

TANAR OF PELLUCIDAR

By EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

AUTHOR OF
"TARZAN OF THE APES"

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

Upward through the darkness Tanar went. Pausing now and then to grope about with his hands, he found that the tree trunk ran up the center of a narrow, circular shaft. He climbed slowly upward and at a distance of about thirty feet above the floor of the tunnel, his head struck stone. Feeling upward with one hand, he discovered that the tree was set in mortar in the ceiling above him.

This could not be the end! What reason could there be for a tunnel and a shaft that led nowhere? He groped through the darkness in all directions with his hand and he was rewarded by finding an opening in the side of the shaft about six feet below the ceiling.

Quitting the bale of the tree, he climbed into the opening in the wall of the shaft, and here he found himself in another tunnel, lower and narrower than that at the base of the shaft. It was dark still, so that he was compelled to advance slowly and with great caution.

He advanced but a short distance when the tunnel turned abruptly to the right, and ahead of him beyond the turn, he saw a ray of light! A condemned man snatched from the laws of death could not have greeted salvation with more joyousness than Tanar of Pellucidar greeted this first slender ray of daylight that he had seen for a seeming eternity.

It shone dimly through a tiny crevice, but it was light, the light of heaven that he never had expected to behold again.

Enraptured, he walked slowly toward it, and as he reached it his hand came in contact with two rough, unpainted boards that blocked his way. It was through a tiny crack between two of these boards that the light was filtering.

As dim as the light was, it hurt his eyes, so long unaccustomed to light of any kind. But by turning them away so that the light did not shine directly into them, he finally became accustomed to it.

When he did, he discovered that as small as the aperture was through which the light came, it let in sufficient to dispel the utter darkness of the interior of the tunnel, and he also discovered that he could discern objects.

He could see the stone walls on either side of the tunnel, and by looking closely he could see the boards that formed the obstacle that barred his further progress. And as he examined them he discovered that at one side there was something that resembled a latch, an invention of which he had been entirely ignorant before he had come aboard the Korsar ship upon which he had been made prisoner.

He clinched his ear to the door and

listened, but he heard no sound.

Then very carefully he examined the latch, experimenting with it until he discovered how to operate it. Steadying his nerves, he pushed gently upon the rough planks.

As they swung away from him slowly a flood of light rushed into the first narrow crack, and Tanar covered his eyes with his hands and turned away, realizing that he must become accustomed to this light slowly.

With closed eyes he listened at the crack, but could hear nothing. And then with utmost care he started to accustom his eyes to the light, but it was long before he could stand the full glare that came through even this tiny crack.

When he could stand the light without pain, he opened the door a little farther and looked out beyond the door lay a fairly large room, in which wicker hamper, iron and earthen receptacles and bundles seved up in hides littered the floor and were piled high against the walls. Everything seemed covered with dust and cobwebs, and there was no sign of a human being about.

Pushing the door open still further, Tanar stepped from the tunnel into the apartment. Everywhere the room was a litter of bundles and packages, with together with various fittings for ships, bales of hides and numerous weapons.

For a moment Tanar stood with his hand still on the open door and as he started to step into the room his hand stuck for an instant where he had grasped the rough boards. Looking at his fingers to ascertain the cause, he discovered that they were covered with sticky pitch.

When he tried to rip the pitch off, he found that it was almost impossible to do so. As he moved around the room examining the contents, everything that he touched with his hand stuck to it—it was annoying, but unavoidable.

An inspection of the room revealed several windows along one side and a door at one end. The door was equipped with a latch similar to that on the door through which he just had passed. Lifting the catch, Tanar pushed the door slightly ajar and before him he saw a long corridor, with doors opening from it.

As he looked, a Korsar came from one of the doorways and, turning, walked down the corridor away from him. A moment later, a woman emerged from another doorway, and then he saw other people at the far end of the corridor. Quickly Tanar of Pellucidar closed and latched the door.

Here was no avenue of escape. For with his smooth face and his naked body, he would be recognized and

trusted might appoint a roadmaster to maintain highways, but the appointee could not be a kin to the trustee.

In Legislature 50 Years Ago

By United Press

The traffic problem, as presented by horse-drawn vehicles fifty years ago, was one which caused deep concern in the 1881 legislature. Senator R. C. Bell, Ft. Wayne, argued that the nine-foot gravel roads were inadequate for the rapidly increasing amount of traffic and he introduced a measure providing that the gravel be spread twelve-feet wide.

His bill presented other radical changes in the road system. He proposed that the township trustees be made the road superintendents and that they be paid \$2 a day instead of \$2.50 for each day they worked on the road.

It provided further that the

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master to maintain highways, but the appointee could not be a kin to the trustee.

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