

Introduction

The Storyteller

It all happened a long time ago; some 27 years since it started for me. Ten years before that when John arrived here and the beginning of an epic and extraordinary trek deep into the mountains and jungle of Central America to find something. But unlike daring fictional adventure stories it was all very real – it all happened and the evidence is here today to prove it.

The year is 2042 and I am sitting on the remains of a chapel, all that is left of a time so singular and extraordinary that it defies any amount of description or account I can settle upon it.

I say all that is left, but a few other relics have withstood the ravages of time. In the cemetery here – the *Cemetery of the Undead* – some of the tombstones are still intact, fallen over with most of the lettering worn away leaving one to guess the occupant. The foundations of The Bucket of Blood saloon still stand, now almost like prison walls in their starkness, trees sprouting out of what was once a hive of activity.

I make my way slowly down the heavily overgrown path and stand on the remains lost in thought, reflecting on the many pleasant and lively evenings spent here deliberating on the latest developments of the great adventures that enveloped us – exploits hard to describe that almost fail with the printed word. I notice something shiny sticking out of the dirt and bend down to see what it is. It is a piece of metal. After scooping up the soil from around it I find the remains of John's old portable shortwave radio, the radio that led him, strange as it may sound, to the unearthing of many discoveries and revelations.

Seven dead horses from jaguar attacks, snakebite and a lightning strike, another intentionally poisoned, 500 truck trips with materials and equipment on a muddy jungle track as far as it is possible to go into the mountains – a single trip taking up to eight hours – then packhorse and oxen. *And that was just the beginning.*

A monumental task for one man alone, and not a young one, for ten long years, while at the same time fighting off constant attacks and menaces by those wanting to control or prevent what he was to discover – a portal between time in this world and celestial time, where everything that is taking place on Earth today has already happened.

Blood and other messages at night, an avalanche and volcanic eruptions to order, a tempest, police struck down, rocks falling off a cliff to create panic, all add to the mysterious powers surrounding the portal and access to it, with more than a fair share of close encounters with snakes and an infestation of scorpions.

There were those so determined to destroy everything that the attacks and onslaughts were never ending, resulting in John twice being taken away by armed police, locked in jail and looking into the face of the *Angel of Death*, but surviving an ordeal that doctors say was not possible (he should be dead, he *was* dead according to hospital records) ... and more than once.

In the jungle of the Lost World John found an insight into the future and the meaning to many things, *but dark, powerful and evil forces* were determined to change the course of events here ... *by any means.*

But that was all before I arrived.

My name is Salvador Morales. I was just 22 years old when it all started for me and my life changed overnight, going from a recent and somewhat naïve college graduate to someone enlightened with a



knowledge beyond anything anyone can even begin to imagine. This narration is about my chance meeting with John, some of the adventures that followed, and the amazing discoveries that were made.

As you read this story you will realize that what has taken place here is, in many respects, beyond our common understanding – a place where truth is stranger than fiction, *stranger even than science fiction*.

You will also get to know and understand that John is not your ordinary person and that his input here is far greater than I am capable of putting to words. But I hope that in some way I have done the story justice and you can look at it in such a way that will open your heart to all things that are possible, especially when you find true love, no matter where that may be or under what circumstances, however strange, uncertain, and unpredictable.

Before you start reading this story you will need to know where the Lost World is, for within its rugged and forbidding confines lies *The Place That Time Forgot*.

South of the United States of America, between the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea, is the small country of Costa Rica. In the south of the country is a remote and wild, almost inaccessible, range of mountains covered in dense forest, much of which is wild and unexplored.

After leaving the nearest town and bumping along a rough track for a journey of some two hours by jeep deep into the heart of the mountains and jungle as far as you can go, and then an hour or more on foot or horseback, you'll be more than surprised to arrive at the most extraordinary place – a place where the mist and clouds drift and hug the mountains; a place of primeval grandeur of which few remain today.

Here, the endless panorama makes you hold your breath in wonder, with no vestige of human life as far as the eye can see – the place where it all began for me.

Oh! Before I forget. I started by writing from the year 2042. You will no doubt be wondering how I can look back from the future on what happened 25 years ago, *which is now*, the year 2017 in our time. All will become clear, or perhaps not, because you will be reading about events so extraordinary that they are hard to believe.

Therefore, you need to put thoughts aside on everything that science and technology has taught you and venture into the realm of the unknown; the twilight zone as some call it.

I

The Old Man & His Cat

The cat was white. It lay there in pure contentedness, curled up on an old man's lap, fast asleep.

The old man was also asleep, or so it seemed. Seated on a decaying log beneath the shade of a large tree his complexion was that of a face worn into its suitor with age. Its creases layered one another around the jowls of the man's mouth, yet were less prevalent around the eyes, indicating someone of a longstanding, kind disposition. His hair complemented that of the cat's, long and flowing, gently in sync to the warm summer breeze.

As I was about to walk past him his eyes opened, looking at me. A casual glance perhaps, but I sensed in that fleeting moment that this was no ordinary old man. I don't know why. Maybe it was his unusual appearance and manner; little did I know that this chance encounter would change not only the course of my life, but reshape the destiny of my entire country*.

Nodding my head I bid him hello and proceeded to venture up the hill, but my ear was drawn back to a voice that was soft, yet commanding.



“Good morning boy,” he said with a benevolent smile. That was all (and I am hardly a boy except to those of a certain age), but it was enough to make me stop and look at him. He beckoned me over with an outstretched arm.

“And where are you off to?” he inquired.

“I’m on my way to church.”

“And a fine day to be going to church,” he replied smiling, stroking the cat.

“What is the name of your cat?” I asked, walking over to get a closer look.

“Winston Smith. It’s a boy’s name I know, but she doesn’t seem to mind. I rescued her when she was almost starved, sickly, waiting in the middle of the road, knowing that I was coming for her.”

By now Winston had awoken, her deep green eyes penetrating mine. She gave a yawn and stretched her paws, claws pointed toward my direction.

“She *knew* you were coming for her?”

“Oh yes! Winston is not like other cats,” the old man explained, “she has a sixth sense, foreseeing events before they occur. One day when I was on my way to Buenos Aires (the nearest town) I came upon her in the middle of the road, not making any attempt to move. I stopped the truck and went over to her, stroked her tiny emaciated body. It was little more than a ball of fur, a matted covering over mere skin and bones, skeletal, but she managed to gather just enough strength to climb upon my knee, looking at me confidently with green eyes that conveyed the message she now belonged to me and I was to take care of her. I have, and she has repaid me many times, not only as a companion but also in her rare perception. Sometimes she wakes me up in the middle of the night to alert me to extraordinary things.”

“What sort of extraordinary things?”

The thought of this tender animal possessing such power was difficult to believe, but the unwavering conviction of his words kept me intrigued.



Allowing time to gather thoughts, he slowly propped himself forward into a position more fitting of a story.

“Let me give you an example. One morning, I was awoken by her from a deep sleep before the chime of 4:00. She was whimpering – biting me gently on the face – clearly agitated by something at that present time. After what seemed like the fifth bite my eyes adjusted to see her pacing between myself and the small portable radio I keep beside my bed. The clock strikes, and her persistence leads me to exit the room in search of coffee. As the water boiled she had clearly become more distressed. Winston was crying, circling the radio. Her message was clear. I switched

the dial over, and the muffled sound of a voice came into clarity, 'You owe me three farthings, say the bells of St. Martin's.' On hearing that my ears were instantly drawn into the radio just as the station went to commercials. 'We will return to 1984 with David Niven as Winston Smith after these messages.'”

“What does any of that mean?” I had no understanding of what John was trying to say. It seemed like nonsense.

“Let me explain. Winston was named after the protagonist, the main character, of a famous novel called Nineteen Eighty-Four; Winston Smith. At the very moment, the day and hour, she wanted me to turn on the radio, the station was re-broadcasting a rare old radio adaptation. She thus woke me at the precise time to hear a program that was being broadcast about her!”

His words rang with seriousness, but nothing he had said made any real sense. All those names.

“I thought you were on your way to church?” The old man had quickly changed the subject, perceiving my confusion and not wanting to delve into further explanation.



“Well, maybe church can wait for this week,” I said. “This is far more interesting. Everyone knows about you, but they don't understand why you are here, or why you have done what you have.”

“I'm sure they know of me far and wide. There is much idle talk and gossip. Many people do not know the truth because they do not seek it. Many rumors get around that bear no resemblance to reality. Though you may find it hard to believe, for many years even I did not know why I was here. Perhaps even today I do not fully understand, for there are many mysteries unfolding in these

mountains.”

“So why did you come?”

The old man didn't respond. His posture had sunk to the position I had first found him in.

“What shall I call you?”

“Well, my name is John.”

Upon that, he just smiled.

The events that unfolded here did indeed change the course of Costa Rica, having a profound influence on both the people and the country.

The broadcast was a very rare production of George Orwell's 1984 originally broadcast from Hollywood in 1949. There are no references to this broadcast in any of the biographies of Orwell and Niven and it was produced only two months after the book was published in June 1949 – by that time Orwell was lying flat on his back in hospital dying of TB. How lucky I was to hear it.

II

The Ghost

Did you enjoy the first chapter?

Download the Whole Book

“The Enchanted Forest”

& The Disappearing Village

