



*It stared at me as it climbed down.*

creature with large bright eyes. It stared at me as it climbed down. Now I saw for the first time a kind of metal ladder down the side of the well. Then the light burned my fingers and fell out of my hand, going out as it dropped. I lit another but the horrible little creature had disappeared.

'I don't know how long I sat staring down that well. Time passed before I could make myself believe that I had seen something human. But slowly I began to understand the truth: that humans hadn't stayed as one species, but had become two different animals. My pleasant children of the Upper-world weren't alone.'

'And what, I wondered, was this creature of the dark doing in my idea of a perfectly organised society? What was its relationship with the calm laziness of the beautiful Upper-world people? And what was hidden down there? I sat on the edge of the well telling myself that there was nothing to fear and that I must go down to find the answer. But I was very afraid to go! As I sat there, two of the Upper-world people came running across the daylight into the shadow. The male followed the female, throwing flowers at her as he ran.'

'They seemed upset to find me looking down the well. I understood that it was bad behaviour to look down these holes, because when I pointed to this one and tried to make a question about it in their language, they grew even more upset and turned away. But they were interested in my matches and I struck some to amuse them. I asked them again about the well, and again I failed. So I soon left them, intending to go back to Weena and see what she could tell me.'

'But my mind was already working. I now had an idea of the importance of these wells, of the mystery of the ghosts, of the meaning of the metal panels and what had happened to the Time Machine! And I also had the beginnings of a solution to the economic mystery that had worried me.'