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opening extract from

The Lost World

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retold by

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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?



Maretas

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!'



‘Indeed? And who are you, sir?’

‘Edward Malone, a reporter for *The Daily Gazette*.’ It would be the biggest story of my life; I was determined that they should take me.

There was another man, lean and tough-looking, also on his feet. He said, ‘I am Lord John Roxton. I have been up the Amazon; I know the country and its people.’

I knew his name, and his reputation as an adventurer. So did others in the hall. It was decided that the four of us should set forth to find Professor Challenger’s dinosaurs, or else prove him a liar.



Never were four men less fit to travel together. I am short-tempered, but Challenger was worse: a vain monster of a man, as ready to fight as to argue. He had a great contempt for the press, and a dozen times he nearly threw

me off the boat, during the long weeks of our voyage out. As many times, I was sorely tempted to do the same to him. Only the fear of losing my story prevented me. What would McArdle say?

Challenger was just as rude to Summerlee. Our two professors would sit out on deck and argue late into the night, Challenger's bullying arrogance against Summerlee's acid disbelief.

