DON JUAN VISITS The PLANET MARS

A profound affection for Lheeta, on a distant world, by the greatest lover of all times

By DON JUAN

MARS, God of War and Lord of Battles! Yet verily I have found his planet a place of love and rare beauty: of pure, unadulterated passion and sweet-smelling odors. Mhersa, the green moon of mating, hangs low o'er the gardens this night. Warm and sweet scented are the timid breezes that bring to mine ears the elfin music of a distant tinkling fountain. Ah, what a night for love! Was Nature ever more conspiring in her delightful subtleties?

I, Thol Shedaar, prince of the reigning house of Gharphut, once known upon that distant planet Terra as Don Juan, lover-extraordinaire, am in high spirits tonight. My royal heart beats impatiently within my breast and the name of desire all but consumes me. And well it may, for this is the night of nights, a priceless gift of the Great Destiny in the name of Romance. The stars have revealed it and the Supreme Council sanctioned it. Through the proper channels I have speeded my invitation and, wonder of wonders, she has accepted.

Here in the enchanted atmosphere of Mhersa's own garden, amid the intoxicating perfumes of countless love-blossoms, aloof from the rest of Creation, I have a rendezvous with the fairest maiden in all Mars! It is more than a rendezvous, it is a surrender, a gift of the Gods!

But once only have mine eyes beheld this vision of marvelous beauty and since leaving the planet Earth I have longed lor the ecstasy that should fall to the lot of any lover.

As I pen these lines in 2136 I think back to the ancient history books of 200 years ago when the Strat-light rockets were foreign to the young men and young women of that decadent age, and when Love itself was always open to either suppression or suspicion. Here on Mars their thoughts are all so different, and it is surprising that such a change could have taken place in a mere span of two centuries. Even their terms of rating were old-fashioned, and a "khad," unit of time, unknown.

It is fully a khad ago since I have known a beautiful woman, during which time I have been oblivious of all women generally. Now, in accordance with the inflexible laws of Mars, I sent a copy of my horoscope to the Interplanetary Supreme Council with full text of my desires in the matter and a request for a union with this goddess of my dreams. It has been approved and soon she will be here, here in the flesh, *mine*—mine until the jade light of Mhersa, the mating moon, pales into dawn! Do you wonder at my impatience? Earthlings are prone to be impatient and I've not yet adapted my desires to the beautifully-creative forces of Mars where Love grows in white-hot intensity with waiting. . . . But, my love, hurry—for the night is all too short!

Hold! I am behaving like a mere boy, actually atremble, and Lheeta, my loved one, expects a prince—and a man. Prince I am and man too—no, by Mhersa, I shall not lose my laurels this night.

Fully possessed of myself, I gaze expectantly at the point where the pearly pathway disappears into the dense shadows of the Central Wood. It is from this wood that my maiden fair will come, from the enchanted tree cluster that shelters the mysterious Temple of Mhersa wherein, even now,

the learned priestess may be preparing Lheeta for me, her ordained lover.

I have not long to wait. Indistinctly at first then clearly in the pale green moonlight, I perceive a figure approaching. It is she! The proud carriage of her superb young body, her rhythmic, graceful stride—what a thoroughbred she is! What a prize! I am indeed the luckiest man in all the Shards of Mars!

She leaves the winding pathway and is coming toward me across the velvety purple lawn. I am a little disappointed for I had expected her to follow the course of the path and thus allow me a clearer view of her charms as she approached.

She is clothed in a filmy drape of fairy-like texture that reveals the exquisite curves of her body. The soft greenish radiance of low-hanging Mhersa shows clearly her every feature. Involuntarily I catch my breath, she is more than beautiful, she is marvelous!

But a few paces now separate us. I am aware of the radiance of her flawless skin, her luxuriant midnight tresses coiled artfully upon her shapely little head, two smouldering sea-green eyes, shot with Mhersa's own fire, full luscious lips daringly inviting!

She stands before me, a half-smile playing upon her tantalizing lips, a hint of mockery in her lovely eyes.

"My Prince is strangely silent." Her voice is low and musical. It thrills me. "Perhaps he is disappointed in the gift of Mhersa."

"Dhall forbid!" I find my errant tongue with an effort. "Forgive me my seeming stupidity, oh Lheeta, for your wond'rous beauty bewilders me. I knew that you were the fairest of the fair but unprepared was I for the full shock of your heavenly charm! You dazzle me with your very loveliness."

THE soft musk of her answer caresses my ears. "Can I but forgive so gallant an excuse? Methinks my Prince is an adept at the art of compliments."

"Not idly so," I hasten to reply. "It is truth from my very heart I speak and I'll venture you know it well. Who should be aware of your own beauty if not yourself? Let's not pretend longer, Lheeta, for the short hour of romance is soon passed and the dawn approaches at malicious speed to tear us apart. You know I love you Lheeta, love you as a prince and as a man. It is the man who now speaks, the prince for tonight is a mere phantom, but the man, Lheeta, is very real."

I take her hand in mine and find it trembling. With fear—or with desire? Time will tell, but time tonight is super-precious.

Hand in hand we walk toward the sheltered nook built just for love. "Lheeta," I venture, "do you find me also desirable in your eyes?"

"Oh yes, Thol, I do not know how to say it, but somehow you are different from other men. When I gaze upon you my brain will not remain clear and something swells and hurts within my breast. I am a little afraid, Thol. I—I am afire inside and yet I tremble as with a chill." She clutches my hand tightly and sways against me. Quickly my arm goes about her and for one delicious moment I hold her close.

Frightened, she leaps away, her breath coming in short gasps. I see the rapid rise and fall of her firm round breasts and the quick color mount to her cheeks.

"What have you done? Oh. Thol!! I—we—it's wrong, you know! I feel so queer. Let us sit down for a moment for I am weak, Thol, strangely weak."

I lead her to a marble bench cushioned with countless blossoms and she sinks upon it with her face buried in their soft fragrance. I too am afire and atremble but I know wherein lies my trouble. There is no mystery here. It is the subtle influence of my former self, Don Juan, that breaks through my supercultivated Martian reserve.

LOVE, as the people of Earth know it, has been dead upon this planet for centuries. We are such a highly cultured people here on Mars that we have eliminated the physical aspect almost entirely from our consciousness and thereby achieved extreme longevity and immunity from diseases of the flesh. Intercourse between the sexes has been purely mental for ages and reproduction has been, up to a certain point, entirely synthetic. We have no marriages, families, homes, etc., everything being run upon a community basis.

A sort of astrology is the foundation of our laws and when the stars decree that a man and a woman shall "mate," they are sent at the

appointed night to the Garden of Mhersa, the green moon, where they are to hold mental communion until dawn. With the coming of day they are sufficiently imbued with each other's thought waves to go to the Phrenal Laboratory and lend their biological assistance to the great god Science. In some cases, as in mine, a man may select his own woman providing the horoscopic findings are favorable but in most instances the whole selection rests with the Supreme Interplanetary Council.

I am a Martian and thereby bound by customary physical limitations, not actually so but because the mental law so decrees and our generations of training have taught us to look upon physical contact as wholly of the lower order. Within me, however, smoulders a spark that has gradually been growing brighter and stronger. This spark, embedded somewhere in the recesses of my subconscious mind by my fiery past incarnation on Terra as the lover Don Juan, suddenly bursts forth in full flame! At the sight of my lovely companion recumbent upon that bed of blossoms my brain catches fire! No longer am I Thol, Prince of Gharput, but Don Juan, Prince of Love!!!

I cast myself down beside Lheeta, take her soft form in my arms and press her to me while my feverish lips shower hot kisses upon the quivering whiteness of her neck and arms. For a moment she seems to fight against my ardent onslaught, then swoons.

Only for a heartbeat or two does she remain unconscious, then her dark-fringed lids flutter open and I see a light shining from her glorious eyes that thrills me to the very soul. Her beautiful arms creep up around my neck and draw me to her in a passionate embrace and her hot lips seek mine. Oh supreme ecstasy!! I drink greedily from the nectar of her burning lips, the contact of her firm young flesh sears me like a flame! Desire welds us in one rapturous embrace and overhead shocked Mhersa hastens to her rendezvous with the distant horizon.

Oblivious to the whole universe we lay in each other's arms. The warm night air is heavy with the perfume of crushed blossoms. Forgotten are the teachings of ages, the superiority of mind over body! With Lheeta as with myself the insidious finger of the carnal past has erased every

"Lheeta, my darling, kiss me!"

vestige of our modern culture. We are barbarians, flesh-hungry—and wonderfully happy.

"Thol," whispers my Lheeta, "why should such bliss have been lost to our poor world? Ah that I might die tonight, here in your arms, and know no more of the cruel impersonal existence that has been my life! I always knew that there must be something better in store for us if we could only find the way. Brain, brain, brain! All the Supreme Interplanetary Council thinks about is developing the brain—and our poor hearts and bodies are starving! Thol, my lover! Let us feast while we may for tomorrow may bring us famine!"

We abandon ourselves to utter delight, our senses swim dizzily in the ruby light of passion. At last our joyous senses reach the limit of their endurance, and a profound, dreamless sleep claims us.

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The angry sun is glaring rudely down upon our unconscious nudity when at last I awake; the same sun which both blessed and annoyed me on Earth in my previous reincarnation. Lheeta sleeps on like a babe beside me. How beautiful she is! A faint rosy flush glows beneath the smooth whiteness of her skin, her lovely coral-tipped

breasts rise and fall with her deep, regular breathing, and a sweet, contented smile plays about the corners of her so kissable mouth.

My delighted eyes rove over the contour of her perfect figure, so gracefully reposing upon the scattered flower petals that had been our bower of love. She stirs in her slumber and whispers my name. Tenderly I stoop to kiss her sweet lips when a harsh voice from behind brings me about with a start.

"Your allotted time has long since expired, Thol of Gharphut," rasped a bulbous looking guard of the Garden of Mhersa, on Mars, eyeing my shocking nakedness with marked disapproval "Go at once to the Laboratory and make your report, then present yourself to the Grand Ghazza of the Supreme Interplanetary Council."

At the sound of the guard's raucous voice Lheeta awakes. She cowers into the far corner of the bower and tries vainly to cover her blushing charms with handfulls of loose blossoms.

Two more guards approach and I am roughly seized by one while Lheeta straggles in the grasp of another. At the sight of her lovely, faultlessly-formed body in the foul clutch of the man, I once again revert to the savage, this time as a fighter instead of a lover.

In a trice I have knocked senseless the three intruding guards and lifted the frightened Lheeta in my arms. Looking arround, I dash across the purple sward toward the woodland. A shrill whistle sounds behind me and I know that soon the whole force of garden guardsmen will be on my trail. But I will protect Lheeta as long as there is a drop of red blood remaining in my veins. How much she reminds me of a beauteous damsel I once knew in Europe hundreds of years ago!

Never will we surrender to this cruel, heartless, advanced civilization to die upon the experimental tables of the Laboratory or return again to the meaningless existence we once knew. We have found Love!

The scientists of this ancient planet Mars think that they have destroyed passion, but that they cannot do. Passion only sleeps, even if it be for ages. We are at last awake, alive, and wonderfully in love, and I defy the whole planet of Mars. We may escape and find happiness somewhere in the remote places of this world, but if we are to die we will die together, for last night has made us one.

"Lheeta, my darling, kiss me!"