

CHAPTER 1

THE AMAZING DISCOVERY

My name is Edward Malone and I'm here to tell you my amazing story.

The adventure began when I fell in love with Gladys Hungerton. I hoped that Gladys would be my wife, but when I asked her to marry me she turned me down. She said she could only marry someone who was a brave and famous hero. I would never be good enough to be her husband, she said, as I was only a newspaper reporter.

I was determined to prove her wrong. The bravest thing I could think to do was to go and visit Professor Challenger. He was one of the cleverest men in Britain and knew all there was to know about animals. He also had a terrible temper. He was violent, unpredictable and he *hated* reporters.

Back in 1909, he had gone to South America on an expedition and was away for two years. There had been a big fuss when he got back and now he refused to answer any more questions about what he had seen there. Only the other week, a reporter from the *Telegraph* had tried to talk to him and Challenger had hit him over the head with an umbrella. The poor man was still in hospital.

I had an idea. I wrote to the professor pretending to be a young student of zoology at the university. I said I thought Challenger was the greatest scientist in the whole world. I also said I had just read something he had written about Charles Darwin, and that there were one or two things I didn't understand. I asked if I could come to his house to talk about it with him.

He wrote a letter back to me. It said he didn't care if I admired him or not. He didn't need some pipsqueak like me to tell him he was a genius as he already knew that. He also said that his essay on Darwin was perfectly

clear and if I didn't understand it I must be a complete nincompoop. However, he did agree to see me at 11 o'clock on Wednesday.

So there I was on Wednesday morning, knocking on the professor's front door. It was opened by a miserable-looking butler who led me to Challenger's study. The butler tapped on the study door. There came a bellow from inside, like the noise of an angry bull. I thought the professor was saying 'Come in, blast you!' so I did.

Challenger sat behind a big desk. He had an enormous head, a thick neck and huge shoulders. He not only sounded like a bull, he looked a bit like one too. His face was very red and his hair very black. He had a long beard that covered his chest and his large hands were also covered with long black hair. His eyes were blue-grey and they glared out at me from under thick, dark eyebrows.

'So you're the idiot who doesn't understand plain English, are you?' he snarled.

'Yes,' I said, meekly.

'You do realise that the cranial index is a constant factor in all such cases as I discussed, and that the germ plasm is different from the parthenogenetic egg, don't you?' he snorted.

'Of course,' I agreed.

'And what does that prove?' he whispered. 'Shall I tell you?'

I nodded eagerly.

'It proves,' he roared, 'that you are an impostor. You're a vile, sneaky reporter who knows nothing about science. I was talking gibberish, you fool!'

I started backing nervously towards the door, but he was too quick for me. He rushed out from behind his desk. I was surprised to see that he was so short – he only reached my shoulders – but he was very strong. He grabbed hold of me and we went tumbling out the door together. We looked like a giant Catherine-wheel going round and round.

Along the passage we went, getting faster and faster. The butler opened the front door and we somersaulted down the steps and into the street. We landed with a thud in the gutter.

‘You ought to be ashamed of yourselves,’ said a policeman who was walking by. ‘What’s going on?’

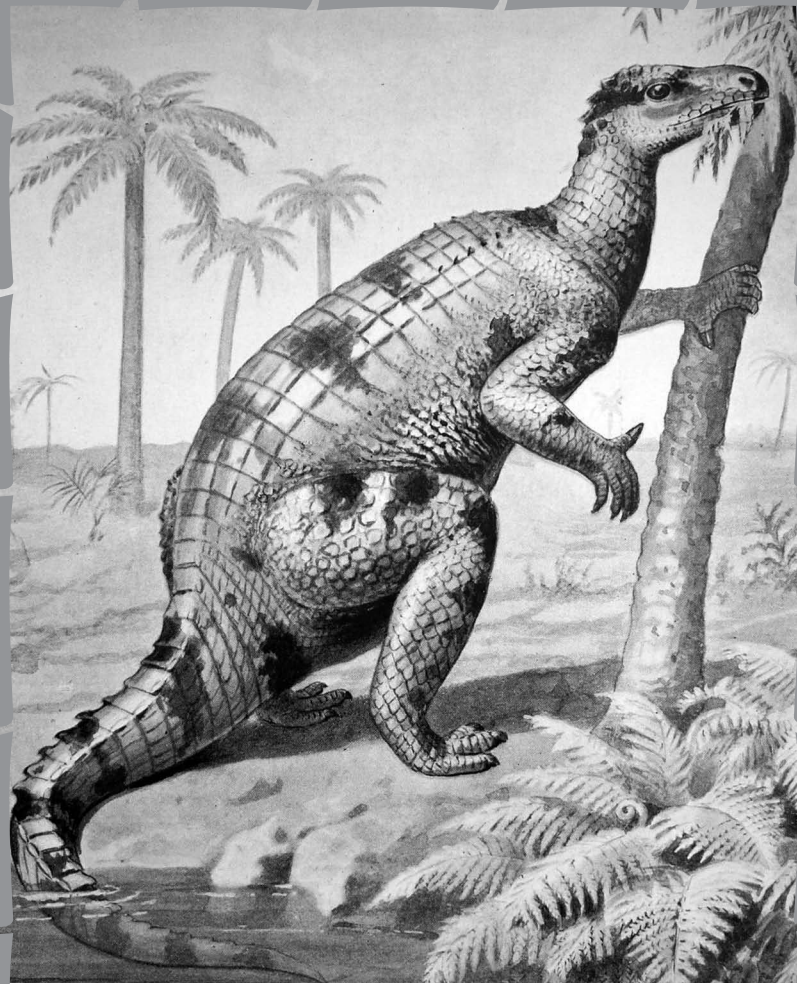
‘This bully attacked me,’ I said. But then I added, after a pause: ‘Though I was partly to blame as I did try to trick him.’

Challenger looked at me and nodded. The policeman walked on and the professor invited me back inside the house.

‘That was good of you to take the blame,’ he said. ‘If you promise to hold your tongue and not repeat a word of what I say to you, I’ll tell you what happened in South America.’

I agreed and Challenger began to tell me his story.

While he was travelling along the Amazon River, he stopped at an Indian village. The village chief showed him a drawing book. It had belonged to an American named Maple White who had died of fever a few weeks before. In the book Challenger saw some curious pictures. There was one of a high, dark-red cliff with a tall pillar of rock beside it. Another was of an extraordinary creature with a head like a bird, a body like a fat lizard and a long tail covered in spikes. Maple White had drawn a figure of a man next to the monster to show how big it was. It must have been about four metres high and nine metres long. The professor had seen a picture just like this in a book about prehistoric animals. It was a stegosaurus. All the dinosaurs were thought to have died out millions of years ago but White must have seen one in South America!



DID YOU KNOW...

... that there were **dinosaurs** on earth for around 135 million years? They died out about 65 million years ago. That was millions of years before the first humans appeared. This picture is of the iguanodon. This was one of the first dinosaurs to be given a name by scientists.

NEW WORDS

butler	a type of servant
expedition	a journey to discover something
gibberish	nonsense words
impostor	someone pretending to be someone else
meekly	timidly
nincompoop	fool
pipsqueak	unimportant person (usually small)
prehistoric	before humans
unpredictable	behaving in unexpected ways
zoology	the study of animals

Are there other words in the chapter you don't know? Look them up in a dictionary and add them to the list. Memorise how to spell them. Now make up a sentence that uses at least three of these new words. Do this for all the chapters in this book.

PUZZLES

Tick the words that describe Professor Challenger.

FAST	BLONDE	GENTLE	FERCE
JOLLY	ANGRY	WEAK	SHORT
STUPID	STRONG	CLEVER	MEEK

Fill the gaps in these sentences, using words from the list below.

Edward Malone was a He wanted to be a He visited Professor Challenger and to be a The professor him and they into the street. A policeman the fight.

FELL	HERO	STOPPED	PRETENDED
ATTACKED	STUDENT	REPORTER	

GET CREATIVE

Draw a cartoon showing Challenger and Malone rolling down the front steps. How can you show movement in a picture? Look at other cartoons from comic books for ideas.