

PROFESSOR  
**CHALLENGER**<sup>®</sup>  
NEW WORLDS, LOST PLACES

edited by  
J.R. Campbell and Charles Prepolec



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# FOREWORD

BY CHRISTOPHER RODEN

**THE ENDURING**, universal popularity of Arthur Conan Doyle's fictional detective Sherlock Holmes makes it all too easy to overlook other brilliant characters which his pen bequeathed to posterity. The Napoleonic-era tales of Brigadier Étienne Gerard allowed Conan Doyle to indulge his love of history, but they also provided the opportunity for him to display a much overlooked facet of his writing: humor. While humor is very occasionally allowed to surface in the Holmes adventures, the Gerard stories are far and away the most sustained humorous writing that Conan Doyle ever produced (though his much neglected novel of suburban life, *Beyond the City* (first serialized in 1891) should never be overlooked in a discussion of works many may consider uncharacteristic of Conan Doyle). His third major fictional creation, Professor George Edward Challenger, was, though primarily the basis for some wonderful science fictional adventures, also a vehicle for humor. Who can fail to smile at the vision of the bombastic professor ejecting an unwelcome journalist from his home, or that of poor Mrs. Challenger being placed on top of a seven foot tall pedestal (Challenger's "Stool of Penance") for regarding his actions as those of a "Brute!"?

Few casual readers of Conan Doyle's work would necessarily associate him with science fiction, but there had been an atmosphere of science fiction in his work long before the conception of Professor Challenger — though perhaps the presence of occultism in stories such as "Lot No. 249", "The Silver Mirror", "The Leather Funnel", and "Playing with Fire" (all written between 1894–1908) masks it somewhat.

Even before Conan Doyle tried his hand at science fiction, however, the genre was already well established. Jules Verne (1828–1905) had even written, in *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (1864), of prehistoric creatures similar to those that Conan Doyle would later employ in *The Lost World*. And while Verne is, rightly, regarded as the father of modern science fiction, he had a British competitor in H. G. Wells, who was extending the boundaries of the genre with such works as *The Time Machine* (1895) and *The First Men in the Moon* (1901). The approaches of Verne and Wells were somewhat different, however, and Verne remarked of Wells on one occasion: “I make use of physics. He invents. I go to the moon in a cannon ball, discharged from a cannon. Here there is no invention. He goes to Mars in an airship which he constructs of a metal which does away with the law of gravitation.” Wells seems to have agreed when he said of Verne: “His work dealt almost always with actual possibilities of invention and discovery and he made some remarkable forecasts.... But these stories of mine do not pretend to deal with possible things: they are exercises of the imagination in a quite different field.” The genre undoubtedly appealed to Conan Doyle, who wrote, “The mere suspicion of scientific thought or scientific methods has a great charm in any branch of literature, however far it may be removed from actual research. Poe’s tales, for example, owe much to this effect, though in his case it was pure illusion. Jules Verne also produces a charmingly credible effect for the most incredible things by an adept use of a considerable amount of real knowledge of nature....” (*Through the Magic Door*, 1907.) It did not take long for Conan Doyle to begin creating his own most incredible things, but what materialized as *The Lost World* was quite different from the original conception he’d had many years before in 1889, when he wrote to his mother, “I am thinking of trying a Rider Haggard kind of book called ‘The Inca’s Eye’ dedicated to all the naughty boys of the Empire, by one who sympathizes with them. I think I could write a book of that sort con amore.”

Rider Haggard may still have been in Conan Doyle’s mind when he began work on his adventure novel for boys in 1911: Haggard had, after all, used a lost world theme in *King Solomon’s Mines* (1895), but the inclusion of prehistoric creatures seems to have developed from a new-found interest in paleontology, probably sparked by the discovery of fossil imprints in a quarry near his Crowborough home in 1909 — “huge lizard tracks” is

# INTRODUCTION



THERE IS REASON LURKING IN YOU  
SOMEWHERE, SO WE WILL PATIENTLY  
GROPE ROUND FOR IT...

BY CHARLES PREPOLEC

*"I was prepared for something strange, but not for so overpowering a personality as this. It was his size which took one's breath away— his size and his imposing presence. His head was enormous, the largest I have ever seen upon a human being. I am sure that his top-hat, had I ever ventured to don it, would have slipped over me entirely and rested on my shoulders. He had the face and beard which I associate with an Assyrian bull; the former florid, the latter so black as almost to have a suspicion of blue, spade-shaped and rippling down over his chest. The hair was peculiar, plastered down in front in a long, curving wisp over his massive forehead. The eyes were blue-gray under great black tufts, very clear, very critical, and very masterful. A huge spread of shoulders and a chest like a barrel were the other parts of him which appeared above the table, save for two enormous hands covered with long black hair. This and a bellowing, roaring, rumbling voice made up my first impression of the notorious Professor Challenger."  
— The Lost World*

So wrote the narrator, young journalist Edward D. Malone, on first setting eyes upon the figure of the irascible Professor George Edward Challenger— hero of Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World*. It's quite the description, but then again Challenger is quite the character. Although he appears in only five stories (*The Lost World*, *The Poison Belt*, *The Land of Mist*, *When the World Screamed* and *The Disintegration Machine*), he is in every way as eccentric and iconic a character as Conan Doyle's more famous creation, Sherlock Holmes. While Challenger's impact on science

fiction isn't on quite the same level as that of Sherlock Holmes on detective fiction, *The Lost World* certainly gave rise to a whole sub-genre within the then fledgling field and inspired a slew of imitators including Edgar Rice Burroughs and, more recently, Michael Crichton and his *Jurassic Park* stories. So, even though *The Lost World* became a landmark silent stop-motion film in 1925 with Wallace Beery as Challenger that lead directly into the making of *King Kong*, an Irwin Allen flick in the 1960s with Claude Rains, two early 1990s low-budget Harry Alan Towers films with John Rhys Davies in the lead, a number of direct to video films of dubious quality, three seasons of a cheesy television series with a bikini clad vixen, and a prestige BBC miniseries in 2001 with Bob Hoskins, to say nothing of Spielberg's derivative *Jurassic Park* films, it's really a pity that the character isn't as well known as Sherlock Holmes today; doubly so since *The Lost World* is probably Arthur Conan Doyle's best and most engaging novel. Given it begins with a young Malone setting off to prove himself a manly sort to his beloved Gladys, it has a coming-of-age feel that seems to suggest Conan Doyle was perhaps inspired every bit as much by R. L. Stevenson's *Treasure Island* as the works of H. Rider Haggard, Verne or Wells.

*"My ambition is to do for the boys' book what Sherlock Holmes did for the detective tale. I don't suppose I could bring off two such coups. And yet I hope it may."*

Of course, Conan Doyle also noted, with the sort of frustration only an author doomed to constant requests to repeat an early triumph can feel, in an interview shortly before his death, Sherlock Holmes overshadowed everything:

*"To tell the truth, I am rather tired of hearing myself described as the author of Sherlock Holmes. Why not, for a change, the author of Rodney Stone, or The White Company, or of The Lost World? One would think I had written nothing but detective stories."*

In any case, while you certainly wouldn't think so from Malone's description of Challenger, the professor and the detective share a number of similar traits. Both are seekers after truth, both use a scientific method in their approach to life's mysteries, and

# HIND AND HORN

BY WENDY N. WAGNER

A **LARGE HAND** closed on the top of my paper, reducing both its protective cover and the racing scores to mere wrinkles. “Dash it, Ellsworth, I’ve been trying to catch your eye the last four miles. Don’t you know we’re almost to Killarney?”

I knew full well that Challenger had been trying to draw attention to himself, but I’d been trying to avoid meeting his eye. Even the pedantics of racehorse rankings was better than a conversation with the man. “W-we’re getting c-close then?”

Damn that stammer. I didn’t need to give him any more ground to feel superior than he already did. *He* was looking at a promotion to Assistant-Keeper of his department. My own career seemed as bogged down as the mummy we were about to excavate.

“Indeed we are.” He furrowed his thick brows. “Have you realized how far out in the country we are? Rough country, too. I had no idea Ireland sported such mountains.”

“County Kerry is known for its hills and mounts,” I agreed, and was pleased that I managed to contain the stammer. Despite working together at the museum the past two months, all I really knew about George Challenger, besides his ridiculous record of academic success, was that he didn’t appreciate weakness... in himself or others. Now that we were working the same assignment, I feared the worst. My leg? My silly stutter? There was no way he would take me seriously— and any promotion on my part would depend on his evaluation of my performance out here in the Irish wilds.



I began gathering my things, but Challenger still held my newspaper. Little by little, he had crumpled and squished it into the palm of his massive hand, until now the entire *Pall Mall Gazette* was a mere ball. He followed my gaze and had the grace to look embarrassed.

"Hope you were finished with that," he said, passing it back to me.

"M-mostly finished."

"Killarney Station!" the conductor bellowed. "Ten minutes till arrival at Killarney Station."

"And that's more than two hours later than expected," Challenged growled. "I hope the chap with the carriage is still waiting for us. In this kind of country, I suppose we'll have a bit of trouble finding the dig. Probably everybody outside the town is some kind of illiterate farmer who doesn't speak a word of English."

"You'd be surprised," I said. "B-b-besides which. That's why I'm here— to speak Gaelic."

"Knew there was some reason," he murmured.

I raised an eyebrow.

"Well, you're not an archaeologist," he said quickly. "Aren't you some kind of folklore specialist?"

I drew myself up out of the chair, trying to rely as little as possible on my cane. "I am fluent in five languages, two of them dead, and I am the primary assistant of the manuscript division of the British Museum. I think I'm of some use out here."

I did not look back over my shoulder as I made my way toward the front of the car. "Sir!"

The conductor smiled at me.

"Are you familiar with the region at all?" At the conductor's nod, I pressed on. "Do you know how far Killarney is from the village of Seghmoin? We're to join a party there."

The man shook his head. "I've never been, but that's some tricky country. Be about an hour in a carriage, maybe longer. Going to have to go around the lough, sir."

The train began to slow, the greenery changing to small, white-washed buildings. Killarney looked like one of those charming little towns I like exploring, and I felt a pang that work and not pleasure brought me here. It was a surprising sensation. I have hated Ireland a very long time.

# THE SHUG MONKEY

BY STEPHEN VOLK

## 1. A PERFECTLY IMPOSSIBLE PERSON

**PROFESSOR GEORGE EDWARD** Challenger contemplated sausages. The construction thereof, the manufacture thereof, the biology thereof, and not least, the taste thereof, as he sliced the end off one specimen, examined it closely through eyes narrowed to slits, sniffed at it with cavernous, dilated nostrils, inserted it into his mouth, and chewed. Even at this early hour he could not desist from being a man of Science.

Knowledge had always been as much the ex-President of the Palaeontological Society's sustenance as anything physical. Not that he was indifferent to the consumption of food. Far from it. His appetite, in keeping with his appetite for brain fodder, was voracious, some might say gargantuan, as the proportion of his girth and the evident stress upon his waistcoat buttons amply testified. The night before, the landlady of the Three Horse Shoes had raised an eyebrow when he had said that four sausages and four fried eggs would suffice for his breakfast, thank you very much, with perhaps a moderate portion of local mushrooms, and yes, some bubble and squeak since it was offered, and devilled kidneys, if it isn't too much trouble, with tea and toast and marmalade to follow, if you please, since breakfast is hardly breakfast without toast and marmalade, don't you agree? Even hearing, let alone consuming, such a list had made the small woman feel slightly giddy as she'd toddled back to the kitchen of the public

house, shaking her head to herself. However to Challenger this was but a light snack to keep him going until luncheon.

"Begin," he said to the young man sitting across the table. "I cannot speak while I masticate, but I can listen. Tell me why I am here." The Professor shook out a folded gingham napkin, lay it in a diamond formation on the protruding bulge under his blue-black Assyrian beard and tucked it fastidiously behind his collar.

"There has come to my recent attention a certain local legend," said Edward Malone, formerly of the *Gazette*, now feature writer of *High Ordinary* magazine, a periodical furnished with a penny farthing on its shiny cover, given to devoting column inches to the follies of the rich, the enigmas of nature, experiences of crime, and the fleeting fashions of the day. "It is well known in these parts and in Cambridgeshire generally. In some instances it has been described as an ape, other times a dog. The extraordinary thing is that it is specific in location, always spotted on or near the road between West Wratting and Balsham. They call it the Shug Monkey."

Malone allowed the appellation to sink in, but Challenger volunteered no response, merely bisecting the yolk of his second egg.

"The derivation of the name is evidently from the Old English '*shuck*' meaning 'demon'. The most famous of many 'black dogs' in British folklore being Black Shuck or Gallytrot, said to be the size of a calf. Left his claw marks in the door of St. Mary's church in Bungay, that one, if legend is to be believed."

Challenger crunched into his toast, one cheek bulging. He buttered the remaining triangle with more attention than he paid the information, but Malone went on, undaunted.

"Many people have seen it over the years. This Shug Monkey, I mean. Descriptions in the literature — by 'literature' I mean newspaper cuttings — are varied. The head and body are generally said to be humanoid, but the tracks sometimes canine, the gait often upright, at other times quadrupedal. Some define it as the traditional spectral hound, '*padfoot*' or *barghest* as it's sometimes termed. Other accounts much more resemble the sightings of werewolves or *woodwoses*: the age-old Wild Man of the Woods, or Hairy Man, believed to be a link between civilized humans and dangerous elf-like spirits of the forest common to most countries of Europe, though in many respects the Shug Monkey, mythologically speaking, seems to have originated with Nordic settlers. Notable characteristics seem to include the dark fur covering its

# THE CRYSTAL MINDERS



BY JOHN TAKIS

I WAS SURPRISED by the arrival in my office at the *Daily Gazette* one late evening of a lank figure, covered from head to toe in streaks of black soot. So complete and disfiguring were the dark markings all across his clothing, hands and face that it took me several moments of staring in mute bewilderment before I recognized the goatish features of my old associate Professor Summerlee. In an instant, I was on my feet.

"My dear professor!" I exclaimed. "What in Heaven's name have you been into, and at this hour? You look as though you've been rummaging through a coal bin!"

"You are very nearly correct, Mr. Malone," Summerlee said, adding a hoarse cough. With an annoyed grimace — scarcely visible beneath the blotches which covered his face — he shrugged off my attempt to steady him by the shoulders. I have remarked elsewhere that, for a man of his years, the professor is almost preternaturally fit; whatever the nature of his misadventure, he seemed none the worse beneath the patina of soot and grime. In a moment, he had seated himself in the chair across from my desk. "I have just returned from an exceptional outing with our mutual friend, George Edward Challenger," he said. "I was headed home with the prospect of a long bath ahead of me, when I realized I was not too far from your newspaper. Since the lamps were lighted, I thought I'd better stop in and give you the story fresh. You will certainly not get it any fresher from *him* — if you get anything at all from that quarter, I mean."

"I am all attention," I said earnestly.

From one desk drawer, I produced a pair of glass cups and a bottle of quality pot still whiskey. Once we were both comfortably settled, I got out my notebook and pen and motioned for him to begin.

"I was at the university, preparing my notes — I am to give a lecture next week on the comparative anatomy of the greater sea mammals — when my clerk interrupted to bring me an urgent cable. It read: 'Come at once to Enmore Park, if you have any sense whatsoever.' Nothing further. That is what passes for a formal invitation with Challenger, of course."

"Well do I know it!"

"I considered drafting a reply in kind, but as my lecture preparations were very nearly complete, I decided instead to call upon him as requested. Anyway, he is not a man to be easily dismissed or ignored. I cherish my peace, and I had a terrible premonition of him stampeding into my *sanctum sanctorum* to search me out if I did not respond promptly to his crude summons! That might well have transpired, for upon my arrival I found him in fine form: red-cheeked, tousle-haired, and striding back and forth across the floor with such fervor that I was surprised he'd not managed to tread clean through the Persian carpet. Upon seeing me, he barked: 'You certainly took your time getting here, Summerlee!' Without waiting for a response, he produced a letter from his vast waistcoat and pressed it into my hands. 'Read this!'

"The message was succinct enough that I can recite it to you from memory: 'To G. E. C. The Great Man has done it! You must come without delay to Stebbing Hall. Come alone. S. Helwig.' I see from your expression that the name means nothing to you. I am not surprised; he is of no great renown. I will try to enlighten you, but let me first tell you of the so-called 'Great Man.' He is Dr. Joseph Ackermann, and until today his greatness was very much up for dispute!"

I felt the smallest glimmer of sympathetic pique. "Not very long ago, you expressed similar sentiments regarding Professor Challenger."

Summerlee sipped at his whiskey. "Even so. Well, there was a time, many long years ago, when greatness seemed indisputably within Ackermann's grasp. He even had Challenger as a devoted acolyte, back in the days before the beard — if you can imagine such a thing."

# KING OF THE MOON

BY LAWRENCE C. CONNOLLY

WE CAME IN low over the jungle, descending hard and fast through the thin air, brushing the tops of flesh-colored trees that exploded into clouds of spores as Jimmy Minor hit them with our braking rockets.

"Brace yourselves!" Professor Challenger roared, as if we needed to be told.

I held on tight as the craft braked, nosed upward, and descended into the mushroom forest.

Ann Cavor rode beside me. She was a sweet girl, and I suppose I might have found her attractive if it hadn't been for her family resemblance to a certain Mr. Cavor, my former business partner, her uncle.

"Quite exciting, isn't it, Mr. Bedford?" She leaned toward me, straining against her straps. "To think we're about to land on the—"

Our rockets cut out.

The ship's tail touched down with a jolt that knocked Jimmy Minor's Stetson from his head. It spiraled through the cabin, bounced off the fingers of our crew's other Jimmy — Jimmy Major — and continued down into my outstretched hand.

"Tarnation! Good catch, Bedford!" Jimmy Minor strained backward in his seat, reaching toward me. "Now pass it back, partner!"

"The moon!" Ann said, completing her earlier pronouncement. "We've landed on the moon!"

A tremor went through the ship.

"Not yet!" The professor roared. "Don't anyone move!"

But Jimmy Minor was already climbing toward me.

"Minor! Hold still!"

We had all gotten into the habit of calling our father-and-son engineers Major and Minor rather than Jimmy and Jimmy. Less confusing that way.

"Professor's right, son!" Major had his face pressed to the portal beside his seat, looking back along the length of the ship. "It seems we're—"

A puff of spores rose beyond the glass, and suddenly we were falling— first sideways, and then nose-down into a terrible crash. The hull gave way, cleaving along the starboard side.

"Blast you, Minor!" the professor cried. "The ship wasn't on the ground at all!"

"But we'd landed!"

"Atop a giant mushroom cap!" The professor leaped from his seat and bounded toward the jagged break in the hull. "I told you, Major! More portals! The ship needs rearview portholes!" He stepped through the breach, and before I knew it he was outside, bellowing at the trees.

I unstrapped and stumbled back to a partitioned space that held our gear. Minutes later, with a large revolver strapped beneath my coat, I climbed out to inspect the damage.

As vessels go, our so-called rocket-ship was an ungainly thing, hardly the tidy sphere that had carried Mr. Cavor and me to the moon ten years earlier. That craft had been powered by cavorite, a compound with the ability to propel a vehicle by canceling the effects of gravity. But this new craft flew on rocket power and looked rather like a bullet with fins, or perhaps like an arrow with a blunted shaft. In any event, it was a broken arrow now.

"So, Bedford!" The professor inhaled deeply, head back, nostrils flared. "You were right about the air being breathable during the day."

"But *only* during the day," I said. "The atmosphere freezes at night, turns to ice. Nothing to breathe then, I'm afraid."

Ann joined us, and for a moment we stood in silence, looking up at the sun hanging low beyond the mushroom trees.

"Major and Minor had best get to work," the professor said. "At the very least, they'll need to seal the hull before nightfall."

The Jimmies must have heard this, for they both appeared at once, leaning out through the hole in the ship, insisting that the repairs couldn't be performed without a sizeable workforce.

# TO ONE TABLE



BY J. R. CAMPBELL

**OTHERS WHO SHARE** my journalistic profession, uninvolved and with the advantage of a comfortable and somewhat smug hindsight, have declared the recent Harley Street dinner party incident to have been 'inevitable'. I must confess that this cold and dispassionate view has supporters among the learned and powerful. It was the opinion put forth by no less a personage than the esteemed Professor George Edward Challenger upon our return from our celebrated Maple White Land expedition. Against the noble scientist one must choose both words and opinions carefully, yet I cannot find it within myself to agree with the fatalistic views of my colleagues and my friend. Inevitable? In hindsight tragedy always appears so. Somehow the concept of unavoidable destiny offers comfort to uninformed readers, those to whom tragedy is nothing more than orderly columns of black type. For my part, examining the chain of events from the vantage of the present day, I see nothing inevitable about any part of the wretched affair. Challenger warned the world, yet his wise words were refused and ignored. With no first-hand experience of their own, the advice of the great scientist was dismissed by a small, wealthy and intellectually arrogant group. Those unfortunates shared both ignorance and doom with those they called friends. In my mind the blame for this tragedy rests on their heads, the reward of obstinate hubris belonging not to the collective race of man but to those privileged fools who refuse any wisdom contrary to their preconceived notions of the world. May they burn for the deaths they unwittingly set before their friends.



Not the neat, dispassionate words of a journalist, I know. I have returned to my home, found the unwashed dish of my interrupted meal just as I left it weeks before when a knock on my door signalled the beginning of my involvement in these terrible events. Nothing in my home, excepting myself, has changed. It is enough. The contentment with which I once looked over my small part of the great city has disappeared. Despair has filled the void. Challenger says my situation will change and I want to believe him. Despite his arrogance and bluster he is a man of great insight, but a return to my former happiness seems to me unlikely. Much has been lost, perhaps too much for one man to bear. Yet the muscles respond to the habits of a lifetime, my fingers, if not my will, stretch for pen and paper. Challenger urges me to make a record of all that has happened, insisting I will be better for the exercise and, as I said, I wish to believe him. So I scratch out yet another line of ink, a sound that has never seemed lonelier, hoping to recover some of myself in the pen's bloodletting.

How strange and appropriate that my involvement should have begun with a meal. Having worked late, I was consuming a tardy dinner when the policemen knocked. Opening the door I found two uniformed constables with expressions as grim as the chill night. "Mr. Malone?" They asked and, seeing my nod, added, "You'll come with us then."

Perhaps such tactics succeed with men of more reputable professions, but as a journalist I had dealt with members of the Yard before and their indignant authority was insufficient to move me. "What do you want with me?"

Glances were exchanged again, expressing more eloquently than words the frustration of dealing with those of a civilian persuasion. The senior constable relented and offered more information. "It's not you the Inspector's after, it's the great man."

Ah, Challenger, of course. "I'll get my coat," I answered. Scraping my plate clean of my half-eaten meal, I gathered my things and ventured out with the constables. Little did I suspect how long it would be before I returned home, or the wretched state in which I would find myself when next I crossed the threshold.



The elegant house in Harley Street was a study in chaos. Windows broken and doors thrown open, servants, police constables and

# THE FOOL'S SEA

BY SIMON KURT UNSWORTH

## 1. A SUMMONS

SENDER: PROF. G. E. CHALLENGER  
GRAND VIEW HOTEL  
PLYMOUTH

TO: EDWARD MALONE  
DAILY GAZETTE  
LONDON

YOUR ATTENDANCE REQUIRED STOP  
COME AT ONCE TO PLYMOUTH DOCK STOP URGENT  
STOP



**I HAD NOT** seen the professor for several years when the telegram came. The last few years had taken me into the heart of the war, but even from the command centers across Europe, Challenger's exploits had been easy to track. I knew from his infrequent communications and more frequent newspaper reports that he had not mellowed; after his altercation with Brophy of The Times he had sent me a message that said simply '£4 6s each now!' It had made me laugh, but no one else who read it understood.

Despite my ambitions, I had never become one of Kitchener's hated war correspondents, instead ending up as an officially sanctioned unofficial liaison between the masses of Fleet Street's

finest and the British Army, ensuring that the tales of the war that got told were the ones we had wanted told. It was unpleasant work, constraining, having less to do with the words I loved than with censorship, and I had left to return to civilian life as soon as I could after the end of the hostilities.

My first instinct was to ignore Challenger's peremptory telegram; my adventures with him seemed an age ago now, several ages, and the creatures we had faced seemed somehow less than terrifying after seeing the churned and torn earth, the putrefying bodies of British and German dead and crows grown fat on human flesh. When you have stood on the edge of a battlefield and smelled the stench of blood and corpses bloating in the French sun, listening as your commanders discuss *acceptable loss* and *strategic sacrifice*, you start to wonder who the real monsters are, and hunting them ceases to be an adventure.

In the end, though, I decided to go because Challenger remained my friend, and perhaps a visit with him was what I needed. His sheer obdurate, immovable *absoluteness* might be refreshing after so much death, so much chaos and uncertainty. I told McArdle that I was on the track of a new story, not telling him anything else, and made my arrangements to leave, and it was only as the train pulled out from Waterloo that I wondered why Challenger had telegraphed me from Plymouth.

## 2. THE THING IN THE TANK

"You're late," said the professor, neither rising nor looking up. The reception staff had given me Challenger's note as I checked into the hotel; it read simply *Lounge* in strokes so fierce that at points they had almost punctured the thick paper. I arranged for my bags to be taken to my room and then went through to the lounge where I found my friend sitting alone at a table, surrounded by charts, maps and papers covered in notes. He was in his shirtsleeves, his jacket hanging like an abandoned tent across the back of the chair, and his torso and arms were as powerful-looking as they had ever been.

"We don't have long," said Challenger, finally deigning to turn his head and peer out at me from under brows that bristled like horsehair. His eyes glittered in the shadows like diamonds in black coal and his beard rasped across the front of his waistcoat. There were strands of grey through it, I saw, and I raised my

# THE EYE OF THE DEVIL



BY MARK MORRIS

EVENTS WHICH ULTIMATELY prove remarkable often begin with the most mundane of encounters. So it was that on a drizzly Wednesday afternoon I was summoned to the office of the *Daily Gazette's* news editor, old McArdle, whose dour countenance and fuzz of fiery red hair concealed a kindly, often humorous nature.

"I have a job for ye, Malone," he said in his Scotch burr. "I think it will be right up your street."

I groaned inwardly, although tried not to allow my inner feelings to imprint themselves upon my face. Such words usually presaged the dreariest of assignments. On Monday I had been dispatched to report on the opening of a new swimming pool in Pimlico; yesterday I had been required to attend an interminable debate about Kensington street lighting in the local council chambers.

"Have ye heard of St. Lenwith?" the editor continued.

I frowned. "It is a small tin mining community in Dartmoor, is it not?"

He nodded. "Full marks, laddie. But did ye know that a terrible accident occurred there not two days ago?"

I shook my head. "I did not."

"Aye." His voice softened. "Six men perished and only one survived. A terrible business. Terrible."

"Terrible indeed," I agreed gravely. "What was the cause? An explosion? A collapsed roof?"

"Neither," said he. "The poor fellows were gassed."

I knew that poisonous gases were a common hazard below ground, most notably carbon monoxide, which was rendered particularly lethal by dint of the fact that it was colorless, odorless and lighter than air. When I posited this as the probable cause, however, McArdle shook his head.

"Well now, that is the queer thing. Rumor has it that the gas which killed these fellows was something entirely new. My understanding is that it had a singular effect on the bodies of those afflicted — an effect never before witnessed in medical circles."

"What manner of effect?" I asked, my curiosity piqued.

He flapped a hand vaguely. "I am afraid the details are scant — which is why I want you to catch the next available train to St. Lenwith. I've already telephoned ahead and procured a room for you at the local inn, the Wayfarers Arms."

"Is that necessary?" I asked, surprised. "Surely a telephone call to the local medical practitioner will furnish you with the pertinent details?"

McArdle held up a hand, stemming my protestations, mild though they were. "Ah, but there is yet more to the story," said he, narrowing his eyes. "More, aye, and stranger still."

I sat upright in my chair. "Indeed?"

McArdle pushed his spectacles up on to his forehead and fixed me with a piercing gaze. "What would be your reaction," he asked, "if I were to inform you that since the accident, the sole survivor, a Mr. Tom Bindle, has been jabbering ceaselessly about his encounter with the devil?"

"I should say that the poor chap's mind is addled," I replied, wishing that McArdle would provide me with the salient facts instead of indulging in incomplete proclamations and insinuations, which amounted to little more than a melodramatic display fit only for the penny theatres and street mummers.

He smiled. "Perhaps that is the case, perhaps not. That is for you to discover."

"It would aid me greatly," I replied, a little acidly, "if I were to be graced with the context of the fellow's diabolic jabberings."

"Forgive me," said McArdle, acknowledging my curtness. "You are quite right, of course." He laced his fingers together on the desk and sat up as straight in his seat as his round back would allow, thus assuming an altogether more business-like air.

"It is my understanding," he resumed, "that during excavations to increase the depth of the mine, the existing seams having

# PROFESSOR CHALLENGER & THE CRIMSON WONDER

BY GUY ADAMS & JAMES GOSS

12th May 1914  
Jessie Challenger  
The Briars  
Rotherfield

My dearest Edward

I do hope things are going well for you with your London Explorers. What a treat it must be for Londonknowing that the very cleverest minds in the entire Empire are all gathered together in one small room. I just pray there isn't an accident with the gaslight— if you were all wiped out, who would do Britain's thinking for her?

I miss you terribly, of course. The pleasing news is that, here in the country, things continue much as usual. Florrie — that's the new cook — has been persuaded to stay (a woman of some education, she was able to decipher the Latin tag you'd carved into her omelet). Austin remains with us. He is nursing wounded pride and yet another black eye— Dearest, far be it for me to tell you how to treat your chauffeur, but if I can prevail upon you to strop striking him, that would be a small slice of heaven. I know the fellow is surly, but he says that, if you had simply warned him the case contained glass slides, he would have carried it with greater care. He also points out proudly that he managed not to drop it, despite the tattoo of fisticuffs beating upon his skull. I have mollified him, and forestalled his departure by assuring him that, the next time you punch him, he is most definitely entitled to hit back. Do you know, I think if I allowed all the servants

the liberty of striking you, I would be saved their annual bonus and a fair few holidays?

If you could only be a little more polite towards them we would eat better, there would be less dust in your laboratory, and Austin would avoid potholes in the road. I say nothing of my own comfort in all of this, of course, as it is you I am thinking of, and your status. In short, you would live in the manner to which a national hero should be accustomed.

Anyway, with the temporary restoration of the status quo, you'll be displeased to hear I was able to receive some of the ladyfolk of the neighborhood. They have been pressing their claims to call on us with some alacrity since the affair of the Poison Belt. There is a general feeling (which I know you cannot be aware of) that the world owes you its life after the lifting of the deadly ether. While I know that there is no basis in this, the fact that you prophesied the calamity, means that many assume that you were involved in the world's revival from its deadly slumber.

Knowing that an afternoon of being feted and cooed over by chattering ladyfolk is your idea of a new circle of hell, I arranged for them to call on me this afternoon, when you were safely on your train to London. "Ladies," I informed them once they were sat around clutching expectant teacups, "I regret to inform you that Professor Challenger has been called away to London on... most pressing business."

Barely had I let the words hang in the air than there were satisfying gasps and exclamations. "Mrs. Challenger," the Vicar's Wife croaked, "You don't mean to say that we are in danger of the poisonous ether returning?"

There was a tiny cry and one woman was already clasping at her smelling salts. Truly, it is at moments like this that I genuinely despair of my sex. It is all very well to chitter about female suffrage, but while the greater portion of womenfolk continues to behave like lacy geese, I cannot say that we do our own cause much credit.

I trust you won't be too cross with me for toying with them, mildly. I held up a calming hand. "Ladies, please rest assured that, while the Professor's summons was urgent, I doubt there is any immediate danger." A little smile played upon my lips as I imagined them descending on Boscarby's Stores to demand oxygen cylinders be sent round to their homes.

# TIME'S BLACK GULF

BY JOSH REYNOLDS

**"HOW LONG HAS** he been like this?" John Roxton said quietly as he lit a cigarette and peered through the doorway into the atrium. Standing nearby, Edward Malone shifted uncomfortably. The two men were a study in contrasts; Malone was shorter and younger, and dressed shabbily. Roxton was older and taller, with the nut brown skin of a born outdoorsman.

"A month at least," Malone said, his voice pitched low. Roxton's blue eyes narrowed.

"And his wife?"

"She... left. Three days ago. I don't know if she's coming back." Malone swallowed. "I wouldn't."

"No," Roxton said, neither agreeing nor disagreeing. He sucked meditatively on his cigarette. "Is Summerlee coming?"

"He's been and gone," Malone said, peeking around the doorway. He looked at Roxton. "He thinks he might know someone who can help. A fellow named Carnacki."

Roxton grunted. In the atrium, bathed in the weak wintry sunlight, Professor George Edward Challenger twitched and muttered to himself in a language that was not his own and bent himself to the building of a device that had no obvious function. Roxton watched him for a time. The figure squatting amidst the mechanical cacophony was more simian than the one he remembered. Challenger had always had a bit of the bull-ape about him, but to see him like this, with his clothing in disarray and his hair and beard greasy with lack of washing, was disturbing.



Roxton expelled smoke through his nostrils and looked back at Malone. "A month, you said?" he said.

"According to the servants and the doctor his wife brought in," Malone said. "They said he fainted and then, when he woke up, he was like... that. He was complaining of headaches and nausea before that."

"You've been playing detective," Roxton said admiringly.

"I'm a journalist, Roxton," Malone said, by way of explanation. "He's been sending out for books as well."

"Books," Roxton repeated.

"Lots of them," Malone said. "The weather has been giving the couriers fits." He gestured. Roxton looked and saw books of all shapes and sizes piled haphazardly all over the atrium. Malone went on. "They said he read through his own library in a day. Almost every book he owns is strewn across the second floor. It looks like a bomb went off in the sitting room." He jerked his chin towards another pile, this one of newspapers. "He's become a fiend for the broadsheets as well. One of everything, every day for a month," Malone said.

"He's keeping track of the date," Roxton said. He plucked his cigarette loose from his lips and gestured with it towards the glass windows of the atrium. Frost coated the glass, and budding dunes of snow lurked against the lower regions. A caustic chill had crept in and now clung to everything, and a wet draft stirred the air in an unpleasant fashion.

"What?" Malone said, looking.

"Scratches," Roxton said. "There are dozens of regular scratches on the glass of the windows and the door." Malone looked at him in shock. Roxton met his eyes and said, "He's hiding them. There aren't enough of them to be noticeable, if you aren't looking for them or didn't see them, like I did just now." Keen eyes flashed as Roxton pushed away from the doorframe. "I'm going to talk to him."

Malone grabbed his arm. "I wouldn't. It's a bit... unnerving."

"I've seen worse," Roxton said, shaking his arm free. Malone didn't reply, but Roxton noted his expression and felt a moment's hesitation. Then, with a grunt, he entered the atrium. He noticed the smell immediately. It hadn't been obvious before, but now it struck him like a blow. It was a strange, metallic odour, not from the creeping damp of the cold weather, and he wondered whether it emanated from Challenger or the device he was so carefully, not to mention quickly, constructing.

# OUT OF THE DEPTHS



BY ANDREW J. WILSON

“It was strange to think that the climax of all the age-long process of Nature had been the creation of that gentleman in the red tie. But had the process stopped? Was this gentleman to be taken as the final type— the be-all and end-all of development? He hoped that he would not hurt the feelings of the gentleman in the red tie if he maintained that, whatever virtues that gentleman might possess in private life, still the vast processes of the universe were not fully justified if they were to end entirely in his production. Evolution was not a spent force, but one still working, and even greater achievements were in store.”

—Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Lost World*



“And least satisfactory of all is something that I cannot touch, somewhere — I cannot determine where — in the seat of the emotions. Cravings, instincts, desires that harm humanity, a strange hidden reservoir to burst forth suddenly and inundate the whole being of the creature with anger, hate, or fear.”

—H. G. Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*



“Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD.”

—Psalm 130

## 1. THE KENSINGTON APE-MAN

Of all the manifold aspects of Professor Challenger's mercurial genius, it is his unrivalled gift for causing offence which never fails to astonish me. My old friend can induce apoplexy in the mildest of men and turn the most dignified gathering into a breach of the peace. The fact that he takes umbrage at the slightest variance from his own opinions never seems to diminish his relish for the pungent scent of controversy and the blazing heat of debate.

I had seen the great man only occasionally since the debacle at Hengist Down, and then mainly at the funerals of mutual friends and colleagues such as Professor Summerlee and Mr. McArdle. The former had been our companion on several adventures, and for all their disagreements, Challenger took the loss of his old sparring partner very badly indeed. The latter had been my mentor and immediate superior at the *Daily Gazette*, and in due course, I had assumed his position as News Editor of the paper. What with the Professor's self-imposed retreat from public affairs and my own increased responsibilities, we had inevitably drifted apart.

Nevertheless, the telegram which arrived at the offices of the *Gazette* on the morning of April the First 1937 should not have surprised me as much as it did. His All Fools' Day communication was as true to form as the chaos which was to follow in its wake:

YOUR ASSISTANCE URGENTLY REQUIRED STOP  
HOBBS LANE KENSINGTON STOP  
MALFEASANCE SUSPECTED STOP  
CHALLENGER

How could I deny the old man after all that we had been through together? Without further ado, I left my assistant in charge of the desk, abandoned my hard-won post and took a cab directly from Fleet Street to our rendezvous, an alleyway not more than a mile from the Professor's home in Enmore Gardens.

There was something about the name Hobbs Lane which troubled me. Had I misfiled some vital scrap of information in the recesses of my middle-aged mind? Was it that the place had once been known as "Hob's Lane", with all the whiff of brimstone which that epithet implies? Or was there another name that I was overlooking which was connected with the place?