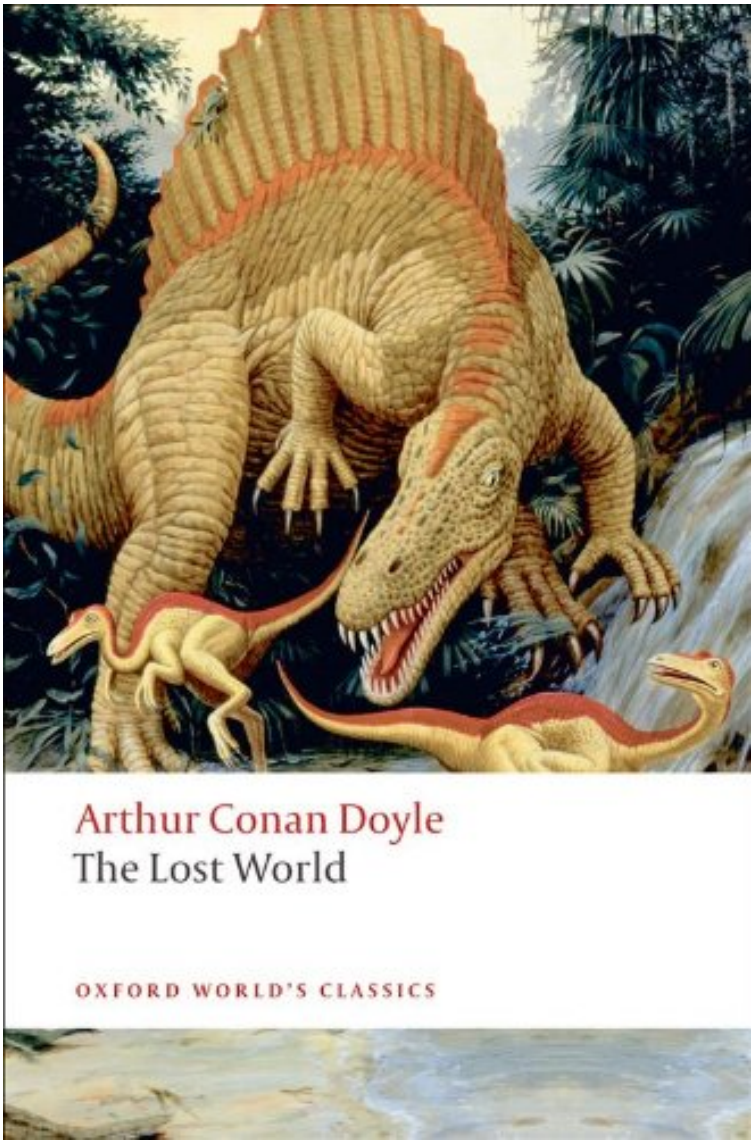
[Download free ebook] File size: 42.Mb

# The Lost World




Download Read Online

*Par Arthur Conan Doyle, Ian Duncan*
*ePub | *DOC | audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF*

Dtails sur le produit Rang parmi les ventes : #824156 dans eBooksPubli le: 1998-04-06Sorti le: 1998-04-06Format: Ebook Kindle

[Download free ebook] The Lost World

**Par Arthur Conan Doyle, Ian Duncan : The Lost World** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Lost World:

**Description :**

Prsentation de l'diteurA scientific expedition sets out to explore a plateau in South America that remains frozen in time from the days when prehistoric creatures roamed the Earth. This classic tale still excites the reader today just as dinosaurs continue to grip the popular imagination. - ;`the ordinary laws of Nature are suspended. The various checks with influence the struggle for existence in the world at large are all neutralized or altered. Creatures survive which would otherwise disappear.'Headed by the larger than life figure of Professor Challenger, a scientific expedition sets out to explore a plateau in South America that remains frozen in time from the days when dinosaurs roamed the Earth. Seemingly impossible to penetrate, this lost word holds great danger for the four men, whether from fiendish ape-men or terrifying prehistoric creatures. Arthur Conan Doyle's classic tale of adventure and discovery still excites the reader today, just as

dinosaurs continue to grip thepopular imagination. -.comForget the Michael Crichton book (and Spielberg movie) that copied the title. This is the original: the terror-adventure tale of The Lost World. Writing not long after dinosaurs first invaded the popular imagination, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle spins a yarn about an expedition of two scientists, a big-game hunter, and a journalist (the narrator) to a volcanic plateau high over the vast rain forest. The bickering of the professors (a type Doyle knew well from his medical training) serves as witty contrast to the wonders of flora and fauna they encounter, building toward a dramatic moonlit chase scene with a Tyrannosaurus Rex. And the character of Professor George E. Challenger is second only to Sherlock Holmes in the outrageous force of his personality: he's a big man with an even bigger ego, and if you can grit your teeth through his racist behavior toward Native Americans, he's a lot of fun. ExtraitChapter 1"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 are given. Look at Clive-just a clerk, and he conquered India. By George! I'll do something in the world yet!"She laughed at my sudden Irish effervescence."Why not?" she said. "You have everything a man could have-youth, health, strength, education, energy. I was sorry you spoke. And now I am glad-so glad-if it wakens these thoughts in you.""And if I do--?"Her hand rested like warm velvet upon my lips."Not another word, sir. You should have been at the office for evening duty half an hour ago, only I hadn't the heart to remind you. Some day, perhaps, when you have won your place in the world, we shall talk it over again."And so it was that I found myself that foggy November evening pursuing the Camberwell tram with my heart glowing within me, and with the eager determination that not another day should elapse before I should find some deed which was worthy of my lady. But who in all this wide world could ever have imagined the incredible shape which that deed was to take, or the strange steps by which I was led to the doing of it?And, after all, this opening chapter will seem to the reader to have nothing to do with my narrative; and yet there would have been no narrative without it, for it is only when a man goes out into the world with the thought that there are heroisms all round him, and with the desire all alive in his heart to follow any which may come within sight of him, that he breaks away as I did from the life he knows, and ventures forth into the wonderful mystic

twilight land where lie the great adventures and the great rewards. Behold me, then, at the office of the Daily Gazette, on the staff of which I was a most insignificant unit, with the settled determination that very night, if possible, to find the quest which should be worthy of my Gladys! Was it hardness, was it selfishness, that she should ask me to risk my life for her own glorification? Such thoughts may come to middle age, but never to ardent three-and-twenty in the fever of his first love.CHAPTER II"Try Your Luck withProfessor Challenger"I always liked McArdle, the crabbed old, round-backed, red-headed news editor, and I rather hoped that he liked me. Of course, Beaumont was the real boss, but he lived in the rarefied atmosphere of some Olympian height from which he could distinguish nothing smaller than an international crisis or a split in the Cabinet. Sometimes we saw him passing in lonely majesty to his inner sanctum with his eyes staring vaguely and his mind hovering over the Balkans or the Persian Gulf. He was above and beyond us. But McArdle was his first lieutenant, and it was he that we knew. The old man nodded as I entered the room, and he pushed his spectacles far up on his bald forehead."Well, Mr. Malone, from all I hear, you seem to be doing very well," said he, in his kindly Scotch accent.I thanked him."The colliery explosion was excellent. So was the Southwark fire. You have the true descreeptive touch. What did you want to see me about?""To ask a favour."He looked alarmed and his eyes shunned mine."Tut! tut! What is it?""Do you think, sir, that you could possibly send me on some mission for the paper? I would do my best to put it through and get you some good copy.""What sort of a meesion had you in your mind, Mr. Malone?""Well, sir, anything that had adventure and danger in it. I would really do my very best. The more difficult it was the better it would suit me.""You seem very anxious to lose your life.""To justify my life, sir.""Dear me, Mr. Malone, this is very-very exalted. I'm afraid the day for this sort of thing is rather past. The expense of the 'special meesion' business hardly justifies the result, and, of course, in any case it would only be an experienced man with a name that would command public confidence who would get such an order. The big blank spaces in the map are all being filled in, and there's no room for romance anywhere. Wait a bit, though!" he added, with a sudden smile upon his face. "Talking of the blank spaces of the map gives me an idea. What about exposing a fraud-a modern Munchausen-and making him rideeculous? You could show him up as the liar that he is! Eh, man, it would be fine. How does it appeal to you?"