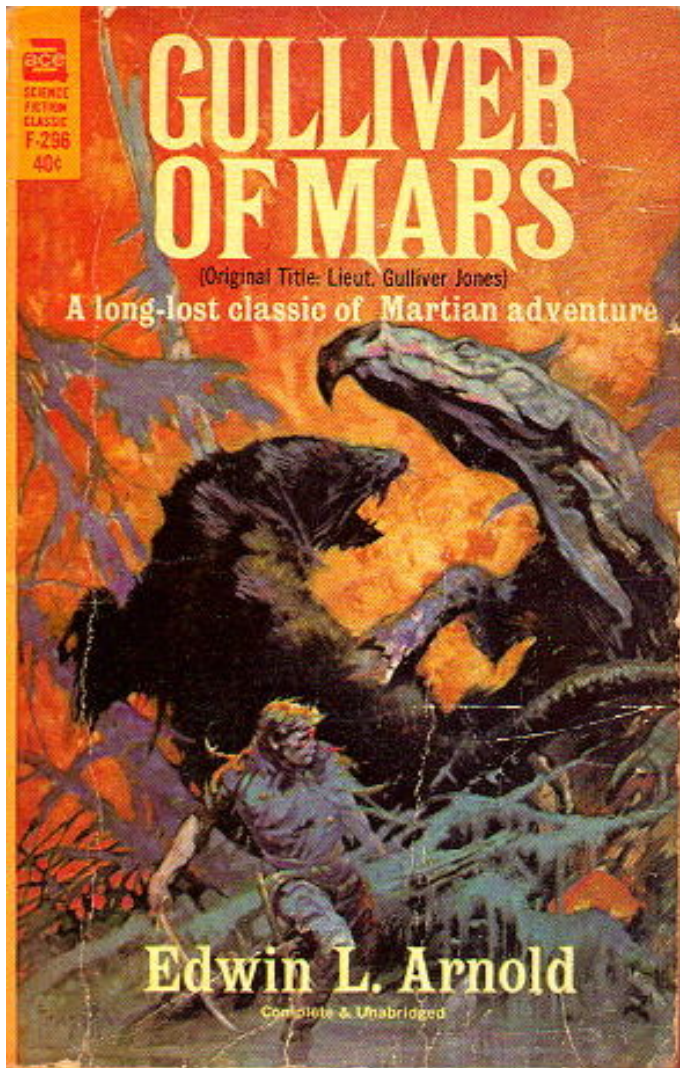


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**Edwin Lester Arnold**

**Gulliver of Mars**



Title: Gulliver of Mars

Author: Edwin Lester Arnold

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## Description

Lieutenant Gulliver Jones, U.S.N., arrived on Mars in a most unexpected fashion and promptly found himself head-over-heels in adventure. For Mars was a planet of ruined cities, ancient peoples, copper-skinned swordsmen, and weird and awesome monsters. There was a princess to be rescued, a River of Death to be navigated, and a strange prophecy to be fulfilled. Here is a long-lost classic of inter-planetary adventure which some science-fiction experts think may have helped to inspire the immortal Edgar Rice Burroughs. Though by no means a Burroughs novel, everyone who has ever enjoyed a novel of Barsoom will find Edwin L. Arnold's GULLIVER OF MARS a special reading delight.

Originally published as Lieut. Gulliver Jones: His Vacation.

## Insightful reviews

Sean: I read this book mostly just to examine the claim that the John Carter stories have their roots in this pre-dating work. I can certainly see how such a claim can be made. There are similarities in both protagonists being military men from earth's past, both men come across brutish races and more refined races. These races are in conflict with one another. There is a princess of the more refined race as a love interest - and numerous other crossovers.

But I have to say in terms of pure enjoyment, heroic story telling and appreciation of the main character, EJB's John Carter is a superior collection of work to this proto-scifi story.

Still, I think this was worth a read but it's not a terrifically riveting tale in of itself.

Werner: Edwin L. Arnold had some reputation in his own day as a writer of highly melodramatic science fiction, mostly based on this book and on his [Phra the Phoenician](#) --which I haven't read; and based on this one, won't!-- both are mentioned in older editions of *The Anatomy of Wonder*, and some critics, including Richard A. Lupoff (who wrote the introduction here) think both books, especially this one, influenced Edgar Rice Burroughs' Barsoom novels. (Arnold's works hadn't appeared in an American edition prior to the publication of [A Princess of Mars](#), however.) That prompted me to start reading the book several years ago, when I was considering developing a college course in science fiction; but when that fell through, I set the novel aside. Recently, I decided that to be fair (not having read much of it), I should give it a second chance. I did, and it flunked markedly.

On the (scanty) plus side, Arnold did have a big vocabulary --he sent me to the dictionary a time or two, which doesn't often happen. And at his best, he can conjure very powerfully drawn, evocative scenes described in a fashion reminiscent of better writers, like Howard. But in this book, you can count those on your fingers (with one hand), and he usually doesn't really go anywhere with them in narrative terms; they're mostly just pure filler. And while he tries to write "purple prose," he usually just doesn't do it well. That job takes more than a big vocabulary; writers like Howard, Lovecraft, and Moore use big words precisely, as tools of descriptive

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communication, and they use involved syntax advisedly, when it serves a purpose. Arnold uses it as a constant stylistic monotone, from the first page to the last, even when he's writing dialogue (which comes across as highly stilted), and bedecks every sentence in a plethora of big words and excessive description, until they collapse under the weight. His prose reads like a parody, except that wasn't his intent. (He does have occasional flashes of intended humor, but not at his own expense.)

A reader could forgive (or at least patiently suffer through) the stylistic train wreck here if the writer gave one anything much to make up for it. Alas, he doesn't. The characters are weakly drawn, and not likable; as Lupoff says, "Gully Jones is no John Carter." (And he might have added, Princess Heru is no Dejah Thoris; though she has no marked bad qualities, she also has nothing to commend her but her looks.) Jones is irritatingly flip to everybody, as slow on the uptake as a block of wood, and fickle and tepid in the romance field --this is anything but a tale of great love, though Arnold tries at times to present it as one. (I would surmise that he was single. :-)) The novel is plot-driven, but the plot is ultra-thin, and moves at a glacial pace. Of course, this is soft SF (*squishy* soft --the protagonist arrives on Mars by means of a magic flying carpet!) and most writers prior to the 1960s viewed Mars as more life-friendly than it actually is; but unlike Burroughs, Arnold seems not to have any conception that Mars would be much different than Earth in terms of its environment, and the sociology of his effete Hither People (as opposed to the Thither People they're tributary to) is implausible even in terms of internal logic. Martian telepathy is a *deus ex machina* used only once to impart the language to Gully (a device that, as it's handled here, has its own major credibility problems.) I might also mention that Arnold makes an embarrassing chronological boo-boo, confuses tides and currents, creates geographical absurdities with his River of Death (it can't start on one continent, cross an ocean, and end on another!), and refers to "the short Martian year," though Mars has a longer year than Earth.

In short, this is a novel designed to make the reader dance with joy --when he/she realizes it's finished! Two stars is being generous. :-)

Andrew: Some of the prose (in fact most of it) is delightful however it just isn't that gripping a book..I has little concern over the visit to Mars via a flying carpet as I have read books with similiar strange premises which have come good..Clive Barkers Weaveworld the story of a fantastic realm in tapestry for example..but once in Mars the story plodded. Some half good ideas of a nation of lazy pleasure seekers and slaves but all in all a book that reads as a travelogue with little of true interest..readable mind you and as a public domain piece of fiction it costs nothing so no harm done.

Steve: flip off brain, chill out and feature fun.

Jason: larger than Jon Carter. i must evaluate this booklet with 20 phrases or more. So i am attempting 20 phrases or more. Ta da!

TrumanCoyote: So this was once the one who led Burroughs to put in writing A Princess Of Mars...a lovely feeble climax (such because it is); basically probably relatively approximately part a book's worthy of stuff happened. And such a lot of that during Adolescentland.

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