

# 12 PERFIDY

In Chapter 12 of "The Monster Men" titled "Perfidy," the adventure intensifies as the search for Virginia Maxon continues. The chapter opens with Bulan, now leading his monstrous companions, moving away from a deserted long-house. Meanwhile, Professor Maxon's search party receives hopeful news of Virginia's sighting, though inaccurately attributed to Bulan by Von Horn, who interprets the information strategically.

A critical moment occurs when the party is forced to halt due to Professor Maxon's sudden illness. They encounter a woman who claims to have seen Virginia Maxon carried by a giant creature, initially thought to be Number Three, sparking a new lead in the search. Skeptical yet desperate, Von Horn persuades Muda Saffir to provide trackers and warriors for a renewed effort to find Bulan and Virginia, leaving behind the ailing professor.

Simultaneously, Sing Lee, distrusting von Horn and motivated by his concerns, stealthily follows the search party. His journey leads him into a dramatic scene where he discovers not just the pursued but a chaotic battle involving Bulan, monstrous beings, and the distressed Virginia. Although von Horn arrives in time to take Virginia back, claiming the rescuer's glory, his departure leaves Bulan amidst a perilous fight. The abandonment reflects von Horn's true nature, prioritizing his desires over loyalty or valor. Sing Lee, witnessing von Horn's betrayal, attempts to intervene but finds himself in danger from one of the creatures. In an act of desperation, he resolves the immediate threat with his revolver, only to lose sight of Bulan and others in the unfolding chaos.

Back at the long-house, the reunion of Virginia with her father and Sing Lee is threaded with narratives of heroism and rescue, all under the shadow of Von Horn's deceitful

account, painting himself as the heroine, significantly downplaying Bulan's critical role. Professor Maxon's uneasy acceptance of Von Horn as a suitor for Virginia showcases the intricate dynamics and moral complexities manifesting within the group, accentuated by Maxon's own doubts about his previous decision regarding his daughter's future.

The chapter concludes with Von Horn renewing his proposal to Virginia under the pretense of their shared experiences. Although conflicted and acknowledging her debt of gratitude, Virginia is not ready to commit, still haunted by her memory of the stranger who genuinely stirred her emotions during her ordeal. The ambiguous bond between her rescuer's identity and her feelings illustrates the emerging emotional landscape that Virginia must navigate amidst the chaos. This intertwining of intrigue, betrayal, and unresolved emotional entanglements sets a compelling stage for the unfolding drama.