

ERB

The Epic Parallel Universe Life  
of Edgar Rice Burroughs  
the  
King of Pulp Fiction

as imagined by

Woodrow Edgar Nichols, Jr.

PART TWO:  
UP THE UGAMBI

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FADE IN:

EXT. PORT OF ALGIERS - DAY

Tarzan boards an English steamer for Cape Town, two men watch him carefully from an upper deck, both are fashionably dressed, smooth-shaven, one is noticeably taller than the other, the tall man is ruggedly handsome, has sandy hair, very black eyebrows.

Tarzan shows his boarding pass to THE PORTER.

CLOSE on the name under which the boarding pass is issued: John Caldwell, London. He boards the ship, goes to his cabin.

INT. CAPTAIN'S TABLE - NIGHT

Tarzan sits at the Captain's Table with THE CAPTAIN, VARIOUS DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, sits next to A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN, 21, and HER MOTHER, 45, who sits next to the Captain. The young woman is tall and shapely, auburn-haired, with blue eyes, snow-white skin, she has an easy charm, is dressed very fashionably, shows ample cleavage. The Captain introduces the young woman to Tarzan. Every one speaks in ENGLISH.

CAPTAIN

Mr. John Caldwell, of London,  
let me introduce you to Miss  
Hazel Strong, of Baltimore.

Tarzan takes her hand, it is electric in his; he speaks English with a French accent.

TARZAN

Pleased to meet you, Miss  
Strong.

CAPTAIN

Seated between myself and  
Miss Strong is her mother,  
MRS. VIDA STRONG.

They nod at each other; Vida nudges her daughter with her elbow.

VIDA  
Hazel, ask Mr. Caldwell  
if he liked America.

Both Vida and Hazel have Southern Belle accents.

HAZEL  
Did you like America, Mr.  
Caldwell?

TARZAN  
Yes, I liked America very  
much, and that means, of  
course, that I like Americans,  
for a country is only what  
its people make it.

They eat, drink red wine, make table conversation.

HAZEL  
You have a very charming  
French accent, Mr. Caldwell.

TARZAN  
Call me John. Your Southern  
accent is equally charming,  
maam. As I was saying, I  
met some very delightful  
people while I was there;  
one family I recall was  
from your own city, Miss  
Strong, whom I liked  
particularly - Professor  
Porter and his daughter.

HAZEL  
Jane Porter! Do you mean  
to tell me you know Jane  
Porter? Why, she is the  
very best friend I have  
in the world. We were  
little children together.

Tarzan stares at the ivory locket around her neck as it  
plays in her cleavage.

She catches his look, flirts with her eyes and large lashes, smiles, leans forward, shows off her breasts, the wine has aroused her, Tarzan can see the imprint of her nipples against the smooth silk of her evening gown.

TARZAN

You may have been children together, but you certainly have grown up now.

They LAUGH.

HAZEL

Now that I am about to lose her I am almost heartbroken.

TARZAN

Going to lose her? Why, what do you mean? Oh, yes, I understand. You mean that now that she is about to be married and living in England, you will seldom if ever see her.

HAZEL

Yes, and the saddest part of it all is that she is not marrying the man she loves. Oh, it is terrible. Marrying from a sense of duty! I think it is perfectly wicked, and I told her so. I have felt so strongly on the subject that although I was the only person outside of blood relations who was to have been asked to the wedding I would not let her invite me, for I should not have gone to witness the terrible mockery.

(sighs)

HAZEL

(continuing)

She will not be reasonable. Jane Porter is peculiarly positive about it. She has convinced herself that she is doing the only honorable thing that she can do, and nothing in the world will ever prevent her from marrying Lord Greystoke except Greystoke himself, or death.

TARZAN

I am sorry for her.

HAZEL

And I am sorry for the man she loves, for he loves her. I never met him, but from what Jane tells me he must be a very wonderful person. It seems that he was born in an African jungle, and brought up by fierce, anthropoid apes. He had never seen a white man or woman until Professor Porter and his party were marooned on the coast right at the threshold of his tiny cabin. He saved them from all manner of terrible beasts, and accomplished the most wonderful feats imaginable, and then to cap the climax he fell in love with Jane and she with him. Oh, they had such a romance, living naked in the jungle like Adam and Eve! She never really knew it for sure until she had promised herself to Lord Greystoke.

The wine is going to her head, she smiles at Tarzan, licks her lips, squeezes his thigh under the table, Tarzan gets an erection, she feels for it, rubs it, Vida suspects what is happening, butts in.

VIDA

Don't you dare bore poor  
Mr. Caldwell with all of  
that romantic nonsense, dear.

EXT. STEAMER DECK - DAY

Tarzan strolls on the promenade, sees Hazel talking with a tall man with sandy hair, she sits in a deck chair, wears a white sleeveless, low-cut cotton summer dress, the man stands over her, appears to be on intimate terms, he strokes the side of her arm, she rubs his thigh.

They both see Tarzan approach, the man bows, turns to walk away. They speak in FRENCH; ENGLISH SUBTITLES.

HAZEL

Wait, Monsieur Thurán, you  
must meet Monsieur Caldwell.  
We are all fellow passengers,  
and should be acquainted.

The man turns, shakes hands with Tarzan, Tarzan stares in the man's beady eyes, knows he has seen them before.

TARZAN

I have had the honor of  
monsieur's acquaintance  
in the past, I am sure.

Thuran appears ill at ease.

THURAN

I cannot say, monsieur.  
It may be so. I have had  
that identical sensation  
myself when meeting a  
stranger.

HAZEL

Monsieur Thuran has been explaining some of the mysteries of navigation to me.

TARZAN

It looked like his hand was moving south by southwest.

Hazel gives Tarzan a knowing look. The angle of the sun hits them on the deck.

HAZEL

Can you move my chair back further in the shade, Monsieur Thuran?

Thuran obliges, has a hard time with his left wrist, suddenly Tarzan knows who the man is: Rokoff!

THURAN

If you will excuse me, I must go now.

He bows, turns, walks away.

TARZAN

Just a moment! If Miss Strong will pardon me, I will accompany you. I shall return in a moment, Miss Strong.

The two men stroll around the deck out of the girl's sight, Tarzan stops, lays a heavy hand on Rokoff's shoulder.

TARZAN

(continuing)

What is your game now, Rokoff?

ROKOFF

I am leaving France as I promised you.

TARZAN

I see you are, but I know you so well that I can scarcely believe that your being on the same boat with me is purely a coincidence. If I could believe it the fact that you are in disguise would immediately disabuse my mind of any such idea.

ROKOFF

Well, I cannot see what you are going to do about it. This vessel flies the English flag. I have as much right on board her as you, and from the fact that you are booked under an assumed name I imagine I have more right.

TARZAN

We will not discuss it, Rokoff. All I wanted to say to you is that you must keep away from Miss Strong - she is a decent woman.

ROKOFF

Is that what they are called in Baltimore?

TARZAN

If you do not leave her be I will pitch you overboard. Do not forget that I am just waiting for some good excuse.

ROKOFF

What kind of an excuse do you need? What will it take to push you over the edge? By the bones of St. Peter, you shall never kill me!

He folds his hand into a fist, extends the thumb, shakes it at him, makes the sign of an old Russian curse taught to the Czar by Rasputin; Tarzan shakes his head, walks away.

Tarzan returns to Hazel, catches her secretly sipping Kentucky Bourbon from a steel flask, she looks up guiltily, offers the flask to Tarzan, he takes it, takes a hearty drink, swallows, his eyes open wide. They speak in ENGLISH.

TARZAN

Whooh! What do you call this fire in a bottle, Miss Strong?

She smiles, rises from the chair.

HAZEL

Bourbon whiskey, Mr. Caldwell. Bourbon whiskey is the drink of Southern gentlemen...and of Southern ladies. Will you walk me to the rail, John?

He walks her to the port rail, it is noon, they have the promenade all to themselves; before them, the thin green line of the African shoreline, the sun shines bright overhead, the glossy smooth waves roll gently.

HAZEL

Jane told me that not only did she spend a good time with the monkey-man naked as a Jay bird -

TARZAN

Are not all birds naked?

She LAUGHS, takes another drink, she is lightly intoxicated.

HAZEL

Oh, that's a good one.  
I'll have to remember it.

(pauses)

What I was going to say is  
that Jane not only spent  
her time naked with the  
monkey-man, he also  
deflowered her, and only  
then after she was nearly  
deflowered by an Ape.

She rubs Tarzan between the legs, he gets an erection.

HAZEL

(continuing)

She said that the Ape almost  
got his penis inside of her.  
Can you imagine?

She unbuttons his trousers, reaches in, pulls out his penis,  
masturbates it.

HAZEL

(continuing)

What a magnificent penis you  
have, John!

(sips from flask)

After the monkey-man killed  
the Ape with his bare hands,  
she gave herself to him.

(dreamy look)

She said it was wonderful,  
and from how she described  
his big penis to me, I must  
say that yours is exactly  
as I imagined it.

TARZAN

What a wonderful coincidence.

HAZEL

Jane made me promise that I  
would never tell anyone. It  
was to be our secret only.

TARZAN  
Which you have faithfully  
kept.

They LAUGH.

TARZAN  
(continuing)  
Does Clayton know that his  
wife was deflowered by  
another man?

HAZEL  
Lord, no! Men have to  
maintain the delusion  
that they are marrying  
a virgin, pure as snow,  
like myself.

(pants)  
I want your beautiful cock  
inside me, John; will you  
come and see me tonight?

TARZAN  
Yes.

HAZEL  
Please forgive me, but I am  
very curious as to why an  
Englishman speaks English  
with a French accent?

She masturbates him harder, the sight of her snow-white hand  
against the dark tan of his penis excites him.

TARZAN  
You have beautiful skin,  
Miss Strong. I was educated  
in Africa by the French.

HAZEL  
Mother is playing cards  
tonight. Meet me here  
on deck. Promise me you  
will.

TARZAN

I promise.

He GRUNTS, ejaculates into the wind.

INT. ROKOFF'S STATEROOM - DAY

Rokoff fumes across a table from Paulvitch. They speak in RUSSIAN, ENGLISH SUBTITLES.

ROKOFF

I would throw him overboard tonight were I not sure that those papers were not on his person. I cannot chance pitching them into the ocean with him. If you were not such a stupid coward, Alexis, you would find a way to enter his stateroom and search for the documents.

PAULVITCH

(smiles)

You are supposed to be the brains of this partnership, my dear Nikolas. Why do not you find the means to search Monsieur Caldwell's stateroom - eh?

EXT. TARZAN'S STATEROOM - NIGHT

Tarzan prepares for his rendezvous with Hazel, he decides to wear an new jacket, he tosses the one he wore in the afternoon on the bed, he adjusts his shoulders in the new jacket, smooths it down, feels dapper, opens the door, exits, closes the door behind him, he forgets to lock it.

ZOOM on the jacket on the bed, it is open, an envelope containing Gernois's secret papers sticks out of an inner pocket.

A few minutes later, the door opens, Paulvitch creeps in. He searches the luggage, the drawers, every square inch of the room, SIGHS, starts to leave, spies the coat on the bed, he sees the envelope, rushes to the bed, removes the envelope, sticks in his inner pocket, leaves the room exactly as he found it.

EXT. PROMENADE DECK - NIGHT

Tarzan stands at the rail, listens to the CHURNING HUM of the motors, doesn't hear the two men approach, it is Rokoff and Paulvitch, they each bend down behind Tarzan, reach for a different leg, nod their heads, count, one, two, three -

They grab Tarzan's legs, heave up at the same time, pitch him overboard, Tarzan falls into the frothy propeller churned water below, SPLASH!

INT. HAZEL'S STATEROOM - NIGHT

Hazel lies naked on her bed, she stares out the porthole window, her dark red nipples make a stunning contrast with her snow-white breasts, they are hard in arousal.

She lowers her right hand over her silky auburn bush, rubs herself between her legs, fingers her vagina, thinks of Tarzan's penis, hears Vida SCUFFLE in the stateroom on the other side of the door. She is getting ready for the card game. They speak in ENGLISH.

VIDA (OFFSCREEN)

Have you seen my pearl  
necklace, Hazel?

HAZEL

It's in the bottom dresser  
drawer, Mother, exactly where  
you left it.

She rubs one of her breasts, squeezes it, makes the nipple bulge, she licks it, she slips another finger inside her vagina, she MOANS, as an orgasm.

VIDA (OFFSCREEN)

Are you all right in there,  
dear?

Before she can answer, she sees a body fall outside the porthole, she GASPS! runs to the window, looks out, listens for a cry of "man overboard," hears nothing, shakes her head, starts to dress for her rendezvous with Tarzan.

MOTHER (OFFSCREEN)

Hazel? Is everything all right?

HAZEL

Everything is just hunky-dory, Mother.

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - NIGHT

Tarzan narrowly escapes being sucked into the huge propellers.

AERIAL SHOT: the ship steams ahead, Tarzan swims for the shoreline 30 miles away. His powerful muscles ripple on his body as he strokes smoothly through the water; item by item, he sheds all of his clothing, the waves roll, the moon is high, he keeps swimming for hours, comes upon an old upsidedown wreck, climbs aboard, sleeps on the hull till morning.

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - MORNING

Morning breaks; he discovers a launch boat floating upsidedown next to the hull, he drags it up onto the hull, turns it over, checks it for holes, he finds various pieces of wood to use as paddles, pushes the boat back in the water, boards it, paddles for the shore.

EXT. AFRICAN JUNGLE - DAY

A naked Tarzan reverts to his ape-man existence, swings through the trees, he has given up on the civilized world. He goes farther into the jungle than he ever ventured before, he stops, SNIFFS the air.

He stalks through the branches, sees A NAKED BLACK MAN walking below, the man is tall, slim, wears nothing but gold arm and ankle bracelets engraved with strange hieroglyphics - they are identical to Martian hieroglyphs! The man is armed with a spear, bow, and knife.

Tarzan makes a noose with his grass rope, slackens it out, gets ready to sling it over the black man's head; out of the corner of his eye, he catches a glimpse of a tawny brown hide worming its way through the underbrush.

It is Numa, the lion, moving in for the kill, he springs upon the black man, Tarzan throws his rope.

TARZAN

Watch out!

The black man turns just in time to see the lion arrested in flight by a rope noose around its neck, Tarzan pulls, the lion's claws rake the air inches from the black man, SWISH, the lion JERKS the rope, Tarzan falls out of the tree, tumbles to the ground, THUD!

Like lightning, Numa turns on Tarzan, Tarzan is unarmed, does not stand much of a chance, the black man comes to his rescue, throws his spear with all his might, SQUISH! the spear transfixes Numa's right groin to beneath the left shoulder, he ROARS in anger, turns again on the black man, only makes it a dozen paces, Tarzan jerks the rope, Numa is stopped, furious he turns his wrath on Tarzan.

The black shoots arrows into the lion with lightning speed, THWIP! THWIP! THWIP! SQUISH! SQUISH! SQUISH! the lion stops, Tarzan winds the rope around a tree trunk, ties it fast.

Tarzan rushes to the black's side, takes his knife, runs back to the lion, while the black keeps the lion occupied with his arrows, THWIP, SQUISH, Tarzan circles Numa, searches for an opening, Numa ROARS, SHRIEKS, SCREAMS IN PAIN, paws at Tarzan, strains on the rope, pulls at it with his giant neck, rears up on his hind legs.

Tarzan sees an opening, rushes in on its left side behind the beast's shoulder, grabs the lion around the neck with a mighty arm, stabs the long blade into Numa's heart once for the kill, SQUISH! Numa collapses dead, THUD!

Tarzan and the black man stand over the carcass of the lion, Tarzan makes the sign of peace and friendship, the black answers in kind.

A HORDE OF SAVAGES from a nearby village gather around them, they have been drawn by the noise of the combat. They appear to be like the black man, tall, slim people, with exquisite noses and lips, naked except for gold and ankle ornaments, all with the same strange hieroglyphs.

The black man ADDRESSES THE TRIBE IN THEIR OWN PRIMITIVE TONGUE, motions at the lion, at Tarzan, the tribe embraces him.

EXT. TRIBAL VILLAGE - NIGHT

The tribe holds an orgy in Tarzan's honor, drums beat, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, people dance in frenzy around a huge fire, drink the native beer, grow intoxicated, fornicate on the ground freely.

Tarzan copulates a beautiful young black girl, she is tall and slim, has large pointed breasts, she moves like the ocean beneath him, he thrusts to the rhythm of the drums, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM.

Tarzan takes her hands, stretches them out, he sucks her jet-black nipples, GRUNTS, ejaculates, she wraps her legs around him, squeezes.

He fondles a bracelet, looks at the fine gold and craftsmanship. She slips it off her wrist, offers it to him as a gift.

TARZAN

Where did you get this?

She does not understand. He points to the bracelet, moves his finger around his head in all directions, she understands, nods, points south.

NATIVE GIRL

Opar.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COLEMAN'S STATIONARY STORE (FLASHBACK) - DAY

ERB and Coleman share a CHUCKLE.

COLEMAN

What's Emma going to think about Tarzan fooling around, Eddie? You know she thinks of herself as Jane.

ERB

Yes, and she also thinks she's Dejah Thoris; but at least she is married to John Carter. Tarzan and Jane aren't married yet, Coleman. And there is still one more women to go in this story: La, High Priestess of the Flaming God of Opar, the Lost Colony of Atlantis, which was originally a Martian colony.

(smiles)

You see, I've also decided to deal with ritualistic religion in Tarzan, too.

COLEMAN

Tarzan fornicating with the black girl is not going to go over big with your Southern audience, Eddie.

ERB

I'll only suggest it in the censored version. If it still bothers them, I'll win them back with the next John Carter. After all, he has slaves; everyone on Mars has slaves. And we all know that Thomas Jefferson fornicated with his slaves.

COLEMAN

Olga reminds me of the hardware store owner's Russian wife in American Falls. She was quite fond of you.

ERB

You have a good memory, Coleman. But you have forgotten that you never gave me enough time off work to do anything about her. I was lucky to look up her dress when she climbed the ladder to get some item or other.

(smiles)

To be honest, she once let me rub her tits while she jacked me off, but I never had the time to properly bed her.

COLEMAN

You were barely sixteen; she must have been twenty-five. Her husband would have killed you had he found out. How can you complain?

They LAUGH.

COLEMAN

(continuing)

Was she your first sexual experience, Eddie?

ERB

No. The first was Indiana Sue, a saloon girl in American Falls. She was Texas Pete's favorite whore.

ERB

(continuing)

She had this technique she called the Indiana Snapping Pussy; it was an inch by inch cock massage, taking immense concentration and vaginal muscle control. She told me it was only for special customers.

COLEMAN

How did you manage to keep that a secret after all these years?

ERB

I knew you would have snitched me off to Ma, just like you did with Texas Pete.

COLEMAN

I had to look out for you Eddie and take care of your welfare. There were several gunmen that wanted to kill you in American Falls. I did what was best for you. Texas Pete was a very bad influence.

ERB

How can you say that, Coleman? He taught me how to break a horse and to trick shoot a gun. He was the rugged personification of the Wild West, where men were men, and made their own law.

COLEMAN

Until he met Nate Champion.

They stare into each other's eyes, an old game young boys play.

ERB

The Wild West was nature  
in the raw with modern  
technology. We will likely  
never legally experience  
that kind of freedom again.

COLEMAN

Some people would call your  
so-called state of raw  
nature "anarchy", Eddie.

They continue with their game of stare-down, but they both  
know the older brother always wins.

ERB

Enough of that. Look, if  
Metcalf gives me a bad  
time over this one, I'm  
thinking of sending it to  
another magazine and making  
him bid on it.

COLEMAN

Can you get away with that?

ERB

Why not? These guys exploit  
writers like slaves. If we  
were to organize and form a  
syndicate, we'd sure have a  
lot more bargaining leverage.

COLEMAN

Good God, Eddie, your  
infatuation with London is  
turning you into a Goddamn  
union man. You should hear  
yourself!

(pauses)

So, what kind of gods do they  
have on Mars?

ERB

As on Earth, not any real  
ones.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BARSOOM, THE MOUTH OF THE RIVER ISS -- DAY

John Carter again astrally-projects to Barsoom, wakes up naked in a strange forest of beautiful trees, filled with huge blossoms, voiceless birds. The trees have trunks a hundred feet in diameter, appear to have been pruned.

The trees are so high, Carter can only see upwards of sixty to eighty feet before the dense foilage obscures his view. The stems and branches of the trees are smooth polished wood. Some trees are ebony black, others are ivory white, scarlet, azure, yellow, the deepest purple.

The ground is covered with golf-course-like red vegetation, showing signs of deliberate cultivation.

Carter walks towards the edge of the forest, beholds a shimmering blue water sea disappearing into the far horizon, and between the sea and the forest, a broad expanse of meadow land.

To Carter's right, a mighty river cuts its way between enormous bluffs, empties into the sea.

By the nearest bank of the river a SCORE OF ODD GROTESQUE MANLIKE FIGURES - THE PLANT MEN - twelve feet high when erect, move slowly across the meadow. Their torsos and legs are humanoid, but their arms are boneless, like elephant trunks, moving in sinuous, snakelike undulations as their tips pass over the vegetation.

The creatures are hairless, their skin a strange, ghoulis blue color, except for a broad band of white encircling a single protruding eye, which is all white with neither pupil nor iris.

Their noses are ragged, inflamed, circular holes resembling bullet wounds. They have no mouth. Their heads, with the exceptions of their faces, are covered with jet black hair ten to twelve inches long. Each hair is the size of an angle worm, they WRITHE AND WRIGGLE over the scalp and face.

Their feet are humanoid, but extremely large and out of proportion to the rest of their body, at least three feet long, very flat and broad.

They have massive tails six feet long, broad where it meets the torso, tapering to a thin blade at the tip, which sticks up at a right angle to the ground.

Suspended by a stem from most of their armpits dangle tiny replicas of themselves six inches long.

As they come close to Carter, he realizes that the tips of their arm-trunks contain razor-like talons with which they clip the vegetation, suck up into their trunks.

A strange SHRIEKING WAIL comes from the direction of the bluffs, fills the air. Every creature turns towards the sound, each hair on their heads stands straight up like antennae.

Their protruding eyes turn towards the largest Plant Man. He makes a strange PURRING SOUND from the mouth of one of his arms, springs towards the bluffs, leaps like a kangaroo, twenty to thirty feet in a single bound on its massive feet. The rest of the herd follows in the same manner.

Carter follows, is able to leap farther than any of the creatures, catches up in seconds.

Huge boulders cover the base of the bluffs. The Plant Men gather at the base of one of the larger boulders. A band of SIX GREEN MARTIANS, TWO MEN AND FOUR FEMALES, back to back, in wide-eyed amazement, stand on top of the boulder, face the obviously hostile Plant Men, armed with long swords and daggers.

The leader of the Plant Men rushes forward, leaps over the Green Martians. As he passes above them, he brings the flat part his tail down with a mighty sweep, BAM! on the head of one of the males, CRUSHES! it like an eggshell.

The rest of the Plant Men emit LOUD PURRS from their hands, terrorize the Martians. Simultaneously, two on each side of the boulder jump over the Martians and bring their tails down in the same manner, BAM! BAM! killing two more of the Martians, leaving only one male and two females alive.

As two more Plant Men leap over the survivors, the male, now savvy to the means of attack, SPLITS one of them open from head to groin with his long sword, SPLAT! The other escapes his sword, dispatches the remaining two females, BAM! with one mighty blow of his tail.

The last Green Martian rushes to meet them, swings his sword over his head, CUTS AND HEWS from right to left, makes a dreadful path, SPLAT! SPLAT! through the crowd of hideous creatures.

He cuts his way through, makes a mad dash for the shelter of the forest.

Carter sees enough. He leaps to the boulder of the dead Martians, retrieves a long sword, with giant leaps, rushes to the aid of the survivor. The Green Martian is pinned against a boulder, he holds off the Plant Men, they HISS and SCREECH as they press in.

Their protruding eyes, focused on the Green Martian, do not perceive Carter's approach until he has HACKED! down four of them from the rear.

The Green Martian rushes forward to meet Carter, his long sword, with circular figure-eight strokes, making short shrift of all Plant Men in his reach, SPLAT! SPLAT! SPLAT!

A SHRILL WEIRD CRY from the bluffs, again and again, LOUDER AND LOUDER.

The two warriors keep fighting, brave the cuts and slices from the razor-sharp talons and tails of the ghoulish monsters. They are soon covered in a green, sticky syrup SPURTING from the wounds of the Plant Men.

They back up against the boulder to prevent the overhead attacks, have almost dispatched them all, again the SHRILL WAILING SOUND from the golden bluffs.

Carter looks to the cliffs far above.

ZOOM on a strange figure of a WHITE MAN with long blond hair, wearing a headpiece with mystic jewel.

He stands on a natural balcony in the face of the Gold Cliffs, makes the SHRILL SHRIEKING SIGNAL CALL, waves a hand towards the mouth of the river as if beckoning to something.

Carter gasps in surprise as he looks in that direction.

AERIAL SHOT: out of the river's mouth stream THOUSANDS OF PLANT MEN AND WHITE APES crossing the meadow towards the boulder. The White Apes are humanoid, stand fifteen feet high, like the Green Martians, have an extra set of arms midway down their torsos.

Their snouts and teeth are like those of an African gorilla, their bodies covered with shaggy white hair. They can run erect or on all fours. They are ferocious and vicious creatures.

CARTER

(points)

It will be a great death.  
Look!

GREEN MARTIAN

We may at least die fighting  
as great warriors should,  
John Carter!

CLOSE on Carter's face as it registers amazement.

CARTER

Tars Tarkas! Is it really  
you?

TARS TARKAS

Yes, John Carter, but there  
is no time to waste. We must  
make for the cliffs. There  
lies our only hope of escape.  
Perhaps we can find a cave or  
narrow ledge where two can  
hold off this motley, unarmed,  
horde.

Carter and Tars Tarkas finish off the remaining Plant Men in the original group, race across the red vegetation for the cliffs.

Carter takes the lead, leaps in great bounds to the base of the cliffs, towering overhead five thousand feet, glimmering like pure gold in the sunlight, broken here and there with streaks and patches of dusky red, green, and occasional areas of white quartz.

The sun passes the cliff's zenith, as the light changes, Carter sees what he has been looking for.

ZOOM on black caves interspersed at random places in the side of the cliff, PAN down to large trees at the base, their upper boughs high enough to allow access to some of the caves.

Tars Tarkas catches up to Carter, the hideous horde in close pursuit.

He nods as Carter apprises him of the plan, they run for the trees.

They reach the trees just as the swiftest of the Plant Men jumps onto Carter, PURRS LOUDLY, attaches his talons to Carter's flesh, begins to SUCK him dry.

Carter breaks free. He uses his sword as a dagger, STABS down, SQUISH! dispatches the creature. The whole horde of Plant Men and White Apes are upon them.

Carter and Tars Tarkas fight mightily, back up against the trunk of a great tree. Tars points to an opening at the base.

TARS TARKAS

Here is shelter for at least  
one, John Carter.

CARTER

In with you then, Tars Tarkas!  
Obey me!

Reluctantly, Tars Tarkas obeys, slides down into the opening. At once the horde is upon Carter, smother him, press their advantage.

INT. INSIDE TREE TRUNK -- DAY

Tars Tarkas slides inside the tree trunk, a small dim place, just big enough for two. He drops his sword, with both hands reaches up, grabs Carter's ankles, pulls him down into safety.

The opening is too small for more than one of the attackers to enter. After many try and fail, they circle the tree, the White Apes HOWL, GROWL and SHRIEK, the Plant Men PURR in frustration.

They give up after an hour, leaving a dozen behind to guard the opening.

Torn and bleeding, Carter and Tars catch their breath, rest briefly to regain strength.

CARTER

What do you make of it all,  
Tars Tarkas? Where in the  
deuce are we?

TARS TARKAS

(surprised)

Where are we? Do you tell me,  
John Carter, that you know  
not where you be?

CARTER

I know we are on Barsoom, but,  
no, I know not where we be.

TARS TARKAS

I came here to the Lost Sea  
of Korus seeking my lost love,  
John Carter, and I hoped to  
find you too here, roaming  
the Valley Dor.

CARTER

And that was the River Iss  
that empties into the Lost  
Sea of Korus in the Valley  
Dor?

TARS TARKAS

This is the valley of love  
and peace and rest to which  
every Barsoomian since time  
immemorial has longed to  
pilgrimage at the end of a  
life of hate and strife and  
bloodshed.

Tars pauses, motions to the world outside the tree trunk  
with his hands, says coldly and ironically:

TARS TARKAS

(continuing)

This, John Carter, is Heaven!

Carter lays a hand upon the Martian's shoulder, tries to  
empathize with him. It is rare for a Green Martian to show  
such emotion.

CARTER

I am sorry, Tars Tarkas.  
I can't imagine what it  
must be like.

TARS TARKAS

Think, John Carter, of the  
countless billions of  
Barsoomians who have taken  
the voluntary pilgrimage down  
this cruel river since the  
beginning of time. Then  
think of them falling  
into the clutches of the  
ferocious and terrible  
creatures that have today  
assailed us.

CARTER

Yes, Tars Tarkas, the  
Barsoomian religion is  
certainly a vile and  
pernicious superstition.

CARTER

(continuing)

We must return to our people  
and expose this monstrous  
lie and bring its hideous  
priests to justice.

TARS TARKAS

No one may return from the  
Valley Dor and live, John  
Carter. Legend says that  
once a Red Martian escaped  
but when he told his story,  
he was tried for blasphemy  
and died a horrible death.  
It cannot be done.

CARTER

Then we will do it!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COLEMAN'S STATIONARY STORE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Coleman looks puzzled.

COLEMAN

That's not much of an  
indictment against  
ritualistic religion.

ERB

Wait, there's more to come.  
Carter and Tars Tarkas gain  
access through the branches  
of the tree to the cave  
complex carved out by the  
Holy Therns, the guardians of  
Valley Dor. Therns are white,  
but bald, wear long blonde  
wigs with diadems with a  
jewel signifying their degree  
of enlightenment.

(waves hand)

ERB

(continuing)

Carter and Tars Tarkas are aided by a Red Martian woman prisoner, Thuvia, a beautiful girl, who shows them the way out to the inner gardens. On the way, Thuvia kills a Thern priest, Sator Throg; Carter puts on his harness and blonde wig; his headpiece and mystic jewel designate him as a Thern of the Tenth Cycle, which is a sphere or plane of consciousness.

(clears throat)

Acting as if he is in charge of two prisoners, they exit the cave complex, enter the inner gardens. However, the Therns are being attacked by the First Born Black Pirates of Barsoom. They are after the women and gather as many as they can in their great ships, the Therns put up a vicious but losing fight. The Pirates discover Thuvia, a dozen of them attack...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. INNER GARDENS OF THE THERNS - NIGHT

Carter, Tars Tarkas, and THUVIA exit the Thern cave complex inside the Otz Mountains, come out into the inner gardens of the Holy Therns. Thuvia is totally naked, has proud pear-shaped breasts, pointed red nipples, holds a radium pistol in both of her hands.

The Therns are under attack by scores of flying battleships belonging to the BLACK PIRATES of Barsoom, the First Born, the dominant race on the planet.

They are large black men over six feet tall; like Red Martians, they have black hair; unlike Red Martians, they have ebony skin, clear cut features that are handsome in the extreme, their eyes are well set and large, a slight narrowness gives them a crafty appearance, the iris of their eyes is of extreme blackness, the eyeball itself quite white and clear.

The pirates swoop down out of the great battleships in two man fliers, land them in the gardens, fight the THERNS, go after their women.

Thuvia waves at the chaos before them.

THUVIA

Do you understand now,  
O Prince, why a million  
warriors guard the domains  
of the Holy Therns by day  
and night? The scene you  
are witnessing now is but a  
repetition of what I have  
seen enacted a score of times  
during the fifteen years  
I have been a prisoner here.  
From time immemorial the  
Black Pirates of Barsoon have  
preyed upon the Holy Therns.

CARTER

They leave their fliers  
unattended. Why don't the  
Therns seize them and cut  
off their escape?

THUVIA

The Therns do not dare.  
They tried it once, but  
the consequences proved  
most dire. The next night  
for a whole moon thereafter  
a thousand of their battle-  
ships circled the Mountains  
of Otz pouring tons of  
projectiles upon the temples,  
the gardens, and the courts.

THUVIA

(continuing)

Every Thern who was not  
killed, was driven for  
safety into the  
subterranean galleries.

Carter spies a two-man flier and directs Tars and Thuvia to follow him. They reach it, enter its cramped deck, Carter places his hand on the starting lever, presses his thumb against the button which controls the ray of repulsion, the craft refuses to budge.

The repulsion ray tanks are undercharged, allowing only the weight of two normal people, the weight of the Green Martian dooms them.

The Black Pirates see them, rush the flier. Thuvia raises her pistols, fires, ZZZZTBANG! ZZZZTBANG! two Black Pirates drop dead in their tracks.

Carter presses the repulsion button far in, locks it, sets the lever for high speed, as the Pirates reach the ship, Carter slides over the deck, with sword drawn, meets the attack.

Tars Tarkas has no time to react, the flier takes off at high speed, Thuvia cries out:

THUVIA

My Prince, O my Prince; I  
would rather remain and die  
with -

Her voice is lost in the distance, the flier disappears behind a mountain peak.

With his great sword, Carter weaves a net of death around him with his sword, CLANG! SQUISH! HACK! SLICE! he decimates the attackers.

The Black Pirates back off, take a breather, eye Carter with malignant fury, yet with a touch of respect.

PIRATE

Thern, you fight like a Dator.  
But for your detestable  
yellow hair and your white  
skin you would be an honor  
to the First Born of Barsoom.

CARTER

I am no Thern.

Carter is WHACKED from behind between his shoulder blades by a heavy object, almost knocking him to the ground. He whirls around to meet the challenge, the object continues in its path, hits a Pirate squarely in the face, BAM! knocks him senseless to the sward.

The object is the anchor of a ten man cruiser being reeled-in, the cruiser flies low fifty feet overhead.

Carter leaps into the air over the heads of the Pirates, grabs for the anchor, gets a hold, is dragged through the higher vegetation of the garden, SCRAPE! the blacks below SHRIEK and HOWL at his escape.

The cruiser veers west, then heads south, beyond the Golden Cliffs, out over the Valley Dor, six thousand feet below, the Lost Sea of Korus shimmers in the moonlight.

EXT. THE SKIES OF SOUTHERN POLAR BARSOOM - NIGHT

Carter climbs onto the anchor, sits on its arm, slowly, he climbs up the anchor chain toward the deck above him, he gets a hand on the deck rail, a BLACK PIRATE faces him full of triumphant hate.

They stare at one another, the Pirate goes for his revolver, aims at the center of Carter's forehead, Carter grabs his throat with his free hand, the Pirate's finger clenches the trigger.

PIRATE

Die, cursed Thern!

His voice is cut off as Carter clamps down on his windpipe, the hammer CLICKS on an empty chamber.

Carter pulls him over the deck, the Pirate drops the revolver, grabs with both hands for the railing, Carter wrings his neck, SNAP! hurls him over the side, watches him merge with the darkness below.

The nearer moon passes below the horizon, the light of the further moon brings into sharp relief SIX black warriors sprawled about the deck in sleep.

A SEVENTH WARRIOR rapes a young white girl, who is securely bound next to a rapid-fire gun; she wears a Thern wig and headpiece, her bright green eyes are widespread in an expression of horrified anticipation and erotic lust, she watches Carter climb on deck, spies the mystic jewel in the center of Carter's stolen headpiece, SIGHS in relief, clamps her legs around the waist of her rapist so he can't escape.

The Black Pirate misinterprets her maneuver, GRUNTS, ejaculates, he does not see Carter approach, Carter easily clamps one hand over the Pirate's mouth, with the other stabs his dagger into the side of the Pirate's neck, SQUISH! rips the blade out through his windpipe, SLASH!

His blood SPRAYS all over the girl, a baptism of death.

Carter grabs the man by his harness, hurls him over the deck. Carter squats down before the girl, she whispers:

GIRL

They raped me one by one.  
The one you killed was the  
last. I assume you took  
care of the pilot?

(Carter nods)

I can aid you with the  
rest, and you will need all  
the aid available when they  
awaken.

CARTER

Some of them will awake in  
Korus.

She cruelly smiles at the idea, Carter cuts her free; her beauty is stunning, she has bright green eyes, large uplifted breasts and large pink nipples, if she wasn't covered with blood, she would be the perfect statue of a goddess.

GIRL

Give me a revolver; I can  
use that upon those your  
sword does not silence in  
time.

Carter does as he's bid, then begins the grisly task at hand, he approaches the nearest sleeper, hurls him over the deck, the warrior's SCREAM fades in the distance below.

The second awakes at Carter's touch, but not in time, Carter hurls him over, his HORRIFYING SCREAM awakes the remaining five, as they stand to their feet, the girl shoots, ZZZZT BANG! a Black Pirate falls dead on the deck.

The girl smiles, she is turned on by the kill, her nipples harden.

The others rush Carter with their swords, the girl can't get a shot, stalks the perimeter, tries to get an angle.

Carter meets the Pirate's swords, CLANG! CLANG! CLANG! sparks fly all around as steel smites steel, then the DULL SICKENING CRUNCH! of shoulder bone parting beneath the keen edge of Carter's Martian sword.

The girl works her way into a prime shooting position, the three remaining warriors attack at the same time, ZZZZT BANG! the girl drops one with a bullet to his brain, Carter disarms one warrior, CLANG! his sword goes over the deck, he drives his sword into the other till the blade sticks out three feet on the other side, SQUISH! his sword is wrenched from his hand as the man goes down, THUD!

Carter takes on the disarmed Pirate hand to hand, he rushes Carter, Carter ducks beneath his outstretched arms, sidesteps to the right, pivots on his left toe, swings a terrible right punch to the Pirate's jaw, POW! knocks him out cold.

GIRL

(LAUGHS)

You are no Thern, for all  
your golden locks or the  
harness of Sator Throg.  
Never lived there upon all  
Barsoom before one who  
could fight as you have  
fought this night. Who  
are you?

CARTER

I am John Carter, Prince of  
the House of Tardos Mors,  
Jeddak of Helium. And whom  
has the honor of serving  
been accorded me?

PHAIDOR

I am Phaidor, daughter of  
Matai Shang, Holy Hekkador  
of the Holy Therns, Master  
of Life and Death upon  
Barsoom, Brother of Issus,  
Princess of Life Eternal.  
I summoned you by the Force  
of Kali-Mundi and Issus sent  
you to save me. They  
thought they were raping me,  
but all they were doing was  
giving me power over them.  
With every violation of  
my body, they sealed their  
own doom. Issus saves  
those that trust in her!

CARTER

Have you ever seen Issus?

PHAIDOR

Her radiant beauty would  
slay anyone who beheld  
her.

The Pirate starts to regain consciousness, Carter strips off his harness, binds his hands and feet to a heavy gun carriage, Phaidor watches, approaches, places the barrel of the revolver between the Black Pirate's eyes.

PHAIDOR

Why not the simpler way?

CARTER

I am no murderer. I kill in self defense only.

PHAIDOR

Like you did the first two sleepers? You are surely a living contradiction.

CARTER

Those were different; at the time we were outnumbered, now the odds are on our side. Besides, I desire to question him.

She shakes her head, narrows her brows, shrugs, lowers the revolver.

PHAIDOR

A waste of a thrill for some odd sense of morality.

Carter takes the helm of the drifting cruiser, it flies at full speed on the heading set by the dead pilot, he swings it about on a northward course, presses the repulsive ray button, shoots up into outer space. It becomes freezing cold, there is little oxygen at the altitudes they reach.

PHAIDOR

(continuing)

Unconsciousness comes quickly at this altitude. Unless you are inviting death for us all, you had best drop, and that quickly.

Carter descends at a steep angle, Phaidor swoons, the black is unconscious, Carter fights from blacking out, succeeds, they reach a breathable height, Phaidor comes to, then the black.

PHAIDOR

It was a close call.

CARTER

It has taught me two things though. First, that even Phaidor, daughter of the Master of Life and Death, is mortal.

PHAIDOR

There is immortality only in Issus, and it is only for the race of Therns. Thus, am I immortal. If the other thing you have just learned has led to as erroneous deductions as the first, you are little richer in knowledge than you were before.

CARTER

The other is that our ebony friend here does not hail from the nearer moon as everyone has been taught to believe. He was like to have died at a few thousand feet above Barsoom. Had we continued the five thousand haads that lie between Barsoom and Thuria, he would have been but the frozen memory of a man.

PHAIDOR

(astonished; to Pirate)

If you are not of Thuria, then where?

The black remains silent, she STAMPS her foot on the deck.

PHAIDOR

(continuing)

The daughter of Matai Shang is not accustomed to having her queries unanswered. One of the lesser breed should feel honored that a member of the holy race that was born to inherit eternal life should deign even to notice him.

The black smiles wickedly, as if he knows something she does not.

XODAR

Xodar, Dator of the First Born of Barsoom, is accustomed to give commands, not to receive them. I am only glad that I was the first to rape you; that is, after your father.

Carter is shocked at the revelation, looks at Phaidor, she lowers her eyes, does not deny the accusation. Xodar turns to Carter.

XODAR

What are your intentions concerning me?

CARTER

I intend on taking you both back to Helium. You will help them listen to me, for if they do, there will be no more voluntary pilgrimages down the River Iss, and the impossible belief that they have cherished for ages shall be shattered into a thousand pieces.

XODAR

Are you of Helium?

CARTER

I am a Prince of the House of Tardos Mors, Jeddak of Helium, but I am not of Barsoom. I am of another world, the one you call Jasoom.

XODAR

I can well believe you are not of Barsoom; none of this world could have bested eight of the First Born single-handed. But how is it that you wear the golden hair and jeweled circlet of a Holy Thern?

CARTER

I had forgotten them.

Carter removes the wig, Xodar is amazed, he doesn't see a bald head, sees Carter's black close-cropped hair instead.

XODAR

You are indeed of another world. With the skin of a Thern, the black hair of a First Born and the muscles of a dozen Dators it was no disgrace even for Xodar to acknowledge your supremacy.

CARTER

I glean that your name is Xodar, but whom, pray, are the First Born, and what a Dator?

## XODAR

The First Born of Barsoom are the race of black men of which I am Dator, or, as the lesser Barsoomians would say, Prince. My race is the oldest on the planet. We trace our lineage, unbroken, direct to the Tree of Life which flourished in the center of Valley Dor twenty-million years ago.

(smiles at Phaidor)

The Therns are but the result of ages of evolution from the pure white ape of antiquity. They are of a lower order still. There is but one race of true and immortal humans on Barsoom. It is the race of black men.

Carter has not been watching the air in front of the cruiser, suddenly Xodar has a look of triumph on his face, Carter looks apprehensively over his shoulder, a massive battleship looms close astern, a boarding party of more than A HUNDRED PIRATES look at them from the main deck.

Carter reverses the engines, CHACHUNK, dives a sheer one hundred feet, ZOOM! the battleship races overhead, Carter puts it in forward, CHACHUNK, raises the cruiser at a sharp angle, throws the speed lever to its last notch, RRRRRMMMM, shoots the steel prow of the cruiser straight at the WHIRRING propellers, ZOOM!

The sun rises over the horizon.

The cruiser CRASHES! into the propellers, Carter, Phaidor and Xodar are nearly pitched overboard from the shock of impact.

Carter reverses the engines, CHACHUNK, the cruiser's bow is wedged in the hole it has created in the battleship's stern, as Carter wiggles the stuck ship loose, SCORES of black Pirates swarm the deck, smother Carter with their numbers.

The Pirates cut Xodar free, he has authority over them all.

XODAR

Secure them, but do not  
injure them.

Carter's and Phaidor's wrists are bound in front of them, they are tied together with a rope, three feet of slack between.

They are taken below and tossed into a small compartment with a sorapus hardwood bench, there is a single port hole; the floor, ceiling and walls are made from carborundum aluminum, a light impenetrable composition extensively utilized in the construction of Martian fighting ships; they are locked inside the room.

Phaidor has enough slack to sit on the bench, she sits spread-legged on the bench, stares at Carter erotically, Carter fights the basic instinct, fails, gets an erection, she smiles at her power over him, stares at his penis.

CARTER

Do you find the study of  
the lower orders interesting?

PHAIDOR

Oh, very; especially when  
they have such an excellent  
profile.

(yawns)

Do you know where we are  
going?

CARTER

To solve the mystery of  
the eternal hereafter, I  
imagine.

PHAIDOR

I am going to a worse fate  
than that.

CARTER

What do you believe your  
fate will be?

PHAIDOR

I can only guess, since no Thern damsel of all the millions that have been stolen away by Black Pirates during the ages they have raided our domains has ever returned to narrate her experiences among them.

CARTER

Is it not a just retribution? Do not the Therns do likewise with the poor creatures who take the voluntary pilgrimage down the River of Mystery? Was not Thuvia for fifteen years a plaything and a slave? Is it less than just that you should suffer as you have caused others to suffer?

PHAIDOR

You do not understand. We Therns are a holy race. It is an honor to a lesser creature to be a slave among us. Did we not occasionally save a few of the lower orders who stupidly float down an unknown river to an unknown end all would become the prey of the Plant Men and the Great White Apes.

CARTER

But do you not by every means encourage the superstition among those of the outside world? That is the wickedest of your deeds. Can you tell me why you foster the cruel deception?

PHAIDOR

All life on Barsoom is created solely for the support of the race of Therns. How else could we live did the outer world not furnish our labor and our food? Think you that a Thern would demean himself by labor?

CARTER

Is it true then that you practice incest?

PHAIDOR

That term is purely for the lower orders; it has no meaning among the Holy Therns. Everything we choose to do is holy.

Carter stands, walks to her, she takes his penis in her hand, masturbates him.

CARTER

Is it true then that you eat human flesh?

PHAIDOR

Truly we eat the flesh of lower orders. Do not you also?

CARTER

The flesh of beasts, yes, but not the flesh of man.

PHAIDOR

As man may eat the flesh of beasts, so may gods eat the flesh of man. The Holy Therns are the gods of Barsoom. Come, let me teach you the ways of the left handed path.

She flicks her tongue over the tip of his penis, fellates him, she stops, holds his penis against her cheek, looks up into his eyes.

PHAIDOR

You are an unbeliever now,  
but should we be fortunate  
enough to escape the Black  
Pirates and enter the court  
of Matai Shang, we shall find  
an argument to convince you  
of the error of your ways.  
And - perhaps we shall find a  
way to keep you as - as - one  
of us.

Carter smiles, sits down next to her, raises his bound hands over her head, pulls her bloody body close, French-kisses her.

CARTER

I fear that I would ill  
requite your father's  
hospitality. The first  
thing that I should do were  
I a Thern would be to set an  
armed guard at the mouth of  
the River Iss to escort the  
poor deluded voyagers back to  
the outer world. Also I  
should devote my life to the  
extermination of the hideous  
Plant Men and their horrible  
companions, the great White  
Apes.

PHAIDOR

No, no, you must not say  
such terrible things -  
you must not even think  
them.

PHAIDOR

(continuing)

Should they ever guess that you entertained such frightful thoughts, should we chance to regain the temples of the Therns, they would mete out a frightful death to you. Not even my - my - not even I could save you.

She pulls her arms over his head, SHUDDERS, Carter realizes that she is beyond argument, he stretches out next to her on the polished hardwood, slides his penis inside her, he sucks her proud pink nipples, takes her slowly.

CARTER

We will escape the Black Pirates and then I will take you to Helium. You shall not convert me to the error of your ways. Forget the incestuous court of Matai Shang.

PHAIDOR

Yes, my Savior; feel the Kali-Mundi, the Great Serpent, rise up out of the shadows. Issus will give us the power.

She moves passionately against him, she kisses his neck, rubs her hands up and down his spine.

PHAIDOR

Oh, John Carter, I love you. Love me now, and I will make you holy.

CARTER

I am taking you to the Temple of Reward in Helium.

CARTER

(continuing)

There, on the Pedestal of  
Truth before the Throne of  
Righteousness, you shall  
tell my people the truth.

PHAIDOR

Rescue me from the Black  
Pirates and we will let  
Issus determine our  
destinies.

She gives herself to him, they copulate as one, there is a  
frenzy of motion, he GRUNTS, ejaculates, she squeezes her  
thighs, milks him dry.

PHAIDOR

(continuing)

I have baptized you in  
Issus; you have been made  
holy. You may copulate me  
any time you please.

Carter copulates her again; before he can finish, the door  
opens, Xodar walks in, he smiles as he watches the lovers  
disentangle.

XODAR

She is more passionate when  
she is being forced.

Phaidor scowls at him.

XODAR

(continuing)

Since you cannot escape under  
any circumstances, I cannot  
see the necessity for  
keeping you confined below.  
I will cut your bonds and  
you may come on deck.

XODAR

(continuing)

You will witness something very interesting, and as you never shall return to the outer world it will do no harm to permit you to see it.

(smiles)

You will see what no other than the First Born or their slaves know the existence of - the subterranean entrance to the Holy Land, to the real Heaven of Barsoom.

(pauses)

It will be an excellent lesson for this daughter of the Therns, for she shall see the Temple of Issus, and Issus, perchance, shall embrace her.

Phaidor stands, raises her head high.

PHAIDOR

What blasphemy is this, calot of a pirate? Issus would wipe out your entire breed if you ever came within sight of her temple.

XODAR

You have much to learn, Thern; nor do I envy you the manner in which you will learn it.

He smiles wickedly, cuts them loose, escorts them up to the main deck.

EXT. MAIN DECK ON THE FIRST BORN'S BATTLESHIP - DAY

AERIAL SHOT: The battleship flies over a great field of snow and ice. ZOOM in on main deck.

CARTER

What is your course, Xodar?

XODAR

A little west of south; you will see the Otz Valley directly. We shall skirt it for a few hundred haads.

CARTER

The Otz Valley! But, man, is not there where lie the domains of the Thern from which I but just escaped?

XODAR

Yes, you crossed this ice field last night in the long chase that you led us. The Otz Valley lies in a mighty depression at the South Pole. It sunk thousands of ads below the level of the surrounding country, like a great round bowl. A hundred haads from its northern boundary rise the Otz Mountains which circle the inner Valley Dor, in the exact center of which lies the Lost Sea of Korus. On the shore of this sea stands the Golden Temple of Issus in the Land of the First Born. It is there that we are bound.

The ship steers a little north of west, a great black mountain rises from the desolate waste of ice, it is not high and appears to have a flat top. Xodar leaves to attend to business, leaves Carter and Phaidor alone at the rail.

CARTER

Is what he has been telling me true?

PHAIDOR

In part, yes. That about the outer valley is true, but what he says of the location of the Temple of Issus in the center of his country is false....Oh, it cannot be true, it cannot be true! For if it were true then for countless ages have my people gone to torture and ignominious death at the hands of their cruel enemies, instead of to the beautiful Life Eternal that we have been taught to believe Issus holds for us.

CARTER

As the lesser Barsoomians of the outer world have been lured by you to the terrible Valley Dor, so may it be that the Therns themselves have been lured by the First Born to an equally horrible fate. It would be a stern and awful retribution, Phaidor; but a just one.

PHAIDOR

I cannot believe it.

CARTER

We shall see.

They approach the black mountain, near its dark, truncated cone, the battleship slows down, they top the crest of the mountain, below them, the yawning mouth of a huge circular well, the bottom lost in inky blackness.

The diameter of the enormous pit is a thousand feet, its walls are smooth, appear to be composed of black basaltic rock.

## EXT. THE GREAT SHAFT - DAY

The battleship hovers motionless over the center of the gaping void, slowly settles into the black chasm, lower and lower, when she is enveloped in darkness, the lights of the great ship are thrown on, a dim halo illuminates the sides of the great shaft.

Down, down, they descend, for a good half hour; abruptly, the shaft terminates in the dome of mighty subterranean world, below them rise and fall the billows of a buried sea, the whole underworld is illuminated in a phosphorescent radiance. Thousands of ships dot the ocean, little islands rise here and there to support the strange and colorless vegetation of the strange world.

## EXT. SEA OF OMEAN - DAY

The battleship descends upon the water with slow and majestic grace, her great propellers are drawn and housed, replaced by smaller, more powerful water propellers.

They glide through the water, most of the ships they pass are war vessels, there are a few lighters and barges, but no typical merchant fleet. Xodar approaches Carter and Phaidor who stand dumbfound at the rail.

## XODAR

Here is the harbor of the  
Navy of the First Born.  
The Sea of Omean is larger  
than the Sea of Korus. It  
receives the waters of the  
lesser sea above it. To keep  
it from filling above a  
certain level, we have four  
great pumping stations that  
force the oversupply back  
into the reservoirs far north  
from which the Red Men draw  
the water which irrigates  
their farm lands.

They pass several islands with strangely shaped circular buildings, apparently roofless, small barred windows pierce the walls midway between the ground and their tops, armed guards squat on benches outside.

Most of these islands are no larger than an acre, they approach a much larger island, the ship pulls up next to it, docks, Xodar and a HALF DOZEN OFFICERS AND MEN escort Carter and Phaidor off the battleship, approach a large oval structure a couple of hundred yards from the shore.

XODAR

(to Phaidor; smiles wickedly)

You shall soon see Issus.  
The few prisoners we take  
are presented to her.  
Occasionally she selects  
slaves from among them to  
replenish the ranks of her  
handmaidens. None serves  
Issus above a single year.

Phaidor clings to Carter's side, no longer the proud daughter of the Master of Life and Death upon Barsoom, but a young and frightened girl in the power of relentless enemies.

The oval building is completely roofless, in its center a large tank of water set below the level of the floor like a swimming pool in a natatorium, near one of sides of the pool, a large black object floats.

They approach the edge of the pool next to the black object; it is a submarine, a hatch opens, a MAN appears out of the strange craft.

XODAR

Transmit to your officer the  
commands of Dator Xodar. Say  
to him that Dator Xodar, with  
officers and men, escorting  
two prisoners, would be  
transported to the Gardens  
of Issus beside the Golden  
Temple.

SUBMARINER

Blessed be the shell of thy  
first ancestor, most noble  
Dator. It shall be done  
even as thou sayest.

He goes below, a moment later AN OFFICER welcomes them  
inside his craft.

INT. INSIDE SUBMARINE - DAY

They are taken to the lowermost deck, their cabin extends  
the entire length of the ship, portholes line either side  
below the water line, they are locked in.

No sooner are they below, the outer submarine hatch is  
closed and secured, CLUNK! the ship begins to VIBRATE AND  
HUM, THE RHYTHMIC PURR of its machinery constantly in the  
background.

PHAIDOR

Where can we be going in  
such a tiny pool of water?

CARTER

From the appearance of the  
craft, I judge we are going  
down.

Phaidor shudders, they experience a sinking feeling in their  
stomachs, the ship descends swiftly, Phaidor holds Carter  
tight against her.

PHAIDOR

Save me! Save me and your  
every wish shall be granted.  
Anything within the power of  
the Holy Therns to give will  
be yours. Phaidor - Phaidor  
already is yours.

She throws her arms around his neck, French-kisses him.

CARTER

Never forget, my Holy Thern,  
that I am married to another,  
the Princess Dejah Thoris of  
Helium. You must learn how  
to share me with her.

Phaidor breaks away from him, hisses:

PHAIDOR

Calot! Calot of a blasphemer!  
Think you that Phaidor,  
daughter of Matai Shang,  
supplicates? She commands.  
What to her is your puny  
outer world passion for the  
vile creature you chose in  
your other life?

(shakes head)

Phaidor has glorified you  
with her love, and you have  
spurned her. Ten thousand  
unthinkably atrocious deaths  
could not atone for the  
affront that you have put  
upon me. The thing you call  
Dejah Thoris shall die the  
most horrible of them all.  
You have sealed the warrant  
for her doom.

Sparks fly from her witchy green eyes, she points a  
condemning finger at him.

PHAIDOR

(continuing)

And you! You shall be the  
meanest slave in the service  
of the goddess you have  
attempted to humiliate.  
Torture and ignominies  
shall be heaped upon you  
until you grovel at my  
feet asking the boon of  
death.

(pauses)

PHAIDOR

(continuing)

In my great gracious  
generosity I shall at  
length grant your prayer,  
and from the High Balcony  
of the Golden Cliffs, I  
shall watch the great  
White Apes tear you  
asunder.

Carter stands amused during her tirade, when she is finished, he points to the porthole, she remembers they are underwater, she trembles, crumples on a bench lining the wall, buries her face in her hands, SOBS like a spoiled little girl.

The submarine's searchlight turns on, Carter looks out a porthole, they are forging through a narrow rock-lined, tubular passage, the propellers cease WHIRRING, the ship comes to a full stop, rises swiftly toward the surface.

Xodar enters the cabin with his men, motions for Carter and Phaidor to come. They exit the submarine into a small subterranean vault, the submarine floats in a large pool in its center.

INT. SUBTERRANEAN VAULT - DAY

Around the edge of the pool, a level platform, the walls of the cave rise perpendicularly for a few feet, arch in the center forming a low roof. The walls about the edge are pierced with a number of entrances leading into dimly lighted passageways. They are forced into one of them, it leads to a large caged elevator, they board the elevator, close the metal gate.

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT- DAY

The elevator rises at a sickening speed, brakes, stops at the landing above, they are led outside of the small structure that houses the top landing of the elevator into a virtual wonderland.

EXT. THE GARDENS AND TEMPLE OF ISSUS - DAY

The Gardens of Issus are a broad scarlet sward full of ivory-stemmed trees with brilliant purple blooms, winding walks paved with rubies, emeralds, turquoise, and diamonds, at the far end, a magnificent temple of burnished gold, hand-wrought with marvelous designs.

Carter and Phaidor stare in amazement.

PHAIDOR

(whispers)

The Temple of Issus.

The GARDENS SWARM WITH BRILLIANTLY TRAPPED BLACK MEN AND WOMEN, among them move RED AND WHITE FEMALES serving their every wish. The white females are bald.

PHAIDOR

Why are the Thern women bald?

XODAR

Because they are. You won't be needing this any longer.

He pulls off her wig and headpiece, throws them on the ground, he moves the prisoners forward, the officers and men TRAMPLE the wig and headpiece underfoot.

Xodar and his company come to a halt at the entrance of the temple, A CORDON OF ARMED GUARDS blocks their way, Xodar speaks to an officer in charge, together they enter the temple. They remain for some time, come back out.

OFFICER

Issus desires to look upon the daughter of Matai Shang and the strange creature from another world who had been a Prince of Helium.

INT. TEMPLE COMPLEX - DAY

They enter the temple complex, are moved through corridors of unthinkable beauty, through magnificent apartments, noble halls, into a bath, where slaves wash them clean.

They are finally taken inside a spacious chamber at the center of the temple. The officer advances to a large door at the far end of the chamber, makes a secret signal, the door opens, a RICHLY TRAPPED COURTIER emerges.

COURTIER

You will be led up to the door; you will then get down on your hands and knees, facing away from the door. You will then crawl backwards until you are told to stop. If Issus desires to look upon you, you will turn and face her.

INT. HOLY OF HOLIES THRONE ROOM OF ISSUS, CARTER'S POINT OF VIEW - DAY

Carter and Phaidor enter the throne room on their knees, crawl backwards for a hundred feet, they are halted by their escort.

VOICE OF ISSUS (OFFSCREEN)

(thin, wavering)

Let them rise.

COURTIER

Rise, but do not face toward Issus.

VOICE OF ISSUS (OFFSCREEN)

The woman pleases me. She shall serve me for the allotted time. The man you may return to the Isle of Shador which lies against the northern shore of the Sea of Omean.

(pauses)

VOICE OF ISSUS (OFFSCREEN)

Let the woman turn and look  
upon Issus, knowing that  
those of the lower orders who  
gaze upon the Holy Vision  
of Her Radiant Face survive  
the blinding glory but a  
single year.

Phaidor pales in a ghastly hue, slowly, she turns as if  
drawn by an invisible yet irresistible force, her arm  
touches Carter's as she turns, he feels her whole body  
shudder.

VOICE OF ISSUS (OFFSCREEN)

Let the woman remain. Remove  
the man. Go!

Carter drops to his hands and knees, crawls through the  
doorway, it is closed behind him, he gets to his feet, Xodar  
and his company of men escort him out of the temple.

EXT. GARDENS OF ISSUS - DAY

They march back leisurely through the gardens.

XODAR

You spared my life when you  
easily might have taken it,  
and I would aid you if I  
might. I can help to make  
your life here more bearable,  
but your fate is inevitable.

CARTER

What will be my fate?

XODAR

That will depend largely  
upon Issus. So long as she  
does not send for you and  
reveal her face to you, you  
may live on for years in as  
mild a form of bondage as I  
can arrange for you.

CARTER

Why would she send for me?

XODAR

The men of the lower orders she often uses for various purposes of amusement. Such a fighter as you, for example, would render fine sport in the monthly rites of the temple. There men are pitted against men, and against beasts for the edification of Issus and the replenishment of her larder.

CARTER

She eats human flesh?

XODAR

She eats only the flesh of the best bred of the Holy Therns and the Red Barsoomians. The flesh of the others goes to our boards. The animals are eaten by the slaves.

AN OFFICER overtakes them.

OFFICER

Issus would look again upon this man.

INT. THRONE ROOM OF ISSUS, CARTER'S POINT OF VIEW - DAY

Carter, separated from Xodar, is back in the throne room on his hands and knees facing away from Issus.

ISSUS (OFFSCREEN)

Let the man rise.

Carter rises.

ISSUS (OFFSCREEN)

Let the man turn and look  
upon Issus.

INT. THRONE ROOM, NORMAL POINT OF VIEW - DAY

Carter turns, sees A PHALANX OF SOLDIERS between him and a raised dais supporting a great bench of carved Sorapus wood, the throne of Issus.

On the throne squats A BLACK FEMALE, she is very old, not a hair remains upon her wrinkled skull, she is toothless except for two yellow fangs, on either side of her thin, hawk-like nose, her eyes burn from the depths of horribly sunken sockets.

The skin of her face is seamed and creased with a million deep-cut furrows, her body is as wrinkled as her face, and just as repulsive.

Emaciated arms and legs are attached to a torso which appears to me mainly a distorted abdomen.

Surrounding her, A COVEN OF FEMALE SLAVES, half Red Martians, half Therns, among them Phaidor, white and trembling, she grins at Carter.

ISSUS

This is the man who slew  
seven of the First Born,  
and, bare-handed, bound  
Dator Xodar with his own  
harness?

COURTIER

Most glorious vision of  
divine loveliness, it is.

ISSUS

Produce Dator Xodar!

Xodar is escorted into the chamber from an adjoining room. Issus glares at him, a baleful light in her hideous eyes.

ISSUS

(continuing)

And you are a Dator of the First Born? For the disgrace you have brought upon the Immortal Race you shall be degraded to a rank below the lowest. No longer be you a Dator, but for evermore a slave of slaves, to fetch and carry for the lower orders that serve in the Gardens of Issus. Remove his harness! Cowards and slaves wear no trappings.

A SOLDIER OF THE GUARD roughly strips Xodar of his trappings.

ISSUS

(screams)

Begone! Begone, but instead of the light of the Gardens of Issus, let you serve as a slave of this slave who conquered you. You shall serve him in the prison on the Isle of Shador in the Sea of Omean. Take him away out of the sight of my divine eyes.

Xodar is escorted from the room, Issus rises, prepares to leave by another exit, she turns to Carter.

ISSUS

(continuing)

You shall be returned to Shador for the present. Later Issus will see the manner of your fighting. Go!

Issus disappears, followed by her retinue; Phaidor lags behind, runs up to Carter, embraces him.

PHAIDOR

Oh, my Savior, do not leave  
me in this terrible place.  
Forgive the things I said  
to you, my Prince. I did  
not mean them.

Carter's guards get impatient.

PHAIDOR

(continuing)

Take me away with you. Let  
me share your imprisonment  
on Shador. We have both  
looked upon Issus and in a  
year we die. Let us live  
that year at least together  
in what measure of joy  
remains for the doomed.

The guards LAUGH, one SMACKS her hard on the buttocks.

GUARD

As if that could ever happen!  
Back to Issus with you!

The guards clamp their grips on Carter's arms as he reacts  
to the smack, he watches Phaidor rush after her Goddess.

EXT. GARDENS OF ISSUS - DAY

Carter is escorted out of the temple, sees Xodar surrounded  
by A CROWD OF MALE AND FEMALE NOBLE BLACKS, they revile and  
CURSE him.

The ebony women are exquisitely beautiful, their proud  
breasts are crowned with jet-black nipples, they bounce like  
poetry as they taunt and SPIT on Xodar.

One of the women, well over six feet tall, with large  
upturned breasts, large proud thick nipples, turns to  
Carter, he looks at her, he reacts to her sensual beauty,  
gets an erection.

WOMAN

Ah, so this is the creature  
who overcame the great Xodar  
bare-handed. Did he do it  
with his penis alone?

GREAT RIBALD LAUGHTER from the crowd.

XODAR

(whispers to Carter)

That's Zenax; Dator Thurid's  
in love with her, but she  
refuses to marry him.

ZENAX

Let him bind Thurid! Thurid  
is a noble Dator. Let Thurid  
show the dog what it means  
to face a real man.

The crowd chants:

CROWD

Thurid! Thurid! Thurid!

A HUGE BLACK MAN approaches, he is weighted down with  
resplendent ornaments and arms.

ZENAX

Here he is now. Mighty  
Thurid, I will suck your  
penis before the nobles  
if you put this proud slave  
in his place!

CARTER

And if I should be the  
victor?

ZENAX

Then you may claim me as your  
prize.

The crowd GASPS at her bravado, turn their eyes on Thurid.

CROWD

Thurid! Thurid! Thurid!

Thurid comes up to Carter, sizes him up, turns to Xodar, his eyes narrow into two thin slits.

THURID

(hisses)

Calot! Ever did I think  
you carried the heart of  
a sorak in your putrid  
breast. Often have you  
bested me in the secret  
councils of Issus,  
but now in the field of war  
where men are truly guaged,  
your scabby heart hath  
revealed its sores to all the  
world. Calot! I spurn you  
with my foot!

Thurid pulls back his leg, Xodar stands erect and motionless as a carven image, as Thurid swings his leg forward, so does Carter, deflects the kick, SMACK!

With a ROAR OF RAGE, Thurid springs on Carter, goes for his throat, he makes the same mistake as Xodar, Carter ducks beneath Thurid's outstretched arm, Thurid lunges past, Carter plants a terrific right punch on the side of Thurid's jaw, POW!

Thurid spins around like a top, his knees give way beneath him, he crumples to the ground at Carter's feet, THUD!

The crowd is silent, stares first at the proud Dator lying on the ruby dust of the pathway, then at Carter, he stands proudly, hands on hips, his penis erect in defiant victory.

CARTER

You asked me to bind Thurid.  
Behold!

Carter stoops, tears off Thurid's harness, binds his hands and feet securely with it. He looks at Zenax.

CARTER

(continuing)

As you have done to Xodar,  
now do you likewise to  
Thurid. Take him before  
Issus, bound in his own  
harness, that she may see  
with her own eyes that there  
is one among you now who is  
greater than the First Born.

Zenax looks at Carter with new eyes, her nipples harden in arousal, she walks up to Carter, puts her right hand on his penis, strokes it, rubs the large tip against her clitoris.

ZENAX

Who are you?

CARTER

I am a citizen of two worlds;  
Captain John Carter of  
Virginia, Prince of the  
House of Tardos Mors,  
Jeddak of Helium. Take this  
man to your Goddess,  
as I have said, and tell  
her, too, that as I have  
done to Xodar and Thurid,  
so also can I do to the  
mightiest of her Dators.  
With naked hands, with  
long sword or with short  
sword, I challenge the  
flower of her fighting-men  
to combat.

ZENAX

I don't know whether to call  
you slave or my Prince. You  
have defeated my suitor in  
combat. I am yours by right  
of conquest. Claim me or I  
will forever be disgraced.

CARTER

I claim you.

The crowd watches the erotic sight of Carter's white penis disappearing into Zenax's black vagina, the guards pull them apart.

GUARD

As if that ever could happen!  
Now, back off, woman! Come,  
my orders are imperative.  
There is to be no delay.

Carter and Xodar are taken to the Isle of Shador.

EXT. ISLE OF SHADOR - DAY

A small cruiser takes the prisoners to the distant Isle of Shador on the Sea of Omean.

They are taken ashore to a small stone prison guarded by SIX BLACKS, one opens the prison with a huge key, Carter and Xodar are escorted inside, the door is closed behind them, the lock is GRATED.

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

Xodar collapses on a low stone bench in the middle of the floor, Carter explores the cell, sofad by sofad - the Marian inch. The building is roofless, thirty ads high, half-way up, two small heavily barred windows.

CARTER

Man, it will profit you  
nothing to mope thus. It  
were no disgrace to be  
bested by John Carter. You  
have seen that in the ease  
with which I accounted for  
Thurid. You knew it before  
when on the cruiser's deck  
you saw me slay three of  
your comrades.

XODAR

I would that you had  
dispatched me at that  
same time!

CARTER

Come, come; there is hope  
yet. Neither of us is  
dead. We are great fighters.  
Why not win to freedom?

XODAR

(amazed)

You know not of what you  
speak. Issus is omnipotent.  
Issus is omniscient.  
She hears now the words you  
speak. She knows the  
thoughts you think. It is  
sacrilege even to dream  
of breaking her commands.

CARTER

---

Thoat-shit, Xodar!

Xodar springs to his feet in horror.

XODAR

The curse of Issus will fall  
upon you. In another  
instant you will be smitten  
down, writhing to your  
death in horrible agony.

CARTER

Do you believe that, Xodar?

XODAR

Of course; who would dare  
doubt?

CARTER

I doubt; and, further, I deny.  
Why, Xodar, you tell me that  
she even knows my thoughts.  
The Red Men have all had that  
power for ages. And another  
wonderful power.

CARTER

(continuing)

They can shut their minds so that none may read their thoughts. I learned the first secret years ago; the other I never had to learn, since upon all Barsoom is none who can read what passes in the secret chambers of my brain.

(pauses)

Your Goddess cannot read my thoughts; nor can she read yours when you are out of sight unless you will it. Had she been able to read mine, I am afraid that her pride would have suffered a rather severe shock when I turned at her command to gaze upon the holy vision of her radiant face.

XODAR

What do you mean?

CARTER

I mean that I thought her the most repulsive and vilely hideous creature my eyes had ever rested upon.

Xodar looks at Carter in horror-stricken amazement, then his eyes focus, he attacks Carter.

XODAR

Blasphemer!

Carter grabs his left wrist, twists it, swings his right arm about his left shoulder, catches him beneath the chin with his elbow, bears him backward across Carter's thigh, he hangs helpless, vents his impotent rage.

CARTER

Xodar, let us be friends.  
For a year possibly we may  
be forced to live together  
in the narrow confines of  
this tiny room. I'm sorry  
I have offended you,  
but I could not dream that  
one who had suffered from the  
cruel injustice of Issus  
still could believe her  
divine.

(pauses)

I will say a few more words,  
Xodar, with no intent to  
wound your feelings further,  
but rather that you may give  
thought to the fact that  
while we live we are still  
more the arbiters of our  
own fate than is any god.  
Issus, you see, has not  
struck me dead, nor is she  
is rescuing her faithful  
Xodar from the clutches  
of the unbeliever who  
defamed her fair beauty.  
No, Xodar, your Issus is  
a mortal old woman. Once  
out of her clutches and  
she cannot harm you.

(waves hand)

With your knowledge of this  
strange land, and mine of the  
outer world, two such  
fighting men as you and I  
should be able to win our way  
to freedom. Even though we  
died in the attempt, would  
not our memories be fairer  
than as though we remained  
in servile fear to be  
butchered by a cruel and  
unjust tyrant - call her  
Goddess or mortal, as you  
will.

Carter raises Xodar to his feet, releases him. Xodar walks to the bench, sits down, bows his head in deep contemplation for hours, slowly, he comes out of his reverie.

XODAR

I have been thinking very hard, John Carter, of all the new ideas you gave me a few xats since. Little by little I have been piecing together the things which you said which sounded blasphemous to me then with the things that I have not seen in my past life and dared not even think about for fear of bringing down upon me the wrath of Issus.

(pauses)

I believe now that she is a fraud; no more divine than you or I. More I am willing to concede - that the First Born are no holier than the Holy Therns, nor the Holy Therns more holy than the Red Men. The whole fabric of our religion is based on superstitious belief in lies that have been foisted upon us for ages by those directly above us, to whose personal profit and aggrandizement it was to have us continue to believe as they wished us to believe.

(waves)

I am ready to cast off the ties that have bound me. I am ready to defy Issus herself; but what will it avail us?

XODAR

(continuing)

Be the First Born gods or  
mortals, they are a  
powerful race, and we are as  
fast in their clutches as  
though we were already dead.  
There is no escape.

CARTER

I have escaped from bad  
plights in the past, my  
friend; nor while there  
is life in me shall I  
despair of escaping from  
the Isle of Shador and  
the Sea of Omean.

DISSOLVE TO: