

Suddenly, I was filled with a feeling of dread. 'I hope I haven't made a terrible mistake,' I muttered to myself.

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On a wet and foggy morning, a few weeks later, Professor Summerlee, Lord Roxton and I boarded a ship to South America. We had made arrangements to meet Professor Challenger at a town on the Amazon river called Manaus. I won't bore you with details of our journey, except to say that we arrived safely in Manaus, and met with Professor Challenger at a small hotel in town.

This is probably a good time to tell you a bit more about my travelling companions: Professor Summerlee was tall and thin, in his mid-sixties with the energy of a man half his age. Lord John Roxton was in his forties; he too was a thin man with blue eyes and a gentle voice. Lord John was a famous hunter and explorer, and had travelled to South America many times. He was also fluent in the local languages.

Professor Challenger had employed some men to help us travel through the Amazon: the party included a large African man named Zambo; two local guides named Gomez and Manuel, and three Mojo Indians from Bolivia who were expert fishermen. Their names were Mojo, José and Fernando.

Lord John hired a steamship, the *Esmeralda*, to take us down the river. We travelled for six days, and when the river began to narrow, we filled two canoes with all our possessions and continued our journey into the unknown.

