Chapter XI - Thuvia- Maid of Mars

Chapter XI begins with Carthoris regaining consciousness in a silent ruin, surrounded by echoes of recent conflict and the absence of his companions. Thuvia and Kar Komak are nowhere to be found, leaving him disoriented and uncertain. Injured and dehydrated, he drags himself toward the desolate ruins of Aaanthor in search of water. The abandoned city looms like a forgotten memory of Barsoom's past, its crumbling walls offering only ghosts and dust. As he presses deeper into its maze-like corridors, his vulnerability grows. But the danger doesn't remain hidden for long. Without warning, Carthoris is ambushed by white apes—creatures of brute strength and mindless aggression.

He is quickly subdued and bound in the damp, cavernous pits beneath the city. The darkness there is stifling, thick with the stench of decay and the sound of unseen movement. Shackled and alone, he prepares for the worst, but fate offers an unexpected reprieve. In a neighboring cell, he hears a voice—Kar Komak, the loyal phantom warrior, has also been captured. Their reunion brings a moment of hope, though their situation remains bleak. Surrounded by towering apes who plot their eventual death, the two warriors share stories and strategies. Kar Komak's past encounter with green men of Torquas reveals just how far-reaching the chaos of their journey has become. Time, however, grows short, and the apes grow restless.

A desperate idea takes shape. Carthoris remembers the ability possessed by certain Barsoomians to give life to imagined forms. He urges Kar Komak, whose mind has long dwelled in the realm of memory and myth, to call forth an army from thought. Summoning focus, Kar Komak conjures an illusion of bowmen—phantom soldiers who fill the chamber with spectral presence. The white apes recoil in confusion and fear, mistaking the mirage for a real threat. In that brief moment of chaos, Carthoris and Kar Komak break free. The illusion gives them just enough time to escape the pit and flee

through the ruins, hearts pounding with urgency.

They make their way to a pair of unattended thoats and ride hard across the Martian wilderness. Their weapons are discarded to mask their origin, for to be recognized as Heliumites in Dusar would mean certain capture. Their trek is silent and tense, minds focused on survival rather than conversation. The vast plains offer little shelter, and each noise in the distance might mean discovery. They ride for hours, navigating terrain shaped by centuries of dust storms and ancient conflict. Eventually, they reach the fertile lands near a canal—an area under cultivation, signaling the approach of civilization. The thoats are released, and the pair continues on foot, cautious of every step and every gaze.

A modest farm offers a pause from danger. There, they meet Hal Vas, a simple man whose kindness is offered without suspicion. Shelter and nourishment are given freely, and for a moment, Carthoris feels the weight of pursuit ease. But questions linger. They are in the dominions of Dusar, and the name of Carthoris carries risk. Any hint of identity might unravel the brief safety they've found. So, Carthoris conceals who he is, watching carefully and planning their next move. Even in peace, the shadow of conflict remains close.

Carthoris’s thoughts drift back to Thuvia. Her image is ever-present, a driving force behind every decision. The challenges they face are not just personal—they are rooted in a larger web of alliances and betrayals. Astok’s obsession has already pushed Martian nations toward war. For Carthoris, each choice must weigh not only his survival but the survival of peace itself. And while the journey has been marked by violence and loss, it is also defined by loyalty and resilience. His bond with Kar Komak, born from belief and tested in fire, serves as proof that even illusions can shape reality.

The chapter draws attention to the unique blend of Martian mysticism and strategy. The imagined bowmen serve not just as a trick, but as a reminder of how belief can manifest power. On Barsoom, courage often depends not on weapons, but on the will to act when action seems impossible. As Carthoris and Kar Komak continue their

mission, their minds sharpen. Every challenge deepens their resolve. And though the road ahead remains uncertain, their purpose burns brighter: to reach Thuvia, to restore order, and to protect what honor still survives in a world at war.

