Chapter XIV - Thuvia-maid of mars Trashed

Chapter XIV places Thuvia of Ptarth at the edge of despair, locked away by Astok in a chamber that seems to mock her hopes. She sits in silence, believing escape to be a fantasy, the walls around her thick with defeat. Her mind clings to the memory of Carthoris of Helium, a man whose courage and decency stand in contrast to the treachery she now faces. Astok, lacking both honor and strength, plots behind the door with Vas Kor. Their whispered conversation reveals a dark plan—Thuvia's death, a permanent silencing of the only obstacle to their schemes. But just as they attempt to act on their cowardice, fate intervenes in the form of a determined warrior. A Heliumite forces entry, sword drawn, and gives Thuvia the opening she needs to act.

The battle is swift but critical. Astok is overpowered, and Thuvia quickly bolts the door, trapping the would-be assassins inside. Her escape, while narrow, is marked by instinct and clarity. No longer passive, she takes charge of her destiny. With Carthoris beside her, the two flee the city, navigating treacherous paths as Dusarian airships roar into pursuit. Thuvia, far from the damsel others perceive her to be, proves a valuable ally. She advises, corrects their course, and even handles ship instruments with the skill of a seasoned pilot. Her courage isn't blinding—it is measured, decisive, and grounded in trust for her companion. Each move is a counterpoint to her earlier sense of hopelessness.

Carthoris, driven by equal parts duty and love, pilots their craft with grit and speed. As Dusarian ships close in, their path is blocked by a fresh threat: green Martian warriors attacking a distant flyer. He makes a quick choice—turning to assist, despite the obvious danger. When they draw close, recognition strikes. The vessel belongs to Kulan Tith, king of Kaol and Thuvia's betrothed. For Carthoris, helping now could mean

forfeiting the woman he loves. Still, he does not hesitate. His sense of honor outweighs personal longing, and he launches into the fray, weapons flashing against a tide of enemies.

The enemy is vast, and their odds grow thinner by the second. Green warriors swarm like a flood, their numbers overwhelming. But just as hope begins to fade, phantom bowmen led by Kar Komak appear. These spectral archers, bound to a promise made in honor, let fly volley after volley. Their aim is true, their purpose pure. Kar Komak himself, though once merely a voice from a forgotten time, now takes physical form to join the fight. He cuts through the horde with unmatched skill, his every movement fueled by ancient loyalty. The tide of battle turns with their arrival.

As the dust settles and silence returns, Thuvia stands beside Carthoris, heart racing with something more than battle’s aftermath. Kulan Tith approaches, grateful yet observant. He has witnessed not just the fight, but the unspoken bond between Thuvia and her rescuer. In that moment, pride gives way to grace. Kulan Tith releases Thuvia from their engagement, not in bitterness but with noble clarity. He acknowledges the love they share and steps aside. His gesture, more than any sword, marks the triumph of integrity over possession.

Carthoris, for all his bravery, had resigned himself to loss. He believed that love was not always rewarded, and that his devotion would go unreturned. Thuvia, however, shatters that illusion. Her voice trembles, not with fear, but with the weight of confession. She has loved him all along. She had only needed the space to choose freely. In a world ruled by alliances and oaths, her choice becomes an act of strength.

Their union, now sanctioned by friendship and tested by war, stands not just as a romantic victory but a testament to shared values. Honor, sacrifice, and freedom—all are upheld in the final exchange. Kar Komak, too, finds closure. His mission complete, he fades into legend once more, leaving behind the impact of a warrior's loyalty. The green Martians vanish, the skies calm, and the air grows still with promise. Where once there had been schemes and entrapment, now stands truth and trust.

This chapter not only wraps the tale but elevates it. Readers are shown that heroism comes in many forms—through battles won, through love confessed, and through letting go when it matters most. The narrative doesn’t end in triumph alone, but in understanding. Thuvia and Carthoris, once bound by circumstance, now stand together by choice. Their story, forged through struggle and truth, lives on not just in Barsoom’s skies but in the hearts of those who believe that love, when real, needs no conquest—only courage.

