

***Chapter 2***  
***“You Are My Whole Life”***



Professor Sarantos was spinning, lost inside a drafty drum with no bottom and no way out. Cagey colors were swirling everywhere with no rhyme or reason. There was nothing tangible to attach their beauty to; a kaleidoscope of perfectly choreographed chaos.

He took a deep breath wondering if it mattered. He thought of Marley, and the life they'd shared over a decade ago. She stood in front of him like a vision from his past.

He must be dead.

She held out her hand towards him, like a guiding light. His one true love had returned in his hour of need and joined him in this madness, no, not joined him but here to save him. She was always a saint, too good for him, but he'd let her go on that horrendously rainy day when faced with a difficult decision. To stay with her would mean he'd have to give up his quest to find the gems for the sword. Now, he wasn't sure if he'd made the right decision to follow his cat-like curiosity.

She stood there like the entire world was her stage, an enchanting goddess in an evening gown dressed in red rhinestones, that reflected deep into her dark eyes. Her black hair, cut short and plastered to the side of her face with two small spit-curls to either side of her cheeks, released the smell of her sweet shampoo toward his nostrils before she disappeared.

"Marley," he said out loud.

"Who the hell's Marley," said Mickey Dark, as he stood beside the unconscious professor.

"Oh, who cares, Gorilla? Professor wake up. Please Professor wake up," said Charlie as she lightly slapped the professor's cheeks bringing a slight rouge color to their surface.



His eyes gradually opened, and he looked around. Charlie was on her knees in front of him, and Mickey stood over him, with his face leaning over his like he was on a gurney in the morgue.

“Stop it both of you. I’m fine. That was some ride. How long have I been out?”

“About three days,” said Gorilla.

The professor lost the ability to keep his jaw intact. It flew open at the same time his eyes bulged out of their sockets. “What the hell? You couldn’t wake me?”

Gorilla started laughing.

“Oh, stop joshing the Professor, Gorilla, you’re just too horrible.”

“Spoil sport. I have to have some fun.”

“Forget it you two. Where are we?”

Even as the Professor asked the question, he looked around at the surrounding trees and felt the angry heat as sweat dripped down his chest and the sides of his face. They were definitely in a jungle, but where, and what time period?

Gorilla curled his lower lip and said, “If you really want to know, I think hell. While you were getting your beauty sleep, the noises here were unlike any I’ve ever heard before. Strange creatures.”

“He isn’t far from the truth. I’m not sure where we are Professor, but we are in a jungle, somewhere, and look at the sword,” said Charlie as she held the sword over his head.



He was still lying in the high grasses. He extended his arm to grab the hilt of the weapon. The gems were missing.

That wasn't good, but he was glad the sword came with them. At least they might have a way back, but first they'd have to find the three gems again to get safely home, but where would they begin?

He moved his body into a sitting position. He must've landed hard, because he felt sore and bruised.

"Easy Professor," said Charlie, as she took his arm helping him sit up.

"Yeah, Doc. You landed after us and you came down hard. It took you a while to get through the vampy vortex, at least that's what I'm calling it. There were some cool colors in the between portal. You know, Doc, in between worlds."

He was still staring at the sword. "Yes, Gorilla, I get it. But, where do we find the gems to get back? We need to collect items here so we can take them back to our timeline and document them," said Sarantos.

Gorilla reached into his jacket that was now slung over his shoulder and pulled out some bars. "Does anyone want a Babe bar?"

"No," said the professor.

"Really, Gorilla? I think we need to find water first. It looks like we could use the leaves for now. There's a lot of moisture here, so harvesting water might be easy," said Charlie.

To prove her point, she grabbed a giant leaf and handed it to the professor. He took it willingly and could suck the juices from the leaf that was larger than his head.

The Professor creased his eyebrows together. “It was tasty. Looking at this leaf, I would think it belonged to the Jurassic Period, but how’s that possible?”

Gorilla looked around, and in a low tone said, “Applesauce, Doc. I don’t like you speaking that way. It gives me the creeps. If it’s true, we need to ‘blouse’ and find somewhere to hide until we sort things out.”

“Shucks, Professor that would explain the strange noises,” said Charlie looking through the trees searching for creatures larger than a house.

He stood up and put his hat back on his head. It must’ve fallen off when he landed. He pulled out a gun.

“I guess it’s lucky I brought...”

Before the Professor could finish his sentence a loud stomping, like a herd of elephants, was heard. It moved towards them. The leaves shifted and the ground beneath their feet shook.

“Doc, I’m out of here,” said Gorilla moving quickly through the overgrown ferns and what appeared to be Gingkoes.

The Professor and Charlie followed close behind putting some distance between them and the savage sound, before stopping at a stream where some conifers were seen crowding alongside the bank. They all drank heavily and pulled off their backpacks even filling their extra water bottles.

“Lucky we brought these, huh Doc.”

The Professor had already filled his up and was looking up and down the river. Then he slowly turned his head towards the thickly laden forest of ferns that had leaves



the size of his body. He pushed his tongue to the side of his mouth forcing his cheek to slightly pop out, a habit that he'd had since childhood whenever he was nervous.

The Professor replied, "Yes, Gorilla, it's lucky."

Charlie stood up. Sarantos could feel her eyes probing his thoughts, as she walked casually towards him and stopped at his side.

"What ya' thinking Professor? You're scaring me," said Charlie.



"Sorry, Charlie, but I think we've gone back in time to North America's Jurassic Period. The plant life is an easy give a way, but how could the gems have ended up here, and where do we begin our search?"

Gorilla capped his water bag and looked around. His lips momentarily vanished, as he sucked them into his mouth before slowly releasing them and pushing them out further than was natural, almost like he was testing the wind and using them as a center for knowledge of the Jurassic Period.

“Tell it to Sweeny, Doc,” said Gorilla.

“I’m telling it to you. I’m sure I’m right, and although you might find it hard to believe, that won’t change the fact we might die here.”

“Bushwa, Doc. That’s not a great positive attitude to reassure your students that everything is jake,” said Gorilla.

Charlie waved her hand and shushed them at once, tilting her head back and forth.

In a quiet voice she asked, “What’s that noise?”

Both men stopped arguing, frowned, and moved their head to the side. Both struggled to hear what Charlie was referring to.

“I hear nothing,” said the Professor.

Charlie said, “It’s getting dusk, and we should get off the river. I think animals might want to come for a drink and we wouldn’t want to be here when they do.”

The Professor said, “We have to be careful. Let’s try to find a small cave to sleep for the night, maybe something too small for a dinosaur to fit into.”

“Oh, Doc, you said it, the word we didn’t want to hear. I can’t even comprehend that word, dinosaur in real-life terms.”

“Well, you need to get used to it Gorilla, because here we are, lost in their world.”

“I know, Charlie, but I don’t want anyone eating me.”

“Nobody does, but we have to be realistic about what just happened, even if it’s not in and of itself realistic,” said Charlie.

“Where do we head Doc?”

Professor Sarantos was searching the area and pulled out his binoculars. “I thought this might come in handy. I’m looking for higher ground where we might find a cave for the night. I think over there across the setting sun, we might get lucky,” the Professor said, pointing to a northern hilly area.

“Let’s go,” said Gorilla. “This place has my heart pounding out of control.”

“Okay, let’s stick together and stay close. Keep an eye out for berries, or any source of food, other than meat. We’d have to cook meat and that could invite guests for dinner that we wouldn’t want to entertain.”

“Sure Professor,” said Charlie.

They briskly followed the Professor as he pushed through prickles and many other unique plants. Curiosity had them collecting several specimens to take back to their time period. It was an action that kept them in that place, a place of purpose, not a place where they might die from something that was hard to get their head around.

The task made the trek go quicker. The further away they got from the water, the more the sounds faded. Without regret or shame, they leaned back and let the path float between them. Professor Sarantos cut vines from the trees and grabbed small rocks to use for weapons. He brought a gun but had limited ammo. The Professor

also had a penknife and dagger. He also found a few firm leaves that might come in handy.



The low hills calmly came into view. The skies grew darker. Darker sounds from the jungle picked up, encouraging them to pick up the pace.

“Grab small branches. If we can make a fire, we might need them. I have matches.”

“Doc, you think of everything, although I have matches and a small switchblade, not to mention bread and extra food. You know me, Doc, I’m always prepared.”

“Yes, I do... over there to the side of those pines. It could be just what we’re looking for, it’s up a little but there might be a path to it.”

They all hurried to the outcrop of small pines. Charlie pulled some needles from a pine and put it in her pocket. The Professor pulled out his narrow knife and cut off vines as a devilish grin slowly spread across his face.

“Ready for an adventure? The cave is a little high. We can’t reach it by climbing but we need to get up to that tree and tie off my vine. Then, we should be able to drop and swing into the cave.”

“Balderdash. Doc, I can climb but the swinging into a cave is for cavemen only.”

The Professor began to climb the tall tree. “Fine, stay here crybaby! You can be a ‘Gorilla bar’ for the dinosaurs, you know, a little snack.”

“Gee, Doc when you put it that way, I’m with you. That bar wouldn’t become famous like the Babe’s bar.”

Charlie was already climbing up the tree keeping it a close race with Professor Sarantos.

Noises were increasing as the darkness of the land crept in from all around, surrounding them in a weatherworn world where they might not survive. Dinosaurs, how can that be? Professor Sarantos was tying off the vine and calculating the

distance from the tree to the cave. It looked to be about three feet, not too bad, but he'd have to swing in, let go, and roll.

The vine was strong and would support their weight. He only hoped that it wasn't the home of a flying Pterosaur. It could mean their doom, but for now he had a gun and a few bullets and that was some small consolation.

He looked at the two faces that now sat in the tree next to him and smiled. "Sorry, I got you both into this unbalanced situation. As much as I'd like to let you go first, it has to be me, you crazy kids, just in case something's in there waiting for a nice juicy tenderloin."

"Professor you're so brave, but you can't smile away the pain. I see your sadness, but it was our decision to be here on this adventure too," said Charlie.

"Yeah, Doc, you're my guiding light and right now we need to hide. I think it's our only option. Remember Doc, I'm as agile as an ape, that's why I got the nickname, Gorilla. I'll go last as I can be fast and personally it looks like a breeze, anyway."



The Professor smacked him on the back. “Yes, you are fast, and I’m counting on both of you to get in there safe. Thinking about it more, I’ll try to hold the rope when I go in, just in case I can tie it off somewhere. Hopefully, then the two of you can just slide in.”

“Good luck, Professor,” said Charlie.

“I’m outta here.” He saluted them grabbed the vine and shimmed down to the opening.

He couldn’t see inside from the distance he was at. It was too dark. He started swinging propelling his body towards the opening. Gorilla was assisting him, as they worked in unison to send him into the unknown hole. And off he went...

What little light he had left from the swiftly closing shadows of the evening hour disappeared completely. He now stood inside the opening. Luckily, the vine was still in his hand.

Listening intently for any sounds in the cave, he pulled out his gun. Before moving to find something to tie off the vine, he thought about how lucky he was to have Charlie and Gorilla with him here. He heard nothing; it was quiet as death.

The ground was slick, and so were the walls as he made his way forward. He was running out of vine. Then he felt a large rock against the slimy wall of the cave. He tied the vine around it and knotted it off.

Making his way to the small patch of light given off by the stars he went back to the opening.

He looked up and saw the two students looking down. The Professor gave them the thumbs up.

Still holding the vine, Charlie reached out and took her end sliding down to the cave with the greatest ease.

“Hi ya, Professor,” she said and stood up grinning broadly.

The giant jungle became silent. The night had sprinkled stars throughout the sky. The air was still.

“It’s too quiet,” said the Professor.

A terrifying roar almost pierced their eardrums.



“Damn, it sounds like a T-Rex, it must be close.”

“There Professor! The trees are going down.”

“Hurry Gorilla,” Professor Sarantos didn’t care if the beast heard him or not, the boy needed to get a move on.

They watched in horror as the demon beast approached quickly running through the trees like they didn’t exist, but Gorilla was fast and was standing beside them before they could gasp one last time before the T-Rex broke free through the trees and into the opening.

They all held their ears tightly as the deafening sound of its monstrous roar nearly shattered their eardrums and the ground beneath their feet vibrated wildly as the giant beast rammed its forty-foot-long body into the sides of the small mountain cliff.

Gorilla was on his knees and holding his ears and mumbling like he was praying to the gods to save him, but in reality he was cursing. “Bushwa, bushwa, bushwa... it saw me... it saw me...”

Charlie was on her knees, and her body was shaking, like a lost soul in the tundra with no hat, wraps, boots or gloves.

Professor Sarantos wanted to stay and observe the creature for scientific study but thought better of it considering his two companions. They were lucky it was about ten feet short of sticking the T-Rex head into the opening and showing off its six to eight-inch teeth.

“Okay, you two, let’s get a little further back from the opening.”



Both students crawled along the ground for at least twenty feet and wobbling to a standing position until they were back on their own two feet. The Professor held out his hand to assist Charlie whose knees seemed to give out with each attempt to stand, but after the third time she could get her body on board.

“I have no light. We could make a fire.” The Professor thought by making a fire it might warm them and give them a lighter spirit.

“Doc, I’ve brought one of those flashlights.”

The Professor couldn't contain his grin. "My boy, you're brilliant."

"Thanks, Doc. I didn't bring extra batteries though. It's goofy those giant D batteries. It takes three, and they're heavy. I didn't have room. Sorry Doc, you understand, with all those candy bars. A man needs to eat."

Nodding his head, the Professor said, "Let's see that flashlight, kid."

Gorilla took it out, slapped it a few times until it complied and shined it towards the inside of the cave. They could still hear big T roaring in anger. Other sounds soon filled the night, as the three of them stood inside the damp cave peering into another unknown adventure.

"Let's look for animal feces, just in case this is the home of a friend we might not want to meet, the flying Pterosaur might be the only dinosaur around that could enter unless the cave empties out into a patch of low-level ground, which some of them do."

"Well, so far so good Doc. Do you see anything Charlie?"

"Nope."

The sounds of a fierce battle ensued from outside the cave, a fight for survival. Little did they know or understand, it wouldn't last long. Then the Professor wondered about mankind, their fight for survival in a world created by them, would they be able to outlast the reign of the dinosaur?

"Professor, we could make a fire. Give me the wood and I'll build one."

"Sure, Gorilla, we need to all collect wood from now on. We don't want to waste the flashlight."

“Sure,” said Gorilla. “I brought some beans and an opener.”

“Well, my boy, you’re a genius.”

“Thanks, Doc.”

“I’ve got a loaf of bread,” said Charlie.

“Looks like a feast to me,” said the Professor.

Soon the fire was blazing away, warming their hearts and bodies. Nights in the jungle were cold. When Gorilla pulled out a pan and heated the beans, the Professor and Charlie went into a hysterical fit of laughing.

“What?”

“Nothing kid, you brought a pan, genius.”

“Well, I didn’t know where we’d end up and I need my nourishment, don’t I, Doc?”

“Yes, you do kiddo, yes you do.”



The smoke of the fire slowly found its way to the outside world via the cave opening. He would've liked to gather rocks to block them in somewhat, but if they did that and something came in from the inside, there'd be no way out.

Soon they were eating and laughing about their crazy day. What else could they do? He learned a long time ago that he needed to take it one day at a time. Even if they were in the Jurassic Period, it was him to the core. He was an adventurer with a Nobel prize at the edge of his fingertips.

More important was the discovery itself, that the sword worked, and it transported them back in time, way, way back in time.

He needed to bring up some concerns with the kids.

“You two kids understand we may never get back right? I’m not sure how the sword works, or why it brought us here. I was thinking maybe the sword can only bring you to three different places in time, thus the three gems, but you need all three to make it work. So that would lead me to believe that someone was here before us, maybe centuries ago, and there must be two gems alike, you know twins. You leave three identical gems here so you can get back and the other three are placed in the sword.”

“Brilliant Professor, even if we do it again, it might be a sequence of events so we may go to the next location and the next before returning to our own time period. That could take a decade,” said Charlie.

“Wow, if that’s true the Professor could die, he’s already father time. You think you could last Professor? If not, we should take a blood oath to get back and give the old Professor credit when we eventually get back there.”

“You’re real funny kid. I think I’ll make it back there easier than you will. One thing bothers me though, we didn’t find the twin gems to the ones we found in our time period. I think there should’ve been another set. Those go in our pockets to take with us to get back, it makes complete sense.”

“If that’s true, Professor, then what do we do? Are you hoping that there are duplicates here? If there are twin gems and we take one set with us, putting the other set inside the sword and someone uses the sword again coming here, they could never return or leave this dinosaur amusement park,” said Charlie.

“That’s true, Charlie.”

“Well, I don’t care at all, because it’s more important for us to get home, right Doc?”

“Yes, I’m afraid I have to agree with you Gorilla. We might have to destroy the sword to avoid someone else being trapped.”

Charlie said, “Unless when we get back, we find the duplicates and rely on the fact the other gems would still be right where we exited, stage left it could still be used.”

“Great thought Charlie. I hope the gems are in my good friend’s safekeeping.”

“Is that all you wanted to chat about Doc?”

“Yes, that about sums it up, other than we need to watch for food. I suggest in the morning we follow this cave to its end, just to make sure we get no surprise visitors. I’m hoping we might use this as a place of safety. I’m not sure how far we would need to go to find the gems. I’ll need to sleep on it, and maybe try to put together the time period the sword was birthed, although it’s a hard puzzle to solve. I had it checked and there was some controversy about dates. It might or might not help us, anyway. Who made it and why they made it would probably help us find the location of the gems better than figuring out what time period they made it. Now you kids get some sleep.”



“Are you staying on watch, Professor?”

“Yes, Charlie we should go in sections. Since we have no way to tell the time, when I get tired, I’ll wake one of you and so on.”

“Sounds good, Doc, I’m on board.”

When the kids fell asleep, the Professor could still hear roaring and fighting off in the distance. Weird frog sounds and ground shaking vibrations were part of the night’s mystery.



He listened for a while, got up and moved around, and tried to keep the fire going with what little amount of wood they had. They couldn't be too far from level ground and should attempt to discover another entrance to make sure there were no other tunnel entrances. Not only that, he thought they should look for the gems. They might very well be buried in a cave.

He thought of Marley and how she'd shake her head and say it served him right messing around with artifacts he knew nothing about, then she'd scold him for getting the kids involved, and about the kids she'd be right.

What had he been thinking bringing them with him? They were not meant for this adventure. You create walls; you manufacture lies; you live your small life. It was a very dangerous learning experience that's for sure.

He was thankful they hadn't pursued the fact he was talking about Marley when he arrived. She never could believe she was his one true love, his destiny. Instead, when he'd confessed his feelings to her, she'd laugh it off and say he only had one true love, and it was the adventure of the hunt, the hunt for artifacts and knowledge.

She was his whole life though she never believed him because of his nagging need for discovery. This was the core of his soul, his make-up, his essence, but he knew she belonged beside him on these journeys. He knew from the moment he first heard her laugh many years ago. He still carried that first photo with him. It all starts with a photo and ends with a memory.

Unfortunately, Marley had a logic about her that wouldn't let him in.

She wasn't married and hardly ever dated; he didn't know why they couldn't find a way. Maybe, if he got himself out of this mess, he'd check in with her, again, and maybe try to rekindle the flame.

She loved him and he loved her, but he couldn't have her botching up his need for adventure and getting his hands dirty. He'd always hoped she would've been his sidekick.

It wasn't meant to be though. Maybe he should just let it go. If she ever got wind of this new adventure, she'd never come back to him, anyway.

He walked around some more, and then woke Gorilla. It surprised him how alert the kid was and more than willing to take over the watch.

"I have some pine needle tea in the pot if you want some."

"Thanks Doc, don't mind if I do."

He laid down on the damp ground and put his beleaguered backpack under his head for some support and warmth.

He fell into a fitful sleep.

\*\*\*

"Professor, get up."

It was Charlie that was nudging him, and Gorilla stood next to her looking anxious, and moving side to side.

"What's up Charlie?"

She put her finger up to her mouth silencing him from speaking further.

Then he heard the voices, not that he could understand them, but they were voices.

The three of them crawled along the ground towards the cave opening and peered out.

A group of ten naked, tan, long-haired Neanderthals were speaking gibberish and pointing at their vine. They were all men and in great muscular form. It would be no competition if they got into battle. They also each carried what looked to be a spear.

The three of them shimmed back to their camp.

“I think they are thinking of using the vine to get into the cave,” said the Professor.

The two kids nodded in agreement.

“I didn’t think men were walking upright in this time period.”

“Oh, Doc what does man know about anything anyway?”

He started to reply when they could hear the voices getting louder and louder; they were coming up the tree.

They needed to leave, now, and they had to move quicker than they would’ve wanted to into the dark, damp, and possibly life-threatening cave.

“Okay, kids, it’s been nonstop fun, but it’s time to fly.”

