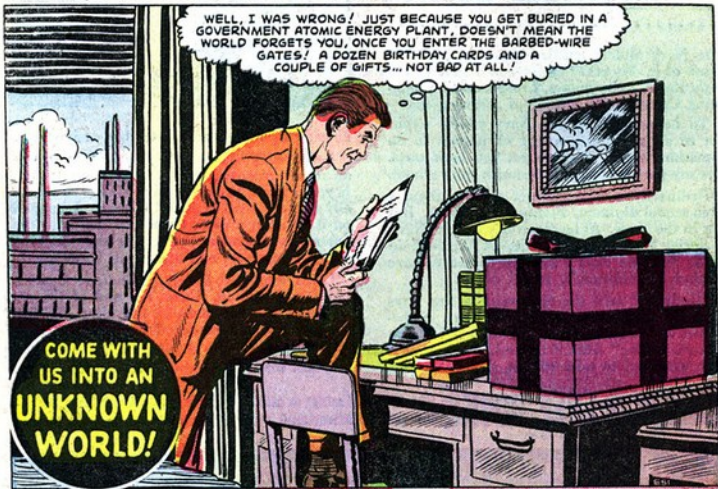


POOR BEN! WELL, ANYWAY, HE'S **STILL** GOT A **GHOST** OF A CHANCE! KINDA NICE TO RECEIVE BIRTHDAY PRESENTS, ISN'T IT? BUT IF **YOU** EVER GET A GIFT LIKE **THIS**, BETTER THROW IT AWAY, BEFORE SOMETHING **TERRIBLE** HAPPENS!

UNHARMED



COME WITH
US INTO AN
**UNKNOWN
WORLD!**

EXCITEDLY,
ERIC
SANDS
RIPS
OPEN
HIS
BIRTHDAY
PRESENTS
IN HIS
ROOM,
AND
THEN
ONE
BY
ONE,
THE
PHYSICIST-
ENGINEER
GLUMLY
LOOKS
AT
THE
TIES...



PUZZLED BY THE STRANGE GIFT, ERIC SANDS LOOKS AT THE CARD THAT CAME WITH IT... BUT JUST TWO WORDS ARE ON IT...

NO SIGNATURE! AND THIS CARD... I'VE NEVER FELT ANY PAPER WITH A TEXTURE LIKE THIS!



A FINE KIT! YOU CAN'T EVEN OPEN IT! THERE'S NO LID, NO SEAMS, NO BUTTON TO PUSH! HOW ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO FIND OUT WHAT'S INSIDE?



I WISH I COULD OPEN... GREAT SCOTT! IT'S STARTING TO OPEN!



AN INTERNAL SLIDING PANEL! AND IT ROLLED BACK WHEN I THOUGHT OF OPENING IT! WELL, THERE'S ONE WAY TO FIND OUT! LET'S SEE IF I CAN "THINK" IT TO CLOSE!



IT'S CLOSING! I DON'T KNOW WHO SENT THIS OR WHAT THIS GAG IS ALL ABOUT, BUT THIS BOX SEEMS TO WORK BY TELEPATHY!



CERTAIN THE KIT IS SOME SCIENTIFIC FRIEND'S CLEVER JOKE, ERIC SANDS ONCE MORE OPENS THE BOX AND DUMPS ITS CONTENTS ONTO HIS BED! BEFORE HIM LIES A WEIRD ARRAY OF TUBES AND VIALS...

HERE I AM, A MASTER ENGINEER IN THE NUCLEAR PHYSICS FIELD, AND I CAN BARELY KEEP UP WITH THE CONSTRUCTION CONCEPTS IN THIS BOOK!



FASCINATED BY THE CHALLENGE OF THE ADVANCED CONSTRUCTION IDEAS IN THE BOOK, ERIC BEGINS TO ASSEMBLE A MARTIAN FROM THE STRANGE KIT! BUT HOURS LATER, WEARY FROM CONCENTRATION, HE LOOKS AT HIS WORK...

WHY AM I WASTING MY TIME? THE TERMS IN THE INSTRUCTION BOOK ARE DOUBLE-TALK! SOMEONE'S PLAYING AN INVOLVED JOKE ON ME! I'LL FIND OUT WHO IN THE MORNING!



BUT THE NEXT DAY, AT THE ATOMIC LAB, ERIC SANDS QUESTIONS HIS COLLEAGUES IN VAIN, AND AT HIS DORM...

NO, I *DIDN'T* PUT ANY LARGE PACKAGE IN YOUR ROOM YESTERDAY... JUST SOME SMALL TIE BOXES!

THAT'S FUNNY... IT WAS THERE, BUT NO ONE SEEMS TO HAVE SENT IT OR KNOWS HOW IT GOT THERE!

MAYBE I'LL FIND OUT WHY IT WAS SENT TO ME IF I PUT THE MARTIAN TOGETHER!

STARTING FRIDAY EVENING, ERIC BEGINS TO ASSEMBLE THE STRANGE CREATURE, SLOWLY, LABORIOUSLY, FOLLOWING THE COMPLICATED INSTRUCTIONS...

ENGROSSED IN HIS WORK, THE HOURS PASS, AND ERIC SANDS BUILDS A STARTLING MONSTER...

IT'S FANTASTIC! THIS IS NO SIMPLE TOY DOLL! I'VE PUT INTERNAL ORGANS AND NERVE FIBERS INSIDE THIS CREATURE! THE JOKER WHO MADE THIS KIT SURE TOOK IT SERIOUSLY!

NOW FOR THE CLOTHES, AND MY MARTIAN IS FINISHED!

ONE FINAL STEP IS LEFT, AND CAREFULLY OBEYING THE INTRICATE WIRING DIRECTIONS, ERIC SANDS CONNECTS THE MARTIAN TO A QUEER ELECTRICAL AFFAIR THE BOOK CALLS A "VITALIZER"!

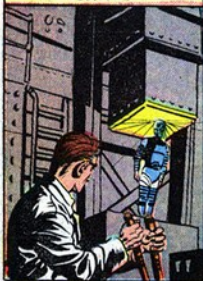
NOW THAT THING HAS BEEN **VITALIZED!** I GUESS IT'S SUPPOSED TO START MOVING ON ITS OWN!

BUT THE COMPLETED MARTIAN DOESN'T MOVE! THE GRIM FIGURE STANDS MOTIONLESS WHERE ITS CREATOR PLACES IT...

IF THIS BLASTED THING DOESN'T MOVE, WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF ALL THAT WORK IN PUTTING IT TOGETHER?



BEWILDERED, ERIC SANDS TAKES THE MARTIAN FIGURE TO HIS LAB FOR TESTING, BUT THE GIANT PRESS CAN'T CRUSH IT...



THE FIERY BLAST OF A BLOW TORCH CAN'T MELT IT...



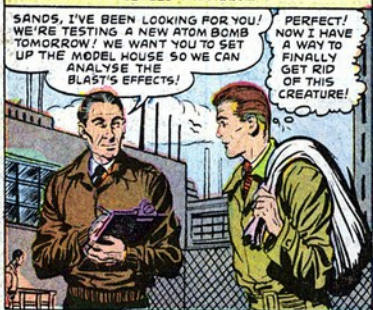
AND NOT EVEN AN ARMOR-PIERCING ROCKET CAN DENT IT...



NOR DOES SPECTRO-ANALYSIS TELL WHAT IT IS MADE OF!



STUNNED, ERIC SANDS LEAVES THE LAB WITH HIS CONCEALED MARTIAN...

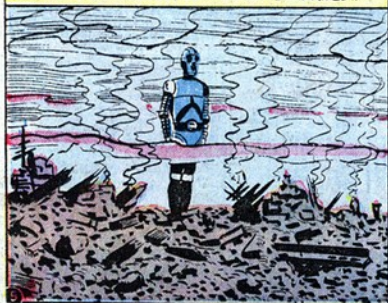


PERFECT! NOW I HAVE A WAY TO FINALLY GET RID OF THIS CREATURE!

WHEN ERIC SANDS FINISHES WIRING HIS DELICATE GAUGES TO THE EQUIPMENT IN THE TARGET HOUSE, HE ADDS A FINAL TOUCH... HE LEAVES THE MARTIAN FIGURE **INSIDE!** THE AREA IS CLEARED, AND IN A BLINDING FLASH, THE HOUSE IS ATOMIZED!



AND AS THE RADIOACTIVE CLOUD MUSHROOMS FROM THE SHATTERED RUBBLE, ONLY **ONE THING** STANDS UNDESTROYED, COMPLETELY UNHARMED...



THEN SUDDENLY, THE MARTIAN FIGURE MOVES! ITS WEIRD ARM LIMB CLUTCHES A STRANGE RADIO AND AN ALIEN VOICE SPEAKS ON EARTH...

MARTIAN PSEUDO-LIFE FORM TO MARS! AS WAS EXPECTED WHEN I WAS PLACED HERE, I WAS ASSEMBLED! THE EARTHLING TESTED ME! NO WEAPON OR FORCE ON EARTH CAN HARM ME! AND SINCE I AM MADE EXACTLY LIKE YOU, IT IS SAFE TO ATTACK! COME!



FOR THE BEST IN WEIRD STORIES LOOK FOR THE ATLAS SEAL ON THE COVER

