

the two guides back up with us.'

Challenger agreed reluctantly. Two hours later, we had climbed down to the camp and returned with guns, food and the two guides. Wasting no time, Challenger carefully made his way across the bridge. Once he'd reached the other side, he jumped off and waved his arms in the air. 'At last! At last!' he cried.

Summerlee, Lord John and I followed. Before long, the four of us were in Maple White's lost world.

But our moment of triumph was followed by something quite unexpected. As we were making our way through the thick trees and shrubs, we heard a loud crash. We rushed back to the edge of the cliff and found that our bridge was gone!

We saw Gomez standing on the column of rock, his face full of hatred. 'Lord John!' he cried. 'I have waited for this moment for a long time; I finally have my revenge! You killed my brother Lopez on the Putomayo River five years ago, and now you will die! All of you fools will die!'

We stared at Gomez in horror and amazement. He laughed, then quickly began climbing down the rock. Lord John raced along the cliff edge – he picked up his rifle and fired. We heard a scream, and then the sound of a falling body.

Lord John hurried back to where we were standing. 'I'm terribly sorry this has happened,' he said. 'I remember Gomez's brother, he was a thief who tried to attack me one night. I had no choice but to kill him.'

Our traitor was gone, but we were trapped. There was no way we could cross the chasm. A little while later, Zambo climbed up the rock.

'Manuel has run away,' he said. 'He helped Gomez destroy your bridge. I tried to catch him, but it was too late. The Indians want to leave too; they are afraid of *Curtupuri*.'

'Tell them to go and get help!' said Lord John.

Zambo nodded. He threw us some more provisions and ammunition, then returned to the camp. We set up our own camp at the edge of the cliff, and surrounded it with thorny bushes. I looked into the dark chasm that separated us from civilisation – our situation was hopeless.

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