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FICTION



VAMPIRES

From Outer Space

BY RICHARD F. WATSON

The Abominable Creature

BY F. X. FALLON

MOURNFUL MONSTER

By Dan Malcolm

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MOURNFUL MONSTER

by DAN MALCOLM

NOVELETTE

illustrated by EMSH

It was huge, massive, with a hide of scales, legs like tree trunks and a fanged mouth of utter horror. Yet it was unmistakably intelligent — and filled with sadness

IT was almost time for the regular midweek flight to leave. On the airstrip, the technicians were giving the two-engine jet a last-minute check-down. In fifteen minutes, according to the chalked announcement on the bulletin board, the flight would depart—making the two thousand mile voyage across the trackless, unexplored wilderness that lay between the two Terran colonies of Marleyville and New Lisbon, on the recently-settled planet of Loki in the Procyon system.

In the Marleyville airport building, David Marshall was having one last drink for the road, and trying unsuccessfully

ly to catch the attention of the strikingly beautiful girl in the violet synthofab dress. Marshall, an anthropologist specializing in non-human cultures, was on his way to New Lisbon to interview a few wrinkled old hunters who claimed to have valuable information for him. He was trying to prove that an intelligent non-human race still existed somewhere on Loki, and he had been told at Marleyville that several veteran hunters in New Lisbon had insisted they knew where the hidden race lived.

"Now boarding for the flight to New Lisbon," came the tinny announcement from



the loudspeaker. "*Passengers for New Lisbon please report to the plane on the field.*"

Marshall gulped the remainder of his drink, picked up his small portfolio, and headed through the swinging door to the airfield. Stepping out of the aircooled building into the noonday heat was like walking into a steambath. The climate on Loki ranged from subtropical to utterly unbearable. Humans had been able to settle in coastal areas only, in the temperate zone. There was one Earth colony here, Marleyville, forty years old and with a population of about eighteen thousand.

Far across the continent, on the western coast, was the other major colony, New Lisbon, with some twenty thousand people. Half a dozen other smaller colonies were scattered up and down each coast, but few humans had ventured into the torrid interior of the continent. It was one vast unexplored jungle.

And as for the other continents of the planet, they were totally unsuited for human life. Temperatures in the equatorial regions of Loki ranged

as high as 180 degrees. In the cooler areas of high and low altitudes, a more tolerable range of 70-100 prevailed. The polar regions were more comfortable so far as climate went, but they were barren and worthless as places to farm or mine.

"*Last call for New Lisbon plane,*" the announcer called. Marshall trotted up the ramp, smiled at the stewardess, and took a seat. The plane was an old and rickety one. It had seen many years' service, Marshall thought. Loki Airlines had a "fleet" of just one plane, purchased at great expense from the highly industrialized neighbor world of Thor. There was not much traffic between Marleyville and New Lisbon. Once a week, the old jet plane made a round trip across the jungle for the benefit of those people—never more than a dozen or so each time—who had some reason for travelling to another colony.

The plane seated about forty, but no more than fifteen were aboard. The attractive girl in the violet dress was sitting a few rows ahead of Marshall. With so many empty seats in the plane, he did not

have any valid excuse for sitting down next to her. Which was unfortunate, he thought with mild regret.

He glanced around. People sat scatteredly here and there in the plane. The stewardess came by and pleasantly told him to fasten his seat belt. A few moments later, the twin jet engines rumbled into life. The plane rolled slowly out onto the runway. Within instants, it was aloft, streaking eastward on the five-hour journey to distant New Lisbon.

THE accident happened in the third hour of the flight. Marshall had been dividing his time between staring out the window at the bright green blur that was the ground eighteen thousand feet below, and reading. He had brought an anthropological journal with him to read, but he found it difficult to concentrate. He would much rather have preferred to be talking to the girl in the violet dress.

He was wondering whether he would have any luck in New Lisbon. This was the final year of his research grant; in a few months his money would run

out, and he would have to return to Earth and take a job teaching at some university. He hoped there would be some clue waiting at the other colony.

The only way an anthropologist could win prestige and acclaim these days was by doing an intensive report on some unknown alien race. The trouble was, most of the planets of the galaxy had been pretty well covered by now. He had his choice of venturing onto some distant and dangerous world or repeating someone else's work.

But there was a rumor that somewhere on Loki lived the remnants of an almost-extinct alien race. Marshall had pegged his hopes on finding that race. He had arrived in Marleyville a week ago and had spoken to some of the old settlers. Yes, they knew the rumors, they told him; no, they couldn't offer any concrete information. But there were some early settlers in New Lisbon who might be able to help. So Marshall was on his way to New Lisbon. And if he drew a blank there, it was back to Earth.

His thoughts were running in that depressing channel, and he decided to try to get some sleep instead of doing still more brooding and worrying. He nudged the seat-stud, guiding the seat back into a more comfortable position, and closed his eyes.

An instant later a shriek sounded in the ship.

Marshall snapped to attention. He glanced across the cabin and saw what the cause of the shriek had been. Great reddish gouts of flame were streaking from the engine on the opposite wing. Moments later the ship yawed violently to one side. Over the public address system came the pilot's voice: "Please fasten seat belts. Remain seated."

An excited buzz of conversation rippled through the ship. Marshall felt strangely calm and detached. So this was what it was like to become involved in an aircraft accident!

His ears stung suddenly as the ship lost altitude. It was dropping in a long, slow glide toward the ground. Shock-waves ran through the passenger cabin as the smoking jet engine exploded. Above every-

thing came the tight, tense voice of the pilot: "We are making an emergency landing. Remain calm. Do not leave your seats until the instruction is given."

The ship was swooping toward the jungle in an erratic wobbling glide now. Cries of panic were audible. With one engine completely gone, the pilot was having obvious difficulty controlling the ship. It came stuttering down through the atmosphere. Marshall could make out individual features of the landscape now. He saw jungle, wild, fierce-looking, untamed.

"Prepare for landing!" came the pilot's words. Marshall gripped his chair's arms tightly. A second later the ship thundered to the ground, accompanied by the crashing sound of falling trees. Marshall glanced out the window. They had crash-landed in the thick of the jungle, pancaking down on top of the trees and flattening them.

He ripped off his safety belt. No time to stop to think—he had to get out of the plane. He fumbled for his portfolio, picked it up, saw

something else under the seat. in big red letters it said SURVIVAL KIT. Marshall grabbed it.

Passengers were rising from their seats. Some were stunned, unconscious, perhaps dead from the violent impact of landing. Marshall stepped out into the aisle. Words met his eyes—EMERGENCY EXIT. His hands closed on a metal handle. He thrust downward, out.

The door opened. He tumbled out, dropping eight or nine feet to the soft, spongy forest floor. He knew he had to run, run fast.

He ran—helter-skelter, tripping and stumbling over the hidden vines. Sweat poured down his body. Time seemed to stand still. He wondered how many other passengers would escape in time from the doomed ship.

The explosion, when it came, seemed to fill the universe. A colossal boom unfolded behind him. The jungle heat rose to searing intensity for a moment. Marshall fell flat, shielding his head against metal fragments with his arms. He lay sprawled face-down in the

thick vegetation, panting breathlessly, while fury raged a few hundred yards behind him. He did not look. He uttered a prayer of thankfulness for his lucky escape.

And then he realized he had very little to be thankful for. He was alive, true. But he was alive in the middle of a trackless jungle, with civilization a thousand miles away at the nearest. Desperately he hoped that there had been other survivors.

HE waited for a few minutes after the blast had subsided. Then he rose unsteadily. The ship was a charred ruin, a blistered hulk. Fragments of the fuselage lay scattered over a wide area. One had landed only a few dozen feet from where he lay.

He started to walk toward the wreckage.

Figures lay huddled in the grass. Marshall reached the first. He was a man in his fifties who was clambering to his feet. ties, heavy-set and balding, Marshall helped him up. The older man's face was pale and sweat-beaded, and his lips

were quivering. For a moment neither said anything.

Then Marshall said, in a voice that was surprisingly steady, "Come. We'd better look for other survivors."

The second to be found was the girl in the violet dress. She was sitting upright, fighting to control her tears. Marshall felt a sudden surge of joy when he saw that she was still alive. She had not completely escaped the fury of the blast, though; her dress was scorched, her eyebrows singed, the ends of her hair crisped. She seemed otherwise unharmed.

Not far from her lay two more people—a couple, who got shakily to their feet as Marshall approached them. Like the others they were pale and close to the borderline of hysteria.

Five survivors. That was all. Marshall found six charred bodies near the plane—passengers who had succeeded in escaping from the ship, but who had been only a few feet away at the time of the blast. None of the bodies was recognizable. He turned away, slowly, shoulders slumping. Five

survivors out of twenty. And they were lost in the heart of the jungle.

"We're all that's left," he said in a quiet voice.

The girl in the violet dress—her beauty oddly enhanced by the tattered appearance of her clothing and the smudges of soot on her face—murmured, "It's horrible! Going along so well—and in just a couple of moments—"

"It was an old plane," muttered the older man bitterly. "An antique. It was criminal to let such a plane be used commercially."

"Talking like that isn't going to help us now," said the remaining man, who stood close to his wife.

"Nothing's going to help us now," said the girl in the violet dress. "We're in the middle of nowhere without any way of getting help. It would have been better to be blown up than to survive like this—"

"No," Marshall said. He held up the small square box labelled SURVIVAL KIT. "Did any of you bring your survival kits out of the plane? No? Well, luckily, I grabbed up mine before I escaped.

Maybe there's something in here to help us."

They crowded close around as he opened the kit. He called off the contents. "Water purifier....compass....a flare-gun and a couple of flares.... a blaster with auxiliary charges....a handbook of survival techniques. That's about it. There's a knife, a flamegun, and a couple of other things."

"We'll never make it," the girl in the violet dress said softly. "A thousand miles back to Marleyville, a thousand miles ahead to New Lisbon. And no roads, no maps. We might as well use that blaster on ourselves."

"No!" Marshall snapped. Staring at the stunned, defeated faces of the other four, he realized that he would have to assume the leadership of the little group. "We're *not* giving up," he said sharply. "We can't let ourselves give up. We're going ahead—ahead to New Lisbon!"

THE first thing to do, Marshall thought, was to get organized. He led them a few hundred yards through the low underbrush, to the side of a

small stream. Strange forest birds, angry over the sudden noisy invasion of their domain, cackled shrilly in the heavy-leaved trees above them. Marshall took a seat on a blunt boulder at the edge of the stream and said, "Now, then. We're going to make a trek through this jungle and we're going to reach New Lisbon alive. All clear?"

No one answered.

Marshall said, "Good. That means we all have to work together, if we're going to survive. I hope you understand the meaning of cooperation. No bickering, no selfishness, no defeatism. Let's get acquainted, first. My name is David Marshall. I'm from Earth. I'm a graduate student of anthropology—came to Loki to do anthropological research toward my doctorate in alien cultures."

He glanced inquisitively at the girl in the violet dress. She said in a faltering voice, "My name is Lois Chalmers. I'm—I'm the daughter of the governor of the New Lisbon colony."

Marshall's eyes widened slightly. Governor Alfred Chalmers was one of the most im-

portant men in the entire Procyon system. Her presence here meant that there would surely be an attempt to find the survivors of the crash.

Marshall next looked toward the married couple. The man, who was short, thickset, and muscular, said, "I'm Clyde Garvey. This is my wife Estelle. We're second-generation colonists at Marleyville. We were going to take a vacation in New Lisbon."

The remaining member of the little band was the middle-aged man. He spoke now. "My name is Kyle, Nathan Kyle. I'm from Earth. I have large business investments on Loki, both at Marleyville and New Lisbon."

"All right," Marshall said. "We all know who everybody else is, now." He looked up at the sky. It was mid-afternoon, and only the overhanging roof of leaves shielded the forest floor from the blazing sun. "We were just about at the halfway point of the trip when we crashed. That means it's just as far to Marleyville as it is to New Lisbon. Probably we're slightly closer to New

Lisbon. We might as well head in that direction."

"Maybe it's better to stay right where we are," Nathan Kyle suggested. "They're certain to search for survivors. If we stay near the wreckage—"

"They could search this jungle for a hundred years and never cover the whole territory," Marshall said. "Don't forget that the only transcontinental plane on this world just crashed. All they have is a handful of short-range cop- ters and light planes—not sufficient to venture this deep into the jungle. No; our only hope is to head for New Lisbon. Maybe when we get close enough, we'll be spotted by a search-party."

"What will we eat?" Estelle Garvey wanted to know.

"We'll hunt the native wild- life," Marshall told her. "And supplement that with edible vegetation. Don't worry about the food angle."

"How long will it take to reach New Lisbon?" Kyle asked.

Marshall shrugged. "We'll march by day, camp by night. If we can average ten miles a day through the jungle, it'll

take about three months to reach safety."

"Three months—"

"I'm afraid so. But at least we'll get there alive."

"Nice to know *you're* so confident, Marshall," Kyle said bleakly. "Three months on foot through a jungle thick with all sorts of dangers—"

"Don't give up before we've started," Marshall said. He studied the survival kit compass for a moment, frowning. "We want to head due east. That way. If we start right away, we can probably cover five or six miles before night-fall. But let's eat and freshen up first."

The blaster supplied in the survival kit had one hundred shots in it, plus an extra hundred in the refill. Marshall was a fair shot, but he knew he would have to do better than fair if they were to survive the trip. Every shot would have to count.

He and Garvey struck out into the forest while Kyle and the women remained behind to fashion water-canteens out of some gourds that grew near the water's edge. The two men entered the darkest part of the

jungle, where the treetops were linked a hundred feet above the forest floor by a thick meshwork of entangled vines that all but prevented sunlight from penetrating.

They moved slowly, trying to avoid making noise. Garvey heard a thrashing in the underbrush and touched Marshall's arm. They froze; a second later a strange creature emerged from a thicket a few feet away from them. It was vaguely deerlike, a lithe, graceful beast whose hide was a delicate grayish-purple in color. In place of horns, three fleshy tendrils sprouted from its forehead.

The animal studied the two men with grave curiosity. Evidently it had never seen human beings before, and did not know whether or not to be afraid. Slowly the forehead-tendrils rose in the air, until they stood erect like three pencils on the beast's head.

Marshall lifted the blaster. Alarmed at the sudden motion, the animal gathered its legs and prepared to bound off into the darkness. Marshall fired quickly. A bolt of energy spurted from the blaster; he aimed for the chest, but his

aim was high, and he caught the beast in the throat instead. The animal blinked once in surprise, then slipped to the mossy carpet of the forest.

Marshall and Garvey carried their prey back to the stream slung between them. The women had worked efficiently while they were gone, Marshall saw. Five gourds lay ranged neatly along the stream's bank, each one carefully hollowed out. Kyle was busy with the water purifier.

Marshall and Garvey dumped the deer-like creature in the middle of the clearing. "Our first meal," Marshall said. "I hope there aren't any vegetarians among us."

IT was a messy business, skinning the animal and preparing it for cooking. Marshall drew that job, and performed it with the small knife from the survival kit. Garvey and his wife built the fire, while Kyle cut down a green branch to use as a spit.

The cooking job was extremely amateur, and the meat, when they finally served it, was half raw and half scorched. None of them

seemed to have much of an appetite, but they forced themselves to eat, and washed it down with purified water. After the meal, Marshall carefully wrapped up the remainder of the meat in the animal's own hide, tying the bundle together with vines. They filled their gourd canteens and plugged them shut.

No one said much. A tremendous task faced them—a trek across half a continent, through unknown jungle. All five seemed subdued by the enormity of the job that confronted them.

They started out, hacking their way through the intertwined brambles, following the compass on an easterly course. The stream followed right along with them, which made things a little easier. It was always good to know that your water supply was heading in the same general direction you were going.

Loki's day was twenty-eight hours long. Marshall's wristwatch was an Earthtype standard one, so it was of little use to him, but Garvey wore a watch which gave the time as

half past three in the afternoon Loki time—Marleyville time. But they were a thousand miles east of Marleyville, and heading further east with every step. Marshall did not attempt to adjust the time to the longitude. Life was complicated enough as it was, just then.

If Garvey's watch were right, though, they had about six more hours of marching time before nightfall would arrive. If they could average a mile an hour while walking, Marshall thought, it might be possible to reach New Lisbon in eighty or ninety days. If they lived that long, he added grimly.

The stream widened out after a while, becoming a fairly broad little river. Water beasts were slumbering near the bank. Marshall approached to look at them. They were reptiles, sleek velvet-brown creatures twenty feet long, with tails that switched ominously from side to side and toothy mouths that yawned hungrily at the little party of Terrans. But the animals made no attempt to come up on shore and attack. They simply glared,

beady-eyed, at the Earthmen.

After more than an hour of steady marching Lois Chalmers asked for a few minutes to rest, and they halted. She pulled off the stylish pumps she was wearing, and stared ruefully at her swollen feet.

"These shoes of mine just aren't intended for jungle treks," she said mournfully. "But I can't walk barefoot in the jungle, I suppose."

Garvey said, "If you'd like, I'll make you some sandals out of bark and vines."

The girl brightened. "Oh, would you?"

So there was a fifteen-minute halt while Garvey fashioned crude sandals for her. During the wait, Marshall ventured down to the river-bank again. The big sleeping reptiles lay sunning themselves on the mud by the side of the water.

Marshall saw golden shapes gliding through the water. Fish. Another source of food, he thought, and one that would not consume the precious blaster-charges. They would need to make hooks from slivers of bone and fishing-line from the sinews of animals.

He smiled to himself as the idea occurred. David Marshall, late of the University of Chicago, had no business knowing anything about such primitive things as home-made fishing equipment.

But a man had to survive, he thought. And to survive you had to use your brains.

He peered at the slowly-moving fish below the water, and nodded to himself. The first opportunity they had, they would improvise some fishing equipment.

THE river narrowed to a stream again, later on, and veered sharply off to the south. The party continued on the eastward path, even though they were no longer with a water supply. The afternoon darkened into night, and the jungle heat subsided.

As dusk began to gather around them, Marshall said, "We'd better stop now. Make camp here, continue in the morning. We'll get into trouble if we try to hike in the dark."

They settled in a small clearing fenced in by vaulting

trees whose trunks were the thickness of a dozen men. The forest grew dark rapidly; Loki's three gleaming moon's could be seen bobbing intermittently above the trees, and a sprinkling of stars brightened the night.

Marshall said, "We'll stand watch in shifts through the night. Kyle, you take first watch. Then Lois. I'll hold down the middle slot. Mrs. Garvey, you follow me, and your husband can have the last shift. Two hours apiece ought to do it."

He opened the survival kit and handed the blaster and flare gun to Kyle. The businessman frowned and said, "What am I supposed to do?"

"Stay awake, mostly, and keep an eye out for visiting animals. And if you happen to hear an airplane overhead, shoot of one of the flares so they'll be able to find us."

"Do you think they'll send a plane this far?" Lois asked.

Marshall shook his head. "Frankly, no. But it can't do any harm to be prepared."

He and Garvey built a fire while the others collected a woodpile to use as fuel through

the night. Then the group settled down for the night. They remained close together; Marshall chose a clump of grass as his bed, while the Garvey's huddled in each other's arms not far away and Lois bedded down on the other side of the fire. Kyle, as first watch, sat near the fire.

Marshall did not find it easy to fall asleep. His senses were troubled by new sensations—the *chickk-chickk* of the jungle insects, the far-off hooting of night-flying birds, the occasional unnerving trumpet-call of some huge wandering animal settling down for the night.

The flickering of the campfire bothered him no matter how tightly he clamped his eyelids together. He remained awake a long while, squirming and shifting position, his mind full of a million thoughts and plans.

He was still half awake and dimly aware of what was happening when Kyle's shift ended, for he heard the financier talking to Lois, waking her up. But some time after that he dozed off, because he was

soundly asleep when Lois came to fetch him for his shift on patrol.

HE was dreaming of some pleasant tropical isle where there was nothing to do but sleep on the beach, swim, make love, and sip mild drinks. He felt the girl's hand on his shoulder, but she had to shake him several times before he woke.

Finally he rolled over and blinked at her. "What's the matter?"

"Your turn," the girl whispered.

"Turn?" he repeated vaguely. Then he came fully awake. "Oh. I see." He got to his feet and glanced at his watch. It read two o'clock. He made a rough computation into Loki time and decided that it was about six and a half hours before dawn.

He looked around. The Garveys and Kyle were sound asleep; Kyle was even snoring. The fire was getting a bit low. Marshall added some logs to it.

"Was there any trouble?" he asked.

"No," Lois said. "Nothing

has happened. Good night.”

“Good night,” he replied.

She crossed the clearing and settled down to sleep. Marshall squatted by the fire and stared upward. A great white bird settled on a tree-limb above him, and the huge creature was staring down at the camp with serene indifference. For a moment Marshall seriously considered shooting the big bird with the blaster he held; it would probably provide them with enough meat for several days. But he held back, reluctant to kill anything quite so beautiful. They still had some of the deer meat left, and there was no need to kill again just yet. After a short while the bird took wing, and flew off into the darkness with solemn dignity.

Marshall paced around the camp. An hour slipped by. He looked around, saw the girl Lois sitting up, her head propped against her hand, watching him. He walked over to her.

“Why are you up?”

“I can’t sleep. I’m wide awake again.” she whispered. “Mind if I keep you company?”

“You ought to get some sleep,” he told her.

“I know. But I can’t.” She got to her feet, and they strolled around the clearing together. He watched her with interest. She was certainly a lovely girl. In the past, he had never had much time to spare for women. His studies had always come first.

“How old are you?” he asked after a while.

“Nineteen,” she said. “You?”

“Twenty-seven.”

“You’re an anthropologist?” she asked.

“Yes.”

“A good one?”

“Not very,” he admitted. “Just run of the mill. I came here hoping to make my fame and fortune by discovering the native life of Loki.”

“You still may,” she said. “Aren’t they supposed to live somewhere in the jungle? Maybe we’ll find them while we’re travelling east.”

Marshall chuckled quietly. He had been so busy with the sheer problems of survival that he had never even stopped to consider that possibility. Of

course, he thought! Wouldn't it be wonderful if I stumbled right into an alien village!

They talked for a while longer, mostly about her. She went to school on Thor, the neighboring world; she had stopped at Marleyville to visit her brother, who was in business there, before going on to see her father at New Lisbon. Evidently, Marshall thought, she had led a rather plush and sheltered life up till now. But she was bearing up pretty well under the jungle life, he thought.

When his watch read half past four, he woke up Estelle Garvey. "Your turn," he told her. "Your husband relieves you at six o'clock."

He returned to his clump of grass. Lois settled down across the way from him. He was asleep within minutes.

THEY were all up at dawn. Garvey, who was very good with his hands, had made use of his time on watch to fashion a pair of fishhooks and some line.

They discovered another small brook not too far from

their campsite, and some patient angling by Garvey and Marshall provided their breakfast: small herring-like fish which had a sharp, pungent taste when cooked. After breakfast they washed up, the women bathing first, then the men. Personal privacy was being respected as best as possible among them.

They marched until noon, when the heat became almost intolerable and they were forced to stop for a siesta. Lois found a bush with round blue-green fruits the size of apples growing on it, and, after Garvey had boldly tasted one without immediate ill effects, they lunched on those and moved on half an hour later.

The forest creatures showed no fear of them. From time to time small rodents with huge hind legs would hop rabbit-fashion almost defiantly close to them, peering curiously out of gleaming blue eyes. Once a big beast clumsily blundered across their path—an animal the height of a man and about fifteen feet long, which clumped along on four immense legs.

It was obviously a vegetari-

an, and just as obviously it had poor eyesight. It crossed their path only twenty feet in front of Marshall, who was in the lead, and paused briefly to gulp down a hillock of grass before continuing on its myopic way.

Morale remained high in the little band. Marshall estimated that they covered better than fourteen miles during the day, and when they stopped at sundown Garvey shot a long-eared gazelle-like animal for their dinner. Sniffing little hyenas came to investigate the kill, but rapidly scattered when Marshall hurled a rock at them. It was not worth wasting a blaster shot on such vermin.

The next day they moved on again, and that day they ran into their first serious problems in the jungle.

The initial snag came in mid-morning. The party was hacking its way through a particularly tangled stretch of pathless underbrush. Abruptly, a torrential rain descended on them—a warmish rain that fell by the bucketful, drenching them within instants. There

was no time to seek cover, and no cover to be had.

The rain lasted fifteen minutes, though there were moments when Marshall felt it was going to go on forever, cascading in endless sheets. They were soaked to the skin by the time it was over.

Their clothing, already shredded and soiled after three days of jungle life, clung to their skins as if pasted there. Gnatlike insects came to hover around the bedeviled Earthmen, stinging and buzzing and flying into ears and eyes and noses and mouths.

A glorious rainbow arched across the sky, glowing in the golden-green sunlight, but none of the Earthmen were in any mood to appreciate its beauty. They were wet and sticky and miserable. After a while, their clothes dried somewhat though the humidity assured that nothing would ever dry completely. By noontime that day, colorful molds were already beginning to form on the soaked clothing. By the time they finished the trip, Marshall thought, their clothes will have rotted completely away.

The prospect of regular drenching of this sort was not an appealing one. But, in the middle of the afternoon, a new problem presented itself. The stream that they had been following most of the day had widened suddenly into a river—and the river had taken a broad swinging curve out in front of them, where it blocked the eastward passage completely.

Marshall shaded his eyes and looked upriver. "Think we ought to try heading north for a while?" he asked.

Garvey shook his head. "Don't think it's wise to leave course, Marshall. We'd better build a raft."

It took them most of the rest of the day to complete the raft, with Garvey, as the best hand craftsman of the group, directing the work. The raft, when it was finished, was a crude but serviceable affair—several dozen logs lashed solidly together by the tough, sinewy vines that grew everywhere in the jungle. The river that had so unexpectedly blocked their route was almost a mile wide. The Terrans had

dled together while Marshall and Garvey poled the rickety raft across.

They were midway across when Kyle, who was holding the blaster, suddenly pointed and shouted: "L-look!"

A snout was rising from the river's murky depths. Turning, Marshall saw the head that followed it—a head about the size of a large basketball, and mostly teeth. The neck came gliding up from the water next, yards of it. Ten, fifteen feet of neck rose above them, and still more lurked beneath the water—along with who knew how many feet of body.

The head was swaying from side to side, looming above the raft and rocking gently as if getting into the rhythm of a spring. Kyle's trembling hands held the blaster. The river creature followed smoothly along the side of the raft, studying the five people aboard, deciding which one would make the juiciest morsel.

"For God's sake, fire!" Marshall called. "Shoot, Kyle, shoot!"

But Kyle did not shoot.

With a muttered curse, Marshall sprang forward, nearly upsetting the delicate balance of the raft, and snatched the blaster from the financier's numb fingers. He lifted and fired. The river-serpent's head vanished. The long sleek neck slipped gracefully into the water. A trail of blood eddied upward toward the surface.

Lois gasped and pointed toward the water. It boiled with activity. Creatures were coming from all over to devour the dead monster.

"I'm sorry," Kyle muttered thinly. "I had the gun—I tried to fire it—but I couldn't shoot, I just couldn't. I was too scared. Marshall, dammit, I'm sorry!"

"Forget it," Marshall said. "It's dead and no harm was done." But he made a mental note to the effect that Kyle could not be trusted to act in an emergency. In the jungle, you were either quick or you were dead.

THEY reached the other side of the river without further mishap, and abandoning the raft where it had

beached itself, they continued inland.

During the next five days, they plodded steadily along. Marshall figured they had covered about a hundred miles—which sounded like a great deal, until he realized it was only one tenth of the total journey.

The five of them were changing, in those five days. Becoming less prissy, less civilized. The barriers of restraint were rapidly breaking down.

They ate foods they would never have dreamed of eating normally, ripping and rending almost raw meat to assuage their hunger. They ate less frequently too, and from day to day they grew leaner, tougher. In the past few years Marshall had let himself get slightly out of shape, but that roll of flesh around his middle had disappeared utterly in only a few days. Muscles that had not worked for many years came into regular play.

The little band did not present a very imposing picture. The men had week-old beards; the women, despite sporadic attempts at self-tidiness, were growing unkempt and very un-

feminine, with ragged, stringy hair and no makeup. As for clothing, it was diminishing rapidly, the effects of continual humidity and rain and jungle life.

Marshall's shirt had been so encrusted with violet and green molds that he had been forced to discard it. His trousers were frayed and tattered, and ended at the knee. Garvey looked similarly disheveled, while Kyle was even worse.

The insubstantial fabrics of the women's dresses had suffered the most. Lois' violet synthofab dress, which had attracted Marshall so much back in Marleyville, was a bedraggled ruin. She shed it completely on the fourth day, making do with her underclothes and some foliage bound around her breasts for the sake of modesty.

But modesty mattered very little in the jungle. It was futile to maintain the old civilized taboos under such conditions. Before the end of the first week, the five of them were bathing unashamedly together, and there was no more

niggling concern with modesty or other social graces that were irrelevant in the cruel world of the jungle.

Marshall became an adept hunter. The jungle abounded in strange life-forms of every description: thick-furred creatures like little teddy-bears, that soared on bat-wings from tree to tree, forming easy targets in mid-glide and yielding deliciously tender white meat; big-beaked jungle birds of astonishing color, who ranged themselves in groups of a dozen along a tree-limb and obediently waited to be shot; curious amphibious creatures who looked like oil drums with eyes, and whose hind legs tasted like chicken; graceful fawn-like creatures that flitted through the forest like tawny ghosts, occasionally coming within range.

Making the most of his two hundred blaster charges, Marshall kept the group supplied with meat. Kyle became a surprisingly able fisherman, while the women made themselves responsible for gathering fruits, nuts, and vegetables, and Garvey took care of the mechanical aspects of jungle

life, the building of clearings and the fashioning of clubs and sandals and the like.

They forged forward, keeping careful track of the days and careful watch of the skies, in case a rescue ship should pass overhead. None did. But the general mood of the party was one of quiet determination. The conviction now gripped them that they would return to civilization alive.

Except for occasional brushes with the larger jungle wildlife, and a few small incidents involving snakes underfoot, there had been no serious problem. The rain, the humidity, the insects—these were inconveniences which could be tolerated. There was no reason to suspect that they would get into difficulties. All they had to do was to keep on plugging ahead.

Until the ninth day. When it suddenly became clear that their eastward march had come to an unexpected halt—perhaps permanently.

IT had been a coolish day, by jungle standards, and the group had been moving at a

good pace all morning. They stopped at noon and feasted on a pair of the small green amphibious oildrum-creatures, and then moved on. Marshall, his blaster in his hand, led the way, with Lois at his side. The girl wore only sheer pants round her waist, but despite this she did not show the embarrassment she had displayed originally when it had been necessary for her to discard her useless city clothes. Her body was tanned and handsome.

Walking behind Marshall came Nathan Kyle, holding the flare-gun, with the Garveys bringing up the rear. On one of his recent evening watches Garvey had fashioned a bow and arrow outfit for himself, and he now wore the bow slung over his thick barrel chest. His wife carried the survival kit.

They cut their way through some reasonably open territory for about an hour after the lunch halt. Marshall, keeping his compass constantly in hand, maintained the consistent eastward course which he hoped would, in time, bring them to the coastal area where the colony of New Lisbon and

the other smaller coast settlements could be found.

The course took them up the side of a small, heavily-wooded rise. Marshall strode through the thick shrubbery, ignoring as best he could the droning insects that nipped at his bare legs, and down the other side of the low hill.

He stopped, staring ahead. His eyes ranged toward the next hill in the gently undulating series. Sudden amazement surged through him.

"Good God," he muttered. "Look at that!"

The others came up to him and paused with him, an anxious, frightened little group. Garvey, squinting out into the distance with his keen, experienced eyes, said finally, "I've never seen anything like it. The beast must be fifty feet high!"

"Are you sure?" Marshall asked.

"At least that much. It's standing in a clump of rhizome trees that grow to about forty feet, never less, and you can see the creature's head bobbing up over the damned trees!"

Marshall was conscious of

Lois pressing up against him, her hand gripping his arm in sudden fright. He put his free arm around her to steady her. But he was frightened himself. He had never seen anything quite like the beast that stood squarely in their path, no more than five hundred yards ahead.

The creature was vaguely humanoid in shape—that is, if it had any meaning to describe such a monster as humanoid. It towered above the trees, but through the shrubbery Marshall could see that it stood on two massive legs that seemed almost like tree-trunks themselves. The being was covered entirely with thick, metallic-looking scales that glistened blue-green in the sunlight. Its immense head consisted mostly of mouth; fangs more than six inches long were visible. The eyes were like blazing beacons, as big as dishes—but they were not the eyes of a beast. There was unmistakable intelligence in them.

As they watched, one gigantic arm swooped upward through the air. For an instant, eight huge fingers were spread wide. Then they closed tight, imprisoning a bat-like

flying reptile the way a man might pounce on a small insect. The trumpeting sound of the frightened pterodactyl echoed for a moment in the forest; then, the mouth yawned, the arm went toward it.

The mouth closed. The monster had devoured an appetizing morsel—a pleasant midday snack. As if to signal its pleasure it rumbled ground-shakingly, a fierce bellow of content. Then it turned, and, sending saplings crashing all around, began to stride toward the group of humans huddled at the foot of the hill.

MARSHALL was the first to react. "Come on," he said harshly. "Maybe it senses us. Let's split up before we all wind up as lunch for that thing."

With a rough shove, he sent Nathan Kyle plunging away into the underbrush. Garvey needed no hint; he and his wife faded off the road into a sheltered spot. Marshall glanced at him, saw him stringing his bow and notching an arrow into place.

Marshall and Lois crouched down behind a thick shrub and waited. He gripped the blaster tight, holding it in readiness, but even as he opened the safety he paused to think that the blaster was a futile weapon to use against a monster of this size.

Lois whispered, "What is that thing? I've never heard of a life-form that size."

"Neither have I. This is just something that's lurked in this unexplored jungle without ever getting seen from the air. And it's just our luck to be the ones to discover it!"

"Does it know where we are?"

Marshall shrugged. "Something that size probably doesn't have very highly developed sense organs. But it may have seen us. And it may be hungry."

"I hope not."

The creature was getting closer. Marshall could feel the ground quivering as each ponderous foot descended to the jungle floor. It was like a distant drumbeat....boom....boom...boom...boom...

Abruptly the booming stopped. That meant, Marshall

thought, that the monster had to be very close—and perhaps was pausing a few yards away, searching for the small creatures it had seen from the distance. He held his breath and warily looked over his shoulder.

Two legs were planted like tree trunks no more than twenty yards away from him. He caught his breath sharply. Lois turned to see what he was looking at; her mouth widened as if she were about to scream, and Marshall instantly clapped his hand over it.

She relaxed. He lifted his hand from her mouth and put a finger to his lips, indicating silence.

They turned round to see the creature.

It did not seem to notice them. Marshall's gaze rose, up the giant legs, past the thick midsection of the body, to the head. Yes there was no doubt about it—there was intelligence in those eyes. But an alien intelligence. And it was the face of a carnivorous creature that would hardly stop to wonder before devouring them.

It had come to a halt and was peering round, spreading

the brush apart with its monstrous paws, hunting for the hidden Earthmen. Marshall prayed that Garvey, on the other side of the creature, would not decide to open fire with his bow. The monster evidently had a poor sense of smell, and the humans were well hidden under the shrubbery. With luck, they might avoid being seen. Perhaps the creature, cheated of its prey, would simply continue on its way through the jungle, allowing them to move along toward New Lisbon without harm.

Long moments passed. The creature, with seemingly cosmic patience, was still standing there, probing the underbrush with its enormous fingers. Marshall kept the blaster cocked and ready in case he should be uncovered. No doubt Garvey was waiting, too, with his wife.

How about Kyle? Marshall remembered the way Kyle had choked up when the sea-serpent had risen from the depths of the river. How was the financier reacting now, with hideous death looming not far overhead?

Marshall found out a moment later.

Kyle began to scream.

"Help! Help me! It's going to find me! Marshall! Garvey! Kill it before it catches me!"

His pitiful wails rang out loudly. Marshall saw the feet of the monster rise and move in the direction of the sound.

"No! No!" Kyle yelled.

"Stay here and don't move from the spot," Marshall told Lois. "I've got to protect Kyle. The idiot! The absolute idiot!"

He moved in a half-crouch through the underbrush. Kyle was still yelling in hysterical fear. Marshall kept going until he reached Garvey. The solidly built colonist had his bow drawn tight and was looking around.

"The creature's just over to the left," Garvey informed him. "It heard Kyle squalling and now it's going to have a look."

Marshall craned his neck back. Yes, there was the creature, hovering high above the forest floor.

"Help me! Please don't let it get me!" Kyle was still wailing.

The creature stooped suddenly. It reached into the underbrush; its fingers closed around something. Then it straightened up. Marshall saw something impossibly tiny-looking held in the monster's hand, and he had to force himself to realize that the kicking, squirming creature the monster held was a human being.

"Let's go," Marshall said. "It's caught Kyle. Maybe we can kill it."

THE monster was staring at Kyle with deep curiosity. The Earthman blubbered and screamed. Gently, the huge creature touched Kyle with an inch-long fingernail. Kyle moaned and prayed for release.

"Should we fire?" Garvey asked.

"Wait a minute. Maybe it'll set him down. It seems fascinated by him."

"It's never seen an Earthman before," Garvey said. "Maybe it'll decide Kyle isn't edible."

"He deserves whatever he gets," Marshall grunted. "But it's our duty as Earthmen to

try to save him. Suppose you take a pot-shot at the hand that's holding Kyle. Think you can hit the alien without nailing Kyle?"

"I'll do my best," Garvey said grimly.

He drew the bowstring back and let the arrow fly—straight and true, humming through the air and burying itself deep in the wrist of the hand that grasped Kyle round the middle.

The creature paused in its examination of Kyle. It probed with a forefinger of the other hand at the arrow that was embedded in its flesh. Suddenly, it tossed Kyle to the ground like a doll it had tired of, and advanced toward the place where Marshall and Garvey crouched hidden behind two gigantic palm-fronds.

"Here it comes," Marshall muttered. "We'd better shoot to kill. You go for the eyes with your arrows, and I'll aim for the legs and try to cut the thing down to our size."

The ground was shaking again. Marshall's hand gripped the blaster butt tightly. Suddenly the monster emitted an earsplitting howl of defiance

and kicked over the tree that had been sheltering them.

Marshall fired first, aiming his blaster bolt straight into the thick leg in front of him. The energy beam was opened to the widest possible aperture. It played on the leg for a moment but barely seemed to pierce the surface. The creature was virtually armor-plated. Marshall glanced back at Garvey. The colonist had already shot two more arrows—Marshall saw them sticking out of the creature's face—and he was notching a third arrow.

The monster stooped over, slapping at the foliage as if irritated by the sudden attack rather than angry. One paw swept inches over Marshall's head. He fired a second bolt into the same place as the first had gone, and saw a break in the scales now. The monster roared in pain and lifted its wounded leg high.

The leg thrashed around, kicking and trampling. Suddenly a sidewise swipe of an open hand caught Marshall and sent him sprawling, half unconscious. He landed near Kyle. The financier, Marshall saw, was not in good shape.

Blood was trickling from his mouth and one of his legs was grotesquely twisted. Kyle's face was a pale white with fear and shock. He did not seem to be conscious.

Marshall struggled to his feet. He became aware that the alien's struggles had slackened somewhat. Running back to Garvey's side, he looked up and saw an arrow arch upward and bury itself in the center of one huge yellow eyeball.

"Bullseye!" Garvey yelled.

The scream of pain that resulted seemed to fill the entire jungle. Marshall grinned at the colonist and gripped his blaster again.

He fired—three times. The charges burrowed into the weakened place in the monster's leg, and suddenly the great being slipped to one knee. Unafraid now, the two men dashed out into the open. Garvey's final arrow pierced the remaining eye of the giant. A shrill cry of pain resulted. Marshall raised his blaster, centering the sights on the monster's ruined eye, hoping that his shot would supply the *coup de grace*.

"Yes," a deep, throbbing

voice said. "*Kill me. It would be well. I long to die.*"

MARSHALL was so stunned he lowered his blaster. Turning to Garvey he said, "Did you hear that?"

"It sounded like—like a voice."

"I was the one who spoke. I speak directly to your minds. Why do you not kill me?"

"Great Jehosaphat!" Garvey cried. "The monster's talking!"

"It's a telepath," Marshall said. "It's intelligent and it's able to communicate with us!"

"*I ask for death,*" came the solemn thought.

Marshall stared at the great being. It had slumped down on both its knees now, and it held its hands over its shattered eyes. Even so, its head was more than twenty feet above the ground.

"Who—what are you?" Marshall asked.

"I am nothing now and soon will be even less. Twenty thousand years ago my people ruled this world. Today I am the only one. And soon I too will be gone—killed by tiny creatures I can hardly see."

Marshall heard a rustling sound behind him and glanced over his shoulder to see Lois and Garvey's wife come hesitantly out of hiding, now that the danger seemed to be past.

Marshall felt a twinge of awe. To think of a world ruled by beings such as these—and to think of them all gone except this one, their cities buried under thousands of years of jungle growth, their very bones rotted by the planet's warmth and lost forever. What a sight it must have been, a city of titans such as these!

"Why do you not kill me?" the being asked telepathically.

"What's happening?" Lois asked.

Marshall said, "Garvey hit the creature in the eyes with arrows, and I knocked him down by blasting his legs. But he seems to be intelligent. And he's pleading with us to put him out of his misery."

"That thing—intelligent?"

"Once we had science and arts and poetry," came the slow, mournful telepathic voice. *"But our civilization withered and died. Children no longer were born, and the old*

ones died slowly away. Until at last only I was left, eating animals and living the life of a beast in the jungle...."

"How can you be sure you're the last?" Marshall asked. "Maybe there are other survivors."

"When others lived my mind was attuned to them. But for many years I have known nothing but silence on this world. I did not know beings your size could be intelligent.... I beg your pardon if I have injured the companion of yours who I seized in my curiosity. Will you not give me the satisfaction of death at last?"

Marshall felt deep sadness as he watched blood stream down the alien's face—yellow-brown blood. If only they had known, if only the being had not been so fearsome in appearance, if only it had made telepathic contact with them sooner—

If. Well, it was too late now.

"Isn't there some way we can help it?" Lois asked.

Marshall shook his head. "We're hundreds of miles from civilization. We'll be

lucky to get back alive ourselves. And I crippled it with my blaster."

"Only thing to do is put it out of its misery," Garvey said flatly.

"Yes. I am in great pain and wish to die."

Marshall lifted the blaster regretfully. Only a few moments before he had been shooting to kill, shooting what he thought was a ferocious and deadly creature. And, he thought, unwittingly he had destroyed the last of an ancient awe-inspiring race.

Now he had no choice. It was wrong to permit this noble creature to suffer, to be eaten alive by the blood-hungry jungle creatures.

His finger tightened on the blaster.

"I thank you for giving me peace," the alien telepathed. *"My loneliness at last will end."*

Marshall fired.

The energy bolt pierced the already broken eye of the monster and seared its way through to the brain. The vast creature toppled forward on its face, kicked convulsively as the message of death passed

through its huge and probably tremendously complex nervous system. In a moment it was all over except for a quivering of the outstretched limbs, and that soon stopped.

Marshall stared at the great body face down on the jungle floor. Then he turned away.

"Let's go see how Kyle is," he said. "The alien picked him up and dropped him again when we opened fire. I think he's in bad shape."

The four of them stepped around the corpse of the fallen alien and made their way to the place where Kyle lay. The financier had not moved. Marshall bent over him, pointing to the livid bruises that stood out on Kyle's body.

"Fingerprints," Marshall said. "The big boy had a pretty strong grip."

Kyle's eyes opened and he looked wildly around. "The monster," he said in a thick, barely intelligible voice. "Don't let it touch me! Don't—"

Kyle slumped over, his head rolling loosely to one side. A fresh trickle of blood began to issue from between his lips, but it stopped almost at once.

Marshall knelt, putting his ear to Kyle's chest.

After a moment he looked up.

"How is he?" Garvey asked.

Marshall shrugged. "He's dead, I'm afraid. The shock of the whole thing, and the internal hemorrhages caused by the creature's grip on him—"

"And he fell about twenty feet," Garvey pointed out.

Marshall nodded. "We'd better bury him before the local fauna comes around for their meal. And then we'll get back on the path to New Lisbon."

THEY dug a grave at the side of the clearing and lowered Kyle's body in. Garvey bound two sticks together crosswise with a bit of vine, and planted them at the head of the grave. No one even suggested a burial for the dead alien. It would have been totally impossible to move a creature of such bulk at all. Its weight was probably many tons, Marshall estimated.

It was nearly nightfall by the time they were finished interring Kyle, but the party

moved along anyway, since no one was anxious to camp for the night close to the scene of the violence. Few words were spoken. The brief and tragic encounter with the huge alien, and Kyle's death, had left them drained of emotion, with little to say to each other.

The next day, they continued to forge eastward. Marshall was still obsessed with the thought of the dead alien.

"Imagine," he said to Lois. "An entire planet full of giants like that—can you picture even a city of them? Fantastic!"

"And all gone," Lois said.

"Yes. Every one. Not a fossil remains. If we ever get back to civilization, I hope to be able to organize a search party to bring back the skeleton of that giant. It'll be quite an exhibit at the Galactic Science Museum, if we ever find it."

In the distance, a hyena cackled. A huge shadow crossed the path in front of them—the shadow of an enormous flying reptile winging its solitary way over the jungle. Far away, the rhythmic bel-

lowing of some jungle creatures resounded echoingly.

Marshall wondered if they ever would get back. They had covered many miles, sure enough, but they had not yet even reached the halfway point in their journey to New Lisbon. And who knew what dangers still lay ahead for them?

They marched on, through that day and the next, and the one after that. Heat closed in around them like a veil, and the rain was frequent and annoying. But they managed. They killed for meat, and fished when they came to water, and by this time they had all become experts on which vegetables were edible and which were likely to provide a night of indigestion and cramps.

Day blurred into day. Marshall's beard became long and tangled. They looked like four jungle creatures rather than four Earthmen.

And then, one day shortly after high noon—

"Look!" Garvey yelled shrilly. "Look up there, everyone! Look!"

Marshall could hear the droning sound even before he could raise his eyes. He looked up, feeling the pulse of excitement go through him. There, limned sharply against the bright metallic blueness of the afternoon sky, a twin-engine plane circled the jungle!

FOR a moment they were all too numb, too stupefied with joy to react. Marshall was the first to break from his stasis.

"The flare-gun—where is it?"

"In the survival kit!" Garvey exclaimed.

Hasty hands ripped open the fabric of the kit that had served them so long. Marshall hurriedly jerked out the flare-gun, inserted a charge with fumbling fingers, lifted the gun, fired.

A blaze of red light blossomed in the sky. Shading his eyes, Marshall saw the plane wheel round to investigate. He inserted another flare and fired it.

"Shirts off, everyone! Signal to them!"

They waved frantically. Minutes passed; then, the

hatch of the plane opened and a small dark object dropped through. A parachute bellied open immediately. The plane circled the area and streaked off toward the east.

Through some sort of miracle, the parachute did not become snagged in the trees on the way down, and the package came to rest not far from where the four stood. Marshall and the others ran for it. They found a note pinned to the wrapping:

We were just about to give up hope of ever finding any of the crash survivors when we saw the flares go up. Your area is too heavily wooded to allow for a landing, and so we're returning to New Lisbon to get a 'copter. Remain exactly where you are now. We expect to be back in about two hours. In the meantime we're dropping some provisions to tide you over until we return.

"We're going to be rescued!" Lois cried. "They've found us!"

"It's like a miracle!" Garvey's wife exclaimed.

The two hours seemed to take forever. The four squat-

ted over the provisions kit, munching with delight on chocolate and fruit, and smoking their first cigarettes since the day of the crash.

Finally they heard the droning sound of a helicopter's rotors overhead.

There it was—descending vertically, coming to a halt in their clearing. Three men sprang from the helicopter the moment it reached the ground. One wore the uniform of a medic. They sprinted toward the survivors. Marshall became uncomfortably aware of his own uncouth appearance, and saw the women attempting to cover the exposed parts of their anatomy in sudden newfound modesty.

"Well! I'm Captain Collins of the New Lisbon airbase. I certainly didn't expect to be picking up any survivors of that crash!"

"My name's David Marshall," Marshall said. He introduced the others.

"You the only survivors?"

Marshall nodded. "A fifth man was thrown from the plane alive, but he died later. We're the only ones who sur-

vived. How far are we from New Lisbon?"

"Oh, three hundred fifty miles, I'd say."

Marshall frowned. "Three hundred fifty? That means we covered better than six hundred miles on foot since the crash. But aren't you a little far from home base? How come you searched for us here?"

The New Lisbon man looked uncomfortable. "Well, to tell the truth, it was a kind of a hunch. We got this crazy message—"

"Message?"

"Yes. A few days back. Damn near everyone in the colony heard it. It was a kind of telepathic voice telling us that there were still a few survivors from the crash, and giving an approximate position. So we sent out a few scouts. Say, anyone of you folks a telepath?"

"No, not us," Marshall said.

"It must have been the alien."

"Alien? You met an alien?"

"Past tense. He's dead."

Marshall smiled oddly. "But he must have decided to do us one last favor before he died. In return for the favor we were doing him. He must have broadcast a telepathic message to New Lisbon."

The New Lisbon man eyed Marshall strangely. "Are you telling me that you found an intelligent alien in the jungle?"

"That's right. And we're going to go back and locate his body, and see if we can preserve it for science. It's the least we can do for him. At least one remnant of his race will be preserved. They won't die away without leaving a trace," Marshall said, as he walked toward the helicopter that would take him back to civilization.

THE END
