

ULTIMATE ADVENTURES™



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Vol. 59, No. 11
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Inside this issue:

Chapter One of an exciting new story:

“Valley of the Thunder Lizards”

Professor Elliot Rafkin on:

***Flora and Fauna
of Eodon -***

The Savage Empire

KEITH BERDAK
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Wild Basin Expedition returns!

ULTIMATE

Adventures™

Volume 59, Number 11

November, 1990 Issue

Contents

<i>Editorial</i>	3
<i>Letters</i>	4
<i>Valley of the Thunder Lizards, Part One</i> by The Avatar	8
<i>Some Reflections on the Flora and Fauna of the Valley of Eodon</i> by Elliot Rafkin	24
<i>Weapons of the Tribes</i>	28
<i>Totems and Offerings</i>	32
<i>Wild Basin Expedition Returns</i> by Jimmy Malone	40

About the Cover:

The goddess Coatlicue (She Who Wears a Skirt of Snakes) — In Aztec mythology, the goddess of earth and fire, and mother of Quetzalcoatl. Artistic interpretation by Keith Berdak.

Ultimate Adventures

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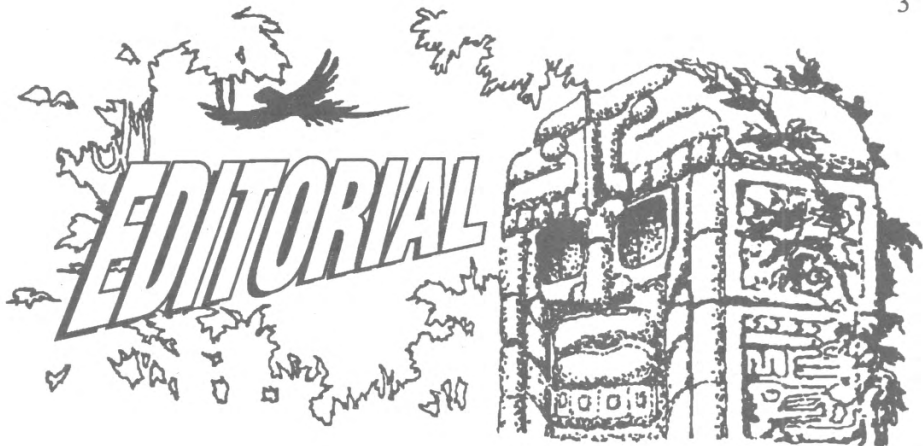
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Welcome to our special "Lost and Found" issue of **Ultimate Adventures**. No, we haven't gotten into the business of returning misplaced luggage to distraught owners: We're far more ambitious than that. Our "Lost and Found" are expeditions and entire cultures... once lost, now found again.

Leading off the issue is Chapter One of a new true-life adventure, "Valley of the Thunder Lizards," a story of action, danger, and mysticism.

Though it is not normally our habit to do so, we've deliberately concealed the identity of the author, who prefers to use the nom-de-plume of "The Avatar". What we *can* say about him is that he's a modern-day adventurer who prefers to keep his identity a secret; but we've heard of him for several years and can attest to his courage, resourcefulness, and truthfulness. Though not one piece of physical evidence can yet corroborate his fantastic story, his reputation, and the fact that he was accompanied on his adventures by our correspondent Jimmy Malone, lead us to accept his story as true.

In his story, certain details and names have been changed to protect the identities of interested parties. Other than these alterations, every word printed here is just as The Avatar wrote it.

Also in this issue is "Some Reflections on the Flora and Fauna of the Valley of Eodon," a companion piece to "Valley of the Thunder Lizards." Penned by first-time correspondent Professor Elliot Rafkin, this is

the premier installment in what we hope will be a regular series of articles on the amazing forms of plant and animal life to be found in that timelost valley.

Rounding out the issue is "Wild Basin Expedition Returns," by regular UA correspondent Jimmy Malone. The Wild Basin Expeditionary Force, thought lost for several months this summer, has emerged unharmed from the wilds of the untamed Hill Country, and Malone was on hand to interview the expedition members.

You'll find two special bonuses in this issue of **Ultimate Adventures**.

First, there's an artist's interpretation of the Valley of Eodon, drawn from descriptions which accompanied this issue's articles on the valley.

Second, as a concession to the growing portion of our readership which is computer-literate, we're providing "Valley of the Thunder Lizards" in disk form. This isn't just the text chapter found in the pages of this issue; it also includes amazing previews of what you can expect to see in future installments. A reference card accompanying the disks will let you know how to utilize them.

We hope you enjoy this issue's special features.

And always remember: Even in our rapidly-shrinking world, there is adventure to be had... and **Ultimate Adventures** will be there to cover it.

—Editor



I am writing in reference to Part Six of your excellent "Improvised Tools and Tactics in the Field" series by Mr. MacGregor [Volume 59, Number 7, July 1990 — Editor]. I'm well aware that Mr. MacGregor is a very busy man, serving as technical advisor to the TV show loosely based on his life, and commend him on finding the time to contribute to **Ultimate Adventures**.

However, Mr. MacGregor's aversion to lethal weaponry is well-known and has, I think, hurt the integrity of his article series. I'm talking here about *guns and bombs*. In my opinion, there's nothing like a well-placed charge of gunpowder to blow holes through impediments and unfriendlies, to startle the opposition, to knock things over, and to throw the enemy's plans out of kilter. Forget MacGregor's Swiss Army Knife: I'll vote for gunpowder as the all-around, all-time winner in the category of Versatile Tools to Have in the Field.

A little know-how and a lot of saltpeter (potassium nitrate), charcoal, and sulphur will go a long way in the field. Pack an appropriate charge into a sturdy pipe (even a reinforced shaft of bamboo), throw in some everyday rocks or rock salt, and you have an improvised deterrent worth its weight in gold. Pack it into a gourd or a pot, add a fuse (strips of cloth impregnated with gasoline, kerosene, wax or tar do wonders), and you

have a concussion bomb that will really take the steam out of a charging group of cannibals, muggers or dogma-wielding protesters.

I love the stuff. I really, really love the stuff. How about giving us an All-Gunpowder Issue?

J.D. Ripper
Tarzana, CA

*It isn't the policy of **Ultimate Adventures** to encourage the irresponsible manufacture or use of munitions. A word to our readers: Should you, by chance, meet Mr. Ripper or anyone who constantly talks like him, please get in contact with local mental health officials to report the person in question.*

— Editor

I was sorry to see Mr. MacGregor's "Improvised Tools" series draw to a close without talking about my personal favorite, the CO₂ fire extinguisher.

Though bulky and often inconvenient, the fire extinguisher is a very versatile tool to have, and is still commonly available in industrial areas... so long as halon remains relatively expensive, that is.

In addition to being a handy-dandy short-term smoke screen, the CO₂ extinguisher can be used to cool superheated surfaces (such as the floors and bulkheads of burning buildings and ships) to allow people to cross to safety, and can (in the right

TO THE EDITOR



hands) be swung with deadly effect.

I can personally attest to MacGregor's claim that you should always, *always* carry a light with you: A pocket flashlight, a book of matches, a cigarette lighter (even if you're a non-smoker), a brand, a torch — it doesn't matter whether you're in the backwoods or the big city, among friends or in a viper's nest, the ability to pull light "out of a hat" can save your life in extraordinary situations.

James Clark Wildman
New York, NY

The response to Mr. MacGregor's series has been very gratifying, and we'll continue to try to bring him aboard as a regular columnist... an even more pressing need now than before, as the next letter will show.

— Editor

I regret to inform you that my occasional collaborator, your regular contributor, Kent Lane, will not be able to provide you the "Modern Savages" series he had previously promised, owing to his unfortunate recent death.

As you will recall, Kent's thesis was that we were entering an era of new tribes and "savage" races — in the form of the street gangs of large American metropolises. His plan was to approach the study of these gangs in the manner of an anthropologist studying a hitherto-unknown culture, trying

to examine them with the perspective of a 19th-century researcher finding African or South American tribes for the first time.

Unfortunately, he didn't follow his plans to the letter. According to the police reports, at a gathering of the "tribe" he was attempting to study, he was offered a disgusting-looking quantity of meat and, not thinking, refused it. In his mind, he placed the offer of the food in the context of 20th-century America, as though it were an appetizer at a dinner party. But it was, in fact, a ritual offering from the leader of the gang in question, and his refusal mortally offended the "chief." Lane's severed head was found the next day. The rest of his body has not been found. Unkind rumors speculate that he may have ended up as a party offering for the next guest of the gang in question.

A word of advice to your readers: Even in the 20th century, it's not safe to presume that any familiar-looking custom from someone else's culture is the same as yours, even if he lives just down the block from you. Keep your eyes and ears open, refuse offerings only when you're sure what they mean, and find out as quickly as possible what is expected of you in return.

Anita Van Sloan
Houston, TX

Kent Lane was one of the best. He will be missed.

— Editor



VALLEY *of the* ***THUNDER LIZARDS***

Chapter One: Strange Departures

by "The Avatar"

The roar — a shrill bellow like metal dying in the grip of crushing machinery — broke the stillness of the forest, startling birds into flight, waking me from sleep.

But the forest was strange. Huge, thick trees like twisted palms blotted out the sunlight; giant ferns hungrily devoured what little light made it to the forest floor. The fleeing birds were misshapen, with short, stubby wings, long-plumed tails, beaks filled with teeth, and cold, reptilian eyes.

And I didn't know why I was here. I had no memory of coming to this place, of

ever having seen it before.

Quickly, I rose and took stock of the situation, of myself.

I was dressed for the occasion: I wore durable riding pants, a rugged safari-style shirt, and high boots which could withstand a lot of abuse in the field. On my belt was a sheathed Bowie knife, an old and trusted friend. And I was — I was —

That brought me up short. I didn't know *who* I was. My name and my reason for being here were utterly gone. There was a hard pocket of vacuum where my memory should be.

That distant scream sounded again, startling me out of my reverie. I began moving in that direction. Perhaps, where things were happening, I'd find some key to

the memories which were locked away from me.

Was this a dream? I pinched myself, and wished I hadn't; it smarted. I concentrated on my surroundings, and the level of detail I perceived didn't suggest a dream. I saw hundreds of light-slivers penetrating the green canopy above, I felt the oppressive, humid weight of the air, I smelled the myriad odors of a living jungle. If this was a dream, it was dangerously real.

Ahead, the jungle opened into a clearing. Branches and fronds above lengthened to block out the sun, except for one dazzling shaft of golden sunlight which struck down at the center of the glade. I moved forward, taking advantage of available cover, trying to spot whatever thing had made that terrible cry.

As I reached the edge of the glade, I spotted movement: A silhouette, a lithe form moving gracefully through the clearing, carrying a spear at the ready. The figure brushed past the shaft of light and was illuminated.

It was a young woman.

She was part of this place, no outsider like myself. Her abbreviated garments were cut from leopard-spotted furs. The head on her spear was stone. The coppery tone of her skin suggested the aboriginal tribes of the Americas. And her features —

She didn't have the pouty, perfect features preferred by modelling agencies, but oh, she was beautiful. Her brown eyes were alert, and there was intelligence and concentration in them. Her lips, slightly parted, carried no expression, but looked as though they were made to curl into a heart-rending, happy smile. Her dark hair was a wild, tumbling mass — a look natural and effortless for her, and which a thousand hair stylists could never duplicate. She had the balanced and confident step of an athlete. She was a jungle cat reincarnated as a woman.

I must have made some noise, for the woman turned, on guard, the shaft of light spilling across her. She turned her face in my direction. It was unlikely she could see

me, but her eyes seemed to fix on me. Like one arrested by the gaze of a panther, I froze.

Then that metallic scream sounded again — from just the other side of the glade. The woman whipped around to face it, and both she and I saw the source of the scream.

It lumbered out of the gloom, a silhouette as tall as a two-story house: A giant reptile moving on two massive legs. It was all in darkness, except for its teeth, a double row of serrated fangs picked out by a stray shaft of light.

It charged the woman, moving like a hungry express train. Not thinking, I did the same, hoping — what? To catch her up and outrun that eating machine on legs? To drag the reptile down and butcher it with my pitiful knife? I didn't know. I didn't think. I moved.

But in an instant, the light faded, except where I stood. Gone were the noise and humidity... all vanished as though someone killed the lights and struck the set in one second. I stopped, alert, trying to slow my breathing in spite of the adrenaline that had just jolted through me.

"The place is real."

The speaker was behind me: I whipped around, hand on my knife-hilt, but the speaker held no menace for me.

"The woman is real."

It was a man greying gracefully into middle age. His beard and mustache were neatly trimmed, his eyes intelligent. He wore colorful robes; on his head was a golden crown of simple design.

"The beast is real, but it is the least of their dangers."

I knew him — a memory of him began to surface in my mind. I trusted him. I struggled to speak, but no words emerged.

"Find out about the ruined moonstones, my friend. Your own stone will not take you there... but you must have it there."

Then the light faded. My eyes opened. I sat up in my own bed, in my own room. My name and memories were restored to me.



It *had* all been a dream. But as my memories came back to me, so did the truth: For the last several nights, I'd had that same dream, varying in no detail... except that this was the first time HE had appeared in the dream.

It was Lord British who had spoken to me at dream's end.

Lord British — there's little room here to talk about him. Suffice it to say that he is a man of wisdom and spiritual strength, master of a powerful brand of mysticism. He rules a remarkable land which few modern men will ever be lucky enough to see. From time to time, he calls on me for help. I have never failed him.

Nor would I now. His command was clear: "Find out about the ruined moonstones." I had a moonstone, brought with me from the place Lord British ruled; it was a smooth, polished black stone, much like a piece of onyx, possessing remarkable properties. But it was in no way ruined... so far as I knew.

Who *would* know? I've made some knowledgeable friends over the years. My thoughts immediately went to Professor Rafkin.

Elliot Rafkin is a man of too many skills and interests, too little time: He's spent his years learning as much as he could about all manner of sciences and studies. If he couldn't tell me what I needed to know, he could tell me who *would*.

I dressed quickly. With conscious irony, I chose the same clothes I'd been wearing in the dream, and slid my faithful Bowie knife into a boot-sheath. It was time to track down the source of my dreams; I might as well be as I appeared in my dreams.

* * *

When I first met Professor Rafkin, he was a teacher. He is now the curator of the local Museum of Natural History. And though he's eminently qualified for that job, he wasn't actually hired for his depth of

scientific knowledge.

Rafkin has a talent with people. His enthusiasm for science is so infectious that it drags others in its wake. He can speak with an entrepreneur for half an hour, on topics which could not interest the person less — shipwrecks off the coast of Turkey, recurrences of legends between Greeks and Aztecs, spectroscopic analyses of moon-rocks — and walk away with a generous check, an endowment to his museum. This isn't manipulation: He never intends to come away with money. But he does, again and again.

The museum has set him up with his own laboratory toward the back of the building. Rafkin's assistants handle the cataloguing of artifacts and arrangement of displays. The museum directors trot him out to meet important people, to attend luncheons, to lecture at universities; but the rest of the time, Rafkin does what he wants, and can usually be found puttering around his lab.

At the museum, I avoided the main entrance and walked to the unmarked side door which serves as Rafkin's private entrance. I pressed the signal button beside the door; when the answering buzz indicated the door was unlocked, I entered.

Now, you must understand: Any busy city street, with its crowds and traffic, is orderly compared to Rafkin's lab. In this room, on its tables, there's no telling what you'll find. I'm used to walking in and seeing scale models of long-buried cities, scientific equipment still in crates, stacks of books and dissertations, sparking machinery whose purpose I couldn't possibly figure out, and jars of preserved organs (it's unsettling to have the contents of mason jars staring at you while you're visiting an old friend). Today was no exception.

But Rafkin wasn't here. Instead, sitting in the room's one padded chair, was an angular young man. Dressed in a two-piece suit, its waist a little too high, its lapels a little too broad, he looked as though he sprang from a 1930s nostalgia show.

He jumped up, too full of energy, as I

entered. "Hi," he said, stuck out his hand; I shook it. "I'm Jimmy Malone. I imagine you're here to see Professor Rafkin."

"Yes, I —"

"He'll be back in just a second. Gone to talk to his mummy. Ha, ha. Don't knock yourself out laughing. Who're you?"

"I'm —"

He gave me a sudden, intense look. "I know who you are. Oh, what a file we have on you. Every so often, you disappear for days on end. Usually come back really tanned. Your neighbors are curious about all that, you know? Care to comment?" He fumbled around his jacket pocket and drew out a battered notebook.

I closed my eyes for a moment, sighed. "Great. A reporter. I come to visit my friend and get a reporter instead."

He grinned. "Rafkin occasionally throws me some interesting story ideas on slow news days. Like today. But, hey, let me give you the whole effect." From a nearby table, he scooped a hat. From inside it, he pulled a small card, tucked it in the hatband, then put the hat on. Inevitably, the card read "Press."

"Isn't that a little old-fashioned?"

His grin just got broader. "Some people have no respect for tradition."

Another voice, dry, sardonic, intruded: "Jimmy, you'll find that my friend has respect for things traditional... but lacks your affection for obnoxious stereotypes."

I turned; emerging from the doorway leading into the museum was Professor Rafkin. I had to grin at his statement. With his wire-framed glasses and muttonchop sideburns, he looked like another stereotype: The irrepressible Victorian-era scientist fabled in books and film. Fortunately, unlike Malone, he did prefer contemporary dress.

Rafkin turned to me: "As for you, what brings you here?"

I gave him an enigmatic smile. "A riddle. What's reptilian, stands about twenty feet tall, walks through the jungle, and devours young women?"

"Joke, or serious proposition?"

"Serious."

He thought about it for a moment.
 "Massive of build, or sleek for its size?"

"Massive."

He frowned. "Nothing, outside of Hollywood that is, matches your description. Remove the woman from your equation, and you're probably speaking of the *Tyrannosaurus Rex*, a Cretaceous-era carnosaur. In certain pitiable movies, of course, you can find dinosaurs running amok, gobbling up cavemen, including young women. In reality, they *did* miss each other by some 65 million years." He gave me an admonishing look. "As well you know."

"I need to speak to you... privately."

Rafkin glanced at Malone, who rolled his eyes toward heaven. "My boy," Rafkin said, "I *do* need a moment alone with my old friend. If you'd just go and look at our mummy collection for a few minutes, I'll tell you about how certain viruses can survive for thousands of years, remaining dormant in a mummy's bandages, becoming active when the tomb is opened... and contributing to all sorts of legends about a deadly 'Mummy's Curse.'"

Malone shot me a dirty look. "If I *must*."

"You must," Rafkin answered, sweetly.

When Malone had gone, I gave Rafkin the whole story: The dreams, the woman, the dinosaur, Lord British, the moonstone. I didn't tell him *all* the truth about Lord British — certainly, I withheld the extraordinary means by which I travel to British's distant realm. But I reported everything else in detail. At the end of my story, I showed him my moonstone.

Rafkin listened attentively through the tale, his expression contemplative. Then he took the moonstone from my hand, examined its lustrous surface, weighed it in his hand.

Finally, he said, "You know, I was wondering if you'd recently taken an especially hard knock to your head. But there's an unlikely coincidence in this 'moonstone' business. Let me show you." He handed me back my own stone, then went to one of the many shelves in the

laboratory.

He returned with a cardboard box. The box was filled with crumpled newspaper; the printing appeared to be in German. Rafkin plunged his hand into the box and groped around. "This was sent to me," he continued, "by a former student of mine. He worked until just recently for a German archaeologist named Spector."

From the box, he pulled a black stone and handed it to me.

In many ways, it resembled my moonstone. It was the same size and weight. But it was significantly different.

Where my stone was smooth and polished, his was cracked and faceted. It looked as though it had resembled mine at some time in the past, but then had been subjected to great heat. While my stone was like polished onyx, his was like charred obsidian: Lustrous in places, on a few flat spots, but elsewhere jagged. I felt that this was not just a moonstone in unpolished form; it was a moonstone which had been somehow *altered*.

Rafkin continued, "My ex-student says that Spector got this and others from a dig in Central America. Spector was examining the stones with his other assistant one night. The next morning, my student reported for work... and found both of them gone, the room stripped clean of furniture. Quite a mystery. My student had one stone; he sent it here in the hopes I could shed some light on the mystery. I haven't made the time to do so... before now."

"Would you? I'd appreciate it. I get the distinct impression that I'll continue having this dream until *something* is resolved. My dreams pointed me at the moonstone... and the moonstone has pointed me toward *you*."

He smiled. "I'll see if I can justify your faith. Let me fiddle with this stone. Make yourself at home."

With Professor Rafkin, "Make yourself at home" means "I'm going to ignore you for a few hours while I look into this." So I pocketed my own moonstone, settled into the professor's sole comfortable chair and relaxed...

... for about two minutes. Then, Jimmy Malone returned.

"So, let's talk about those disappearances of yours. What's the story? You CIA? Helping US-backed rebels somewhere?"

"Tell you what, Jimmy. You write whatever you like, put it in print, and I'll see you in court. That way you and my lawyers get to do all the work, and I can sleep."

He grinned like a shark invited to a feeding frenzy. "Oh, this *is* going to be fun. You've got all my journalistic instincts jumping. What say we —"

He was cut off by Rafkin: "What the devil..."

I stood to look, and Malone, doubtless feeling the sting of his 'journalistic instincts,' hastily plucked a pocket camera from his jacket and checked to make sure it was loaded.

Rafkin was backing away from the table where the cracked moonstone lay, wires and leads attached to it... the whole mess surrounded by a bright, translucent glow of energy.

"What did you *do*?" I demanded.

Rafkin shook his head, baffled, his gaze fixed on the table. "I was checking the material's heat and electrical conductivity. The first reading was all bolloxed up. You put a certain quantity of electrical energy into that stone, and *more* comes out — or so my gauge said. Then that glow sprang up..."

As he spoke, the glow around the stone swelled out like a bright balloon of energy across the equipment on the table.

Before I could intervene, Rafkin tentatively stretched out his hand to touch the field. There was a sound — a crack and sizzle, like the world's largest droplet of water skidding around on the world's largest frying pan — and Rafkin was thrown back, landing hard a dozen feet away.

I was at his side in a second, positioning myself between him and the still-swelling field. His eyes were closed, his breathing shallow. "Professor?" I gave him a quick shake, glanced back over my shoulder to check the position of the glow; it was still ten feet back, but growing steadily.



Abruptly, the lights in the room went out, and the glowing balloon disappeared. As my eyes adjusted to the darkness, I saw Malone standing by a metal box on the wall — the circuit-breaker. He'd thrown the master breaker. My opinion of the man, which had been hovering close to zero, climbed a couple of notches. I could hear querulous complaints from the museum's patrons through the door leading into the museum.

"Good job, Malone," I snapped. "Quick, get me his first-aid kit. It's on one of his bookcases." I gripped Rafkin's wrist, seeking the pulse, trying to gauge how seriously hurt the man might be.

Malone ran to the bookcases, began digging through them with a rough disregard of their contents, which would be sure to infuriate Rafkin. As a matter of fact, Rafkin's eyes snapped open at the sound of someone mistreating his possessions.

"Get your hands *OFF!* That's delicate equipment!" I'd never heard Rafkin so loud, and didn't expect him to be so vigorous after the tremendous jolt he'd taken, but the aging scientist sat up, pushed me aside, and stood up to harangue the newsman. "Your interest in my work does *not* give you license to manhandle my diagnostic tools. You —"

I broke in, "I told him to find your first aid kit. You've had a shock. Malone pulled the plug on your experiment —"

Rafkin's expression turned to one of puzzlement. "Oh? Then why is it still glowing?"

I turned to look, and he was right: The glow had reappeared around the stone. Now dim, it was gaining in brightness.

Malone stepped away from the bookcase. "That's impossible. I killed the power."

"Malone, Professor," I said, "get out of here. I have a seriously bad feeling about this —"

Malone, no fool, was moving before I finished. But he was still steps from the door when the floor shook, a rippling shock that threw him and Rafkin to the floor; I barely kept my feet.

The brightness on the table increased to blinding intensity, but didn't grow in size... not this time. Instead, something else appeared — something familiar to me, and yet strangely alien.

It appeared in the air above the center of the room: An eerie rectangle of blackness, half again the size of an ordinary door, hanging unsupported in midair. Rafkin's eyes opened wide, seemingly to the size of dinner plates; Malone, from his vantage point on the floor, was again shooting photographs.

"What on *earth...*" Rafkin breathed.

"A moongate," I answered, incredulous. "They're... holes, holes in space and time. I told you about Lord British — that's how I travel to where he is. But I've *never* seen one that looked like this. It's supposed to be blue, an inviting blue..."

I'd never seen one which *behaved* like this one, either. Instead of waiting where it appeared and then vanishing, this thing abruptly swelled in size, expanding in all directions, bloating out at all of us before we could react.

Rafkin turned to run; the black surface struck him. Malone got his hand on the door; the black surface crawled across him. I turned and made a dive for the exterior door; the blackness enveloped me in mid-leap.

* * *

I was hit with a nauseating falling sensation, as though I were tumbling out of a plane with a blindfold on instead of a parachute. I writhed, struck out in all directions: My hands touched nothing. For long seconds I was caught in the silent darkness of this mutant moongate... and then I hit ground.

I landed shoulder first on the lab floor, the pain from my mistimed impact causing my sight to grey out for a second. I could hear Rafkin gasping for breath, and Malone's exclamation: "Mother MacRae, what have I gotten into *now?*"

Then I could hear other things: Distant bird-calls. A breeze stirring the trees. Insect

chirpings. A faraway wolf-like howl...

My vision cleared, and I knew where I was.

I lay on the laboratory floor, just where I'd expected to fall. But, while I should have landed mere feet from the exterior wall, the lab floor now gave way to mulchy jungle floor. The wall was gone, vanished as if it had never existed.

I looked around, and the same was true in all directions. The walls and ceiling were all gone, replaced by a jungle vista. Above was a green canopy of branches. Humid air quickly rolled in to replace the air-conditioned coolness of Rafkin's lab.

The lab was otherwise intact: All its tables, bookcases, stools and cots were still in place, and the cracked moonstone was still wired up to Rafkin's diagnostic equipment... but it was now quiet and dark. Of the black moongate there was no sign.

Rafkin looked around wonderingly and glanced at me. "Um."

"Yes?"

"I don't suppose... this is the place of your dreams?"

I nodded. "It's very much like it. The trees and the ferns are all the same."

Malone rose, taking pictures by reflex. His expression suggested that he, not Rafkin, had been hit by an electrical jolt. His mouth worked, but nothing resembling words emerged.

Rafkin continued, delicately feeling his way along: "I'm not going to be an idiot about this. Delusion it may be, I prefer to proceed as though it were entirely real. And if it is entirely real, and possesses many of the same qualities as your dream, then it might... possess others."

"Logical," I answered, amused by his analysis.

"If it does indeed feature, um, something like the carnosaur of your dream... Well, I am in possession of a rifle, here in the lab. A collector's item, really; the museum just got it in the other day, and we were having trouble cataloguing it. I think perhaps we should dig it out." He moved toward one of the bookcases, changed his

mind, turned toward the other. "Not that it would necessarily —"

He was cut off by a distant scream. It wasn't a scream of fear, but of anger. Nor was it the scream of a human; it was animal. Shriller and more piercing than the bellow of my dreams, it was much like the hunting-call of a bird of prey.

Rafkin and I whipped around to stare in the direction of the scream; even the bemused Malone looked. Then, we heard another: Also high-pitched, also short and warlike, this was definitely the cry of a human. A woman or a young boy made that cry.

I was running before I realized it, running toward the source of that call, ignoring Rafkin's admonition: "Wait, wait, I'll find that — oh, the devil with it." I heard him running after me, and then heard Jimmy Malone start out after *him*.

In spite of the soft ground and thick undergrowth, I made good time, charging full-out through this alien jungle. I heard them again: The animal shrill, the human reply. These were the sounds of battle, of enemies in combat: I was sure of it.

And I was right. I skidded out of the oppressive jungle canopy and into sunlight. Momentarily blinded, I stopped to let my eyes adjust... and then beheld the source of the cries.

This was a broad clearing in the jungle, a stony shelf where the trees could not get a foothold. And over the center of it hovered... a *thing*, something I dimly remembered as belonging to the era of dinosaurs. It was like schoolbook illustrations of the pterodactyl, the flying reptile with the bone-crested, beaked head, the broad gliding wings... but this thing was *huge*.

I could barely estimate its wingspan: It was flapping so fast, trying to hover, that a precise measurement was impossible. It must have been over a hundred feet from wingtip to wingtip. It was a brownish-green, the color of some elephants, a color easy to remember as grey if you don't look too closely.

What was it hovering over? As I started



forward again, as I heard Rafkin and Malone skid to a stop just where I had stood, I got a good look at the creature's prey.

It was a woman, and not just any woman: It was the hide-clad beauty who had appeared in my dreams. *The woman of my dreams...* Even in this circumstance, that turn of phrase popped up in my mind, tingeing my thoughts with a touch of irony.

The woman held her spear as though she knew how to use it. She did, too. She uttered a scream, but it was no cry of fear: It

was a war-cry, a jungle *kiai*. She made a wicked-looking two-handed thrust at the flying thing's underside with her spear, stabbing it, forcing it to flap up further into the air.

Then she heard me pelting up from behind her. She spun involuntarily, focusing on what might be a new enemy.

I saw her face, the face of the woman who'd haunted my dreams. She saw mine, and her expression changed, from ferocity to confusion: I saw a flicker of recognition in



her eyes.

Then the flying thing swooped down, taking advantage of her momentary distraction. It slammed her to the ground, one talon closing upon her, sending her spear flying away.

I was now almost upon it, running too fast to stop. It lunged at me, its fierce beak aimed at the center of my chest.

By reflex — reflex which I've cultivated, reflex which has saved my life many times — I swept my arm in a fencer's circle

parry and deflected the beak away from me. The thing's bristly hide gashed my arm; I continued forward and slammed into it where its neck joined its powerful body.

I saw its vast wings rise up, ready for a powerful downward sweep: It was about to take off, to carry away its prey. Breathless from the impact, I locked my arms around the thing's neck. Perhaps my weight would keep it from lifting off, give the woman time to recover and slip free.

My grip was nearly broken when the

thing reared its head back and snapped at something — at Jimmy Malone. The reporter, no longer dazed, stopped just outside the thing's reach while it struck at him, then he tried to circle around it. It couldn't track him: There I was, holding its neck in a death-grip, hampering its movements. Jimmy darted in past its head and made a wild leap onto its broad, leathery back. "And it's Number 39, Malone, with the sack!" he shouted — but it was bravado. His eyes were wide and frightened.

"Hold on!" I shouted at him. "Maybe it can't lift!"

"Right!" came a voice, but not Jimmy's: It was Rafkin's, from underneath the leathery monster. I spared an incredulous look. There, holding the prostrate woman, trying to pull her free of the giant talon, was the professor, but he let her go to grab the talon — a more precarious hold than the one I had.

The creature writhed for a second, failed to throw any of us clear — though I was bruised, and Jimmy nearly went airborne. Then it swept its great sail-like wings down... and lifted clear of the earth.

It immediately dropped to ground again, and I could hear a thud and Rafkin's pained "Oof!" even over the beast's shrill cry. But its next downsweep lifted it a full eight feet into the air, and with each subsequent wingstroke it climbed higher.

I couldn't look around, and caught only glimpses of thick jungle all about. We'd failed to keep the beast on the ground, and there was no telling where it intended to fly us. Bizarre images of being dropped into a nest full of hungry, man-sized chicks crossed my mind. We didn't want this beast taking us to its home — better to land in terrain unfamiliar to both of us.

Though each stroke of the wings jolted me and nearly tossed Jimmy clear, I had to get on top, had to get one arm free. Cursing and straining, I tried once, twice, three times to swing my leg up over its neck, and succeeded on the third try.

Immediately I was banged across the head and nearly knocked out. The bony crest

on the beast's head came down as the beast looked up, and that crest nearly cracked my skull. I clung there for a moment as the pain in my head lessened.

Then, breathing a prayer, I tightened my grip with one arm, reached back with the other... put my hand on the hilt of my Bowie knife, still resting in its boot-sheath, and drew it out. A sudden jolt nearly cost me my grip on the hilt, but after a quick, heart-stopping juggle I managed to get a good hold on it.

I raised the blade for a death-stroke into the thing's neck, but a brief attack of sanity stayed my thrust. I couldn't *afford* a quick kill. We had to force the thing to *land*, not crash. Instead, awkward, I slashed blindly backwards, hoping to hit where the wings joined the body, to damage without killing.

I hit on my third try. As I drew my blade back bloody, the beast screamed again. I'd only *thought* it was loud before. Gripping its neck, I was blasted by the volume of its tortured scream, and the vibrations from that cry rattled every bone in my body. But still it flew, and I struck again and again, slashing at its shoulders and wings.

From moment to moment, I caught glimpses of the creature's underbody. The first few showed me only a desperately wide-eyed Professor Rafkin hanging on for dear life and an unconscious woman in the creature's right talon.

Then, after a few moments, the woman's eyes opened. I saw her fumble about her garments, saw her come up with a crude knife-blade of stone, saw her strike at the beast's underbelly.

She almost lost her life, right then. The beast opened its talon to drop its stinging prey and she slipped free. But Rafkin, showing surprising speed and strength, caught her one-handed, grabbing at her wrist as if it were the Nobel Prize.

I momentarily lost sight of that life-and-death scene. The beast shuddered and banked sharply to the right, losing altitude, nearly throwing me loose. This was a controlled dive... but the beast was descend-

ing, and was descending injured.

Another glance showed me that Rafkin now had both hands back on the talon, and had his stubby legs locked around the woman. She, in turn, eyes narrowed, was holding onto him with one hand, grasping the talon with the other. Their pose was awkward, but fractionally more secure than it had been a moment ago.

The beast screamed its bone-jarring cry again, and its rate of descent, already fearsome, became terrifying. Had it picked out a place to land? I couldn't see one ahead in the unbroken jungle. But whether it had a spot in mind or not, it was whipping in for a landing.

We tore through the top canopy of the jungle and were lashed by fronds and branches. A second later, I heard an impact, felt a shudder as the animal hit and smashed through a light branch.

Then, ahead, there was an opening in the jungle, another broad glade. Bursting into open air, the beast backwinged frantically, trying to slow its forward rate.

It did — only for a moment. I heard a cry of terror from behind me: Jimmy Malone, who'd managed to hold on all this time, was finally cast loose as the monster backwinged. A blue blur, he flew tumbling past my head and out of my sight.

Then there was a horrid tearing noise as something in the beast's wing — something I had been carving at — ripped and gave way. The beast screamed one last time; its forward momentum not checked, it crashed headlong into one of those giant palm-like trees.

This impact threw me loose, straight into another tree-trunk. Then I was falling: It felt like a hundred feet, but couldn't have been more than ten.

That was more than enough. When I hit, back first, all wind was driven from my body. I could do no more than gasp for air and futilely try to convince myself to ignore the pain and stand up.

From where I lay, I saw the beast's carcass draped over dozens of yards of jungle floor. It still twitched a little, but I



could see no voluntary movement. Then, the wing nearest me stirred, lifted awkwardly.

From underneath clambered the native woman of the copper skin. Behind her, moving painfully on hands and knees, was Rafkin. Both looked as though they'd been through hell... but both were alive. They looked at the swiftly-expiring flying beast, then glanced about in all directions — for me, for Jimmy.

She caught sight of me first, and came toward me, as skittish as a cautious but fatally-curious cat. Rafkin, on the other hand, saw Jimmy first — Jimmy, and what was following him.

I was amazed that Malone could even move, but he was *running*: He burst out from among the trees, limping, his clothes torn, his face cut, the flying beast's life-blood splattered all over him... and he was running as if to save his life. Hard on his heels were men: Copper-skinned men wearing garments of leopard-spotted furs, men with the stamp of this jungle on them.

As the woman reached me, cautiously extended a hand down to me, she glanced back and saw Jimmy. One quick, curt syllable escaped her lips, and the native men

came to a quick halt in instant obedience of her command. Jimmy, reaching Professor Rafkin, cast one look back, saw he was no longer being pursued, and drew for a moment to an exhausted halt.

My breath was coming back to me. I managed to grasp the woman's hand, let her aid me to my feet... just in time to see one last man enter the glade from the surrounding line of trees.

He was tall, caucasian, blond, young: A man of some height, a man with a lithe, athletic build. His garments were different from those of his companions; he wore tanned leather rather than fur, was booted rather than barefoot.

And his face was known to me. I had seen it countless times, accompanying me through the wildernesses of Britannia, the faraway land ruled by Lord British.

With breath still failing me, I managed to croak his name: "Shamino?"

He looked at me, startled. Recognition came to his eyes, but only faintly. He shook his head, a denial; but his expression was unconvinced, as if he only half-believed his denial. With his hand, he indicated himself: "Shamuru. Shamuru."

* * *

The campfire blazed up bright and cheerful, stark contrast to the nighttime darkness surrounding us.

I sat by the fire, by Jimmy, who was festooned with bandages torn from Rafkin's shirt. Nearby sat Rafkin, engaged in halting conversation with the natives named Shamuru and Aiela: Shamuru, the man who wore the face of my old friend Shamino, and Aiela, the woman for whom we'd taken that impromptu ride through the sky. Around us were perhaps twenty male warriors, jungle tribesmen who obeyed every word issued by Aiela.

I felt better after devouring a quantity of meat blackened on that fire. No, it wasn't meat from the reptile we'd killed — the Super-Pteranodon, as Rafkin dubbed it. The natives shunned that meat as inedible.

They'd caught many four-legged plant-eaters, creatures which, except for being hoofless, looked like a cross between a tiny horse and a small deer. Rafkin had taken one look at the brace of beasts caught by the tribesmen, distractedly declared "Hyracotherium," and turned back to his discussion.

Jimmy was scribbling down an account of everything that had happened since he'd reached the museum. Fortunately for him, his battered pocket notebook held many blank pages; I had a feeling he'd see them all filled up before we were done here.

These natives treated us like honored guests. They were impressed with the way we'd killed the Super-Pteranodon, were baffled by our clothes and language, and were grateful that we'd saved Aiela, obviously a person of importance to them.

Rafkin, to his delight, understood certain words they were speaking, declaring that they spoke a variant of a Central American dialect he knew. While darkness gathered, he sat with Aiela and Shamuru, and the others set up camp and built a fire.

Rafkin eventually moved back over to us; Shamuru and Aiela, too, drifted over. Nervously, Rafkin pulled off his glasses and rubbed them with a slightly-less-than-filthy shirt-tail.

"Well, I've learned a few things," he admitted. "I've puzzled out a bit more of their dialect and have a slightly more informed idea about what is happening."

"I, for one, am not at all curious," Jimmy deadpanned. "In other words: Tell me, or you'll end up flying around on another one of those pteranopters."

Rafkin smiled. "This place is some sort of isolated valley. These natives call it Eodon. It appears to be inhabited by a loose grouping of pre-agrarian tribes. I understand that there is one 'village built of stone' where the people farm, which might indicate a more sophisticated culture than that possessed by our friends here.

"Anyway: Most of these people are members of the Kurak tribe. The young lady whom we assisted is Aiela, the daughter of

their chief... in effect, their princess.”

I glanced up at Aiela, found that she was already staring at me. Though startled by the sudden contact, she did not turn away.

Rafkin continued, “The other fellow, Shamuru, is a member of an upland clan called the Barako. He wasn’t born among them. They found him wandering in the mountains, amnesiac, a few months ago. The name you keep saying, ‘Shamino’ — it agitates him, but he cannot remember it. He does say that he knows you from somewhere, and that he has never seen you before.”

I grinned. “That doesn’t exactly make sense, does it?”

“Rather. It obviously confuses *him*.

“Anyway, Aiela says she has had several dreams lately, dreams where she has been in terrible danger from some sort of insect-like creature, when who should appear but a mighty strange warrior... oops, let me correct that, a strange, mighty warrior... who saves her. A warrior with your face.

“At any rate, Aiela appears to be accorded special warrior status within her

tribe, and hunts on her own. She says that yesterday she was ambushed by warriors from another tribe, the Urali, and that their chieftain — a strongman she calls Darden the Huge — decided she was the woman for him.

“She managed to get clear of Darden and took a long route to get back to her village without meeting him again. That’s when she was attacked by the creature I’m calling a Super-Pteranodon. A marvelous species. Several times as large as Quetzalcoatlus. Fully articulated wings, not just a glider.” He shook his head wonderingly.

“You know the rest. Shamuru, who’s a friend of the tribe, and several of her tribesmen have been searching for her since yesterday.”

His voice became more animated. “According to these people, the Super-Pteranodon is only the tip of a primordial iceberg. They talk about many enormous reptiles to be found in this valley. I *have* to see them. It looks as though we’re dealing with multiple cases of extraordinary survival of species.”

Rafkin’s expression finally became



more serious. "Now... are you going to confide in me and tell me how you think you know this Shamuru's face?"

I glanced around. Aiela was intent; she continued to study me, curiosity and wonder in her eyes. Shamuru appeared to be impassive, but I could see from his eyes that he was distressed. Jimmy never met my eyes; he was scribbling as fast as he could, trying to keep up with all details being discussed.

I sighed, regretting the necessity of discussing this with Malone around, but gave in. There was no telling when possession of all the facts might save a life... perhaps even mine.

"I told you that I occasionally do favors for a foreign dignitary who goes by the name Lord British. That's true. I sort of led you to believe that he was European, that his name was a code-name, but that's *not* true.

"British lives in a place — a *world* — he calls Britannia. I like to think of it as a distant reflection of our own world. I get the impression, from his choice of names and other clues, that he's had some contact with our world, but I've never gotten the whole story out of him.

"I've been to Britannia several times, always traveling there in a moongate, a portal. What you saw in your lab today was a sort of moongate... but a very twisted and alien one. I've never seen one like that before, and don't know why it behaved like it did, or why it brought us *here* instead of to Britannia.

"Shamino, who's a dead ringer for Shamuru here, is a friend of mine in Britannia. It's disturbing to see him here, like this, minus his memory... assuming that Shamuru *is* Shamino, that is."

Shamuru's eyes flickered every time his name, or rather *either* of his names, was spoken.

"There's some corroboration in things he's said," Rafkin admitted reluctantly. "But it's still a... peculiar story."

"It's even stranger if you've lived through it. Listen, I'm *not* asking you to believe it. It's probably better if you just

forget you ever heard it. But you asked, and you deserve the truth. Later on, if you decide to institutionalize me, just give me a head start." I grinned. "They'll never find me."

I glanced again at Aiela, caught her steady gaze. "Uhhh, Professor... In the time you've been talking to these people, have you figured out: Did I assume some sort of responsibility for Aiela, by helping to save her?"

Rafkin grinned, quickly suppressed it when I glanced back at him. "Are you afraid of this, or hoping for it? Don't answer that. A rhetorical barb. No, I don't get the impression that obligation of that sort is one of their customs. She *has* repeatedly expressed her gratitude to us, particularly to you. And she's very curious about you. I have a feeling that you'll need to take a crash course in their language... if ever you're to speak with her alone, which is obviously what she wants."

I nodded. "Tell her —"

I was interrupted by a strange, chirping cry from the forest. Two warriors stood, and one raised a hand to his lips and issued a similar cry. Others whispered quickly to one another; Rafkin spoke briefly with Aiela and turned back to us.

"One of the scouts," the professor informed us. "He's alerting us about a beast. Something they call a Shield-Back. I think I have to see this."

He rose, and again Aiela spoke with him. Disappointed, he said, "She says it's a leaf-eater and that it won't come near a fire or men."

"Poor thing," Jimmy intoned. "Maybe Santa will stick a dinosaur in your Christmas stocking."

Rafkin glared, Jimmy laughed... and a native out in the jungle screamed.

In an instant, we were all standing, the natives catching up their spears and bows.

Out just beyond the edge of the firelight, there was a *whuff, whuff* noise — like a bull breathing impossibly loudly. Then, our phantom "bull" moved into the light.

This "Shield-Back" was a reptile, long,



broad, and flat, with a knobby back, something like the horned toads of the southwest... but *enormous*. This thing was larger than a luxury car. It was no fake, no special effect; it was *alive*, and lumbering toward us.

As it passed further into the light, we caught sight of the things trailing from its mouth and across its back. They were something like vines, something like ropes. They were, in fact —

“Reins,” Raffin breathed.

He was right. On its back was the silhouette of a man, a huge, broad-shouldered man the size of an NFL defensive lineman.

Aiela shouted words of command, and I understood one: “Darden!” Darden her thwarted suitor, Darden the enemy chief.

Darden yelled a reply, a basso-profundo roar, and was answered by more war-cries from the forest. There were more men, Darden’s men, in the jungle; they moved in quickly, forming a line in front of the lizard he rode.

Aiela’s men wavered, dread in their eyes, dread of the kind of man who could command a giant reptile. That kind of dread is fatal, and I knew it. Before my common sense could catch up to my instincts, I grabbed a spear from an inert Kurak warrior and shoved my way through the Kurak line, shouting a wild Britannian war-cry.

The attackers expected an easy victory; perhaps they’d counted on the Kuraks being afraid of the reptile and its rider. I charged up to them before they realized they were wrong. The first warrior I faced tried a simple thrust; I slid his point out of line and put my own into him, a brutal thrust into the center of his chest. He hit the ground hard.

But these jungle men recover fast. I was surrounded by a dozen hard-eyed men with spears. I went on the defensive, parried one thrust, blocked another and kicked its wielder hard on the side of the knee. I had the satisfaction of hearing that joint crack, seeing the warrior collapse with a cry of pain.

Then the Kuraks woke up. A shower of

Kurak arrows rained into my enemies. Darden's warriors fell back. Aiela's spearmen came up on either side of me, forming a line, while Aiela's archers prepared another volley.

Had it been just their warriors against ours, we could have scattered them back into the jungle. But while I took down two warriors and was joined by Aiela's men, the musclebound monster named Darden was bringing his riding-lizard up to speed.

The reptile hit its stride. Darden yanked on its reins, harshly pulling its head toward us. The giant lizard slewed over in our direction, came within twenty feet of us, fifteen...

There was no way Aiela's warriors could hold the line against four tons of charging meat and bone. I opened my mouth to call for the line to break, to surround the Shield-Back and fall on it from the side, but I never got the chance.

I saw the hurtling spear out of the corner of my eye. I tried to twist out of its way, but was only partially successful; the stone head grazed my temple, stunning me, staggering me back.

I could only watch as the reptile charged forward, still picking up speed, slamming through the line of Kurak warriors, scattering and crushing them. I was still dizzy; my legs wouldn't move. I watched helplessly as Darden jerked its head

around to orient on me. One step closer, two; its head was almost upon me; I saw the cold, amused laughter in the eyes of Darden, saw his handsome features twisted in a broad smile of victory...

But I didn't see the blow that put me down. The lizard's leg must have clipped me; all I know is that I flew back, smashed once again against a tree, slumped down at its base.

I should have passed out then. I might as well have been unconscious: I couldn't move, couldn't speak, couldn't even tell if I were still breathing. But I could still *see*.

I saw Darden and his mount draw abreast of Aiela where she stood, her bow at the ready, aiming straight and true at Darden's throat. I knew he was a dead man. But I was wrong.

Behind Aiela crept up another stealthy Urali warrior. He swung the shaft of his spear against her head; she collapsed and her shot went wild. I couldn't see Darden's grin then, but knew he still wore it, that it broadened and became even more triumphant as his warrior handed Aiela's inert form up to him.

My last sight was of the Shield-Back and its precious cargo lumbering out into the night. Then darkness closed down on me. I fell into unconsciousness as deep and dark as a well.

Next Issue — Chapter Two: Strange Reunions

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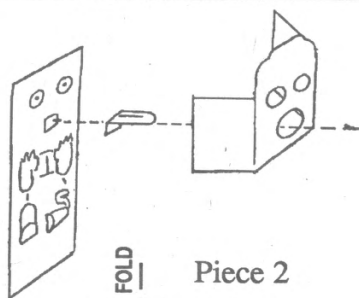


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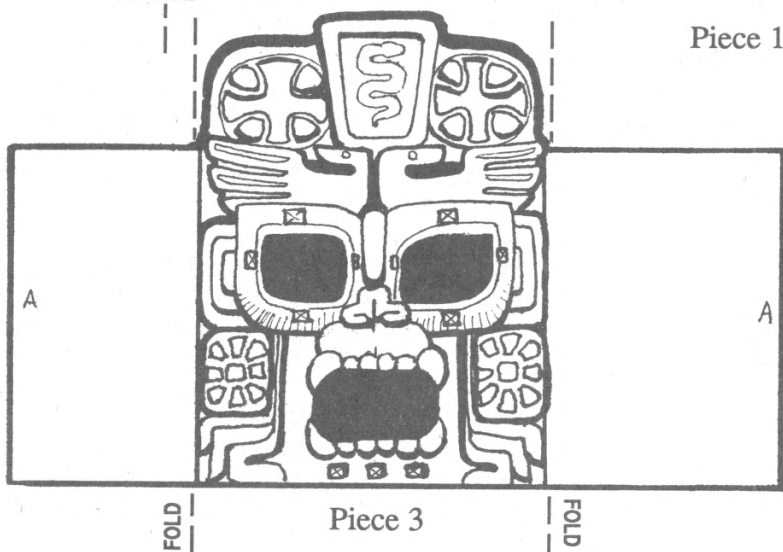
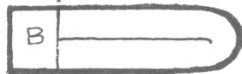
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WIGGLE THE MASK TO MAKE THE GOLDEN JAGUAR ROLL HIS EYES!



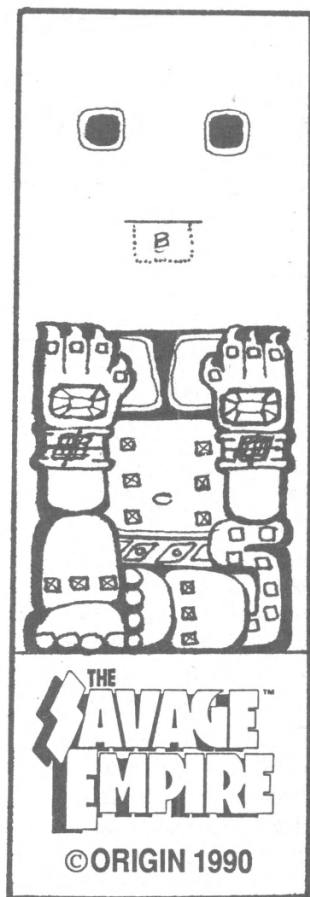
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COME REFLECTIONS

on the
Flora and Fauna
of the Valley of Eodon



by Professor Elliot
Archimedes Rafkin

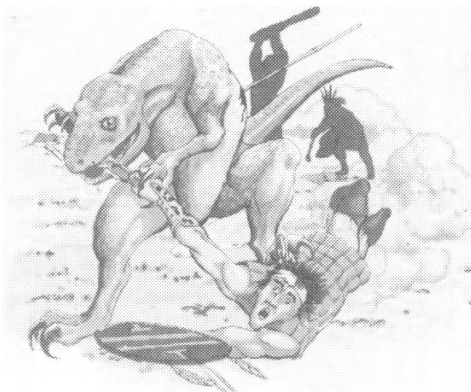
Editor's Note: The following article was transcribed from handwritten notes provided by Professor Rafkin, who elected to stay behind in the Valley of Eodon.

It is a trifle distressing to realize that future generations will remember one's name more for a stroke of extraordinary luck than for personal accomplishments. That, I think, is my own situation. Though I never had reason to doubt my own qualifications, it is inevitable that the scientific community will eventually regard me only as the chronicler of the remarkable Valley of Eodon — as a Bosworth to a primordial Johnson. And it was sheerest luck, not scientific inquiry or archaeological exploration, that led me to find the valley.

My good friend Jimmy Malone informs me that he will be arranging for the story of our discovery of the valley to be published before these notes see the light of day, and that I need not fill the few remaining pages of his battered notebook with another account of that story. So I shall instead provide a summary overview of the valley itself — the world's first look at this remarkable setting. It is my hope that in the future I will be able to send out more thorough essays on the topic.

The Valley of Eodon is, to a scientist, rather akin to a time capsule which was filled with amazing treasures and crucial information... but flaws in its construction allowed moisture to seep in and corrupt the wondrous items within. As labored as this simile may be, it is indeed representative of the facts. In these few pages remaining to me, I will look at some of these "treasures" make hypotheses about their origins and the changes they have undergone.

The People of Eodon



The people living in the Valley of Eodon, with an important exception, are pre-agrarian, untouched by the Agricultural Revolution. To the readers of Mr. Malone's more general-interest publication, this means that they do not grow food; they are hunter-gatherers, living on the meat of the beasts they hunt, and supplementing their diets by gathering plants, nuts, and fruits which grow wild in the wilderness. The exception to that generalization is the Nahuatla race, who are somewhat more advanced than the other tribal groupings.

By and large, the peoples of the valley live in small tribal groupings. Though the tribes appear to have originated in very disparate parts of the globe, they have apparently assimilated to a significant degree, and now most tribes are organized along very similar fashions.

Each tribe is led by a hereditary chieftain, who acts as the dictator of tribal policy, adjudicator of disputes among tribe

members, war-leader in the frequent clashes between tribes, and representative of the tribes to all visitors and dignitaries.

Also very crucial to the tribe's chain of command is its shaman, or spiritual leader. The tribal shamans conduct important rituals which divine the wishes of certain "nature spirits" revered by the people of the valley... but I will address that topic momentarily. The shaman also acts as advisor to the chieftain, performs ceremonies of "marriage" (i.e., ceremonies in which the nature-spirits are invoked to recognize the validity of a nuptial bond), and often acts as principal healer to the tribal unit.

Below the tier to which the chieftain and shaman belong, the precise hierarchy of the tribe is somewhat difficult for an outsider to discern. Warriors are accorded a special status; so are tribesmen who develop a bond or special affinity for the beasts of the jungle, such as jaguars. Different tribes have different approaches to the rights of their female members. Some are distinctly patriarchal, with women distinctly second-class citizens; at least one is definitely matriarchal; and many others seem to have traditions of women in subordinate positions while yet allowing certain capable women to attain the skills and status of warriors.

A certain amount of assimilation has taken place among the tribes over the years; there has been a good deal of interbreeding between the tribal units, so that none is precisely a pure descendant of a specific outer-world culture. However, many of the tribes have retained distinctive racial and cultural features over the centuries, and it is fascinating to study them and speculate on their origins.

Before progressing on to a look at the individual tribes, let me say that the thing which most struck me about these humans — the thing which I should have anticipated, and yet which still gripped me when I perceived it — is the manner in which they have adapted to their wild environment. In a land replete with prehistoric reptiles and other beasts of antiquity, the cultures, iconography, and mythology of the peoples

have adapted to reflect these surroundings.

It is not uncommon, for example, to see a tribal chieftain whose elaborate headdress is a hood fashioned from the skull and beak of a large pteranodon... a wooden tribal border marker rather like a "totem pole" carved with the features of carnivorous dinosaurs... warriors carting about shields fashioned from the skin of reptiles thought extinct for more than 65 million years... cave-paintings showing human warriors locked in deadly combat with the mighty triceratops or ankylosaurus... Scenes like these, commonplace and invisible to the natives, are amazing and delightful to the anthropologist. I hope to be able to study them for many years to come, and that I will be joined by those even more qualified to such study.

All humans in the valley speak a common language, a mother tongue which appears to have been blended from several sources, principally the *nahuatl* tongue of central America. Examinations of their individual dialects, however, sometimes illuminate the tribes' true origins.

Nahuatl



There is no doubt in my mind that the Nahuatl people are related to the outer-world Aztec culture. Indeed, it is my belief that the Nahuatl and the Aztecs both descended from a single culture, and that



members of that culture were transported to the Valley of Eodon at a time in the ancient past. The very word "Nahuatl," in fact, refers to the language spoken by the Aztecs.

The Nahuatla, like their outer-world counterparts, build massive pyramids, temple buildings, and homes in stone. They work gold. They have a certain reverence for the sun, but they do not anthropomorphize it, or directly worship it: Like the other valley natives, and unlike the Aztecs, they withhold their special reverence for the valley's nature-spirits. However, Nahuatla legend and the behavior of a recent Nahuatla leader make me believe that ancient customs of human sacrifice were once part of the Nahuatla culture.

They are somewhat more technologically advanced than the other tribes, working copper and bronze for ornamentation... although tradition has apparently kept them to the obsidian standard for their weaponry. And they are distinctly more agrarian than the other tribes, growing and harvesting much of their food, hunting and gathering the rest.

Yolaru

The Yolaru are a black tribe dwelling in some of the deepest jungles of the valley of Eodon. Their antecedents are definitely African, but I have been unable to pin down even an approximation of the era they left their homeland and came to the Valley of Eodon.

I had the fortunate opportunity to live among the Yolaru for a time, and found them to be among the most civilized of the human tribes of the valley — civilized not in terms of technological advancement, but in the sophistication of their tribal laws and the tolerance in which they hold the beliefs of other tribes.

Their dialect of the common valley language contains elements of what I believe to be Bantu dialects. Their choices of weapons include the to-be-expected spear and knife, but the Yolaru warriors also had a certain affection for large wooden club-like maces featuring wicked-looking obsidian spikes.

Barako

I had very little opportunity to study the Barako, a northern tribe of the valley. They



are mountain-dwellers, fond of high craggy places and heavy wrapped-fur garments; a Barako warrior is considered most noble when his garments come from the fur of the ferocious cave bear common in the Barako mountains. No fools, they do most of their hunting with the simple bow, and appear to use their heavy wooden clubs only in times of emergency.

The Barako are a matriarchal society, their rulership being handed down from queen to queen. Though other tribes of the valley appear to have had independent queens, the Barako are the only tribe to whom this appears to be the norm.

A caucasian race, the Barako are insular (they are among the most isolated tribes to be found in the valley) and aggressive, but appear to form strong family bonds. Their dialect of the common language appears to contain more proto-Indo-European elements than many of the other dialects; it is therefore likely that they hail originally from prehistoric Europe.

Barrab

An interesting race, the Barrab live atop a mesa on a distant corner of the lost valley. Their skin tone is somewhat yellow, and their eyes feature slight epicanthic folds; these racial factors, plus some unusual structures in their dialect of the common valley language, lead me to conclude that they originated in eastern or northeastern

Asia of many centuries ago.

The Barrab live at a higher altitude than most of the valley residents. Their rulership combines both secular and mystical interests: Their chieftain is always their shaman. They are expert climbers, and my friends who have observed them in warlike situations say they prefer to climb to high altitudes and rain spears down on their prey, often utilizing the atl-atl, or spear-thrower.

They are a very polite people, as cultured in many ways as the Yolaru, but not as outgoing or tolerant of outsiders.

Disquiqui

Though I can detect practically no evidence of it in their dialect, the Disquiqui



bear certain cultural traits in common with the peoples of the South Seas. Considered irresponsible and annoying by many of the other tribes, the Disquiqui tend to be happy, musical, and rather notoriously amorous.

However, in spite of their behavior, which tends to range from the humorous to the bizarre to the celebratory, I always recall how and where Captain Cook died, and keep my wits about me when dealing with the Disquiqui.

Jukari

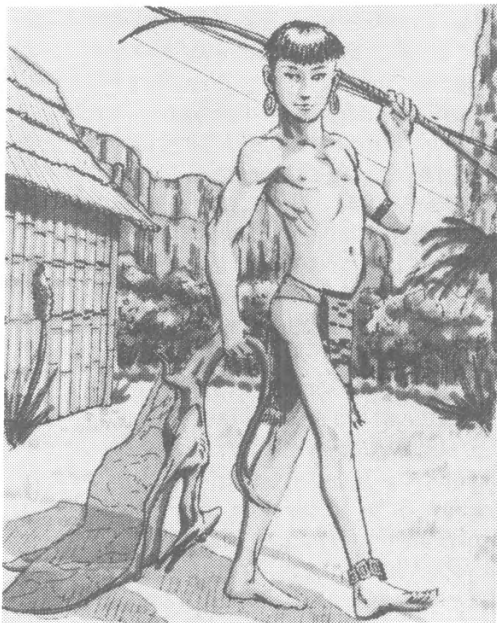
A reverent and hard-living race, the Jukari occupy lands in the vicinity of the valley's active volcanoes. Their lives seemed to be dedicated to a few simple tasks: Finding enough to eat in the harsh, unpromising volcanologists' paradise they occupied; placating the nature-spirits whom

they felt cause the earth to rumble and the mountains to "spit fire;" and coping in a warlike fashion with the nearby tribe called the Haakur.

The Jukari are amongst the most primitive of the valley's tribes, and their dialect of the languages gives me few clues as to their outer-world origin.

Kurak

The Kurak were one of the more interesting cultures of the lost valley. Evidently descended from certain South



American Indian tribes (or so their dialect attests), they appear to have profited more from interaction with other tribes than their fellows. Their legends make it clear that they have frequently accepted exiles into their ranks, particularly exiled warriors and runaways from the other tribes. This has certainly profited their gene pool and given them a reputation as the valley's "melting-pot" tribe.

A tribe of the deep jungles, the Kuraks revere the jaguars, and some of the tribesmen actually appear to develop emotional bonds with the wild felines.

The Kuraks are famed in the valley as stealthy warriors, as very accurate spearmen



WEAPONS OF THE TRIBES

Just as every tribe has a hierarchy — with the chief at the top, followed by the shaman, the chief's children, senior warriors, and so on — the natives of the Valley of Eodon believe that their weapons have a pecking order, too.

Part of this belief is practical: A spear does more damage than a crude stone dagger, and so the spear is considered a "greater warrior" than the dagger. Part of the belief is spiritual; certain weapons are believed to be better-attuned to the spirits, and thus are superior weapons.

Among the natives, the Nahuatl obsidian-edged sword is considered the "chief" of weapons, with the widely-used atl-atl, or spear-thrower, as the well-respected "shaman." Beyond that, in descending order of worth, we have the large, two-handed club favored by the strongest natives; the hand-thrown spear; the stone axe used by most native warriors; the primitive short-bow used by nearly every tribe for both warfare and hunting; the solid wood club; the rock hammer, a single-handed club; the scalpel-sharp Nahuatl obsidian knife, more practical as a tool than a weapon; and, finally, the relatively rare boomerang.

The blowgun, a weapon in use by all

the tribes but especially common among the feared Urali thugs, is the "outcast," having no place in this hierarchy—the darts alone are far too weak to be a weapon, but when coated with poison they become an instrument of death far too powerful for use under all but the most dire of circumstances.

The armor and shields of the Valley likewise followed a pecking order. Shields made from Stegosaurus plates are the "chief" form of protection.

Armor and shields made of leather outrank those made from tree bark, but either material offers greater protection than cloth.

With the advent of modern-day men to the Valley of Eodon, the natives' weaponry has been challenged by the products of twentieth-century science. The high-powered hunting rifle was the most powerful weapon in the entire valley, bar none. Even the crude but serviceable muskets and grenades I fashioned from indigenous materials were far superior to anything the natives had to offer. The hefty fireman's axe from my displaced laboratory proved to be a good but not outstanding weapon; its primary forte was in the felling of the largest and toughest trees in the valley, a challenge to which no native tool could rise. Likewise, the Avatar's steel Bowie knife was only slightly superior to the natives' razor-sharp stone knives.



Nahuatl Obsidian-Edged Sword



Atl-Atl (Spear-Thrower) with Spear

and bowmen. Though they have a history of warfare with the Yolaru, they are much like that tribe in many ways.

Pindiuro

It seems evident that the Pindiuro have a distant relationship with one or more North American Indian tribes, particularly plains-dwelling tribes. Some dialectal phrases reminiscent of the Siouan language group, and their nomadic, plains-oriented lifestyle point to this origin.

The Pindiuro appear to feel the closest kinship with the *eohippus*, or “dawn horse,” ancestor of the modern equines; this mammal, as large as a medium-sized dog, is very numerous on the Pindiuro plains. The Pindiuro hunt and trap the animal for its meat and fur, and keep some as pets.

Interestingly, though the Pindiuro appear to be patriarchal in structure, their legends cite many independent queens, and the current ruler of the tribe at the time of this writing is a queen.

Urali

Among the most exasperating peoples of the valley — exasperating in both a personal and academic sense — are the Urali tribe. It would be difficult to find a more suspicious, insular culture.

According to the legends of the Yolaru and the Kurak, the Urali once lived out in a marshy region of the central jungle area of the valley, east of the Nahuatla. However, over a period of centuries the marsh gradually dried out, forcing the Urali into an ever-smaller homeland... for the Urali *do* prefer swamps to more congenial surroundings.

Eventually, again according to legend, the Urali just vanished as a tribe, not to be heard from again for quite a long time. (The natives say it was a thousand years, which is unlikely, but following the approximation of dividing by ten any such inflated number out of antiquity, a century is not unlikely.) As it turns out — as modern members of the Urali will reluctantly admit — an Urali scout of that time discovered access to another,

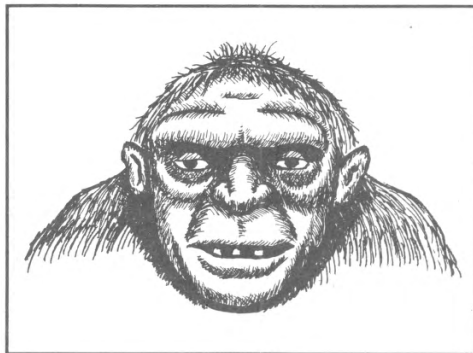
greater swamp region and the entire tribe migrated there in secret. It was not until recent years that the other tribes encountered Urali exiles and discovered that the Urali still existed; and only in recent months has contact with the Urali been extensive, as a recent chieftain led the tribe in raids against the other tribes.

But the Urali remain as secretive as ever, and will not willingly divulge the secret of the access to their hidden swamp-lands. As it turns out, that access is not too far afield of their original homeland (else the legends of other tribes might mention the Urali migrating before disappearing altogether).

On an academic level, the Urali are exasperating because it has been difficult — rather, impossible — to discern their outer-world origins. Based on the preponderance of rogues, outcasts, and exiles in their folklore, the blended quality of their dialect and racial characteristics, and other data, it is my belief that they are a tribe originating in the valley itself, being composed of exiles who fled to the seclusion of the swamps in order to elude enemies. This is certainly an appropriate origin for their suspicious tribal personality. However, this is merely a working hypothesis. It will take a more accomplished linguist and anthropologist than your humble correspondent to root out the truth about their background.

Haakur

Saving the best for last, I present the Haakur. My initial impression of them was that they were a tribe whose homeliness,



excessive hairiness, characteristic facial features (such as jutting jaws, prominent supraorbital ridges, and oversized noses), and other factors were simply the result of inbreeding and perhaps cultural selection.

However, such turns out not to be the case. Examinations of an injured Haakur warrior — especially concentrating on the shape and volume of the skull (the brain case actually being greater than that of *homo sapiens sapiens*), the curiously limited characteristics of the vocal chords, their patterns of thought (far more intuitive and instinctive and far less rational) than the other humans of the valley — lead me to the inevitable conclusion that here we have living examples of *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis*, or Neanderthal Man, extinct on the outer world for at least 30,000 years.

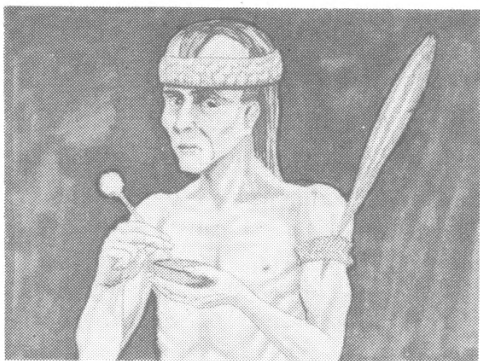
If the Haakur were the only evidence I had of such an amazing survival, I would be greatly tempted to dismiss it — to presume that conditions of health and breeding had led one insulated pocket of humanity here to develop neanderthaline physical characteristics. But, as will be demonstrated below, this is far from the only case of survival.

Ironically, though modern anthropological theory holds that the neanderthals were more upright than the brutish, bent-knees posture firmly fixed in modern folklore for the “caveman” — that, in fact, a shaved and suitably-dressed neanderthal would merely be considered somewhat homely by modern man — the Haakur come much closer to fitting the stereotyped image. Millennia of inbreeding and hereditary arthritis have conspired to make the Haakur of the valley of Eodon almost precisely into the stooped, hunched “cavemen” of pedestrian Saturday cinema.

The Spiritualism of the People

Man does not live by bread — or, in the case of the valley’s natives, principally meat — alone. The peoples of the valley have a distinct spiritual side to their cultures.

Each tribe is served by one shaman and



one or two shaman apprentices whose task it is to commune with the nature spirits they believe inhabit the valley. They commune with these spirits for guidance, beg them for courage and the benefits of health in times of trouble, ask their forgiveness when slaying totem animals, and ask portents of the future.

All of this would seem to be commonplace, except for the manner in which these rituals sometimes manifest themselves. The shamans are very accomplished at demonstrating what can only seem like “magic” to their more credulous brethren.

When attempting to perform “magic,” a shaman will draw forth a small carved stone icon representing the nature-spirit he wishes to invoke, and will make an offering to that icon — for example, scattering a handful of grain to the wind. Then, the shaman concentrates or meditates while chanting, and in short order some interesting effect results.

Make no mistake: Their performances are convincing, and no one living in the valley, the shamans included, perceives them as connivance or fakery. And while I



do not know if they are utilizing an unconscious form of mass hypnosis, a biophysical process such as that which produces hysterical stigmata, or some other technique, their "magic" is quite inexplicable and believable. I have seen the injured and sick know if they are utilizing an unconscious form of mass hypnosis, a biophysical effect miraculous recoveries after being "healed" by a shaman... and, while most of the healing is unquestionably taking place only in the mind of the patient, the results of this healing far exceed any results I have heretofore seen in conventional hypnosis.

It is a fascinating phenomenon, and one which I hope to be able to study for many years to come.

The Fauna of Eodon

I note with dread the upcoming end of blank pages in Mr. Malone's fabled notebook, and will strive to distill the rest of my commentary. In so doing, I will no more than briefly mention the more "mundane" varieties of animal life to be found here — a great variety of snakes (principally vipers; constrictors do not seem to have survived here), a large and beautiful species of black jaguar which has been very successful in this environment, a great variety of parrots — and will instead concentrate on the more extraordinary forms of animal life to be found here.

Unfortunately, I can no more than briefly mention the variety of enormous cave spider to be found here in the Valley of Eodon. This is a web-building spider, an absolutely huge species — one example I have seen measured six feet across with legs at extension. They occupy certain caves in the valley, but do not rely on the bounty of their webs: They go foraging at night. I have not had the opportunity to study them and cannot offer much in the way of scientific discussion of their origins.

I mentioned "survivals" earlier, speaking specifically of species which here have survived the extinction which befell

them in the outer world.

There are many such cases of survival here, and I will address several of them briefly. You will doubtless scoff at this listing, dismissing it as impossible, an attitude I encourage among the scientifically-minded... but I must also insist that when qualified scientists have come here and seen what I have seen, the scoffing will cease.

Among the animal types to be found in the Valley of Eodon are the following:



Allosaurus. Family Allosauridae. The Allosaurus dates to the late Jurassic and early Cretaceous (centering on about 144 million years ago). It is a carnivorous dinosaur which moves about on two legs; some 40 feet long and 15 feet in height, it weighs (from casts I have taken of its footprints and estimations therefrom of its weight) about one and a half tons. The only ones I have seen in the valley have been solitary hunters, but the natives swear to me that they sometimes band together in packs to hunt down larger prey, such as the apatosaurus. I do not know whether these stories reflect the truth, or are tales designed to terrify unwitting outsiders such as myself. (In truth, they did manage to achieve that effect.)

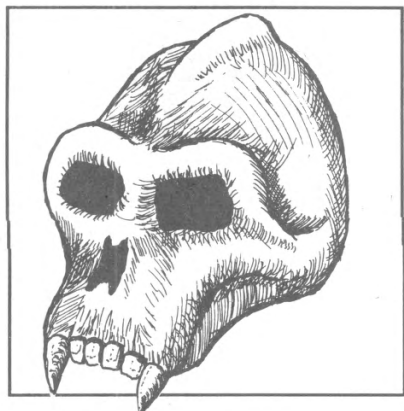
Alphadon. Order Pantotheria. This primitive mammal dates to the late Cretaceous period (around 65 million years ago). It is best thought of as a three foot-long



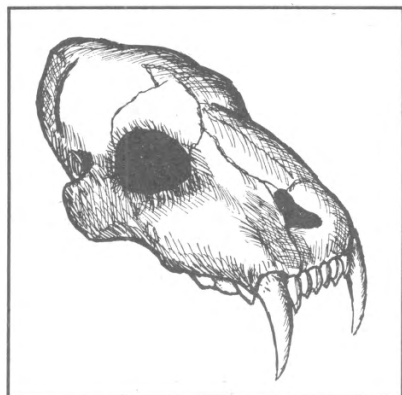
TOTEMS AND OFFERINGS



*Totem of Heluzz
Spirit of Knowledge and Vision*



*Totem of Aphazz
Spirit of Emotion & Strength*



*Totem of Motazz
Spirit of Battle*

The shamans of the Valley of Eodon use totems and offerings in combination in order to effect their "magic."

Their totems, each representing a nature spirit, include a human skull, a gorilla skull, and a jaguar skull. The human skull is the totem of the spirit named Heluzz, the spirit of knowledge and vision. The gorilla skull is the totem of Aphazz, the spirit of emotions and strength. The last totem, the skull of a jaguar, represents Motazz, whom the natives believe governs the field of battle.

Their offerings, cast to the wind during their rituals, include: Theobroma cacao, known to the natives as chocolatl; Banisteriopsis caapi, used by the natives (who call it pinde) to produce visions and gain wisdom; and Virola calophylla, a potent snuff that the natives call yopo.

Each totem is used with each offering, for a total of nine possible combinations, each representing a "magical spell."

The Magic of Heluzz - Spirit of Knowledge and Vision

Human Skull with Chocolatl: This combination produces a moderate light for a period of several minutes. The light is on a par with that produced by torches, so this spell is not especially useful. How exactly the light is produced remains a mystery, however.

Human Skull with Pinde: The natives believe that during this spell the shaman leaves his body and becomes a spirit-eagle, looking down on the world from high above. Regardless of superstition, I have personally witnessed shamans under the influence of this spell demonstrating impressive knowledge of their surroundings, knowledge that cannot be attributed solely to memory or experience.

Human Skull with Yopo: When a shaman casts this spell, he believes himself able to sense hostile intent in those around him. Certainly this "sense" is merely the result of autohypnotically enhanced knowledge of human psychology and the local fauna, but one cannot argue with the results.

The Magic of Aphazz - Spirit of Emotion and Strength

Gorilla Skull with Chocolatl: This spell actually seems to mesmerize the caster's enemies, temporarily lulling them into turning on their comrades.

Gorilla Skull with Pinde: Shamans use this spell to alleviate the effects of wounds and illness of all his comrades. Whether the effects are merely psychosomatic or the pinde has an actual effect on the healing process has yet to be determined.

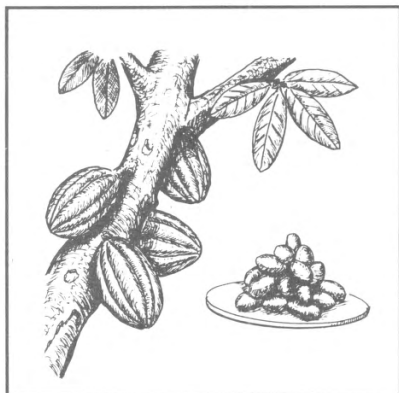
Gorilla Skull with Yopo: This is perhaps the most doubtful spell of all. The natives claim this spell protects the shaman and all his comrades from harm. This is clearly untrue—I have seen people under such “protection” take grievous wounds. To give the shamans the benefit of the doubt, perhaps the spell simply does not work to the degree that the natives seem to believe it does.

The Magic of Motazz - Spirit of Battle

Jaguar Skull with Chocolatl: With this offering, the shaman invokes Motazz to summon a creature into the battle. This spell, and indeed all those associated with Motazz, only works when locked in mortal combat, or so say all the shamans I've spoken to. Personally, I believe that it is simply the scent of the aromatic chocolatl and the noise of conflict that summons the creatures, but there is little doubt that friendly animals do appear.

Jaguar Skull with Pinde: This spell is used by the shaman to “curse” his opponents. Much like the curses of the Carribean voodoo doctors, the effects of this spell most likely stem from the fears of the victim rather than the “power” of the caster.

Jaguar Skull with Yopo: This spell has the complementary effect of the “curse”—it heightens morale among the shaman's comrades, whipping them into an unstoppable battle frenzy.



Chocolatl



Pinde



Yopo

marsupial superficially resembling an opossum. In the valley of Eodon, they occupy the ecological niche elsewhere taken by modern rats. They are clever omnivores, capable (via gripping feet and prehensile tails) of living in trees, and can be quite dangerous in packs.

Ankylosaurus. Family

Ankylosauridae. This low-slung dinosaur with the armored back dates to the late Cretaceous period (about 65 million years ago, up to the end of the age of dinosaurs). An herbivore, it moves about on four legs, defending itself with a massive macelike knot at the end of its tail. It grows to some 18 feet and weighs about three tons, making it about the length and weight of a car. I have personally seen one native man riding a smaller variety of ankylosaur, but as he was in the process of trying to murder me at the time, I failed to query him on his techniques for capturing and training the beast.

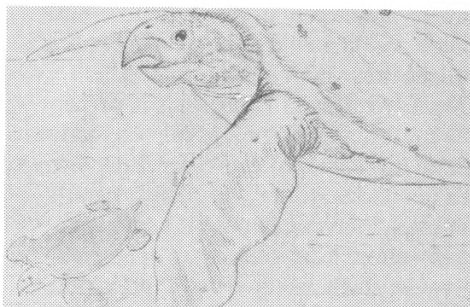
Apatosaurus. Family Diplodocidae.

The Apatosaurus was for years known, and is still popularly known, as the Brontosaurus. Though by no means the largest dinosaur known in the outer world, the Apatosaurus is the largest to be seen within the Valley of Eodon, being some 80 to 120 feet long and weighing some 30-35 tons. Though prevailing scientific theory (and evidence within the Valley) holds that the apatosaurus does not actually spend the majority of its life in the water, the apatosaurus of the Valley does tend to seek the swamp-waters when danger is in the air;



this terrain discourages the greater predators such as the allosaurus and tyrannosaurus. The native name for this beast translates, most appropriately, as "Longneck."

Archelon. Order Chelonia, Suborder Cryptodira, Family Protostegidae. Modern readers would doubtless prefer to call it a "big turtle." Dating to the late Cretaceous period (i.e., somewhat over 65 million years



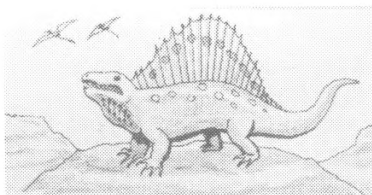
old), the Archelon is a sea turtle of preposterous size, growing to some 12 feet in length. The varieties I have seen in the Valley of Eodon have been freshwater variants who are accustomed to the presence of humans and will often forebear attacking humans if thrown a quantity of food.

Deinonychus. Family

Dromaeosauridae. The Deinonychus dates to the early Cretaceous (some 144 million years ago) and is a fast-moving carnivorous dinosaur which runs on two legs. It grows to about 12 feet in length, stands around 6' in height, and weighs as much as a man. While living with the Yolaru tribe, I had opportunity to see a pack of Deinonychus hunting, attacking, and killing a juvenile apatosaurus, a most remarkable and illuminating sight. It is my hope that in future letters I may provide commentary on the social structure of the Deinonychus and other saurian species.



Dimetrodon. Order Pelycosauria. Not technically a dinosaur, this creature belonged to that class of reptiles from which the mammals evolved. Dimetrodon dates to



the early Permian era (about 286 million years ago). This four-legged, low-slung reptile is about 13' long, weighing some 450 pounds, and features a large, sail-like spinal crest used to regulate its body heat. It has very powerful jaws and kills its prey by clamping onto and holding its victim until it perishes. In the Valley of Eodon, it's an early-morning hunter, usually making its kill shortly after dawn or going hungry for the day.

Gigantopithecus. Family Pongidae.

This primate is an enormous gorilla-like animal, standing some twelve feet in height and weighing in around 900 pounds, if my measurements of its tracks can be trusted. The native name for it translates roughly as the "black ghost," referring to the color of its hair and its solitary, normally shy habits. Though it does not seek out other animals — excepts for small rodents to supplement its otherwise vegetarian diet — it is a ferocious adversary when injured or angered, and the natives are terrified of it. Too, it is to be noted that there are occa-

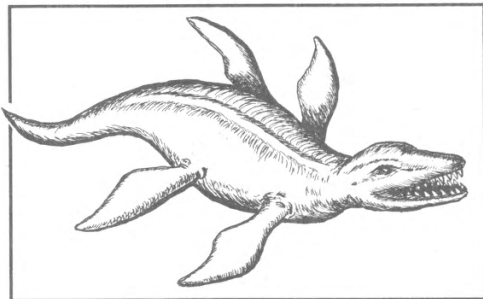


sional "rogue ghosts" who develop strange, deviant behavior, such as rampaging through the jungles and terrifying most men and animals in their path, or breaking away from their gigantopithecus clan and seeking to form new clans — often with smaller, intimidated "black ghosts" or even humans! In the Valley of Eodon, the Gigantopithecus dwells on the mountain slopes and ledges.

Hyracotherium. This small animal (some two feet in total length) is more commonly known as the *eohippus*, or "dawn horse." As the name suggest, it is the ancestor of modern horses. It dates to the early Eocene era (around 55 million years ago). It is very common in the Valley of Eodon, especially in the northern plains, where the natives hunt it for its hide and meat. (It is in no immediate danger of extinction, being a prolific breeder and a very good runner.)

Megatherium. This ancestor of the modern tree sloths was a ground sloth the size of some modern elephants. Walking about on four legs, it was some 20 feet long and 6 feet at the shoulder, and weighed on the order of three tons. Its descendant in the Valley of Eodon is much the same, and behaves much like its tree-sloth relatives: Vegetarian, slow-moving, mostly peaceful. It is not, however, an easy kill for natives or dinosaurs, being capable of fighting savagely for its life.

Plesiosaur. Order Plesiosauria, Superfamily Plesiosauroidea. This is a



water-dwelling dinosaur dating to the early Jurassic (some 200 million years ago). Growing to twenty to twenty-five feet in the

valley, the plesiosaur is a dangerous and aggressive animal. Certain outer-world descendants of the species grew to more than forty feet in length, and may well be represented in the deeper waters of the valley. The still waters (such as the swamps) are sufficiently rife with them that it is unsafe to cross except on a raft - or perhaps on the back of an accomodating apatosaurus or archelon.

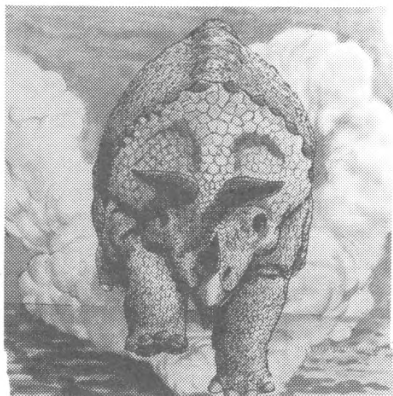
Pterosauria. Numerous examples of the famous flying reptiles are in evidence in the valley. The species they represent date from the early Jurassic (213 million years ago) to the late Cretaceous (some 65 million years ago), from the Dimorphodon of England to the Quetzalcoatlus of the southwestern United States. In addition, another pterosaurian species, a super-pteranodon who dwarfs the mighty Quetzalcoatlus and is capable of becoming airborne while carrying hundreds of pounds of prey, exists in the valley; I do not know whether it is a survival of a hitherto-undiscovered species from the outer world or a species which has developed in the peculiar conditions of the Valley of Eodon. When I have had opportunities to examine more of these "super-pteranodons," I shall provide the scientific community with more data on them... and, of course, will take the discoverer's prerogative of naming the species.

Smilodon. Family Felidae. This beast, dating from the late Pleistocene era (about 10,000 years ago), is the archetypal "sabre-toothed tiger." Here, as with the Haakur, conditions in the Valley of Eodon have

made the creature match its popular conception rather than its outer-world reality. Though laymen regard the 'sabre-toothed tiger' as a monster the size of a Kodiak bear, actual outer-world smilodons seldom grew longer than four feet. However, in the Valley of Eodon, I have seen many sabre-tooths four times that size. The smilodons of the valley are vicious, brutish animals, terrifyingly aggressive in combat and capable of little cunning; they have been known to mortally wound their prey and sit back for it to die, but that is the extent of their "tactics."

Stegosaurus: Family Stegosauridae. This beast dates to the late Jurassic era (around 144 million years ago), was some 25 feet long, and weighs around four tons. An herbivore, it is notable for the series of spiny plates which protrude from its spine, and for the knot of sharp spikes at the end of its tail — its most formidable weapon. I regret to say that I cannot settle the debate over whether the spiny plates are actually armor or a mere heat-dispersal mechanism; none of these plated beasts has allowed me to get close enough to determine this. However, the natives of the Kurak tribe say that monsters such as the Sharptooth (Tyrannosaurus) circumspectly avoid the spines when attacking the Stegosaurus, which is some evidence that they play a definite defensive role.

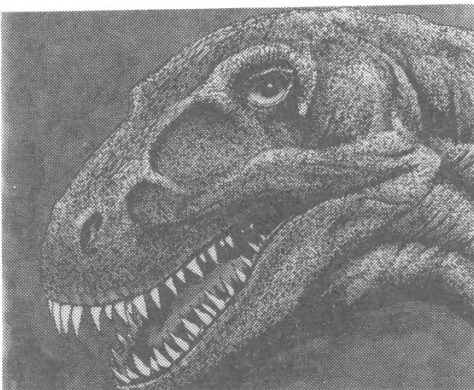
Triceratops. Dating from the late Cretaceous (70 to 65 million years ago or so), the triceratops is the dinosaur famed in art and moving pictures, with the shield-like head featuring three protruding offensive



horns; the horns over the eyes are over a meter in length apiece. This herbivorous beast is over 30 feet long and weighs, as far as I can tell, in the vicinity of ten tons. In the Valley of Eodon, the Triceratops moves about in herds through the forests and the plains, living off the luxurious plantlife and using pack tactics to defend itself from predators.

Tyrannosaurus. Family

Tyrannosauridae. The Tyrannosaur dates to the late Cretaceous period (some 65 million years ago, about the end of the era of the dinosaur). It is another carnosaur moving on



two legs, and is almost 60 feet in length. It stands a few feet taller than the Allosaurus (or is it merely that it *appears* to stand taller? I must do comparative measurements sometime... when I am able to do so without being consumed) and weighs four times as much, massing some eight tons.

Among the inhabitants of the valley, its native name translates roughly as "Sharp-tooth." As observed in the Valley of Eodon, the Tyrannosaur is actually a quick-moving and *intelligent* predator; the natives say that it is in the habit of hiding itself behind stands of trees or ridges of hills and then ambushing its prey, roaring and racing down upon them at full speed. It is a prodigious and terrifying beast.

The tyrannosaur skulls I have been able to observe here suggest that the local species has developed a genetic defect in its skull structure: A blow of sufficient magnitude, assuming that one is able to hoist a boulder high enough into the air and drop it onto the

tyrannosaur's head, might be enough to slay it in a single blow, if my calculations are to be trusted.

Ursus spelaeus. Family Ursidae. The mighty "cave bear" first appeared in the outer world some two million years ago, in the Pleistocene era and survived well beyond the Ice Age. A large bear, it is still not as large as certain modern bears. The bears observed in the Valley of Eodon seem content to subsist on grubs and vegetable matter, but the natives are certain that it will kill quite effectively if provoked.

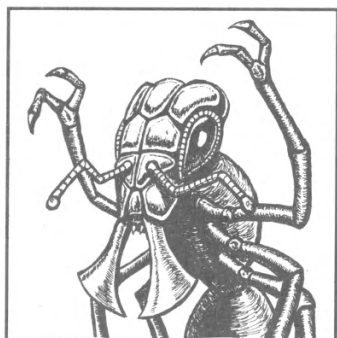
And let me not finish this discourse without mentioning two of the most amazing examples of "animal life" I have encountered in the Valley: The Sakkhra and the Myrmidex.

The **Sakkhra** are a bipedal dinosaurian race. They stand some six to seven feet in height and weigh an average of about 150 pounds. And, though this statement will inevitably lead to consternation and mockery among my fellows in the scientific community, they have every appearance of being a sentient race, possessing language, the knowledge and ability to flake stone into weaponry, civilized customs, and the ability to learn and speak some of the human language of the valley. They seem to be an evolutionary offshoot of some bipedal



carnosaur; my best guess places their ancestor in the family Dromaeosauridae. They feature cranial crests as, it would appear, warning mechanisms and secondary sexual characteristics, and the Dromaeosauridae's distinctive sickle-claw on the lower legs is merely a vestige in the Sakkhra.

The **Myrmidex** are an insect species, but one unlike any ever seen in the outer world. Myrmidex (my own name for them,



and the name to which I've translated all native references to them in our various notes and papers) are ant-like in structure and social organization, but grow to manlike size. As such, they make hash of prevailing theory about the square-cubed laws, but they do exist, and are a formidable and savage race... much like the ants to which they appear to be related. They are a frightful danger in the Valley of Eodon, and show signs of intelligence to augment their ant-like ferocity and tirelessness.

The Flora of Eodon

I look with alarm on the shrinking number of blank pages available to me in Mr. Malone's notebook, and so I must be brief here.

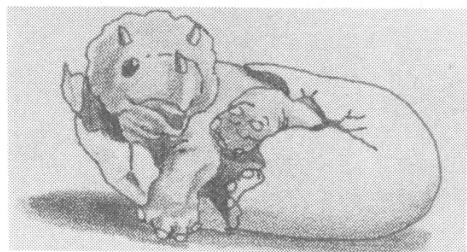
The Valley of Eodon is a remarkable hodge-podge of terrain types. At its heart, in both a geographical and thematic sense, is jungle — a jungle featuring plant-life largely retained, I believe, from the Jurassic and Cretaceous. It is distinctly a rain forest, but unlike any known to the outer world.

Side-by-side, and growing in great profusion, we see giant horsetails of the Carboniferous era; luxuriant seed ferns of the Permian era; great conifers of the Jurassic; and flowering plants and modern-seeming tropical plants of the Cretaceous. In addition, many forms of plant life are identical to those to be found in the Amazon

basin of the outer world, one more datum, to my mind, that the Valley of Eodon is in that region of South America somewhere.

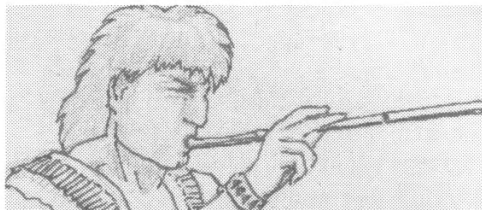
However, in the north of the valley, the terrain abruptly gives way to upland plains, where maize and modern grasses grow. In the southeast, stony land predominates, where little grows; this is the region dominated by active volcanoes, a volcanologist's dream. And then there are the rich Urali swamplands, a microcosm of Jurassic-era swamp conifers.

The Future of Eodon



Recent events in the Valley of Eodon make it inevitable that the land will soon be discovered by modern man. It is imperative, if knowledge is to prevail over greed and politics, that the scientific community and environmentalist interests move swiftly to protect and study this strange, rich, and ultimately vulnerable region from the ravages of promoters, builders, and profiteers.

Scientists of all disciplines must come here in order to study and catalogue the flora, fauna, and geography of this land. Anthropologists and archaeologists must do the same for its intelligent population. National government must apply pressure to the ruling body of whatever country the Valley turns out to reside within, that developers not pave over the Valley and its riches before they can be studied.



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STARRING

**Richard Corlane • Byron Swade
and Faith Selburn as Aiela**

**Casting by Keith Berdak and Glen Johnson
Cinematography by Jason Templeman and Bob Quinlan
Production Design by Dan Bourbonnais and 'Manda Dee
Original Musical Score by the Fat Man
Screenplay by Aaron Allston**

WILD BASIN Expedition Returns



The Wild Basin Expedition—(Clockwise from lower left) Keith Berdak, Jeff Johannigman, Jeff Dee, Marc Schaeffen, Denis Loubet (rear), Aaron Allston, 'Manda Dee, Philip Brogden, John Watson, Jason Templeman (rear), Bob Quinlan, George Sanger, Glen Johnson, Mike Romero, Richard Garriott, Stephen Beeman. (Dan Bourbonnais not shown)

by Jimmy Malone

When entrepreneur Richard Garriott gave the crew of the new *Savage Empire* movie a present — a vacation safari in the exotic Hill Country where much of the movie's location work was filmed — he didn't realize that he was nearly sending them into oblivion.

The expedition set out from the Austin, TX headquarters of Garriott's entertainment empire on June 1, shortly after principal photography on the movie was completed. Radio reports from the safari were cheerful and routine for the next two weeks. But the report of June 15 was the last from the expedition.

For the next 30 days, Garriott and his executive staff kept a constant vigil on their radio equipment, chewed their knuckles, and badgered the government to launch a rescue expedition into the Wild Basin region of the Hill Country.

That government mission, accompanied by Richard Garriott, was launched on June 27. It quickly found the expedition's base camp — its tents still standing, the team's equipment still in working condition — but failed after more than two weeks to turn up any further sign of the expedition.

Then, on July 16, the members of the rescue mission woke up to find the Wild Basin explorers in the rescuers' camp — rummaging through the stores of food, rigging an impromptu volleyball court out of rope and tarpaulins, and making so much noise that the government rescuers couldn't sleep.

"It was pretty amazing," says erstwhile rescuer Garriott. "Their clothes were the worse for wear, and they were complaining a lot about the lack of air conditioning in our camp, but otherwise they were fine. Some of them were doing Three Stooges schtick, and

the rest seemed to be arguing about which of the *Star Wars* movies was the best."

Where had they been for the last month, and how had they survived? Interviews with expedition members reveal the startling facts.

Trek Into the Wilderness

Stephen Beeman, 21, safari leader and director of the *Savage Empire* movie, explains: "We'd been in the wild for a couple of weeks, and I think the rest of the crew was getting bored. I'd be doing some work in my tent, and every two minutes one of them would pop in to see what I was doing — like, 'Party in my tent!' I got aggravated and suggested that we go on a hike, to bleed off some of that caffeine energy and scout out locations for the 'Making of *The Savage Empire*' documentary, which I'm also directing. So we took off. After that — well, it's all Aaron's fault."

Aaron Allston, 29, screenwriter on the *Savage Empire* film, readily agrees with Beeman's assessment. "My sense of direction is 100% accurate, but only 50% of the time," he admits. "I was in the other 50% that day. We were wandering around, having a good old time, except that Keith [Berdak] kept getting snake-bit, and we kept running into these huge scorpions the size of, well, scorpions. But when we decided to

head back to camp, it wasn't there. I'd swear somebody moved it.

"So we started ranging all over the place looking for it. Johann would climb up a tree and look all around, then gnash his teeth and shout 'We're going to get back to camp on time and under budget, or I'm going to have somebody's head!' But we never made it back."

'Johann' is Jeffrey David Johannigman, 29, the producer of *The Savage Empire* and safari second-in-command. A burly, blond-haired, blue-eyed Aryan, he is well on his way to becoming one of Hollywood's most agitated producers. He remembers the events of the hike with no affection. "This hike wasn't on my schedule, and I knew it wasn't going to work out. I could feel the schedule slide with every step we took, but sometimes there's no controlling these writers and artists. I gave them enough rope and they hung all of us. Next time I want to see people running around in the forest, I'll put an Errol Flynn movie in the VCR."

Meeting the Natives

Dan Bourbonnais, 36, is *The Savage Empire*'s chief set-design supervisor and a storyboard artist for the film. A skilled technician with extensive backgrounds in both art and construction, he appointed himself photographer for the expedition... and secretly hoped that the expedition might encounter the semi-legendary natives of the Hill Country. He got more than he bargained for.

"We were lost," he explains laconically. "Wandering around like idiots. Aaron kept saying, 'Wait! That looks familiar,' and led us off in a new wrong direction. Johann was stomping, shouting 'This is fine, fine, just fine!' and consulting the company handbook to figure out what to do. Steve was walking along behind Johann and making fun of him.

"So we round a turn in this dry creek-bed, and there they are, the natives. About a dozen of them, males and females. They had a fire going, with a crude grate on top, and some sort of meat on that, they were charring it black. I started taking pictures,



Writer Aaron Allston, Producer Jeff Johannigman, Executive Producer Richard Garriott, and Director Stephen Beeman demonstrate leadership ability and an unerring sense of direction.

and they looked up, and... waved. Not hostile at all."

"Manda Dee, 23, is the pixie-like set designer on *The Savage Empire* and Bourbonnais' partner in set design. "We got to know the natives pretty well," she admits. "They're a wild bunch. They ride around in the backs of these huge, rusty metal chariots, and whoop it up. They drink this sort of weak fermented brew that really gives you a headache. The first natives we came across were having a ritual cookout.

"I got to help them with a religious ceremony, where they built this runway with stones on an open plain — like the Nazca lines, you know; they wanted to entice their Sky Gods to visit. So we laid out this 900'-long runway in the shape of an armadillo." She considers a minute, then admits, "Well, actually, it was *my* idea, but they helped."

Jason Templeman, 23, is a script consultant to the film, and choreographer of the movie's extensive combat scenes; for the expedition, he was also pressed into service as team cook. "Those natives had some strange customs," he said. "They'd go swimming at different places in the Hill Country. One place, they'd go in naked. Another place, they had to wear a little scrap of clothing. I never could figure out why one place was different from the other, and they couldn't exactly tell me. So I'd just stand there, and stare, and stare, trying to figure out the difference, and that's when Keith Berdak would sneak up on me and drop a snake down my pants."

Surviving in the Wild

Keith Berdak, 35, is chief casting director for *The Savage Empire*. "Most of the faces in the movie are my choices," he admits, "except my partner Glen got to cast the 'babes.' Lucky stiff." Berdak admits that he wasn't originally keen on the idea of the expedition: "I have a problem with snake venom, I don't know why, but my instructor in anthropology and archaeology — Karen E. Bell, Ph.D. — persuaded me that I ought to go anyway. She was a technical consultant on *The Savage Empire*, too. I'm grateful



Artist Keith Berdak (center) displays his masterful snake-handling techniques to Programmer Jason Templeman and Playtester Mike Romero.

to her for it. I got to see so many things, especially animal species, that I'd never be able to see in civilization."

Suddenly, he stoops, snatches something up off the ground, and waves a wriggling snake in the face of the startled correspondent. "Like this. Interesting snake. Looks a lot like an Australian tiger snake, which is a really deadly creature, but this one seems friendly enough. Ouch! Little beggar bit me."

Though Berdak was unable to complete his interview, camp medics report that he should recover fully.

Though the animal life may have been dangerous, starvation in the wild wasn't a hazard. The Fat Man — pseudonym for *The Savage Empire*'s musical composer, a large bald man with a fuming cigar, an aggressive manner, and a curiously undersized head — explains it this way: "The food was the best part of this expedition. Those natives, they'll kill you with the stuff. Every day, cookouts, roasts, barbecues, I loved it."

He interrupts his explanation with a massive belch, and he smiles and tilts his head, savoring the musical purity of its tone. "Anyway, the food's the only reason I'd ever consider going on another of these things. Food and women. Only a woman could drive a man to take a safari to a god-

forsaken place like this. Yachting, that's my idea of exercise." He turns back to his previous conversation: "So I says to the witch doctor, 'All I wanted was a small head — ' Wait, I told it wrong..."

"It was a strange, strange place," admits Denis Loubet, 33, artist of *The Savage Empire*'s promotional poster. "There isn't a lot of good wood available here, so the natives built their tall, cliff-like homes out of huge panes of glass."

"I thought it was great," says Marc Schaeffen, 20, the movie's sound-effects specialist. "I'm ready to go on another safari. Not much went wrong, except us getting lost, and me arguing with the Fat Man about music all the time — I'm a guitarist — but sometimes I'd cook and then he'd be nice to me, and then there was Steve Beeman always wandering around, going 'Sleep? Sleep is for the weak! Onward!' Those parts weren't fun. Maybe those guys will stay at home for the next safari."

The Way Back Home

"After we'd been there a few weeks," says Philip Brogden, 30, the film's dialogue consultant, "we heard from the natives that there was another party of explorers out there."

Bob Quinlan, 29, Beeman's executive assistant, disagrees: "That's not quite right. We heard from the natives that there were more explorers the natives wanted to invite to a party."



World-Builder John Watson, Artist Glen Johnson, and Writer Philip Brogden check for a pulse after Keith Berdak's display of snake-handling technique.

"Right, right," Brogden continues. "Beeman figures that this is our chance to get out — Johann's sort of 'gone native' by this time, so Beeman takes over completely, cracks the whip, threatens to fire everybody. The Fat Man *did* fire everybody, but fortunately we don't work for him... Anyway, Beeman got us all headed out into the wild again, then got us all lost again."

Glen Johnson, Keith Berdak's casting co-director, continues: "It was a *real* shame, too. I'd like to cast some of those natives in our next picture. There were some real lookers — in the company's technical jargon, 'babes' — in the tribe."

Jeff Dee, a storyboard artist for the film and 'Manda Dee's husband, adds: "I was busy razzing Beeman. His parents were originally from this region, you know. He doesn't like admitting it because then he can't account for why he couldn't find his way back out. So I notice that John [Watson] is carefully mapping out every step we're taking, checking the sun, looking at a compass, all this sort of stuff. And I see that our base camp and all our movements on the safari are on the map."

"Jeff asks me, 'How long have you been keeping that?'" breaks in John Watson, who was responsible for some of the maps and other graphics appearing in *The Savage Empire* movie. "I say, 'Ever since we left home. I figured we could use it to illustrate our safari when we get home again.' Anyway, everybody comes over to look, and there is this noise like shouting, and I guess I black out about that time. When I wake up, I'm covered in bruises, especially on my head, and they're carrying me into our old base camp... and that's just where the rescue expedition is set up."

So the lost expedition is found, with all fifteen members alive and (except for the poisoned Berdak) physically well. By the time this account sees print, all members of the Wild Basin Expedition will be safe at home, working on their next movie... and considering the advisability their next safari.

Coming Soon:

The Authorized Book on the Valley of Eodon

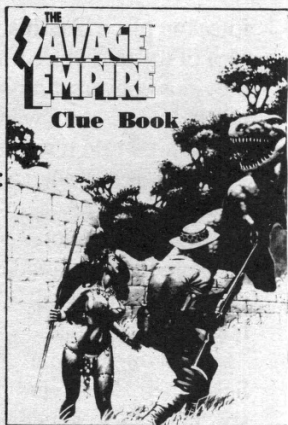
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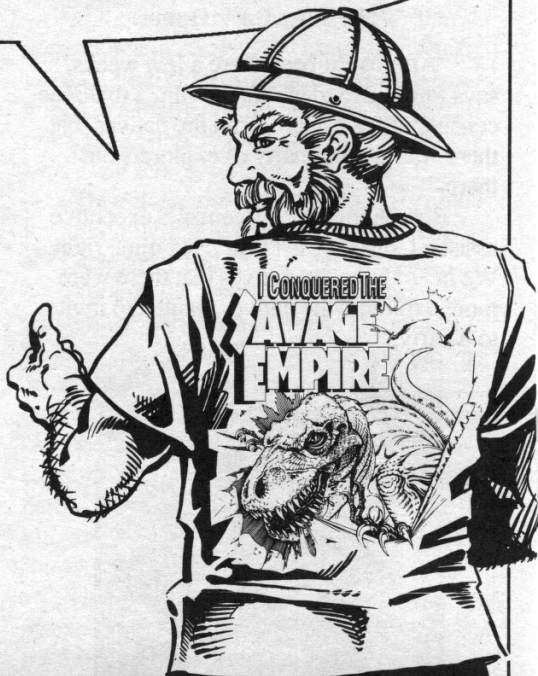
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