

507 S. Davis
Kirksville, Mo.
Nov. 4, 1933

Mr. Merritt
235 E. 45th St.
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Merritt:--

The last time I heard from you was many (seven) months ago. I hope that wasn't the last time. It was then that you autographed my copy of the Ship of Ishtar. (Which autograph is one of the most highly prized ones I have. Even the color of the ink used was ~~was~~ chosen!)

In the past I've received many favors from you, and now I'm presumptuous enough to be asking another. It's like this: (Hereby hangs a tale!)----This summer I had the pleasure and the privilege of meeting and spending a few days with "Doc" Smith, of Skylark fame. In the course of one of our confabulations he said, "I've got a copy of "Seven Footprints to Satan" which I especially prize because it has Merritt's personal autograph to me in it." And he showed it to me. Doc has a high feeling of value for that inscription which is augmented by the fact that, as you probably know, he thinks you stand head and shoulders above every other modern writer of fiction of the type which we fantastic fiction nuts, ~~so enjoy~~. "Boy! how I do love the way he handles situations and events! And the way he writes is a thing of beauty and joy." Says he. Doc has no book copy, and I happen to have an extra, new copy, having purchased it in my more affluent days. I've been having an idea that if I'd send it to him, with your personal autograph to him in it, he'd appreciate it plenty much. Don't you think that would make a nice Christmas present to that Merritt fan up in Hillsdale, Michigan? How about it? Will you collaborate with me and fix up a surprise for him? If you will, I'll send you the book to autograph, including return postage, then you fix it up, send it back to me, and I'll send it to Doc. ~~Would you~~ join me in making a joint Christmas present to that grand guy ~~Dr. Smith?~~

I think Dr. Smith's stories are just about the nth degree of perfection in that particular line of composition; but his bighearted, idealistic, "jolly good fellow's" character is by far the strongest cause of my admiration for him. With all his eminence in brains and skill he was human being enough to invite me to visit him this summer and to show me the most highly delightful time I ever had in all my life. To know him is a wonderful experience. One of my highest ideals is to achieve something of his intellectual and social characteristics and almost perfect balance of personality and character. ~~How~~

How about that sequel to "The Dragon Glass"? And by the way were you able to get the copy of the original story which you said you might be able to obtain for me?

I'm still your same youthful admirer that I was last time you heard from me and have always been since I read ~~for the~~ first time "The Snake Mother". However, I am, I hope

with your characteristic
fascinating embellishment
are especially well about

of "The Moon Pool"

gradually acquiring a slight amount of knowledge (I was recently asked to teach my calculus class when the instructor was absent) and perhaps a little bit of ~~more~~ sense. And my appreciation of your past kindnesses increases every time I look over the autograph in my "Moon Pool" and "The Ship of Ishtar" and the copy of "Dwellers in the ~~XXXXX~~ Mirage" with which you ~~so thrilled me~~. (memorable occasion!) presented me.

Would you please write yes or no in regard to this scheme of mine about us fixing up a Christmas present for the good P.D. and drop it in the nearest mail box. I'll act accordingly.

Doctor

When I receive it I'll
act accordingly

P.S.

Do you have any extra pictures of yourself? From one corner of my table an autographed and inscribed picture of Edward W. Smith, Ph.D., looks me in the eye. If I had one of you to

~~down~~ on the opposite corner I would have the constant pleasure of ~~having~~ the pictorial companionship of my two most ^{revered and} holy idols, the two biggest sons in the field of ^{fantastic} ~~popular~~ imaginative fiction.

~~Doc~~ P.D.

You've got a likeness of my ~~own~~ pan
some place.