

it sideways. It broke after a few seconds, and I rejoined Weena with a weapon in my hand. It was heavy enough, I thought, to break the head of any Morlock I might meet. And I wanted very much to kill a Morlock or two. I wanted to go straight down the room and kill the ones I heard. I didn't do this, though, partly because I also wanted to stay with Weena – and to get back to my Time Machine.

'Well, with the metal bar in one hand and Weena in the other, I went out of that room and into another even larger one, which was full of old books. These had fallen to pieces and none of the words could be read. I'm not a great writer, so didn't spend too long thinking about this waste of time and energy, but I did think sadly of my own seventeen papers on scientific subjects.

'Then, going up the wide stairs, we came to a room that had perhaps been a science room. And here I had some hopes of finding something useful. Except at one end where the roof had fallen down, this room was in good condition. I went quickly to every unbroken case. At last, in one of them, I found a box of matches. Very excited, I tried them. They were dry and perfectly good.

'I turned to Weena. "Dance," I said to her in her own language, because now I really had a weapon against the horrible creatures that we were afraid of. And so, in that broken-down museum, on the thick, soft carpet of dust, to Weena's great happiness, I danced a slow dance, singing a song as well as I could. Partly the dance was from different countries, partly it was my own invention – because I am naturally inventive, as you know.

'It was strange that this box of matches had lasted for so many years, but it was very fortunate for me. And I also found something even less likely – a jar containing a number of candles. I broke it open, put these in my pocket and left that room very happy.

'I can't tell you all the story of that long afternoon. I would

have to think hard to remember what I saw in the correct order. I remember a long room filled with guns, and although some were still in good condition, I could find no bullets. In another place was a large collection of stone and metal gods – Polynesian, Mexican, Greek, Roman, from every country on Earth, I think. And here I couldn't help writing my name on the nose of a stone god from South America that I really liked.

'As evening came, my interest level fell. I went through room after room: dusty, silent, often ruined. Some things were just piles of broken material; some were in better condition. In the end we came to a little open square. It had grass and three fruit trees, so we rested there.

'Towards sunset I began to think about our situation. Night was getting closer and my safe hiding place still had to be found. But that worried me very little now. I had with me, perhaps, the best of all defences against the Morlocks – I had matches. I had the candles in my pocket too, if more light were needed.

'It seemed to me that we should spend the night in the open, protected by a fire. In the morning I could try to get the Time Machine. To do that, at that time, I had only my metal bar. But now, with my growing knowledge, I felt very differently about those metal panels. I had never thought they were very strong, and I hoped that the metal bar would be heavy enough to do the job.

## Chapter 12 Fear of Fire

'When we came out of the palace, the sun hadn't completely gone down. I wanted to get through the woods before it was dark, and to reach the white sphinx early the next morning. My plan was to go as far as possible that night and then build a fire and sleep in the protection of its light. So as we went along I collected sticks and dry grass, and soon had my arms full.