

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE'S



THE
LOST WORLD



MUSEUM OF UNNATURAL
MYSTERY PRESS

Adapted and illustrated
by Lee Krystek

CHAPTER ONE

Mr. Hungerton was the most tactless person upon earth, --a fluffy, untidy cocktato of a man, centered upon his own silly self. I really think he thought I came round to his house three days a week, not so I could visit with his daughter, Gladys, but so he could lecture me on the failings of the economy.



When he left the room I leaned forward. This was the moment I had been waiting for! I was going to propose to my beloved Gladys!

Ned, please don't propose. Our friendship has been so nice! Please don't spoil it!

Gladys, how did you know? Is there another man?

Women are never caught unaware by these things. No, there isn't another man, just another type of man.



Gladys, I can change. I can be a heroic man! A woman like you would inspire me!

Perhaps you can and if so we can talk about it again. Tonight, however, you are a reporter late for evening duty at his newspaper and I don't want your editor, Mr. McArdle, blaming me!



Mr. Malone, do you know what would happen if all the debts in the world were called up at the same time, and payment was insisted upon immediately?

Well, I should be a ruined man, Sir!

Young Malone, it is impossible to discuss any serious topic while you are around. I'm late for my meeting anyway!



I don't understand! A different type of man?

Yes! An adventurer. A hero. An explorer. A man who can look Death in the face and have no fear of it. That's the type of man I want to fall in love with and marry.



All this will seem to the reader to have nothing to do with my narrative; and yet there would have been no narrative without it. As I walked through London to work at the Daily Gazette that evening in 1912, I determined that very night, if possible, I would find the quest which would be worthy of my Gladys!



I always liked my editor, McArdle, and I rather hoped that he liked me.

The colliery explosion story was excellent. So was the Southwark fire. You have the true descriptive touch. What did you want to see me about?

Could you send me on some mission for the paper? Anything that has adventure and danger in it. I would do my best!



I'm afraid the day for this sort of thing is rather past. The big blank spaces in the map are all being filled in... Wait a moment --- I might have something. How about exposing a fraud? Why not try your luck with Professor Challenger? He came back from South America last year claiming he found some strange animals there. Either something wonderful happened--or the man's a champion liar, which is the more likely situation.



Professor Challenger! The famous zoologist? Didn't he break the skull of Blundell, of the *Telegraph*?

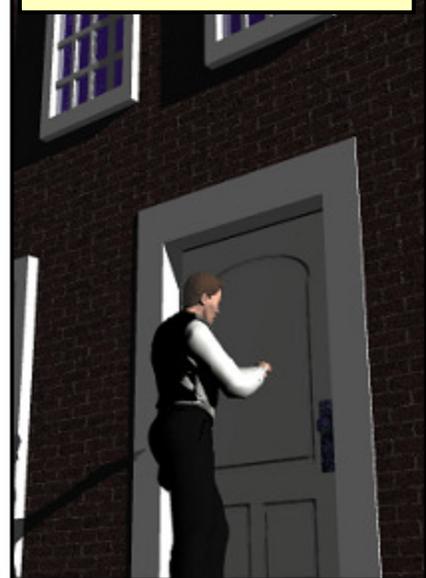
You said it was danger you were after! Besides, Blundell probably got him at the wrong moment. I'm sure you'll do better. You have a way with people.

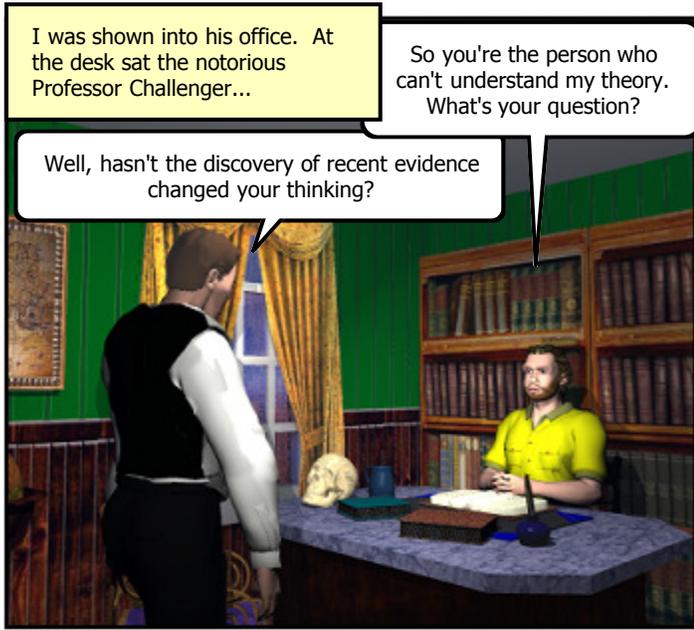


Challenger had been misquoted in the press before and it seemed unlikely he would talk to me if he knew I was a reporter, so I consulted with a friend who was on the staff of *Nature Magazine*. He showed me articles the professor had written. This gave me an idea. I would send a letter to Challenger saying I was a student interested in his theories and that I wished to meet with him to ask some questions.



I received a note back from Professor Challenger indicating the day and time I would be allowed to come to his house to speak to him. As I stood at the door, I was nervous. I had to convince him I was really a student of biology and gain his confidence so he would tell me about his trip to South America without letting on that I was one of those journalists he hated so much.

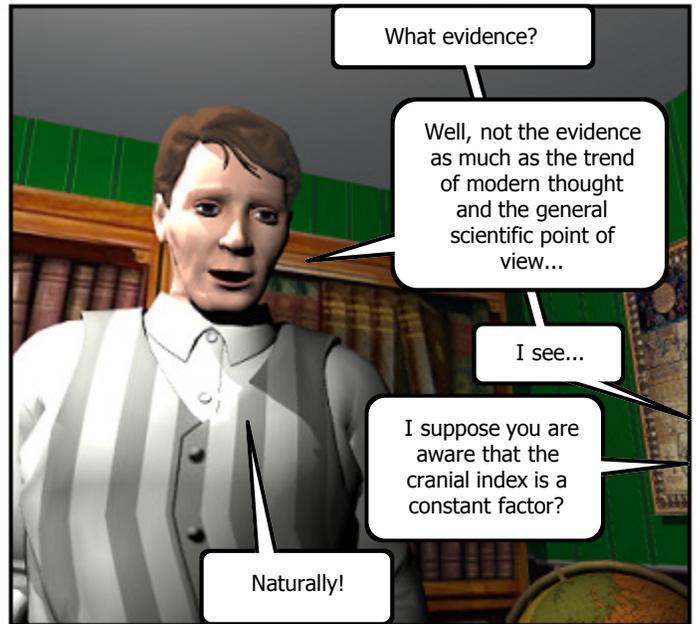




I was shown into his office. At the desk sat the notorious Professor Challenger...

So you're the person who can't understand my theory. What's your question?

Well, hasn't the discovery of recent evidence changed your thinking?



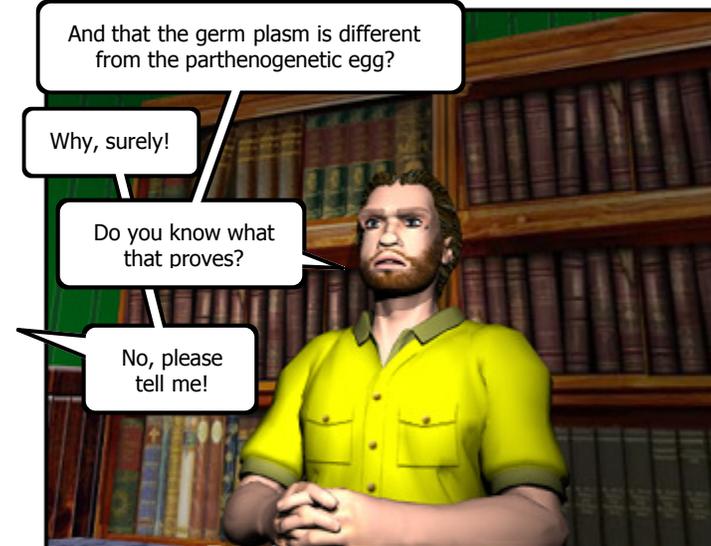
What evidence?

Well, not the evidence as much as the trend of modern thought and the general scientific point of view...

I see...

I suppose you are aware that the cranial index is a constant factor?

Naturally!

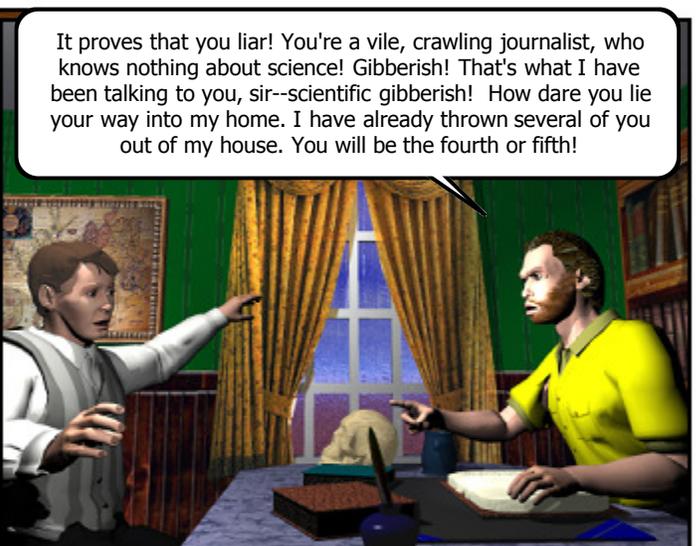


And that the germ plasm is different from the parthenogenetic egg?

Why, surely!

Do you know what that proves?

No, please tell me!

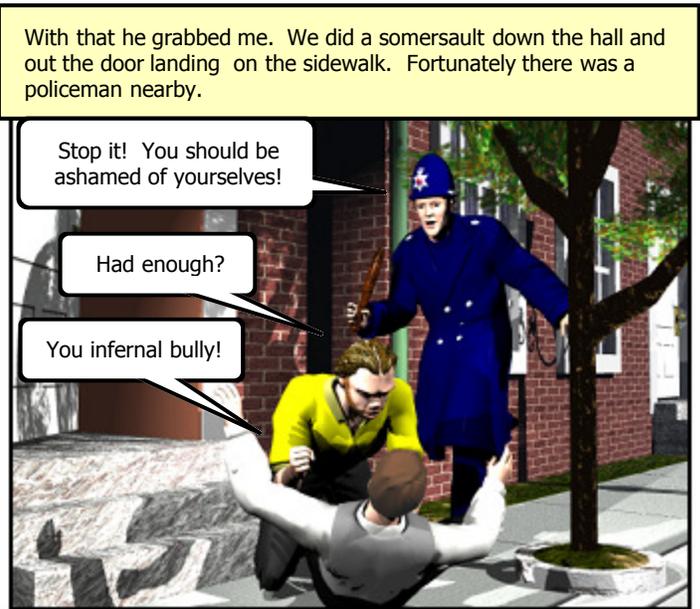


It proves that you liar! You're a vile, crawling journalist, who knows nothing about science! Gibberish! That's what I have been talking to you, sir--scientific gibberish! How dare you lie your way into my home. I have already thrown several of you out of my house. You will be the fourth or fifth!



Look here, sir, you can be as abusive as you like. But there is a limit. You will not assault me. I'll not stand for it.

Dear me! You won't stand for it, eh? Well, I think I'm going to throw you out of my house just as I did with your brother journalists!



With that he grabbed me. We did a somersault down the hall and out the door landing on the sidewalk. Fortunately there was a policeman nearby.

Stop it! You should be ashamed of yourselves!

Had enough?

You infernal bully!

CHAPTER TWO

After having thrown me out of his house, Professor Challenger invited me back in!

Now as to your return to my house after your most justifiable expulsion. By admitting this incident was your fault I see that you have a sense of responsibility that is rarely found in the journalism profession. The sub-species of the human race to which you unfortunately belong has always been below my mental horizon. Your words brought you suddenly above it.

Thank you, I think...



This man attacked me!

The professor was in trouble for the same thing last month, too. Do you wish to press charges?

Well, that's your right, Sir.

No, I was myself to blame. I intruded upon him.



As the officer walked away, Professor Challenger mounted his steps. I was surprised when suddenly he turned back to me.

Come in, Mr. Malone. I'm not done with you yet!



I am going to talk to you about South America. First of all, I wish you to understand that nothing I tell you now is to be repeated in any public way unless you have my express permission. Is that clear?

Professor, surely a judicious account----



"My story starts during my last trip to South America. On my return I stopped at a native village and the chief asked me to look at a sick man. When they led me to his hut I was surprised to see he was a white. The natives told me he had stumbled into their village through the woods alone in the last stages of exhaustion. Despite the use of some medicine I had with me, he soon died of a fever without regaining consciousness."

My conditions or I will tell you nothing.

If you insist.

I do.



I went through his knapsack. He had very little with him: a paint-box, a box of colored chalks, a cheap revolver and this...

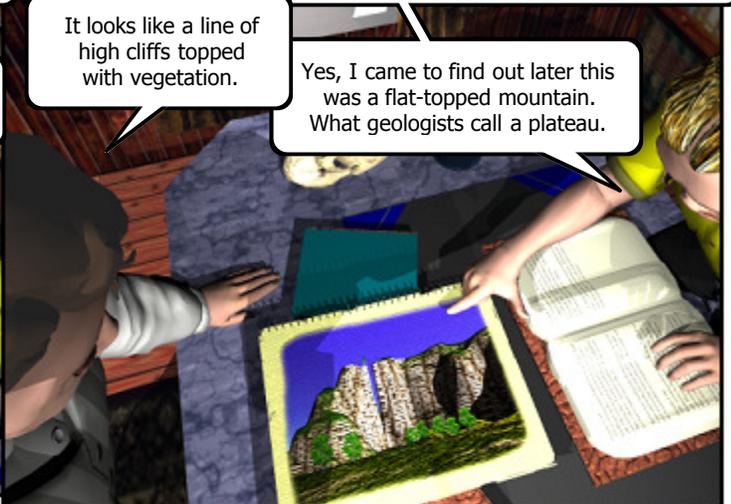
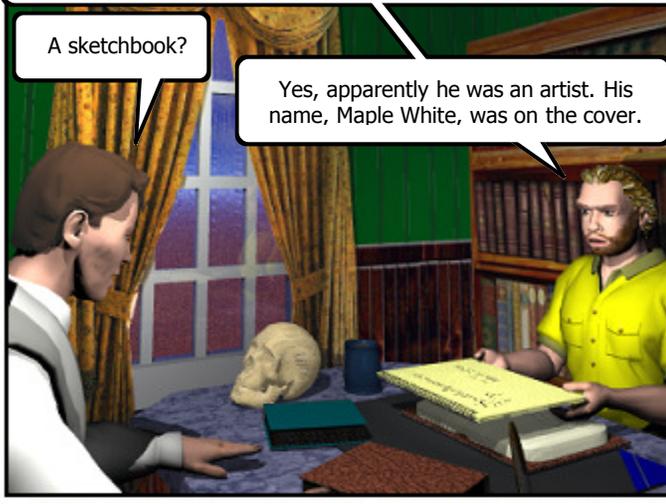
Most of the book contains pictures one might sketch while visiting South America. Plants, animals, people-but look at this.

A sketchbook?

Yes, apparently he was an artist. His name, Maple White, was on the cover.

It looks like a line of high cliffs topped with vegetation.

Yes, I came to find out later this was a flat-topped mountain. What geologists call a plateau.



I continued to look through the book and came across this. What do you think?

It's some kind of reptile, but the man is too small.

That's Mr. White. He sketched himself in to give a scale of heights.

Good heavens! Then you think the beast was -- why Charing Cross station would hardly make a home for such a brute!

It is certainly a well-grown specimen.

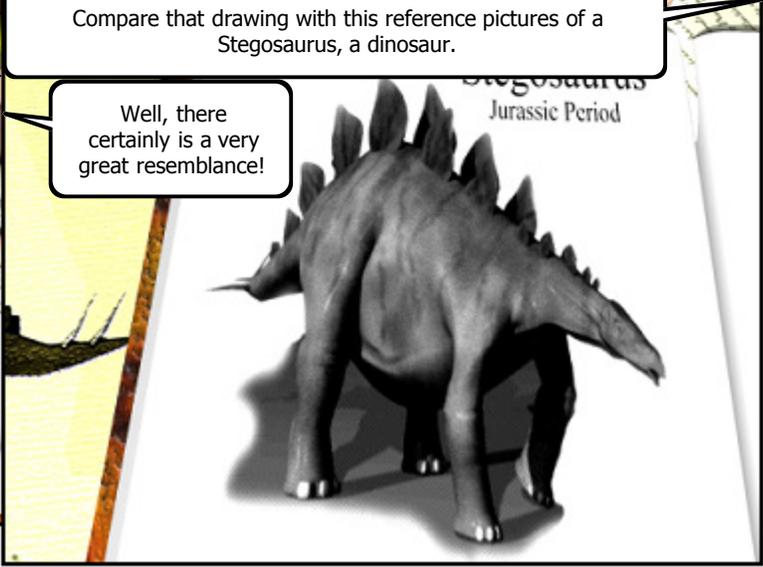
What do you believe made him draw such an animal?

Too much gin, I should think!

Compare that drawing with this reference pictures of a Stegosaurus, a dinosaur.

I believe the creature exists. This this is actually sketched from life.

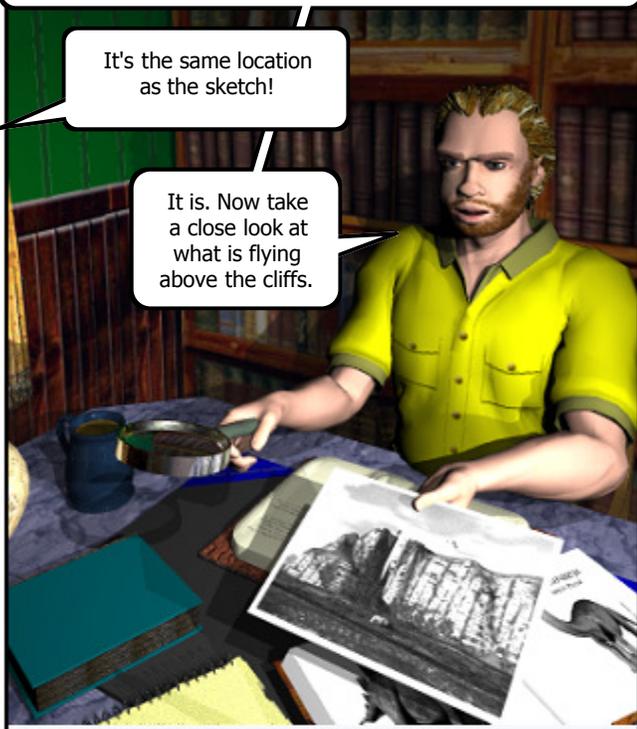
Well, there certainly is a very great resemblance!



I wasn't totally convinced myself, but interested enough to backtrack White's path till I found the plateau. There I took this photograph.

It's the same location as the sketch!

It is. Now take a close look at what is flying above the cliffs.



He handed me the photograph. It was fuzzy in spots and in very bad shape, but with the magnifying glass I could still make out some detail.

It must be some huge bird, but it looks more like a monstrous bat!

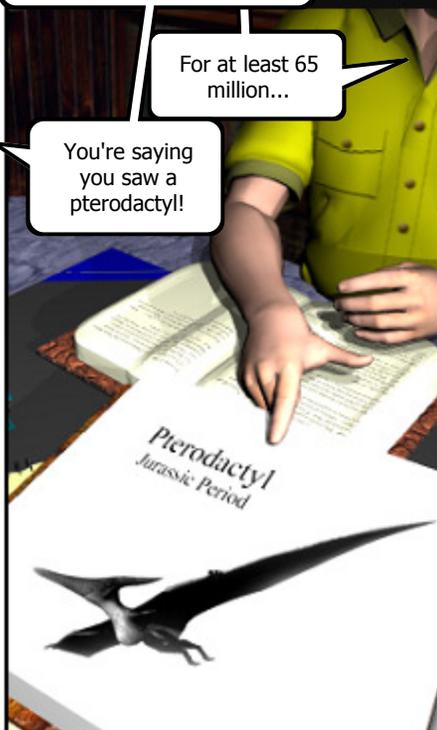


Now just compare it to this reference picture...

A pterodactyl?! Haven't they been extinct for millions of years?

For at least 65 million...

You're saying you saw a pterodactyl!



"Not just saw it, Mr. Malone. I shot one. I recovered the body and then preserved it to bring back to England for a full examination."

BANG!



Surely with that kind of evidence your fellow scientists must believe your story!

The evidence is gone. On the return trip my canoe rolled over and everything was lost! I was only able to save the sketchbook and a few photos. I have the greatest story in science to tell, but am dismissed as a crackpot! I believe that trapped on top of that plateau by the cliffs are creatures that have not been seen for millions of years.

But what can be done?

Tonight there will be a lecture by Professor Summerlee, a naturalist of some popular repute. I have been asked to sit upon the platform and thank the speaker at the end. I think I will take the opportunity, with infinite tact and delicacy, to throw out a few remarks of my own which might arouse interest in the audience.

And may I come?

By all means. It will be a comfort to know I have at least one ally in the hall, however inefficient and ignorant of the subject he may be.



I invited my friend from Nature Magazine, Tarp Henry, to join me and we arrived at eight-thirty at the lecture hall of the Zoological Institute. The topic of talk was billed as "The Record of the Ages."



Halfway through the lecture the Professor started talking about dinosaurs.

...that frightful brood of saurians that still affright our eyes when seen as fossils, but which were fortunately extinct long before the first appearance of mankind upon this planet.

Question!

I repeat, which were extinct before the coming of man...

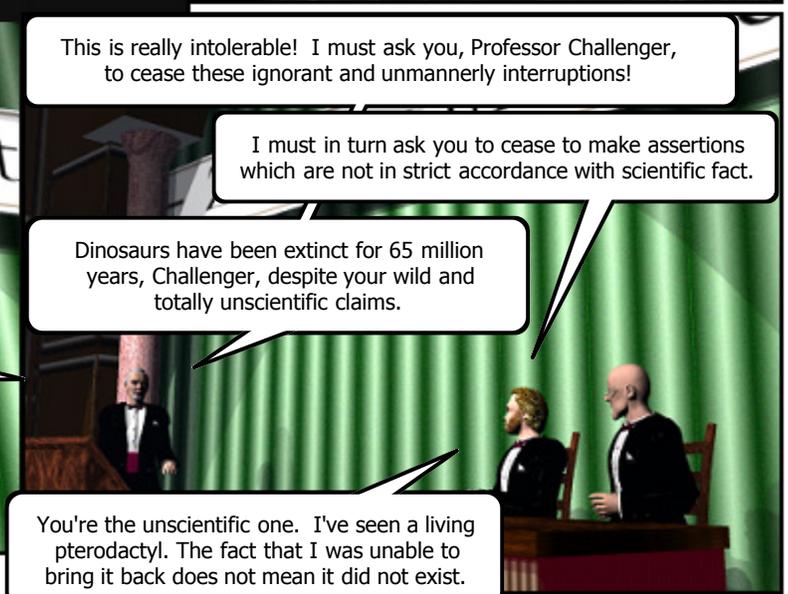
Question!

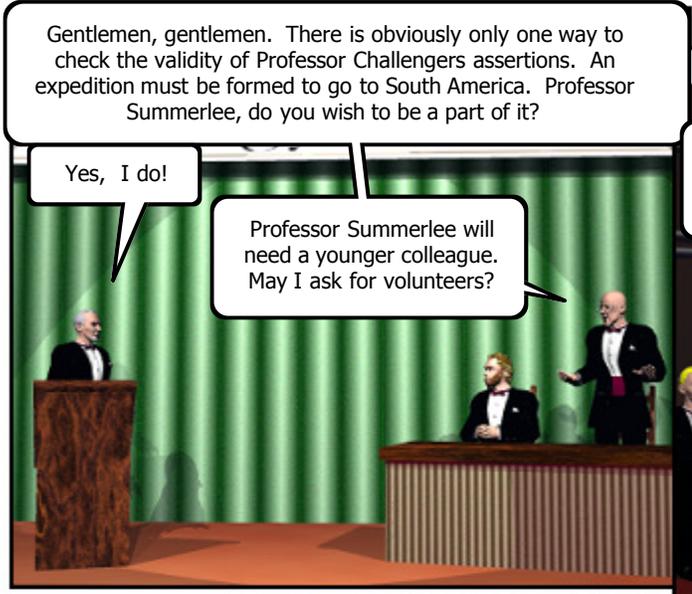
This is really intolerable! I must ask you, Professor Challenger, to cease these ignorant and unmannerly interruptions!

I must in turn ask you to cease to make assertions which are not in strict accordance with scientific fact.

Dinosaurs have been extinct for 65 million years, Challenger, despite your wild and totally unscientific claims.

You're the unscientific one. I've seen a living pterodactyl. The fact that I was unable to bring it back does not mean it did not exist.





Gentlemen, gentlemen. There is obviously only one way to check the validity of Professor Challengers assertions. An expedition must be formed to go to South America. Professor Summerlee, do you wish to be a part of it?

Yes, I do!

Professor Summerlee will need a younger colleague. May I ask for volunteers?

Would a more heroic adventure ever come my way? My chance to win Gladys!

I will go. I am Edward Malone, reporter for the Daily Gazette.

I am Lord John Roxton. I have already been up the Amazon and know the ground.

Very well. We have our expedition.

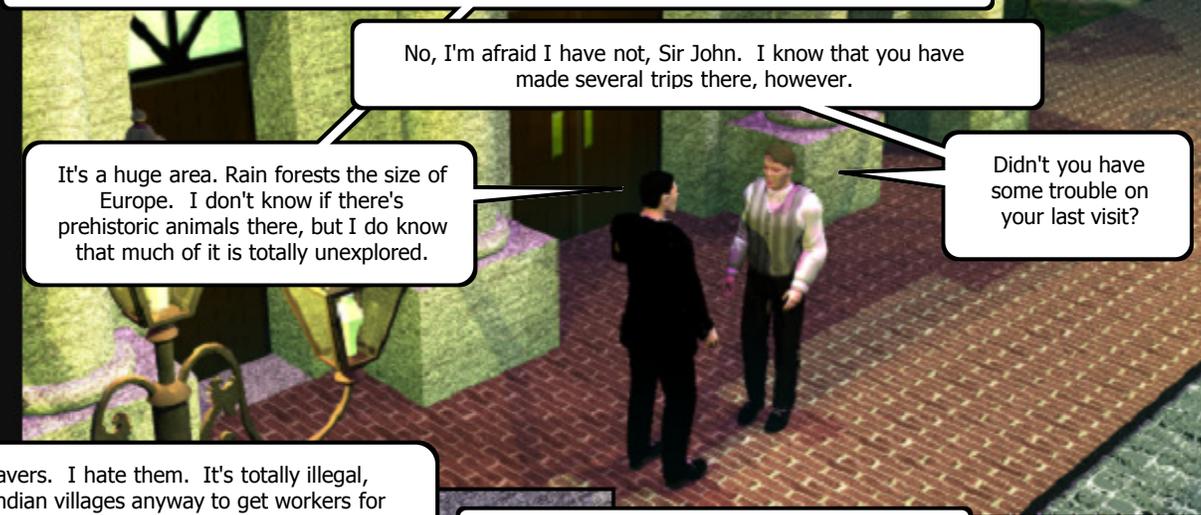
I was stunned by what I had just done. When it was all over Sir John approached me.

Well, we've taken the jump, you and me, Mr. Malone. Ever been to South America before?

No, I'm afraid I have not, Sir John. I know that you have made several trips there, however.

It's a huge area. Rain forests the size of Europe. I don't know if there's prehistoric animals there, but I do know that much of it is totally unexplored.

Didn't you have some trouble on your last visit?



You mean the slavers. I hate them. It's totally illegal, yet they raid the Indian villages anyway to get workers for the rubber plantations. I hired a private army and put one band out of business. Its leader, a scoundrel named Predro Lopez, swore an oath hunt me down and kill me.

What happened?

Well, I'm here to tell the tale and he isn't.

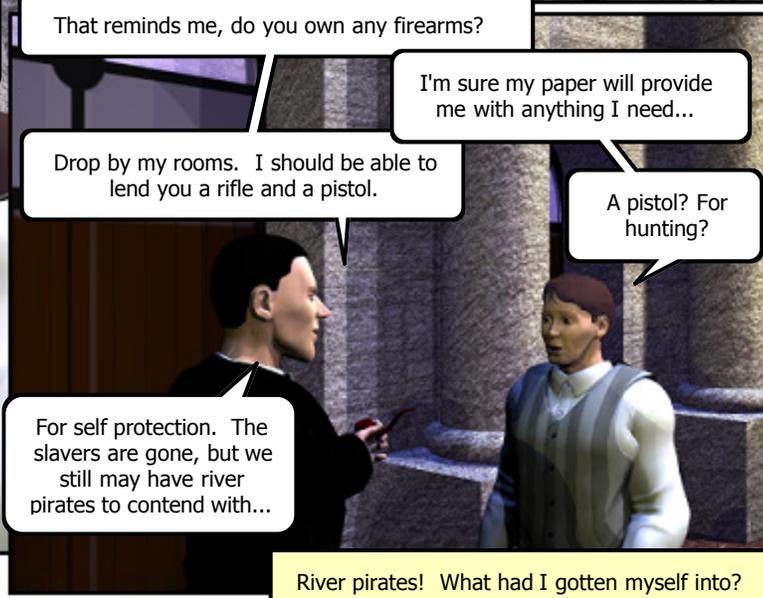
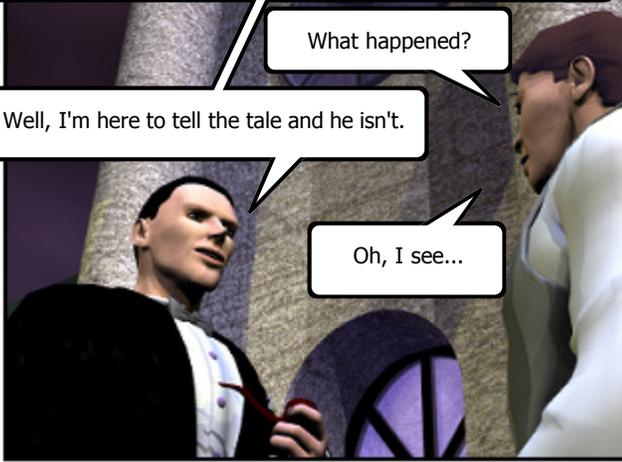
Oh, I see...

That reminds me, do you own any firearms?

I'm sure my paper will provide me with anything I need...

Drop by my rooms. I should be able to lend you a rifle and a pistol.

A pistol? For hunting?



For self protection. The slavers are gone, but we still may have river pirates to contend with...

River pirates! What had I gotten myself into?

CHAPTER THREE

Preparations for our expedition were quickly made and soon we found ourselves on the dock ready to board the liner that would take us to our adventure in South America. Professor Challenger was there to see us off.



Here are the directions I promised you. In return you will swear not to open this sealed package till you reach the outpost of Manaus on the Amazon and not until the time and date written on the outside. Do I have your word?

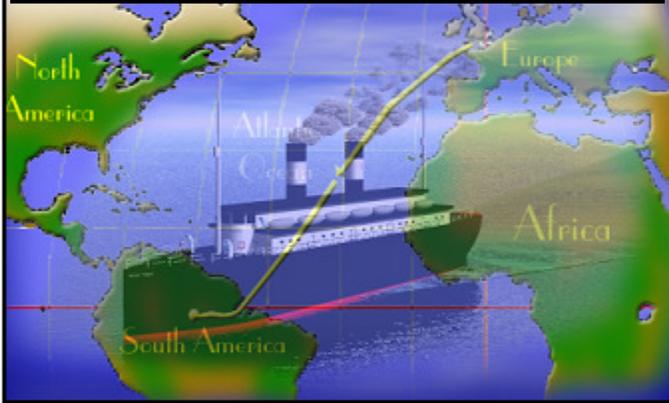
Oh really, Challenger, all this silliness-

Do I have your word?

Yes, you do.



We crossed the Atlantic without incident and changed ships for our trip up the immense Amazon River. Eventually we passed the narrows at Obidos and reached the tiny outpost town of Manaus.



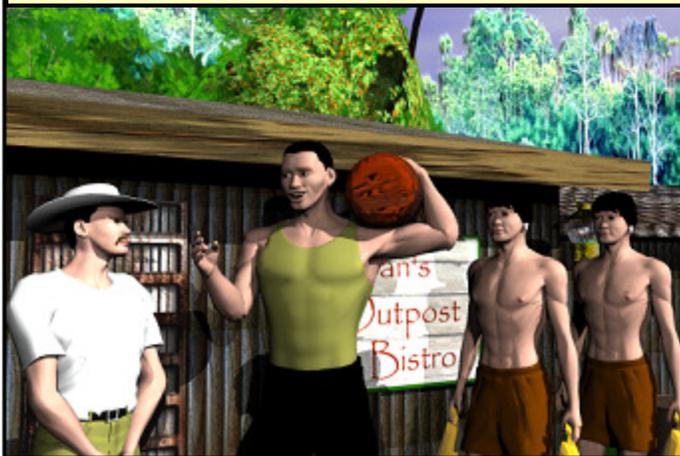
We arrived two weeks before the agreed upon time to open the instructions.

I can't believe we are just going to sit here until July 15 waiting to open those directions. Let's just get it over with! He'll never know!

I gave my word, Professor Summerlee. Besides it will take two weeks to hire help and buy all our supplies.



To join us on the expedition Lord John hired a local guide with a sour disposition named Gomez. He also engaged the jolly, good natured African Zambo as our cook. Two Indians from the nearby Mojo tribe rounded out our little expedition as porters.



The moment to open the directions soon arrived.

I don't understand! The papers inside are all blank...

It's an open admission! We only have to return home and report him as the brazen imposter he is!

I never intended for you to open the envelop, but I'm afraid I'm a bit late...



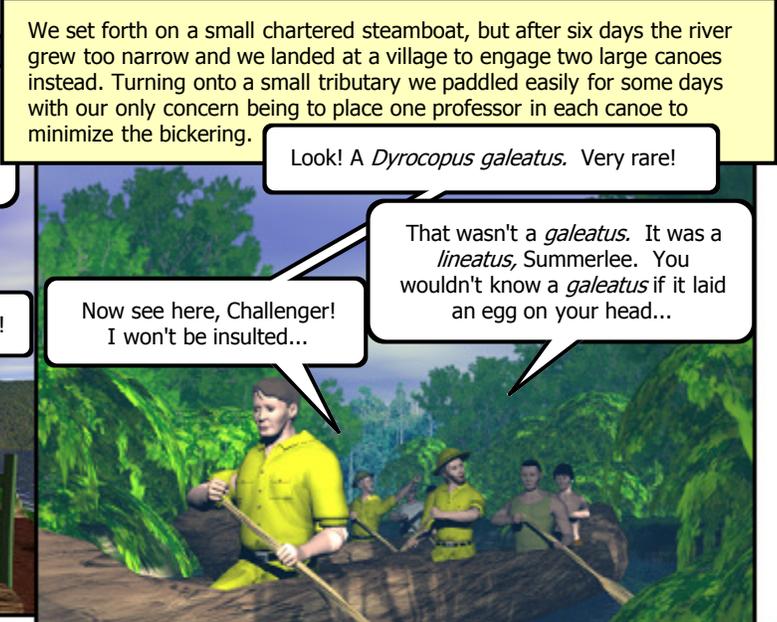


Challenger! What are you doing here?

I must confess it was always my intention to guide you myself, but I couldn't leave London immediately and I wanted you to get underway. Is all ready for the journey?

We can start tomorrow.

Then we shall!



We set forth on a small chartered steamboat, but after six days the river grew too narrow and we landed at a village to engage two large canoes instead. Turning onto a small tributary we paddled easily for some days with our only concern being to place one professor in each canoe to minimize the bickering.

Look! A *Dyrocopus galeatus*. Very rare!

That wasn't a *galeatus*. It was a *lineatus*, Summerlee. You wouldn't know a *galeatus* if it laid an egg on your head...

Now see here, Challenger! I won't be insulted...

The creek turned into a mere brook and we were forced to abandon the canoes. We walked many days through swamp and wood until we emerged from a bamboo grove onto an open plain. Before us stood the high cliffs I'd seen in Challenger's picture.



Do you still doubt me, Summerlee? There's our destination before us!

It's impressive geology, Challenger, but I still haven't seen any prehistoric life.

We reached the plateau and made camp. Lord John shot a wild pig for dinner. On the occasion of my last visit I exhausted every means of climbing that cliff. We must circle the plateau and look for another way up.



I don't see any reason to climb it at all. There no sign of animal life let alone dinosaurs-

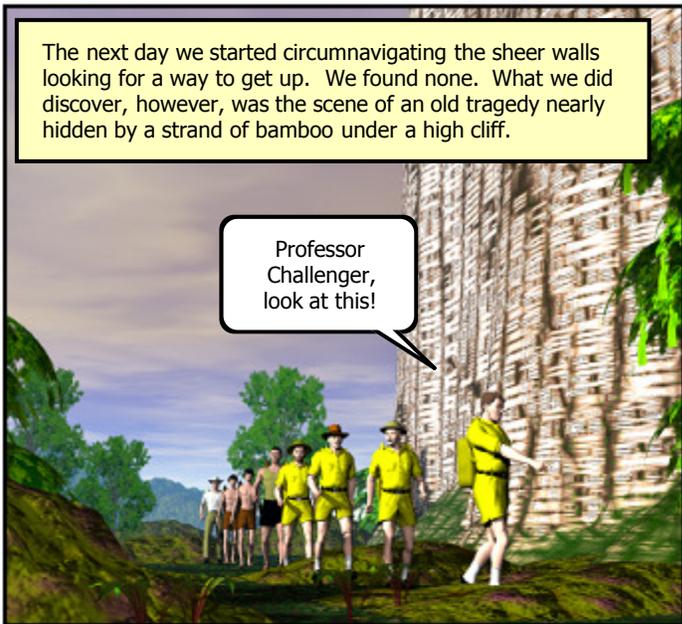


Good Heavens! My dinner!



Challenger, I'm sorry I ever doubted your word.

Apology accepted, old fellow. Apology accepted.



The next day we started circumnavigating the sheer walls looking for a way to get up. We found none. What we did discover, however, was the scene of an old tragedy nearly hidden by a strand of bamboo under a high cliff.

Professor Challenger, look at this!

Poor fellow. He must have fallen from the plateau above and been impaled on the sharp bamboo canes. What a horrible way to go!

Look at what's left of his clothes. He's European. I have no doubt as to his identity. I inquired and found that Maple White traveled with a friend named James Colver. I'm afraid we are looking at his remains. The fact that he fell from above, however, confirms there must be a way up.



We continued along and suddenly came along an arrow etched in chalk upon a rock. Following it we found a narrow cave that led up into the interior of the plateau. This was undoubtedly the path Maple White had used, but a recent landslide had blocked the way. We were forced to continue with our circumnavigation until we had arrived back at our original camp without finding a way up the cliffs.



Perhaps the best thing to do would be to return and make our report. We've all seen the pterodactyl. We can come back next year with the resources necessary to make the ascent.

Eureka! That won't be necessary. I know how to get up there. First we must climb that pinnacle. It will be easier than the cliffs. Get some rope and our gear.



Challenger, what's the point of dragging us up here? The chasm between this summit and the plateau is at least fifty feet and we have no way to bridge it.

But we do have a way. Nature has provided us a marvelous bridge in the form of this tree. All we have to do is chop it down so it falls across the gap.



We took turns using the axe till the tree gave way late in the day.

Watch out!

CRACK!

As soon as we were sure the tree was secure, we loaded ourselves up with gear and started across.

Gentlemen, welcome to the lost world!

I sent Zambo down to get the rest of our supplies. It's getting dark and I think our first order of business should be to set up camp. We can use some of those torn bushes to--

Our bridge was at the bottom of the chasm and Gomez wore a horrible grin.

Roxton, I have killed you, like you killed by brother, Pedro Lopez!

CRASH!

What was that!?!

So your brother was that filthy slaver, eh? I should have suspected!

You English dog! You will never get down and I am free to resume the family business!

I don't think so!

BANG!

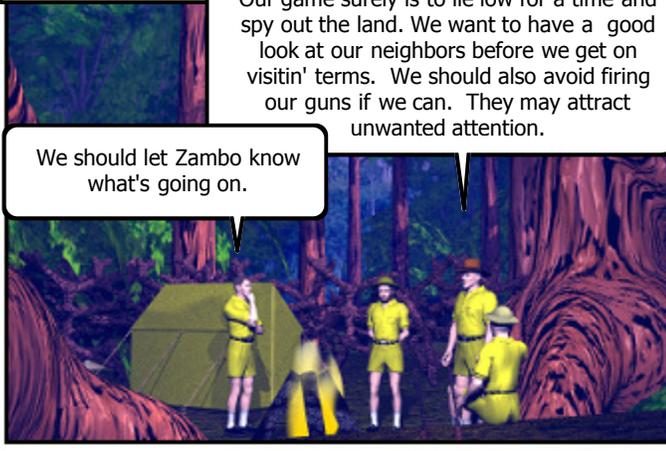
Gomez would never enslave another man again, but he had left us in a desperate situation. We were as far from any human aid as if we had been on the moon. If we were to survive it would only be through our own abilities. We were now stranded, perhaps forever, in this lost world!

CHAPTER FOUR

On the morning after our being trapped upon the plateau by the villainous Gomez we began a new stage in our adventure. We built a thorn bush wall around our camp which we soon named 'Fort Challenger.'

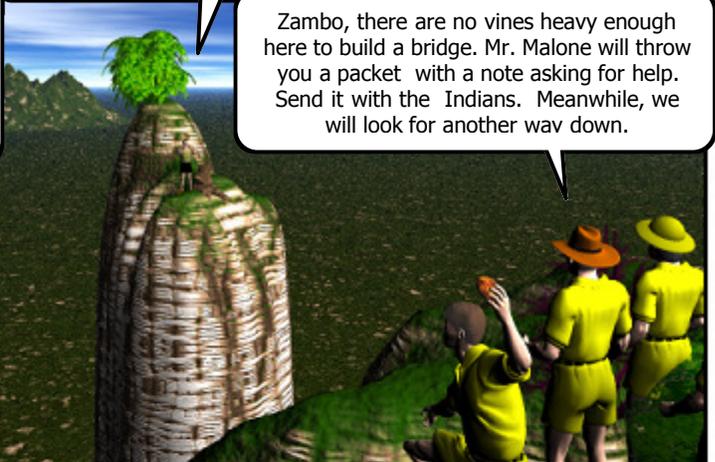
Our game surely is to lie low for a time and spy out the land. We want to have a good look at our neighbors before we get on visitin' terms. We should also avoid firing our guns if we can. They may attract unwanted attention.

We should let Zambo know what's going on.



Sirs, I'll stay as long as need be, but I cannot stop the Indians from leaving. They greatly fear this place. Find some thick vines and throw them to me. Perhaps we can build a bridge and get you back.

Zambo, there are no vines heavy enough here to build a bridge. Mr. Malone will throw you a packet with a note asking for help. Send it with the Indians. Meanwhile, we will look for another way down.



Next we started exploring the area around the camp. Following some tracks, we found an open glade, and in this were some of the most extraordinary creatures that I have ever seen. Crouching down behind a rotten log, we observed them at our leisure.

Are these... are these dinosaurs?

Yes. Styracosaurus, I believe.



A little further along we came across a pit that in the early days must have been one of the smaller volcanic blow-holes of the plateau. It was quite a fantastic sight.

There are nests all over. The place is a pterodactyl rookery!

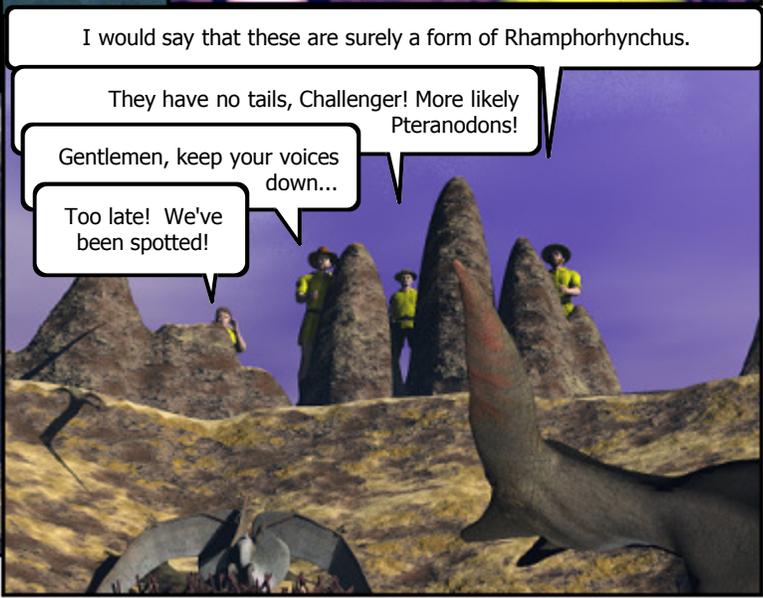
Interesting. There's a kind of blue clay at the bottom...

I would say that these are surely a form of Rhamphorhynchus.

They have no tails, Challenger! More likely Pteranodons!

Gentlemen, keep your voices down...

Too late! We've been spotted!





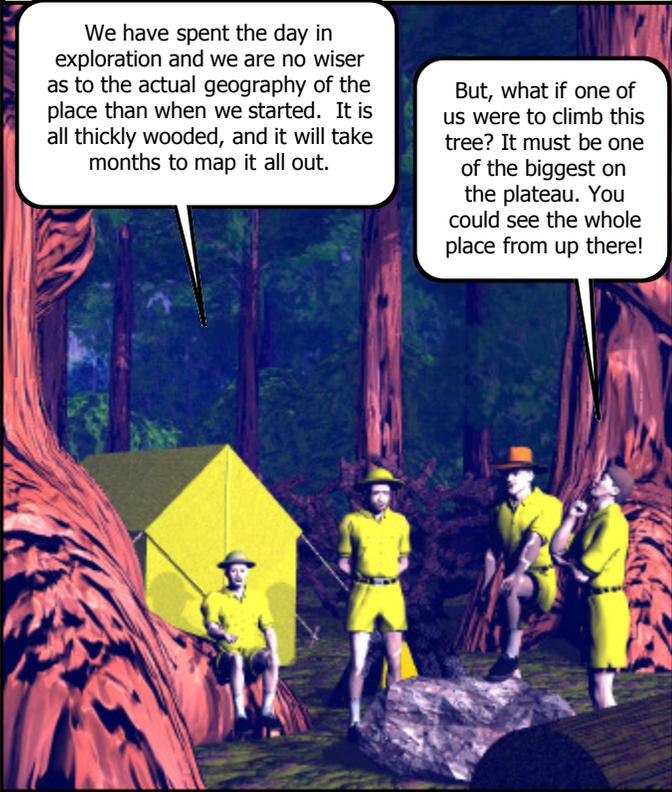
I'm afraid we shall be exceptionally well informed as to the habits of the enraged pterodactyl!

To the woods! Run for your lives!

We made it safely back to camp with only minor scratches. There we discussed the results of the day's legwork.

We have spent the day in exploration and we are no wiser as to the actual geography of the place than when we started. It is all thickly wooded, and it will take months to map it all out.

But, what if one of us were to climb this tree? It must be one of the biggest on the plateau. You could see the whole place from up there!



Being the youngest member of the expedition, I made the climb. Halfway up I was startled to run into an ape-like creature. There was a strange intelligence behind its eyes - perhaps even hatred and menace - then in a flash with the sound of broken boughs it was gone, having disappeared into a tangle of green leaves.



I reached the top without further incident and found myself looking down at a most wonderful panorama of this strange country. I could see the glade where we had seen the dinosaurs and beyond that the pit of the pterodactyls. The land's shape was that of a shallow funnel, all the sides sloping down to a considerable lake in the center. I took out my pad and made a map, then started down before it got dark.



I told my friends about my encounter with the creature and showed them my map.

You may have discovered a new species, young Malone!

You certainly have discovered a new feature of this land: the central lake. Gives you the right to name it. What will it be? Lake Malone?

I think I would prefer Lake Gladys.



I couldn't sleep as I was still excited from the adventure of the tree. The full moon was shining brightly, and the air was crispy cold. What a night for a walk! And then suddenly came the thought, "Why not?" What if I crept out of the camp and hiked down to the lake and returned with a report by breakfast? I might be the first human to ever set eyes on the place! How brave! How Gladys would be proud of me!

Grabbing one of the guns and stuffing my pockets full of shells, I tip-toed across the camp and climbed the thorn wall surrounding Fort Challenger. My last glance showed me the unconscious Summerlee, most futile of sentinels, nodding away like a queer mechanical toy in front of the smouldering fire.



I had not gone a hundred yards before I deeply repented my rash action. It was dreadful in the forest. The trees grew so thickly that I could see nothing of the moonlight. Only my foolish pride kept me going. Following a small stream as it flowed down into the center of the plateau, it was about one in the morning when I at last saw the gleam of water amid openings in the jungle. Ten minutes later I was on the beach of the central lake.

When I looked across the lake I could see huge creatures swimming in the water or coming down to the edge to drink. More amazing, however, was a string of lights on a hillside. These could only be watch fires at the mouths of caves. There were other humans on this plateau! This discovery alone was worth the whole hike!



As I started back to camp I heard the deep-throated snarl of an animal behind me in the dark. I was being stalked! Grabbing a rifle round from my pocket I tried to load the gun. It was then that I realized I had brought the shotgun! I had the wrong type of ammo. I was defenseless!



I set myself to do such a half-mile as I have never done before or since. My limbs ached, my chest heaved and yet with that horror behind me I ran and ran and ran. For a moment I thought I had thrown him off; then suddenly, with a crashing and thudding of giant feet, the beast was upon me once more. He was at my very heels.



With every instant I expected to feel his grip upon my back. And then suddenly there came a crash--I was falling through space, and everything beyond was darkness.



I awoke to see the monster's head above the hole through which I'd fallen. It seemed confused by my sudden disappearance and I could hear it sniffing, trying to pick up my scent. The pit was filled with the most putrid odor. This must have covered my own smell, because the monster lost interest and wandered off after a few minutes.



I began to examine the pit into which I'd fallen. It was a man-made trap! Sharpened, greased stakes awaited any giant beast that might fall in through the branch-covered roof. Some of the remains of former victims still littered the floor. I could only surmise that the people whose watch fires I saw across the lake had built this device.



It was dawn before I finally emerged from my refuge. I had gotten completely lost during my headlong flight, however, and had no idea of the way back to camp. Then a rifle shot split the air! My companions had awoken and finding me missing were sending me a signal to guide me home. I picked up my lost gun and hurried toward the sound.



My heart sank as I entered the camp. It was deserted. Something or someone had knocked down the thorn bush wall and torn Fort Challenger apart. Our equipment was scattered all over and there was a pool of fresh blood on the ground. What had happened here and were my friends dead or alive?



CHAPTER FIVE

I searched all that day for my friends without success and slept in our ruined camp alone. At sunrise I was violently shaken awake by a familiar figure: Roxton!



I found myself hurrying madly after him through the woods as he dodged in and out through the scrub until we finally we came to a thicket of dense brush.

Quick! Every moment counts. Get the rifle and fill up your pockets with shells. Also some food. Half a dozen tins will do. Don't wait to talk or think. Get a move on, or we are done! They'll be here any minute!



We should be safe enough in the middle of this. You can tell me your tale and I'll tell you ours. Just keep your voice low. They've long ears--sharp eyes, too.



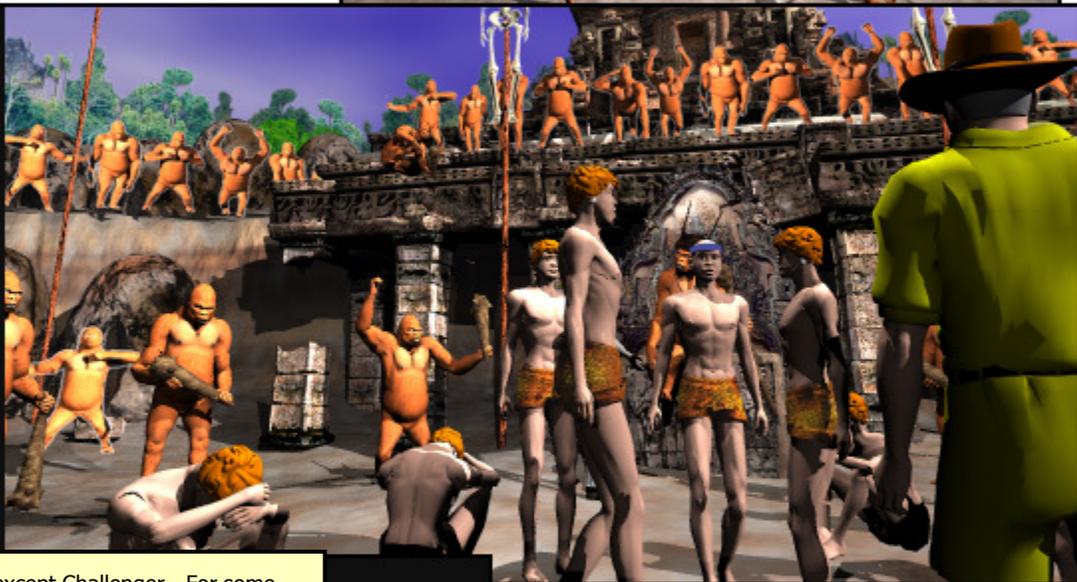
After I told him about my hike to the lake he said, "That gunshot wasn't a signal. That ape you saw in the tree was watching us. A whole bunch of them raided the camp at dawn. They acted more like men than apes for they carried clubs and talked among themselves. I got one with that shot, but we were overwhelmed."



"They dragged us to their village located on the edge of the plateau in the ruins of some ancient temple. Challenger said these ape-men were some kind of missing links. Well, I wish they had stayed missing!"



"You said you thought there must be humans here? You're right! I've actually seen them. They've been warring with the ape-men for centuries. Each holds half of the plateau. The ape-men had captured a bunch of the natives including one fellow that I think must have been the Indian chief's son."



"They treated us roughly, all except Challenger. For some reason, perhaps it's that beard he has, the ape's king treated him like a long lost brother. Perhaps the ape-men saw a resemblance. In any case, I could hear Challenger arguing with the king for our release, but without success."

"Then they started their games. The village is right over that grove of bamboo where we found the body. The apes like to take the natives and toss them over the edge and see if they are dashed to pieces on the rocks or get skewered on the canes. That's what must have happened to Maple White's companion."



"They saved Summerlee, some of the natives and I to toss over the edge the next day. That evening Challenger managed to bring us some food."

While the guards aren't looking I'll loosen your bonds. Maybe you can make a break for it while they aren't watching. They don't seem to be able to run fast.

I won't be able to outrun them, but you must go and warn Malone!



"I waited until the guards fell asleep right before dawn then made a run for it. Challenger was right, they're not as fast as humans out in the open. Still, Summerlee wouldn't have made it. I ran straight back to camp, hoping to find you, and I did. You know the rest."

So what do we do now?

Well, I know what I'm going to do. As soon as those apes stop searching for me, I'm going to load this gun with bullets and go back and rescue the professors.

I'm going with you!



We would have never made it to the wall of the ape-men's village unnoticed if it hadn't been for the excitement within. The horrible game had started again!



The ape-men suddenly seized one of the natives and slung him out over the edge. The group rushed forward to watch and there was a long, awful, pause of silence, broken by mad yells of delight. Then they fell back and waited for the next victim.

This time it was Summerlee. Two of the guards pulled him brutally to the edge.

Challenger, *do* something!

Listen here! I know his theories are dull and his research unimpressive, but he is a fellow member of the Academy and I must insist on his release!



Roxton!

Shoot into the thick of them, Malone. Create confusion!

CRACK!

OOF!



With our guns the two of us made a horrible havoc. The mob of ape-men ran about in panic, unable to tell where this storm of death was coming from.

Come on, Summerlee! It's time to take leave of our hosts!

BANG! BANG! BANG!



We ran forward into the open to meet our friends. The ape-men soon recovered from their panic and pursued us. One after one they fell victim to Lord Roxton's rifle until they learned of its power and would no longer face it.



We took the professors back to our new hiding place in the thicket.



If we keep quiet they shouldn't be able to find us. I don't think they have much of a sense of smell.

But someone did find us! The chief's son and two of his fellow survivors.

CHAPTER SIX

Back in our hiding place in the thicket, Professor Challenger proceeded to lecture us about our new allies.

What are they doing here?

I think they want our protection...

Then they shall have it!



I cannot doubt that they are recent immigrants from below. Faced by ferocious creatures up here, they took refuge in the caves which Malone has described to us. No doubt they've had quite a fight to hold their own, especially against the ape-men who regard them as intruders and wage endless war upon them.



There were three of them. What happened to the other one?

He has gone to fetch some water. We fitted him up with an empty beef tin and he was off.

I'll go and look after him.



As I approached the nearby brook, I was shocked to see the dead body of the missing Indian laying on the ground. He lay upon his side, his limbs drawn up, and his head screwed round at a most unnatural angle.

Roxton! Challenger! Come here! Quick!



Out of the thick green foliage over my head, two long muscular arms covered with reddish hair descended and wrapped around my neck. I felt an intolerable pressure forcing my head back until the strain upon the spine was more than I could bear. Everything started to go black...

Agggghhhh!



I awoke on my back upon the grass with an aching head and stiff neck.

You've had the escape of your life, young fellow! When I saw your head twisted half-off I thought we were one short.

They've found our hideout. They won't face our guns while it's light, but in the dark they will be able to swarm over us. Our only chance is to make it to the Indian caves by sunset!



We packed up what few possessions we had and started immediately toward the lake, following the same trail I'd taken two nights before. We could not shake the feeling we were being watched, though we could see nothing around us but a dense screen of trees.



The sun was below the horizon when we reached the lake and it was getting dark.

We've still got miles and miles to go to get to the caves! We'll never make it!

Accala! Accala!



Through the gathering dark we looked where our new friend was pointing and saw something moving through the water. A flotilla of canoes! This was undoubtedly a rescue party for the chief's son. Now it was a rescue party for us, too.



They beached their boats and an elderly man, with a necklace of great lustrous glass beads, came forward and embraced the youth whom we had saved.



That night our young friend made a speech with such eloquent gestures that we could understand it all as if we had known his language. "What is the use of returning? Sooner or later it must be done. Our comrades have been killed. We are ready now. These strange men are our friends and they hate the ape-men too. They command thunder and lightning. When shall we have such a chance again?"



I have a score to settle with these monkey-folk, and I'm going to go with our new friends and see them through this scrap. What do you say, Challenger?

Of course I will help.

Me too!

We seem to be drifting very far from the object of this expedition, but if you are all going, I can hardly stay behind!



At earliest dawn we started upon our expedition. Often I thought that I might be a war correspondent, but in my wildest dreams I couldn't have conceived the nature of the battle which I was about to report! Weapons from the stone age were accompanying the last word of the gunsmith's art from St. James' Street.



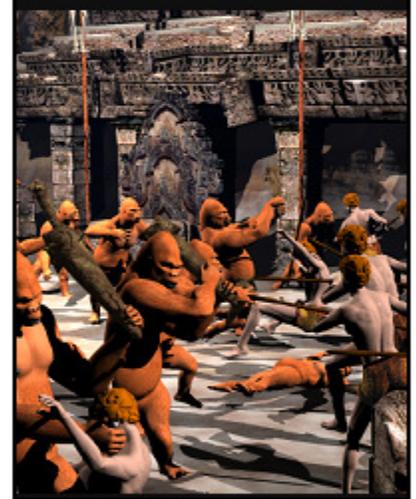
A wild, shrill clamor rose from the edge of the wood and suddenly a body of ape-men rushed out with clubs and stones, making for the center of the Indian line. It was horrible to see the fierce brutes with foaming mouths and glaring eyes, rushing forward and swinging their heavy clubs.



The fighting became furious as we advanced into the trees. At one time our allies broke under the pressure, but they were rallied by their old chief and came on with such a rush that the ape-men began in turn to give way.



Soon we were fighting in the ape village itself. The ape-men resisted us every step of the way, but their numbers were dwindling rapidly as one after another they fell to our advance.



The dozen or so ape warriors left were driven across that little clearing which led to the edge of the cliff. A semicircle of spearmen closed in on them and in a minute it was over. Half died where they stood. The others, screaming and clawing, were pushed over the edge and went hurtling down just as their prisoners had, to be impaled onto the sharp bamboos six hundred feet below.



CHAPTER SEVEN

As the females were marched away as prisoners, Challenger addressed us.

We have been privileged to be present at one of the decisive battles of history--battles which have determined the fate of the world. By a strange turn of fate we have helped to decide such a contest. Now upon this plateau the future must ever be for man.



Life among the Accala Indians was exciting. One day we suddenly heard voices yelling "Stoa! Stoa!" and looked up to see several natives being pursued through the village by two large, carnivorous, reptiles. We attempted to intervene with our guns, but the weapons had little effect on the monsters.



We, like the Indians, were forced to retreat to the caves. From the safety of these the natives used blowguns with poison-tipped darts to attack the creatures.

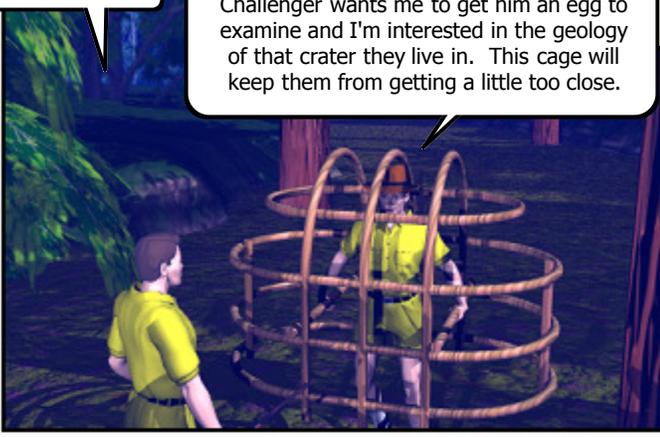
The feathered darts with their loads of poison were slow, but effective. After a few minutes, the monsters fell to the ground and rolled about in their death throes. When they finally lay still, we ventured closer to take a look. Each of the creatures' ugly heads were filled with teeth the size and shape of bananas.



We continued to explore the place even as we looked for a way of escape. I was surprised to come upon Roxton one day carrying a curious contraption.

What's this?

I'm going over to visit the pterodactyls. Challenger wants me to get him an egg to examine and I'm interested in the geology of that crater they live in. This cage will keep them from getting a little too close.



Challenger came up with a means of escape that involved sewing together animal skins to make a balloon and filling it with hydrogen gas that bubbled up from one of the geysers. Unfortunately the experiment went very wrong and he was forced to rethink his plan.



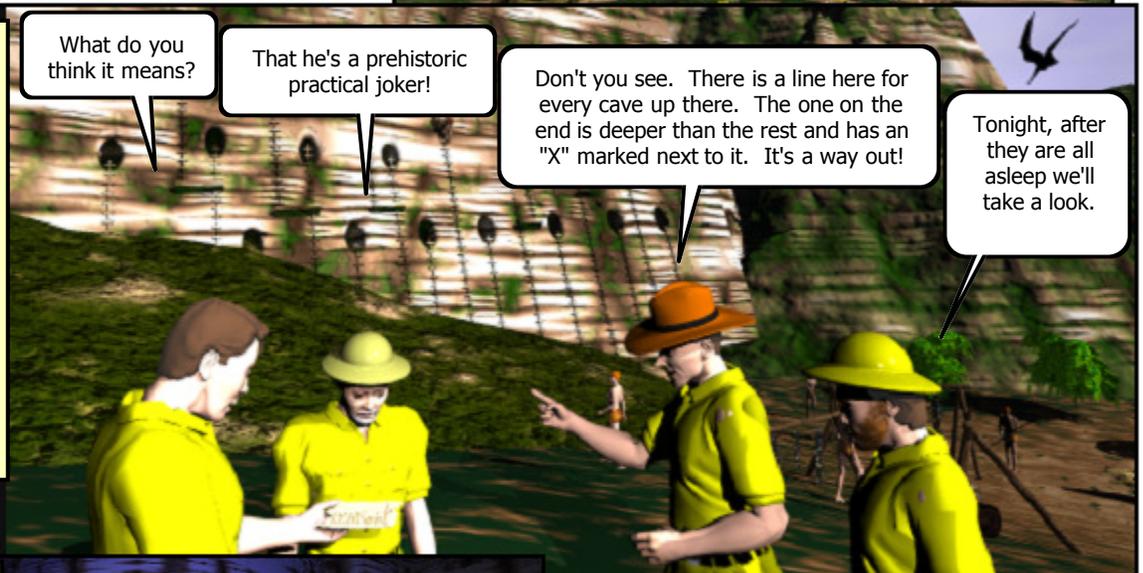
Only the chief's son was sympathetic to our plight. One day he handed me a slip of bark with markings drawn on it. He put his finger to his lips to tell me it was a secret, then pointed toward the caves. I showed the bark to my friends.

What do you think it means?

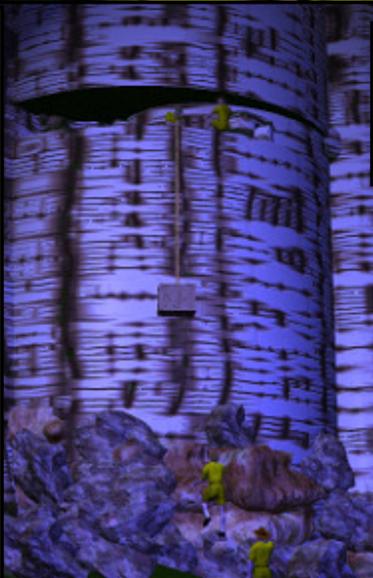
That he's a prehistoric practical joker!

Don't you see. There is a line here for every cave up there. The one on the end is deeper than the rest and has an "X" marked next to it. It's a way out!

Tonight, after they are all asleep we'll take a look.

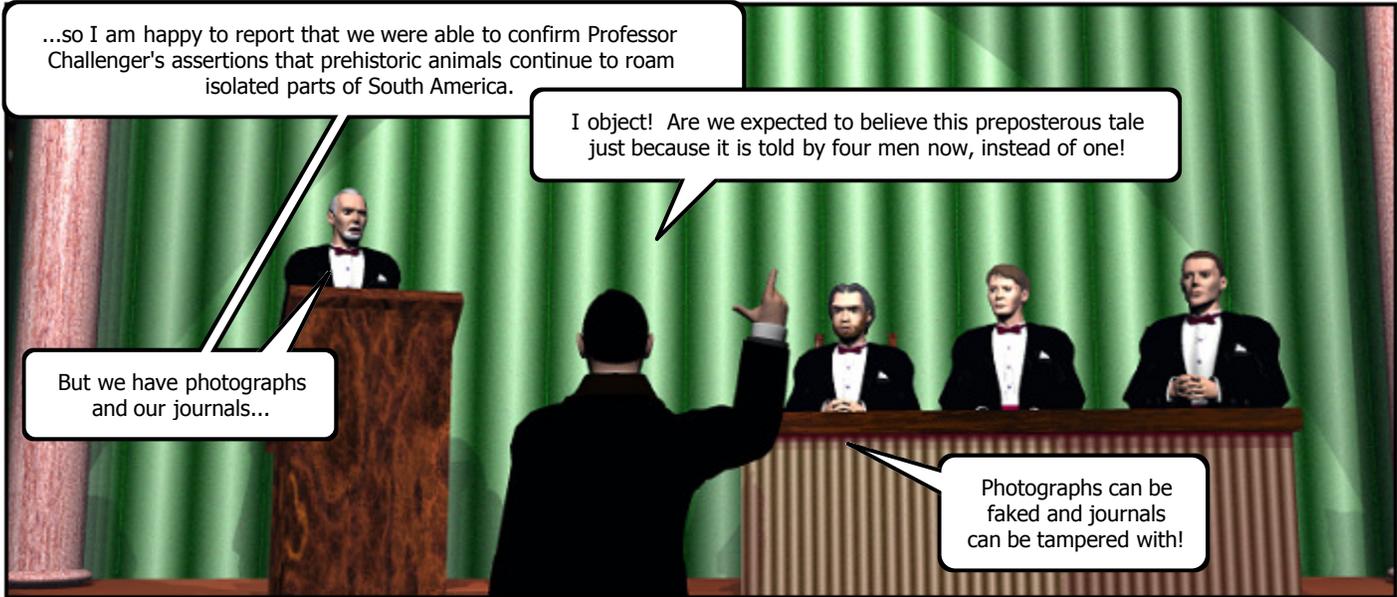


The tunnel did indeed lead to a window on the outer cliff only fifty feet above the ground. The next night we quietly gathered our things and left without saying goodbye lest the natives try to detain us. The next morning we marched into our old base camp to the surprise of a delighted Zambo.



In less than two months we were back in London. A special meeting of the Zoological Institute was convened to hear the report of our findings. That night the auditorium was packed with people and filled with an air of anticipation.





...so I am happy to report that we were able to confirm Professor Challenger's assertions that prehistoric animals continue to roam isolated parts of South America.

I object! Are we expected to believe this preposterous tale just because it is told by four men now, instead of one!

But we have photographs and our journals...

Photographs can be faked and journals can be tampered with!



Let me understand this: You don't believe our photographs or the observations made in our journals constitutes proof?

With that Challenger removed the top of the packing case that Roxton and I had just carried in. A putrid and insidious odor suddenly pervaded the room.

Correct!

You'd only believe if you saw the thing itself?

Come on then. Come on then, my pretty, pretty!

My word! What is it ?

Indeed!

Heavens! It's horrible! A living gargoy!



The creature, excited by the outcries in the hall, took to its wings. Too late Professor Challenger saw the open case at the back of the room.

Quick! Close that window! Close the window!

To Challenger's despair, the creature vanished out the window and into the night, but not before it had proven the truth of our story. What happened to the animal is hard to say, but there were reports of a giant bat-like monster roosting on Queens Hall and startling Londoners as it flew around the tower of Big Ben.



Soon as I could, I went to the Hungerton household to see my beloved Gladys...

Hello, I'm here to see Miss Gladys Hungerton.

She's here, but she's no longer Miss Hungerton. She is Mrs. Potts, my wife.

Your wife!?!



In a few moments Gladys joined us and made everything clear.

I guess you never got my letter. After you abandoned me by running off to South America I met William. Your really didn't expect me to wait for you while you went traipsing around the world, did you? In any case, William and I married and father is letting us stay here till our house is ready.

I see, well, good luck...



Just one question before you go, Mr. Potts. How did you win her heart? Have you searched for hidden treasure, or traveled to the North pole, or done time on a pirate ship, or perhaps flown the Channel? What do you do for a living?

I, sir, am a certified public accountant!

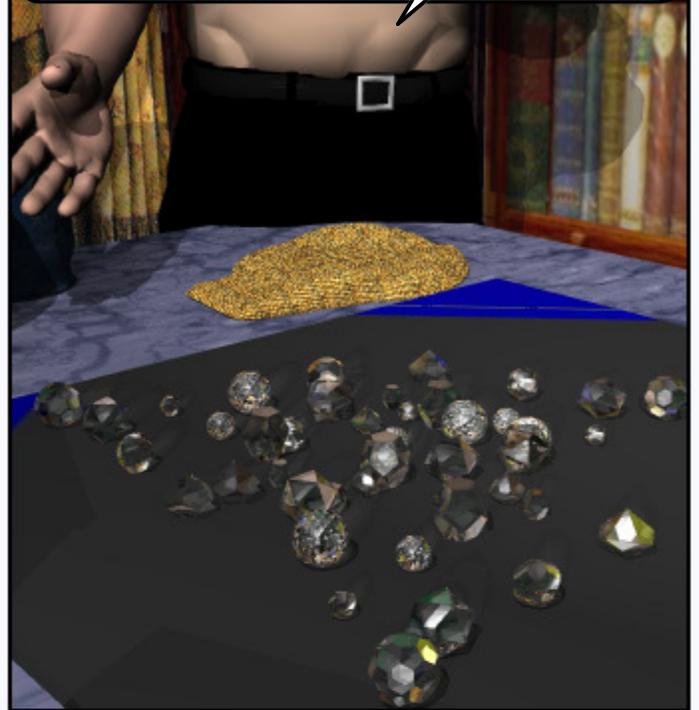


The next day Roxton asked us all to meet at Professor Challenger's office.

As you know, I was very interested in the blue clay in the pterodactyl crater. While I was there getting the egg, I also picked up some rock samples. You see, the only place I've ever seen clay like that was in the diamond mines of Kimberley, South Africa.



I didn't want to say anything until they were cut and valued, in case I was wrong. Here they are and the lot comes to at least two hundred thousand pounds, which we will split equally. What will you do with your fifty thousand, Challenger?



Well, I will found a private museum, which long been one of my dreams!

I'll be able to retire and finish my classification of the chalk fossils!

I'll use my share to outfit an expedition to have another look at our plateau. As to you, Malone, you, of course, will spend yours to get married.



Not just yet. I think, if you will have me, that I would rather go with you.

I was rather hoping you would say that, Mr. Malone.

