



LOOK--
MAN O' MARS
IS GOING
DOWN!

STOP THE RACE!
IF THAT HORSE
FALLS, THE WORLD
WILL FALL VICTIM
TO A MARTIAN
INVASION!

"FOOL"...
"IDIOT"... "MADMAN"...
THESE WERE THE SLANDEROUS
WORDS HURLED AT ME AS I
CHARGED ONTO THE ST. RITZ
TRACK SHOUTING MY DESPERATE
WARNING! BUT AN INGENUOUS
MARTIAN PLOT TO INVADE THE WORLD
HAD BEEN TOLD TO ME BY A HORSE AND--
WAIT! DON'T TURN THE PAGE-- PLEASE!
BEFORE YOU, TOO, DRAW A FOOLHARDY
CONCLUSION, LET ME TELL YOU OF THE
TIME...

I RODE MAN O' MARS

IT ALL BEGAN THE DAY I JOCKEYED AT ST. RITZ--
A COURSE IN EUROPE'S INTERNATIONAL PLAY-
GROUND! AS USUAL, I FINISHED "UP THE TRACK..."

IT TOOK A LOT OF COURAGE TO ENTER THE
JOCKEY'S ROOM LATER...

OUT OF THE MONEY AGAIN!
I THOUGHT I RATED
THIS HORSE PERFECTLY--
BUT HE JUST DIDN'T
HAVE IT!

I HEAR
HE'S NEVER
HAD A WINNER!
GIVENS
SHOULD
GIVE UP!

LUCKY HE'S A
JOCKEY-OWNER!
NOBODY ELSE
WOULD GIVE HIM
A MOUNT!



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THEY WERE RIGHT--AND A LOSING STABLE DOESN'T LAST LONG IN "THE SPORT OF KINGS"! LATER, I TOLD MY FRIEND AND TRAINER, TIM HILL, OF MY DECISION...

GIVE UP RIDING? I THINK YOU'RE BEING FOOL-HARDY, MR. GIVENS! RACING'S A GAMBLE--AND YOU'VE JUST BEEN UNLUCKY!

IT'S MORE THAN THAT, TIM! LAST WEEK I COULDN'T EVEN KEEP OUR STABLE'S HOPE, MAN O' MARS, RUNNING STRAIGHT!

THE COLT WAS JUST A LITTLE JUMP-SHY, THAT'S ALL! STOP WORRYING, MR. GIVENS-- YOU'LL REACH THE WINNER'S CIRCLE SOME DAY! STAY WITH IT!

THANKS FOR YOUR ENCOURAGEMENT, TIM-- I'LL SLEEP ON IT!



BUT SLEEP WAS IMPOSSIBLE THAT NIGHT! AND I FOUND MYSELF STROLLING ABOUT THE STABLE AREA TRYING TO REACH A DECISION...

WHAT SHALL I DO? I'D KEEP RIDING IF I THOUGHT THERE WAS A CHANCE OF BREAKING THIS JINX...

I CAN DO THAT FOR YOU, GIVENS... IF YOU WILL GIVE ME THE CHANCE...

HUH? IS THAT YOU, TIM? WHERE ARE YOU?



IT WAS THEN THAT IT HAPPENED--THE MOST SHOCKING MOMENT IN MY ENTIRE LIFE...

I'M RIGHT HERE, GIVENS... BEFORE YOUR VERY EYES!

A TALKING HORSE--? NO... IT CAN'T BE! IT'S... A--A GAG...

WHERE ARE YOU? WHO IS IT? ANSWER ME-- THIS ISN'T FUNNY!

I SPOKE THOSE WORDS... LISTEN CAREFULLY, GIVENS... THIS IS THE GREATEST THING THAT HAPPENED TO YOU--!





MY MARTIAN COLLEAGUES AND I WERE EXPERIMENTING IN THOUGHT PROJECTION. THROUGH AN ERROR, I TOOK POSSESSION OF THIS FOUR-LEGGED CREATURE!



AND NOW, MY MIND IS IMPRISONED WITHIN THIS HORSE! THIS IS IT POSSIBLE FOR ME TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOU VIA MENTAL "THOUGHT WAVES"!

MAN O' MARS... A HORSE... TALKING TO ME! A DREAM... HALLUCINATION... IT MUST BE! I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY...



I TURNED... AND, SUMMONING ALL MY WILL POWER, MANAGED TO PLACE ONE TREMBLING LEG BEFORE THE OTHER...

I'VE GOT TO RUN... RUN... RUN!!!

VERY WELL, GIVENS... YOU WILL NEED TIME TO GRASP THE MAGNITUDE OF THIS SITUATION! I WILL BE WAITING FOR YOU... HERE IN MY STABLE!

UTTER FEAR KEPT ME FROM THE STABLE AREA FOR FIVE DAYS! BUT IN THAT TIME I REACHED A DEFINITE CONCLUSION, AFTER I'D SEEN A DOCTOR...



J. BROWNE
M. D.
OFFICE HOURS
2PM - 4PM

THE DOCTOR ASSURED ME MY MIND IS IN ORDER! SO IT WAS NO HALLUCINATION-- MAN O' MARS IS POSSESSED BY A BEING FROM ANOTHER WORLD!



I GATHERED MY COURAGE AND VISITED THE ANIMAL... SO... YOU HAVE RETURNED, EARTHLING! DOES YOUR MIND NOW HAVE THE CAPACITY TO GRASP THIS UNIQUE SITUATION?

YES... AND I THINK THE PROPER AUTHORITIES SHOULD BE NOTIFIED TO CONFIRM THIS... PHENOMENON!



IMPOSSIBLE! I HAD THE POWER TO MAKE BUT ONE MENTAL CONTACT-- AND YOU ARE IT, GIVENS! THIS FREAK SITUATION CAN NEVER BE CONFIRMED!

AND NOBODY WOULD EVER BELIEVE MY STORY! WELL, WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?



TO THE RACES! I HEARD THAT MAN O' MARS WAS JUMP-SHY! MY WILL-POWER CAN CORRECT THAT!

IF YOU COULD, WE'D BE A CINCH TO WIN THE INTERNATIONAL HANDICAP! LET'S HAVE A WORKOUT AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS!



HOUSE OF MYSTERY



AS MAN O' MARS AND I BREEZED THE MORNING MILE, CLOCKERS GAPED AT THEIR WATCHES IN AWE...

I CAUGHT 'EM AT 1:35 FLAT! MY WATCH MUST BE OFF!

OFF NOTHING -- I CLOCKED THE SAME TIME! THAT WORK-OUT ALMOST BROKE THE TRACK RECORD!



LATER, I QUESTIONED MAN O' MARS--OR RATHER THE FRIENDLY BEING THAT HAD POSSESSED THE ANIMAL...

ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO GO THROUGH WITH THIS? I COULD RETIRE YOU TO A FARM TO LIVE OUT YOUR EARTH LIFE...

NEVER! AS AN EARTH-LING BEAST, I AM PREPARED TO DO MY DUTY! BUT ONE THING YOU MUST PROMISE ME, GIVENS...



I INSIST UPON BEING TREATED LIKE ANY OTHER RACE HORSE! IF I AM SERIOUSLY INJURED, YOU WILL HAVE ME DESTROYED! I DEMAND THE PRIVILEGES OF THE ANIMAL I POSSESS!

VERY WELL, MARS... IT'S A PROMISE!



ON THE DAY OF THE BIG RACE-- I WAS HIGHLY ELATED -- FOR A "WIN" AT LAST SEEMED WITHIN MY GRASP! BUT AS I APPROACHED THE STABLE...

LOOKS LIKE THIS IS THE DAY... AND I'LL HAVE MY FIRST WINNER IN FRONT OF WORLD LEADERS WHO ARE ATTENDING THE RACE... HUH? WHAT'S HE THINKING...?

I TRICKED THE FOOL EARTH-LING GIVENS! WHEN I FALL AND BREAK MY LEG DURING THE RACE, THIS WORLD WILL BE DOOMED...



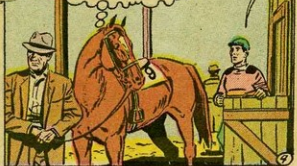
I FROZE... SHOCKED BY MARS' MENTAL THOUGHT WAVES THAT REACHED MY MIND...

SUDDENLY, MARS COMMUNICATED WITH ME! I HAD BLUNDERED...



G-GREAT SCOTT-- I'VE BECOME THE VICTIM OF A... A... MARTIAN SCHEME! I CAN'T RIDE MAN O' MARS... NO ONE MUST! I'LL HAVE HIM SCRATCHED AT ONCE...

YOU FORGET THAT I CAN ALSO READ YOUR THOUGHTS, GIVENS! NOW THAT YOU KNOW OUR PLAN, I MUST NOT ALLOW YOU TO INTERFERE...



BEFORE I COULD CRY A WARNING, I WAS STRUCK DOWN...



O-OH...

MR. GIVENS... ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

WHACK

LATER, I LEARNED WHAT OCCURRED NEXT...

HE'S... OUT COLD, TIM! WHAT'LL WE DO?

GET A SUBSTITUTE RIDER, OF COURSE! MR. GIVENS WOULD NEVER FORGIVE ME IF I SCRATCHED HIS HORSE!



I REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE FIRST AID ROOM TO HEAR THE FRIGHTENING WORDS OF THE TRACK ANNOUNCER...

AND AT THE QUARTER POLE JUMP, THAT'S DARIUS AND MAN O' MARS COMING UP TO CHALLENGE... OH, THAT'S MAN O' MARS GOING DOWN...

THERE'S THE PLANNED SPILL! I'VE GOT TO GET OUT THERE AND STOP THE MARTIAN SCHEME...

TIM! TIM! DON'T LET THE VET DESTROY THAT HORSE!

HUMPH! I GUESS GIVENS REALLY HAS CRACKED! THEY SAY HE'S BEEN TALKING TO HORSES LATELY!



DON'T SHOOT! THANK HEAVEN... I'M IN TIME!

BUT, MR. GIVENS-- THE HORSE HAS A BROKEN LEG! THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO FOR HIM NOW! ACCORDING TO RACE-TRACK LAW, HE MUST BE DESTROYED!

NO! I THINK TOO MUCH OF MAN O' MARS! I'M GOING TO HAVE THAT LEG PUT IN A CAST AND RETIRE HIM TO A FARM!

EARTHLY INTERFERER-- IN ANOTHER INSTANT OUR PLAN WOULD HAVE SUCCEEDED-- I WOULD HAVE BEEN DESTROYED!





YES... RELEASING YOUR MIND SO THAT IT COULD PENETRATE AND POSSESS ONE OF THE HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN THE CROWD!

UNFORTUNATELY, THE EARTH RANGE FOR SUB-PLANTING OUR MIND IS EXTREMELY SHORT! THUS, WE LURED YOU INTO ENTERING "MARS" INTO THIS RACE!

FOR WE REALIZED GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WERE TO BE PRESENT! HAD OUR PLAN SUCCEEDED, I WOULD HAVE BEEN A SPY IN HIGH CIRCLES! WHAT NOW?

WHEN I OVERHEARD YOUR THOUGHTS, YOU MENTIONED THAT YOUR SUPERIORS WOULD TRANSPORT YOU BACK TO MARS ON THE EVE OF THE ECLIPSE IF YOU FAILED..

YES... BUT PERHAPS I WAS AWARE OF YOUR PRESENCE AND THOUGHT OF THAT TO DELAY FOR TIME!



YOU'RE BLUFFING -- HAVING YOUR LITTLE JOKE ON ME BECAUSE I DEFEATED YOUR SCHEME!

ONLY TIME WILL TELL, GIVENS! BUT IF I'M **NOT** BLUFFING, MY MIND WILL BE FREE TO POSSESS A HUMAN ONCE THIS ANIMAL DIES! THEN, EVENTUALLY OUR PLAN WILL SUCCEED!
HEE-HAW!

THE MARTIAN'S THREAT KEPT ME ON EDGE FOR A WEEK. WAS HE OR WAS HE NOT BLUFFING?



FINALLY, ON THE MORNING AFTER THE ECLIPSE...

WELL, THIS IS IT! I--I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'LL DO IF THE CREATURE IS STILL HERE!
MARTIAN-- SPEAK TO ME!

THANK HEAVEN--THE MARTIAN MIND THIEF HAS LEFT THE ANIMAL! MAN O' MARS IS HIS OLD SELF NOW, AND THE THREAT FROM OUTER SPACE IS NO MORE!

WHINNY

THE END.