

UNDER THE MOONS OF MARS

BY EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

SYNOPSIS.

Captain John Carter, U. S. A., at the close of the Civil War went West prospecting for gold. He was killed by a mountain cave, from which emanates a poisonous gas. Overcome by this, he is presently undergoing a physical metamorphosis, some inherent part of him being released so that he can view, like a second person, his seemingly lifeless body lying on the cave floor. In this state, through a series of phenomena, he finds himself transported to the planet Mars.

CHAPTER XV A Sad History

WHEN consciousness returned, and, as I soon learned, I was down but for a moment. I sprang quickly to my feet, searching for my sword, and there I found it, buried to the hilt in the green breast of Zed, who lay dead upon the other moss of the ancient sea bottom.

also regained my own, and, turning my back upon his ugly carcass, I moved, sick, more, and disgusted, toward the chariots which bore my retinue and my belongings.

Bleeding and weak, I reached my women, who, accustomed to such happenings, dressed my wounds, applying the wonderful healing and remedial agents which make only the most instantaneous of death-blows fatal.

As I approached I found Dejah Thoris lying prone upon her silks and furs, her little form racked with sobs.

She did not notice my presence, nor did she hear me speaking with Sol, who was standing a short distance from the vehicle.

"Is she injured?" I asked of Sol, indicating Dejah Thoris by an inclination of my head.

"No," she answered; "she thinks that you are dead."

"And that her grandmother's cat may now be the only one to polish its teeth?" I queried, smiling.

"I think you wrong her, John Carter," said Sol. "I do not understand either her ways or yours, but I am sure the granddaughter of 10,000 jeddaks would never grieve like this over the death of one she considered beneath her, or, indeed, over any who held but the highest claim upon her affections."

"They are a proud race, but they are

just, as are all Barsoomians, and you must have hurt or wronged her grievously that she will not admit your existence living; though she mourns you dead."

"Tears are a strange sight upon Barsoom," she continued, "and so it is difficult for me to interpret them. I have seen but two people weep in all my life, other than Dejah Thoris; one wept from sorrow, the other from baffled rage. The first was my mother, years ago, before they killed her; the other was Sarkoja, when they dragged her from me today."

"Sola," I begged, "tell Dejah Thoris I am alive and well. I shall not force myself upon her, and be sure that you do not let her know I saw her tears. If she would speak with me, I await her command."

Sola mounted the chariot, which was awaiting into its place in line, and I hastened to my waiting chariot and galloped to my station beside Tara Tarkas at the rear of the column.

We made a most imposing and awe-inspiring spectacle as we swung out across the yellow landscape; the 250 ornate and brightly colored chariots preceded by an advance guard of some 100 mounted warriors and chieftains riding abreast and 100 yards apart, and followed by like number in the same formation, with a score or more of flankers on either side; the 50 extra mastodons, or heavy draft animals, known as sildars, and the five or six hundred extra throats of the warriors running loose within the hollow square formed by the surrounding warriors.

She looked up at my approach, her face lighting with pleasure and welcome.

"I am glad you came," she said. "Dejah Thoris sleeps, and I am lonely. Mine own people do not care for me, John Carter; I am alone."

"It is sad fate, since I must live my life among them, and I often wish that I were a true green Martian woman, without love and without hope, but I have known love, and I am lonely."

I sank down beside the industrious woman, and for some time we sat in friendly silence. After a while we entered into conversation, and in the end she opened her heart to me and told me her story.

The tragedy and pathos of the story at first surprised me, and it was that Sola was so different from the other Martian women I had known. Despite Martian customs, there had been real love between her father and mother—a clashing affair which had persevered for years, to be discovered and exposed by Sarkoja during a time when Sola's father was at war. His identity was not learned by any woman.

Old Tal Hajus, soulless and bloody-handed villain, ordered Sola's mother executed; but the doomed woman, before her death, succeeded in placing her young daughter among the other common children, and the real identity of the child never came out.

"I never saw my mother after that night," said Sola, "and I was imprisoned by Tal Hajus, and every effort, including the most horrible and shameful torture, was brought to bear upon her to wring from her the name of the child. But she remained steadfast and loyal, dying amid the laughter of Tal Hajus and his chieftains during some awful torture she was undergoing; only the name of the child was not learned."

"She had told them that she had killed me to save me from a like fate at their hands, and that she had thrown my body into the sea, and I am sure she believed her, and I feel that day that she suspects my true origin, but does not dare expose me because she also guesses, I am sure, the identity of my father."

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covered sea bottom; and so we moved in utter silence, like some huge phantasmagoria, except when the stillness was broken by the guttural growling of a goaded sildar, or the squealing of fighting thralls.

The green Martians converse but little on the march and then only in monosyllables, low, and like the faint rumbling of distant thunder.

We traversed a trackless waste of moss which, bending to the pressure of broad tire or padded foot, rose up again behind us, leaving no sign that we had passed.

We might indeed have been the wraiths of the departed dead upon the dead sea of that dying planet for all the sound or sign we made in passing.

It was the first morning of a large body of men and animals I had ever witnessed, which raised no dust and left no spoor; for there is no dust upon Mars except in the cultivated districts during the winter months, and even then the absence of high winds renders it almost unnoticeable.

We camped that night at the foot of the hills we had been approaching for two days, and which marked the southern boundary of this particular sea.

Our animals had been two days without drink, nor had they had water for nearly two months, and since shortly after leaving Thark, but, as Tara Tarkas explained to me, they require but little and can live almost indefinitely upon the moss which covers Barsoom, and which, he told me, holds in its tiny stems sufficient moisture to meet the limited demands of the animals.

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THE CHEERFUL CHERUB

Prayer meeting is the place to go To study human types, Or practice your arithmetic By counting organ pipes.



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MILLBOURNE FIREMEN MAY MAKE DRASTIC CHANGE IN THEIR SYSTEM

Recognize Need of Revision After the Events of That Fire in Kirklyn Which Went Out Just Before They Got There

It is barely possible that the Millbourne Fire Company will change its system of fire fighting.

Although no alterations have been decided upon, some of the residents expressed the belief today that the company's experience on Saturday night might awaken a few thoughts in this regard.

The fire ladders were discussing past achievements yesterday on the night in question when suddenly word came of a fire in Kirklyn, Delaware County, Pa. Opinions differ as to what happened during the exciting moments that followed.

It is known, however, that the chief was unavoidably out of town. The official driver of the \$3500 brass-trimmed auto fire truck was likewise absent. His assistant could not be found, it is said, nor the assistant's assistant.

And the fire in Kirklyn kept on burning.

SOMEONE ASKED the official police force of Millbourne to try a hand at the truck. But both cops positively declined. They called attention to the borough rules, which state positively that the cops must not leave the borough while on duty.

There is no paragraph which permits them to leave the place even on the new fire truck. So they devoted their attention to ringing the borough fire bell. This bell, it is said, weighs 1000 pounds, and it is 100 houses in Millbourne, which therefore allows 10 pounds of bell for each house.

Meanwhile, the fire in Kirklyn was still blazing.

When it was discovered that the police wouldn't go, and there was no one in the driver's seat, it was decided to permit the firemen to try.

to her full height and, looking me straight in the eye, said:

"What would Dotar Sojat, Thark, of Dejah Thoris, his captive?"

"Dejah Thoris, I do not know how I have angered you. It was further from my desire to hurt or offend you, whom I had hoped to protect and comfort."

"Have none of me, if it is your will, but that you must aid me in effecting my escape, if such a thing be possible, is not my request, but my command. When you are safe once more at your father's court you may do with me as you please, but from now on until that day I am your master, and you must obey and aid me."

She looked at me long and earnestly and I thought that she was softening toward me.

"I understand your words, Dotar Sojat," she replied, "but you I do not understand. You are a queer mixture of child and man, of brute and noble. I only wish that I might read your heart."

"Look down at your feet, Dejah Thoris; it lies there now where it has lain since that other night at Korad, and where it will ever lie heating alone for you until death shall fill it forever."

She took a little step toward me, her beautiful hands outstretched in a strange, groping gesture.

"What do you mean, John Carter?" she whispered. "What are you saying to me?"

"I am saying what I had promised myself that I should not say to you, at least until you were no longer