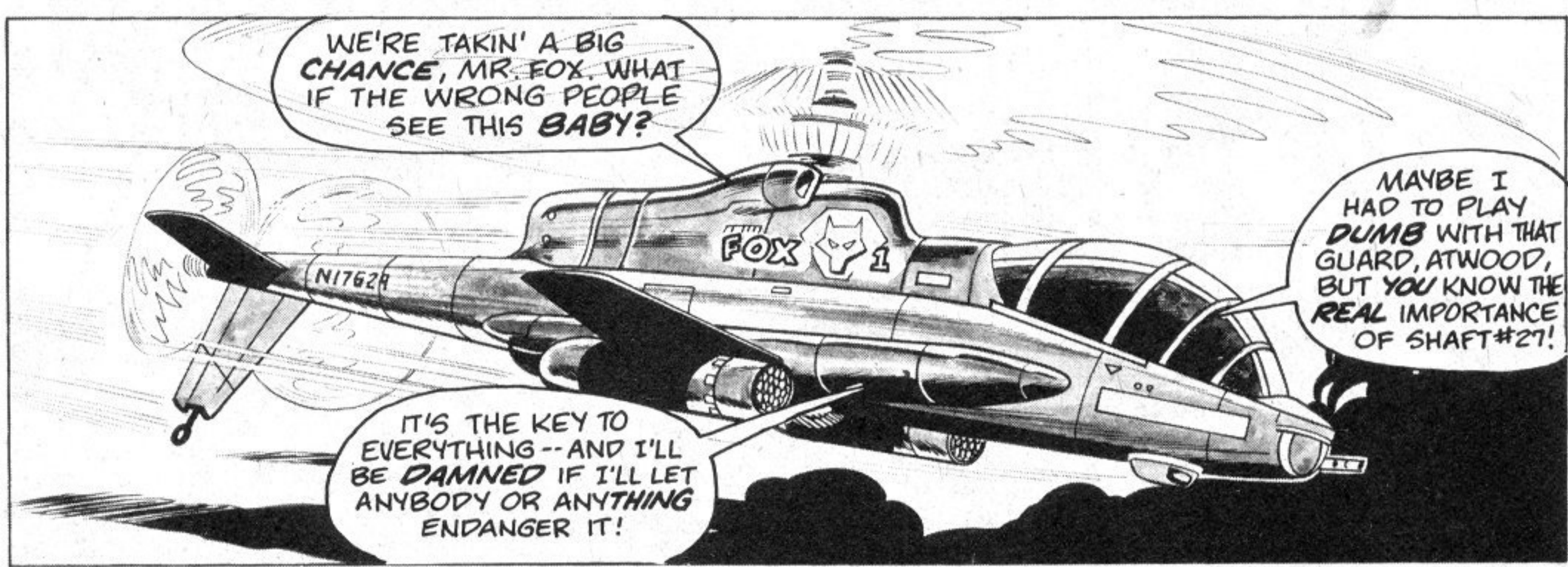
OH MY LORD!
NOW THERE'S TWO OF THEM!



-- ARE THE SECOND!

POW!

WHAT KIND OF HORROR HAS MY HUSBAND'S MAD SCHEMES RELEASED?



WE'RE TAKIN' A BIG CHANCE, MR. FOX. WHAT IF THE WRONG PEOPLE SEE THIS BABY?

MAYBE I HAD TO PLAY DUMB WITH THAT GUARD, ATWOOD, BUT YOU KNOW THE REAL IMPORTANCE OF SHAFT#27!

IT'S THE KEY TO EVERYTHING--AND I'LL BE DAMNED IF I'LL LET ANYBODY OR ANYTHING ENDANGER IT!



"TO SEEK VENGEANCE WOULD BE TO BECOME AS MAD AS HE", THE ELDERS HAD SAID.

BUT THEY HAD NOT LOST THEIR MATES.



YET PERHAPS MADNESS HAS CLAIMED YOU AS WELL.

HOW ELSE COULD YOU POSSIBLY HAVE THOUGHT THAT A SINGLE BLOW WOULD DEFEAT YOUR FOE?



HOW ELSE COULD YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN THE FEROCITY--

-- THE SAVAGERY--



THAT SECOND CREATURE--

-- THAT HAS ALLOWED HIM TO ESCAPE YOU--

WHY DO I FEEL HE'S TRYING TO HELP ME?



-- FOR TEN CENTURIES--

-- AND ACROSS A HUNDRED WORLDS.

ALAS, YOUR MADNESS IS NOT AS GREAT AS HIS.

THUS YOUR FALL BEFORE HIS ATTACK.

BUT THROUGH THE FOG THAT BEGINS TO DESCEND OVER YOUR MIND YOU HEAR THE WOMAN'S SCREAMS--



YOU PLUNGE INTO THE EARTH-WATERS AFTER HIM--



LET GO OF ME!

LET GO!

-- AND THE MADNESS LEAVES YOU.



-- NO LONGER DRIVEN BY A LUST FOR REVENGE.

-- FORCES YOU TO TAKE HIS MIGHTIEST BLOWS.



NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU--

-- HE MUST NOT
KILL AGAIN!



YOU BREAK FROM
THIS STRUGGLE, FOR
YOU HAVE SEEN SOME-
THING YOU SHOULD
HAVE REALIZED
IMMEDIATELY.

HUMAN BEINGS ARE NOT
AMPHIBIOUS.

THE WOMAN
IS DROWNING.



YOU LEAVE
YOUR MADNESS
BELOW.

VENGEANCE CAN WAIT.

DEATH IS IMPATIENT.

THE PRIME MOVER HAS
SMILED UPON YOU.



THIS PLACE
IS FAMILIAR
TO YOU.

THERE ARE OTHER HUMANS HERE--

-- HUMANS WHO WILL --



--HELP
YOU?

THE
MONSTER'S
BACK!

COME ON,
YOU GUYS--

WASTE
'EM!

IF SHAFT
#27 HAS
BEEN
DAMAGED,
WE'RE ...



EXCUSE ME, MR. FOX.
I'M GETTING A RADIO
REPORT FROM THE CREW
DOWN THERE.

THE MONSTER'S
RETURNED --
CARRYING AN UN-
CONSCIOUS
WOMAN!

THEN WHAT
ARE YOU WAITING
FOR, MAN?

GET THIS CRATE
MOVING!



A THOUSAND YEARS! AND THEY HAVE NOT LOST THEIR FEAR.

BUT DO THEY FEAR AS WELL--



--THE FRAGILE BURDEN YOU CARRY?

THE QUESTION BECOMES ACADEMIC A MOMENT LATER AS THE WORLD EXPLODES AROUND YOU.

YOUR WOULD-BE ATTACKERS ARE HURLED TO THE EARTH.



TWO OF THEM WILL NEVER RISE AGAIN.

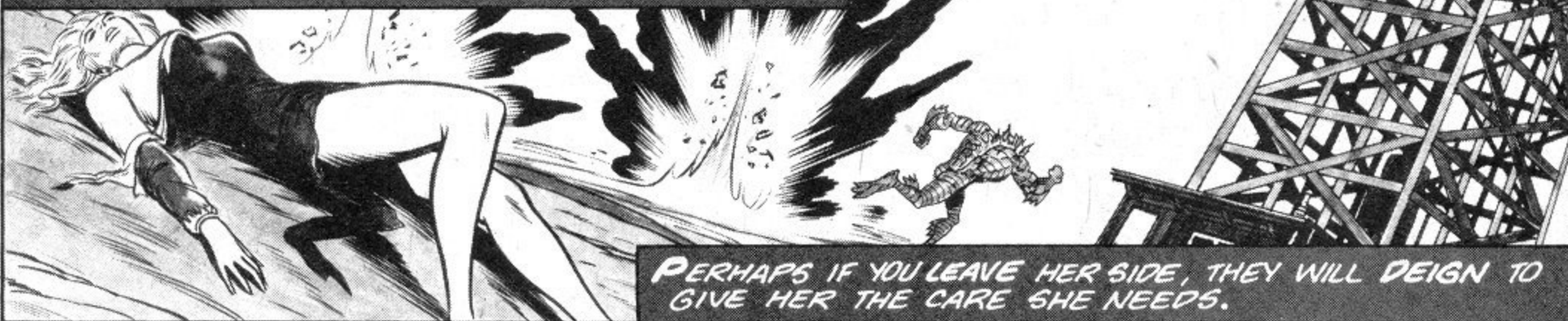
ONLY YOUR SPACE-HARDENED SKIN--

-- PROTECTED THE WOMAN FROM THE FIRST BLAST.

YOU ARE NOT SURE YOU COULD SURVIVE A SECOND.



SHE NEEDS MEDICAL ATTENTION, BUT IT IS CLEAR THE HUMANS ARE INTERESTED ONLY IN DESTROYING YOU.



PERHAPS IF YOU LEAVE HER SIDE, THEY WILL DEIGN TO GIVE HER THE CARE SHE NEEDS.

GOOD GOD, MR. FOX! THOSE WERE OUR MEN YOU GOT IN THE BLAST!

I SAW THAT... THING NEAR SHAFT #27. I GUESS I LOST MY HEAD FOR A MINUTE.

LOOK-- SET ME DOWN NEAR THE MEN.

I'LL TELL THEM THE MISSILES FIRED ACCIDENTALLY.



WHEN THEY SEE THEIR BOSS RISKING HIS LIFE TO WARN THEM FROM THE AREA, THEY'LL BELIEVE ME.

WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?

YOU GET BACK UP IN THE AIR--

I'LL PROBABLY GET A FEW POINTS IN THE LOYALTY DEPARTMENT TO BOOT.



"AND FINISH THAT MONSTER OFF!"



MY GOD!

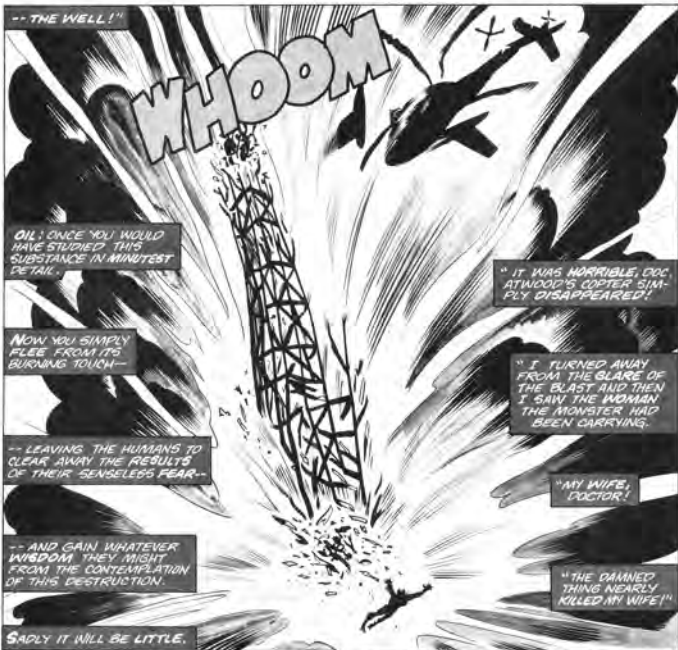
THE FOOL IS STILL USING MISSILES!

CAN'T HE SEE HOW CLOSE HE IS TO--



-- THE WELL!

WHOOOM



OIL: ONCE YOU WOULD HAVE STUDIED THIS SUBSTANCE IN MINUTEST DETAIL.

NOW YOU SIMPLY FLEE FROM ITS BURNING TOUCH--

-- LEAVING THE HUMANS TO CLEAR AWAY THE RESULTS OF THEIR SENSELESS FEAR--

-- AND GAIN WHATEVER WISDOM THEY MIGHT FROM THE CONTEMPLATION OF THIS DESTRUCTION.

SADLY IT WILL BE LITTLE.

"IT WAS HORRIBLE, DOC. ATWOOD'S COPTER SIMPLY DISAPPEARED!"

"I TURNED AWAY FROM THE GLARE OF THE BLAST AND THEN I SAW THE WOMAN THE MONSTER HAD BEEN CARRYING.

"MY WIFE, DOCTOR!"

"THE DAMNED THING NEARLY KILLED MY WIFE!"



SHE'S NOT OUT OF DANGER YET, MR. FOX.

PHYSICALLY, HER INJURIES WERE SLIGHT.

BUT WE BOTH KNOW SHE'S BEEN UNDER A TREMENDOUS MENTAL STRAIN LATELY, AND I'M AFRAID--

--THE ADDITIONAL SHOCK OF BEING CAPTURED BY THAT... "MAN-PHIBIAN," THEY'RE CALLING IT--ALMOST DROWNING-- AND THEN GETTING CAUGHT IN THE OIL WELL EXPLOSION--



--MAY HAVE TRAUMATIZED HER COMPLETELY.

SHE MAY NEVER RECOVER FROM THE STATE SHE'S IN.

MY WIFE -- BETH -- A VEGETABLE?

FOR THE REST OF HER LIFE?



IT'S THE FAULT OF THAT DAMN CREATURE!

MANPHIBIAN! IT'S NOT A MAN -- IT'S A MONSTER!

AND WHEN I FIND IT--

--IT'LL BE A DEAD MONSTER!

THE SUPERFICIAL BURNS YOU SUFFERED IN THE OIL WELL EXPLOSION ARE HEALING RAPIDLY.



YOU ARE READY TO LET THE MADNESS CLAIM YOU AND CAST ASIDE THE BELIEFS YOUR RACE HAS FOLLOWED FOR EONS.

THE ELDERS SAY NO MAN MAY HARM HIS FELLOW MAN.

BUT THE ONE YOU SEEK IS NOT A MAN. HE IS BUT A FOUL MONSTER.



AND WHEN YOU FIND HIM--

--HE WILL BE A DEAD MONSTER.