

"It was exciting when the baby pterodactyl
came back to England and flew off.
It might be anywhere!" Tom, 12



THE LOST WORLD

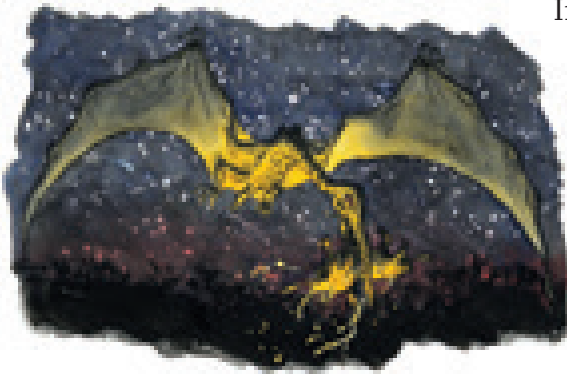
ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

'Dinosaurs are most certainly not extinct. I have seen them.'

An incredible claim by the eccentric Professor Challenger leads to an expedition deep into the Amazon, where an unlikely group of men find themselves on a journey into unknown dangers. Will they have the skills, strength, intelligence and good fortune to survive?

Do dinosaurs really exist on the inaccessible plateau? How did a human skeleton become impaled on a bamboo spike? Can humans survive in a land of such primitive powers?

If journalist Edward Malone ever returns home to write his newspaper report, will it be to declare Challenger a madman or a genius?



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Arthur Conan Doyle



Retold by Chaz Brenchley
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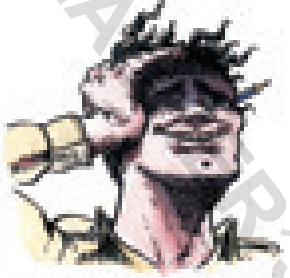
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THE CHARACTERS

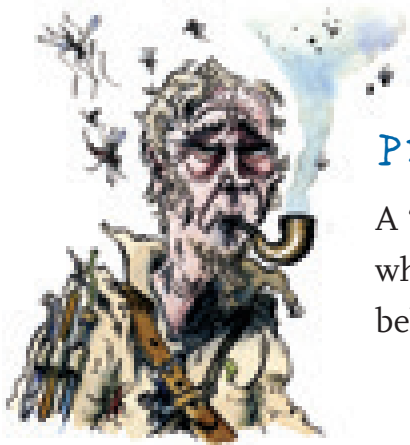


Edward Malone

A young journalist, ambitious and foolhardy. Will his yearning for adventure lead him into lethal danger?

Professor Challenger

An arrogant, bullying, brilliant scientist. How can he prove his claims?

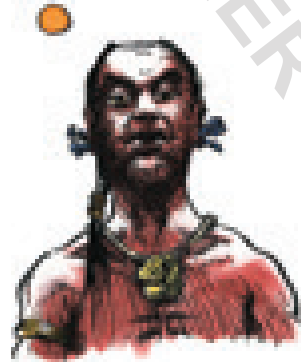


Professor Summerlee

A 'doubting Thomas', suspicious of what he has not seen. Will he ever believe Challenger?

Lord John Roxton

An experienced explorer. Will his past catch up with him, and endanger the whole party?

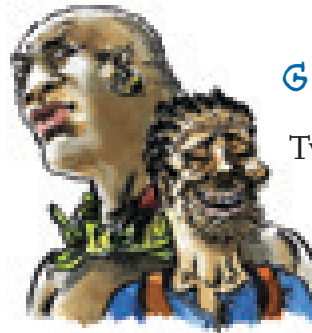


Mareta

A prince of his people, and an honest young man. Can he repay his debt of gratitude?

The ape-king

The 'missing link', half human and half animal. Which half will over-rule the other?



Gomez and Zambo

Two local guides. Which will be loyal, and which will be treacherous?



THE LOST WORLD

We don't usually cover public lectures at *The Daily Gazette*. My editor – old McArdle, the finest newsman I ever met – had picked up a rumour, though, of something in the wind. So he sent his most junior reporter. Me.

The lecturer, Mr Waldron, gave us a bird's-eye view of creation. He talked about how life evolved from the simplest creatures; but when he said dinosaurs were extinct long before the coming of man, another voice boomed, 'Question!'

Waldron repeated himself, loudly and slowly. 'Question!'

Waldron looked towards another scientist on the stage. The audience's eyes followed his. We were looking at a most extraordinary figure, a man with a vast head and a great black spade-like beard.

'Ah, I see,' said Waldron. 'Professor Challenger.'

That set the whole hall abuzz. Challenger was as famous for his eccentric temper as he was for his scientific discoveries. His presence explained my editor's interest, and his behaviour justified it. Every time Waldron suggested that prehistoric life was extinct, the professor would bellow his challenge. Soon every student in the hall was joining in.

'Really, sir!' Waldron cried. 'I must ask you to cease these intolerable interruptions!'

Professor Challenger rose to his feet. He looked even odder standing, being remarkably short and broad, but his words startled us more. 'And I must ask you, Mr Waldron, to cease making untrue statements. Dinosaurs are most certainly not extinct. I have seen them for myself.'

The hall erupted with noise: questions, challenges, hoots of mockery. Challenger stroked his beard and said nothing. Waldron retired in confusion, but another man stood to

face him. Tall, thin and bitter, this was Professor Summerlee. 'I suppose,' he said, 'that you observed these ... marvels ... during your recent expedition to South America?'

'That is correct.'

'May we know precisely where?'

'You may not,' said Challenger. 'I will keep that to myself for now. However, I intend to lead another expedition, to prove what I say. Will you come?'

'Yes,' said Summerlee, 'I will.'

'Excellent. There will be difficulties and dangers; may I call for volunteers?'

I sprang to my feet. 'I will go, sir!'



explorers, first to map the globe and then to conquer it. Most of the known world was divided up between a handful of 'advanced' nations. The golden age of imperial expansion was over by Conan Doyle's day, but the Britain he grew up in still had a large empire, and still believed in the 'white man's burden' – the right of one nation to rule over another.

South America had largely been colonised by the Spanish and the Portuguese. Independence movements swept through the continent in the early nineteenth century. By the time Conan Doyle wrote *The Lost World*, the countries he wrote about had been independent for almost a hundred years, yet old colonial attitudes still flourished. You can see this not only in the characters' behaviour and beliefs, but also in the author's. To Conan Doyle, white men are inherently superior; half-castes – children of mixed parentage, like Gomez, who would have had a Portuguese father and an Indian mother – are portrayed as treacherous; black men like Zambo are simple but trustworthy.

Interestingly, Zambo is of African descent. Why do you think there are black Africans in South America?

The explorers of earlier generations had opened up the world, so Conan Doyle's readers knew all about far-flung colonies and their peoples. Only a few, however, were likely to see such exotic places. Foreign travel was for the rich. Ordinary people could never dream of leaving home unless they emigrated or signed up to serve the empire, either in the army or the colonial civil service. Most people's experience of overseas was limited to reports of other people's travels in books and newspapers. This is one reason why novels like *The Lost World* were so popular; tales of adventure in distant lands fed the imagination of a nation that owned a quarter of the world yet could never hope to see it.

This was also the heyday of the big game hunter. Lord John is an adventurer, a traveller and explorer, but his pleasure lies in hunting and shooting the wildlife he discovers. The professors see nothing wrong with this; indeed, they do it 'in the name of science'. How do *you* feel about this?