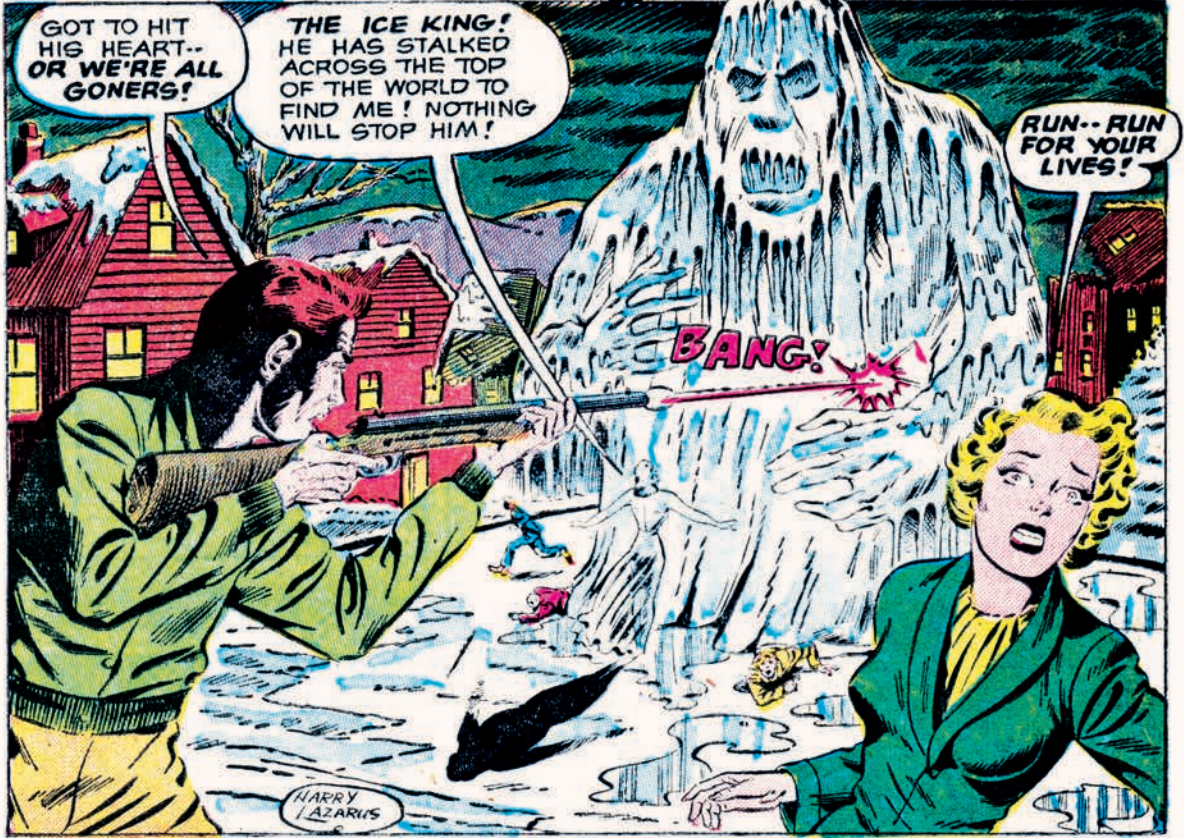


WHAT IS THAT TINY SPARK OF LIFE FORCE THAT MAKES A THING LIVE-- MAKES A MAN DIFFERENT FROM A LUMP OF CLAY? IF WE KNEW, WE MIGHT UNDERSTAND HOW A MASS OF ICE COULD MOVE, THINK, AND FEEL-- HOW IT COULD BECOME A FEARFUL AGENT OF DESTRUCTION WHEN BALKED IN LOVE! WE THINK YOU MAY SLEEP LESS ON A WINTER'S NIGHT WHEN YOU HAVE LEARNED ABOUT THE...

Heart of the SNOW MAIDEN



THE ALPS IN SUMMER... A PLACE OF BEAUTY, OF PEACE... A PLACE WITH ROOM FOR EVERYTHING-- INCLUDING **TERROR!**



"LONG AGO," GIL BEGAN, "A FRIENDLY SPRITE KNOWN AS THE SNOW MAIDEN WOULD SOMETIMES COME DOWN FROM HER ICY HOME ON THE MOUNTAIN AND JOIN IN THE DANCING --"

"SHE WAS A LIVING STATUE OF SOLID ICE, WHITE, COLD, AND-- VERY BEAUTIFUL! SO LONG AS SHE WAS A REMOTE SEMI-GODDESS, THE VILLAGERS LOVED HER..."

"... UNTIL ONE DAY, SHE DEFIED THE TIMELESS LAW THAT GOVERNS THE MORTAL AND IMMORTAL-- SHE FELL IN LOVE WITH A HUMAN!"

THEY ARE WRONG WHO SAY MY HEART IS COLD! FOR YOU, IT BURNS LIKE A CRYSTAL FLAME!

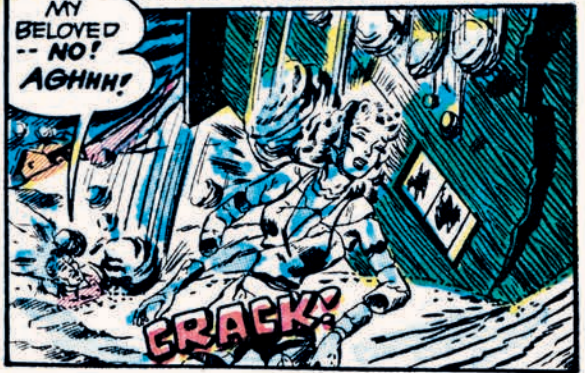


THUS THE FORCES OF TRAGEDY WERE UNLEASHED! HIGH ON MOUNT BLANC, A MONSTROUS FORCE STIRRED-- WHO CLAIMED THE SNOW MAIDEN FOR HIS OWN-- "THE ICE KING!"

SO DIED THE SNOW MAIDEN-- BURIED UNDER A MOUNTAIN OF SNOW, ALONG WITH THE ENTIRE VILLAGE--

SHE DARES FORSAKE ME? THEN SHE MUST DIE-- WITH HIM WHO STOLE HER FROM ME!

MY BELOVED -- NO! AGHHH!



WHAT A BEAUTIFUL LEGEND-- BUT RATHER SILLY, ISN'T IT?

MAYBE... BUT EVER SINCE I FIRST HEARD IT AS A KID, I'VE BELIEVED IT!



THEN, AFTER HOURS OF HUNTING AMONG THE RUINS-- GIL BENT OVER TO PICK UP A SHINING OBJECT--



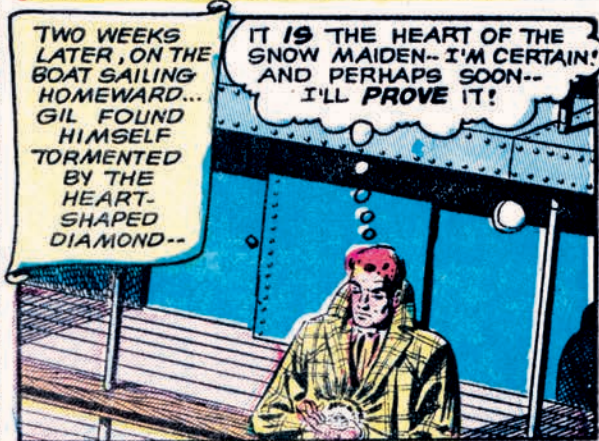
ELLA-- WHAT LUCK! IT-- IT'S WHAT I CAME HERE TO FIND-- THE HEART OF THE SNOW MAIDEN!

OH, GIL, DON'T CARRY THIS TOO FAR! THIS IS THE 20TH CENTURY, REMEMBER?



I... I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT! IT'S PROBABLY A VALUABLE DIAMOND SOMEBODY LOST! I'LL HAVE IT CUT INTO AN ENGAGEMENT RING-- FOR YOU!

THAT'S MORE LIKE IT, DARLING-- AND IT IS BEAUTIFUL!



TWO WEEKS LATER, ON THE BOAT SAILING HOMEWARD... GIL FOUND HIMSELF TORMENTED BY THE HEART-SHAPED DIAMOND--

IT IS THE HEART OF THE SNOW MAIDEN-- I'M CERTAIN! AND PERHAPS SOON-- I'LL PROVE IT!



SOME MONTHS LATER--

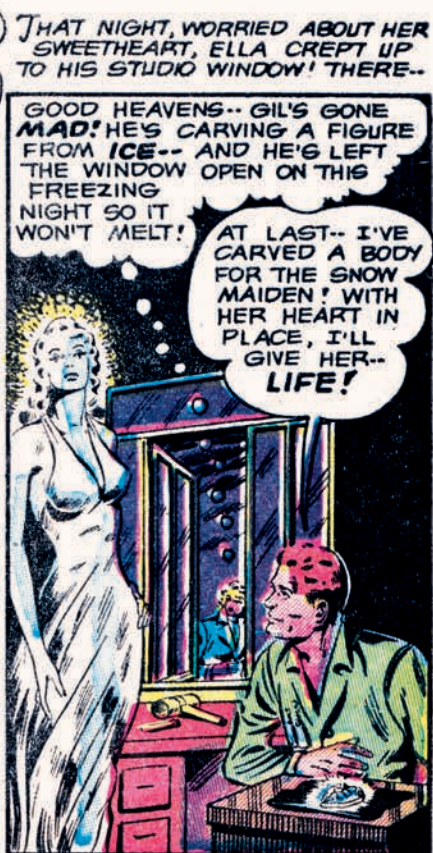
GIL, SINCE WE'VE RETURNED FROM ABROAD, YOU'VE SPENT MOST OF YOUR TIME IN YOUR STUDY! EVEN A SCULPTOR SHOULD HAVE SOME TIME FOR HIS BEST GIRL!

ARE YOU-- AVOIDING ME?

ER... I'VE BEEN VERY BUSY, DEAR-- A SPECIAL JOB!-- I'LL CALL YOU TONIGHT!



I DON'T DARE ASK HIM WHY HE HASN'T GIVEN ME MY ENGAGEMENT RING-- CUT FROM THAT STRANGE DIAMOND HE FOUND! MAYBE HE DOESN'T LOVE ME ANYMORE-- MAYBE HE'S SOLD IT!



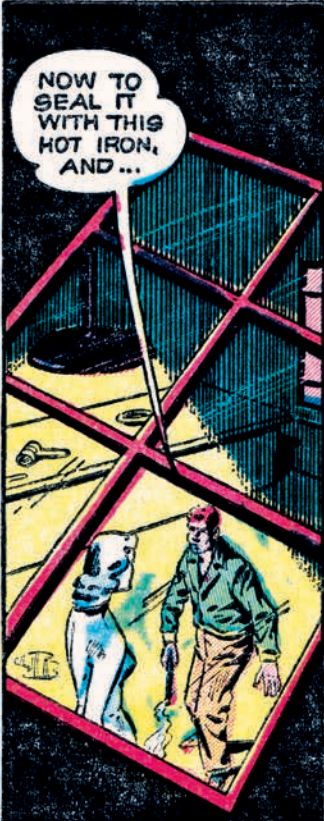
THAT NIGHT, WORRIED ABOUT HER SWEETHEART, ELLA CREEPT UP TO HIS STUDIO WINDOW! THERE--

GOOD HEAVENS-- GIL'S GONE MAD! HE'S CARVING A FIGURE FROM ICE-- AND HE'S LEFT THE WINDOW OPEN ON THIS FREEZING NIGHT SO IT WON'T MELT!

AT LAST-- I'VE CARVED A BODY FOR THE SNOW MAIDEN! WITH HER HEART IN PLACE, I'LL GIVE HER-- LIFE!

NEXT, GIL ANXIOUSLY PREPARED TO PLACE THE HUGE GEM WITHIN THE FROZEN FORM--

IF ELLA IS RIGHT ABOUT THAT LEGEND... THEN I'VE CARVED ONLY A LOVELY STATUE THAT WILL SOON MELT AWAY! THIS HEART MUST BE THE ANSWER-- AND I'LL KNOW IN A MOMENT!



NOW TO SEAL IT WITH THIS HOT IRON, AND...

A BREATHLESS MOMENT! THEN-- MIRACULOUSLY-- THE FIGURE CAME ALIVE!

LIFE! I FEEL IT -- COURAGING THROUGH ME! I WAS RIGHT! I WAS RIGHT!



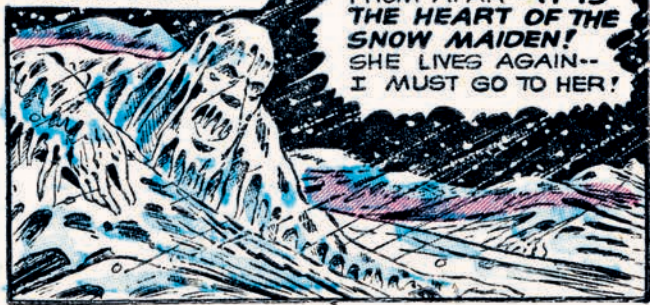
BUT-- WHY? WHY HAVE YOU GIVEN ME LIFE AGAIN? WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I FELL IN LOVE WITH A LEGEND! NOW I HAVE GIVEN LIFE TO THAT LEGEND-- AND MY LOVE REMAINS!



I ONCE FELL IN LOVE WITH A MORTAL, AND-- THE RESULT WAS DEATH FOR MANY, INCLUDING MY LOVER! I'M WILLING TO TAKE MY CHANCES! YOU'RE RIGHTFULLY MINE-- I RECREATED YOU! I... I'VE LOST HIM-- TO A COLD, INHUMAN CREATURE-- FROM THE UNKNOWN ITSELF!



MEANWHILE, FAR ACROSS THE SEA, THE MOLD WAS POURED FOR STARK TERROR! ONCE AGAIN, THERE WAS OMINOUS ACTIVITY ON THE SLOPES OF MOUNT BLANC--



THAT DULL BEATING FROM AFAR-- IT IS THE HEART OF THE SNOW MAIDEN! SHE LIVES AGAIN-- I MUST GO TO HER!

BY DAY, A SHAPELESS CRAG OF ICE--

HM... DIDN'T NOTICE THAT ICE PILE THERE YESTERDAY! MY EYES MUST BE GOING BAD!



BY NIGHT, A SWIFTLY-MOVING MONSTER THAT RACED ACROSS THE TOP OF THE WORLD, EVER CLOSER TO ITS GOAL--

HUH? I COULD'VE SWORN I SAW AN ICEBERG MOVING ACROSS THE HORIZON-- FAST AS AN EXPRESS TRAIN! BETTER KEEP QUIET ABOUT IT-- THE BOYS'LL THINK I'M LOCO!



THEN, AT A FARM, A FEW MILES FROM GIL'S STUDIO, THE HORRIFYING MONSTER WAS DISCOVERED!

SARAH-- HELP! CALL THE POLICE! AARGHHH!



MAGICALLY, THE COUNTRYSIDE WAS AROUSED, THE NATION PANICKED--

THIS BRUTE IS FANTASTIC, FOLKS! SOLID ICE-- BUT ALIVE! THE NATIONAL GUARD IS ATTACKING IT WITH EVERYTHING FROM GUNS TO BLOW TORCHES-- BUT NOTHING SEEMS ABLE TO STOP THIS NIGHTMARE CREATURE!



HE'S GETTING AWAY-- HEADING FOR THE VILLAGE NEARBY!

IT SOUNDS LIKE-- IT MUST BE-- THE ICE KING OF THE LEGEND! IT MUST BE COMING FOR THE SNOW MAIDEN!



GIL-- HE'S IN DANGER! I'VE GOT TO WARN HIM!

