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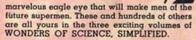
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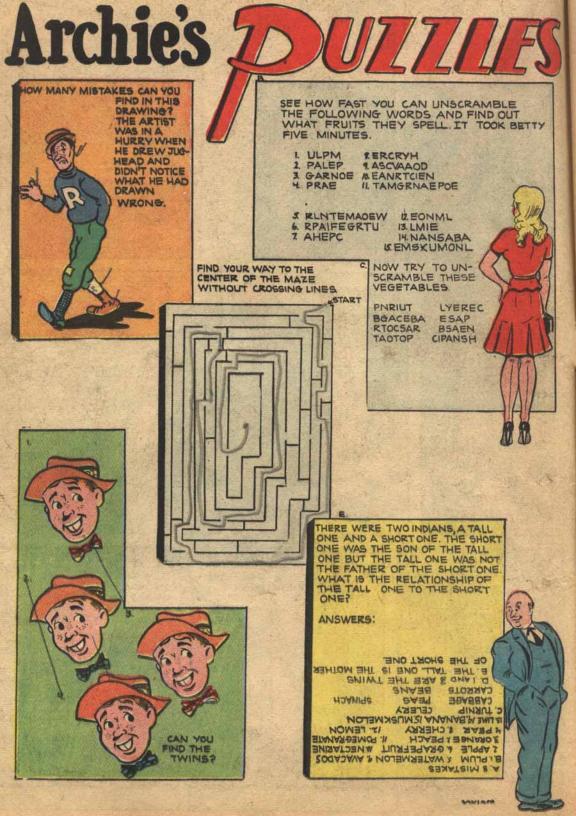


























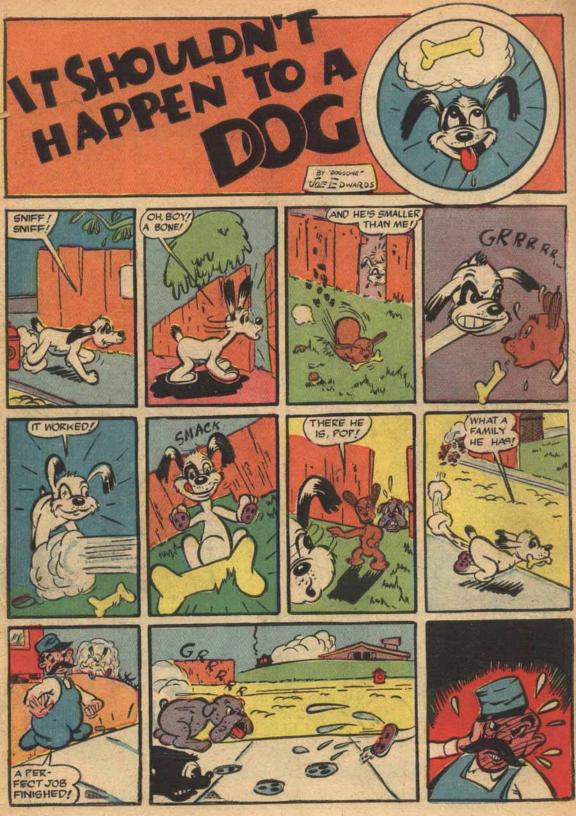


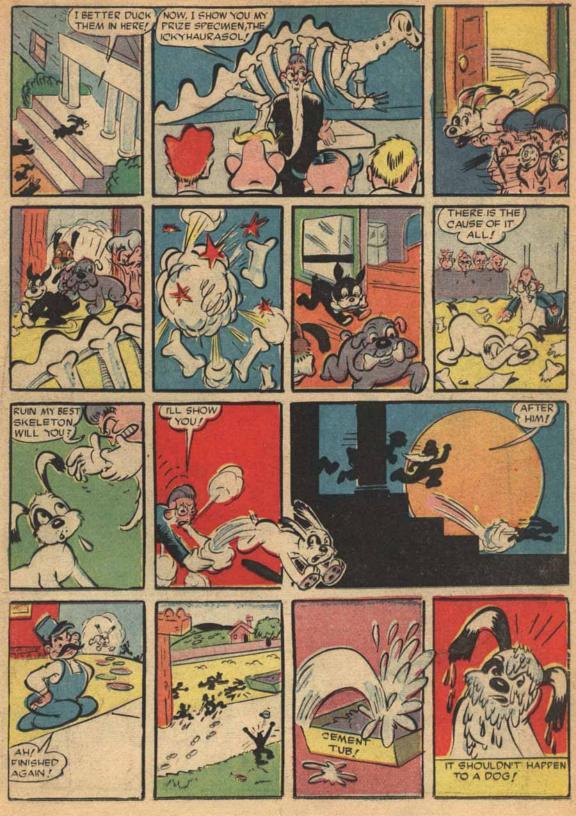




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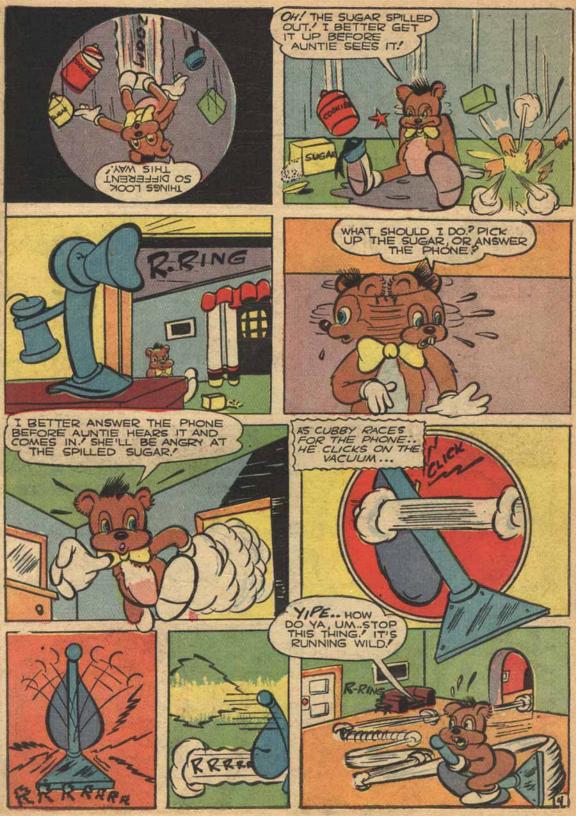










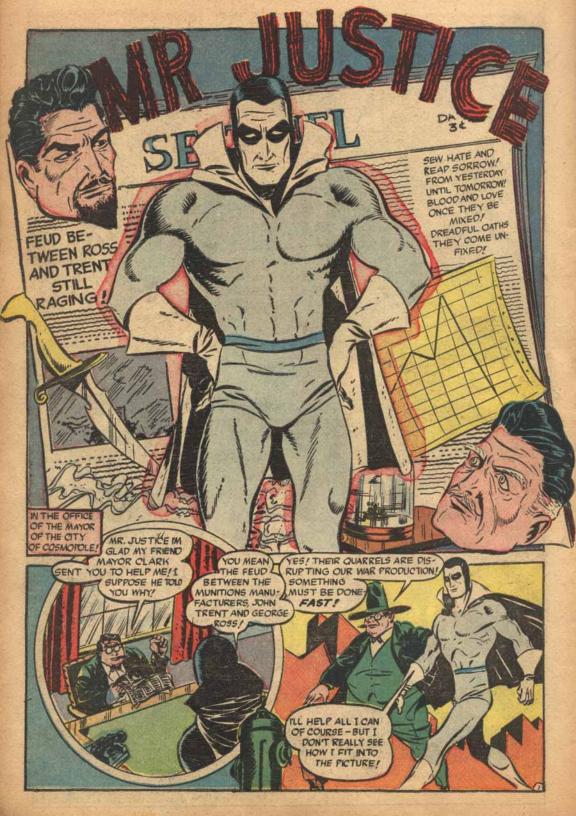
























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MAIDEN IN DISTRESS

A Clancy and Looney Story By VIVIAN

"YOU know, Clancy, I was just thinkin' it's too bad the olden days are gone," Looney remarked to Clancy as they strolled down West Main Street. Looney was home on a two week furlough.

"Yeah," Clancy sighed, "I guess automobiles are here to stay."

"Aw, I don't mean the horse and buggy era. I mean the days of King Arthur's Round Table. You know, when knights were bold and damsels fair, and the knights would rescue the damsels."

"What's the matter with you, spring fever?" demanded Clancy, as he rubbed his hands together to protect them from the cold January wind. "If it's spring fever, Looney, my boy, it must be a hangover from last year, in this weather!"

"Just the same, it must have been swell for those knights, just dashing in and helping out those beautiful dames all year long!"

"You mean you wouldn't mind lending your assistance to some nice blonde like the one coming down the street now?" Clancy said, looking at a pretty girl that was hurrying towards them.

"Yup, she's just the type you'd like to rescue," Looney answered, and then was very flabbergasted when the Type You'd Like To Rescue came up to the boys and said, "Are you Clancy and Looney? I've been looking all over for you. Your landlady said you headed in this direction so I came right down here. I need your help."

"That's fine, lady," said Clancy, "but Looney here says that the knight has to find the girl, not the girl the knight!"

"Shut up, Clancy, and let's hear what she has to say." Looney smiled at the blonde who was glancing from one to the other with a slight suspicious look on her face. She backed a full inch away from them before she continued talking.

"Well, you see, I have a very big problem on my hands, and I thought of you immediately, because of all I have heard and read about you."

Clancy shifted his weight from one foot to another and sheepishly hung his head. "Aw shucks, miss, we haven't done anything—much."

"That's not true. I think you're wonderful."

This remark caused Looney, who was far from being embarrassed, to flick a piece of imaginary dust from his lapel. "Yes," he agreed, "there's something in what you say."

"Well," the blonde smiled hesitatingly, "I shall tell you my trouble. I certainly hope you can help me. My father is an inventor. A very good one, too. But he is poor, and he needed money to finance his greatest and most recent invention. The man who lent him the money made him sign a contract, and he slipped a

clause in it which was very unfair and unscrupulous! It permits this man to take over the rights to my father's invention if he doesn't finish it by a certain date. Now my dad won't finish it for another month, at least, and the time alloted him expires tomorrow. There is no way that we can legally get the contract back, and the man also took the formula for the invention with it. He keeps both the formula and the contract locked in his safe. I know it's thievery, but there is no legal way of getting out of the contract, and since this man is going to really rob my father of his invention, I thought maybe you boys would help me by opening the safe and getting the contract and formula."

Clancy scratched his head. "Well, miss, I don't know. After all, I'm a cop, and . . ."

"Why, Clancy, you fat-head, can't you see this is our damsel in distress, and we are the knights who have to rescue her? We can't turn the poor gal down! Lead the way, miss. Where is this safe you wish cracked open?"

"Oh thank you, thank you!" The girl smiled dazzlingly at Looney. "You'll realize what an unfair advantage this man is taking of my father when I tell you that he will get back ten times the amount that he loaned my father if he sells the invention. The formula contains the secret for a new type of gas, and a method for manufacturing it."

"Okay, sister, here come Sir Looney and Sir Clancy to the rescue." Looney tipped his hat and made a graceful how.

Clancy doubtfully shook his head. "I still don't know . . ." His voice trailed off into oblivion as the girl tucked her hand under his arm and gently pulled him along.

"I left my car near here. Come. I'll drive you to the house. The man is Lon Carter, the munitions manufacturer. I have the plans of his house with me, and will tell you where the safe is and how to break into it. I made sure of everything before I came to you."

Looney nudged Clancy. "I'm sure we'll be decorated with the Cross of King Arthur's Round Table for this."

Clancy answered, "I just hope we don't get into any trouble up at headquarters because of you and your knights and damsels!"

Later, as it was growing dark, a car containing Clancy, Looney and the girl, stopped in front of a house. The two men got out, and after a whispered conference in which the girl promised to wait for them at the corner, they proceeded to tackle the problem of getting into the house and at the safe.

Looney, the light-weight, was the first to go through the window that happened to be open on the first floor. Clancy followed, and aside from the fact that all the window glass was shattered by his attempt to straighten his back at the wrong time, everything proceeded without disaster. Miraculously, no one in the house was aroused at the sound of the broken glass, and the boys decided to play safe and take off their shoes so that no more noise would be caused.

Clancy at first refused to take off his shoes, not willing to show the holes in his socks, which he said would embarrass him if they got caught. But after a little persuasion from Looney, he joined him in the name of chivalry.

They tiptoed into the room containing the safe, which was artfully hidden behind a picture of some old walrus, probably Lon Carter, himself. Or at least that was what Looney said.

"Psst, Clancy, I think I've got the thing opened," Looney whispered as he pulled at a heavy steel door. "The combination worked."

"Now where is the contract and the formula?" Clancy, a stickler for detail, asked. "Hurry, before some one comes!"

"What did she say the formula was called? Oh yeah, Formula xxxxx4. Here's one xxxxx4. Wait'll I count each x! Okay, here, you take it."

Clancy took the contract and the formula and put it in his pocket.

"I'll put it here with my Aunt Mathilda's letter."

"Okay, Clancy, let's go back to the fair damsel." Looney closed the safe door. They proceeded out of the house without any further mishaps, and finally reached the car, which was waiting for them at the corner. There they discovered that they had left their shoes back in the house. They decided against going back for them. After driving for a block, the girl turned round to them,

"May I have the contract and formula now?" she sweetlý asked them.

"Sure," Clancy answered, hurriedly giving her the envelope, as if he were glad to get rid of it.

"Okay, boys, you can get out now," the blonde said viciously, as soon as the envelope was in her hands. "What suckers you two are! Falling for a line like that. The German government happens to be very, very interested in this formula, and I was commissioned to get it. I figured there was no reason why I shouldn't get a couple of suckers to do my work forme, and you two were the perfect dupes. Well, boys, here's where you get out. And it's no use tracing my license plate. This is a stolen car!"

An astonished, stockingfooted Clancy and Looney looked after the car as it zipped away.

"Well, whaddyaknow! So that's what we get for trying to help some dame that's in trouble. King Arthur can keep his Round Table! We go through all that trouble, and not only don't get thanked, but find we've been helping Germany, in the bargain." Looney's voice was filled with disillusionment and disgust.

Clancy, meanwhile, h a d been digging in his pocket. "Hey, Looney, guess what! I gave her the wrong envelope! She has Aunt Mathilda's letter! Just wait'll she reads it! Oh boy! Come on, we'll go back to the house and return the contract and formula, and get back our shoes!"





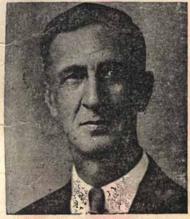












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