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At the Earth's Core

By Milton Subotsky

Slowly does it,
Mr. Evans!
When I give
the word!
Now, are you
ready with your cork, sir?
A great
big smile! Beautiful!
Ready?
Oh, dear,
oh dear, oh...
oh, oh, oh...
this is awful.
Oh, David, take us with you.
Sorry, Maisie.
No passengers allowed.
Tell you what, Innes.
I'll bet you 50 guineas
my coach and four'll
beat you to the other side.
Good idea! While
you're galloping over the top
we'll be drilling
through the middle.
That'll do.
Stop there.
Thank you.
Doc?
Oh, David, my dear fellow,
what a proud moment this is.
I hope your faith
in me will be fully justified.
I just made a wager.
A little champagne to success?
Oh, yes,
I'll... I'll drink to that.
Oh, no.
I'd better not.
I'm at the controls
and you must keep
a clear head, too, David.
- Winterbottom...
- Mr. Innes, sir.
Dowsett, of the times.

- How do you do, sir?

- How do you do?

This is Dr. Abner Perry.

- How do you do?

- How do you do, sir?

Dr. Perry

was kind enough

to nominate me

as his worst student.

It took me longer to graduate

from geological engineering

than any other man alive.

Oh, but you had many

fine qualities, David.

But you were rather slow.

And that is rather surprising

because his father was so clever.

One of the best we ever had in,

uh, '58, I think it was.

Yes, yes, '58.

Dear old dad.

He should've

been here to see the mole.

Ah, that is what you call it?

The... the "iron mole"?

That's what I call it.

Dr. Perry here, calls it a high

calibration digging machine.

It'll bore through solid rock

at a rate of 78 feet per minute.

And this is

your design, Dr. Perry?

The finance has been provided

by Mr. Innes, I gather.

Oh, pardon me.

David, gyroscopes.

I know that today is just a

test-run through our Welsh hills...

- Good day. David, come along.

- Good day, sir.

But can you tell me, is it really

your intention to eventually explore

deep into the bowels of the earth?

Sir, we've been on top

of the earth long enough.
It's about time
we found out what's underneath.
Great crowd, huh, doc?
Concentrate, David.
Close doors.
Locks on.
All secure.
Ahh!
How are we?
Ready to go, doc?
Oh, yes!
Yes, my dear fellow.
I'll just check the gyroscopes.
Ahh!
Very nice.
Well, would you like
to move off, my boy?
Ready and willing, doc.
Good luck,
and happy landings.
Oh, dear.
Where is that smoke coming from?
Ah, yes. Well, you'd better
put that out until we're underway.
Procedure check.
Vision ports.
Opening vision ports.
Control.
Begin lift,
steady up to 10 degrees.
Check the inclinometer as we go, David.
Milford, get the horses ready,
otherwise I shall lose 50 guineas.
No cheating, Archie.
You can't start until they're off.
14,
- 15...
- Right. Hold at that and lock off.
- Locked off.
- Thank you, control.
Vision lights, aft.
Vision lights, forward.
Nose-cutters.

Right!
Bring in the crawler banks.
Firing engines, now.
Here we go.
10, 9, 8, 7...
...4, 3,
2, 1.
Release.
Up a little on the throttles, David.
I have her at 1800.
Oh! Back up, David!
Going in again.
Gripping now.
Cut in the tail pan.
Tail pan at 300.
Come on, girls. Off we go.
Come on, Milford.
Steady the throttles.
We're in.
Slow her down, David.
On the throttles.
Don't cut the engines.
Whew!
By gad!
That cannot be possible.
Quick. What does
the distance meter read?
Confounded contraption!
It should be 700 feet deep
by the time we get
it back to horizontal.
She's going too fast.
I can't change her course,
most extraordinary thing!
The mole is burning up inside, doc.
Can you... can you just
take over, David?
I must...
- Don't give up, sir
- I can't, I...
- Ah, oh, ah...
- Doc! Doc Perry!
- Ohh!
- Don't...

Perry!

Doc?

- Oh, Doc!

- Huh?

- Doc!

- Oh!

- You all right?

- Where wh-where was I?

It's c-c-c-old.

- The temperature...

- Hmmm?

Look at it.

I can't see a thing.

Oh!

Ice.

Ice. It can't be possible.

Fascinating. Just
make a note of the...

Oh!

Just make a note of
the temperature, will you?

She's going up!

A little more throttle, David.

Temperature's rising, doc.

We're on our way home.

Not quite.

We appear to be, uh,
in the middle
of a... an underground
lake at the moment.

Ohh!

Excellent!

Excellent!

Lifting nicely.

Knew she'd do it.

Lifting nicely?

Hold on, doc!

Hold on.

Ohh!

Total power failure?

Oh, how very disappointing.

It must've been the water.

I didn't allow
for that contingency.

Well, doc, shall we
see where we are?
Yes.
I'll, uh, just
get my umbrella.
The weather seems so changeable.
Ah!
Ah, where did I put it
amongst all this lot?
Ah! There it is.
Doc?
Doc!
Yes... yes. What?
Come here, quick.
Hey really, I really must check
the reason for that power failure.
I don't like being...
what an unbelievable sight.
Oop!
Steady, doc.
David!
This can't be the other
side of the hill, surely.
Unless it's
changed dramatically.
Well, where are we?
Look at this Mesozoic moss.
Or is it a cycad?
Yeah, I'm not sure, I...
I've only seen it
before in fossilized form.
I would dearly love to take
a frond back with me.
That will be great, doc.
Just great.
But where on earth can we be?
Doc?
Oh, I say.
Steady, they may be stingers.
Onward, dear boy.
What an extraordinary sky.
What a strange color, doc.
This cannot be the Rhondda valley.
I've never seen anything like it.

Like nothing on earth.

David?

We are not on earth.

We're...

Well, if we're not on earth, doc,
then where the hell are we?

From my observations, dear friend, I
can positively state that we are under it.

Under?

At the earth's core.

By Jove!

How very interesting.

- Uh, d-doc...

- Mmm?

No, I-I don't think you
want to get too close to that.

Yes.

It is a somewhat aggressive
looking... creature.

David!

Oh, dear!

David, don't lose contact.

Doc!

Shoo! Shoo!

Oh!

Oh!

Oh, oh dear!

Oh!

- Ohh!

- No, doc. This way.

Oh, dear.

Oh!

- Here.

- Oh, dear.

Take care of
yourself, David.

- Oh!

- Hang on, doc.

David?

Hang on, doc.

Oh!

Ugh!

Take that!

Come on!

You ugly...
Oh, dear.
Oh, oh, I say!
I say, do be careful.
But we came in peace!
Ugh!
Oh, oh, David,
How good to see that you're safe.
Have you ever seen
anything like this before?
No.
Those prisoners look human.
Yes.
And they appear to be intellectually
superior to our captors.
I do find
that interesting.
They seem a pretty subhuman
species, yet the master race.
Isn't that always the way?
Yes, the power
of aggression, dear boy.
Brawn before brains.
No! Don't hit him!
I'll remember him, doc,
but they all look the same.
Yes.
Ugh!
David,
don't you think it's about time
we introduced ourselves
to our fellow sufferers?
Dr. Abner Perry
at your service, ma'am.
David.
Dia.
Dia?
You can call him Doc.
- Ghak.
- Oh, Ghak.
Oh!
Dia?
Who's that man up in front
who keeps looking at me?

He is Hoojah the sly one.
Do not trust him.
Perry?
Doesn't it ever
get dark here?
According to my watch, we've
been traveling for 2 days.
No, here there can be no night.
Just perpetual daylight.
We are in a cave, you understand,
a gigantic cave.
And the sky is the underside
of the earth's crust...
the magma, probably something
like 20 miles above us.
Oh.
Conserve your energy, dear boy.
We're both going to need it.
That was my father's watch.
Unpleasant character.
Oh, dear!
Dia?
Who are they?
Sagoths,
soldiers of the Mahars.
Oh, and... and pardon me,
what are Mahars?
Mahars rule Pellucidar,
and Sagoths take us
to be slaves in their city.
- What a charming prospect.
- Dia.
Aghh!
Agh!
Dia!
Your act of chivalry didn't
seem very popular, David.
Ahhh!
Pardon me.
Doc!
David!
That must be the city of the Mahars.
Oh! Do watch that thing!
Ohh!

Uhh!

Oh, they're so excitable,
like all foreigners.

Dia.

Dia!

I just wanted to ask
her how much farther.

They're giving
us the cold shoulder, David.
We certainly seem to have blotted
our copybook somehow.

Ohh!

Ugh!

David, I-I...

I'm sorry to
be a burden, but I...

I don't think
I can go on much longer.
Come on, doc.

It can't be much farther.

Oh!

Noisy lot, aren't they, David?

Ah.

Doc?

Mmm?

Dia...

Dia, she's gone.

Uh?

She's not here?

Ghak, what happened to Dia?

Hoojah the sly one.

He escaped with the girl you refused.

- I what?

- You insulted Dia.

Do you not know what you have done?

No.

When a man from Pellucidar fights
with another man for a woman,
she belongs to he who wins.

Well, you should've claimed
her or released her.

But you showed contempt
for her by doing nothing.

Now no man can

take her as mate
until he's overcome you in combat.
I didn't know.
I thought I was protecting her.
Forgive me, for you
could not have known.
Dia was in hiding from Jubal,
the ugly one.
He is a man with the
strength of many men.
And he has made it known
that he wants Dia for his mate.
There is no one who can
defend her against him,
and so Dia fled to the hills.
Only to be captured
by a Sagoth raiding party.
There is something
you should know, my friend.
Dia is a princess,
the daughter of kings.
She is proud and she
will never forgive you,
even if you did find her again,
which you will not.
We are all doomed
to slavery... and death.
They are no respecters of age, are they?
David!
What a phenomenal sight...
a fire curtain!
Ooh!
Ugh!
- David!
- What?
A Rhamphorhynchus of
the middle Jurassic period.
My goodness, how enormous.
Why, the largest
remains we ever discovered
have never indicated a size much greater
than that attained by an ordinary crow.
- Oh!
- Hey!

What are you doing?

Oh, oh!

Doc!

Perry!

Take care of yourself.

I will, and you.

You are beginning to annoy me.

Ghak, one at a time.

You've got a long day.

Ah, there you are, my friend.

Another one for the shelves.

Thank you.

Now, what have we got?

Fascinating.

"The Mahar...

"is limited...

"vocally...

"but has been...

"endowed...

"with...

"mesmeric powers...

"and a high degree of telepathy".

That's quite a

combination, for a bird.

I don't know what it is

they're giving us to eat.

Perhaps it's just as well.

- Doc?

- Mm-hmm?

How do we get out of here?

I really haven't been able

to find out anything definite

about the Mahar's secret yet,

except that, in some way,

it is connected with the lava,

with the heat.

Well, I'm certainly getting

to know about that.

Ahh, but that is the point, David.

Slaves are used to constantly

repair and divert the lava channels.

You see, although the

lava is of vital importance,

it is also eating away at the very

foundations of the Mahar city.
And so its flow has to be continually
checked and rechanneled.
In fact, the whole safety of the
city is dependent upon the slaves.
And, uh, we are
among their number now.
Oh, there's
cheerful Annie again.
Watch yourself, doc.
Doc!
Yeah.
David.
David.
- Ra.
- Ra?
Hu-rah, rah.
Oh, uh...
I don't come from Pellucidar.
I come from another world.
I escaped from the Mahar city.
No one can escape from the Mahar city.
The Mahars are all-seeing,
all lethal.
Ra, why haven't you risen up
and fought the Mahars?
You do not know the Mahar.
You have not really seen their power.
They're evil!
Ra,
if your tribe and the others
joined together, you could
defeat the Mahars.
It's good thought.
But come with me.
I'll show you.
Then you'll understand.
Ra?
Where are you taking me?
We are now within the outer
walls of the Mahar grotto.
We climb.
What are these
prisoners doing here?

Wait, and you shall see.

You may be thankful that you're not
on the same side of the wall as they.

The Mahars.

Are you looking for someone?

Yes.

Dia.

Thank God she's not here.

Vile cr...

They've got to be destroyed.

They've got to be.

Come.

We go.

David.

I'm going back.

After what you've just seen?

Especially after what I've seen.

They've got to be destroyed.

David, you're one man...

Strong, it's true.

How can you win?

I've got to find the

secret of the Mahars

and destroy them.

- I'll bring Ghak back.

- Ghak?

He will not trust me.

No tribe trusts each other.

I know.

You go back to your village, Ra,

till the Sagoths come again.

Do you think I'll let

you go back alone?

- You're a friend, Ra.

- Yes, but foolish friend.

The Mahars will

make a meal of us.

We've just doubled our strength.

It's...

Danion!

The ear.

Get it behind the ear.

The ear!

Oh, no!

You got him!
Bravo!
David, above you!
Freedom!
Freedom!
Freedom! Freedom!
Come on, doc.
Get a tight hold, doc.
I have a firm grip upon
your trousers, David.
- David!
- What?
I found it!
I found the Mahar secret!
- Come with me.
- Not now, doc!
But it's just through
this hidey-hole.
Come on, me boy,
I'll show you.
It's not far now, David.
Be careful of the edge.
It was the most amazing piece of luck.
I practically stumbled on it.
And after pondering over all
those heavy slabs in the library
and learning very little from them,
I got so dispirited.
I kept thinking, "whatever will I
tell David when he gets back?"
You knew I'd come
back for you, did you?
Of course I did.
What would I do without you?
There...
there it is.
The very origin of
every Mahar that's born.
Look, David.
Do you see that winch?
That is what controls the fire curtain.
This is where we're
going to finish them.
- It's a dead end, David.

- Doc, in here.
Down there? But I'm
not a rabbit, you know.
Come on, doc.
Fascinating rock structure, David.
Would you please, doc... come on!
Oh, I'll just sit for a moment.
Alright.
Catch your breath.
I can't find my marks.
David? Have you ever
thought of going to the moon?
Hmm?
Come on, doc.
Oh, uh, which way now?
I'm afraid we're lost, doc.
Be careful not to graze
yourself on these
formidable-looking rocks here.
Oh!
I say, there's that...
peculiar pellucid light ahead.
Shall we explore?
Whoops-a-daisy.
Here, doc. Come on.
Watch yourself.
Come on.
Oh!
Fresh air at last.
David?
I'm so sorry, dear fellow.
This place is apt to make
one a little jumpy.
Here, sit down.
Dia!
Come, and I kill her.
Dia!
Ahh! David!
Bull's-eye!
Dia?
No.
Dia, I thought
I'd never see you again.
Dia?

Be masterful, David.

Dia?

Sit down!

Sit down!

- Now, you listen to me...

- No, it's too late now.

When we were near my village,

I managed to escape

from Hoojah the sly one.

And now I fear

that Hoojah the sly one

will lead Jubal

the ugly one back here.

I heard about him.

David, he will kill you.

He is the strongest warrior

in all of Pellucidar.

What, David?

The sooner I meet up

with Jubal, the better.

Come on.

Come on!

- Watch your step, doc.

- Oh, yes.

My word, what a fiery beastie.

Oh, your royal highness,

how very nice

to see you again.

Remarkably efficient,

these primitive weapons.

I've never had occasion

to use them before.

Ha! The cord

from my spectacles.

Oh, your tomahawk came

in very useful, too, David.

Brains before brawn, huh, doc?

Oh, a combination of both, dear boy.

We must hurry.

Yeah, I've got to find the ugly one.

Wouldn't exactly call him

very pretty, would you?

Hey, David!

Wait for me!

It's Jubal the ugly one!
You can say that again.
Come, we must hide.
- No, no, Dia, no!
- Come!
I'm gonna have to fight
Jubal once and for all.
- Stand aside, David.
- Doc, I said this is my fight.
- Ohh!
- David!
David...
Watch him, David!
That's right, David.
Dia.
No! No!
Unhand her, you coward.
Never mind the Queensberry rules.
Well done, David!
Now...
you scoundrel.
Missed.
Well, at least we put
him to his heels. Hmph!
Well done, David!
Such courage, my boy!
Such great courage!
David!
Jubal!
You have defeated Jubal.
Dia is yours.
Dia will not be mine until we destroy
the Mahars and free Pellucidar.
Raise bows.
Take aim.
Fire!
Robin Hood and his
merry men, what, David?
Hear me, leaders of
the tribes of Pellucidar.
These strangers came to our world...
a world ruled by the Mahars who
have enslaved and tortured us.
For as long as we can recall...

our tribes have been divided.

Now, with the help of

our new-found friends

we are united.

And we have the strength and the
power to destroy once and for all
those who have enslaved us.

Death to the Mahars!

Well, David, would you like to
summarize our deployment?

I will lead the main attack.

Ghak, and his men will cover the rear.

Ra and Dr. Perry will go ahead of us
through the lava channel
and the inner sanctum
and cut off the main fire supply.

I hate to ask you

to do this, doc,

but you know where

the controls are.

I'm delighted to be of
some active service, my boy.

Don't you worry, David.

I will take good care of him.

Oh, most kind.

Well, meeting adjourned, gentlemen.

- I go with you, yes?

- No, Dia. No.

Why not, David?

Dia, the Mahar city is
no place for you.

- David...

- Dia.

This is it.

I must warn you,
it gets very hot in there.

Deuced it's hot!

You could roast an ox in here.

Got you, you boulder!

Oh, I do beg your pardon,
your royal highness.

I thought you were the enemy.

- No.

- Dia, what are you doing here?

It's Hoojah... he has
been captured by the Sagoths.
He might betray us.
That traitorous blighter!
What a pity my arrow missed him.
Oh, well.
Quickly, fall in.
- Follow me.
- Right.
Single file.
Retreat!
Ra, the inner sanctum!
You cannot mesmerize me!
I'm British!
Dia!
Dia! Perry!
Dia!
Dia!
Doc!
Dia!
David!
David!
Ahh, David!
David!
Doc, you're limping!
Oh, it's my broolly!
Come on, doc, hurry up!
Come on, doc!
Here, David, here!
Come on!
Keep going, doc.
Dia.
Perry, this way.
Wh-why have you stopped?
- We must wait for Ra!
- Oh, yes!
Ra!
It's too late.
Come on!
Dia.
Doc.
Doc...
Ra!
Poor Ra.

Yes, indeed.
A brave man.
Come on, doc.
Ah, here's David and his lovely lady.
Goodbye!
People of Pellucidar,
according to your custom,
I take Dia
to be my bride.
No, David.
It's not to be.
I must stay here.
This is my world.
I would be lost in yours.
No. No, you wouldn't.
I want to show you
the wonders of my world.
I know, and I love you.
Come along, David.
We must be on our way.
Goodbye, Dia.
God bless you.
David?