

PLANET STORIES



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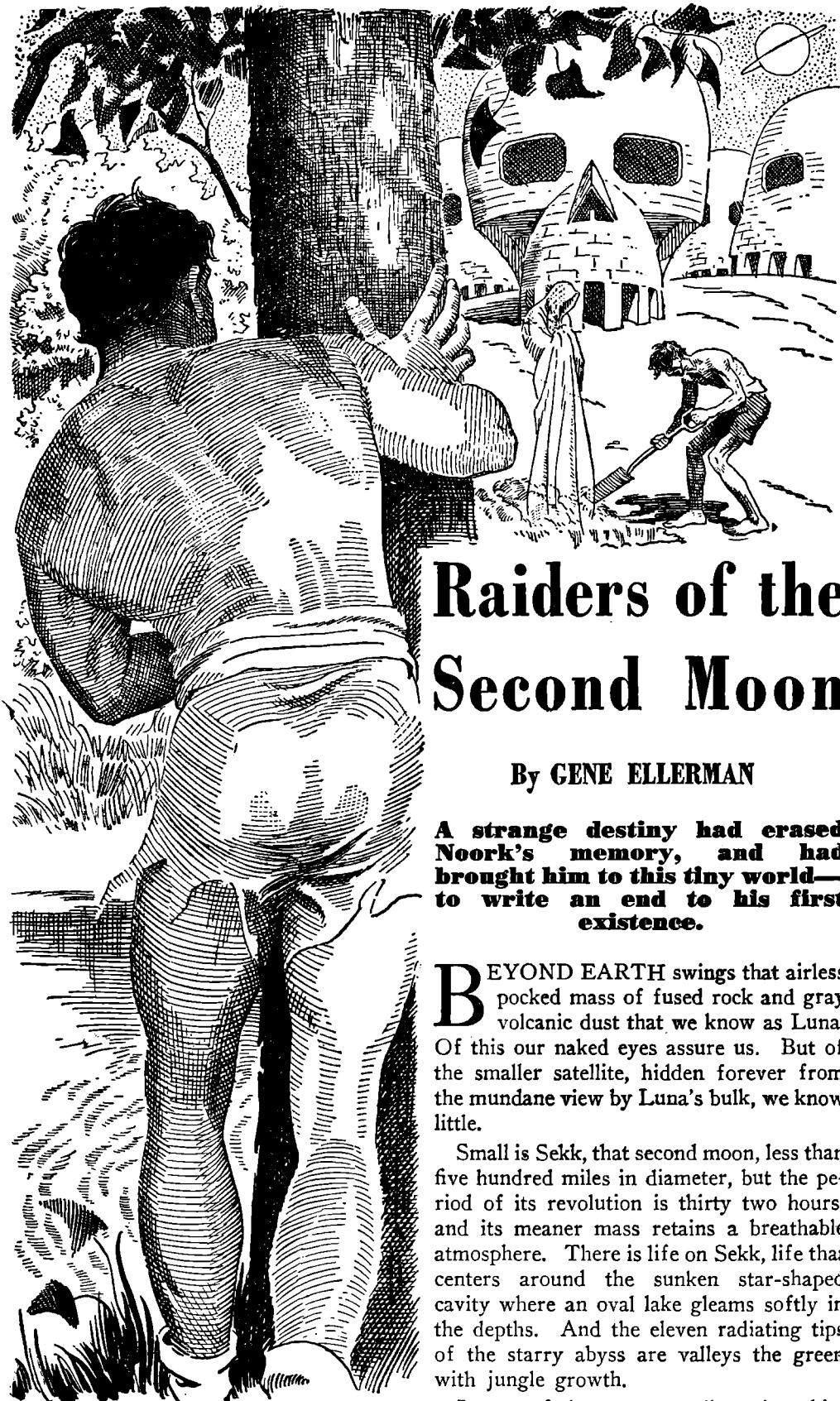
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Raiders of the Second Moon

By GENE ELLERMAN

A strange destiny had erased Noork's memory, and had brought him to this tiny world—to write an end to his first existence.

BEYOND EARTH swings that airless pocked mass of fused rock and gray volcanic dust that we know as Luna. Of this our naked eyes assure us. But of the smaller satellite, hidden forever from the mundane view by Luna's bulk, we know little.

Small is Sekk, that second moon, less than five hundred miles in diameter, but the period of its revolution is thirty two hours, and its meaner mass retains a breathable atmosphere. There is life on Sekk, life that centers around the sunken star-shaped cavity where an oval lake gleams softly in the depths. And the eleven radiating tips of the starry abyss are valleys the green with jungle growth.

In one of those green valleys the white savage that the Vasads called Noork

squatted in the ample crotch of a jungle giant and watched the trail forty feet below. For down there moved alertly a golden skinned girl, her only weapons a puny polished bow of yellow wood and a sheathed dagger.

Sight of the girl's flowing brown hair and the graceful feminine contours of her smooth-limbed body beneath its skin-halter and the insignificant breech-clout, made his brow wrinkle with concentration. Not forever had he lived in this jungle world of valleys and ragged cliffs. Since he had learned the tongue of the hairy Vasads of forest, and the tongue of their gold-skinned leader, Gurn, the renegade, he had confirmed that belief.

For a huge gleaming bird had carried him in its talons to the top of the cliff above their valley and from the rock fire had risen to devour the great bird. Somehow he had been flung clear and escaped the death of the mysterious bird-thing. And in his delirium he had babbled the words that caused the apish Vasads to name him Noork. Now he repeated them aloud.

"New York," he said, "good ol' New York."

The girl heard. She looked upward fearfully, her rounded bare arm going back to the bow slung across her shoulder. Swiftly she fitted an arrow and stepped back against the friendly bole of a shaggy barked jungle giant. Noork grinned.

"Tako, woman," he greeted her.

"Tako," she replied fearfully. "Who speaks to Tholon Sarna? Be you hunter or escaped slave?"

"A friend," said Noork simply. "It was I who killed the spotted *narl* last night when it attacked you."

Doubtfully the girl put away her bow. Her fingers, however, were never far from the hilt of her hunting dagger.

Noork swung outward from his perch, and then downward along the ladder of limbs to her side. The girl exclaimed at his brown skin.

"Your hair is the color of the sun!" she said. "Your garb is Vasad, yet you speak the language of the true men." Her violet oddly slanting eyes opened yet wider. "Who are you?"

"I am Noork," the man told her. "For many days have I dwelt among the wild

Vasads of the jungle with their golden-skinned chief, Gurn, for my friend."

The girl impulsively took a step nearer. "Gurn!" she cried. "Is he tall and strong? Has he a bracelet of golden discs linked together with human hair? Does he talk with his own shadow when he thinks?"

"That is Gurn," admitted Noork shortly. "He is also an exile from the walled city of Grath. The city rulers call him a traitor. He has told me the reason. Perhaps you know it as well?"

"Indeed I do," cried Sarna. "My brother said that we should no longer make slaves of the captured Zurans from the other valleys."

Noork smiled. "I am glad he is your brother," he said simply.

The girl's eyes fell before his admiring gaze and warm blood flooded into her rounded neck and lovely cheeks.

"Brown-skinned one!" she cried with a stamp of her shapely little sandalled foot. "I am displeased with the noises of your tongue. I will listen to it no more."

But her eyes gave the provocative lie to her words. This brown-skinned giant with the sunlit hair was very attractive. . . .

THE GIRL was still talking much later, as they walked together along the game-trail. "When my captors were but one day's march from their foul city of Bis the warriors of the city of Konto, through whose fertile valley we had journeyed by night, fell upon the slavers.

"And in the confusion of the attack five of us escaped. We returned toward the valley of Grath, but to avoid the intervening valley where our enemies, the men of Konto, lived, we swung close to the Lake of Uzdon. And the Misty Ones from the Temple of the Skull trailed us. I alone escaped."

Noork lifted the short, broad-bladed sword that swung in its sheath at his belt and let it drop back into place with a satisfying whisper of flexible leather on steel. He looked toward the east where lay the mysterious long lake of the Misty Ones.

"Some day," he said reflectively, "I am going to visit the island of the unseen evil beings who stole away your friends. Perhaps after I have taken you to your brother's hidden village, and from there

to your city of Grath. . . ." He smiled.

The girl did not answer. His keen ears, now that he was no longer speaking, caught the scuffing of feet into the jungle behind him. He turned quickly to find the girl had vanished, and with an instinctive reflex of motion he flung himself to one side into the dense wall of the jungle. As it was the unseen club thudded down along his right arm, numbing it so he felt nothing for some time.

One armed as he was temporarily, and with an unseen foe to reckon with, Noork awkwardly swung up into the comparative safety of the trees. Once there, perched in the crotch of a mighty jungle monarch, he peered down at the apparently empty stretch of sunken trail beneath.

At first he saw nothing out of the ordinary. Apparently there was no stir of life along that leaf-shadowed way. And then he caught a glimpse of blurring shadowy shapes, blotches of cottony mist that blended all too well with the foliage. One of the things from the island in the Lake of Uzdon moved, and he saw briefly the bottom of a foot dirtied with the mud of the trail.

Noork squinted. So the Misty Ones were not entirely invisible. Pain was growing in his numbed arm now, but as it came so came strength. He climbed further out on the great branch to where sticky and overripe fruit hung heavy. With a grin he locked his legs upon the forking of the great limb and filled his arms with fruit.

A barrage of the juicy fruit blanketed the misty shapes. Stains spread and grew. Patchy outlines took on a new color and sharpness. Noork found that he was peltting a half-dozen hooded and robed creatures whose arms and legs numbered the same as his own, and the last remnant of superstitious fear instilled in his bruised brain by the shaggy Vasads vanished.

These Misty Ones were living breathing creatures like himself! They were not gods, or demons, or even the ghostly servants of demons. He strung his bow quickly, the short powerful bow that Gurn had given him, and rained arrows down upon the cowering robed creatures.

And the monsters fled. They fled down the trail or faded away into the jungle. All but one of them. The arrow had pierced

a vital portion of this Misty One's body. He fell and moved no more.

A moment later Noork was ripping the stained cloak and hood from the fallen creature, curious to learn what ghastly brute-thing hid beneath them. His lip curled at what he saw.

The Misty One was almost like himself. His skin was not so golden as that of the other men of Zuran, and his forehead was low and retreating in a bestial fashion. Upon his body there was more hair, and his face was made hideous with swollen colored scars that formed an irregular design. He wore a sleeveless tunic of light green and his only weapons were two long knives and a club.

"So," said Noork, "the men of the island prey upon their own kind. And the Temple of Uzdon in the lake is guarded by cowardly warriors like this."

Noork shrugged his shoulders and set off at a mile-devouring pace down the game trail toward the lake where the Temple of the Skull and its unseen guardians lay. Once he stopped at a leaf-choked pool to wash the stains from the dead man's foggy robe.

The jungle was thinning out. Noork's teeth flashed as he lifted the drying fabric of the mantle and donned it.



Noork

UD TASTED the scent of a man and sluggishly rolled his bullet head from shoulder to shoulder as he tried to catch sight of his ages-old enemy. For between the hairy quarter-ton beast men of the jungles of Sekk and the golden men of the valley cities who enslaved them there was eternal war.

A growl rumbled deep in the hairy half-man's chest. He could see no enemy and yet the scent grew stronger with every breath.

"You hunt too near the lake," called a voice. "The demons of the water will trap you."

Ud's great nostrils quivered. He tasted the odor of a friend mingled with that of a strange Zuran. He squatted.

"It's Noork," he grunted. "Why do I not see you?"

"I have stolen the skin of a demon," answered the invisible man. "Go to Gurn. Tell him to fear the demons no longer. Tell him the Misty Ones can be trapped and skinned."

"Why you want their skins?" Ud scratched his hairy gray skull.

"Go to save Gurn's . . ." and here Noork was stumped for words. "To save his father's woman woman," he managed at last. "Father's woman woman called Sarna."

And the misty blob of nothingness was gone again, its goal now the marshy lowlands that extended upward perhaps a thousand feet from the jungle's ragged fringe to end at last in the muddy shallows of the Lake of Uzdon.

To Noork it seemed that all the world must be like these savage jungle fastnesses of the twelve valleys and their central lake. He knew that the giant bird had carried him from some other place that his battered brain could not remember, but to him it seemed incredible that men could live elsewhere than in a jungle valley.

But Noork was wrong. The giant bird that he had ridden into the depths of Sekk's fertile valleys had come from a far different world. And the other bird, for which Noork had been searching when he came upon the golden-skinned girl, was from another world also.

The other bird had come from space several days before that of Noork, the Vasads had told him, and it had landed somewhere

within the land of sunken valleys. Perhaps, thought Noork, the bird had come from the same valley that had once been his home. He would find the bird and perhaps then he could remember better who he had been.

So it was, ironically enough, that Stephen Dietrich—whose memory was gone completely—again took up the trail of Doctor Karl Von Mark, last of the Axis criminals at large. The trail that had led the red-haired young American flier from rebuilding Greece into Africa and the hidden valley where Doctor Von Mark worked feverishly to restore the crumbled structure of Nazidom, and then had sent him hurtling spaceward in the second of the Doctor's crude space-ships was now drawing to an end. The Doctor and the young American pilot were both trapped here on this little blob of cosmic matter that hides beyond the Moon's cratered bulk.

The Doctor's ship had landed safely on Sekk, the wily scientist preferring the lesser gravity of this fertile world to that of the lifeless Moon in the event that he returned again to Earth, but Dietrich's spacer had crashed.

Two words linked Noork with the past, the two words that the Vasads had slurred into his name: New York. And the battered wrist watch, its crystal and hands gone, were all that remained of his Earthly garb.

NOORK PADDLED the long flat dugout strongly away from the twilight shore toward the shadowy loom of the central island. Though he could not remember ever having held a paddle before he handled the ungainly blade well.

After a time the clumsy prow of the craft rammed into a yielding cushion of mud, and Noork pulled the dugout out of the water into the roofing shelter of a clump of drooping trees growing at the water's edge.

Sword in hand he pushed inward from the shore and ended with a smothered exclamation against an unseen wall. Trees grew close up to the wall and a moment later he had climbed out along a horizontal branch beyond the wall's top, and was lowering his body with the aid of a braided leather rope to the ground beyond.

He was in a cultivated field his feet and

hands told him. And perhaps half a mile away, faintly illumined by torches and red cloots of bonfires, towered a huge weathered white skull!

Secure in the knowledge that he wore the invisible robes of a Misty One he found a solitary tree growing within the wall and climbed to a comfortable crotch. In less than a minute he was asleep.

"The new slave," a rough voice cut across his slumber abruptly, "is the daughter of Tholon Dist the merchant."

Noork was fully awake now. They were speaking of Sarna. Her father's name was Tholon Dist. It was early morning in the fields of the Misty Ones and he could see the two golden-skinned slaves who talked together beneath his tree.

"That matters not to the priests of Uzdon," the slighter of the two slaves, his hair almost white, said. "If she be chosen for the sacrifice to great Uzdon her blood will stain the altar no redder than another's."

"But it is always the youngest and most beautiful," complained the younger slave, "that the priests chose. I wish to mate with a beautiful woman. Tholon Sarna is such a one."

The old man chuckled dryly. "If your wife be plain," he said, "neither master nor fellow slave will steal her love. A slave should choose a good woman—and ugly, my son."

"Some night," snarled the slave, "I'm going over the wall. Even the Misty Ones will not catch me once I have crossed the lake."

"Silence," hissed the white-haired man. "Such talk is madness. We are safe here from wild animals. There are no spotted narls on the island of Manak. The priests of most holy Uzdon, and their invisible minions, are not unkind."

"Get at your weeding of the field, Rold," he finished, "and I will complete my checking of the gardens."

Noork waited until the old man was gone before he descended from the tree. He walked along the row until he reached the slave's bent back, and he knew by the sudden tightening of the man's shoulder muscles that his presence was known. He looked down and saw that his feet made clear-cut depressions in the soft rich soil of the field.

"Continue to work," he said to the young man. "Do not be too surprised at what I am about to tell you, Rold." He paused and watched the golden man's rather stupid face intently.

"I am not a Misty One," Noork said. "I killed the owner of this strange garment I wear yesterday on the mainland. I have come to rescue the girl, Tholon Sarna, of whom you spoke."

Rold's mouth hung open but his hard blunt fingers continued to work. "The Misty Ones, then," he said slowly, "are not immortal demons!" He nodded his long-haired head. "They are but men. They too can die."

"If you will help me, Rold," said Noork, "to rescue the girl and escape from the island I will take you along."

Rold was slow in answering. He had been born on the island and yet his people were from the valley city of Konto. He knew that they would welcome the news that the Misty Ones were not demons. And the girl from the enemy city of Grath was beautiful. Perhaps she would love him for helping to rescue her and come willingly with him to Konto.

"I will help you, stranger," he agreed.

"Then tell me of the Skull, and of the priests, and of the prison where Tholon Sarna is held."

The slave's fingers flew. "All the young female slaves are caged together in the pit beneath the Skull. When the sun is directly overhead the High Priest will choose one of them for sacrifice to mighty Uzdon, most potent of all gods. And with the dawning of the next day the chosen one will be bound across the altar before great Uzdon's image and her heart torn from her living breast." The slave's mismatched eyes, one blue and the other brown, lifted from his work.

"Tholon Sarna is in the pit beneath the Temple with the other female slaves. And the Misty Ones stand guard over the entrance to the temple pits."

"It is enough," said Noork. "I will go to rescue her now. Be prepared to join us as we return. I will have a robe for you if all goes well."

"If you are captured," cried Rold nervously, "you will not tell them I talked with you?"

Noork laughed. "You never saw me," he told the slave.

THE SKULL was a gigantic dome of shaped white stone. Where the eye-sockets and gaping nose-hole should have been, black squares of rock gave the illusion of vacancy. Slitted apertures that served for windows circled the grisly whiteness of the temple's curving walls at three distinct levels.

Noork drifted slowly up the huge series of long bench-like steps that led up to the gaping jaws of the Skull. He saw red and purple-robed priests with nodding head-dresses of painted plumes and feathers climbing and descending the stairs. Among them moved the squatly gnarled shapes of burdened Vasads, their shaggy bowed legs fettered together with heavy copper or bronze chains, and cringing golden-skinned slaves slipped furtively through the press of the brilliant-robed ones. The stale sweaty odor of the slaves and the beast men mingled with the musky stench of the incense from the temple.

Other misty blobs, the invisible guards of the ghastly temple, were stationed at regular intervals across the great entrance into the Skull's interior, but they paid Noork no heed. To them he was another of their number.

He moved swiftly to cross the wide stone-slabbed entry within the jaws, and a moment later was looking down into a sunken bowl whose rocky floor was a score of feet below where he stood. Now he saw the central raised altar where the gleam of precious stones and cunningly worked metal—gold, silver and brass—vied with the faded garish colors of the draperies beneath it. And on the same dais there loomed two beast-headed stone images, the lion-headed god a male and the wolf-headed shape a female.

These then were the two blood hungry deities that the men of Zura worshipped—mighty Uzdon and his mate, Lornu!

Noork joined the descending throng that walked slowly down the central ramp toward the altar. As he searched for the entrance to the lower pits his eyes took in the stone steps that led upward into the two upper levels. Only priests and the vague shapelessness of the Misty Ones climbed those steps. The upper levels,

then, were forbidden to the slaves and common citizens of the island.

As he circled the curving inner wall a foul dank odor reached his sensitive nostrils, and his eyes searched for its origin. He found it there just before him, the opening that gave way to a descending flight of clammy stone steps. He darted toward the door and from nowhere two short swords rose to bar his way.

"None are to pass save the priests," spoke a voice from nowhere gruffly. "The High Priest knows that we of the temple guards covet the most beautiful of the slave women, but we are not to see them until the sacrifice is chosen."

Noork moved backward a pace. He grumbled something inaudible and drew his sword. Before him the two swords slowly drew aside.

In that instant Noork attacked. His keen sword, whetted to razor sharpness on abrasive bits of rock, bit through the hidden neck and shoulder of the guard on his right hand, and with the same forward impetus of attack he smashed into the body of the startled guard on his left.

His sword had wrenched from his hand as it jammed into the bony structure of the decapitated Misty One's shoulder, and now both his hands sought the throat of the guard. The unseen man's cry of warning gurgled and died in his throat as Noork clamped his fingers shut upon it, and his shortened sword stabbed at Noork's back.

The struggle overbalanced them. They rolled over and over down the shadowy stair, the stone smashing at their softer flesh unmercifully. For a moment the battling men brought up with a jolt as the obstruction of the first guard's corpse arrested their downward course, and then they jolted and jarred onward again from blood-slippery step to blood-slippery step.

The sword clattered from the guardian Misty One's clutch and in the same instant Noork's steel fingers snapped the neck of the other man with a pistol-like report. The limp body beneath him struggled no more. He sprang to his feet and became aware of a torch-lighted doorway but a half-dozen paces further down along the descending shaft of steps.

In a moment, he thought, the fellows of this guard would come charging out, swords in hand. They could not have failed to

hear the struggle on the stairs of stone, he reasoned, for here the noise and confusion of the upper temple was muted to a murmur.

So it was that he ran quickly to the door, in his hand the sword that had dropped from the dead man's fingers, and sprang inside, prepared to battle there the Misty Ones, lest one escape to give the alarm.

He looked about the narrow stone-walled room with puzzled eyes. Two warriors lay on a pallet of straw, one of them emitting hideous gurgling sounds that filled the little room with unpleasing echoes. Noork grinned.

From the floor beside the fatter of the two men, the guard who did not snore, he took a club. Twice he struck and the gurgling sound changed to a steady deep breathing. Noork knew that now the two guards would not give the alarm for several hours. Thoughtfully he looked about the room. There were several of the hooded cloaks hanging from pegs wedged into the crevices of the chamber's wall, their outlines much plainer here in the artificial light of the flickering torch.

Noork shed his own blood-stained robe quickly and donned one of the others. The cloaks were rather bulky and so he could carry but two others, rolled up, beneath his own protective covering.

The matter of his disguise thus taken care of he dragged the two bodies from the stairway and hid them beneath their own fouled robes in the chamber of the sleeping guards. Not until then did he hurry on down the stone steps toward the prison pit where Tholon Sarna, the golden girl, was held prisoner.

THE STEPS opened into a dimly lit cavern. Pools of foul black water dotted the uneven floor and reflected back faintly the light of the two sputtering torches beside the entrance. One corner of the cavern was walled off, save for a narrow door of interlocking brass strips, and toward this Noork made his way.

He stood beside the door. "Sarna," he called softly, "Tholon Sarna."

There were a score of young women, lately captured from the mainland by the Misty Ones, sitting dejectedly upon the

foul dampness of the rotting grass that was their bed. Most of them were clad in the simple skirt and brief jacket, reaching but to the lower ribs, that is the mark of the golden people who dwell in the city-states of Zura's valleys, but a few wore a simple band of cloth about their hips and confined their breasts with a strip of well-cured leopard or antelope hide.

One of the women now came to her feet and as she neared the metal-barred entrance Noork saw that she was indeed Sarna. He examined the outer lock of the door and found it to be barred with a massive timber and the timber locked in place with a metal spike slipped into a prepared cavity in the prison's rocky wall.

"It is Noork," he said softly as she came closer. He saw her eyes go wide with fear and sudden hope, and then reached for the spike.

"The priest," hissed the girl.

Noork had already heard the sound of approaching feet. He dropped the spike and whirled. His sword was in his hand as though by magic, as he faced the burly priest of the Skull.

Across the forehead and upper half of the priest's face a curved shield of transparent tinted material was fastened. Noork's eyes narrowed as he saw the sword and shield of the gigantic holy man.

"So," he said, "to the priests of Uzdon we are not invisible. You do not trust your guards, then."

The priest laughed. "We also have robes of invisibility," he said, "and the sacred window of Uzdon before our eyes." He snarled suddenly at the silent figure of the white man. "Down on your knees, guard, and show me your face before I kill you!"

Noork raised his sword. "Take my hood off if you dare, priest," he offered.

The burly priest's answer was a bellow of rage and a lunge forward of his sword arm. Their swords clicked together and slid apart with the velvety smoothness of bronze on bronze. Noork's blade bit a chunk from the priest's conical shield, and in return received a slashing cut that drew blood from left shoulder to elbow.

The fighting grew more furious as the priest pressed the attack. He was a skilled swordsman and only the superior agility of the white man's legs kept Noork away

from that darting priestly blade. Even so his robe was slashed in a dozen places and blood reddened his bronzed body. Once he slipped in a puddle of foul cavern water and only by the slightest of margins did he escape death by the priest's weapon.

The priest was tiring rapidly, however. The soft living of the temple, and the rich wines and over-cooked meats that served to pad his paunch so well with fat, now served to rob him of breath. He opened his mouth to bawl for assistance from the guard, although it is doubtful whether any sound could have penetrated up into the madhouse of the main temple's floor, and in that instant Noork flipped his sword at his enemy.

Between the shield and the transparent bit of curving material the sword drove, and buried itself deep in the priest's thick neck. Noork leaped forward; he snatched the tinted face shield and his sword, and a moment later he had torn the great wooden timber from its sockets.

Tholon Sarna stumbled through the door and he caught her in his arms. Hurriedly he loosed one of the two robes fastened about his waist and slipped it around her slim shivering shoulders.

"Are there other priests hidden here in the pits?" Noork asked tensely.

"No," came the girl's low voice, "I do not think so. I did not know that this priest was here until he appeared behind you." A slow smile crossed Noork's hidden features. "His robe must be close by," he told the girl. "He must have been stationed here because the priests feared the guards might spirit away some of the prisoners."

Slowly he angled back and forth across the floor until his foot touched the soft material of the priest's discarded robe near the stairway entrance. He slipped the thongs of the transparent mask, called by the priest "Uzdon's window" over his hood, and then proceeded to don the new robe.

"My own robe it slit in a dozen places," he explained to the girl's curious violet eyes—all that was visible through the narrow vision slot of her hood. He finished adjusting the outer robe and took the girl's hand.

"Come," he said, "let us escape over the wall before the alarm is given."

WITHOUT incident they reached the field where Rold toiled among the rows of vegetables. Another slave was working in a nearby field, his crude wooden plow pulled by two sweating Vasads, but he was not watching when Rold abruptly faded from view.

Noork was sweating with the weight of two cloaks and the airlessness of the vision shield as they crossed the field toward his rope, but he had no wish to discard them yet. The tinted shield had revealed that dozens of the Misty Ones were stationed about the wall to guard against the escape of the slaves.

They came to the wall and to Noork's great joy found the rope hanging as he had left it. He climbed the wall first and then with Rold helping from below, drew Sarna to his side. A moment later saw the three of them climbing along the limb to the bole of the tree and so to the jungle matted ground outside the wall.

"Will we hide here in the trees until night?" asked the girl's full voice.

Noork held aside a mossy creeper until the girl had passed. "I think not," he said. "The Misty Ones are continually passing from the island to the shore. We are Misty Ones to any that watch from the wall. So we will paddle boldly across the water."

"That is good," agreed the slave, "unless they see us put out from the shore. Their two landing stages are further along the beach, opposite the Temple of Uzdon."

"Then we must hug to the shore until we pass the tip of the island," said Noork thoughtfully. "In that way even if they detect us we will have put a safe distance between us."

Shortly after midday Noork felt the oozy slime of the marshy lowlands of the mainland beneath his paddle and the dugout ran ashore in the grassy inlet for which they had been heading. His palms were blistered and the heavy robes he yet wore were soaked with sweat.

"Once we reach the jungle," he told the girl, "off come these robes. I am broiled alive."

Suddenly Noork froze in his tracks. He thrust the girl behind him. "Misty Ones!" he hissed to Rold. "They crouch among the reeds. They carry nets and clubs to trap us."

Rold turned back toward the boat with Noork and Sarna close at his heels. But the Misty Ones were upon them and by sheer numbers they bore them to the ground. Noork's mightier muscles smashed more than one hooded face but in the end he too lay smothered beneath the nets and bodies of the enemy.

A misty shape came to stand beside these three new captives as they were stripped of their robes. His foot nudged at Noork's head curiously and a guttural voice commanded the shield be removed. Then his voice changed—thickened—as he saw the features of Noork.

"So," he barked in a tongue that should have been strange to Noork but was not, "it is the trapper's turn to be trapped, eh Captain Dietrich?"

A FAT, square-jawed face, harsh lines paralleling the ugly blob of a nose, showed through the opened robe of the leader. The face was that of Doctor Von Mark the treacherous Nazi scientist that Stephen Dietrich had trailed across space to Sekk! But Noork knew nothing of that chase. The man's face seemed familiar, and hateful, but that was all he remembered.

"I see you have come from the island," said the Doctor. "Perhaps you can tell me the secret of this invisible material I wear. With the secret of invisibility I, Karl Von Mark, can again conquer Earth and make the Fatherland invincible."

"I do not understand too well," said Noork hesitantly. "Are we enemies? There is so much I have forgotten." He regarded the brutal face thoughtfully.

"Perhaps you know from what valley the great bird brought me," he said. "Or perhaps the other bird brought you here."

Von Mark's blue eyes widened and then he roared with a great noise that was intended to be mirth. His foot slammed harder into Noork's defenseless ribs.

"Perhaps you have forgotten, swine of an American," he roared suddenly, and in his hand was an ugly looking automatic. He flung back his robe and Noork saw the dress uniform of a general. "Perhaps," the scientist repeated, "but I will take no

chances. The amnesia is often but a pretense."

His lip curled. "This is something for you to remember, Captain Dietrich," he said as the ugly black muzzle of the gun centered on Noork's bronzed chest.

And then Doctor Von Mark cursed as the gun dropped from his nerveless fingers and his hands clawed weakly at the arrow buried in his wide belly. He stumbled backward.

Arrows rained from the mistiness that had closed in about Von Mark and his men. The men from Wari, their faces unshielded, fell like flies. In a moment those yet alive had taken to their heels, And Noork felt invisible fingers tearing at the nets that bound him.

As he rose to his feet the robed figure let its misty covering drop aside. A handsome golden-skinned warrior stood revealed.

"Gurn!" cried Noork.

A glad cry came from the throat of Tholon Sarna as she saw her brother. And then she crept closer to Noork's side as the invisible mantles of Gurn's loyal Vasads opened to reveal the hairy beast men they concealed. Rold whimpered fearfully.

"The message that Ud carried to me was good," laughed Gurn. "The Misty Ones skin easily. We were trapping the Misty Ones as they came across the lake," he looked at the dying Von Mark, "as were these others. Soon we would have come to your rescue, Noork, my friend."

"Lucky I escaped first," Noork told him. "The priests of Uzdon would have trapped you. To them the Misty Ones are visible."

He picked up the fallen vision shield that lay beside their feet. His chest expanded proudly.

"No longer," he told Gurn, "am I a man without a name. I am Captain Dietrich from a distant valley called America. I was hunting this evil man when my bird died."

He smiled and his brown arm tightened around Sarna's golden body. "The evil man is dead. My native valley is safe. Now I can live in peace with you, Gurn, and with your sister, here in the jungle."

"It is good, Noork," smiled Tholon Sarna.