

The FALSE FACE PLANET!

WHEN THE FIRST SPACE-MEN FROM EARTH REACH THE PLANET MARS, THEY FIND A HIGHLY CIVILIZED WORLD-- IN RUINS! WHAT HAPPENED TO BRING ABOUT SUCH TOTAL DESTRUCTION? WHEN THE EXPLORERS ATTEMPT TO BRING BACK OLD RECORDS AND TREASURES TO EARTH TO FIND AN ANSWER TO THIS RIDDLE--A STRANGE FORCE PREVENTS THEM FROM REMOVING ANYTHING FROM MARS!

"I'VE SOLVED THE MYSTERY OF MARS. I'LL CREATE A SENSATION WHEN I RETURN TO EARTH!"

"YOU'LL NEVER GO BACK TO YOUR NATIVE PLANET, EARTHMAN! OUR SECRET MUST NEVER BE REVEALED."





MYSTERY IN SPACE



A MID THE RUBBLE OF CHARRED MASONRY ON THE PLANET *MARS*, THE *EARTH* SPACESHIP *LINCOLN* DISEMBARKS ITS CREW...

EVEN IF WE HAVEN'T FOUND THE HOPED-FOR LIFE ON *MARS*, THERE'S EVIDENCE THAT LIFE DID EXIST HERE ONCE!

CAMERAS CLICK AS ARCHEOLOGISTS BRUSH THE DUST OF CENTURIES FROM METAL STATUETTES AND BOOKS PRINTED IN THE MARTIAN LANGUAGE...



WE'VE FOUND ENOUGH TO RECONSTRUCT THEIR ENTIRE CIVILIZATION!

LATER, AS THE *LINCOLN* TAKES OFF FOR EARTH, ARCHEOLOGIST ABNER ZOLLNER REACHES FOR THE GREATEST TREASURE OF ALL...



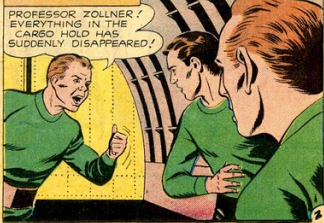
AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF *MARS*. IT WILL SHOW WHAT LIFE WAS LIKE ON OUR SISTER PLANET AGES AGO!

BUT AS HE TURNS THE PAGES OF THE BOOK...



GREAT STARS! THE BOOK IS FADING AWAY--
DISAPPEARING!

SUDDENLY A WILD CRY OF DISBELIEF AND DESPAIR RISES FROM THE CARGO HOLD WHERE THE PRECIOUS ARTIFACTS ARE KEPT...



PROFESSOR ZOLLNER! EVERYTHING IN THE CARGO HOLD HAS SUDDENLY DISAPPEARED!

ON EARTH SOME WEEKS LATER, AN OFFICIAL INVESTIGATION IS HELD --



THESE SLIDES AND FILMS SHOW US LOADING THE LINCOLN! WE TOOK PRECAUTIONS TO INSURE SAFE TRANS-PORT, WHAT WE MUST LEARN IS *WHAT MADE THOSE MARTIAN OBJECTS DISAPPEAR?*

SEVERAL MONTHS LATER, ANOTHER EXPEDITION TAKES OFF AND ARRIVES ON THE RED PLANET...



PROFESSOR ZOLLNER-- COME QUICKLY, LOOK WHAT I'VE FOUND!



IT'S THE SAME BOOK THAT DISAPPEARED ON OUR RETURN TRIP TO EARTH! THERE ARE MY INITIALS AND THE DATE ON THE FLY LEAF!

HOW DID IT GET BACK ON MARS?



I REMEMBER THIS STATUETTE, IT'S THE SAME AS THE ONE I EXAMINED LAST TIME. THERE WAS A DIS-TINCTIVE NICK ON IT--AND HERE IT IS!

WHAT POSSIBLE EXPLANATION CAN THERE BE FOR SOMETHING AS LITTERLY FANTASTIC AS THIS?

CLICK!

ONCE AGAIN THE CARGO IS LOADED, ONCE AGAIN AS THE SPACESHIP HURRIES TOWARD THE EARTH...



THE MARTIAN OBJECTS ARE DISAPPEARING AGAIN!

IN THE OFFICES OF THE **EARTH-TIMES DAILY**, EDITOR JONAS GREGG SPEAKS TO HIS STAR COLUMNIST, PAUL WELDON...

IF YOU COULD SOLVE THE MYSTERY OF THE DISAPPEARING MARTIAN OBJECTS, PAUL, IT'D BE THE SCOOP OF ALL TIME!



I'LL BLAST OFF BY NIGHTFALL!

IN A FULLY EQUIPPED ONE-MAN SPACER, THE COLUMNIST RISES MARSWARD FROM A NEW YORK SPACEPORT...

THERE MUST BE A LOGICAL EXPLANATION FOR THESE DISAPPEARANCES! IT'S UP TO ME TO FIND IT!

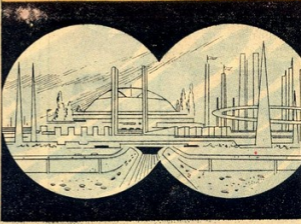


ON MARS, PAUL WELDON SURVEYS THE LANDSCAPE...

IF ONLY SOMETHING WOULD HAPPEN-- TO GIVE ME A CLUE TO THOSE MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCES!



AS HE PEERS INTENTLY THROUGH THE BINOCULARS...



IN AMAZEMENT, WELDON LOWERS THE GLASSES AND BRUSHES A HAND ACROSS HIS HELMET...

I GUESS I'VE BEEN STARING TOO HARD! FOR A MOMENT I THOUGHT I SAW MARS THE WAY IT USED TO BE-- ALIVE!



THEN, AS HE LOOKS ABOUT HIM...

I-I'M NOT SEEING THINGS! MARS IS ALIVE-- TEEMING WITH PEOPLE!



TELO MAK KARNAK!



MYSTERY IN SPACE



A PROCESSION OF HIGHLY EXCITED PEOPLE LEADS HIM ALONG A BROAD AVENUE TO A CANOPY WHERE AN OLD MAN SITS...



AS SOON AS HIS FINGERS TOUCH THE GLOBE, PAUL WELDON REALIZES HE CAN UNDERSTAND THE MARTIANS...



THE MARS YOU ARE SEEING NOW IS THE REAL MARS, THE DEAD, BARREN PLANET. WE PERMIT THE REST OF THE UNIVERSE TO SEE IS--



A FALSE FACE! 1000 YEARS AGO, AN INVADING FLEET FROM OUTER SPACE ATTACKED THE PLANET...

"WE FOUGHT BITTERLY WITH AND AGAINST NUCLEAR WEAPONS OF FRIGHTFUL POWER. WHEN THE ALIENS EXPLODED RADIATION POISON GAS BOMBS ON MARS, WE KNEW OUR WORLD WAS DOOMED..."



"WE FINALLY DESTROYED THE INVADERS-- BUT AT A BITTER, AWFUL COST..."



"WE HAD TO LEAVE MARS IMMEDIATELY OR PERISH, SO WE CONSTRUCTED A MIGHTY SPACE ARK AND ROSE TO ORBIT AROUND OUR DEAD PLANET, THEN AFTER 100 YEARS..."





MYSTERY IN SPACE



"WE RESOLVED NEVER AGAIN TO BE ATTACKED FROM OUTER SPACE, AND SO OUR GREATEST SCIENTISTS BEGAN CONSTRUCTING A MACHINE TO **WARP TIME...**"

THE MACHINE WILL SURROUND MARS WITH A **TIME-SHIELD**, SO ANYONE **VIEWING** IT FROM SPACE WILL SEE IT AS IT WAS 1000 YEARS AGO. ANYONE **LANDING** ON MARS WILL PASS THROUGH THE SHIELD AND BE HURLED 1000 YEARS INTO THE PAST.



THEN--THE MARS WE EARTHMEN LANDED ON IS THE WAR-SHATTERED MARS OF 1000 YEARS AGO--WITH THE POISON GAS GONE.

EXACTLY! IN THIS WAY, WE LIVE SECURE FROM ATTACK BY PRESENT-DAY INVADERS.



NOW I UNDERSTAND WHY WE COULDN'T TAKE AWAY THOSE TREASURES! WE--OF THE **PRESENT**--COULD PASS THROUGH THE TIME-SHIELD, BUT NOTHING BELONGING TO THE **PAST** COULD GO THROUGH; THEY AUTOMATICALLY RETURNED TO THEIR ORIGINAL POSITION.

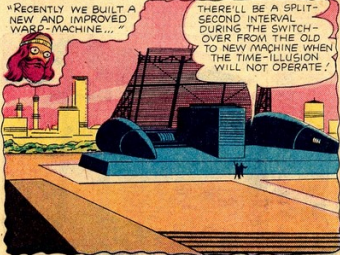


THE ONE THING I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND IS--HOW DID I GET HERE IN THIS PRESENT-DAY MARTIAN WORLD?



"RECENTLY WE BUILT A NEW AND IMPROVED WARP-MACHINE..."

THERE'LL BE A SPLIT-SECOND INTERVAL DURING THE SWITCH-OVER FROM THE OLD TO NEW MACHINE WHEN THE TIME-ILLUSION WILL NOT OPERATE.



WE REALIZED THAT ANYTHING FROM THE **PRESENT** THAT CHANCED TO BE ON MARS OF 1000 YEARS AGO WOULD BE TIME-TRANSFERRED TO OUR HIDDEN WORLD--BUT IT WAS A RISK WE HAD TO TAKE.





THAT'S HOW I--AND EVERYTHING BELONGING TO ME--WERE TRANS-LOCATED! WHAT A STORY THIS WILL MAKE WHEN I GET HOME!

YOU CAN NEVER GO HOME, EARTHMAN!



WE MUST KEEP YOU HERE ON MARS TO PREVENT YOU FROM REVEALING THE SECRET OF OUR WARP-MACHINE! SOMEHOW, YOUR PEOPLE MIGHT FIND A WAY TO NEUTRALIZE IT!

FOR MONTHS, PAUL WELDON MAKES THE BEST OF HIS SITUATION. HE LEARNS MARTIAN FLUENTLY, AND BECOMES AN HONORARY CITIZEN ...



I LIKE IT WELL ENOUGH HERE, AND AM REASONABLY HAPPY! BUT I SURE MISS THE EARTH!

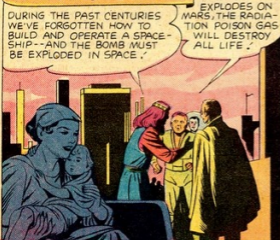
THEN ONE MOMENTOUS DAY ...



LOOK--AN UNEXPLODED RADIATION POISON GAS BOMB! IT MUST HAVE LAIN IN THE BOG FOR 1000 YEARS!

DRYING UP OF THE BOG CAUSED IT TO RISE TO THE SURFACE! AFTER ALL OUR CARE--MARS IS DOOMED!

DESPAIR STRIKES THE MARTIANS.



DURING THE PAST CENTURIES WE'VE FORGOTTEN HOW TO BUILD AND OPERATE A SPACE-SHIP--AND THE BOMB MUST BE EXPLODED IN SPACE!

IF IT EXPLODES ON MARS, THE RADIATION POISON GAS WILL DESTROY ALL LIFE!

THE EARTH COLUMNIST THRUSTS HIMSELF INTO THE LITTLE GROUP, HEART BEATING WILDLY...

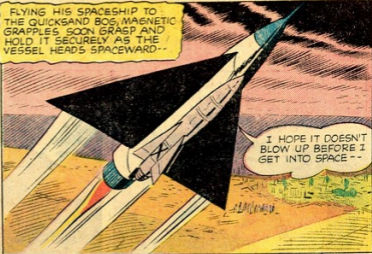


I HAVE A SPACESHIP! LET ME TAKE THE BOMB AND EXPLODE IT IN SPACE! IF YOU DON'T, WE'LL ALL DIE! YOU'LL HAVE TO TRUST ME NOT TO REVEAL YOUR SECRET!

NOT TO LET YOU TAKE THE BOMB AND EXPLODE IT MEANS OUR CERTAIN DEATH! THIS WAY, WE ALL HAVE A CHANCE OF LIFE! GO, EARTHMAN, WITH OUR HEART-FELT THANKS--



FLYING HIS SPACESHIP TO THE QUICKSAND BOG, MAGNETIC GRAPPLER SOON GRASP AND HOLD IT SECURELY AS THE VESSEL HEADS SPACEWARD--



I HOPE IT DOESN'T BLOW UP BEFORE I GET INTO SPACE--

HIGH OVER MARS THE BOMB EXPLODES IN A FIERY BLAST...

I EXPLODED THE BOMB BEHIND MARS--WHERE IT CAN'T BE SEEN FROM EARTH! NO ONE BACK HOME WILL KNOW WHAT HAPPENED!



FOR I'VE DECIDED NEVER TO TELL THE **TRUE** STORY OF MARS! THE MARTIANS HAVE THEIR REASONS FOR WANTING PRIVACY! I'M GOING TO RESPECT THOSE REASONS--EVEN THOUGH I'LL BE PASSING UP THE GREATEST STORY IN SPACE-HISTORY!



THE END 8

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