

SPACE ADVENTURES

The Uncharted PLANET

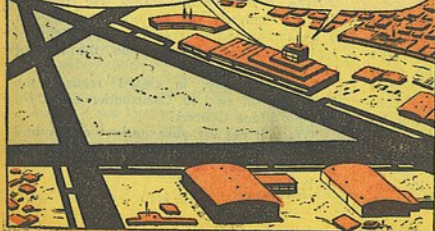
EVERYONE HAS, AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER, CONSIDERED THE FLIGHT OF THE UNFORTUNATE CASTAWAY ON AN UNINHABITED ISLAND, OR THE ONES WHO BECAME STRANDED ON THE BURNING DESERT, OR IN THE FROZEN WASTES OF THE NORTH. BUT HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED THE POSSIBILITY OF BEING ALONE... ON A DESOLATE, UNCHARTED PLANET?



ART
CAPPELO

HERE'S THE LIST OF DELINQUENT RE-LICENSES, COMMISSIONER. MOST OF THEM ARE BETWEEN PLANETS, AND WILL BE IN FOR LICENSE RENEWAL WITHIN A MONTH... BUT THIS ONE ROCKET HAS BEEN OUT FOR THIRTY-SEVEN MONTHS!

THIRTY-SEVEN MONTHS... HMM, LICENSED FOR TWO YEARS... THIRTEEN MONTHS DELINQUENT. LET'S SEE, HERE... LICENSE ISSUED TO KENNETH BAKER, PILOT, AND ROBERT LARKIN, CO-PILOT... NUMBER FA-702-R.



THEY DESCRIBE THEMSELVES HERE AS SPACE PROSPECTORS. WELL ... IT'S POSSIBLE THEY COULD STAY OUT THAT LONG, BUT I'M MORE INCLINED TO BELIEVE THEY'VE PROBABLY CRACKED UP TRYING TO LAND ON SOME OUT OF THE WAY ASTEROID OR PLANETOID. THESE PROSPECTORS WILL LAND ANYWHERE TO LOOK FOR PRECIOUS GEMS OR METAL DEPOSITS...



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LISTEN, KEN, I KNOW IT'S A FIFTY-FIFTY PROPOSITION, AND WE AGREED TO GO THE LIMIT THIS TRIP. BUT WE'VE BEEN AWAY OVER THREE YEARS AND WE HAVEN'T FOUND A THING!

AND YOU WANT TO CALL IT A DAY AND HEAD FOR EARTH. IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE LEADING UP TO, BOB?



YES! I'VE HAD ENOUGH.

WELL, WE HAVEN'T A CENT BETWEEN US, YOU KNOW. WE STAKED EVERYTHING ON THIS TRIP. WE'LL HAVE TO SELL THE SHIP TO PAY OFF THE BILLS... THAT MEANS NO MORE PROSPECTING FOR US!



WE'LL NEVER FLY OUR OWN SHIP AGAIN, ANYWAY... WE'RE SO LONG OVERDUE ON RE-LICENSE FEES WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO PAY THEM OFF!

OKAY, BOB, YOU WIN. TO TELL THE TRUTH, I'M KIND OF... WHAT'S THAT NOISE... THE RADAR PROBE?

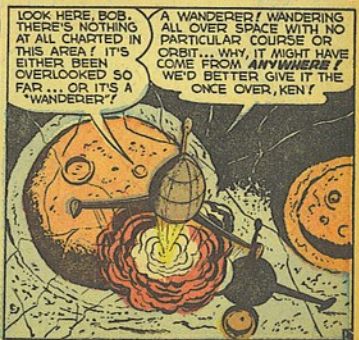


HEY... IT'S A BIG ONE! BIGGER THAN AN ASTEROID...

SMALL PLANET, PROBABLY. GET A FIX ON HER WHILE I GET OUT THE CHARTS FOR THIS REGION!



IT FIGURES OUT TO BE ABOUT SEVENTY-TWO THOUSAND MILES FROM US AT THIRTEEN DEGREES... NEARLY DEAD AHEAD!



LOOK HERE, BOB. THERE'S NOTHING AT ALL CHARTED IN THIS AREA! IT'S EITHER BEEN OVERLOOKED SO FAR... OR IT'S A "WANDERER"!

A WANDERER! WANDERING ALL OVER SPACE WITH NO PARTICULAR COURSE OR ORBIT... WHY, IT MIGHT HAVE COME FROM ANYWHERE! WE'D BETTER GIVE IT THE ONCE OVER, KEN!

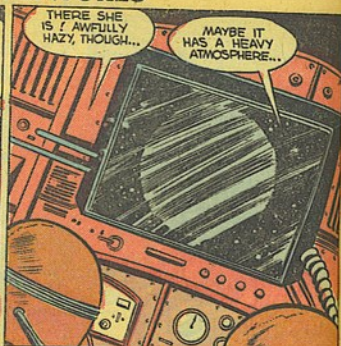
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LATER...



CAN'T FIND IT ON THE TELEVIEW YET, KEN.

YOU WILL... SOON. WE'RE HEADED RIGHT FOR IT, AND THE RADAR INDICATES IT'S DEFINITELY A PLANET... AND NOT SO SMALL AS WE THOUGHT!

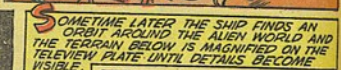


THERE SHE IS! AWFULLY HAZY, THOUGH...

MAYBE IT HAS A HEAVY ATMOSPHERE...



IT HAS AN ATMOSPHERE, ALL RIGHT, KEN. AND THE INSTRUMENTS SHOW IT TO BE ALMOST LIKE THAT OF EARTH'S! I THINK I CAN SEE CONTINENTS AND OCEANS ON THE TELEVIEW NOW...



SOMETIME LATER THE SHIP FINDS AN ORBIT AROUND THE ALIEN WORLD AND THE TERRAIN BELOW IS MAGNIFIED ON THE TELEVIEW PLATE UNTIL DETAILS BECOME VISIBLE.



FUNNY... PLENTY OF WATER, BUT NO TREES OR PLANT LIFE TO SPEAK OF... ALL DESERT!

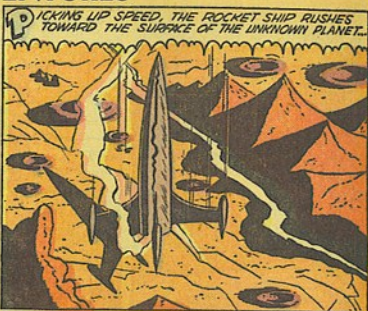
PLENTY OF ROCKS, THOUGH, AND SOMETIMES ROCKS HAVE PRECIOUS METAL CONTENTS. WHAT DO YOU SAY WE GO DOWN? THE ATMOSPHERE TESTS OUT AS BREATHABLE.



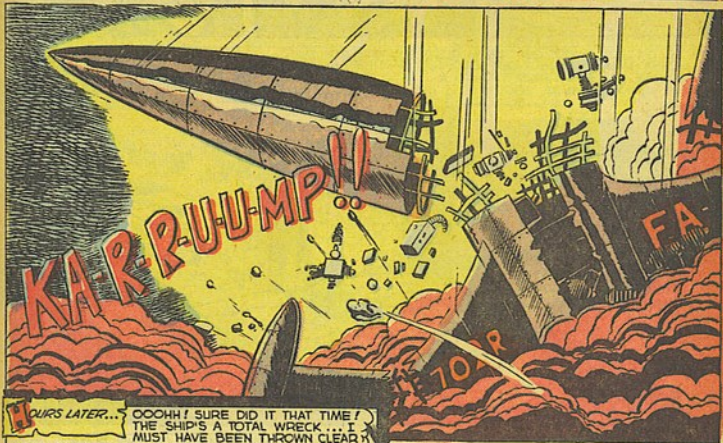
HEY.. THE INDICATOR SHOWS THAT THE BRAKING ROCKETS ARE DEAD, KEN! WE'VE GOT TO PULL UP... QUICK...!

CAN'T DO IT! I'VE GOT THE THROTTLES WIDE OPEN... NOT ENOUGH ALTITUDE LEFT TO FLIP HER OVER IN! STRAP DOWN FOR A CRASH LANDING!

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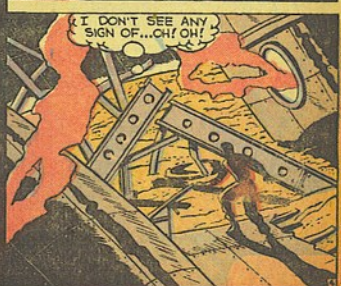


PICKING UP SPEED, THE ROCKET SHIP RUSHES TOWARD THE SURFACE OF THE UNKNOWN PLANET...



OURS LATER...

OOHH! SURE DID IT THAT TIME! THE SHIP'S A TOTAL WRECK... I MUST HAVE BEEN THROWN CLEARLY OF IT WHEN THE HULL SPLIT OPEN! NO BROKEN BONES... I WONDER WHERE BOB IS?



I DON'T SEE ANY SIGN OF...OH! OH!

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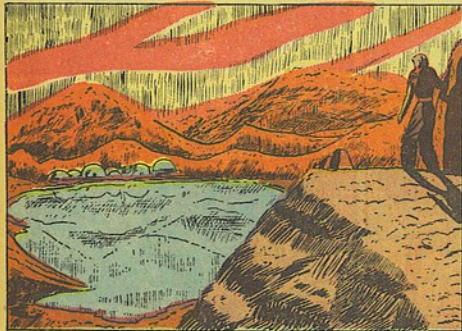


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FOR TWO AND A HALF OF THE LONG DAYS BAKER PLODS SLOWLY BUT STEADILY THROUGH THE BURNING SANDS. HIS SHOES WORN THROUGH, THE HOT SURFACE HAS LONG SINCE BURNED ANY SENSE OF FEELING FROM HIS TORN AND BLOODY FEET. THE HUMAN BEING... SLOWLY LOSING A BATTLE FOR SURVIVAL AGAINST THE ELEMENTS...



GONNA LOOK OVER THIS HILL IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO! THEN I'M JUST GONNA LAY DOWN ... AND DIE!



HELLO-O-O THE CITY...

FUNNY... NOT A SIGN OF LIFE OVER THERE...



THE BUILDINGS LOOK TO BE IN GOOD REPAIR. WONDER WHY NO ONE'S AROUND THE PLACE?



REACHING THE ISLAND, BAKER STUMBLES TOWARD THE NEAREST OF THE LOW BUILDINGS. SILENCE HANGS OVER THE ISLAND LIKE A PALL.

NO WONDER THEY APPEARED NEW FROM OUT IN THE WATER... THEY'RE MADE OF SOME KIND OF METAL... LAST FOREVER! BUT THEY'RE VERY OLD!



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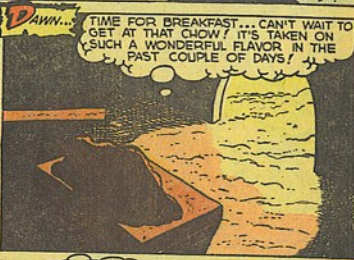
THIS STUFF DOESN'T TASTE SO BAD ANY MORE. ALMOST GOOD, MATTER OF FACT! FUNNY HOW THAT HARD DIAS FELT SO WARM AND COMFORTABLE LAST NIGHT, TOO? MUST BE GETTING USED TO THIS PLACE...



IT'S SO HARD TO... TO FORM WORDS.. ALIUD TO-DAY, WONDER WHY? BUT IT'S REMARKABLE HOW..HOW COMFORTABLE THIS PLACE IS.. ONCE A GUY GETS USED TO IT! AND I'VE NEVER NOTICED HOW ATTRACTIVE MY HANDS WERE BEFORE? FUNNY ABOUT THAT... MAYBE IT'S THE LIGHT IN HERE, OR SOMETHING.



HOW I LOVE THIS DIAS, BOY... THEY'LL NEVER GET ME TO SLEEP IN A LOUSY BED AGAIN!



TIME FOR BREAKFAST... CAN'T WAIT TO GET AT THAT CHOW! IT'S TAKEN ON SUCH A WONDERFUL FLAVOR IN THE PAST COUPLE OF DAYS!



AFTER BREAKFAST I'LL GO OUT AND LAY AROUND IN THE SUN...



MAYBE I'LL TAKE A LITTLE SWIM IN THE LAKE BEFORE I HAVE MY NAP...

AVING FINALLY BECOME THOROUGHLY ADAPTED TO HIS NEW SURROUNDINGS, HIS FOOD AND THE WORLD IN WHICH HE LIVES, BAKER MOVES SLOWLY AWAY FROM HIS DWELLING PLACE, GRUNTING CONTENTEDLY...