

AN UNFORTUNATE ENCOUNTER

CHAPTER ONE

John was an ornithologist. Although he thoroughly enjoyed his job, he always felt as though there was something missing in his day to day encounters with the wonderful animals of the wild. He always felt that he was not in touch with the animals he observed.

It took him several months before realizing that this problem was to do with his eyesight. He noticed this while bird watching one afternoon.

It seemed that the birds he could hear he could not see. It was then that he started to value his eye sight more than his hearing.

John then decided that he preferred seeing than hearing.

One day, as he was strolling the streets in the town of Waterford, while searching for a new pair of binoculars, he stumbled upon a peculiar advertisement mentioning something about a scientific experiment involving a sense of the customers' choice being improved. John scanned the sign once more and noticed in small print at the very bottom "side effects involve one of the customer's senses being compromised".

He thought for some time before he decided he would jeopardize one of his senses, but while doing so would get the breakthrough he desired. With better eye sight he could see birds from a distance and observe dangerous animals without having to risk being noticed.

CHAPTER TWO

As he entered the scientific clinic to proceed with the experiment, he felt an eerie atmosphere. He took a seat and waited patiently until he heard his name being called out. He was told to walk down a corridor to the fifth door on the left, and when he arrived by the door he gave a genteel knock. He was greeted by a rather unpleasant doctor who seemed to be in a rush.

He was then given a glass of pink liquid and two green tablets. He was reluctant to consume them but he felt it better to do so sooner instead of waiting until he no longer had the courage.

The doctor then asked him the sense which he wished to improve and reminded him of the side effects. He then handed John a large, round ball which seemed like the top of a giant lollipop. John was confused as to how this ball was to improve one of his senses.

The doctor explained how he was to take one of the pills inside the ball each day for a month.

John was shoved out of the room without any time to inquire about the strange medication. He left the clinic wandering if the entire thing had been a scam.

After a month had passed he had noticed a significant difference in his eyesight and could see far beyond what he previously could. He was filled with excitement as he began his journey to the Amazon where he hoped to see extravagant birds and unusual animals.

CHAPTER THREE

However, when he arrived he realized that his expectations were perhaps too high. He imagined the noise of the birds coming from the trees would fill the air with its enlightening and cheering cacophony. Instead, all that he could hear was the monotonous breeze blowing through the trees. He was confused as to why he couldn't hear as well as usual until he remembered the side effects of the pills he had taken. This didn't bother him much though, because his hearing was the sense he valued the least. He travelled south deeper into the jungle looking to see wonderful animals and birds. He gazed across the horizon wondering what awaited him.

When he rose from his sleep he prepared breakfast just outside his tent on the spit he had bought specifically for the occasion. He was pleased with himself after he had devoured an entire African bird which he had caught the previous night. He began his explorations at noon.

As he ventured through the vast vegetation of the jungle he found himself whining constantly with the pain of the sharp brambles digging into the flesh around his ankles. He stopped briefly to check for blood. When he was sure that his legs had not been scarred, he continued his hopeful search. As night crept in he began to feel cold. He looked for an appropriate campsite for hours until he came to a clearing.

CHAPTER FOUR

After several attempts to erect his tent, he lost his patience and sat discouraged on the wet ground beneath him. He couldn't understand how he had put it together the previous time. Eventually he realized that he was going to have to crawl into the flat tent and sleep

in it. Surprisingly, he had quite a peaceful sleep for most of the night, until he was woken by an aggressive, groaning noise which had him on his feet within an instant. He grabbed his flashlight in a moment of panic and discovered when he emerged from the tent that it was of no use to him. He could see for miles despite the pitch black darkness. He was amazed at this and remembered his decision to improve his eyesight. He still remained petrified though, and spun around constantly before unsheathing his dagger from its scabbard after hearing another unsettling noise. He began to feel like he was in serious danger. He grabbed his gear and ran as fast as his legs could carry him. However, as it was night, there was not a single soul there to help him escape from his troubles.

CHAPTER FIVE

It didn't take him long to realize that he was trapped and calling for help would be futile until morning. He slept perched high in a tree. He felt at some stages during the night that he was being haunted by an evil spirit of some sort. He drifted asleep soon after discovering the disturbing sound had disappeared. Unfortunately, his pleasant sleep was disrupted again by another noise. John began to slide down the tree's trunk and before he had a chance to pull himself back up, he hit the ground with an immense thump which sent a shock up his spine. He stumbled to his feet but struggled to stand. He then collapsed and lay unconscious on the ground.

What occurred next may not have if John had taken some time to consider the potential negative side effects of the experiment he had undergone. The furious creature attacked him from behind leaving John no chance of survival as the sense that was compromised was his ability to hear.

Jack Cooke 14th June 2013