

THE INCREDIBLE
ADVENTURES OF
**JANUS
STARK**



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THE TREASURY OF BRITISH COMICS PRESENTS

THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES OF **JANUS STARK**

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THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES OF

JANUS STARK

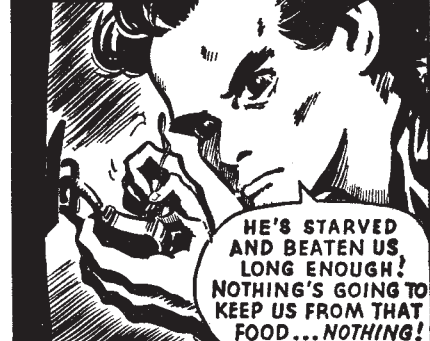
THE DARK SILENCE OF MIDNIGHT LAY OVER VICTORIAN LONDON. BUT INSIDE THE ORPHANAGE OF HEMLOCK HALL, A BOY WORKED WITH BATED BREATH..... A BOY WHOSE UNCANNY POWER WAS SOON TO ASTOUND THE WORLD!



HURRY, JONAS! IF OLD TRAGG CATCHES US TRYING TO BREAK INTO THE KITCHEN--!

I DON'T CARE IF HE DOES! ALL I CAN THINK OF ARE THOSE VITTLES IN THERE!

DELICATELY, THE WIRE IN JONAS CLARKE'S LONG-FINGERED HAND PROBED THE MECHANISM OF THE PADLOCK...



HE'S STARVED AND BEATEN US LONG ENOUGH! NOTHING'S GOING TO KEEP US FROM THAT FOOD... NOTHING!

BUT EVEN AS THE LOCK SPRANG OPEN...



I'VE DONE IT, MATES... WE'RE IN!

VERY CLEVER, YE THIEVIN' YOUNG WHELP!

OWW! IT'S THE WARDEN! WE'VE BIN NABBED!

THE BRUTAL HAND OF SIMON TRAGG FELL ON JONAS'S SHOULDER...



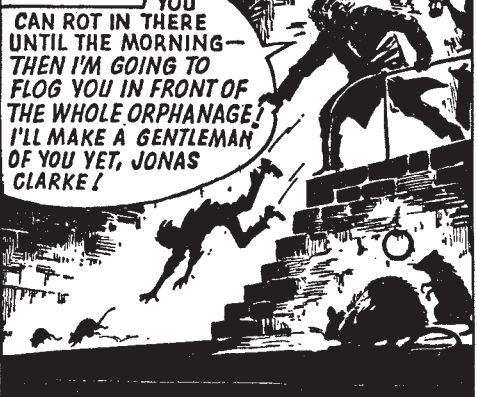
AA-AAGH!

YOU LITTLE FOOL! I KNEW WHAT YOU WAS PLANNIN' WHEN I SAW YER PRACTISING ON THE PADLOCK OF THE GARDEN SHED!



BUT YOU ALWAYS 'AVE BEEN A STRANGE ONE, 'AVEN'T YOU, CLARKE? THAT WEIRD LOOK IN YER EYE.. GIVES ME THE CREEPS, IT DOES! BUT I'LL FIX YER--!

THE STRUGGLING BOY WAS HURLED DOWN A FLIGHT OF STEPS...



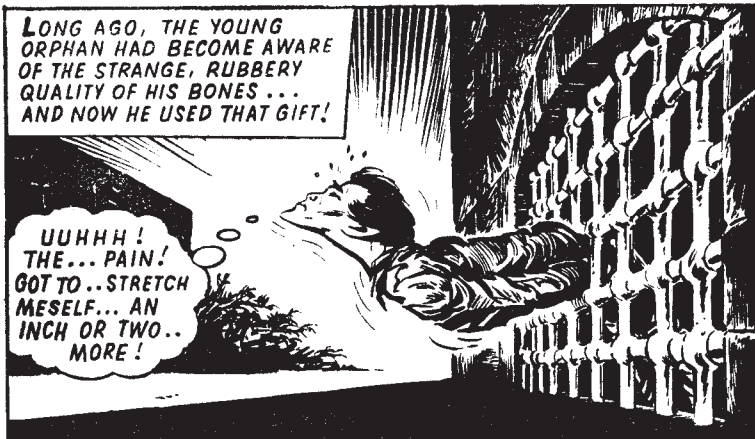
YOU CAN ROT IN THERE UNTIL THE MORNING-- THEN I'M GOING TO FLOG YOU IN FRONT OF THE WHOLE ORPHANAGE! I'LL MAKE A GENTLEMAN OF YOU YET, JONAS CLARKE!

BUT EVEN AS THE CELLAR DOOR SLAMMED BEHIND SIMON TRAGG...



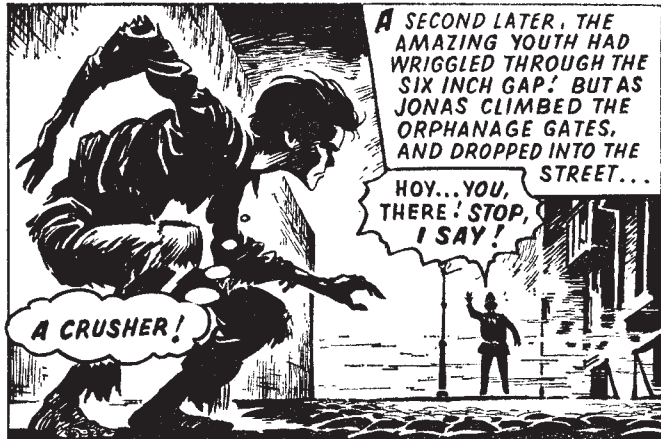
YOU'LL NOT LAY A FINGER ON ME, TRAGG! I'VE ONLY STAYED HERE AS LONG AS I HAVE FOR THE SAKE OF THE OTHER BOYS!

CONTINUED OVERLEAF



LONG AGO, THE YOUNG ORPHAN HAD BECOME AWARE OF THE STRANGE, RUBBERY QUALITY OF HIS BONES... AND NOW HE USED THAT GIFT!

UHHH! THE... PAIN! GOT TO... STRETCH MESELF... AN INCH OR TWO... MORE!



A SECOND LATER, THE AMAZING YOUTH HAD WRIGGLED THROUGH THE SIX INCH GAP! BUT AS JONAS CLIMBED THE ORPHANAGE GATES, AND DROPPED INTO THE STREET...

HOY... YOU, THERE! STOP, I SAY!

A CRUSHER!



DESPERATELY, THE BOY TOOK TO HIS HEELS... BUT LACK OF FOOD HAD WEAKENED HIM!

AFTER 'IM, LEN! HE'S JUST BUNKED OUT OF THE ORPHANAGE!

THEY'RE... GAINING ON ME! CAN'T... KEEP GOING MUCH.. LONGER!



THEN, AS HE HURLED HIMSELF AROUND A CORNER!

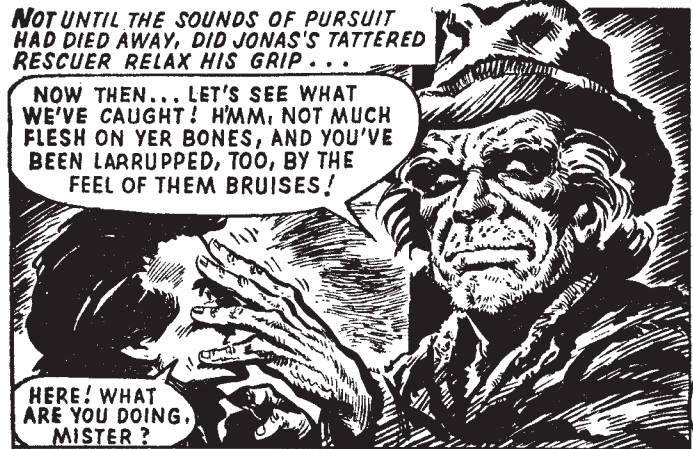
IN HERE, LAD!

AAAOWWW!



A ROUGH BUT GENTLE HAND STIFLED JONAS'S STARTLED YELL...

NOT A SOUND, YOUNG SHAVER... OR WE'LL BOTH BE IN THE SOUP!



NOT UNTIL THE SOUNDS OF PURSUIT HAD DIED AWAY, DID JONAS'S TATTERED RESCUER RELAX HIS GRIP...

NOW THEN... LET'S SEE WHAT WE'VE CAUGHT! HMM, NOT MUCH FLESH ON YER BONES, AND YOU'VE BEEN LARRUPPED, TOO, BY THE FEEL OF THEM BRUISES!

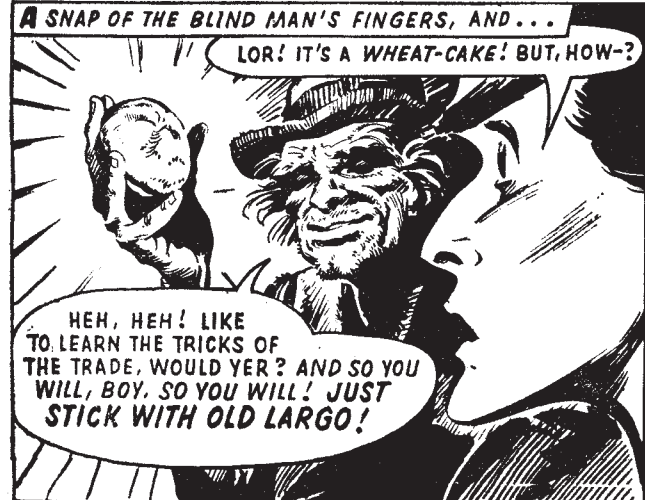
HERE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING, MISTER?



THEN THE INCREDIBLE TRUTH DAWNED ON JONAS...

WHY, YOU.. YOU'RE BLIND!

I DON'T NEED EYES TO SEE YOU, LAD! I USES ME NOSE, AND ME EARS! I CAN DO THINGS WITH ME 'ANDS THAT WOULD BAFLE AN EAGLE-WATCH THIS!



A SNAP OF THE BLIND MAN'S FINGERS, AND...

LOR! IT'S A WHEAT-CAKE! BUT, HOW-?

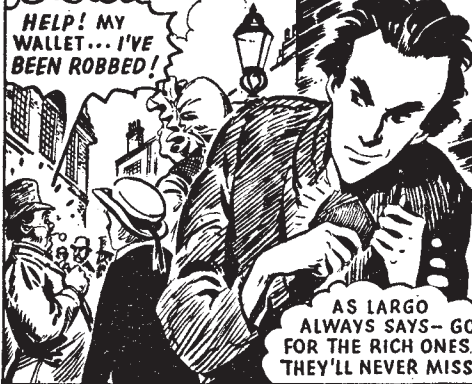
HEH, HEH! LIKE TO LEARN THE TRICKS OF THE TRADE, WOULD YER? AND SO YOU WILL, BOY, SO YOU WILL! JUST STICK WITH OLD LARGO!

AND SO, IN THAT RUBBISH-LITTERED ALLEY, A STRANGE AND AFFECTIONATE PARTNERSHIP WAS FORMED. AS THE YEARS PASSED, LARGO AND THE YOUNG ORPHAN BECAME LIKE FATHER AND SON. IN THE BLIND MAN'S MUSTY GARRET, JONAS LEARNED THE STEALTHY ARTS OF THOSE WHO HAD TO STEAL TO SURVIVE...



GENTLY, LAD... FEEL FOR THE CLICK OF THEM TUMBLERS! BY THE TIME I'VE FINISHED, YOU'LL BE CRACKING SAFES WITH YOUR EYES SHUT!

BY THE TIME HE WAS TWENTY, JONAS'S SKILL WAS EVEN GREATER THAN HIS TUTOR'S...



HELP! MY WALLET... I'VE BEEN ROBBED!

AS LARGO ALWAYS SAYS— GO FOR THE RICH ONES! THEY'LL NEVER MISS IT!

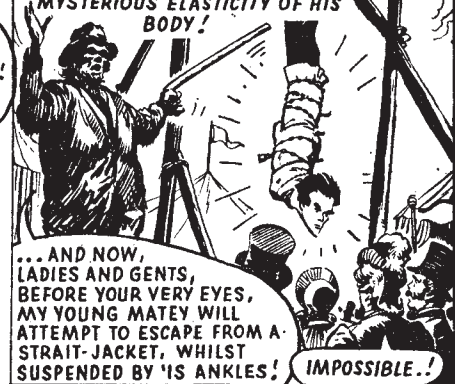
BUT MOST OF THE STOLEN MONEY SOON PASSED THROUGH HIS HANDS!



THERE'S ENOUGH THERE FOR NEW TOGS, AND ALL THE GRUB YOU CAN EAT! TELL YOUR MOTHERS YOU FOUND IT!

COR! FANKS, MISTER...

AS JONAS CLARKE GREW OLDER HE LEARNED TO CONTROL THE MYSTERIOUS ELASTICITY OF HIS BODY!



... AND NOW, LADIES AND GENTS, BEFORE YOUR VERY EYES, MY YOUNG MATEY WILL ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE FROM A STRAIT-JACKET, WHILST SUSPENDED BY 'IS ANKLES!

IMPOSSIBLE..!



THAT DAY, JONAS AMAZED EVEN LARGO!

GREAT SCOTT! HE'S FREED ONE ARM ALREADY!

HIS BODY SEEMS TO BE MADE OF RUBBER!



A FEW FANTASTIC SECONDS LATER...

HE— HE'S DONE IT!

THE FELLOW'S A MARVEL! HE OUGHT TO BE ON THE STAGE!

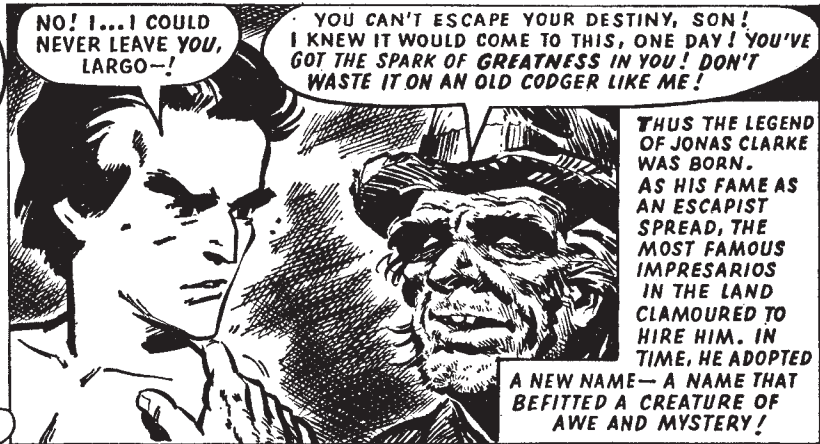
THEY'RE RIGHT, YOUNG MAN! SUCH TALENTS AS YOURS ARE WASTED IN A MARKET-PLACE!



THE SPEAKER INTRODUCED HIMSELF AS A THEATRICAL IMPRESARIO...

OUR THEATRES ARE CRYING OUT FOR SOMETHING NEW! WITH A FEW MORE TRICKS, AND THE RIGHT STAGING, YOU COULD BE A SENSATION!

WELL, JONAS... WHAT D'YE SAY, LAD?



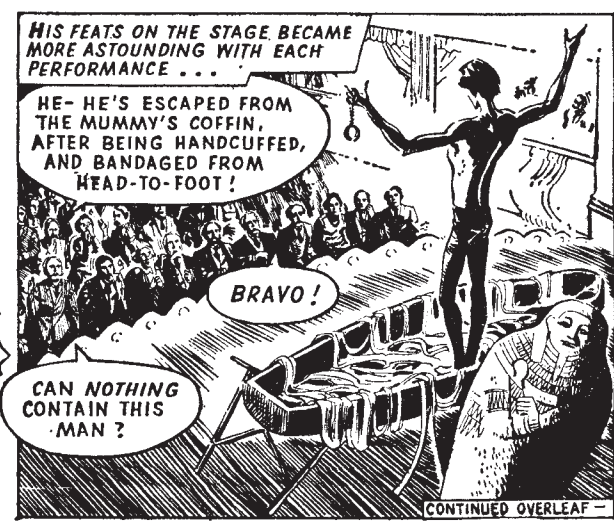
NO! I... I COULD NEVER LEAVE YOU, LARGO—!

YOU CAN'T ESCAPE YOUR DESTINY, SON! I KNEW IT WOULD COME TO THIS, ONE DAY! YOU'VE GOT THE SPARK OF GREATNESS IN YOU! DON'T WASTE IT ON AN OLD CODGER LIKE ME!

THUS THE LEGEND OF JONAS CLARKE WAS BORN. AS HIS FAME AS AN ESCAPIST SPREAD, THE MOST FAMOUS IMPRESARIOS IN THE LAND CLAMoured TO HIRE HIM. IN TIME, HE ADOPTED A NEW NAME— A NAME THAT BEFITTED A CREATURE OF AWE AND MYSTERY!



BEHOLD, JANUS STARK— MASTER OF ILLUSION, SON OF THE UNKNOWN! NO LOCK CAN FETTER ME... NO ROPE OR CHAIN CAN BIND MY LIMBS!



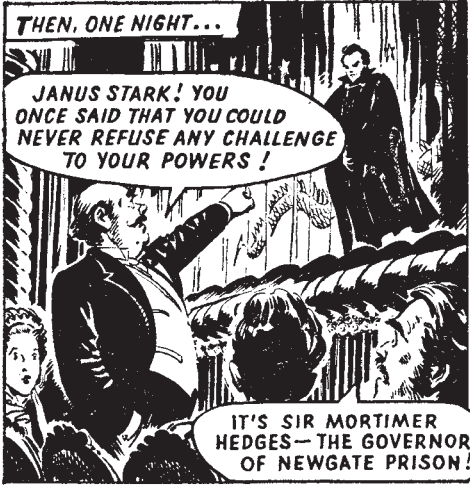
HIS FEATS ON THE STAGE BECAME MORE ASTOUNDING WITH EACH PERFORMANCE...

HE— HE'S ESCAPED FROM THE MUMMY'S COFFIN, AFTER BEING HANDCUFFED, AND BANDAGED FROM HEAD-TO-FOOT!

BRAVO!

CAN NOTHING CONTAIN THIS MAN?

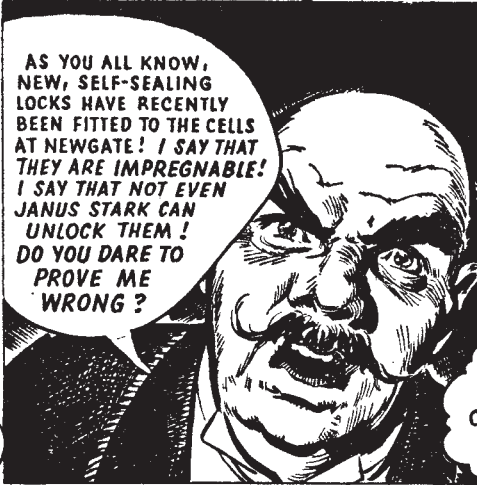
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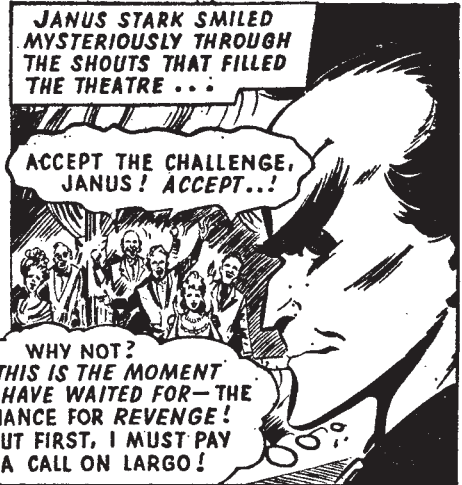
THEN, ONE NIGHT...

JANUS STARK! YOU ONCE SAID THAT YOU COULD NEVER REFUSE ANY CHALLENGE TO YOUR POWERS!

IT'S SIR MORTIMER HEDGES—THE GOVERNOR OF NEWGATE PRISON!



AS YOU ALL KNOW, NEW, SELF-SEALING LOCKS HAVE RECENTLY BEEN FITTED TO THE CELLS AT NEWGATE! I SAY THAT THEY ARE IMPREGNABLE! I SAY THAT NOT EVEN JANUS STARK CAN UNLOCK THEM! DO YOU DARE TO PROVE ME WRONG?



JANUS STARK SMILED MYSTERIOUSLY THROUGH THE SHOUTS THAT FILLED THE THEATRE...

ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE, JANUS! ACCEPT...!

WHY NOT? THIS IS THE MOMENT I HAVE WAITED FOR—THE CHANCE FOR REVENGE! BUT FIRST, I MUST PAY A CALL ON LARGO!

THE FOLLOWING NIGHT, HAVING VISITED HIS OLD FRIEND, JANUS PRESENTED HIMSELF AT NEWGATE GAOL...



AS WE AGREED, MR. STARK, YOU WILL BE LOCKED IN THIS CELL, AND GIVEN ONE HOUR IN WHICH TO ESCAPE! UNLESS, OF COURSE, YOU WOULD LIKE A LITTLE LONGER—?

ONE HOUR WILL BE SUFFICIENT, GOVERNOR!

ONCE ALONE IN THE CELL, JANUS STARK SWUNG INTO ACTION!

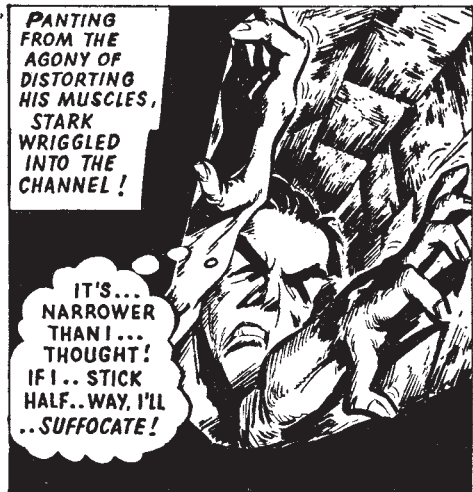


I WILL DEAL WITH THE LOCK LATER! WITH THE HELP OF MY CANE, I WILL NOW PERFORM THE ILLUSION OF BEING IN TWO PLACES AT THE SAME TIME!

STARK'S CANE CONCEALED A BLADE OF THE FINEST STEEL, WHICH HE USED TO PRISE UP ONE OF THE HEAVY FLAG-STONES...



LARGO WAS RIGHT! A DISUSED SEWER CHANNEL RUNS RIGHT BENEATH THE CELL-BLOCK!



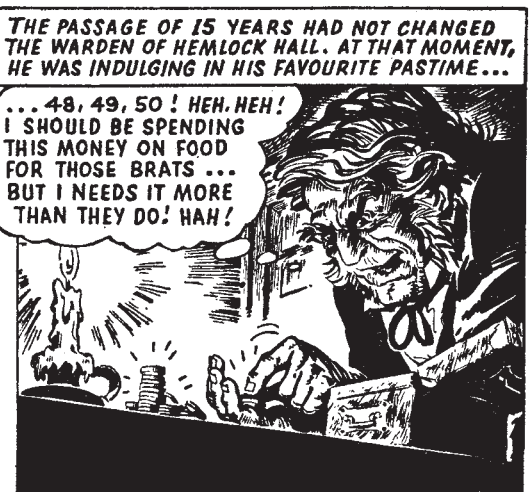
PANTING FROM THE AGONY OF DISTORTING HIS MUSCLES, STARK WRIGGLED INTO THE CHANNEL!

IT'S... NARROWER THAN I... THOUGHT! IF I... STICK HALF.. WAY, I'LL ..SUFFOCATE!



BUT, AT LAST...

THANK THE STARS... I'VE REACHED THE MAIN SEWER! NOW FOR SIMON TRAGG!



THE PASSAGE OF 15 YEARS HAD NOT CHANGED THE WARDEN OF HEMLOCK HALL. AT THAT MOMENT, HE WAS INDULGING IN HIS FAVOURITE PASTIME...

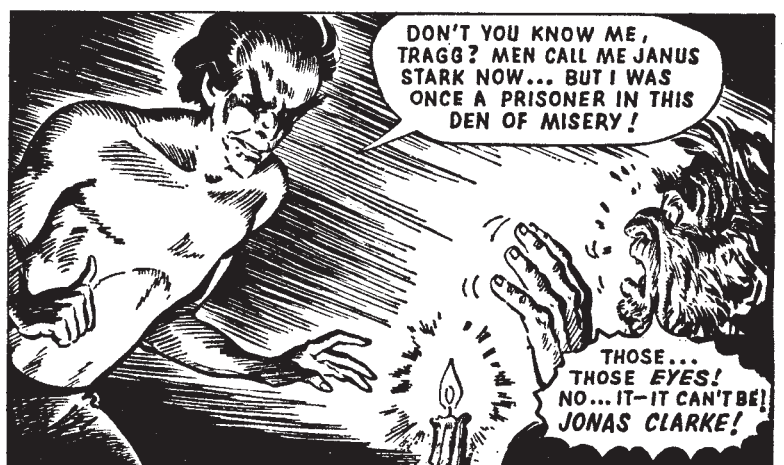
... 48, 49, 50! HEH. HEH! I SHOULD BE SPENDING THIS MONEY ON FOOD FOR THOSE BRATS... BUT I NEEDS IT MORE THAN THEY DO! HAH!



THEN, JUST AS TRAGG COUNTED THE LAST OF THE GLITTERING SOVEREIGNS...

SO, SIMON TRAGG.. WE MEET AGAIN!

HUUH? WH-WHASSAT? WHO'S THERE?



DON'T YOU KNOW ME, TRAGG? MEN CALL ME JANUS STARK NOW... BUT I WAS ONCE A PRISONER IN THIS DEN OF MISERY!

THOSE... THOSE EYES! NO... IT-CAN'T BE! JONAS CLARKE!

THE POWER OF THE UNIVERSE SEEMED TO LEAP FROM STARK'S FINGER-TIPS . . .

AAAAAHHH!

YES, TRAGG! AND NOW I BRING A RECKONING—REVENGE FOR ALL THE UNFORTUNATE SOULS WHO HAVE SUFFERED FROM YOUR GREED!

STARK'S VENGEANCE WAS SWIFT! TWENTY MINUTES LATER, BACK INSIDE NEWGATE PRISON . . .

THE HOUR IS UP, GENTLEMEN! SHALL WE SEE HOW MR. STARK IS GETTING ON?

I EXPECT TO FIND CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE THAT THIS PRISON IS NOW ESCAPE-PROOF!

BUT AS THE SMIRKING OFFICIALS TURNED INTO THE CELL-BLOCK . . .

AH, THERE YOU ARE, SIR MORTIMER! I WAS JUST EXAMINING THE NEW LOCK... A MOST INTERESTING MECHANISM!

NO! I D-DON'T BELIEVE IT...!

THE GOVERNOR WAS STILL GOGGLING IN AMAZEMENT, WHEN . . .

THERE HE IS! THAT'S THE MAN, OFFICER!

EH? CONFOUND IT! WHO IS THIS FELLOW?

IT'S MR. SIMON TRAGG, SIR, THE WARDEN OF HEMLOCK ORPHANAGE!

HE CLAIMS THAT MR. STARK BROKE INTO HIS ROOMS, AND ATTACKED HIM!

THAT'S RIGHT! HE KNOCKED ME OUT, AND STOLE THE ORPHANAGE FUNDS!

WHAT UTTER NONSENSE! MR. STARK HAS BEEN LOCKED IN THAT CELL FOR THE LAST HOUR! BESIDES, HE COULDN'T POSSIBLY HAVE LEFT THE CELL-BLOCK UNSEEN!

BUT I SAW HIM! I SAW HIM WITH MY OWN EYES! YOU'VE GOTTER BELIEVE ME--!

TAKE HIM AWAY! THE MAN'S A FOOL!

HE'S CERTAINLY NOT FIT TO BE IN CHARGE OF AN ORPHANAGE! WE'LL HAVE TO SPEAK TO THE FOUNDERS!

A FEW DAYS LATER, THE NEW WARDEN OF HEMLOCK HALL ADDRESSED A MEETING OF HIS STAFF... AS A RESULT OF THE ROBBERY, AND THE FACT THAT TRAGO WAS EMBEZZLING THE ORPHANAGE FUNDS, I AM AFRAID IT WILL BE SOME TIME BEFORE WE CAN IMPROVE THE BOYS' FOOD AND LIVING CONDITIONS!

THEN!

WHAT ON EARTH?!

CRASH!

TREMBLING HANDS UNWRAPPED THE BUNDLE WHICH HAD HURTLIED THROUGH THE WINDOW!

IT.. IT'S THE ORPHANAGE CASH-BOX... FILLED WITH SOVEREIGNS! THERE'S MORE THAN ENOUGH FOR OUR NEEDS!

QUICKLY, THE WINDOW! WE MUST CATCH A GLIMPSE OF OUR UNKNOWN BENEFACTOR!

BUT THERE WAS NOTHING TO BE SEEN... EXCEPT THE GAUNT SILHOUETTE OF JANUS STARK, STRIDING TOWARDS THE RISING MOON . . .

WATCH OUT FOR ANOTHER MYSTERY-FILLED TALE OF JANUS STARK... NEXT WEEK!

THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES OF

JANUS STARK

IT WAS EARLY SUMMER IN THE DEVON COASTAL TOWN OF TORCOMBE, AND IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND AT THAT TIME, THE ARRIVAL OF A TRAVELLING FAIR WAS A GREAT EVENT AMONG THE LOCAL PEOPLE. ESPECIALLY WHEN ONE OF THE MAIN ATTRACTIONS WAS JANUS STARK, MASTER OF ILLUSION, WHOSE FAME AS AN ESCAPIST HAD SPREAD FAR AND WIDE...

NOW HE WAS ABOUT TO PERFORM HIS LATEST AND MOST DANGEROUS FEAT OF ALL...



ROLL UP, ROLL UP! STEP FORWARD AND WITNESS THE COURAGE OF JANUS STARK AS HE ATTEMPTS THE IMPOSSIBLE!

SLOWLY, THE BARKER SLID JANUS INTO THE GAPING MUZZLE OF A HUGE CANNON...



THIS MIGHTY WEAPON IS LOADED! A FUSE HAS BEEN LIT! AND EVEN THOUGH CHAINED, MY FRIEND WILL ESCAPE BEFORE THE CANNON FIRES!

'TIS MADNESS! HE'LL BE BLOWN TO BITS!

RAMMED DEEP INSIDE THE BARREL, JANUS STARK HAD DISCOVERED THAT THE STRANGE, RUBBER-LIKE QUALITY OF HIS BONES COULD MAKE HIS BODY AS FLEXIBLE AS AN EEL'S...



FIFTEEN SECONDS BEFORE THE POWDER IGNITES! ONCE I HAVE ONE HAND FREE, THE REST WILL BE EASY...

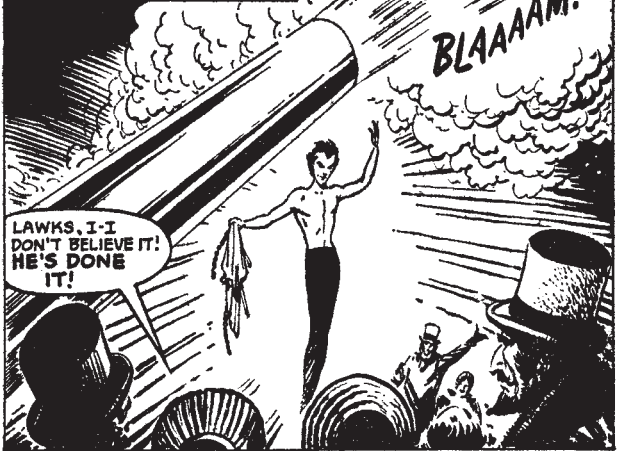
SWIFTLY, THE SPLUTTERING FUSE BURNED TOWARDS THE FIRING-HOLE. AND THEN...



LOOK! AN ARM - HE HAS ONE ARM LOOSE!

TOO LATE... TOO LATE!

BUT SUDDENLY, WITH BARELY A SPLIT SECOND TO SPARE, JANUS WRIGGLED OUT AND UNDER THE DEADLY MUZZLE...



BLAAAAM!

LAWKS, I-I DON'T BELIEVE IT! HE'S DONE IT!

AS THE CROWD SURGED FORWARD, A BURLY, WELL-DRESSED MAN RUBBED HIS JAW THOUGHTFULLY...



HMM... SENSATIONAL INDEED! PERHAPS THIS JANUS STARK WOULD BE THE PERFECT CHOICE FOR THE PLAN I HAVE IN MIND!

FIVE MINUTES LATER, THE STRANGER STEPPED FORWARD...



CONGRATULATIONS, YOUNG FELLA! THE NAME'S BENJAMIN HARDINGTON. HAVE YOU HEARD OF ME?

FROM THE TOWNSPEOPLE, YES. FOLKS SAY YOU'RE THE RICHEST LANDOWNER IN THESE PARTS!

TRUE... AND AFTER WITNESSING YOUR EXHIBITION, I'D LIKE YOU TO BE GUEST OF HONOUR AT A DINNER PARTY I'M GIVING TONIGHT! MY COACHMAN CAN PICK YOU UP AT EIGHT!



SO BE IT! I ENJOY GOOD FOOD AND PLEASANT CONVERSATION!

BUT THAT NIGHT, AS STARK WAS DRIVEN THROUGH HARDINGTON'S ESTATES TOWARDS HIS MANSION...



THE SQUIRE'S TENANTS! LIVING IN HOVELS AND DRESSED IN RAGS! OBVIOUSLY HE IS A MAN WHO CARES LITTLE FOR THE WELFARE OF HIS WORKERS!

BROUGHT UP IN AN ORPHANAGE HIMSELF, STARK HATED THE POVERTY IN WHICH SO MANY PEOPLE WERE FORCED TO LIVE. AND AT THE MANSION...



WELCOME TO HARDINGTON HALL! COME IN...

WEALTH! SPLENDOUR! HE SHOULD BE MADE TO SHARE HIS RICHES!

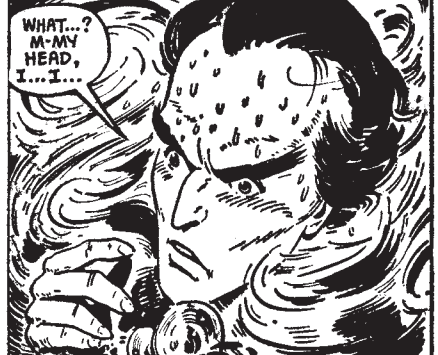
JANUS STARK FOLLOWED HIS HOST INTO THE BANQUETING HALL... THEN STOPPED IN SURPRISE...



WHAT IS THIS? ONLY TWO PLACES SET? WHERE ARE THE OTHER GUESTS?

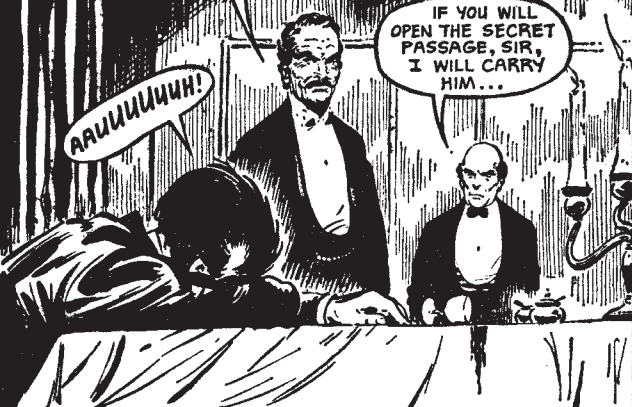
REGRETFULLY, A SUDDEN FEVER HAS PREVENTED THEM FROM COMING, BUT NO MATTER! LET THE TWO OF US BE MERRY!

SHRUGGING, JANUS DRANK SOME WINE... AND ALL AT ONCE, THE ROOM SEEMED TO SPIN WILDLY!



WHAT...? M-MY HEAD, I... I...

HA, HA! SLEEP WELL, JANUS STARK... SLEEP WELL!



AAAAUUUUHH!

IF YOU WILL OPEN THE SECRET PASSAGE, SIR, I WILL CARRY HIM...

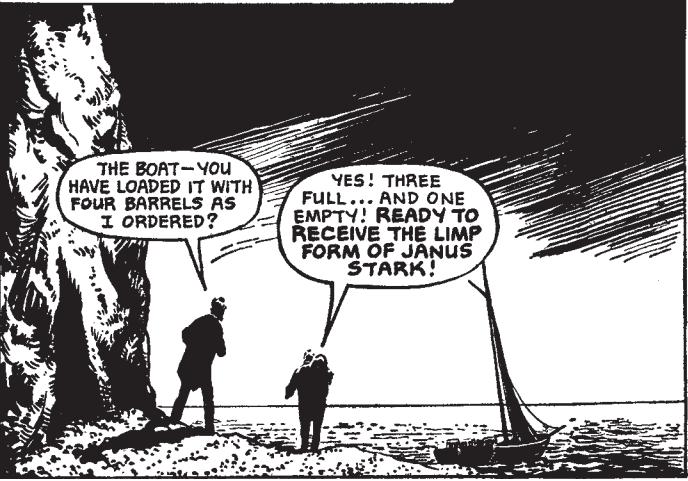
WITH JANUS SLUNG LIMPLY OVER THE BUTLER'S SHOULDER, HARDINGTON PRESSED A HIDDEN SPRING IN THE OAK-PANELLED WALL...



QUICKLY, BAINE. THE EFFECTS OF THE DRUG WILL NOT LAST LONG.

HAVE NO FEAR SIR. EVERYTHING IS PREPARED DOWN BELOW...

THE TWO MEN FOLLOWED THE DIMLY-LIT SECRET PASSAGE DOWNWARDS UNTIL IT EMERGED ON A BEACH AT THE FOOT OF THE CLIFFS...



THE BOAT—YOU HAVE LOADED IT WITH FOUR BARRELS AS I ORDERED?

YES! THREE FULL... AND ONE EMPTY! READY TO RECEIVE THE LIMP FORM OF JANUS STARK!

TOGETHER, THEY BENT STARK'S BODY ALMOST DOUBLE AND SQUEEZED HIM INTO THE CASK...



'TIS LIKE HANDLING A LUMP OF RUBBER, SQUIRE!

YES... AN AWE-INSPIRING CREATURE INDEED! AND IDEAL FOR OUR PURPOSE, WHAT? HEH! HEH!

CONTINUED OVERLEAF...

SWIFTLY, THE BUTLER HAMMERED THE LID INTO POSITION...



EXCELLENT! NOW PASS ME THE AXE, QUICKLY!

YES, SIR...

NEXT MOMENT, HARDINGTON CRASHED THE BLADE DOWNWARDS INTO THE FLOOR OF THE BOAT!

IT IS DONE! THE BOAT WILL DRIFT AND TAKE ABOUT HALF AN HOUR TO SINK. STARK WILL RECOVER AND TRY TO ESCAPE IN THAT TIME... EXACTLY OPPOSITE THE STRETCH OF COASTLINE I HAVE SELECTED!



KRAAAK!

WITH ITS SAIL SET, THE LEAKING CRAFT MOVED SLUGGISHLY NORTHWARDS IN A STIFFENING BREEZE...



... AND TWENTY MINUTES LATER, JANUS STARK STIRRED!



BY THE STARS, WHAT...? SQUIRE HARDINGTON - THAT WINE! IT WAS DRUGGED!

I'M TRAPPED INSIDE A BARREL... AND I HEAR WATER SLAPPING AGAINST ITS SIDE!



REALISING HE WAS IN SOME SORT OF DANGER, JANUS FOUND A TINY CRACK IN ONE OF THE PLANKS... AND SLID TWO ELASTIC-LIKE FINGERS THROUGH THE GAP!



NAILS HAVE BEEN DRIVEN IN TO HOLD THE LID DOWN. I MUST PRIZE THEM LOOSE...

TWISTING HIS FLEXIBLE BODY THIS WAY AND THAT, JANUS PULLED OUT ONE NAIL... THEN TWO... THEN THREE...



A-A CHINK OF LIGHT! THE LID MOVES!

IT WIDENED TO A MERE SIX-INCH GAP... BUT FOR THE MASTER ESCAPIST, IT WAS SPACE ENOUGH!



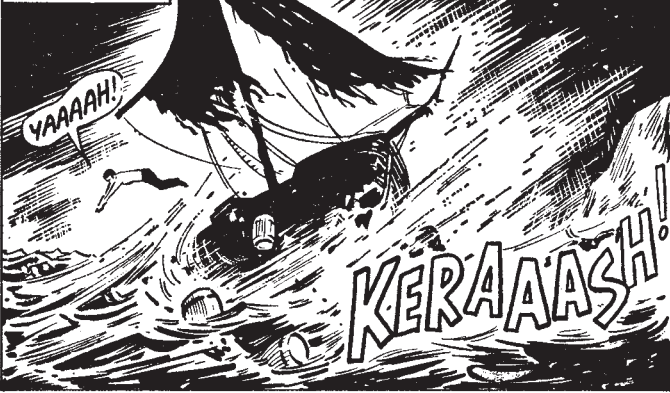
UUUUUH... FREE! I'M FREE! BUT ON A BOAT! A SINKING BOAT!

BEWILDERED, STARK LEAPT FOR THE HELM...



THE SHORE IS A MERE TWO HUNDRED YARDS AWAY! PERHAPS I CAN BEACH HER BEFORE SHE GOES UNDER...

CAUGHT BY THE INCOMING TIDE, THE WATERLOGGED CRAFT ROLLED TOWARDS SOME ROCKS...



THEN, AS JANUS STAGGERED DAZEDLY ON TO DRY LAND...



THAT'S HIM WITHOUT A DOUBT! SEIZE HIM, ME LADS!

BY THE POWERS, WHAT—?



WE BE OFFICERS OF HER MAJESTY'S CUSTOMS AND EXCISE SERVICE! AND BY LOOK O' IT, WE'VE CAUGHT YE RED-HANDED IN THE ACT OF SMUGGLING. OPEN THEM BARRELS!

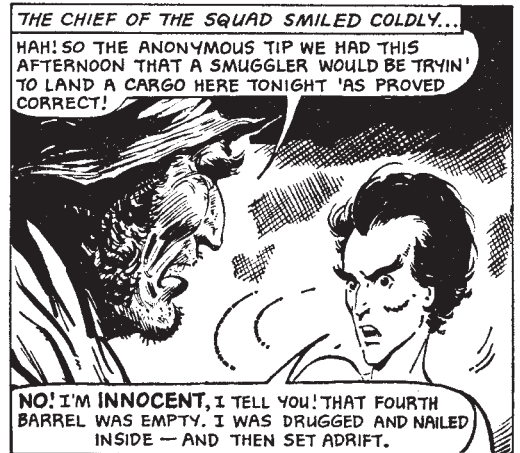


SWIFTLY, ONE OF THE CUSTOMS MEN SMASHED AT THE NEAREST ONE...

WELL...?

FINEST FRENCH BRANDY, SIR. NO DOUBT THE OTHER TWO CONTAIN THE SAME!

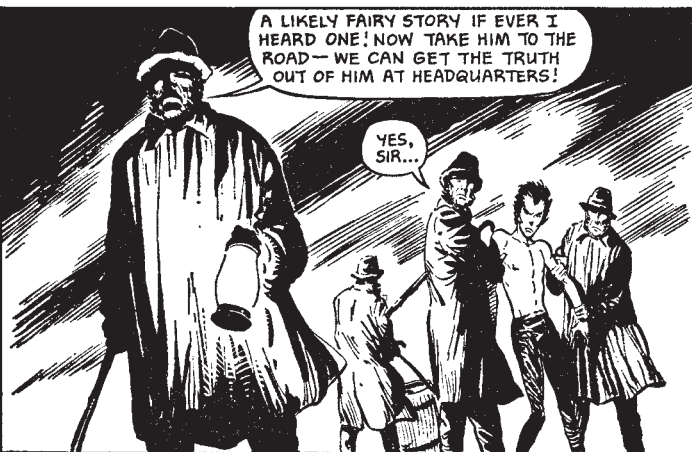
CRUUNCH!



THE CHIEF OF THE SQUAD SMILED COLDLY...

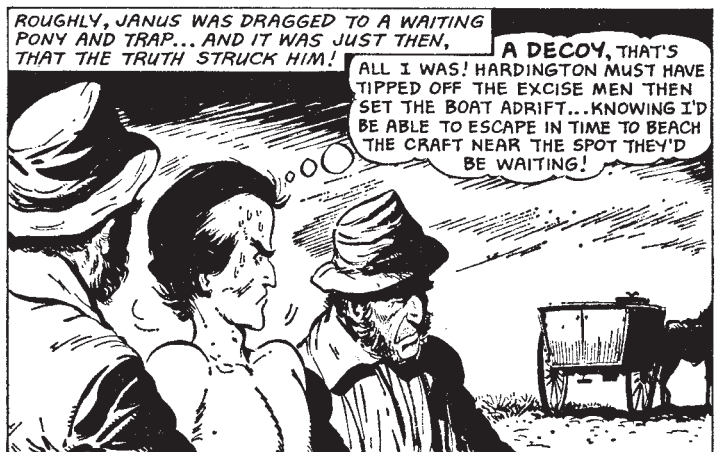
HAH! SO THE ANONYMOUS TIP WE HAD THIS AFTERNOON THAT A SMUGGLER WOULD BE TRYIN' TO LAND A CARGO HERE TONIGHT 'AS PROVED CORRECT!

NO! I'M INNOCENT, I TELL YOU! THAT FOURTH BARREL WAS EMPTY. I WAS DRUGGED AND NAILED INSIDE — AND THEN SET ADRIFT.



A LIKELY FAIRY STORY IF EVER I HEARD ONE! NOW TAKE HIM TO THE ROAD — WE CAN GET THE TRUTH OUT OF HIM AT HEADQUARTERS!

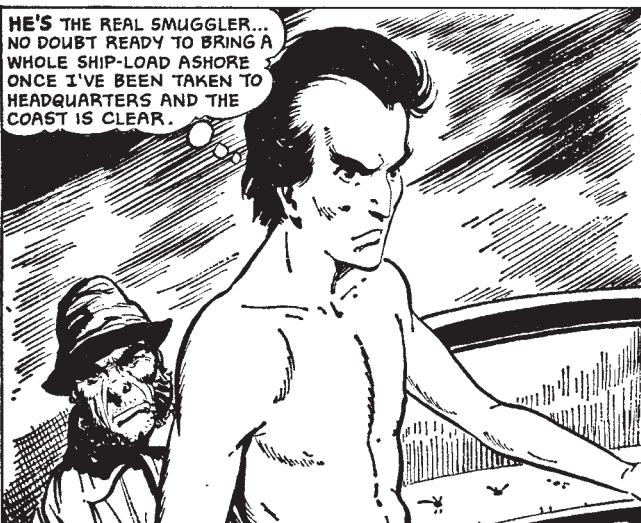
YES, SIR...



ROUGHLY, JANUS WAS DRAGGED TO A WAITING PONY AND TRAP... AND IT WAS JUST THEN, THAT THE TRUTH STRUCK HIM!

A DECOY, THAT'S

ALL I WAS! HARDINGTON MUST HAVE TIPPED OFF THE EXCISE MEN THEN SET THE BOAT ADRIFT... KNOWING I'D BE ABLE TO ESCAPE IN TIME TO BEACH THE CRAFT NEAR THE SPOT THEY'D BE WAITING!



HE'S THE REAL SMUGGLER... NO DOUBT READY TO BRING A WHOLE SHIP-LOAD ASHORE ONCE I'VE BEEN TAKEN TO HEADQUARTERS AND THE COAST IS CLEAR.



THE PONY AND TRAP MOVED OFF... AND A SUDDEN ANGER BOILED IN THE HEART OF JANUS STARK!

SOMEHOW I MUST GET FREE... RACE BACK TO HARDINGTON HALL AND PROVE MY INNOCENCE! THAT WHEEL! IT WILL BE DANGEROUS... BUT PERHAPS THE RUBBER-LIKE QUALITY OF MY BONES CAN TAKE THE STRAIN!

CONTINUED OVERLEAF...

WITH THE SPEED OF A STRIKING SNAKE, JANUS THRUST HIS ARM DOWNWARDS... THROUGH THE WHIRLING SPOKES OF THE WHEEL!



CREEAAK!

STRETCHED ALMOST TO BREAKING POINT, HIS FANTASTIC MUSCLES JAMMED THE WHEEL INSTANTLY...



YAAAAGH!

DISENTANGLING HIS ARM, JANUS TOOK TO HIS HEELS...



DONE IT, BY GLORY! NOW FOR HARDINGTON HALL - AND THAT BLACK-HEARTED SQUIRE!

AN HOUR LATER, HE WAS ON THE CLIFF-TOP... GAZING ANGRILY AT THE SCENE BELOW.

A FRENCH BRIG MOORED OFF-SHORE. LINES OF MEN WITH BARRELS, SO I WAS RIGHT AFTER ALL...

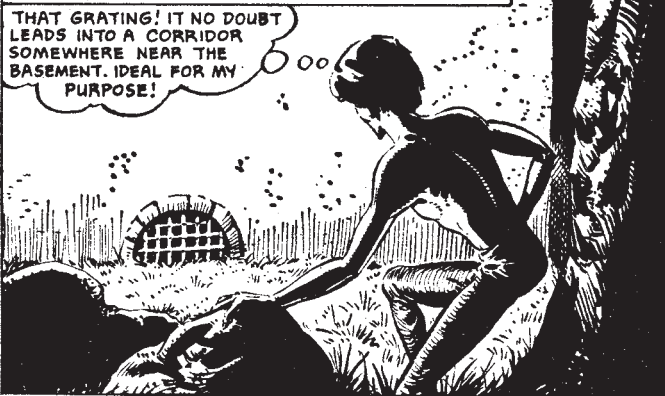


THAT CLEFT IN THE ROCKS AT THE FOOT OF THE CLIFF MUST CONNECT WITH A SECRET PASSAGE TO THE CELLARS. IT IS TIME THAT JANUS STARK TOOK HIS REVENGE!



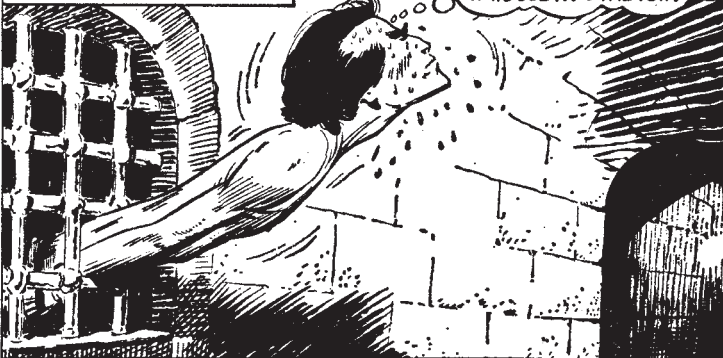
SWIFTLY, HE INCHED HIS WAY ALONG THE CLIFF-FACE.

THAT GRATING! IT NO DOUBT LEADS INTO A CORRIDOR SOMEWHERE NEAR THE BASEMENT. IDEAL FOR MY PURPOSE!



YET AGAIN, THE UNCANNY POWER STORED WITHIN STARK'S LIMBS ENABLED HIM TO PERFORM THE IMPOSSIBLE!

UUUUH! A-ANOTHER FEW FEET, THAT'S ALL! S-SQUEEZE... WRIGGLE... STRETCH!



ONCE INSIDE, HE CAT-FOOTED HIS WAY TOWARDS A LIGHTED DOORWAY. AND THERE...

AAAH, AT LAST! NOW I HAVE IT, HARDINGTON - THE PROOF I NEED!



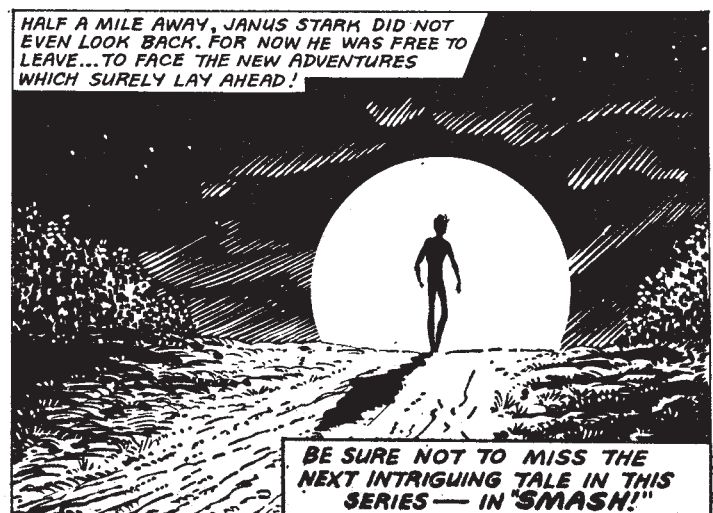
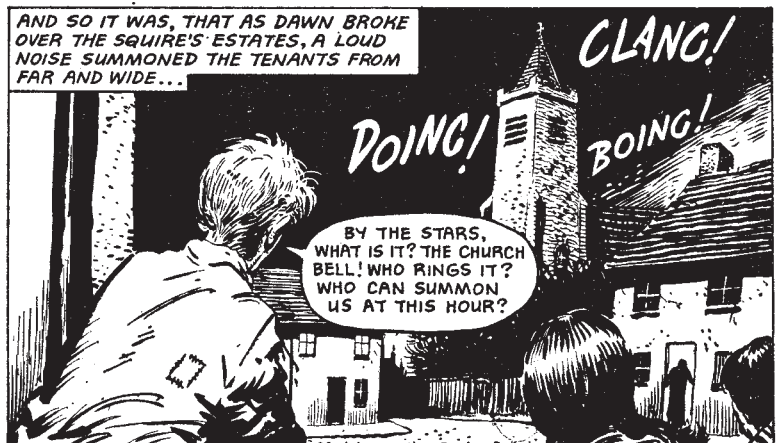
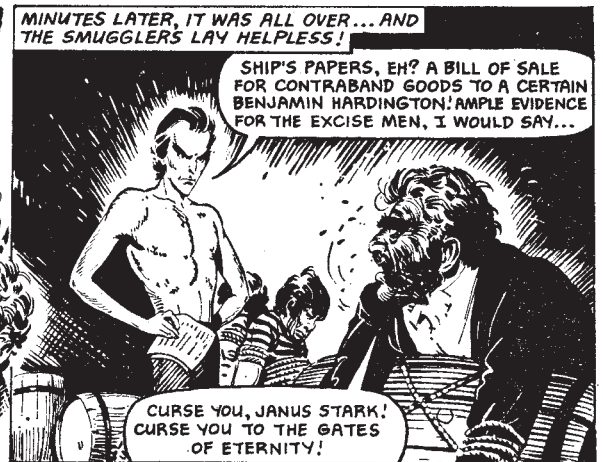
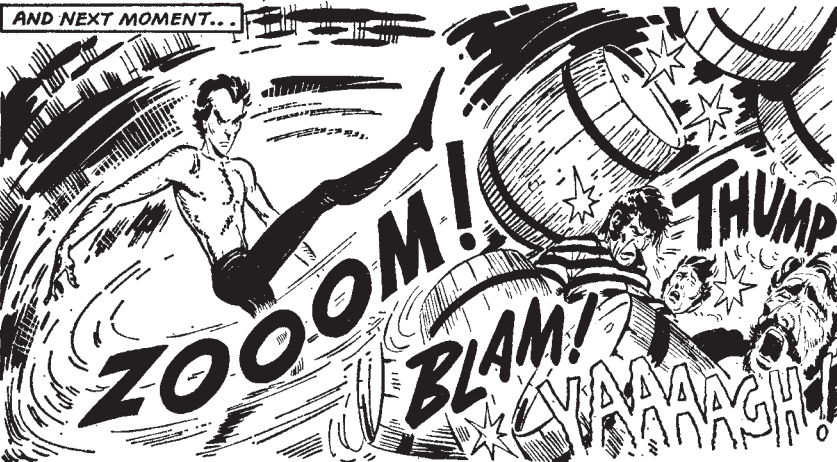
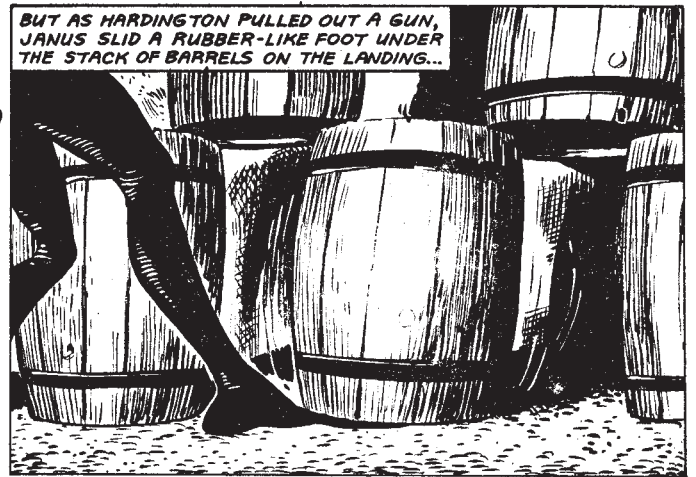
BUT AS JANUS TURNED, HE ACCIDENTALLY KICKED OVER A TIN MUG. AND NEXT MOMENT...

MA FOI! UP THERE, SQUIRE... AN INTRUDER!



CLANG!
TING!

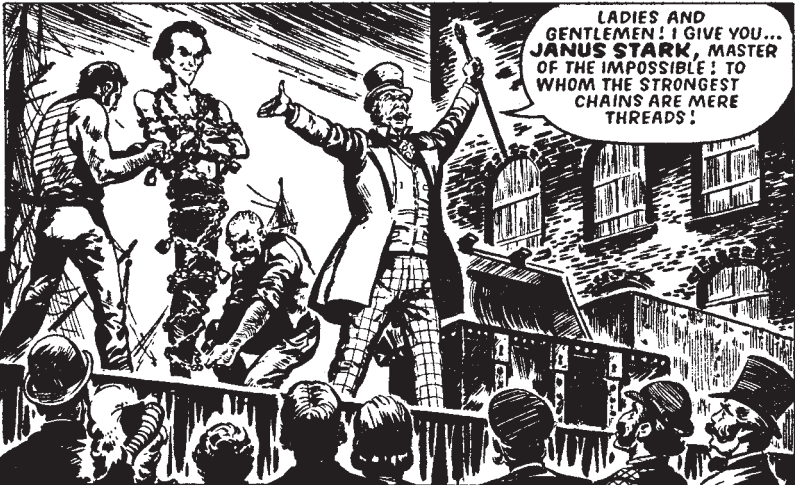
JANUS STARK, BY THUNDER! GET HIM, LADS. HURRY!



THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES OF

JANUS STARK

A HUSHED CROWD PACKED THE SOUTHWARK WHARF-SIDE, LISTENING, OPEN-MOUTHED, AS A RAUCOUS-VOICED SHOWMAN BELLOWED THE SUPERLATIVE PRAISES OF THE FANTASTIC ACT HE WAS ABOUT TO PRESENT.



LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! I GIVE YOU... **JANUS STARK**, MASTER OF THE IMPOSSIBLE! TO WHOM THE STRONGEST CHAINS ARE MERE THREADS!



LOADED WITH PADLOCKED IRON, JANUS STARK WILL BE LOCKED INSIDE THIS IMPREGNABLE TRUNK...



AND THEN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, IT WILL BE PLUNGED INTO SETTING CEMENT! JANUS STARK WILL ESCAPE... OR BE ENTOMBED UNTIL DEATH CLAIMS HIM!



AS THE PREPARATIONS FOR HIS FATE-TEMPTING ORDEAL WERE MADE, JANUS LET HIS EYES WANDER OVER THE GAPIING CROWD...

THERE'S A DETERMINED YOUNG IMP... SCALING THE WAREHOUSE WALL FOR A BETTER VIEW, HE STANDS EVERY CHANCE OF BREAKING HIS FOOLISH NECK...



BUT JANUS STARK DIDN'T KNOW YOUNG TOBY TASKER...

I'LL BE FOR IT IF OLD GRIMES CATCHES ME... BUT IT'S WORTH IT TO SEE THE GREAT JANUS STARK!



A LOW MURMUR RAN THROUGH THE WATCHERS AS JANUS WAS LOCKED IN THE POWERFUL TRUNK...

HE'LL NEVER GET OUT OF THAT! LET ALONE WHEN IT'S DUMPED IN CEMENT!

I DUNNO SO MUCH!



NEXT MOMENT...



SLOWLY, THE MASSIVE YRUNK SANK BELOW THE THICK SURFACE...

THE FELLOW'S DOOMED! THREE MINUTES ALREADY... THE AIR MUST HAVE RUN OUT BY NOW!



FIVE MINUTES TICKED SLOWLY BY... AND THEN, TO A ROAR OF ASTONISHMENT...

'E'S DONE IT! LUMME, 'E'S DONE IT!



YOUR APPRECIATION, MY FRIENDS... FOR THE MOST INCREDIBLE MAN OF THE CENTURY!



NOW CHATTERING EAGERLY, THE CROWD BEGAN TO DISPERSE...

A PRETTY HAUL, JANUS: AND WHAT PUBLICITY FOR YOUR FUTURE STAGE APPEARANCES!

THEY WERE INDEED A GENEROUS CROWD...



THEN A MOVEMENT OVER BY THE WAREHOUSES CAUGHT JANUS'S EYE...

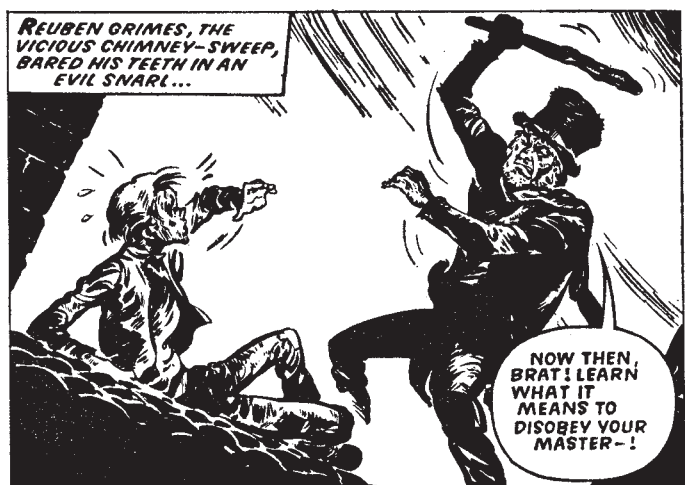
COME DOWN, YE IDLE WHELP! D'VE THINK I PAY YOU A PENNY A WEEK TO WASTE YER TIME?

M-MR. GRIMES! I DIDN'T MEAN NO HARM! HONEST!



HARM? I'LL GIVE YE HARM, CURSE YOU!

AAAGH!



REUBEN GRIMES, THE VICIOUS CHIMNEY-SWEEP, BARED HIS TEETH IN AN EVIL SNARL...

NOW THEN BRAT! LEARN WHAT IT MEANS TO DISOBEY YOUR MASTER-!

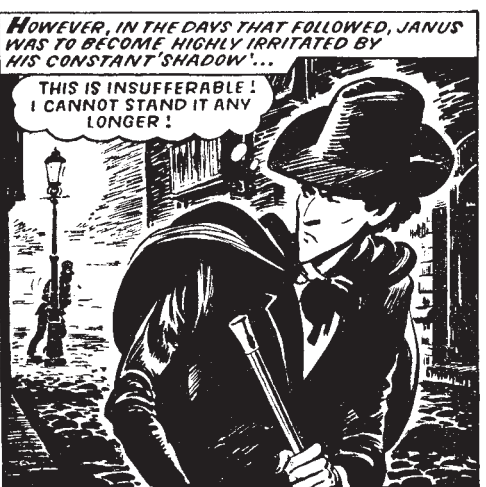
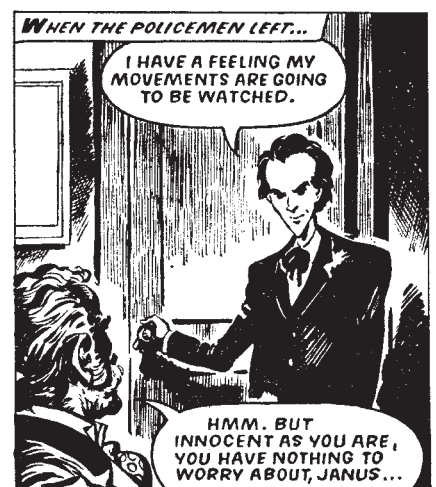
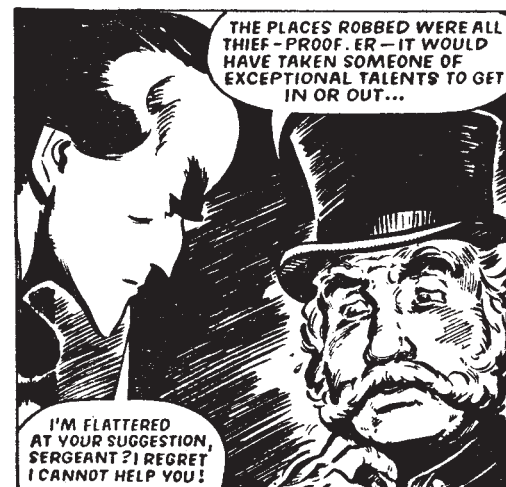
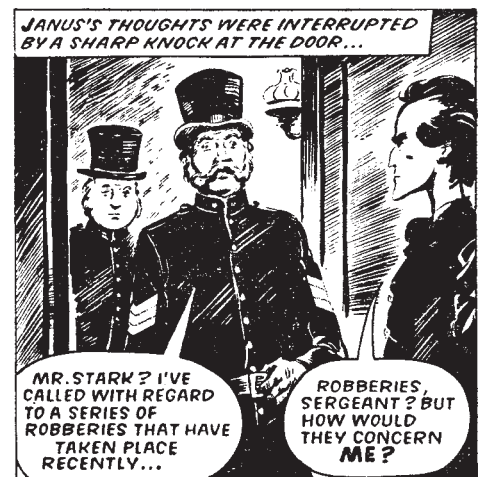
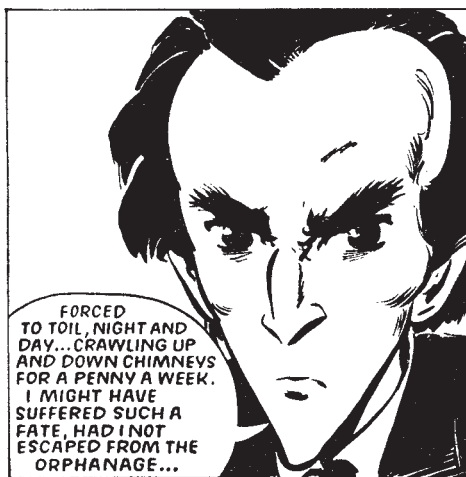
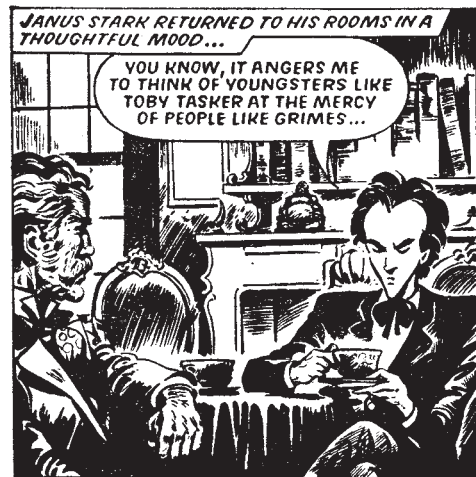


NEXT INSTANT, THE SWEEP'S WRIST WAS CAUGHT IN FINGERS OF STEEL?

ENOUGH! I'LL NOT SEE A DEFENCELESS BOY BEATEN BY THE LIKES OF YOU!

GRAAAGH! WHO DARES...?

CONTINUED OVERLEAF-





WITHOUT WARNING, JANUS BROKE INTO A RUN AND SWIFTLY ROUNDED A CORNER...

SOME PLACE TO HIDE... JUST FOR A WHILE... AH! THE VERY SPOT!



A COAL-HOLE... FAR TOO NARROW FOR EVEN THE SMALLEST NORMAL MAN TO SQUEEZE THROUGH. BUT JANUS STARK WAS NO NORMAL MAN.



A SECOND LATER, AND THE STREET WAS EMPTY!

HE - HE'S VANISHED! GONE INTO THIN AIR AND GIVEN ME THE SLIP!



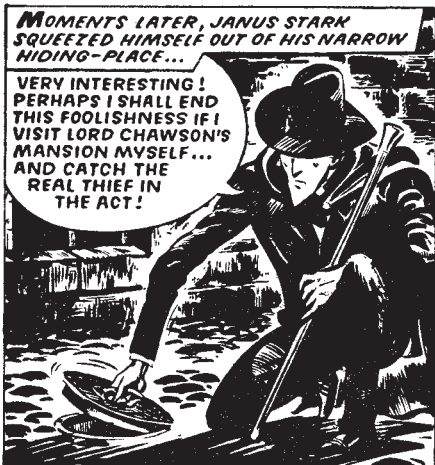
THEN, HEAVY FOOTFALLS RESOUNDED ON THE PAVEMENT BEHIND THE POLICEMAN...

THERE YOU ARE, TWENTY-THREE! NEW ORDERS... WE'VE GOT TO GUARD LORD CHAWSON'S MANSION. IT'S EMPTY TONIGHT, AND THE GOVERNORS EXPECT OUR MYSTERIOUS THIEF TO STRIKE!

AND I'VE JUST LOST JANUS STARK, SERGEANT!



ALL THE MORE REASON WE SHOULD BE ON THE ALERT! COME ON!



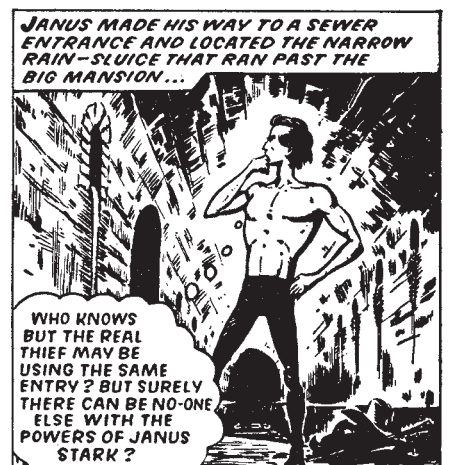
MOMENTS LATER, JANUS STARK SQUEEZED HIMSELF OUT OF HIS NARROW HIDING-PLACE...

VERY INTERESTING! PERHAPS I SHALL END THIS FOOLISHNESS IF I VISIT LORD CHAWSON'S MANSION MYSELF... AND CATCH THE REAL THIEF IN THE ACT!



BLENDING WITH THE SHADOWS, THE MASTER CONTORTIONIST MADE A CIRCUIT OF THE LARGE HOUSE. IT WAS SURROUNDED BY POLICE...

I'LL HAVE TO ENTER BY THE SLUICES!



JANUS MADE HIS WAY TO A SEWER ENTRANCE AND LOCATED THE NARROW RAIN-SLUICE THAT RAN PAST THE BIG MANSION...

WHO KNOWS BUT THE REAL THIEF MAY BE USING THE SAME ENTRY? BUT SURELY THERE CAN BE NO-ONE ELSE WITH THE POWERS OF JANUS STARK?



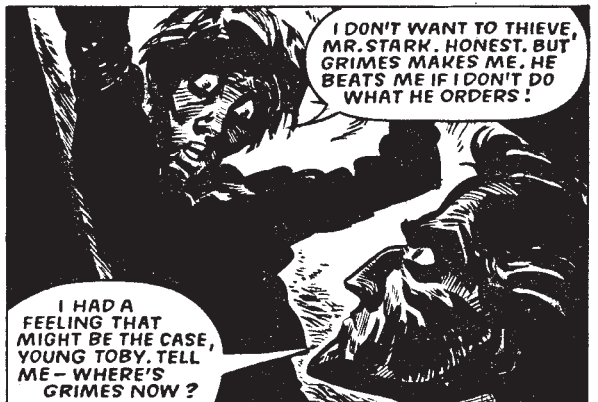
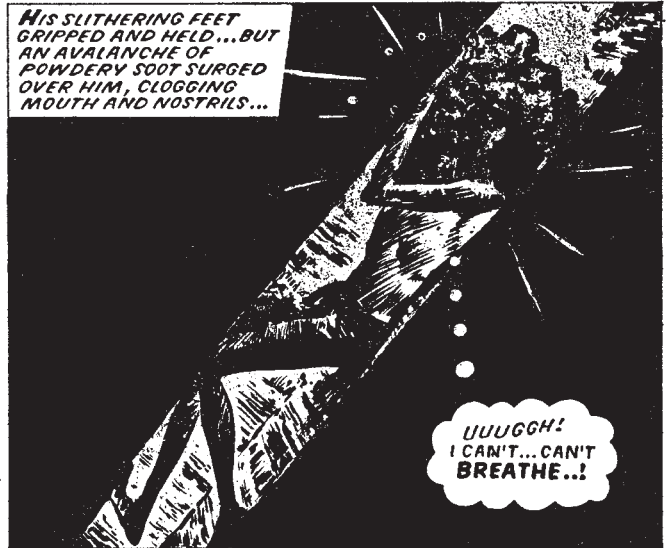
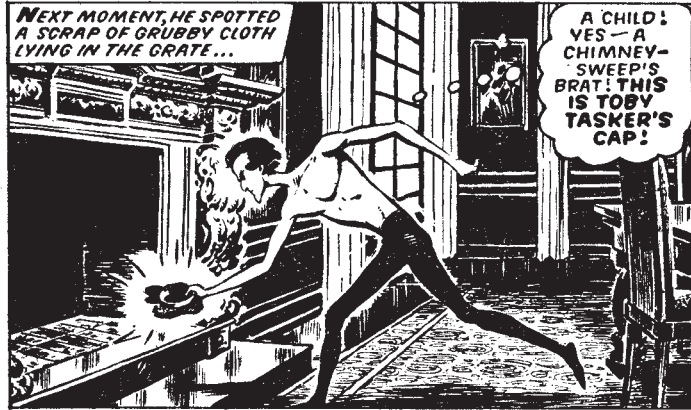
CONTRACTING HIS MUSCLES TO NERVE-JARRING COMPACTNESS, JANUS SQUIRMED HIS WAY ALONG THE SLUICE...

AAAAGH! THE PAIN...



THE SHARP BEND IN THE RAINFALL SUMP BENEATH THE CHAWSON MANSION ALMOST HAD JANUS TRAPPED...

CONTINUED OVERLEAF -





UP ON THE ROOF, TWO HOUSES ALONG. I HAVE TO MEET HIM THERE AN' HAND OVER THE LOOT...



IN THE DARKNESS, JANUS SMILED GRIMLY...

I THINK I HAVE A NOTION THAT WILL SETTLE FOR OUR FRIEND GRIMES ONCE AND FOR ALL, TOBY! LISTEN CAREFULLY TO MY INSTRUCTIONS...



SECONDS LATER, JANUS AND THE BOY PARTED COMPANY...

WHAT A MESS! A FINE SWEEP'S BOY I'D MAKE! NOW TO CAUSE A LITTLE NOISE TO BRING IN THE PEELERS...

SWIFTLY, JANUS DASHED OVER A HEAVY CHAIR... THEN FORCED HIMSELF INTO A MAKESHIFT HIDING PLACE!



A NOISE IN THE HOUSE! COME ON... INSIDE!

UPON THE ROOF, TOBY TASKER WAS CARRYING OUT HIS PART OF THE PLAN!



MR. GRIMES! HELP ME! I'M—I'M STUCK IN THE CHIMNEY!

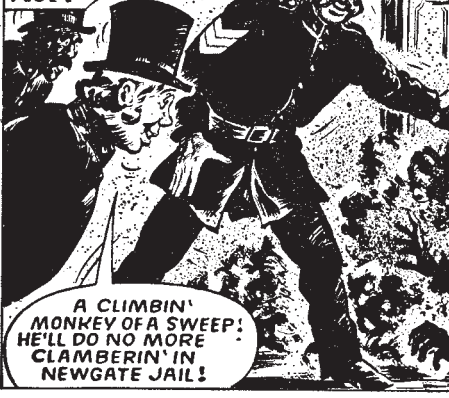
A SHADOWY FIGURE FLITTED SILENTLY ACROSS THE ROOFTOPS WITH THE AGILITY ONLY A TRAINED SWEEP COULD POSSESS...



WHERE ARE YOU, THEN, YOU STUPID LITTLE WHELP??

RIGHT BEHIND YOU, MR. GRIMES...

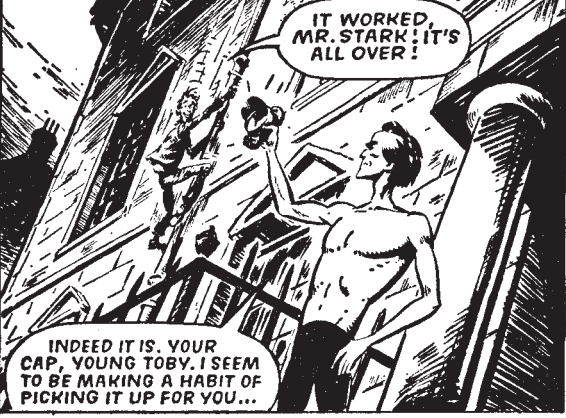
GRIMES'S SHRIEK OF ALARM ECHOED HOLLOWLY AS TOBY UPENDED THE MAN'S FEET AND PITCHED HIM HEADLONG DOWN THE FLUE!



BY THUNDER! HE'S FALLEN INTO OUR HANDS! AND IT AIN'T STARK AT ALL!

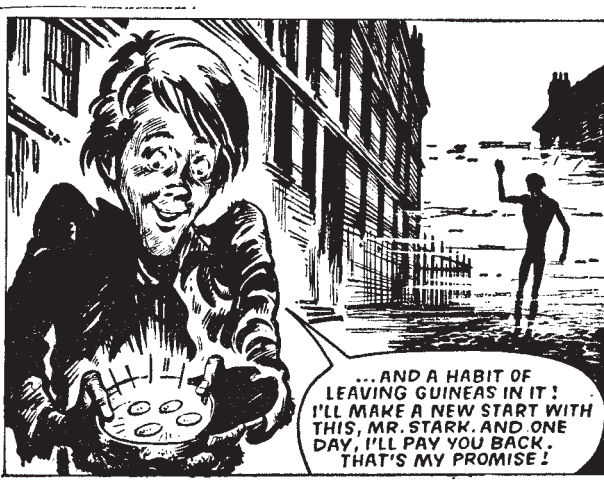
A CLIMBIN' MONKEY OF A SWEEP! HE'LL DO NO MORE CLAMBERIN' IN NEWGATE JAIL!

AND LONG AFTER THE HOUSE HAD ONCE MORE FALLEN SILENT...



IT WORKED, MR. STARK! IT'S ALL OVER!

INDEED IT IS, YOUR CAP, YOUNG TOBY. I SEEM TO BE MAKING A HABIT OF PICKING IT UP FOR YOU...

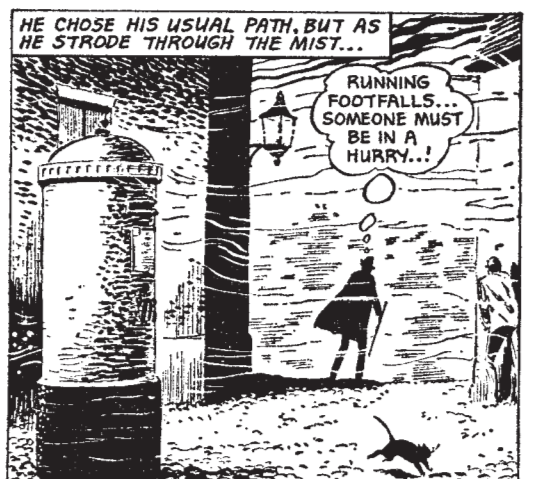
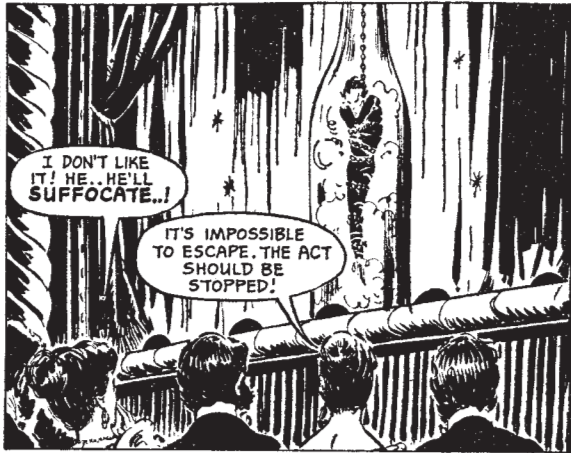


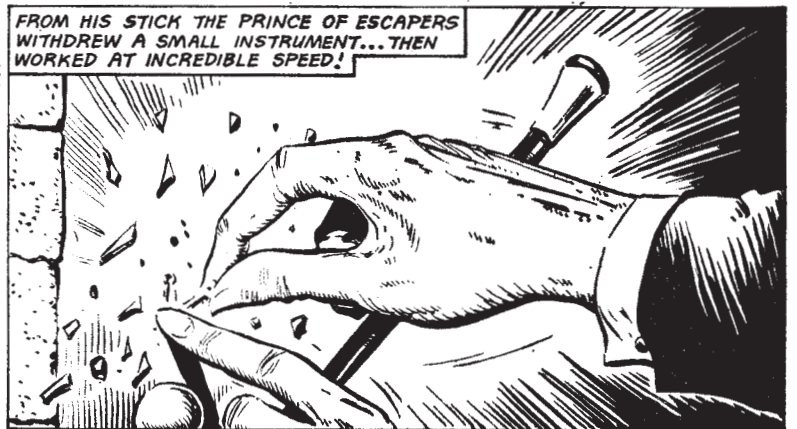
... AND A HABIT OF LEAVING GUINEAS IN IT! I'LL MAKE A NEW START WITH THIS, MR. STARK. AND ONE DAY, I'LL PAY YOU BACK. THAT'S MY PROMISE!

JOIN JANUS STARK IN ANOTHER INCREDIBLE ADVENTURE NEXT WEEK!

THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES OF JANUS STARK

IN THE PACKED VICTORIAN THEATRE, A WHITE-FACED AUDIENCE WATCHED SPELLBOUND AS A VAST, SEALED BOTTLE FILLED SLOWLY WITH SMOKE. WITHIN IT A CHAINED, MANACLED FIGURE WAS IMPRISONED...THE FIGURE OF JANUS STARK, UNCANNY 'PRINCE OF ESCAPERS', WHOM NO LOCKS OR FETTERS COULD HOLD!





CONTINUED OVERLEAF...



I... I KNOW TOO MUCH! I WAS STRUCK DOWN... A MAN WITH A SCAR. HE LEFT ME... BUT FOR YOU, I'D BE DEAD.

MAN WITH A SCAR? THAT MUST HAVE BEEN THE THUG WHO RAN INTO ME EARLIER!

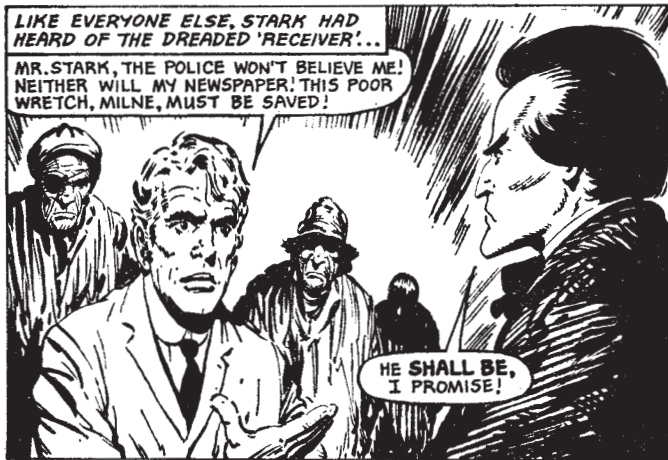


KEEN CRANED FORWARD EARNESTLY...

I'M DANGEROUS... BECAUSE I'M SURE A PRISONER IN FOULPEN JAIL IS TO BE SILENCED PERMANENTLY! ONLY HE CAN IDENTIFY 'THE RECEIVER', THE MASTER-MIND WHO CONTROLS LONDON'S UNDERWORLD!



... HIS NAME'S MILNE! HE'S A BURGLAR WHO WAS FALSELY CONVICTED. 'THE RECEIVER' PUT HIM THERE... WHERE HE CAN BE KILLED!



LIKE EVERYONE ELSE, STARK HAD HEARD OF THE DREADED 'RECEIVER'...

MR. STARK, THE POLICE WON'T BELIEVE ME! NEITHER WILL MY NEWSPAPER! THIS POOR WRETCH, MILNE, MUST BE SAVED!

HE SHALL BE, I PROMISE!



MEANWHILE, UGLY-LOOKING CHARACTERS HAD EDGED NEARER...

YOU'RE NEW IN 'ERE, AIN'T YOU, FRIEND?

I-I... WE'RE JUST GOING TO LEAVE...



STEEL GLITTERED EVILLY...

YOU COULD BE LEAVING, ALL RIGHT, BLABBER-MOUTH— FOR EVER!

WHAT DID I TELL YOU, STARK? THEY MEAN TO SILENCE ME, TOO!

CAN JANUS SAVE HIS COMPANION FROM A GRIM FATE? FIND OUT IN THE NEXT NERVE-TINGLING INSTALMENT!

THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES OF

JANUS STARK

JANUS STARK, THE UNCANNY 'PRINCE OF ESCAPERS', RESCUED A YOUNG FREELANCE JOURNALIST NAMED KEEN FROM A BURNING ROOM. KEEN WAS IN FEAR OF HIS LIFE BECAUSE HE KNEW THAT A CONVICT IN FOULFEN JAIL WAS TO BE ASSASSINATED BY ORDER OF 'THE RECEIVER', A DREADED MASTER-MIND OF THE VICTORIAN UNDERWORLD. THEN, IN A TAVERN, TWO CUT-THROATS ADVANCED UPON STARK AND KEEN...

JANUS STARK MOVED WITH EYE-DAZZLING SPEED...

AAAAAAH! A SWORD STICK!

WE MEANT NO 'ARM, GUV'NOR!

THEN I'M HAPPY FOR YOU, MY FRIENDS! BUT BE VERY CAREFUL!

THE SILENCE WAS DEATHLY...

GOOD NIGHT, EVERYONE! DON'T BOTHER TO RISE...

PUBLIC BAR

HE'S A DEVIL IN DISGUISE! LOOK AT THE WAY HIS EYES BURN!

YOU'VE CONVINCED ME OF THE DANGER, KEEN... THIS MAN MILNE MUST BE SAVED FROM HIS FATE!

YOU... YOU MEAN... WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO THE JAIL?

A LITTLE LATER...

MR. STARK, I KNOW MILNE'S CELL NUMBER! IF ONLY YOU CAN GET TO HIM...

MY KNOWLEDGE OF JAILS IS GREATER THAN YOU MIGHT THINK, MY FRIEND! I INTEND TO BREAK INTO FOULFEN!

FOULFEN JAIL, ONCE A FORT, REARED HIGH FROM TREACHEROUS MUD FLATS...

STORES AND PRISONERS COULD ONLY BE MOVED IN BY BOAT AT HIGH TIDE. AT LOW TIDE THE QUAGMIRE MUD COULD TRAP AND HOLD ANYONE WHO TRIED TO CROSS...

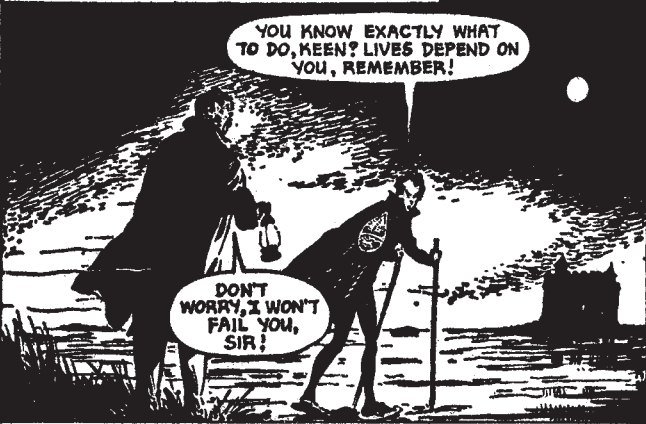
WE WON'T FIND THE MISSING PRISONER NOW! THE MUD GOT HIM... TILL THE WATERS CAME!

MEANWHILE, AT A NEARBY INN...

I'LL CROSS THE MUD TONIGHT AT LOW TIDE. THESE WILL ACT LIKE SNOW-SHOES! ONE PAIR IS FOR OUR PRISONER FRIEND, MILNE!

BRILLIANT! YOU'RE A GENIUS, MR. STARK!

THAT NIGHT, WITH THE MOONLIGHT CASTING EERIE SHADOWS ACROSS THE BLEAK PRISON...



YOU KNOW EXACTLY WHAT TO DO, KEEN? LIVES DEPEND ON YOU, REMEMBER!

DON'T WORRY, I WON'T FAIL YOU, SIR!

THE 'MUD-SHOES' DISTRIBUTED STARK'S WEIGHT EVENLY...

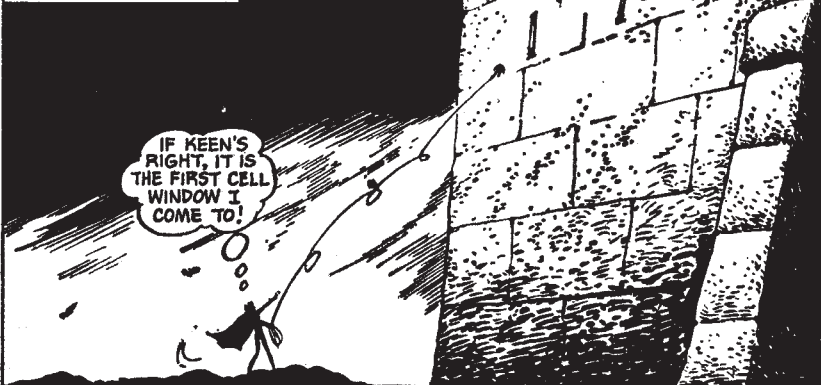


A SUPREME TEST OF MY SKILL! BUT I MADE NO MISTAKE...

GLUK! GURG!



AT LAST, JANUS STARK REACHED FIRM GROUND. THEN A GRAPNEL FLASHED WITH UNCANNY AIM...



IF KEEN'S RIGHT, IT IS THE FIRST CELL WINDOW I COME TO!

USING ALL HIS CONSIDERABLE SKILL, STARK 'WALKED' UP THE WALL IN ALMOST COMPLETE SILENCE!



MILNE! I'M HERE TO FREE YOU. YOU'RE A DEAD MAN IF YOU STAY IN JAIL!

AN UNTIDY FIGURE ROSE FROM THE SHADOWS...



BLESS YER, MATEY! IT'S ALL CLEAR...

HOLD ON WHILE I LOOSEN THE BARS!

USING A STRANGE INSTRUMENT, STARK FORCED THE BARS APART. THEN...



'E...E MUST 'AVE BONES LIKE RUBBER! IT FAIR GIVES ME THE CREEPS!

AAAAAH!

LOCKED CELLS WERE NO PROBLEM FOR STARK'S EERIE TALENTS, EITHER...

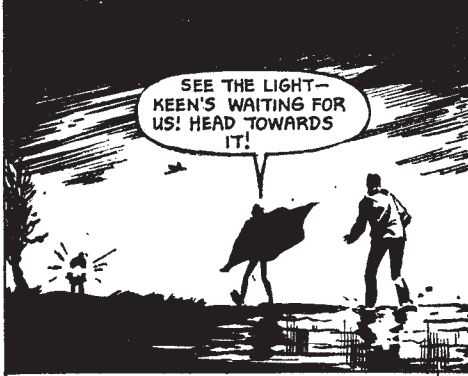


WE'LL NEVER GIT OUT THIS WAY... WHAT ABOUT THE GUARDS?

BE QUIET! I'LL DO THE WORRYING!

CONTINUED OVERLEAF...

MILNE NEVER QUITE UNDERSTOOD HOW THEY BOTH REACHED THE MUD-FLATS...HOW DOORS OPENED SOUNDLESSLY BEFORE HIS RESCUER'S TOUCH. BUT AT LONG LAST...



SEE THE LIGHT—KEEN'S WAITING FOR US! HEAD TOWARDS IT!

BREATHING HEAVILY, THE PAIR REACHED THE MAINLAND. BUT AS KEEN STEPPED FORWARD...



IT...IT'S 'IM... THE RECEIVER! MY OATH...!

YOU'RE SO RIGHT, MILNE! I AM!

A DEADLY REVOLVER APPEARED IN KEEN'S HAND...



I'M SORRY, STARK... I MUST KILL YOU BOTH TO... ER... STOP A CONVICT'S ESCAPE! TO REACH A MAN IN PRISON ISN'T EASY... I NEEDED YOU TO BRING MILNE TO ME! NOW YOU BOTH KNOW TOO MUCH!

STARK SHRUGGED CASUALLY...

SO IT WAS ALL AN ACT, EH, KEEN? THE FAKED ATTEMPT ON YOUR LIFE... YOU STAGED THINGS CLEVERLY TO MAKE SURE OF MY HELP?



IT'S A PITY YOUR CLEVERNESS MUST BE WASTED... BUT YOU'RE DANGEROUS ENOUGH TO MERIT THE FIRST SHOT!

THE REVOLVER BLAZED...

WHAT—? THE CLOAKS FLOATING!... IT'S EMPTY!



THEN A SHAPE ROSE UP SUDDENLY... AND KEEN RECALLED NOTHING MORE!



AS YOU SAY, I AM DANGEROUS!... VERY DANGEROUS!

THE CAPTURE OF THE DREADED 'RECEIVER', AND HIS CERTAIN IDENTIFICATION, TOOK LONDON BY STORM!

THERE'S SOME MENTION OF STARK, THE MUSIC HALL FELLOW...

THERE'S ALSO A GREAT DEAL THE POLICE REFUSE TO EXPLAIN.



STARK WAS NO FAVOURITE OF THE LAW!

CONFOUND YOU, STARK! ONE DAY YOU'LL GO TOO FAR...

WHEN THAT DAY COMES, I TRUST YOU'LL HAVE A JAIL ABLE TO HOLD ME... I DOUBT IT! GOOD DAY, CHIEF CONSTABLE!



DON'T MISS THE DRAMATIC STORY FEATURING THE INCREDIBLE JANUS STARK NEXT WEEK!

THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES OF JANUS STARK

JANUS STARK—FAMED MAN OF MYSTERY—HAD THE UNCANNY POWER OF BEING ABLE TO ESCAPE FROM ALL LOCKS AND FETTERS. SUCH INCREDIBLE SKILL NOT ONLY EARNED HIM FAT FEES AT THE THEATRES AND MUSIC HALLS OF VICTORIAN LONDON, IT ALSO DREW THE INTEREST OF THE POLICE...



'EVENING, MR. STARK! I HEAR YOU'RE TO GIVE OUR CHIEFS A DEMONSTRATION AND LECTURE?

YOU'RE WELL INFORMED, CONSTABLE! YES, MY SKILL SEEMS IN STRANGE DEMAND.



MOCKING EYES GLOWED FROM THE PALE FACE..

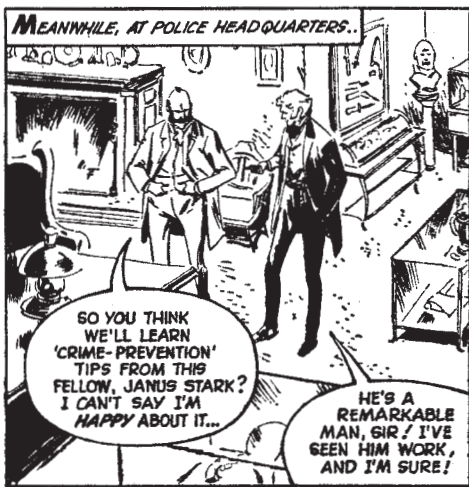
WHEN THE LAW NEEDS ME, CONSTABLE, I OBEY, I ONLY TRUST THEY DON'T THINK I KNOW MORE ABOUT BURGLARY THAN AN HONEST MAN SHOULD!

NOW DON'T PULL MY LEG, SIR!



STARK PASSED ON INTO THE EERIE LIGHT...

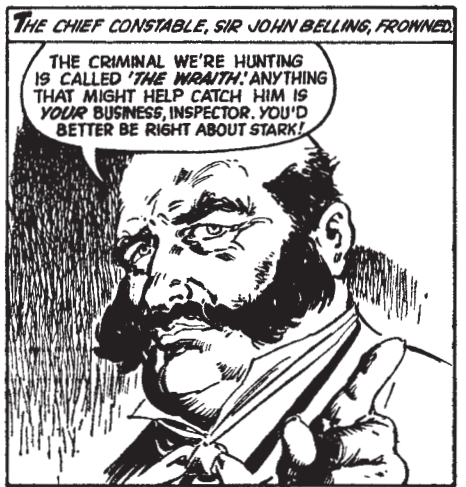
HE'S A RUM COVE, THAT ONE! FAIR GIVES ME THE GIVERS...I'D LIKE TO SEE 'IM AT HIS DEMONSTRATION, THOUGH.



MEANWHILE, AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS..

SO YOU THINK WE'LL LEARN 'CRIME-PREVENTION' TIPS FROM THIS FELLOW, JANUS STARK? I CAN'T SAY I'M HAPPY ABOUT IT...

HE'S A REMARKABLE MAN, SIR! I'VE SEEN HIM WORK, AND I'M SURE!



THE CHIEF CONSTABLE, SIR JOHN BELLING, FROWNEED.

THE CRIMINAL WE'RE HUNTING IS CALLED 'THE WRAITH.' ANYTHING THAT MIGHT HELP CATCH HIM IS YOUR BUSINESS, INSPECTOR. YOU'D BETTER BE RIGHT ABOUT STARK!



SUDDENLY...

GOOD EVENING, GENTLEMEN! I HOPE YOU EXPECTED ME?

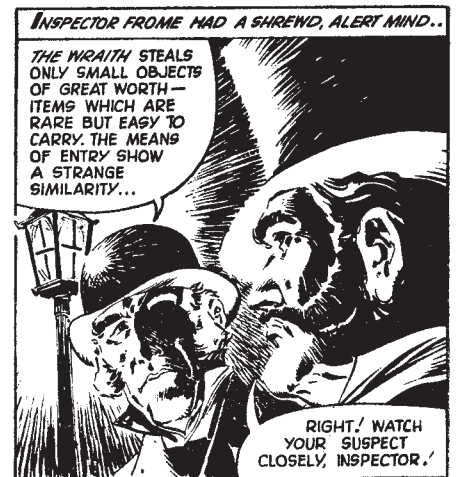
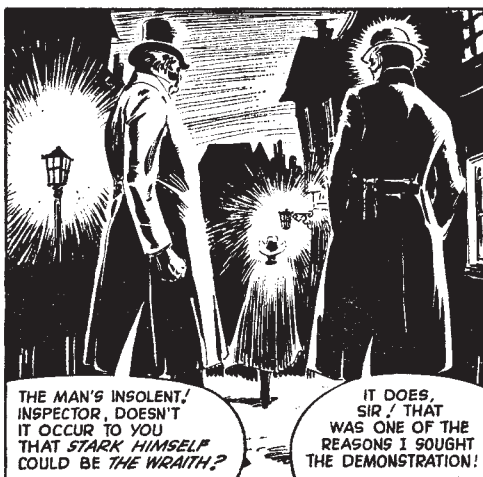
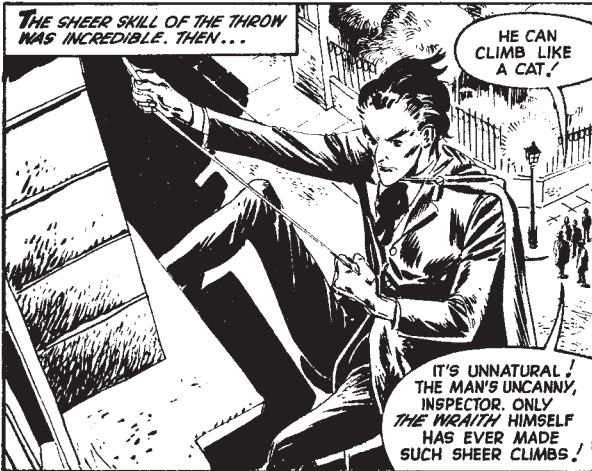
IT-IT'S STARK HIMSELF! WHERE DID YOU SPRING FROM?

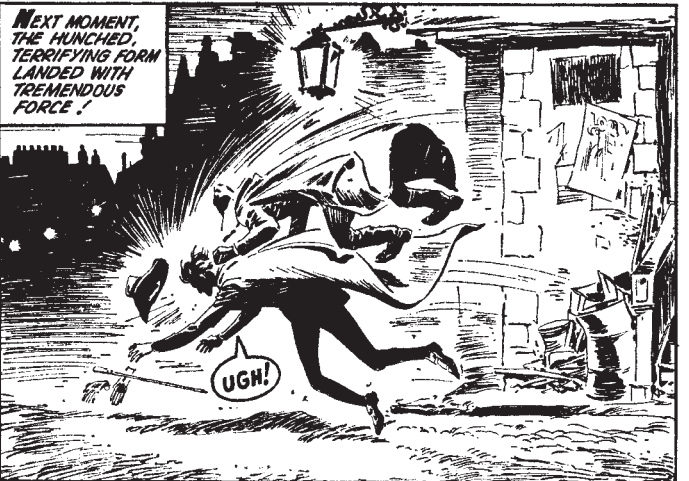
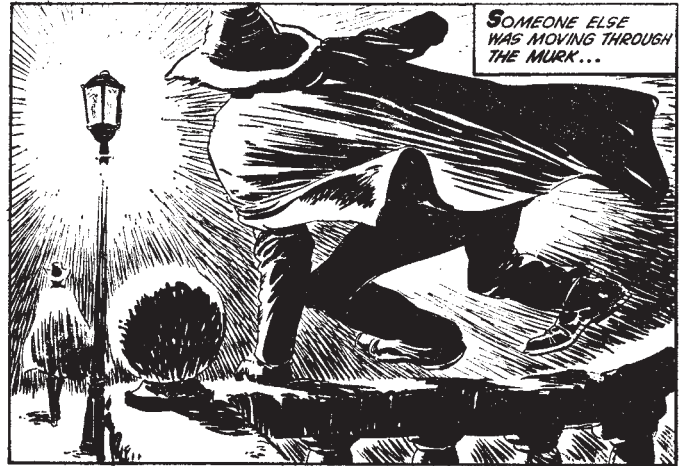


STARTLED, SIR JOHN FLUNG OPEN THE OUTER DOOR...

WAKE UP, YOU MEN! DID YOU SEE ANYONE ENTER JUST NOW?

NO, SIR! THE GAS-LIGHT FLICKERED AND..





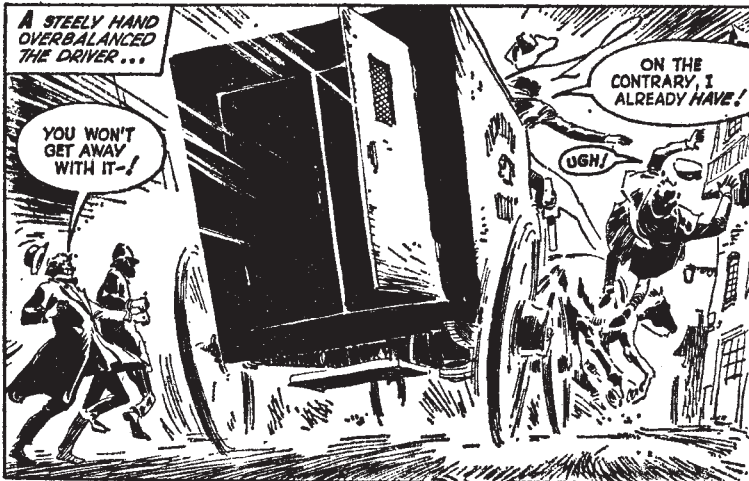
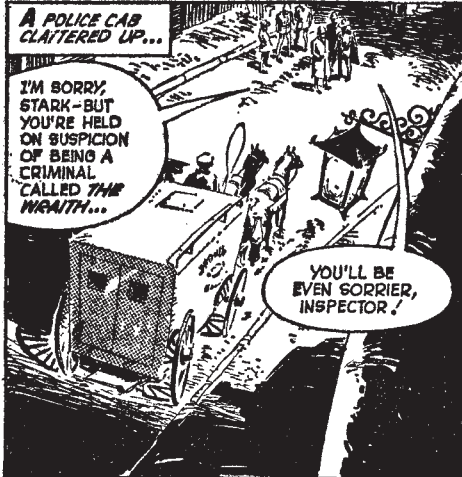
WILL STARK BE BLAMED FOR THE MYSTERY FIGURE'S CRIMES?

READ ON NEXT MONDAY!

THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES OF

JANUS STARK

JANUS STARK - MASTER OF MYSTERY AND ESCAPE - HAD GIVEN A DEMONSTRATION OF HIS UNCANNY POWERS TO THE POLICE OF VICTORIAN LONDON, BUT THEY SUSPECTED THAT HE WAS REALLY A CRIMINAL GENIUS CALLED THE WRAITH. JANUS WAS ATTACKED AND KNOCKED UNCONSCIOUS, AND WHILE HIS PRESENCE WAS AWAITED AT A MUSIC HALL, A ROBBERY WAS COMMITTED. WHEN THE ESCAPIST FINALLY ARRIVED, INSPECTOR FROME OF SCOTLAND YARD WAS WAITING FOR HIM...





LONDON'S UNDERWORLD IS STILL YOUR WORLD, THOUGH YOU STAY IN ITS SHADOWS. WHERE SHALL I FIND THE WRAITH, OLD FRIEND?

DON'T ASK ME THAT... NOT EVEN YOU, SON!



OLD LARGO SHUDDERED... YOU'RE AFRAID, LARGO— AND THE FEAR IN YOUR THOUGHTS REACHES TO ME! NO, I WON'T ASK YOU. I'M REMEMBERING— AND I MAKE MY OWN PLANS!



IN THE PAPERS NEXT DAY...

THERE'S SOME MYSTERY ABOUT THIS. D'YOU THINK THE CONFOUNDED FELLOW IS A FRAUD?

JANUS STARK VANISHES WITHOUT TRACE— POLICE STAY SILENT

IT MUST BE ONE OF HIS STUNTS, HUMPHREY! FOR PUBLICITY... PERHAPS...



BUT THE WRAITH WAS NOT IDLE. A CUNNING, TREACHEROUS MIND WAS AT WORK. IT WAS TWO NIGHTS LATER, THAT...

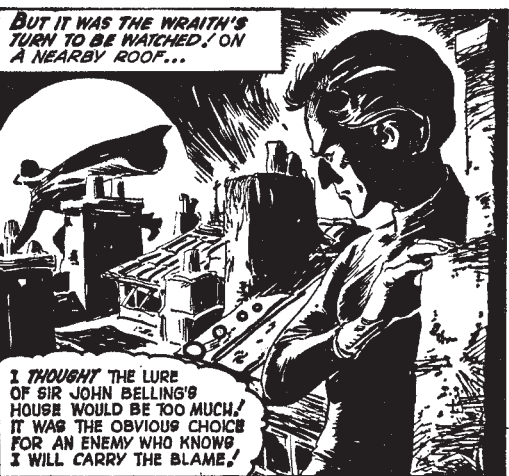
..SIR JOHN BELLING'S HOUSE WAS ENTERED AGAIN!



THE UNCANNY CLIMBER, ONCE INSIDE, MOVED IN TRAINED, DEFT SILENCE...



WHEN THE MYSTERY FIGURE LEFT, WITH HIM WENT THE GOLD AND JEWELLED SNIFF-BOXES WHICH JANUS STARK HAD SEEN DURING HIS DEMONSTRATION...



BUT IT WAS THE WRAITH'S TURN TO BE WATCHED... ON A NEARBY ROOF...

I THOUGHT THE LURE OF SIR JOHN BELLING'S HOUSE WOULD BE TOO MUCH. IT WAS THE OBVIOUS CHOICE FOR AN ENEMY WHO KNOWS I WILL CARRY THE BLAME!



THE BLACK-CLAD FIGURE OF VENGEANCE WHIRLED IN PURSUIT...

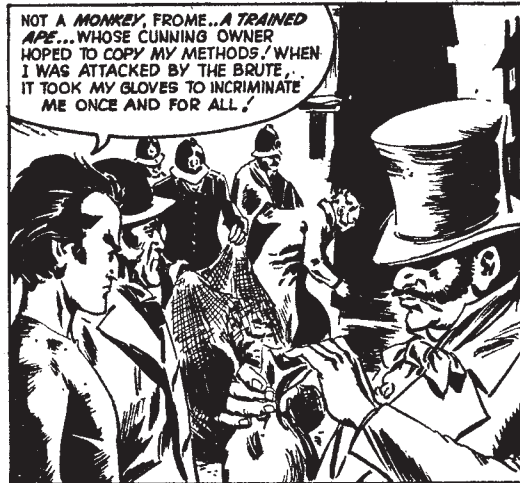
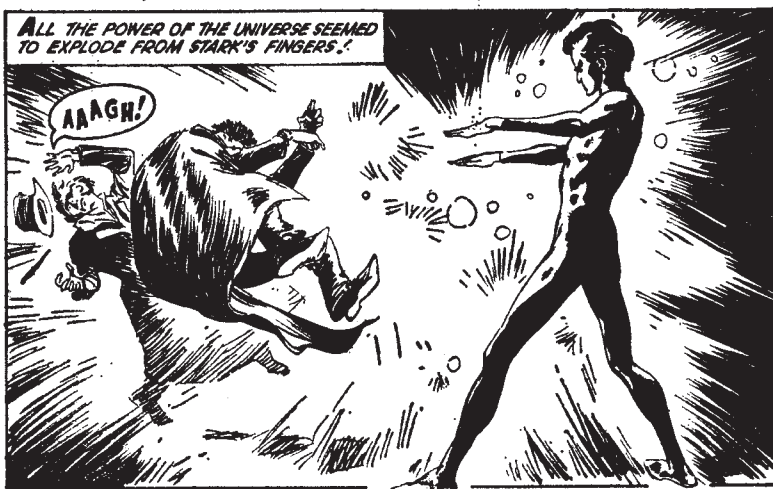
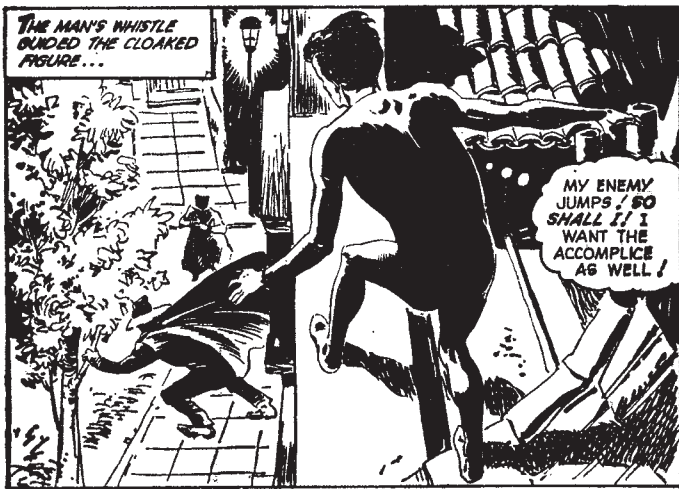
SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH WILL NOT DEFEAT ME AGAIN— POWER RUNG THROUGH ME LIKE FIRE!



FROM THE GROUND SOMEONE STARED UP IN HORROR...

MY OATH, IT—IT'S STARK! THE CUNNING DEVIL WAS WAITING! HE'S TRACKING THE WRAITH...!

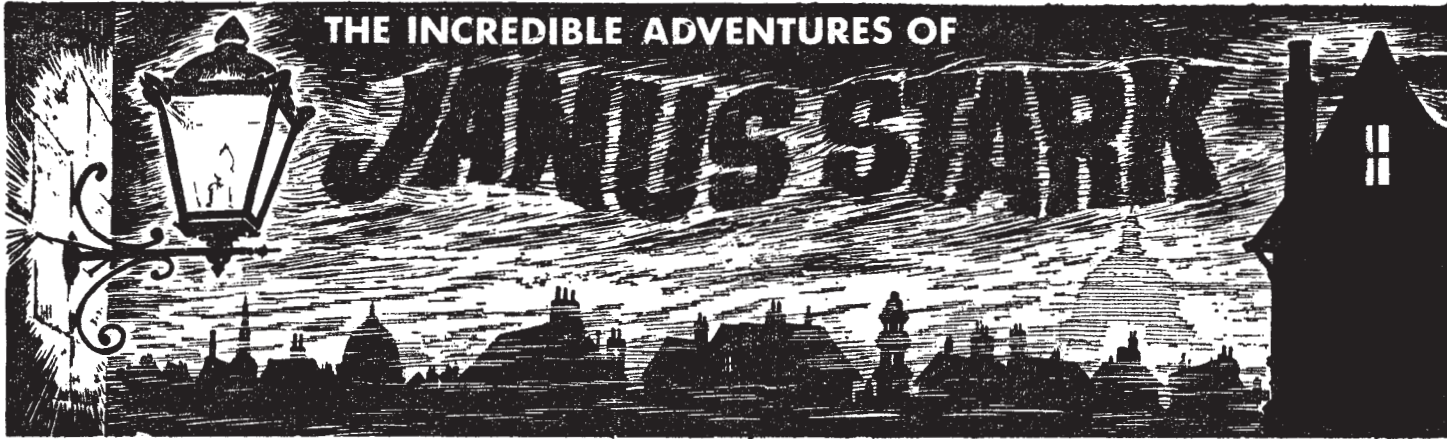
CONTINUED OVERLEAF—



THERE WILL BE ANOTHER DRAMA-CHARGED STORY FEATURING THE INCREDIBLE JANUS STARK NEXT MONDAY! DON'T MISS IT!

THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES OF

JANUS STARK



THESE WERE RAISED VOICES IN THE PACKING DEPARTMENT OF TROUNCER'S WAREHOUSE. CALEB POUND WAS ABOUT TO GET THE SACK FROM HIS TENTH...



OF ALL THE LAZY, GOOD-FOR-NOTHING LOAFERS I'VE EVER COME ACROSS, POUND, YOU ARE THE WORST! I'VE NO USE FOR WASTRELS!

A YOUNGER MAN CAME AS USUAL TO CALEB'S DEFENCE... HIS BROTHER BOB.



DON'T DISMISS HIM, SIR! GIVE HIM ONE MORE CHANCE..PLEASE!

SILENCE! YOUR IMPERTINENCE WILL COST YOU YOUR OWN JOB IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL!

CALEB POUND MUMBLED AN IMPATIENT INSULT AND GRABBED HIS BROTHER'S ARM...



DON'T LICK THE OLD FOOL'S BOOTS, BOB. COME ON - THIS STINKIN' WAREHOUSE AIN'T NO PLACE FOR US!

NOW HOLD HARD, CALEB... OH, WHAT'S THE USE?

DEJECTED, BOB FOLLOWED CALEB DOWN THE BUSTLING STREET...



WHAT DO WE DO NOW, CALEB? NO JOBS, NO MONEY...

I'LL SEE YOU ALL RIGHT, BOB. SUMMAT'LL TURN UP, MARK MY WORDS!

THEY PASSED THE BRIGHTLY-LIT DOORWAY OF A VARIETY THEATRE...



HERE'S A GO, CALEB! MEN WANTED!

HEH! IT'LL BE SCENE-SHIFTIN', NO DOUBT, MIGHT BRING IN THE ODD SHILLING WITHOUT TOO MUCH TOL...

THE BROTHERS APPLIED, AND WERE HIRED. BOB, AT LEAST, FOUND THE JOB MORE THAN NORMALLY INTERESTING...



LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! I GIVE YOU THE MASTER OF ESCAPE..THE DESPAIR OF EVERY LOCKSMITH, JANUS STARK!



THE AUDIENCE WATCHED BREATHLESSLY AS JANUS ALLOWED HIMSELF TO BE LOADED WITH CHAINS AND PADLOCKS...

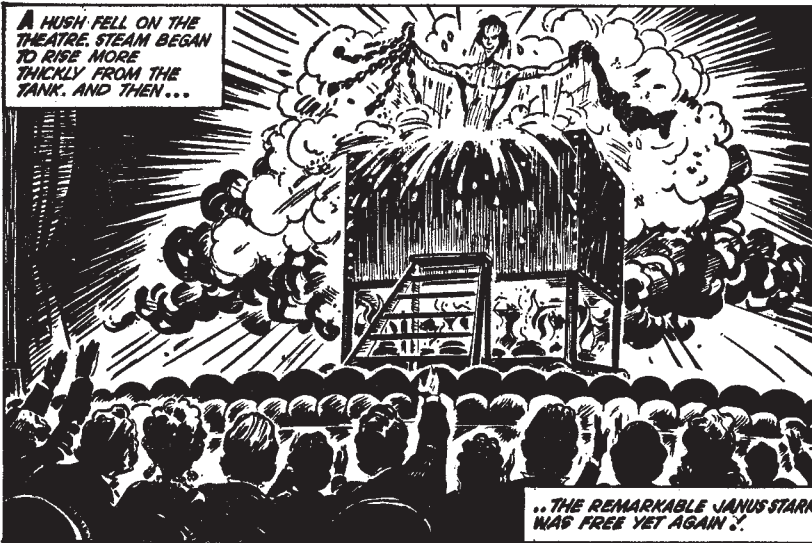
I INVITE ANYONE TO COME UP AND TEST THESE CHAINS BEFORE JANUS STARK IS ROPED WITHIN A SACK, BUT THAT IS NOT ALL... OH, NO, INDEED!

Click!



HE'LL NEVER GET OUT OF THAT! HE'LL BE BOILED ALIVE!

GARN! TRICKERY, BOB... THAT'S WHAT IT IS! IT'S A BIG FARE!



A HUSH FELL ON THE THEATRE. STEAM BEGAN TO RISE MORE THICKLY FROM THE TANK. AND THEN...

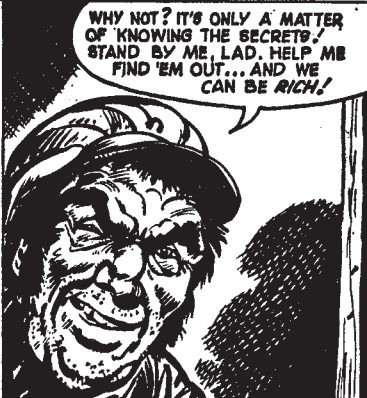
...THE REMARKABLE JANUS STARK WAS FREE YET AGAIN!



LATER, BACKSTAGE, CALEB POUND BEGAN TO SHOW AN UNUSUAL INTEREST IN JANUS STARK AND HIS ACT...

LOOK THERE, BOB! A MAN MAKING A FORTUNE BY TRICKERY! WHAT'S TO STOP ME DOING THE SAME?

ARE YOU MAD, CALEB? YOU - COPYING THE GREAT JANUS STARK?

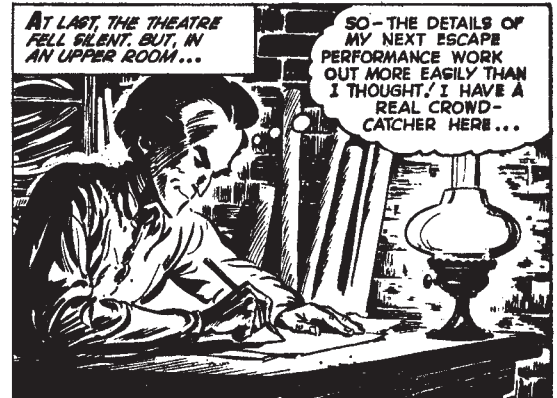


WHY NOT? IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF KNOWING THE SECRETS! STAND BY ME, LAD. HELP ME FIND 'EM OUT... AND WE CAN BE RICH!



WEAK... EASILY INFLUENCED BY HIS ELDER BROTHER, BOB POUND AGREED TO HIS PLAN...

YOU SLIP OUT LAST, BOB... AND TELL THE DOORMAN I'VE ALREADY GONE. THEN, WHEN HE'S LOCKED UP AND GONE HOME, I'LL EXAMINE EVERY INCH OF JANUS STARK'S PROPS...



AT LAST, THE THEATRE FELL SILENT. BUT, IN AN UPPER ROOM...

SO - THE DETAILS OF MY NEXT ESCAPE PERFORMANCE WORK OUT MORE EASILY THAN I THOUGHT! I HAVE A REAL CROWD-CATCHER HERE...



THEN... WHAT WAS THAT? A NOISE FROM DOWNSTAIRS! BUT... THE THEATRE IS SURELY EMPTY...!



I HEAR THE RING OF METAL! SOMEONE IS TAMPERING WITH MY PROPS...

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CAT-FOOTED, JANUS WAS ABLE TO COME WITHIN A YARD OF CALEB POUND!

AND WHAT, IF I MAY MAKE SO BOLD, DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?

WHAT...? JANUS STARK!



I MEANT NO HARM! I- I'M A DESPERATE MAN, SIR! I WANTED TO LEARN YOUR SECRETS... YOUR TRICKS...

THERE ARE NO TRICKS, FELLOW. MY SKILL LIES IN MY BODY, IN THE QUALITY OF MY BONES. IT IS - SHALL WE SAY, A GIFT...



AT JANUS STARK'S QUIET, COMPOSED MANNER, CALEB'S CONFIDENCE AND AGGRESSION BEGAN TO SOAR...

WHAT? NO TRICKERY? COME OFF IT... YOU'D BETTER TELL ME, OR ELSE, THERE'S ROOM FOR TWO OF US IN THE SAME GAME!

LISTEN, MY BLISTERING FRIEND. YOUR RAISED VOICE SUGGESTS VIOLENCE, AND I WARN YOU...



THE CALM WORDS STUNG CALEB'S TEMPER. INSTINCTIVELY, HE REACTED...

I'LL FORCE YOUR SECRETS OUT OF YOU!

I GUARANTEE YOU WON'T!



JANUS ABSORBED THE SHOCK OF CALEB'S HEAVY BODY... SUCH WAS THE QUALITY OF HIS PHYSIQUE, BUT JANUS WAS CARELESS...

UGH!



JANUS SANK SLOWLY TO HIS KNEES AND TOPPLED FORWARD, UNCONSCIOUS...

AARGH! SO YOU'RE AT MY MERCY, MR. CLEVER JANUS STARK! I'LL SHOW YOU HOW I TREAT THOSE WHO LAUGH AT CALEB POUND!



THE LIGHT OF MADNESS IN HIS EYES, THE BIG MAN WRENCHED OPEN THE TAPS ON THE BURNERS BENEATH JANUS STARK'S TANK...

YOU REFUSED TO PART WITH YOUR SECRETS, STARK! SO NOW YOU'LL DIE WITH THEM!



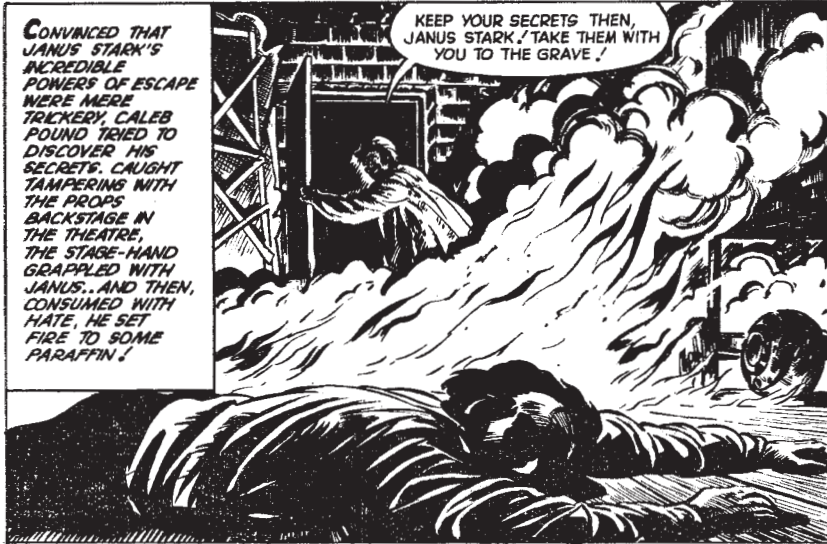
THE THIN SCRAPER OF A MATCH... THE SUDDEN ROAR OF FLAME...

FAREWELL, JANUS STARK! ESCAPE FROM THIS... IF YOU CAN!

WILL JANUS RECOVER IN TIME TO SAVE HIMSELF? FIND OUT IN THE NEXT DRAMA-CHARGED EPISODE!

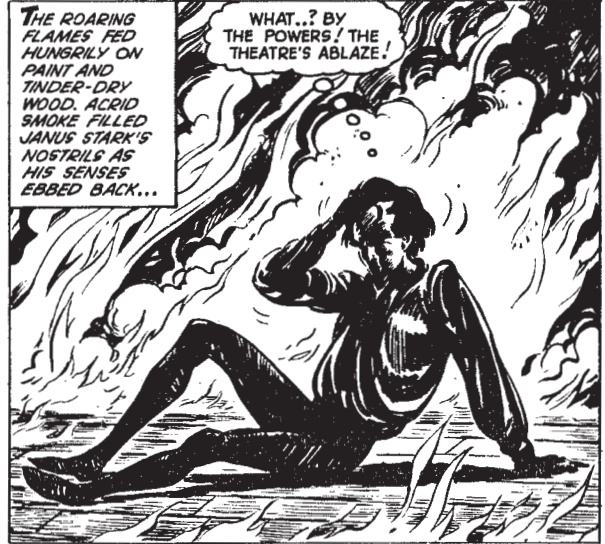
THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES OF

JANUS STARK



CONVINCED THAT JANUS STARK'S INCREDIBLE POWERS OF ESCAPE WERE MERE TRICKERY, CALEB FOUND TRIED TO DISCOVER HIS SECRETS. CAUGHT TAMPERING WITH THE PROPS BACKSTAGE IN THE THEATRE, THE STAGE-HAND GRAPPLED WITH JANUS... AND THEN, CONSUMED WITH HATE, HE SET FIRE TO SOME PARAFFIN!

KEEP YOUR SECRETS THEN, JANUS STARK! TAKE THEM WITH YOU TO THE GRAVE!



THE ROARING FLAMES FED HUNGRILY ON PAINT AND TINDER-DRY WOOD. ACRID SMOKE FILLED JANUS STARK'S NOSTRILS AS HIS SENSES EBBED BACK...

WHAT...? BY THE POWERS! THE THEATRE'S ABLAZE!

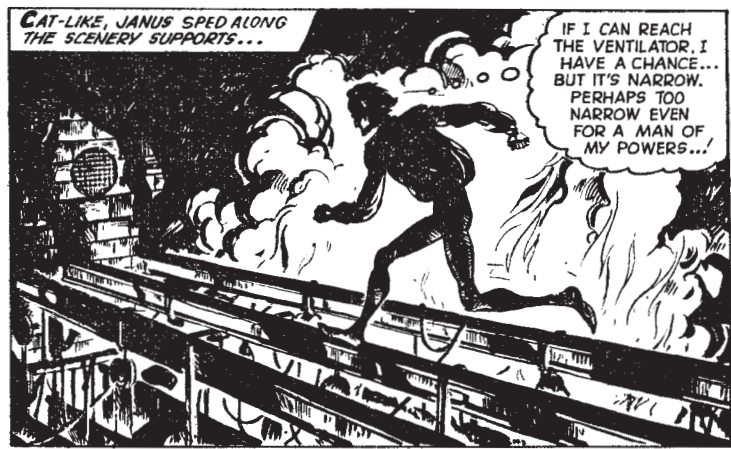


THERE WAS NO WAY THROUGH THE FIRE. JANUS COULD ONLY RETREAT TO THE STAGE...

MY ONLY HOPE LIES ABOVE ME! A RACE... AND MAY DEATH BE THE LOSER!



HOT METAL SEARED HIS HANDS AS HE RACED UPWARDS...



CAT-LIKE, JANUS SPED ALONG THE SCENERY SUPPORTS...

IF I CAN REACH THE VENTILATOR, I HAVE A CHANCE... BUT IT'S NARROW. PERHAPS TOO NARROW EVEN FOR A MAN OF MY POWERS...



FEVERISHLY, HE TORE OFF THE MESH GUARDING THE EIGHTEEN-INCH SHAFT...

GASPING WITH AGONY, JANUS FORCED HIS WAY INTO THE CRIPPLING TUBE, BONES AND MUSCLES COMPRESSED TO THEIR LIMIT...



AAGH! HOT AIR... MAKING IT LIKE A FURNACE...

FINALLY, ANOTHER GRILLE YIELDED TO HIS DESPERATE KICKS...



AN OFFICE! MAY THE POWERS GRANT THAT THE WINDOW LEADS TO FREEDOM!



BUT...

TRAPPED! NOTHING BUT A SHEER WALL.

MEANWHILE, AT THE FRONT OF THE THEATRE, A GREAT CROWD HAD GATHERED TO WATCH THE EFFORTS OF THE FIRE BRIGADE...



AMONG THEM WERE CALEB POUND AND HIS YOUNGER BROTHER BOB...

A MERRY BLAZE, YOUNG 'UN. MAKES A FELLER FEEL PROUD OF HIS WORK!

YOU - YOU MEAN... YOU STARTED IT?



YEAH! TO ROAST JANUS STARK! BUT YOU WON'T SHOP ME, BOB... NOT ME. NOT YOUR GOOD OLD BROTHER CALEB...

YOU STUPID FOOL! YOU'VE GONE TOO FAR THIS TIME!

SUDDENLY, A LIFETIME OF COVERING UP OF MAKING EXCUSES FOR THE BIG, CHILD-LIKE CALEB WAS OVER...



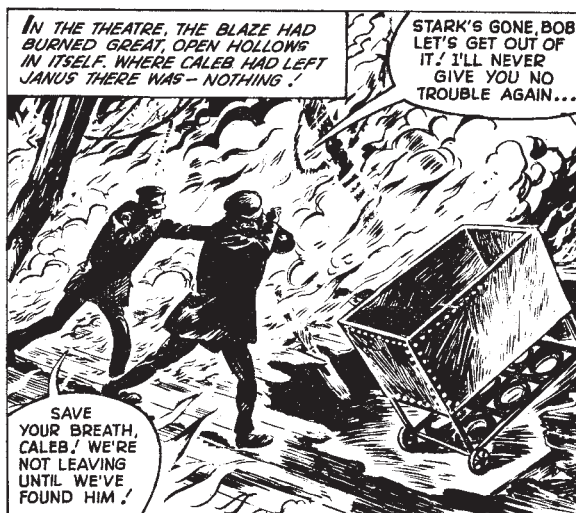
YOUR INFANTILE MIND'S PUT YOU ON THE ROAD TO THE GALLOW'S, CALEB... UNLESS YOU MOVE FAST!



'ERE! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

STAGE-DOOR

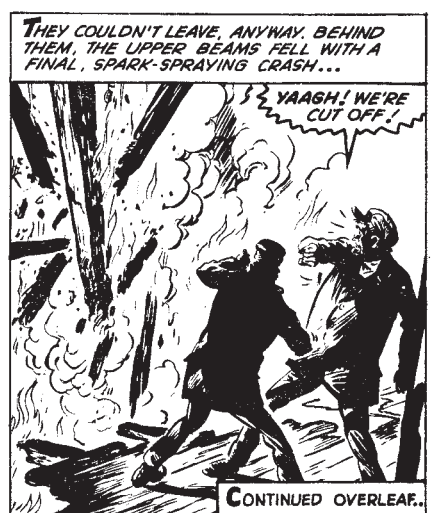
INSIDE! THERE'S A MAN ALIVE IN THERE, HEAVEN HELP HIM!



IN THE THEATRE, THE BLAZE HAD BURNED GREAT, OPEN HOLLOW'S IN ITSELF. WHERE CALEB HAD LEFT JANUS THERE WAS - NOTHING!

STARK'S GONE, BOB! LET'S GET OUT OF IT! I'LL NEVER GIVE YOU NO TROUBLE AGAIN...

SAVE YOUR BREATH, CALEB! WE'RE NOT LEAVING UNTIL WE'VE FOUND HIM!



YAAGH! WE'RE CUT OFF!

CONTINUED OVERLEAF..



THEN, FROM FAR ABOVE, A SHARP, STACCATO VOICE SOUNDED ABOVE THE CRACKLE OF SUNDERING TIMBERS...

YOU DOWN THERE! HOLD HARD - I'VE A COIL OF ROPE HERE TO HAUL YOU UP!

JANUS STARK! HE'S ALIVE!



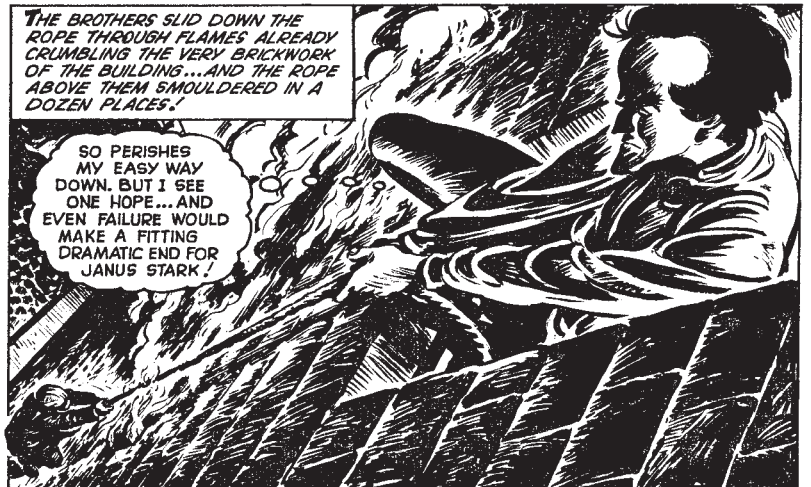
THE BRUTE STRENGTH OF HIS FANTASTIC MUSCLES HAULED THE MEN CLEAR, NO-ONE BUT JANUS STARK COULD HAVE MANAGED THE FEAT...

YOU! THE ONE WHO STARTED THIS! BUT AT LEAST YOU WERE MAN ENOUGH TO REPENT AND COME BACK FOR ME...

I-I WAS NOT MAN ENOUGH, JANUS STARK. MY BROTHER MADE ME..



THEN YOU ARE MAN ENOUGH TO ADMIT IT! COME-MAKE YOUR ESCAPE! I SHAN'T BE FAR BEHIND YOU...



THE BROTHERS SLID DOWN THE ROPE THROUGH FLAMES ALREADY CRUMBLING THE VERY BRICKWORK OF THE BUILDING...AND THE ROPE ABOVE THEM SMOULDERED IN A DOZEN PLACES!

SO PERISHES MY EASY WAY DOWN. BUT I SEE ONE HOPE...AND EVEN FAILURE WOULD MAKE A FITTING DRAMATIC END FOR JANUS STARK!

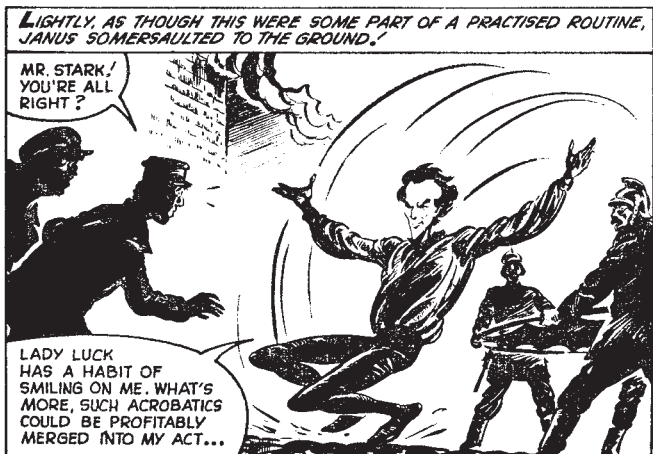


IT WAS FORTY FEET TO THE GROUND... AND THE SHEET STRETCHED TAUT BETWEEN THE FIREMEN!

HA! BUT THERE'S A POOR AUDIENCE BELOW...



EVERY MUSCLE IN JANUS STARK'S BODY CONTRACTED LIKE RUBBER...HIS FEET HIT THE SHEET AND THE WHOLE SHOCK WAS CONTAINED WITHIN HIS AMAZING FRAME...



LIGHTLY, AS THOUGH THIS WERE SOME PART OF A PRACTISED ROUTINE, JANUS SOMERSAULTED TO THE GROUND!

MR. STARK! YOU'RE ALL RIGHT?

LADY LUCK HAS A HABIT OF SMILING ON ME. WHAT'S MORE, SUCH ACROBATICS COULD BE PROFITABLY MERGED INTO MY ACT...



I-I MISJUDGED YOU, MR. STARK. I'M GOING TO CONFESS TO THE FIRE I STARTED, AND WHEN I'VE SERVED MY SENTENCE, I'LL TRY TO BE AS GREAT A MAN AS YOU...

WELL SAID. I SHALL BE WAITING TO CONGRATULATE YOU. A MAN MAY ESCAPE FROM MANY THINGS...BUT SELDOM FROM HIMSELF!

YOU CAN READ THE START OF ANOTHER JANUS STARK ADVENTURE NEXT WEEK!

THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES OF

JANUS STARK

A THICK FOG LAY OVER THE DOCKLAND OF VICTORIAN LONDON, AND IN AN AREA OF TALL, DECAYING HOUSES, ONLY ONE PERSON MOVED THROUGH THE DRIPPING STREETS. HIS NAME WAS JANUS STARK... FAMOUS ESCAPIST, MASTER ILLUSIONIST, AND - SOME SAID - A MAN WHOSE POWERS BORDERED ON THE UNCANNY!



TWO DAYS BEFORE, JANUS HAD RECEIVED A LETTER FROM HIS OLDEST AND MOST TRUSTED FRIEND, BLIND LARGO!

THIS SAYS HE IS LYING DESPERATELY ILL IN LONDON. HE WANTS ME TO GO TO HIM - IMMEDIATELY!



JANUS TRAVELLED SOUTH AT ONCE, REMEMBERING HOW LARGO HAD TAUGHT HIM ALL THE SECRETS OF THOSE WHO HAD TO STEAL TO SURVIVE...

THAT'S IT, ME LAD... STROKE THE DIAL! LISTEN AN' FEEL FOR THE CLICK O' THEM TUMBLERS...

YEARS LATER, JANUS HAD BECOME FAMOUS AS AN ESCAPIST, AND THEIR WAYS HAD PARTED, BUT NOW...

THIS IS THE HOUSE, ALL RIGHT. LARGO'S LETTER SAID HE WAS LYING SICK IN THE ROOMS OF A FRIEND...

CASUALLY, STARK PUSHED OPEN THE DOOR, AND SUDDENLY...

NOW, BARNEY... STRIKE HIM DOWN!

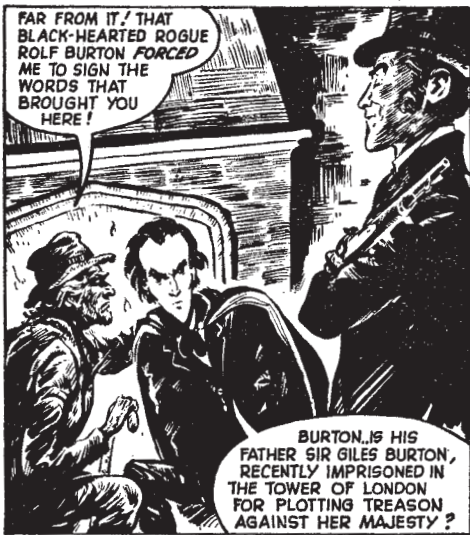
CLUMP!

IT WAS HALF AN HOUR BEFORE JANUS RECOVERED CONSCIOUSNESS... TO FEEL A Gnarled, familiar hand TOUCHING HIS FACE!

SO YOU FELL FOR IT, EH, LAD? I WAS HOPIN' YOU'D SMELL A RAT AN' STEER CLEAR!

YOU - YOU MEAN THE LETTER WAS A TRICK, LARGO? YOU'RE NOT ILL AT ALL?





FAR FROM IT! THAT BLACK-HEARTED ROGUE ROLF BURTON FORCED ME TO SIGN THE WORDS THAT BROUGHT YOU HERE!

BURTON IS HIS FATHER SIR GILES BURTON, RECENTLY IMPRISONED IN THE TOWER OF LONDON FOR PLOTTING TREASON AGAINST HER MAJESTY?



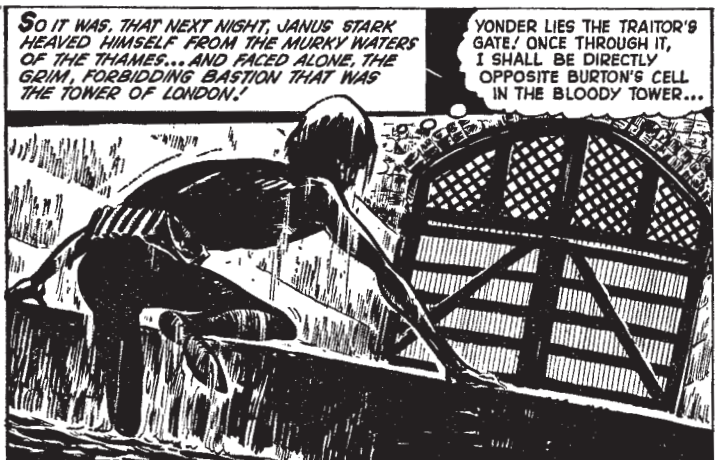
CORRECT, STARK! BUT HE WILL NOT BE IMPRISONED MUCH LONGER, BECAUSE YOU ARE GOING TO BREAK IN AND FREE HIM!

NOT I, SIR! YOUR FATHER DESERVES TO LANGUISH IN JAIL FOR SUCH A CRIME AS TREASON. BESIDES, NO MAN ALIVE COULD FREE HIM FROM THE TOWER!



NO MAN EXCEPT YOU, STARK! SUCCEED, AND YOU BOTH GO FREE. FAIL... AND LARGO DIES!

I SEE I HAVE NO CHOICE, YOU FIEND! JUST GIVE ME TWENTY-FOUR HOURS TO LAY MY PLANS...



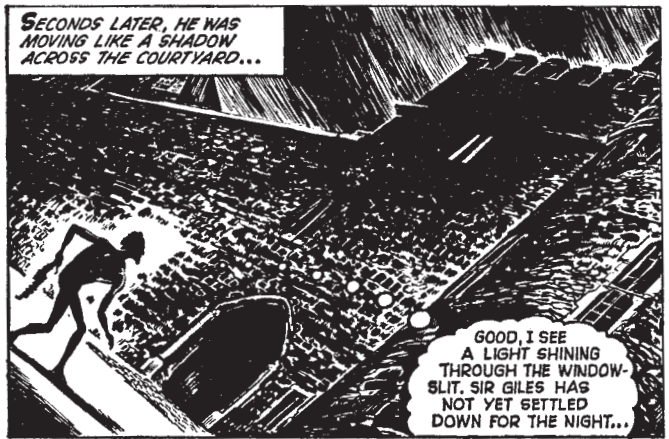
SO IT WAS, THAT NEXT NIGHT, JANUS STARK HEAVED HIMSELF FROM THE MURKY WATERS OF THE THAMES... AND FACED ALONE, THE GEM, FORBIDDING BASTION THAT WAS THE TOWER OF LONDON!

YONDER LIES THE TRAITOR'S GATE! ONCE THROUGH IT, I SHALL BE DIRECTLY OPPOSITE BURTON'S CELL IN THE BLOODY TOWER...



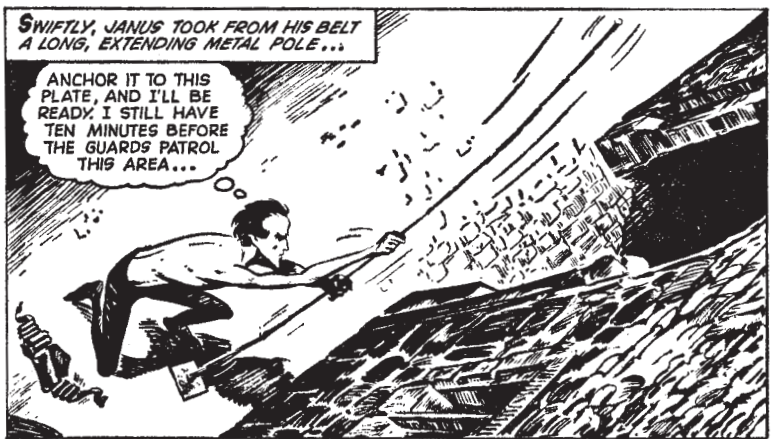
LONG BEFORE, JANUS HAD LEARNED HOW TO CONTROL THE RUBBER-LIKE QUALITY OF HIS BONES... AND NOW HE USED THAT GIFT!

UUU-AAA-OOH! A-ALMOST THERE!



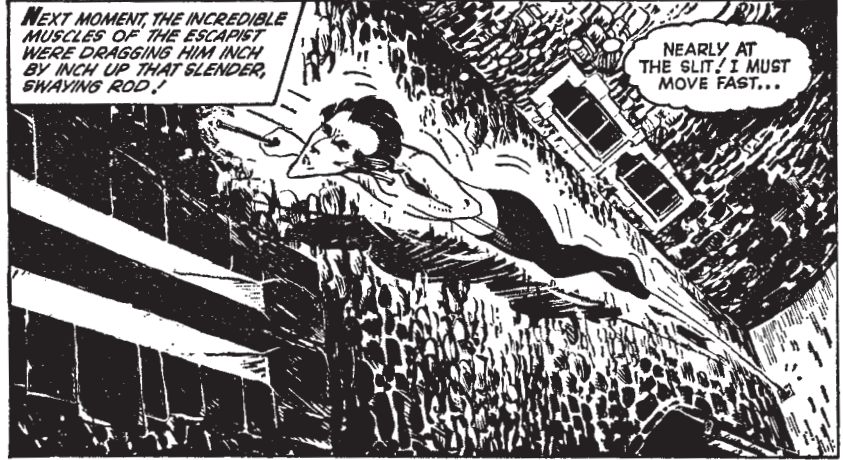
SECONDS LATER, HE WAS MOVING LIKE A SHADOW ACROSS THE COURTYARD...

GOOD, I SEE A LIGHT SHINING THROUGH THE WINDOW-SLIT. SIR GILES HAS NOT YET SETTLED DOWN FOR THE NIGHT...



SWIFTLY, JANUS TOOK FROM HIS BELT A LONG, EXTENDING METAL POLE...

ANCHOR IT TO THIS PLATE, AND I'LL BE READY. I STILL HAVE TEN MINUTES BEFORE THE GUARDS PATROL THIS AREA...



NEXT MOMENT, THE INCREDIBLE MUSCLES OF THE ESCAPIST WERE DRAGGING HIM INCH BY INCH UP THAT SLENDER, SWAYING ROD!

NEARLY AT THE SLIT! I MUST MOVE FAST...



QUICKLY, JANUS GRABBED THE APERTURE AND DISCONNECTED HIS POLE. THEN HE WAS SLIDING INTO THE BLOODY TOWER ITSELF!

UUUUUHH!

B-BY THE POWERS, WHAT? WHO ARE YOU?

CONTINUED OVERLEAF



THE COLD, BLACK EYES OF SIR GILES BURTON STARED IN DISBELIEF...

NAME'S MATTER, LITTLE SIR GILES. SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT I HAVE BEEN SENT BY YOUR SON ROLF TO RELEASE YOU!

'PON MY WORD, THIS IS GREAT NEWS INDEED! I KNEW ROLF WOULD NOT ALLOW ME TO ROT IN THIS ACCURSED DUNGEON!



BUT JANUS WASN'T EVEN LISTENING. ALREADY, TWO LONG, SENSITIVE FINGERS WERE PROBING THROUGH THE LOCK ON THE CELL DOOR...

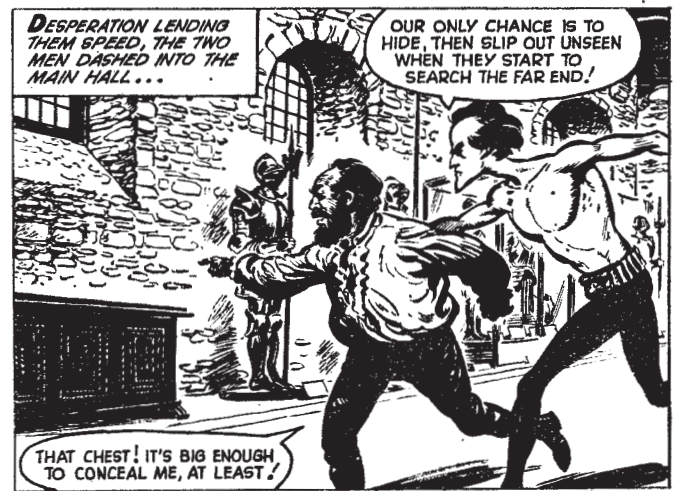
THE KEYS HANG FROM A NAIL ON THE WALL. KNOCK THEM OFF AND I CAN CATCH THEM WITH MY OTHER HAND STUCK UNDER THE GAP IN THE DOOR!



THE KEYS FELL... AND IT WAS A MOMENT'S WORK TO UNLOCK THE DOOR. BUT THEN, AS THEY MADE THEIR GETAWAY TO THE MAIN COURTYARD...

ZOUNDS... LOOK THERE! IT'S SIR GILES - HE ESCAPES!

YEOMAN WARDERS - WE'VE BEEN SPOTTED, INTO THE ARMOURY, SIR GILES - HURRY!



DESPERATION LENDING THEM SPEED, THE TWO MEN DASHED INTO THE MAIN HALL...

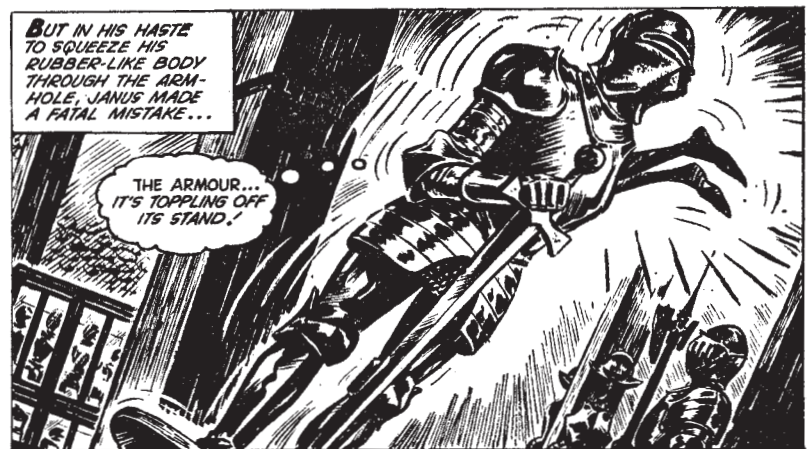
OUR ONLY CHANCE IS TO HIDE, THEN SLIP OUT UNSEEN WHEN THEY START TO SEARCH THE FAR END!

THAT CHEST! IT'S BIG ENOUGH TO CONCEAL ME, AT LEAST!



AS SIR GILES CLAMBERED IN, JANUS LOOKED AROUND FRANTICALLY...

THEY'LL BE HERE ANY SECOND. THAT SUIT OF ARMOUR IS MY ONLY HOPE...



BUT IN HIS HASTE TO SQUEEZE HIS RUBBER-LIKE BODY THROUGH THE ARM-HOLE, JANUS MADE A FATAL MISTAKE...

THE ARMOUR... IT'S TOPPLING OFF ITS STAND!



CRASH!

OVER THERE, BY THUNDER! SOMEONE'S IN THE SUIT!

THEN STAND BACK! IF IT'S SIR GILES, HE MAY BE ARMED... AND THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO MAKE SURE...



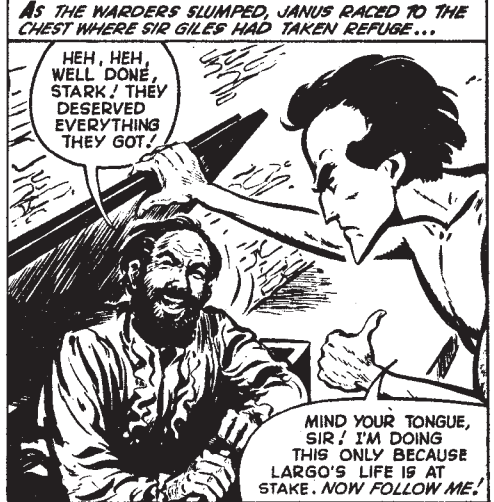
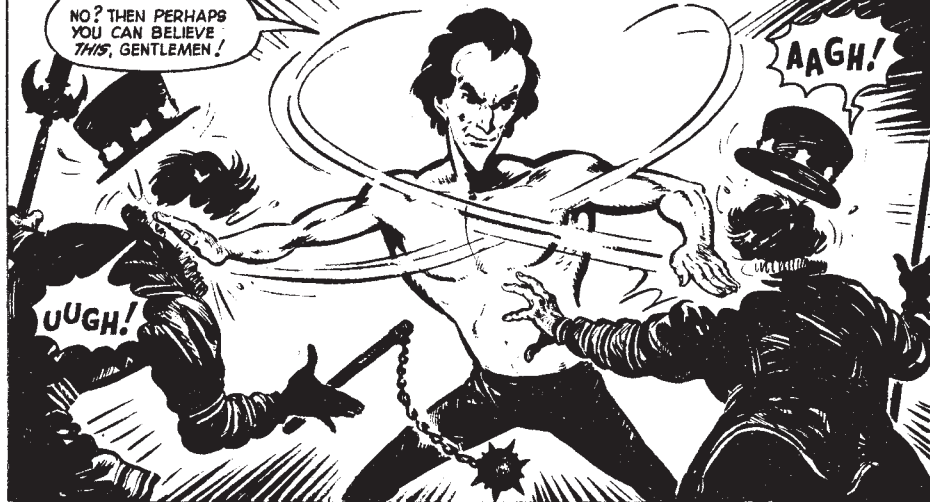
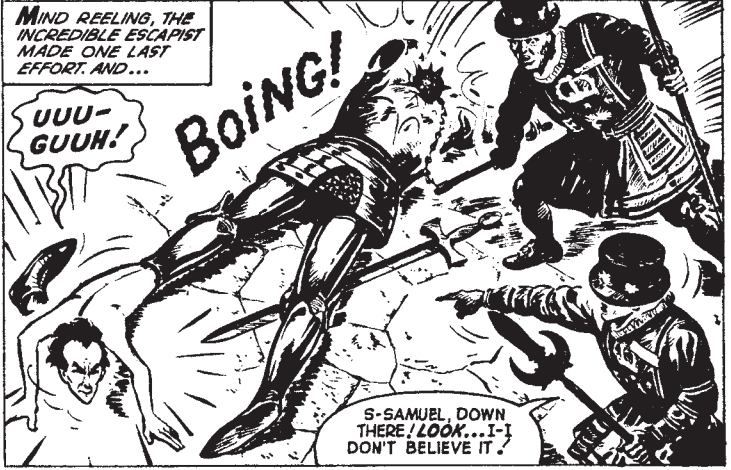
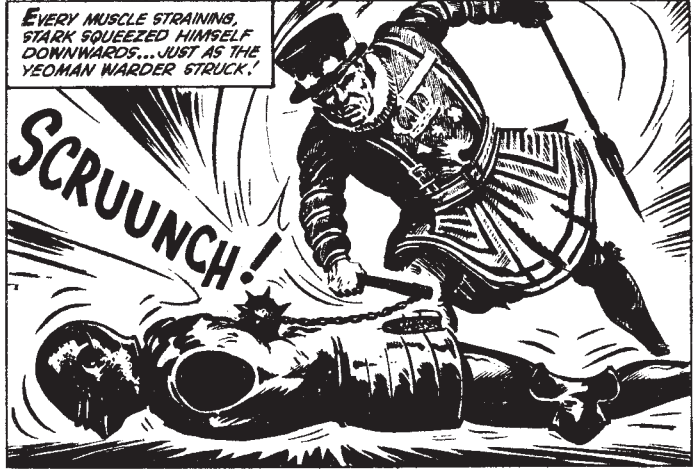
AND THAT'S BY GETTING HIM, BEFORE HE GETS US!

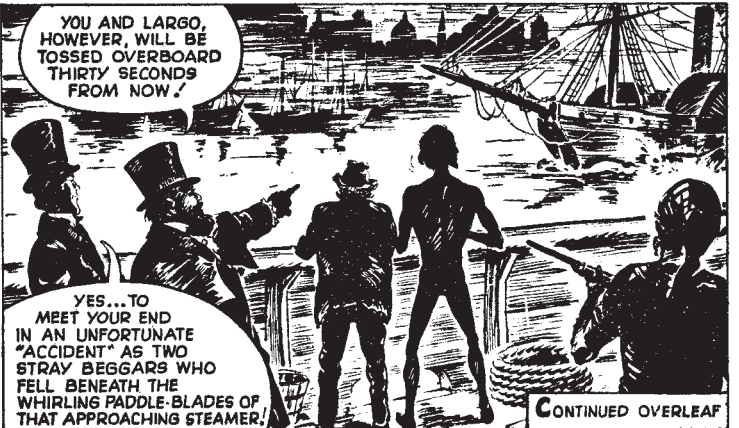
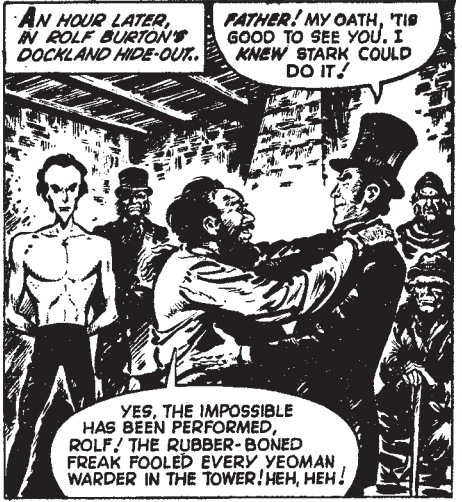
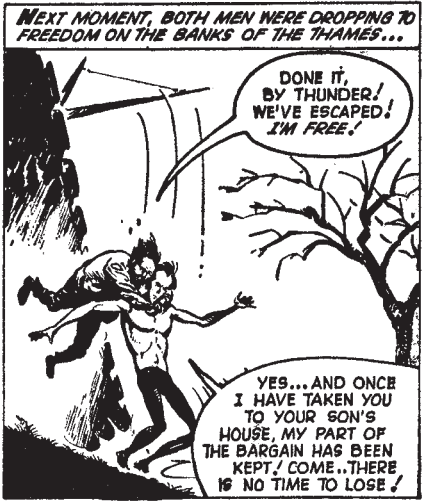
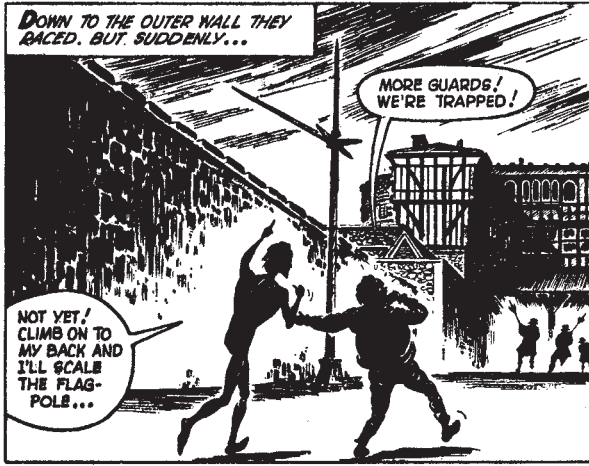
CAN JANUS STARK WRIGGLE HIS WAY OUT OF THIS TIGHT SITUATION? FIND OUT IN THE NEXT GRIPPING EPISODE!

THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES OF

JANUS STARK

WITH HIS OLD FRIEND BLIND LARGO HELD AS A HOSTAGE, MASTER ESCAPIST JANUS STARK WAS FORCED BY A NOBLEMAN CALLED ROLF BURTON TO BREAK INTO THE TOWER OF LONDON AND RESCUE SIR GILES BURTON, HIS FATHER, WHO HAD BEEN IMPRISONED FOR TREASON. ALL WENT WELL UNTIL JANUS AND SIR GILES WERE SPOTTED CROSSING THE MAIN COURTYARD AND CHASED INTO AN ARMOURY. AND WHEN JANUS TRIED TO HIDE IN A SUIT OF ARMOUR, IT TOPPLED OVER...

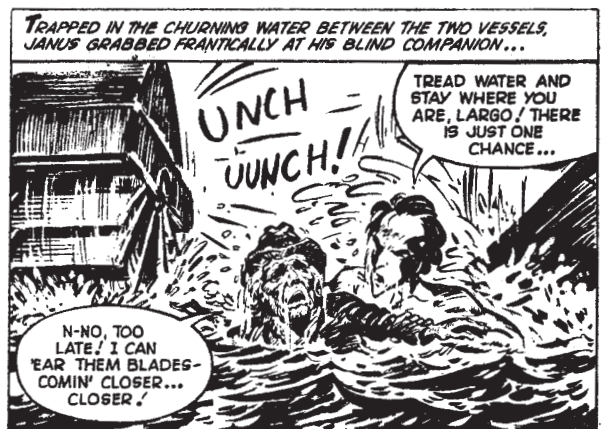






WORRIED, JANUS AND LARGO FELT THEMSELVES LIFTED... AND DROPPED OVERBOARD!

SPAASH! WHRRRR... UUNCH UUNCH! UUNCH!

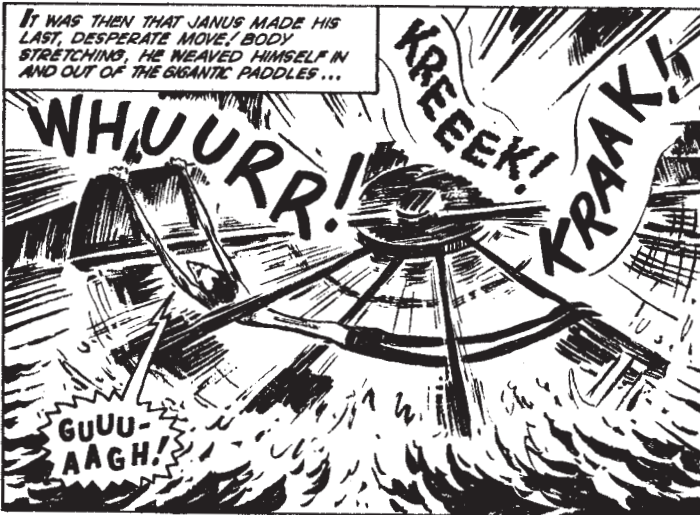


TRAPPED IN THE CHURNING WATER BETWEEN THE TWO VESSELS, JANUS GRABBED FRANTICALLY AT HIS BLIND COMPANION...

UNCH UUNCH!

TREAD WATER AND STAY WHERE YOU ARE, LARGO! THERE IS JUST ONE CHANCE...

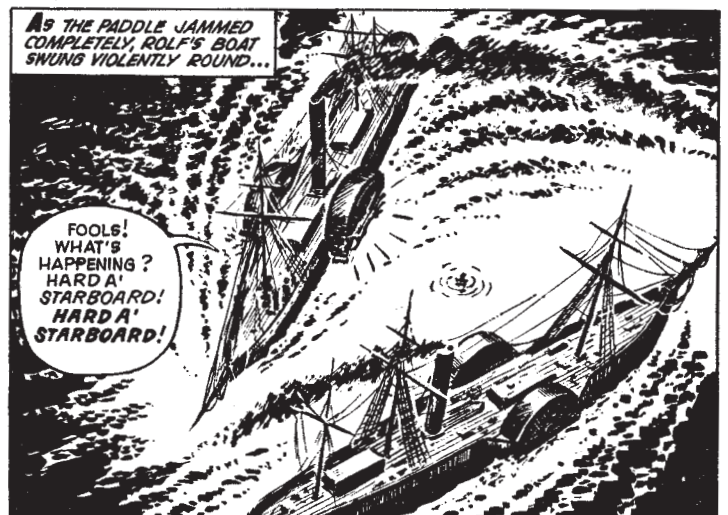
N-NO, TOO LATE! I CAN 'EAR THEM BLADES-COMIN' CLOSER... CLOSER!



IT WAS THEN THAT JANUS MADE HIS LAST, DESPERATE MOVE! BODY STRETCHING, HE WEAVED HIMSELF IN AND OUT OF THE GIGANTIC PADDLES...

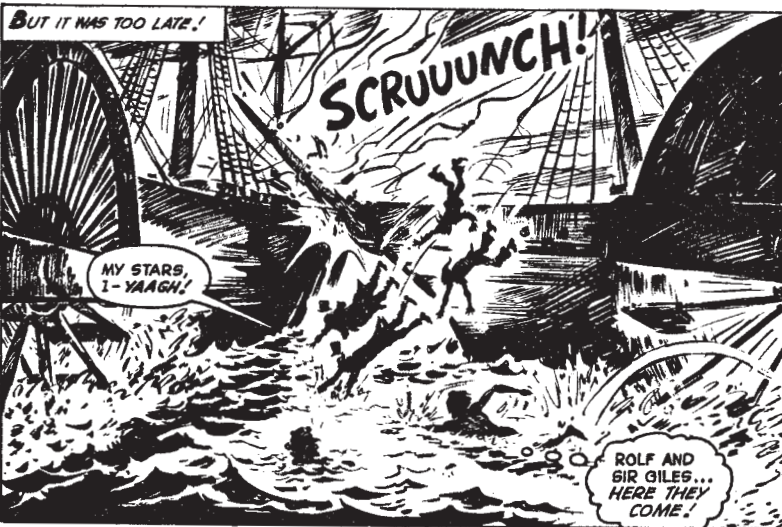
WHUURR! KREEK! KRAAK!

GUU-AAGH!



AS THE PADDLE JAMMED COMPLETELY, ROLF'S BOAT SWUNG VIOLENTLY ROUND...

FOOLS! WHAT'S HAPPENING? HARD A' STARBOARD! HARD A' STARBOARD!



BUT IT WAS TOO LATE!

SCRUUUNCH!

MY STARS, I-YAAGH!

ROLF AND SIR GILES... HERE THEY COME!



NEXT MOMENT, JANUS STARK WAS TAKING HIS JUST REVENGE!

CRACK!

WELL DONE, JANUS, LAD! BLIND I MAY BE... BUT THE CRACK O' VILLAINOUS SKULLS IS A SOUND I'D KNOW ANYWHERE!



MINUTES LATER, JANUS AND LARGO HAD DRAGGED THEIR DAZED PRISONERS ON TO A DESERTED WHARF...

BOUND AND HELPLESS! ALL THAT REMAINS NOW, LAD, IS TO TELL THE CRUSHERS WHERE TO PICK 'EM UP. THIS EVIL NIGHT'S WORK IS OVER...

YES, OLD FRIEND... OVER! NOW I MUST BID YOU FAREWELL...



BUT REMEMBER, LARGO... IF THOSE NIMBLE, SAFE-CRACKIN' FINGERS OF YOURS EVER LAND YOU IN THE TOWER O' LONDON, JUST SEND FOR JANUS STARK TO GET YOU OUT!

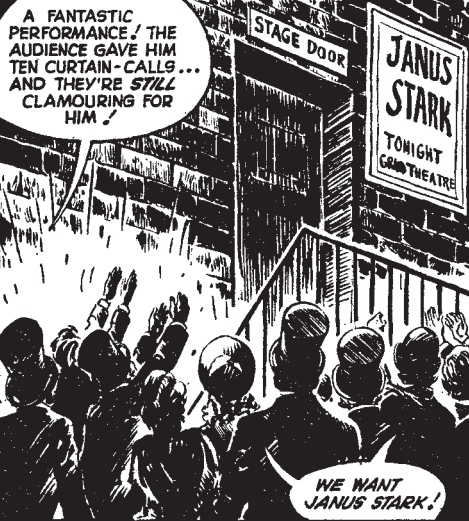
HEH, HEH! THAT I WILL, LAD... THAT I WILL!

THERE WILL BE ANOTHER THRILLING ADVENTURE FEATURING THE PRINCE OF ESCAPERS IN NEXT WEEK'S COPY OF 'SMASH!'

THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES OF

JANUS STARK

INSPECTOR FROME OF SCOTLAND YARD KEPT A SUSPICIOUS EYE ON THE MYSTERIOUS JANUS STARK, ESCAPOLOGIST EXTRAORDINARY AND MASTER-ILLUSIONIST OF THE VICTORIAN ERA. AND IT WAS AS WELL HE DID SO, FOR MANY A WRONGDOER WOULD HAVE ESCAPED JUSTICE BUT FOR THE UNCANNY POWERS OF THE MAN WHO LAUGHED AT LOCKS...



A FANTASTIC PERFORMANCE! THE AUDIENCE GAVE HIM TEN CURTAIN-CALLS... AND THEY'RE STILL CLAMOURING FOR HIM!

WE WANT JANUS STARK!



BUT THERE WERE GRIM-FACED MEN IN UNIFORM AMONG THE CROWD OUTSIDE THE STAGE DOOR...

WE WANT JANUS STARK AS WELL... EH, MEN?

AVE, INSPECTOR... UNDER LOCK AND KEY!

THERE HE IS! HOORAH!



ARREST HIM, MEN!

SO! WHAT AM I ACCUSED OF, INSPECTOR?



INSPECTOR FROME HAD GOOD REASON TO SUSPECT JANUS STARK...

TIE HIM SECURELY!

IN EVERY TOWN YOU'VE VISITED ON YOUR RECENT TOUR, STARK, A DARING ROBBERY HAS BEEN COMMITTED. ONLY A MAN WITH YOUR FANTASTIC TALENTS COULD HAVE CARRIED OUT THOSE CRIMES!

HAW, HAW! LET'S SEE YOU DO YOUR ACT NOW, MAESTRO!



JANUS STARK BRACED THE MUSCLES IN HIS EXTRAORDINARY BODY...

YOU WISH FOR AN ENCORE, MY FRIENDS?

THE ROPES ARE JUST DROPPING OFF HIM!

INCREDIBLE!



A CAT-LIKE LEAP CARRIED THE ESCAPOLOGIST TO A GRATING IN THE PAVEMENT...

...PRESTO!

DON'T JUST STAND THERE GAPING, YOU FOOLS!

HE - HE'S NOT HUMAN!



THEN...

UNTIL I HAVE CLEARED MY NAME, INSPECTOR... I MUST GO UNDERGROUND!

HE'S SQUEEZING THROUGH THE BARS OF THAT GRATING!

HOW CAN YOU HOLD A BLOKE LIKE THAT, INSPECTOR?

A SHORT TIME LATER, IN THE COBWEB OF VICTORIAN ALLEYWAYS, A BLIND MAN WAS STANDING ON A CORNER...

AHA! THAT FOOTFALL LIKE THE RUSTLING OF A LEAF... 'TIS YOU, JANUS STARK!

YOUR EARS ARE SHARPER THAN MOST MEN'S EYES, LARGO. CAN YOU ALSO TELL THAT I AM IN TROUBLE?

LARGO HAD BEEN STARK'S EARLIEST PROTECTOR AND TUTOR...

AYE, MY SON! OLD LARGO KNOWS ABOUT THOSE ROBBERIES IN EACH OF THE TOWNS YOU VISITED ON YOUR TOUR... AND HE KNOWS WHO ELSE WAS A-TOURING IN THE SAME TOWNS, AT THE SAME TIME...

SOMEONE ELSE? BUT ACCORDING TO FROME, HE MUST HAVE TALENTS AS FANTASTIC AS MINE TO HAVE CARRIED OUT THOSE CRIMES!

THE MAN I'M A-THINKING OF HIRES OTHER MEN'S TALENTS, MY SON! I SEE THAT POSTER ON THE WALL...

SPENGLER'S CIRCUS!
PRESENTS:
CARLOS
RING OF KNIFE THROWER
THE DIABOLOS
TIGHT-ROPE WALKERS
MANUEL
THE JUGGLER
AND MANY OTHERS!

A CIRCUS! WHY, YES... JULES SPENGLER EMPLOYS A WHOLE RING-FULL OF ODD TALENTS. PERHAPS IT IS TIME I DID MY ACT IN THE BIG TOP!

SOON AFTERWARDS, JANUS STARK ENTERED THE CIRCUS GROUNDS...

SURE I'VE HEARD OF YOU, STARK... BUT I DOUBT IF YOU'RE AS GOOD AS THEY SAY!

LET US TALK IT OVER IN YOUR CARAVAN, SPENGLER! I BELIEVE YOU WOULD FIND MY TALENTS INVALUABLE!

STARK FOLLOWED THE CIRCUS OWNER INTO HIS CARAVAN...

I'VE GOT A LOAD OF TALENT IN MY CIRCUS, STARK! MY ARTISTES BRING ME IN A PRETTY PENNY...

I'M SURE THEY DO...

A MOMENT LATER...

BUT I THINK I COULD GIVE THEM A HAND, DON'T YOU?

STRIKE A LIGHT! MY WALLET.. WATCH... EVEN MY CUFF-LINKS... HE'S DIPPED THE LOT WITHOUT ME FEELING A THING! STARK - YOU'RE HIRED!

THE FOLLOWING NIGHT, THE MASTER-ESCAPOLOGIST MADE HIS FIRST APPEARANCE IN THE BIG TOP...

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN-THE AMAZING JANUS STARK WILL NOW ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE, TIED HAND AND FOOT, FROM A BARREL SUSPENDED IN MID-AIR!

IMPOSSIBLE!

HE'S GOT A HOPE!

BUT NOTHING WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR JANUS STARK!

HE'S CRACKING ONE OF THE STAVES WITH HIS FINGERS!

LOOK! HIS ARM'S SNAKING OUT OF THE BUNGHOLE!

IT'S UNCANNY!

AS STARK EMERGED FROM THE BARREL, HE HEARD THE WHISPER HE HAD BEEN WAITING FOR...

IF YOU WANT TO EARN YOURSELF SOME REAL MONEY, STARK, REPORT TO ME AFTER THE SHOW...

HOORAH!

HE'S DONE IT! HE'S FREE!

Continued overleaf...

LATER, OUTSIDE JULES SPENGLER'S CARAVAN...

TONIGHT WE SHALL VISIT THE OFFICES OF ONE SIMOR KEMPSKI, DIAMOND MERCHANT! IT'S LOCATED ON THE TOP FLOOR OF AN ISOLATED WAREHOUSE... AND REPUTED TO BE BURGLAR-PROOF!

H'MM! THESE CIRCUS STARS OF SPENGLER'S ARE NO ORDINARY BURGLARS, LARGO'S HUNCH WAS RIGHT!

THE CIRCUS OWNER AND HIS TROUPE SALLIED OUT INTO SLEEPING LONDON...

THERE IS THE DIAMOND MERCHANT'S WAREHOUSE, STARK... ISOLATED..PATROLLED BY POLICEMEN, YOU WONDER HOW WE ARE TO GAIN AN ENTRY, EH? WATCH...

VAMOS!

CARLOS IS THE DEADLIEST KNIFE-THROWER IN THE WORLD! HE JUST SUBSTITUTES A GRAPNEL FOR A KNIFE...

AS SOON AS THE LINE WAS SECURE, MORE OF SPENGLER'S TROUPE WENT INTO ACTION!

AND NOW, THE FABULOUS DIABOLOS, TIGHT-ROPE WALKERS SUPREME, WILL CARRY OUT THEIR PART OF THE OPERATION!

YOUR HENCHMEN CERTAINLY ARE TALENTED, SPENGLER! NO WONDER THE POLICE ARE BAFFLED!

AND WHEN THE ROPE-LADDERS HAD BEEN MADE FAST BETWEEN THE TWO BUILDINGS...

WE MAY HAVE NEED OF YOUR TALENTS, STARK, BEFORE THE NIGHT IS OUT!

HAVE NO FEAR, RINGMASTER..MY ACT WILL LEAVE YOU SPEECHLESS!

INSIDE THE WAREHOUSE...

WE HAVE LOCATED KEMPSKI'S OFFICE, PATRON... BUT THE SAFE INSIDE IT LOOKS IMPREGNABLE!

AHA! BUT NO LOCK CAN DEFY THE CUNNING FINGERS OF OUR NEWEST RECRUIT! FORWARD, JANUS STARK!

WITHIN TWO MINUTES, THE SAFE HAD SUCCUMBED TO THE MAESTRO'S GENIUS!

BRAVISSIMO!

SILENCE, YOU FOOLS! WE DO NOT WISH THE POLICE TO ATTEND THIS SPECIAL PERFORMANCE OF OURS!

JANUS STARK CONTINUED TO PLAY HIS DANGEROUS DOUBLE-GAME...

PASS THE DIAMONDS TO ME, STARK!

WHEN HE HAS TAKEN THEM BACK TO THE CIRCUS...I WILL SPRING MY TRAP, AND LET THE POLICE FIND THEM IN HIS GREEDY HANDS!

BUT SUDDENLY...

SEIZE THE VILLAINS, MEN!

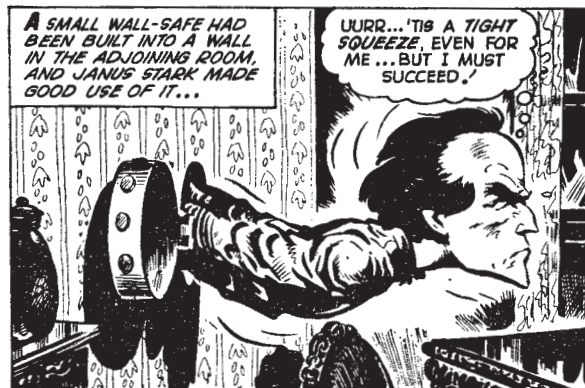
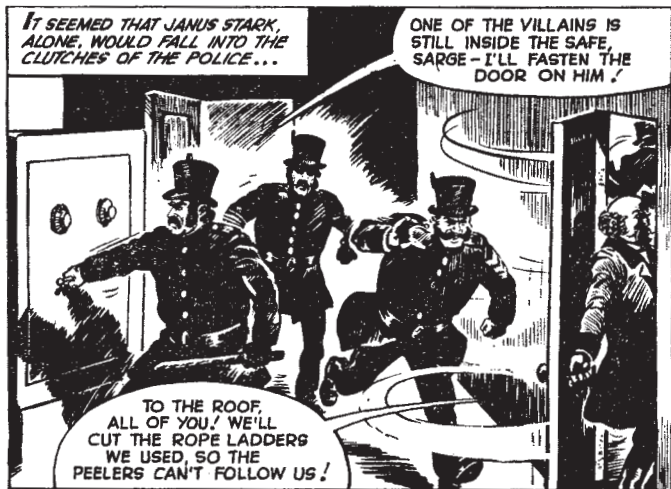
SAPRISTI!

THE PEELERS!

CAUGHT IN THE ACT! DOES THIS MEAN THAT JANUS STARK WILL BE BRANDED A CRIMINAL? READ ON NEXT WEEK!

THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES OF JANUS STARK

JANUS STARK, ESCAPOLOGIST EXTRAORDINARY OF THE VICTORIAN ERA, HAD BEEN ACCUSED BY INSPECTOR FROME OF SCOTLAND YARD OF COMMITTING SEVERAL ROBBERIES WHILE ON A THEATRE TOUR. IN AN EFFORT TO CLEAR HIS NAME, JANUS JOINED THE REAL CULPRITS, A TROUPE OF CIRCUS PERFORMERS RUN BY JULES SPENGLER, AND HELPED THEM TO ROB A DIAMOND WAREHOUSE. BUT NO SOONER HAD HE BROKEN INTO THE SAFE, THAN THE POLICE ARRIVED... AND IN THE CONFUSION, JANUS WAS PUSHED INSIDE THE SAFE!





SAPRISTI! HE HAS RETURNED! IT IS A MIRACLE!

ONLY A SHADOW COULD HAVE ESCAPED FROM THAT LOCKED SAFE!

HMM... BUT I CAN THINK OF A MORE LIKELY EXPLANATION!



FOR ONCE, JANUS STARK HAD BEEN TOO CLEVER... AND THE CIRCUS OWNER'S SUDDEN ACTION TOOK HIM COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE!

THE POLICE MUST HAVE RELEASED STARK FROM THE SAFE... AND THEN PERSUADED HIM TO RETURN HERE AND FIND OUT ALL OUR PLANS BEFORE THEY ARREST US!

AAH!



LOCKED INSIDE THE CAGE WITH STARK WAS A HUNGER-MADDENED LION...

NO!

WE HAVE A SIMPLE WAY WITH INFORMERS, STARK... AND A SURE ONE... DEATH!



BUT NOW THE PRINCE OF ESCAPERS SUMMONED A POWERFUL NEW WEAPON TO HIS DEFENCE... HIS WEIRD HYPNOTIC GAZE!

DOWN, BRUTE!

HIS EYES BLAZE - AND THE LION CRINGES!



STARK SQUEEZED HIS STRANGELY-ELASTIC BODY THROUGH THE BARS OF THE CAGE...

DON'T STAND THERE WITH OPEN MOUTHS, YOU FOOLS... KILL HIM!

SI, PATRON... HE WILL NOT ESCAPE THE KNIVES OF CARLOS!



UHH! NOW I SHALL NEED TO PUT FORTH ALL MY POWERS... TO SURVIVE!



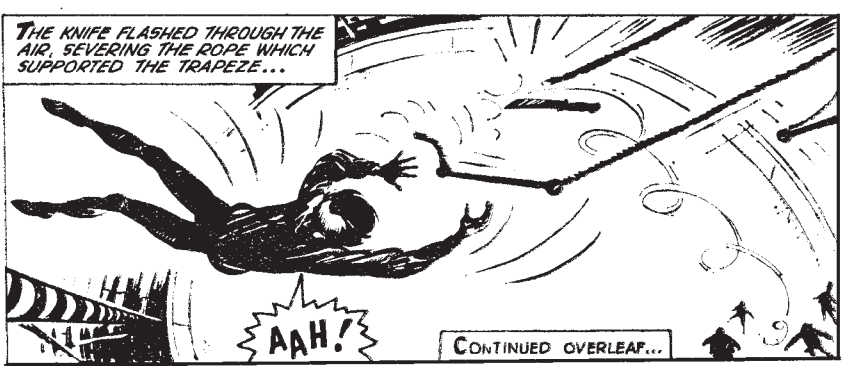
JANUS STARK CLIMBED TO THE TRAPEZE IN THE ROOF OF THE DESERTED BIG TOP...

QUICKLY! BEFORE HE SOARS OUT OF OUR REACH!

IT IS A LONG THROW, PATRON...



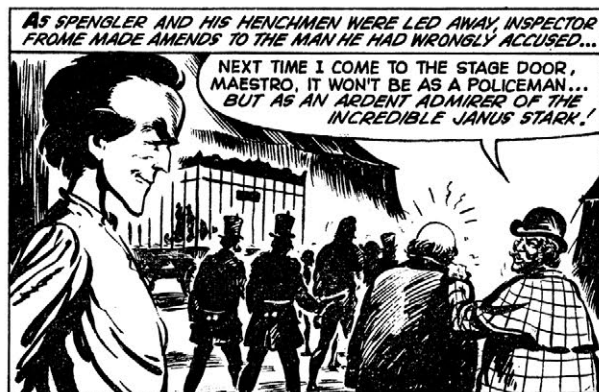
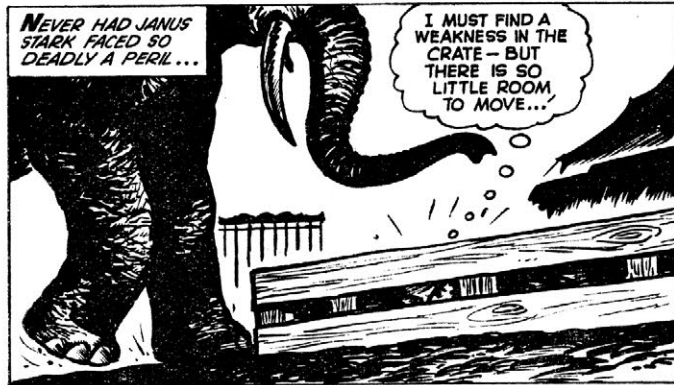
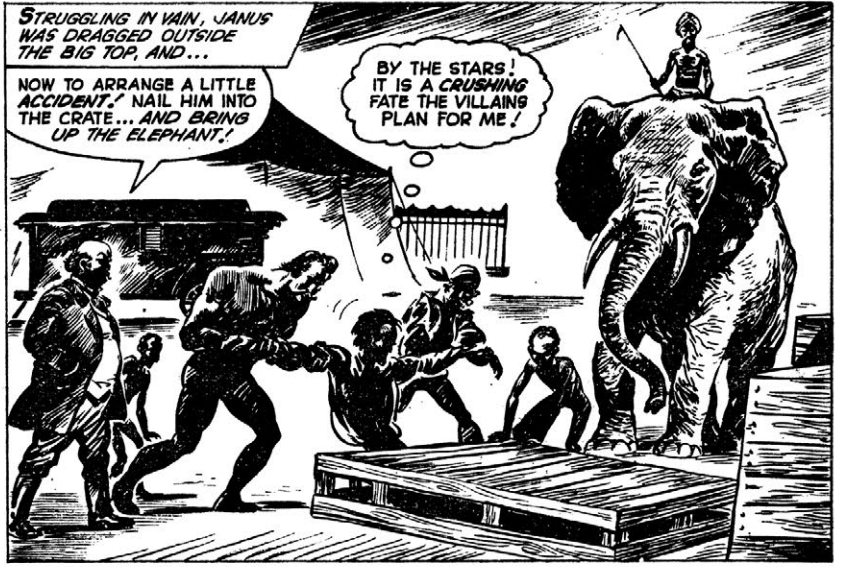
...BUT CARLOS NEVER MISSES!



THE KNIFE FLASHED THROUGH THE AIR, SEVERING THE ROPE WHICH SUPPORTED THE TRAPEZE...

AAH!

CONTINUED OVERLEAF...



YOU CAN READ ANOTHER EXCITING TALE OF THE INCREDIBLE JANUS STARK NEXT TIME!

MORE THRILLING TALES FROM THE TREASURY

TREASURY OF BRITISH COMICS



ALIENS FROM A FAR FLUNG PLANET TAKE OVER BRITAIN

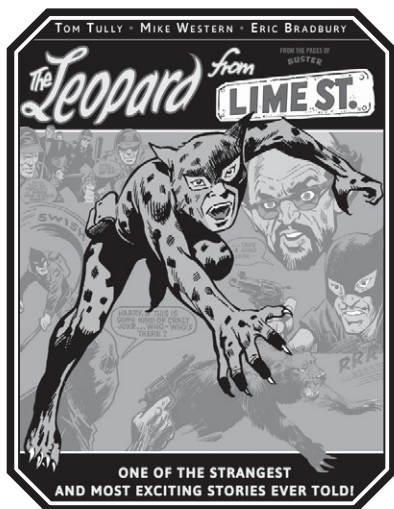
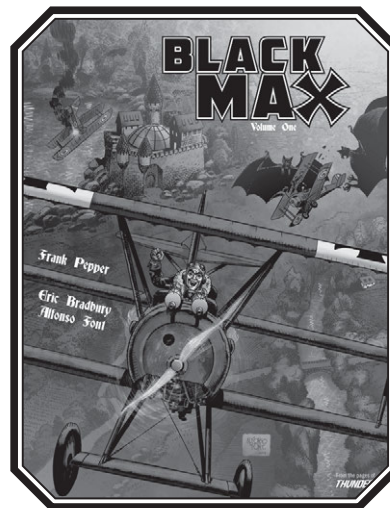
INVASION 1984!

John Wagner • Alan Grant • Eric Bradbury

WATCH OUT! THE SKIES ARE RULED BY THE GREAT BEAST

BLACK MAX!

Frank Pepper • Eric Bradbury • Alfonso Font

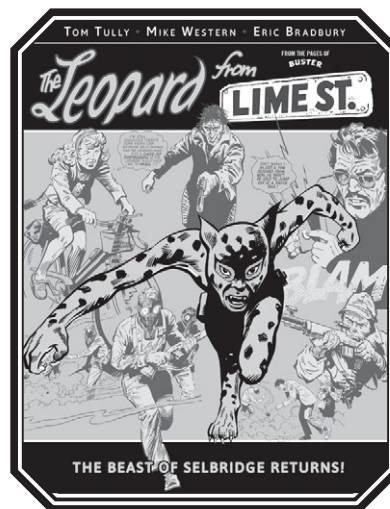


THE FELINE AVENGER WHO PREYS ON CRIME

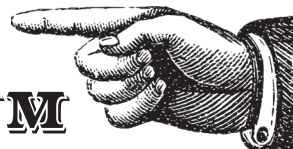
THE LEOPARD FROM LIME ST.!

Tom Tully • Mike Western • Eric Bradbury

ALL THESE AND MANY MORE ARE AVAILABLE NOW!



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TOM TULLY

Tom Tully is one of the most prolific writers ever to grace British comics. His diverse portfolio of work was produced over forty decades. Born in Glasgow, Tully entered the industry in the sixties when he began working for Fleetway. One of his earliest strips, *Heros the Spartan*, ran in the original **Eagle** and was illustrated by the great Frank Bellamy. He also wrote *Mytek the Mighty* (**Valiant & Vulcan**) and *The Steel Claw* (**Valiant & Vulcan**) in the same decade. The seventies saw Tully work on a variety of significant stories including *Adam Eterno* (**Thunder**), *Johnny Red* (**Battle**), *Harlem Heroes* (**2000 AD**), *The Leopard from Lime Street* (**Buster**) and *Roy of the Rovers* (**Tiger**), the strip he worked on longer than any other writer.

FRANCISCO SOLANO LÓPEZ

Francisco Solano López hailed from Argentina, but created many memorable and popular British comic book strips such as *Kelly's Eye* (**Knockout**), *Janus Stark* (**Smash!**), *Nipper* (*Score 'n' Roar*), *Pete's Pocket Army* (**Buster**) and *Master of the Marsh* (**Smash!**). He contributed art to *Adam Eterno* (**Thunder**) and many Picture Library stories for Fleetway (including a Battler Britton story for **Thriller Picture Library**). In Argentina he was known for *Ernie Pike* (with Hugo Pratt and José Muñoz), and most famously *The Eternaut* (written by Héctor Germán Oesterheld). He died in 2011.





JANUS STARK

MASTER OF ILLUSION
SON OF THE UNKNOWN!

TREASURY
OF BRITISH
COMICS

REBELLION