

# Chapter Eleven

## Finding and Reaching the Temple

Bonnie and I still were not sure why the Jungle Master and his people let us go. They had us where they wanted us. Outnumbered and outgunned we were and yet we were let go. Well, at least for a short season. I had no doubt that if we continued our journey to the temple we would run into the Jungle Master and his people again. We continued to walk through the jungle and admiring the natural beauty of the forest.

“How much longer?” Bonnie asked. “My feet are getting tired.”

“I know it has been a few hours,” I said. “Still, I hope Asli, Baris and the others survived.”

“Me too,” Bonnie said.

Bonnie paused for a moment. At first, I thought she might have been admiring the jungle more. I mean it was an extremely wonderful sight. The trees were taller and more colorful than we had ever seen and plus we had seen many different types of birds, animals and other wildlife that we had never seen before. We heard the loud screams of what I knew were monkeys. It truly was a relaxing moment in a time I knew we would not have much time to relax. I walked to her and quickly realized that something was wrong.

“What’s the matter?” I asked.

“Will we ever see Kasey again?” Bonnie asked, as tears fell down her face.

“We will Bonnie,” I assured her. “We will see Kasey again. Somehow and someday we will become a trio again. Look, this is not your fault. This is mine. All my life I wanted to win

that canoeing competition and because of my competitiveness I got you and Kasey in a situation that should have never happened.”

“Don’t say that. Kasey and I wanted to help you win too,” Bonnie protested. “I mean the competition meant as much to us as it did you. There was no way we could foresee that storm. And besides now that we are here I got to learn how to defend myself which I said I always needed to do and learn some medicinal techniques. So, it has not all been bad.”

“You’re right,” I confessed.

“And plus looking back it got me away from Paul,” Bonnie said. “I wonder if he even knows I am missing.”

Bonnie and I thought about that question for a moment before realizing we came up with the same answer.

“Nah,” I said.

“I agree. He is probably too busy hanging out with his friends and doing whatever it is he does. He probably has not even tried to call. You know Alex with him we often go through days and even weeks at a time without talking to each other on the phone,” Bonnie said.

“That does not sound like he has much interest in you,” I said.

“No. It doesn’t,” Bonnie agreed.

“You know Bonnie, when I was a young kid I would sometimes have these dreams,” I began.

“Dreams,” Bonnie said.

“Yeah. Sometimes I would be in jungles like this one. All lit up and extremely colorful. And sometimes I would be in other regions like the mountains and oceans,” I said.

“It is funny that you say that Alex but so have I,” Bonnie said.

“You have had dreams too,” I said, with slight shock in my voice.

“Yes,” Bonnie began. “And I would tell my mom and dad about them. They would just laugh and say they were only dreams, but they felt so real.”

“What were you dreams like?” I asked.

“Sometimes I would be dressed like I am now which is to say almost not dressed at all. I would almost always be carrying a pouch with. Sometimes I would also be dressed in mountain gear like I was climbing a cold region and then sometimes I would also be dressed like a pirate and be on a ship and funny thing Alex you were there too in my dreams,” Bonnie said.

“I was,” I asked.

“Yeah, you were. You were older but still looked the same. But then again so was I. We both were older,” Bonnie said.

“Was Kasey there?” I asked.

“I did not see Kasey. Honestly, I was not even sure what we were doing,” Bonnie said, as tears ran down her face.

“Hey. Hey. All will be alright,” I said.

“You don’t think I am crazy?” Bonnie said.

“No,” I said.

“Good answer. What do you really think though?” Bonnie again asked.

“Bonnie, you are not crazy. You are different and unique as each person is. The dreams you have experienced I cannot say for certain what they are or what they represent but I do know for each person that experiences them it feels real and, in many cases, represents something that has happened to them in the past. In many ways Bonnie our dreams is like a part of who we are.

It is a part of us. So, no I do not think you are crazy. You keep being the wonderful person you are and something tells me you will be more than just fine.”

“Thanks,” Bonnie replied.

“It is beautiful isn’t it?” I asked as Bonnie and I again looked at the jungle.

“It is. A perfect place for a date,” Bonnie said. “I am glad to be here with you.”

“Me too,” I said. Bonnie and I reached out and grabbed each other. We were about to share another kiss when we heard footsteps begin to approach.

“We’ve been here too long. I think it is time to go,” Bonnie said.

“No kidding,” I said as Bonnie and I began running through the jungle. We ran as fast as we could. I did not think it was possible for either Bonnie or I to run faster than we were. We did not look back to see if who was following us. Although I did not think it was the jungle people, I did not want to take that chance either. Bonnie and I continued to run until a few moments later she screamed and got attention.

“STOP,” Bonnie yelled.

I stopped and with no more room to spare. I was inches away from death I saw. We had finally arrived at the temple. The temple was indeed surrounded by a poisonous dark purple bog that I knew if I touched meant certain death. I took a leaf just to test my hypothesis and dropped the leaf into the bog and once the leaf hit the poison the leaf quickly incinerated into dust.

“We have arrived,” I said.

There was no doubt it was temple. It was a very large stone structure that appeared that appeared to have been built ages ago. Grass and vines covered the sides which told me that despite its longevity that it had not been used for some time. Also, I noticed that most of the temple appeared to be above ground though I could tell some was underground. The temple no

doubt was much bigger than we had expected it. Judging just from its outside appearance only I had no doubt it was going to take us a while to explore the temple and truly find out what was happening. Even as fear began to creep into my mind I had no doubt that Bonnie and I needed to get into the temple.

“Now do you cross this bog and get in?” Bonnie asked.

“That does appear to be the million-dollar question,” I said. “Follow me perhaps there is a way to get in on the other side.”

Bonnie and I walked around the temple. Part of it had the appearance of a square which meant that it had four sides though as you looked up it became more pyramid like in appearance. We were on the verge on giving up until we walked around the last side and saw some stones in the bog that led to one entrance.

“Oh no,” Bonnie said.

“Yeah,” I added. I was not fond of the idea of frog jumping across the bog either. One mistake was all it would take and then we would be no more.

“Is there another way?” Bonnie began to ask.

No sooner was it then after she said those words, we heard the loud screeches of the jungle people again. They were coming and getting closer. I knew we were not going to have time to strategically jump our way across the bog. We would, as Baris told me, must take leaps of faith and trust that we would not mess up.

“Bonnie,” I shouted.

“Okay,” Bonnie said.

I took the first jump and barely landed on the first stone. I thought for a moment that I would fall into the bog, but I was stopped from falling by Bonnie who had quickly jumped onto the stone too and grabbed me by the waist.

“Well, this is awkward,” I said.

“Lead the way mister,” Bonnie said as she let me go.

I again jumped to the second rock, then to the third and with each jump I began to feel better and more confident. Bonnie, like me, was getting better and more confident as she jumped from rock to rock. I had made it to the entrance to the temple when I turned and saw she had tripped and was about to fall into the bog. I reached out and caught her before she could hit the bog. Her knee was just mere inches away from the bog. Fortunately, the last rock was not very far from the temple. I was able to lift Bonnie into the air for a few seconds, turn and then put her down right in front of the entrance of the temple beside me.

“That was a close one Alex,” Bonnie said as she kissed me on the cheek. “Thank you.”

We continued to hear loud screeches and as we did we turned and saw what appeared to be several hundred jungle warriors screaming at us. Odd, I said to myself was that I did not see the Jungle Master. Equally odd too was that none of them were making any threatening moves for the time being. I began to get a sickening in my stomach that seeing these jungle warriors meant that Baris, Asli and the other village soldiers had been slaughtered. I continued to stand there thinking until Bonnie got my attention a few moments later.

“Alex.”

“Yeah.”

“We need to go. We have a job to do,” Bonnie said. She was right I said to myself.

Whatever was happening with the Jungle Master, the jungle people and the tribal people was

somehow connected with the temple. The temple that we now had managed to arrive at despite the danger of the Jungle Master and his people as well as the danger of the purple poison bog that surrounded it. The temple, that was humungous. We did not know where our answers would be found in the temple except to say that it was in the temple somewhere. No matter how long it would take we would get to the bottom of this and hopefully help bring peace to the people of the jungle. We slowly entered the temple as the jungle people, still across the bog, watched.