

The last known species of dinosaurs

Marquis Terry tells the exhilarating tale of the time he went on safari in the North of Africa and what he did there to ensure the survival of the last known species of dinosaurs.

Lady Alyssa asks the Marquis for a tale

As she discreetly slips her hard-earned coins into a small red purse, Lady Alyssa turns to the Marquis beside her and says, "Do tell us the exhilarating tale of the time you went on safari in the North of Africa and what you did there to ensure the survival of the last known species of dinosaurs."

In which the Marquis takes much too long to set the scene, *or* In which the Marquis is expelled from a volcano into the , deepest darkest equatorial jungle and encounters a small people who make him their god

"My esteemed peers, I must apologize for my quietness - your vivid descriptions 'ave so distracted me! The very colours of this room 'ave become so entrancing - the very surfaces seem to be breathing and pulsing with the life of your stories - the colours! the burning towers! the colours!..." The Marquis shakes himself and blinks, and the swirling of his pupils seems to subside somewhat. He calls for some throat lubricant and takes a quick swig.

"But to assuage your curiosity, Madame," he replies to the Lady Alyssa, "oui, the events of which you speak *were* well north of the beginning of my journey in Antarctica, located in fact, in the north-central part of the darkest continent of Africa, but it was not *quite* in the northernmost regions of Africa." The Marquis gazes into the distance as he begins to reminisce.

"I 'ad been traversing the submerged lava tunnels beneath the darkest continent in a small ceramic craft designed by my dear dear Bruno, Master of 'ops, Tun and Mash. Bruno 'ad sent this vehicle to me in an effort to return me to my marquisate, as 'e sorely missed my patronage, and undoubtedly our weekly Biere Club quaffing sessions. So yes, the entire experience may 'ave been defined as a safari, in that I was on a desperate 'unt to find my way 'ome! Unfortunately, the map Bruno 'ad included was tres confusing, and, as my navigator skills are limited to the use of well known public establishments in urban areas, I soon found myself 'opelessly lost."

"'oping to find my way to the surface and reorient myself, I directed the craft in an upward direction, but somehow managed to wedge the craft quite solidly in a constriction - I thought my doom was at 'and! But before I knew it, the pressure buildup was so great that I was spewed forth from the constriction and out the mouth of a great volcano, with a great deal of ash and debris. Fortunately, the ovoid design was sturdy and my crashlanding was cushioned by my impact in a river. The force of the impact diverted the river channel and drew the attention of the small natives of the jungle thereabout."

"Upon egress from my vehicle amidst the smoke and ash, there was a great buzz from the surrounding crowds of natives - black as night, and 'alf my size! - and before I knew it, they had

proclaimed me their god and were devotedly serving me as well as any commoners from civilized Europe could! Within days, my disruption of the river and accompanying windfall of nutrient rich volcanic ash had consolidated my position as almighty deity, having introduced their scrawny jungle crops to the concept of irrigation and fertilizer”.

“I was only wanting to get home, but they followed me everywhere I went, and would not let me leave the jungle”.

The Doctor shifts in his seat

“I am familiar with certain African tribes, although the one of which you speak is unknown to me. I'll wager, however, that they maintained the surprisingly common practice wherein a suspected god is placed in a pit with a deadly jungle lion, in order to prove their divine credentials, as it were. Teaching them of irrigation and fertiliser can not have helped matters, although of course you weren't to know that.”

In which the Marquis hears of mysterious creatures

The Marquis takes another gulp of his ale.

“I gradually came to know all the tribes of the extensive jungle system, and they came to know me, as the stories spread of the powerful god from the sky. As I gradually became able to understand the language of the little people, I became aware of rumours linking me to mysterious jungle creatures, which the tribes generally avoided. As you might imagine - I was intrigued by these elusive beasts, which were variously described as vast, gentle, ferocious, and a variety of other adjectives. Although the natives were evasive, I became determined to track the creatures down, and organized a safari within my meta-safari.”

“Indeed good Doctor, the serendipitous events surrounding my arrival led me directly to a pit 30 feet deep, in which a rather hungry lion awaited me - unfortunately, lions being uncommon in the tropical jungle, the specimen in question had been transported over hundreds of miles from his savannah home, and was much the worse for wear. His transport conditions had also been apparently substandard and dehydrating, and the poor creature's stench appeared quite deadly to the insects which encountered him. Thus, once lowered into the pit, I had to put the scrawny and malnourished beast out of his misery with my trusty flintlock pistol. In any case,...”

Lady Kathryn furrows her brow rather prettily, deep in contemplation

“How odd that they thought you a god! Although, the dear little creatures do seem to bestow the honour quite readily. Why, when I was in the Congo only last year I was rather surprised to find that my fourth cousin (on mothers side) Roger Williamsonson had somehow ascended to a similarly exalted position. He offered to make me his wife and Queen of All I Surveyed. But I could never marry Roger - he was always such a ditherer!”

Lady Kathryn holds up a silver piece. “It would not surprise me to learn that Roger was not at all pleased when he learnt that you had usurped his position as supreme all powerful being. He never would share his toys as a child. I'll wager that he used his influence with the Ging gang gooly tribe to

thwart every attempt you made to learn more of these mysterious creatures.”

In which the Marquis encounters the first of the lost species

“Well, Madame, my stay in the Congo occurred nigh on ten months ago, and I would be very surprised if this Roger of which you speak were still in any position amongst the tribes. However, now that you mention it, there **were** a number of incidents in starting my cryptozoological expedition, which may very well relate to your suppositions.”

“Although most of the tribes were indeed in full support of me, as you have implied there were a number of individuals, which I now surmise to be the Ging gang gooly, who appeared not to be as integrated amongst my followers. I recall noting that the design of their feather fetishes and accoutrements were markedly different from the tribes with which I was familiar.”

The Marquis pauses for a long refreshing sip of effervescent ale.

“As may be consonant with your description of my rival as a 'ditherer', my preparations went smoothly until the very day I was due to leave, when Ngaga, a recent volunteer to our expedition, discovered my best trackers unconscious, and unwakeable. Although the tribespeople were certain that there was bad mojo at work, my times in the seediest of Paris' underground establishments allowed me to quickly recognise the influence of a strong soporific drug. Fortunately, among the very first things I had explored upon my arrival in this exotic environment, was the availability of possible new pharmaceuticals. The tribal shamen, usually quite reclusive, were quite willing to assist their latest supreme being in his research. Thus a quick dose of my now patented Getup'n'go, a cunning combo of plants of coca, cacao, and cafe arabica, available now for only 12 shillings a pop, quickly restored Mbaba and Mbobo to health.”

“Well, once on our way, Mbobo's keen senses detected an unusual trail. After days of patient tracking, encounters with poisonous creatures appearing in our supplies, Ngaga getting sick, avoiding large pit traps in our path, Ngaga's exhaustion, and a few giddy night-time drumming sessions, we finally glimpsed what seemed to be a huge gray mass moving through the thick growth. After reassuring my trackers and support crew that I would not allow the creature to harm them, we continued tracking it. Finally, we came to the river Lulua, where we clearly observed a huge long-necked and whip-tailed quadruped crossing, and disrupting it's entire flow.”

Duke Peter pushes forth a silver coin

“I would wager good sir, that that beast you describe was none other that the Frumious Jabberwock. And it was indeed stalking you in the hopes of a meal. Intent on picking you of one by one, if I know their habits at all.”

“I regret, your unexpected encounter with the Jabberwock in Africa, Marquis – as I had bred them to be challenging game for well prepared hunters. Why else would one travel to Africa after all?”

In which we don't quite meet the Frumious Jabberwock

“Oh no need for regret Your Grace! We did indeed encounter a creature with features of both the

fearsome bandersnatch - the theropod scientifically known as /Deinocheirus mirificus/, and the fast and impressively crested jabberwock, /Utahraptor ostromaysorum/, as I will come to in a moment, but first - where was I? ah yes..."

"Once we had managed to ford the river ourselves we had lost sight of what the pygmies were beginning to call the 'Mkele Mbembe', or 'one who stops rivers', in light of our first clear sighting of it, and in memoriam of my own initial appearance. Dusk began to fall, and this side of the Lulua was unknown territory, the vegetation gigantic and dense. We felt eyes upon us, and the tribesmen began to be quite anxious - I'm afraid you were exactly right Duke Peter, we were being stalked for a meal!"

"When first the hapless Ngaga and then Mbelba, our dessert chef, disappeared, the tribesmen were terrified, and we set up a fortified camp. Resorting to the soothing strains of drum and bass and jungle beats (which I've brought back to Europe as 'Jungle') we retired for the night, after only three courses for dinner, and sadly dessertless."

"In the morning, we came across what was left of the ravaged bodies. Tragically, the packs which had carried cantaloupe, berries, amarula fruit, cream and other dessert supplies were missing. Although in fact, the carcasses looked remarkably intact. Mboobo took a stick and gave one of the bodies a poke. Ngaga, now completely naked (your pardon ladies), his pack and meagre clothing gone, sat bolt upright! We soon had the story out of him and the Mbelba - the Mkele Mbembe had doubled back and started following us. It had picked them off, one by one, for the dessert supplies, and left them stunned and traumatised."

"As it became clear to us that the Mkele Mbembe was not a carnivore, the tribesmen relaxed, but I began to question - whyfore the lack of large predators in the area - for example, jungle lions? And as Mboobo regained the track, we heard a ferocious and blood-curdling cry, as you surmised, Duke Peter, the Frumious Jabberwock was on our trail..."

Miss Thimblebelly speaks

When the Marquis has paused dramatically, leaving his listeners in rapt suspense, almost able to hear the ferocious and blood-curdling cry of the Frumious Jabberwock, Miss Thimblebelly speaks.

"High adventure has never been quite my thing, I'm afraid, and I really have little idea as to how you managed to extract yourselves from such a vexing situation. But I am delighted to learn it was you responsible for the introduction of such new and stirring music to Europe. Why, it has recently made its way across the Channel, and I myself have used certain themes in my own harpsichord, harmonica and bugle compositions, not to mention being inspired to create the BoyBande troupes which have enjoyed somewhat remarkable popularity, but that's another tale entirely.

"I'd surmise that the cunning plan that has enabled your Marquisness to be here to delight us with your company has as an integral part the intriguing jungle music in question". She nudges a silver coin across to the Marquis.

In which we finally encounter the Frumious Jabberwock

"As we stood in the clearing around Ngaga and Mbelba, the entire safari party froze as the cry of the Jabberwock reverberated around us. The crisp morning gained a surreal lucidity as movements in the vegetation and the whiffling and burbling drew closer. I must admit, I was quite at a loss as to what to

do - although my curiosity sometimes gets the better of me, I'm not really an adventurous soul, and hardly at home in the wilderness. My first instinct was to lead the party up a tree - but before I could enact this cunning plan, the Jabberwock was upon us! It's huge toothsome head entered the clearing, followed by a massively powerful body. It's grasping claws ready to snatch us up. In a disconcertingly birdlike manner, it cocked it's huge head at our terrified group, and raised it's feathered crest. The creature rattled its long stiff blue and red and rich purple feathers against each other as it considered us. We were statues. And then - suddenly - it's head was back on the trail - our trail - which was of course following the Mkele Mbembe. And then it was striding past us on two powerful legs, its iridescent scales and feathers a blur of colour until all we saw was the long tail, leaving the clearing in pursuit of a worthwhile meal." In which a fight breaks out.

"Despite having been frightened to within a nanoinch of their lives, our luck thus far reinforced the tribespeople's confidence in me. Now following not one, but two intriguingly magnificent, beautiful and mysterious creatures through the jungle, we were eager and energized. Finally, about midday, just ahead of us, the terrifying cry of the Jabberwock sang counterpoint to a deep rumbling roar. At the edge of a clearing I set our sous chef to work on lunch, and then took the rest of the party toward the clearing."

"As we peered into the clearing, we could see the Mkele Mbembe standing her ground in front of a crater of huge pale eggs, while in facing her, the Jabberwock was hissing and rattling its erect crest. Its sparse arm and shoulder plumage standing out from its body, and its scaly tail moving slowly back and forth. In a shockingly sudden movement, the Jabberwock darted to the side, then leapt, striking at the Mkele Mbembe with all four terribly clawed feet. Failing to gain purchase, nor even to pierce the thick, armor-like hide, the Mkele Mbembe quickly shook off the predator. Turning with nimbleness surprising in one so large, the protective mother swung her massive tail like a battering ram toward her attacker, missing by a minute margin, as the biped leapt from harm's way. Back and forth the sparring continued, throughout lunch, and till afternoon tea. After our break for a soft honey-based candy I had lately discovered in Egypt and introduced to the Congo, and which went surprisingly well with the indigenous hot cocoa drink, we were surprised to discover the Jabberwock had been joined by another of its kind."

Contessa Barbara interrupts

The Countess, who had for a moment been lost in thought, appears to reach some conclusion and looks up with a smile. "Sir," she says, proffering a silver, "The similarities between this skirmish between the Jabberwock and the lady Mkele Mbembe and the mating rituals of the lesser Yug Behemoth - which I had the opportunity to observe during my girlhood, having been sent by my aged uncle to a finishing school run by the Lady Brigette of Bridegedoon (who turned out to be not at all what she appeared, and the school a cover for an illegal feather-laundering operation (but that's another story)) - are too strong to ignore. I'm willing to bet that the two animals were - despite their great morphological differences - in fact members of the same species, and that the young Jabberwock was merely trying to gain the lady's favour. This newcomer - I surmise - was the father of the Mkele Mbembe's present clutch and not best pleased at the display."

The doctor looks slightly affronted

"My dear lady, you can not seriously be suggesting that the ferocious display of violence described so vividly by the Marquis could be merely mating ritual? No, no indeed, for while the Jabberwock is a ferocious beast of unparalleled... well, ferocity, its mating rituals are of the most tender and moving

displays to be found in the animal kingdom, or so I have read (and I thank the Duke for introducing me to young Lewis, who makes a remarkable correspondent, in such diverse matters as mathematics, natural history and babysitting). In any case, such displays are only ever directed towards members of its own species, which can be determined by mere observation, as members of the same species generally look sufficiently similar as to make the classification quite an elementary matter." He pauses to look around the table, looking ever so slightly concerned. "For example," he continues, "would you place a bat in the same taxonomic category as a mouse, as some misguided scholars are wont, when it clearly belongs with the birds? I ask you..."

"No, what the Marquis is describing is clearly an example of nature, red in tooth and claw, and such a battle could only ever end in the death of one participant at the bloody teeth and claws of the other, followed by the consumption of sufficient of the loser's flesh as to make a hearty meal. I apologise to the ladies present for my graphic description, but such is the way of nature in the more uncivilised climes.

"I will wager, with this piece of silver that I have here, that the newcomer (in fact a fine example of a Jabberwock mare) was in fact the steed of the renowned Italian adventurer, Carlo de Silinami, who, due to the unfortunate appearance of Marquis' company and godly attire, mistook him (most unfairly, but what can you expect of an Italian?) for a savage himself."

In which the titanic battle is interrupted, and the Marquis returns , to the longwindedness of his introduction in order to end this interminable ordeal

"My good Doctor, you are indeed correct that this fight was the epitome of 'nature, red in tooth and claw'. And normally, this would indeed end in the death and consumption of one of the participants, however, the interruption of the titanic battle by - as you say - de Silinami and his steed, Nancy - altered the normal course of events to some extent. Obviously intent on impressing me and my party as apparent savages with his prowess, and aiming at elevation to deity, de Silinami and Nancy quite ferociously attacked the original Jabberwock. De Silinami - perched on a heavily worked leather saddle atop Nancy's shoulders, dressed in Italian silks, and waving a ridiculous little sword, cut quite a ludicrous figure, although he no doubt thought it quite dashing. As I would later discover, in order for Nancy to accept a rider, she had been lobotomized as a fledgling, and in combination with de Silinami's offensive cologne, both the Mkele Mbembe and the original Jabberwock turned quite viciously on the newcomer. A slash of the claws, and the saddle was unsaddled, a thwack of a tail, and de Silinami was unseated, a snap of the jaws, and de Silinami was no more. Poor, confused, and somewhat dull Nancy was soon fighting for a mouthful of her one-time owner."

"The blood-frenzied Jabberwocks, still a little peckish after such a relatively small entree, continued to battle one another and occasionally the unfortunately beset dino-mum. I and my pygmies continued to occasionally catch the action, between aperitifs, soup, entree, fish, meat, salad, dessert, cheese platter, and our postprandial drinks, and saw nary a pause nor sign of tiring from the beasts, although they were covered with shallow scratches, and even a little blood."

"By night we were a little blase about the monumental battle, and having been through de Silinami's dislodged belongings (including his informative diary which revealed to us Nancy's provenance), were at a loose end. The tribesmen, after the long day, rather foolishly began our usual pre-bedtime jungle music session. The drumming junglemen were fully into it, when ominously, I suddenly realized the sound of battle had stopped. Turning slowly toward the clearing, I saw the two Jabberwocks slowly

approaching our oblivious party. Seeing their heads bobbing - monstrosly birdlike - almost in time with the beat, I had a flash of inspiration! Encouraging the DJ's to play their hypnotic rhythms louder and even more enthusiastically, I was graciously satisfied when the Jabberwocks proved the old wives tale, that 'music soothes the savage beast', and began to - I know not how else to describe it - dance!. They were quite entranced with the music. It was clear we would have no more trouble with creatures of such good musical taste."

"Taking the frazzled but recovering Mkele Mbembe - now named Nelly - some papaya and sugar cane endeared us to her as much as our control of the Jabberwocks (Nancy and Fred). The tribesmen doted on her eggs, so reminiscent of my magma-vehicle, and I encouraged their view of the Mkele Mbembe as holy creatures, to be protected and taken care of. Once we returned to the tribes and I introduced the idea, the Jabberwocks became tremendously useful in controlling pests (such as rampaging elephants and nosy white hunters) in the villages as well as in protecting the pygmies from out-of-jungle tribes. They were also highly valued for patrolling the protected nests and herds of Mkele Mbembe, and for their highly decorative feathers - which with my suggestions on selective breeding to the shamen, will eventually cover the animals. These huge Jungle Chickens have become quite ubiquitous throughout the Congo. The Ging Gang Gooly were particularly enamored of the colourful feathers, and combined with Ngaga's endorsement, they became some of my most ardent followers. I'm afraid any remaining gods in outlying tribes would quite quickly have been overthrown by my own surpassing Godliness."

"Having charged the pygmy tribes with the sacred duty of ensuring the prosperity of the Mkele Mbembe and incidentally guaranteed the continued usefulness of the Jabberwocks, the pygmies happily threw me into the closest volcano, and in my giant egg I resumed my search for a way home - but that of course is another story..."

Go back to [the_first_game](#)

From:

<https://curufea.com/> - **Curufea's Homepage**

Permanent link:

<https://curufea.com/doku.php?id=roleplaying:munchausen:dinosaur>

Last update: **2008/08/27 18:39**

