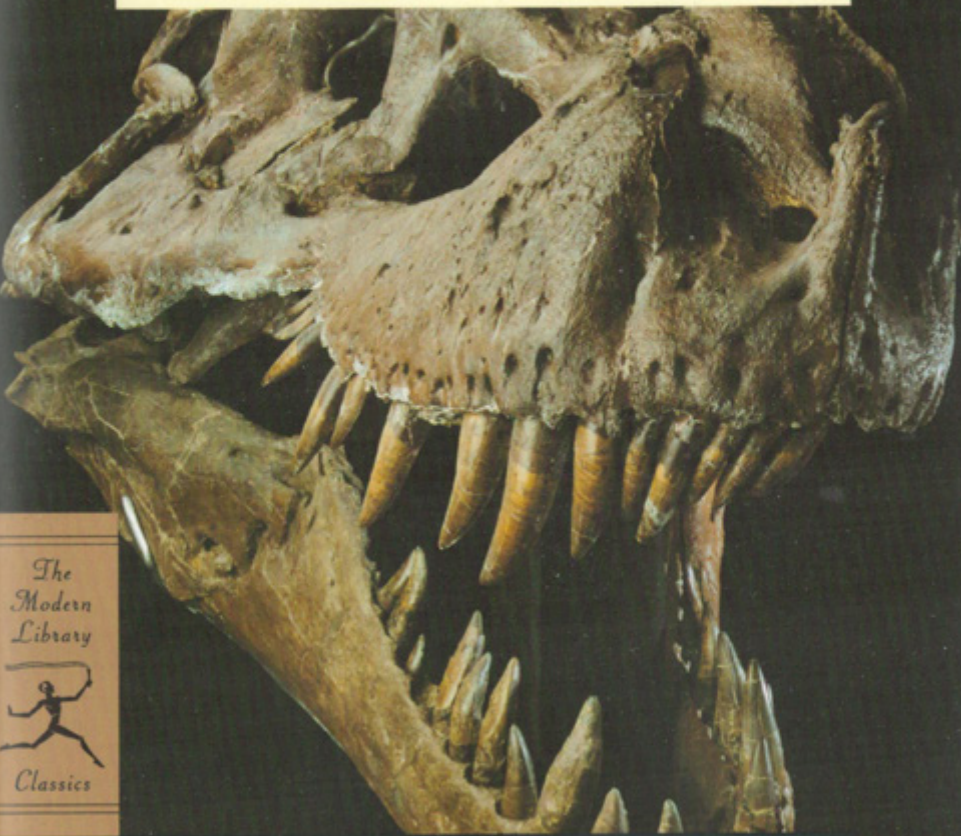


*"The Lost World . . . provide[s] evidence that Doyle had it in him to be one of the greatest science fiction writers of all time."*—SAM MOSKOWITZ

# THE LOST WORLD

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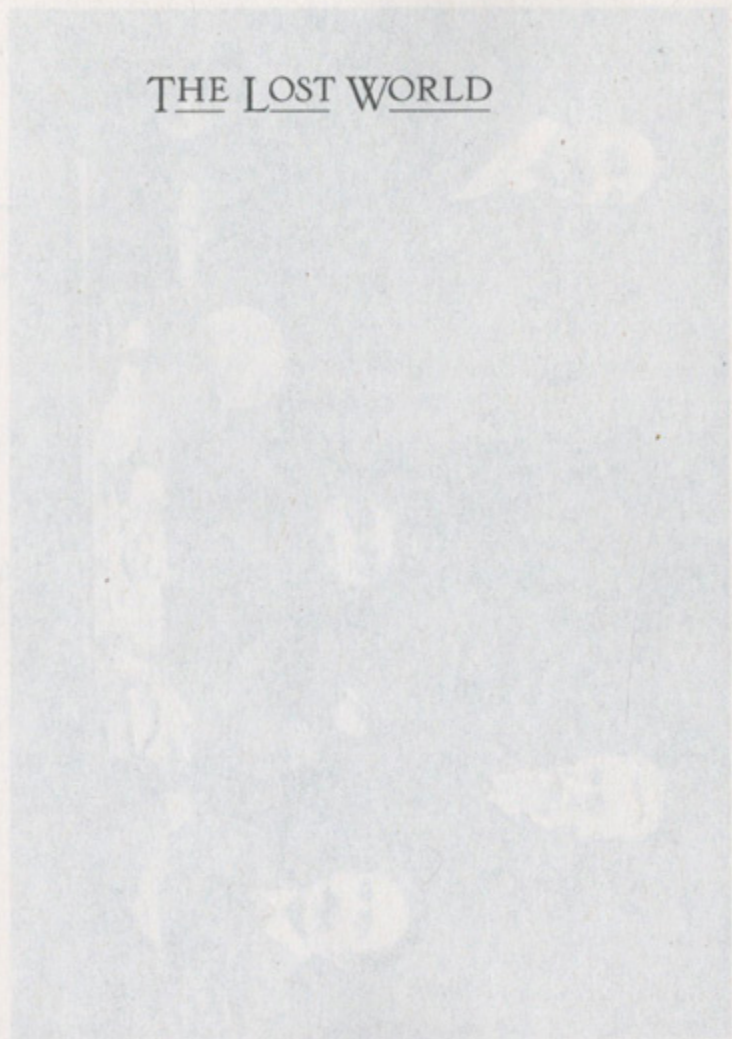
Arthur Conan DOYLE

Introduction by MICHAEL CRICHTON

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# THE LOST WORLD





Professor Summerlee, F.R.S.

E. D. Malone (*Daily Gazette*)

Professor G. E. Challenger, F.R.S., F.R.G.S.

Lord John Roxton.

THE MEMBERS OF THE EXPLORING PARTY.



ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE  
THE LOST WORLD

BEING AN ACCOUNT OF  
THE RECENT AMAZING ADVENTURES OF  
PROFESSOR GEORGE E. CHALLENGER,  
LORD JOHN ROXTON, PROFESSOR SUMMERLEE,  
AND MR. E. D. MALONE OF THE "DAILY GAZETTE"

*Introduction by Michael Crichton*

*Notes by Julia Houston*



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## ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, physician turned author and creator of literature's most famous detective, Sherlock Holmes, was born in Edinburgh on May 22, 1859. His large Catholic family were known for their artistic abilities, but Conan Doyle decided to study medicine at Edinburgh University. While a student, Conan Doyle tried to earn money by writing stories, and his first, "The Mystery of Sasassa Valley," was published in 1879. A short stint as a ship's surgeon preceded the opening of his own initially unsuccessful medical practice in Southsea. Newly married to Louise Hawkins, Conan Doyle again took up writing to supplement his meager income. In the half century that followed, he would produce more than 30 books, 150 short stories, poems, plays, and essays across a wide range of genres, from detective novels, historical fiction, science fiction, history, and religious tracts to autobiography.

Conan Doyle's first novel, *A Study in Scarlet*, published in *Beeton's Christmas Annual* for 1887, introduced the literary world to Dr. Watson and Sherlock Holmes, a detective modeled on one of Conan Doyle's university professors who had incredible deduction skills. Though the novel had limited success, Conan Doyle continued writing, and in 1889 he published *Micab Clarke*, a historical novel.



This publication would establish a pattern in Conan Doyle's writing career—flip-flopping between detective stories and what Conan Doyle always considered the more serious work of writing historical fiction and nonfiction.

Conan Doyle's second Sherlock Holmes novel, *The Sign of Four*, was commissioned by *Lippincott's Magazine* and published in 1890. At this time, Conan Doyle also gave up his medical practice, moved to London, and finished a medieval novel that would remain his favorite, *The White Company* (1891). The second half of 1891 brought widespread popularity for Conan Doyle's Baker Street sleuth when six new adventures were serialized in the *Strand Magazine*, beginning with "A Scandal in Bohemia." The reading public and the magazine editors begged for more, and Conan Doyle hesitated since he was already working on another historical novel, *The Refugees*, published in 1893. He finally consented to write six more Holmes tales at a very high price, and they were eventually collected in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1892).

After he completed a historical novel about the Napoleonic wars, *The Great Shadow* (1892), Conan Doyle began a new set of detective stories. He had decided at this point to retire Sherlock Holmes on his own because his attempts to fend off the demand for Holmes stories by asking exorbitant fees had been ineffective. The last story in Conan Doyle's new collection, *Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (1894), was titled "The Final Problem," and in it, Conan Doyle sends Sherlock Holmes over the Reichenbach Falls. Fans mourned the loss of Holmes, but for Conan Doyle, Holmes's demise gave him the freedom to write more of what he wanted.

The next decade was extremely productive for Conan Doyle. *The Stark Munro Letters* (1895), an autobiographical novel, was written in Switzerland, where he and his family had relocated for a few years. While on an American reading tour, Conan Doyle conceived of a new serial character, a French soldier in Napoleon's army named Brigadier Gerard, who appears in *The Exploits of Brigadier Gerard* (1896) and *Adventures of Gerard* (1903). *Rodney Stone*, a novel about prizefighting, was published in 1896 upon his return to Switzerland. Conan Doyle and his family moved back to England and *Uncle*

*Bernac*, another novel about the Napoleonic wars, was published in 1897. *The Tragedy of the Korosko* (1898) was completed after a trip to Cairo.

The Boer War broke out in 1899 and the forty-year-old Conan Doyle volunteered to serve as a military surgeon. His army experiences prompted him to write *The Great Boer War* (1900), an authoritative history, and *The War in Africa* (1902), a short book of reportage that exonerated the British military from propagandist accounts of brutal conduct among soldiers. It was for this that Edward VII knighted Conan Doyle on August 9, 1902.

*The Hound of the Baskervilles* appeared in the same year, after having been serialized in the *Strand* in 1901. Although Conan Doyle did not at first intend to write Sherlock Holmes into the novel, it became the most popular Holmes story and perhaps Conan Doyle's most acclaimed work. It was not long before new Holmes tales began to appear in magazines in 1903 and 1904; they were reprinted in *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* (1905).

In 1906, Conan Doyle's wife died, and one year later he married Jean Leckie. During this time, Conan Doyle devoted larger amounts of time to history and politics. *Sir Nigel*, a historical novel and prequel to *The White Company*, appeared in 1906. One of Conan Doyle's pet political causes included offering detective services to help those wrongly arrested, which culminated in *The Case of Oscar Slater* (1912). In 1909, he published *The Crime of the Congo*, a tract against Belgian mistreatment of natives.

Detective stories continued to appear in *The Valley of Fear* (1914) and a collection of Holmes adventures titled *His Last Bow* (1917), of which *Booklist* wrote, "Every story is told with the author's admirable mastery of the narrative art." But the Victorian world embodied in the Holmes canon had begun to fade in the new century, and detective fiction was no longer Conan Doyle's focus. He tried his hand at science fiction in *The Lost World* (1912), followed by *The Poison Belt* (1913) and others. Spiritualism had increasingly become Conan Doyle's most important work; he published many books on the subject, the most famous of which was the two-volume *History of Spiritualism* (1926).



The final twelve of sixty Holmes stories were published in *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes* in 1927, ending a much-celebrated run of English literature's favorite detective.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle died on July 7, 1930, but the immortal creation of Sherlock Holmes, revered by *The New York Times* as "the most widely known character in English fiction since Pickwick," ensures his lasting fame.

## CONTENTS

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE	v
INTRODUCTION <i>by Michael Crichton</i>	xi
A NOTE ON THE TEXT	xxv

### THE LOST WORLD

FOREWORD	xxxi
CHAPTER I "THERE ARE HEROISMS ALL ROUND US"	3
CHAPTER II "TRY YOUR LUCK WITH PROFESSOR CHALLENGER"	9
CHAPTER III "HE IS A PERFECTLY IMPOSSIBLE PERSON"	17
CHAPTER IV "IT'S JUST THE VERY BIGGEST THING IN THE WORLD"	24
CHAPTER V "QUESTION!"	42
CHAPTER VI "I WAS THE FLAIL OF THE LORD"	55
CHAPTER VII "TO-MORROW WE DISAPPEAR INTO THE UNKNOWN"	64
CHAPTER VIII "THE OUTLYING PICKETS OF THE NEW WORLD"	74
CHAPTER IX "WHO COULD HAVE FORESEEN IT?"	87
CHAPTER X "THE MOST WONDERFUL THINGS HAVE HAPPENED"	109
CHAPTER XI "FOR ONCE I WAS THE HERO"	125
CHAPTER XII "IT WAS DREADFUL IN THE FOREST"	142

CHAPTER XIII "A SIGHT WHICH I SHALL NEVER FORGET"	156
CHAPTER XIV "THOSE WERE THE REAL CONQUESTS"	170
CHAPTER XV "OUR EYES HAVE SEEN GREAT WONDERS"	184
CHAPTER XVI "A PROCESSION! A PROCESSION!"	201
NOTES	219
READING GROUP GUIDE	229

THE EAST WORLD

Foreword	xxxv
CHAPTER I "THERE ARE HEROES ALL ROUND US"	3
CHAPTER II "THEY FOUL UP WITH PROGRESS CHALLENGER"	9
CHAPTER III "HE IS A PERFECTLY IMPOSSIBLE PERSON"	17
CHAPTER IV "IT'S JUST THE VERY BIGGEST THING in the World"	24
CHAPTER V "DANGER"	42
CHAPTER VI "I WAS THE KING OF THE LORD"	52
CHAPTER VII "TO-GORROW WE DEPART INTO the Unknown"	64
CHAPTER VIII "THE GETTING POINTS OF THE New World"	74
CHAPTER IX "WHO COULD HAVE FORESEEN IT?"	87
CHAPTER X "THE MOST WONDERFUL THING That Happened"	109
CHAPTER XI "FOR ONE I WAS THE HERO"	125
CHAPTER XII "IT WAS BREAKING IN THE FOREST"	143



## INTRODUCTION

*Michael Crichton*

The literary achievement of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle cannot be understood unless one recognizes the excessive, even lurid, quality of his imagination. In real life, Conan Doyle was a physician and solid citizen—devoted father, energetic athlete, political activist, even a candidate for Parliament. He was a practical man, involving himself in causes as diverse as atrocities in the Belgian Congo and the need to reform British divorce laws. In photographs he appears solid, too: strongly built, mustached, sitting walruslike at his desk with pen in hand, writing swiftly and making few changes once his words are on the page.

But the imagination that propelled his pen ran to extremes. Indeed, it is hard to conceive of a more extreme character than Sherlock Holmes himself, with his monomaniacal focus on crime, fits of depression, cocaine injections, clouds of tobacco smoke, melancholic violin-playing, and bursts of furious energy once the game is afoot. Holmes is a brilliant creation, but he is excessive in every way.

And Holmes's cases are filled with the exotic and bizarre—deadly trained snakes, ancient curses, dart-blowing dwarfs, masked children, rooms with crushing walls. A supernatural aura floats over many of

the tales; unworldly forces are frequently evoked, as in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, though always explained away in the end.

This tendency to excess is found not only in the Holmes stories, but in many others as well. One thinks of the paranormal "The Leather Funnel," the lurid dementia of "The Beetle Hunter," the ghastly revelations of "The Sealed Room,"<sup>1</sup> and many others.

One might expect such excesses to strain credibility—and, in fact, some of the stories do. But surprisingly few. For it was Conan Doyle's peculiar genius to place the bizarre imaginings of his mind within an apparently realistic setting. Filled with telling detail, his stories seem real. We are convinced the author has walked every London street, has visited every house and shop, that he describes so convincingly.

Thus it comes as something of a shock to learn that the author did nothing of the sort. Conan Doyle did not live in the gaslit London he described so well. Nor did he care about authenticity: "So long as you produce your dramatic effect, accuracy of detail matters little. I have never striven for it. . . . What matter if I can hold my readers?"<sup>2</sup> Thus, the London of Sherlock Holmes is not factual at all. It is a literary creation—a brilliantly executed, utterly convincing "dramatic effect."

Sherlock Holmes had been a fixture of the literary scene for a quarter of a century when, in 1912, his creator decided to set himself a fresh challenge to his skill with dramatic effects. Contemplating a new character and a new novel, *The Lost World*, to introduce him, Conan Doyle informed his editor, "My ambition is to do for the boy's 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."<sup>3</sup>

At first glance, it seems an odd ambition. In those days, the "boy's book" referred to a particular kind of fast-paced story intended for younger readers—in short, juvenile pulp fiction. One would not expect it to attract the world-renowned author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, a contemporary of Oscar Wilde, Joseph Conrad, and George Bernard Shaw. It was especially unlikely considering the fact that



Conan Doyle was famously ambivalent about his most popular creation, Sherlock Holmes. Throughout his life, Conan Doyle considered himself first and foremost a writer of serious historical fiction. Just seven years after he created Holmes, Conan Doyle killed him off—to make time, he said, for “more serious work.” The pressure of overdue bills and a clamoring public eventually persuaded the author to bring him back a few years later. But he was never happy about it, claiming that “I have had such an overdose of him that . . . the name gives me a sickly feeling to this day.”

Yet now, at the age of fifty-three, Conan Doyle was planning to create another popular character, in another popular genre. It may be that, exasperated with Holmes, he wanted to create a rival in the character of Professor George Challenger. Certainly we know that he followed the same procedure that had led him to Holmes, basing his character on a vividly remembered teacher from his medical school days. Holmes had been based on Joseph Bell, a hawk-faced instructor with extraordinary powers of observation. For his new character, Professor Challenger, the author recalled “the squat figure of Professor Rutherford with his Assyrian beard, his prodigious voice, his enormous chest and his singular manner.”

In any case, one cannot help comparing Holmes and Challenger—the two characters are so diametrically opposite in every way that Challenger becomes a kind of anti-Holmes. Where Holmes is tall and lean, Challenger is squat and pugnacious. Holmes shuns publicity; Challenger craves the limelight. Holmes charms, Challenger insults; Holmes is subtle, Challenger crude; Holmes is diffident, Challenger aggressive. Indeed, the only trait they share is prodigious physical strength.

But if Challenger was intended to challenge Holmes, he is the wrong man for the job. The single most striking feature of Sherlock Holmes is that people believe him to be a real person. He is one of the few characters in fiction of whom that can be said. Challenger, on the other hand, is comical beyond belief. His excesses, his irascibility, and his ready insults make him fun to read, but no one would ever mistake him for a real person. No one goes looking for Challenger's house, the way readers make pilgrimages to Baker Street,



looking for the 221b address, which they are astonished to find is fictional. Challenger remains fixed on the printed page.

But in *The Lost World*, Conan Doyle did something far more influential than invent a character—he invented a particular kind of fantasy story, and demonstrated a successful way to tell it.

Of course, there was already a rich tradition of fantasy adventure stories, and no one knew it better than Conan Doyle. Nine years younger than Robert Louis Stevenson, three years younger than Rider Haggard, Conan Doyle had launched his own literary career in the late 1880s, a decade that saw the publication of *Treasure Island* (1883), *King Solomon's Mines*, *Jekyll and Hyde*, and *Kidnapped* (1886), *She* (1887), *The Black Arrow* (1888), and *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889). These were enormous public successes and remain to this day masterly examples of the adventure form.

By 1912, when Conan Doyle began *The Lost World*, the literary landscape had changed. Stevenson had died eighteen years earlier. Rider Haggard, his rival, was still writing adventure romances but the intense interest that once allowed a poster to call *King Solomon's Mines* "The Most Amazing Book Ever Written" was long gone. Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, published in 1902, had set the adventure story on a more adult, gloomy, metaphysical course.

Even more to the point, the world was becoming known; the blank spaces on the map were being filled in. It was increasingly difficult for authors to postulate some far-off land where strange doings might occur. There were no unexplored places anymore.

Thus the story Conan Doyle had in mind presented enormous challenges. He intended to write about an expedition to a remote, high plateau in South America, cut off from the rest of the world. In this lost world, evolution has taken a different path. Led by Professor Challenger, the explorers were to confront all manner of atavisms: dinosaurs, bizarre beasts, and ferocious ape-men. After surviving dread horrors and continuous peril, they would escape and return safely home.

The story Conan Doyle wrote was a great success in its day and more than fulfilled its author's stated intention. Just as Sherlock

Holmes set the standard—and in some sense established the formula—for the detective story ever since, so too has *The Lost World* set the standard and the formula for fantasy-adventure stories since that time. The tone and techniques that Conan Doyle first refined in *The Lost World* have become standard narrative procedures in popular entertainment of the present day.

It is one thing to conjure up a detective in a gaslit London that already exists. It is quite another to create a world from scratch, fill it with dinosaurs and ape-men, and make it equally palatable. *The Lost World* succeeds brilliantly. How does the author do it?

One can view the novel as a catalog of procedures to disarm the reader. From the outset, its tone is lighthearted and comedic. Conan Doyle casts the narrative as an account of a real expedition, as reported by a participant. To support this, he includes all sorts of corroborative material that one might expect to find—maps, photographs of the explorers, and so on. (For the original edition, Conan Doyle supplied photographs of the main characters, including himself in a false beard as Professor Challenger; the photographs are reproduced in this edition.) And he sprinkles his text with references to real places and people, including such contemporary scientists as Wallace, Bates, and Lankester.

But we're not expected to be fooled into actually believing this. On the contrary, *The Lost World* reads like a parody of a literary form. Conan Doyle understands that his approach does not reduce the reader's acquiescence, but rather encourages it: even as we are amused, even as we are told not to take it seriously, we are subtly encouraged to go along with the gag.

Equally disarming is the author's gentle way of denigrating his own project. His novel is old-fashioned and he does not hesitate to say so: "I'm afraid the day for this sort of thing is rather past," the editor tells the narrator, young Malone. It is a way for the author to agree with the reader's criticism, and thus set it aside: yes, yes, it's outdated, but let's continue anyway.

Conan Doyle is similarly skillful in the way he introduces his outrageous premise. He presents us with a puzzle. Challenger shows



the narrator Malone a notebook, brought back from the jungle, containing impossible images, drawings of dinosaurs. What is the explanation for these images?

Puzzles are an excellent way to promote credibility because even the most skeptical reader will attempt to explain the puzzle, and in doing so must unconsciously accept the premise on which the puzzle is based. Thus, by the time the notebook has been explained away, the premise—that somewhere in South America there is a lost world of dinosaurs—has been accepted. Young Malone has accepted it, and so have we.

But in case any readers are still undecided, Conan Doyle creates a skeptic, Tarp Henry, to give voice to any lingering doubts.

"My dear chap, things don't happen like that in real life. People don't stumble upon enormous discoveries and then lose their evidence. Leave that to the novelists. The fellow is as full of tricks as the monkey-house at the Zoo. It's all absolute bosh."

"But the American poet?"

"He never existed."

"I saw his sketch-book."

"Challenger's sketch-book."

"You think he drew that animal?"

"Of course he did. Who else?"

"Well, then, the photographs?"

"There was nothing in the photographs. By your own admission you only saw a bird."

"A pterodactyl."

"That's what *he* says. He put the pterodactyl into your head."

One can think of passages such as this as a psychological insurance policy for the author. Conan Doyle gives voice to the doubts of skeptical readers, who can now relax into the story. In addition, the passage provokes our natural contrariness. Tarp is so adamant we have been fooled that we are provoked to defend ourselves, insisting that we have not been. And the ironic "Leave that to the novelists" serves as a suggestion for readers to do exactly that—to go along



with the novel's premise and not to worry about whether things like this happen in real life.

Finally, this passage presages a more powerful expression of skepticism to come, in the lecture-hall scene. This conversation is therefore laying groundwork for the challenge that provokes the expedition, and Malone's volunteering to go.

Thus, by the time the expedition is under way, the reader is fully prepared—in fact, eager—to meet dinosaurs. The premise has been sold. Now we are entering an unknown territory where we can no longer bring our personal experiences to bear. From this point on, Conan Doyle is fully in control; as he once put it, "I claim I may make my own conditions, and I do so."

But, in fact, his problems have just begun. Selling his premise is, in fact, much easier than delivering on it. The first problem Conan Doyle had to face concerned the story's pace.

By his own account, Conan Doyle intended to revive a fast-moving narrative form, the so-called ripping yarn. But an expedition through dense jungle is not fast moving. Exotic places must be described, and searches necessarily take time. The very nature of the expedition threatens to impede his narrative.

Conan Doyle employs three solutions to the problem of pace. First, he attenuates the journey, arriving at the plateau in as few pages as possible. Second, he sustains a conflict between Professor Challenger and his intellectual nemesis, Professor Summerlee, as a kind of running gag. Whatever incident may occur along the way, we can be sure Challenger will make the most of it, and Summerlee the least. If Challenger sees a pterodactyl, Summerlee sees a stork. The two men argue about the speech of cannibals, the meaning of wildlife, the leadership of the expedition—indeed, they argue about everything. It passes the time.

Third, a tedious search is replaced by a succession of mysteries to be solved. Following the example of Jules Verne, the protagonists of whose *Journey to the Center of the Earth* retraced the route of an earlier explorer, Conan Doyle's expedition retraces the route of the

artist whose notebook we have seen. (It is clear that Conan Doyle drew heavily from Verne's novel in shaping *The Lost World*. Both novels require a young narrator to prove his worth to the woman he loves by going off on a dangerous expedition with an irascible older scientist. Both novels establish their premise with a puzzle. Both recount plainly impossible adventures, and both eventually lead to the discovery of long-extinct beasts and other wonders.)<sup>4</sup>

But Conan Doyle recognized the limitations of Verne's simple narrative structure, which quickly devolves into a mere survival story; a search for water in passages beneath a volcano. For *The Lost World*, Conan Doyle establishes a more complex plot, with more intriguing characters. In particular, he draws the big-game hunter, Lord John Roxton, so vividly that the aristocrat frequently upstages Challenger himself.

Conan Doyle sustains interest by presenting, and resolving, a series of mysteries along the way. Why did Challenger seal his instructions? What is the meaning of the native drums? Whose skeleton was impaled on the bamboo? Where do the chalk marks lead? How will the expedition ever reach the plateau, now that the cave is blocked? And so on. This may be classic melodramatic structure, but it is far more sophisticated than that of Verne's novel.

These serial mysteries, interrupted by the occasional swoop of a pterodactyl, soon bring us to the rocky pinnacle we must ascend to reach the plateau. And here occurs the first genuine plot twist of the novel—the protagonists arrive at the plateau and are trapped there, perhaps never to leave.

—

With his characters cut off from civilization, Conan Doyle must now address the most serious problem of the novel: his lost world has no antagonist. Because he was re-creating the view of scientists in the early twentieth century, his dinosaurs are lumbering, dim-witted beasts. They are not suitable antagonists. This may be why Conan Doyle focuses so much on pterodactyls—they are, at least, fast moving. But pterodactyls do not permit a great variety of aggressive behavior; they can swoop down and slice, but little else.



Like the other dinosaurs, they cannot serve as worthy opponents, so Conan Doyle makes them objects of horror. Indeed, his description of the pterodactyl rookery is one of the most effective passages of the novel:

There were hundreds of them congregated within view. All the bottom area round the water-edge was alive with their young ones, and with hideous mothers brooding upon their leathery, yellowish eggs. From this crawling flapping mass of obscene reptilian life came the shocking clamour which filled the air and the mephitic, horrible, musty odour which turned us sick.

He goes on to describe them as "horrible . . . hideous . . . ferocious . . . filthy . . . like some devil in a mediæval picture." This description sets the tone for all that is to come, but in a sense Conan Doyle never surpasses this moment. Our first view of dinosaur life is also the most memorable.

Worse, this exposure to dinosaurs has the unfortunate effect of resolving the purpose of the expedition. In short order, Professor Summerlee is arguing they should all go home. "We came here upon a perfectly definite mission . . . to test the truth of Professor Challenger's statements. . . . Our . . . work is therefore done."

But this is plainly unsatisfactory. The expedition cannot simply turn around and leave; nothing has really happened yet. Conan Doyle needs a clever antagonist to sustain his narrative, and with warm-blooded, intelligent dinosaurs still fifty years in the future, he has no choice but to fall back on pure invention. In keeping with the atavistic theme of the tale, he postulates a race of savage ape-men ("dryopithecus of Java, [or] pithecanthropus") who capture Challenger and Summerlee and oblige the young hero and Lord John to save them before they are killed. These ape-men provide the plot twists for the remainder of our time on the plateau.

Contemporary readers may be nonplussed to find that a good deal of this later action occurs offstage. One could argue that Challenger's capture by the ape-men is sufficiently important that we ought to see it take place before our eyes, but we do not, because



the narrator Malone is elsewhere at the time. We may even come to suspect Malone is being deliberately kept away from the action. Almost certainly he is, because the author wants events to be related in dialogue by Lord Roxon.

Conan Doyle had long realized that any description—even the description of violent action—slowed the pace of the story. He could achieve far greater narrative speed by doing everything in dialogue. Over the years, he honed his dialogue to the point of astonishing compression. At times he could dispense with description entirely. In “The Three Students,” Sherlock Holmes is inspecting the living room when he says,

“... Where does that door lead to?”

“To my bedroom. . . .”

“I should like to have a glance round. What a charming, old-fashioned room! Perhaps you will kindly wait a minute, until I have examined the floor. No, I see nothing. What about this curtain? You hang your clothes behind it. If anyone were forced to conceal himself in this room he must do it there, since the bed is too low and the wardrobe too shallow. No one there, I suppose?”<sup>5</sup>

Conan Doyle could compress action as well:

“The game’s up, Ryder,” said Holmes, quietly. “Hold up, man, or you’ll be into the fire. Give him an arm back into his chair, Watson. He’s not got blood enough. . . . Give him a dash of brandy. So! Now he looks a little more human. . . .”<sup>6</sup>

The swift power of Conan Doyle’s dialogue is equally evident in *The Lost World* when Challenger describes his first expedition to the remote South American plateau:

“And then, sir, what did you do next?”

“It was the wet season, Mr. Malone, and my stores were exhausted. I explored some portion of this huge cliff, but I was unable to find any way to scale it. The pyramidal rock upon which I saw and shot the pterodactyl was more accessible. Being something of a cragsman, I did

manage to get half way to the top of that. From that height I had a better idea of the plateau upon the top of the crags. It appeared to be very large; neither to east nor to west could I see any end to the vista of green-capped cliffs. Below, it is a swampy, jungly region, full of snakes, insects, and fever. It is a natural protection to this singular country."

Conscious that a paragraph of dialogue could replace whole pages of description, Conan Doyle missed no opportunity to shift action to reported speech, as he does with Lord Roxton. And he knew that, paradoxically, properly written dialogue could convey a greater sense of immediacy than a description of action while it occurred.

Furthermore, the speaker could add color and humor to his account, and it is the continuous insertion of outrageous humor in *The Lost World* that encourages the reader to lower his guard. Thus, early on, Challenger puts his wife on a pedestal to get her out of the way; and thus, late in the story, Challenger is found to have a distinct resemblance to the chief of the ape-men, which is a source of fun once the danger is past. Challenger wants to make sure young Malone does not tell this to a wider audience:

"... You may have heard some rather fatuous remarks of Lord John Roxton's which seemed to imply that there was some—some resemblance——"

"Yes, I heard them."

"I need not say that any publicity given to such an idea—any levity in your narrative of what occurred—would be exceedingly offensive to me."

"I will keep well within the truth."

But that, of course, does not satisfy Challenger at all, who must finally announce, "The king of the ape-men was really a creature of great distinction—a most remarkably handsome and intelligent personality. Did it not strike you?" To this the youthful reporter agrees, and Challenger finally goes to sleep.<sup>7</sup>

The action on the plateau, whether confrontations with beasts or with ape-men, is treated with the combination of tension and good



humor that marks the rest of the narrative. In the end, this is the most enduring influence of *The Lost World*: that its author found a way to tell a fantasy story by inviting you to laugh at it and to believe it at the same time. It is a technique that has been used many times since, particularly in movies.

The first film version of *The Lost World* was released in 1925 and starred Wallace Beery. At a cost of a million dollars, it was the most expensive picture ever made up to that time. The dinosaurs were created by stop-motion animation. Subsequent versions of *The Lost World* were filmed in 1960, 1992, and 1998, and a popular television series of the same name began in 1999.

But the influence of Conan Doyle's storytelling techniques—to say nothing of his dinosaurs—was evident as early as 1933, with the release of *King Kong*. The combination of realism and parody, humor and suspense that Conan Doyle pioneered has proven to be a durable audience-pleaser. Modern audiences take these unlikely dramatic combinations for granted; if they think of them at all, they are inclined to view them as modern and ironic. But in fact these juxtapositions have a long history—going back to the misty South American plateau of Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World*.

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MICHAEL CRICHTON'S novels include *The Andromeda Strain*, *Congo*, *Jurassic Park*, *The Lost World*, and *Timeline*; he is also the creator of the television series *ER*. He lives in Los Angeles.

#### NOTES

1. All three stories are collected in *Round the Fire Stories* (first published in 1908; reprinted San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1991).
2. From "How I Write My Books," in *What I Think*, edited by H. Greenhough Smith (London: Newnes, 1927). This seminal essay is reprinted in various volumes, e.g., *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1993).
3. Cited in Daniel Stashower, *Teller of Tales: The Life of Arthur Conan Doyle* (New York: Henry Holt, 1999). Of the many biographies of Arthur Conan Doyle, detective novelist John Dickson Carr's *The Life of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949) was long



considered the best; it is now regarded as out of date and somewhat fictionalized. Among more modern texts, I recommend Owen Dudley Edwards's *The Quest for Sherlock Holmes* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1983), Martin Booth's *The Doctor and the Detective* (New York: St. Martin's, 1999), and Daniel Stashower's *Teller of Tales*. The latter two are of particular interest because they are written by novelists. Stashower extensively treats Conan Doyle's controversial interest in Spiritualism.

4. See also Michael Crichton, "Introduction," in Jules Verne, *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (Oxford, U.K.: Folio Society, 2001). The similarity to the authentic version of Verne's novel is particularly striking; unfortunately, a fraudulent text, extensively rewritten by nineteenth-century "translators" Griffith and Farran, is still being published and is still cited in certain academic works. (To tell the difference: Verne's novel has Professor Lidenbrock as its central character; the false version has "von Hardwigg.")
5. "The Adventure of the Three Students," in *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, edited by William S. Baring-Gould (New York: Clarkson Potter, 1967), vol. 2, p. 373. The Baring-Gould text is essential for anyone interested in Conan Doyle; it is also great fun.
6. "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle," in *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, vol. 1, p. 463.
7. Despite Challenger's concern for his own reputation, and despite his early public success, his character has largely faded from view. This is not for lack of the author's continued attention. Conan Doyle published a fantastic if unsatisfying Challenger story, *The Poison Belt*, the year after *The Lost World*, and some years later featured Challenger in the Spiritualist novel *Land of Mist* and in *The Maracot Deep and Other Stories*, the last volume Conan Doyle published before his death. The title story of the latter volume was subtitled "The Lost World under the Sea."

## A NOTE ON THE TEXT

*The Lost World* was first published serially in the *Strand Magazine* between April and November of 1912 and in the *Philadelphia Press Sunday Magazine* between March and July of 1912, and was first published in book form by Hodder and Stoughton in October of 1912. The Modern Library Paperback Classics edition has been set from the Hodder and Stoughton edition. The following typographical errors have been corrected:

- P. 16, L. 8: a comma has been inserted after "violent."
- P. 22, L. 32: "Catharine" has been replaced with "Catherine."
- P. 30, L. 24: a comma has been deleted after "vegetation."
- P. 33, L. 32: "cartilege" has been replaced with "cartilage."
- P. 34, L. 12: "cartilege" has been replaced with "cartilage."
- P. 57, L. 1: "take" has been replaced with "taken."
- P. 63, L. 18: "to to" has been replaced with "to."
- P. 81, L. 9: "tunne" has been replaced with "tunnel."
- P. 140 (illustration caption): "GINGHO" has been replaced with "GINGKO."
- P. 176, L. 1: "And" has been capitalized.
- P. 185, L. 13: "town" has been lowercased.
- P. 211, L. 16: a comma has been inserted after "box" and deleted after "he."

There with a crown of gold  
I light me up to see  
To the boy who will a man  
Or the one who will a boy





I have wrought my simple plan  
If I give one hour of joy  
To the boy who's half a man,  
Or the man who's half a boy.

Mr. E. D. Malone desires to state that both the illustrations for the  
book and the steel plates have been prepared and engraved by  
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tion. Mr. E. D. Malone would wish also to express his gratitude to  
Mr. Patrick J. Foster, of Kew-Forest, England, for the skill and  
sympathy with which he has worked up the sketches which were  
brought from South America, and also to Mr. W. Eastwood, of Lin-  
coln, Hampshire, for his valuable expert help in dealing with the  
photographs.

## FOREWORD

Mr. E. D. Malone desires to state that both the injunction for restraint and the libel action have been withdrawn unreservedly by Professor G. E. Challenger, who, being satisfied that no criticism or comment in this book is meant in an offensive spirit, has guaranteed that he will place no impediment to its publication and circulation. Mr. E. D. Malone would wish also to express his gratitude to Mr. Patrick L. Forbes, of Rosslyn Hill, Hampstead, for the skill and sympathy with which he has worked up the sketches which were brought from South America, and also to Mr. W. Ransford, of Elm Row, Hampstead, for his valuable expert help in dealing with the photographs.

## THE LOST WORLD

THERE ARE HEROISMS  
ALL ROUND US

Mr. Hargrave, however, really was the most reckless person upon earth—a truly fanatical devotee of a man, perfectly unscrupulous, but absolutely certain upon his own ability. If anything could have driven me from China, it would have been the thought of such a father-in-law. I am convinced that he really believed in his heart that I was going to die. I became three days a week for the pleasure of his company, and every evening to hear his views upon civilization—a view of things which he was in the way of being an expert.

For an hour or more, just before I returned to the camp, we talked things over, and had much to say about the future of the world, the depreciation of the rupee, and the true significance of exchange.

"Suppose," he cried, with arched eyebrows, "that all the men in the world were called up tomorrow, and had to face the greatest misadventure upon which, under our present conditions, would happen first?"

I gave the well-known answer, that I should be a ruined man, upon which he jumped from his chair, reproved me for my habitual irony, which made it impossible for him to discuss any reasonable



## CHAPTER I

# "THERE ARE HEROISMS ALL ROUND US"

Mr. Hungerton, her father, really was the most tactless person upon earth—a fluffy, feathery, untidy cockatoo of a man, perfectly good-natured, but absolutely centred upon his own silly self. If anything could have driven me from Gladys, it would have been the thought of such a father-in-law. I am convinced that he really believed in his heart that I came round to the Chestnuts three days a week for the pleasure of his company, and very especially to hear his views upon bimetallism—a subject upon which he was by way of being an authority.

For an hour or more that evening I listened to his monotonous chirrup about bad money driving out good, the token value of silver, the depreciation of the rupee, and the true standards of exchange.

"Suppose," he cried, with feeble violence, "that all the debts in the world were called up simultaneously and immediate payment insisted upon. What, under our present conditions, would happen then?"

I gave the self-evident answer that I should be a ruined man, upon which he jumped from his chair, reproved me for my habitual levity, which made it impossible for him to discuss any reasonable

subject in my presence, and bounced off out of the room to dress for a Masonic meeting.

At last I was alone with Gladys, and the moment of fate had come! All that evening I had felt like the soldier who awaits the signal which will send him on a forlorn hope, hope of victory and fear of repulse alternating in his mind.

She sat with that proud, delicate profile of hers outlined against the red curtain. How beautiful she was! And yet how aloof! We had been friends, quite good friends; but never could I get beyond the same comradeship which I might have established with one of my fellow-reporters upon the *Gazette*—perfectly frank, perfectly kindly, and perfectly unsexual. My instincts are all against a woman being too frank and at her ease with me. It is no compliment to a man. Where the real sex feeling begins, timidity and distrust are its companions, heritage from old wicked days when love and violence went often hand in hand. The bent head, the averted eye, the faltering voice, the wincing figure—these, and not the unshrinking gaze and frank reply, are the true signals of passion. Even in my short life I had learned as much as that—or had inherited it in that race-memory which we call instinct.

Gladys was full of every womanly quality. Some judged her to be cold and hard, but such a thought was treason. That delicately-bronzed skin, almost Oriental in its colouring, that raven hair, the large liquid eyes, the full but exquisite lips—all the stigmata of passion were there. But I was sadly conscious that up to now I had never found the secret of drawing it forth. However, come what might, I should have done with suspense and bring matters to a head to-night. She could but refuse me, and better be a repulsed lover than an accepted brother.

So far my thoughts had carried me, and I was about to break the long and uneasy silence when two critical dark eyes looked round at me, and the proud head was shaken in smiling reproof.

"I have a presentiment that you are going to propose, Ned. I do wish you wouldn't, for things are so much nicer as they are."

I drew my chair a little nearer.



"Now, how did you know that I was going to propose?" I asked, in genuine wonder.

"Don't women always know? Do you suppose any woman in the world was ever taken unawares? But, oh, Ned, our friendship has been so good and so pleasant! What a pity to spoil it! Don't you feel how splendid it is that a young man and a young woman should be able to talk face to face as we have talked?"

"I don't know, Gladys. You see, I can talk face to face with—with the station-master." I can't imagine how that official came into the matter, but in he trotted and set us both laughing. "That does not satisfy me in the least. I want my arms round you and your head on my breast, and, oh, Gladys, I want——"

She had sprung from her chair as she saw signs that I proposed to demonstrate some of my wants.

"You've spoiled everything, Ned," she said. "It's all so beautiful and natural until this kind of thing comes in. It is such a pity. Why can't you control yourself?"

"I didn't invent it," I pleaded. "It's nature. It's love."

"Well, perhaps if both love it may be different. I have never felt it."

"But you must—you, with your beauty, with your soul! Oh, Gladys, you were made for love! You must love!"

"One must wait till it comes."

"But why can't you love me, Gladys? Is it my appearance, or what?"

She did unbend a little. She put forward a hand—such a gracious, stooping attitude it was—and she pressed back my head. Then she looked into my upturned face with a very wistful smile.

"No, it isn't that," she said at last. "You're not a conceited boy by nature, and so I can safely tell you that it is not that. It's deeper."

"My character?"

She nodded severely.

"What can I do to mend it? Do sit down and talk it over. No, really I won't, if you'll only sit down!"

She looked at me with a wondering distrust which was much



more to my mind than her whole-hearted confidence. How primitive and bestial it looks when you put it down in black and white! And perhaps after all it is only a feeling peculiar to myself. Anyhow, she sat down.

"Now tell me what's amiss with me."

"I'm in love with somebody else," said she.

It was my turn to jump out of my chair.

"It's nobody in particular," she explained, laughing at the expression of my face, "only an ideal. I've never met the kind of man I mean."

"Tell me about him. What does he look like?"

"Oh, he might look very much like you."

"How dear of you to say that! Well, what is it that he does that I don't do? Just say the word—teetotal, vegetarian, aeronaut, Theosophist, Superman—I'll have a try at it, Gladys, if you will only give me an idea what would please you."

She laughed at the elasticity of my character. "Well, in the first place, I don't think my ideal would speak like that," said she. "He would be a harder, sterner man, not so ready to adopt himself to a silly girl's whim. But above all he must be a man who could do, who could act, who would look Death in the face and have no fear of him—a man of great deeds and strange experiences. It is never a man that I should love, but always the glories he had won, for they would be reflected upon me. Think of Richard Burton! When I read his wife's life of him I could so understand her love. And Lady Stanley! Did you ever read the wonderful last chapter of that book about her husband? These are the sort of men that a woman could worship with all her soul and yet be the greater, not the less, on account of her love, honoured by all the world as the inspirer of noble deeds."

She looked so beautiful in her enthusiasm that I nearly brought down the whole level of the interview. I gripped myself hard, and went on with the argument.

"We can't all be Stanleys and Burtons," said I. "Besides, we don't get the chance—at least, I never had the chance. If I did I should try to take it."

"But chances are all around you. It is the mark of the kind of man I mean that he makes his own chances. You can't hold him back. I've never met him, and yet I seem to know him so well. There are heroisms all round us waiting to be done. It's for men to do them, and for women to reserve their love as a reward for such men. Look at that young Frenchman who went up last week in a balloon. It was blowing a gale of wind, but because he was announced to go he insisted on starting. The wind blew him one thousand five hundred miles in twenty-four hours, and he fell in the middle of Russia. That was the kind of man I mean. Think of the woman he loved, and how other women must have envied her! That's what I should like—to be envied for my man."

"I'd have done it to please you."

"But you shouldn't do it merely to please me. You should do it because you can't help it, because it's natural to you—because the man in you is crying out for heroic expression. Now, when you described the Wigan coal explosion last month, could you not have gone down and helped those people, in spite of the choke-damp?"

"I did."

"You never said so."

"There was nothing worth bucking about."

"I didn't know." She looked at me with rather more interest. "That was brave of you."

"I had to. If you want to write good copy you must be where the things are."

"What a prosaic motive! It seems to take all the romance out of it. But still, whatever your motive, I am glad that you went down that mine." She gave me her hand, but with such sweetness and dignity that I could only stoop and kiss it. "I dare say I am merely a foolish woman with a young girl's fancies. And yet it is so real with me, so entirely part of my very self, that I cannot help acting upon it. If I marry, I do want to marry a famous man."

"Why should you not?" I cried. "It is women like you who brace men up. Give me a chance and see if I will take it! Besides, as you say, men ought to *make* their own chances, and not wait until they





## Introduction by MICHAEL CRICHTON

INCLUDES NEWLY COMMISSIONED ENDNOTES

In *The Lost World*, the first in a series of books to feature the bold Professor Challenger—a character many critics consider one of the most finely drawn in science fiction—Challenger and his party embark on an expedition to a remote Amazonian plateau where, as the good professor puts it, “the ordinary laws of Nature are suspended” and numerous prehistoric creatures and ape-men have survived. “Just as Sherlock Holmes set the standard—and in some sense established the formula—for the detective story . . . , so too has *The Lost World* set the standard and the formula for fantasy-adventure stories . . . ,” Michael Crichton writes in his Introduction. “The tone and techniques that Conan Doyle first refined in *The Lost World* have become standard narrative procedures in popular entertainment of the present day.”

MICHAEL CRICHTON'S novels include *The Andromeda Strain*, *Congo*, *Jurassic Park*, *The Lost World*, and *Timeline*; he was also the creator of the television series *ER*.

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