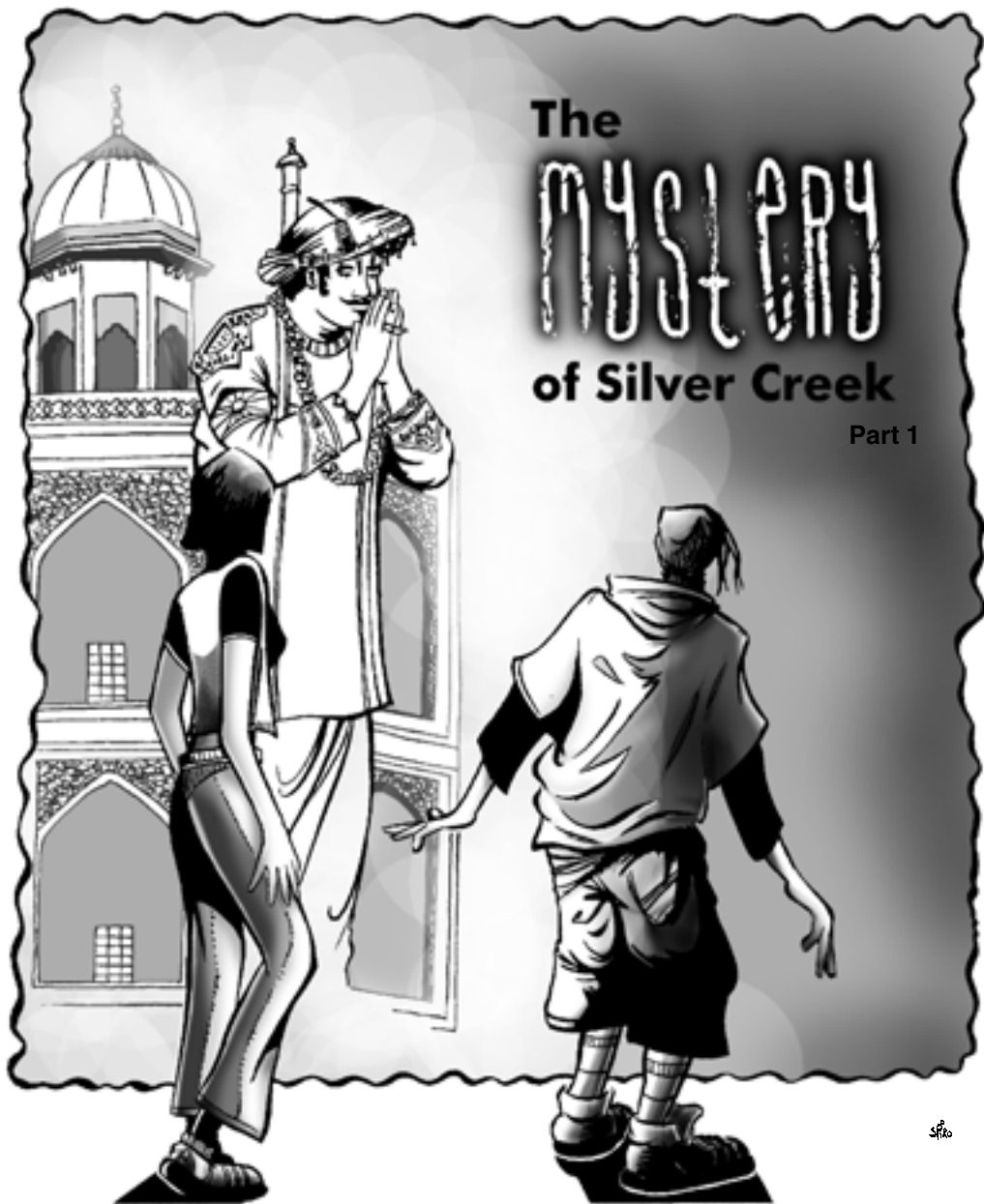


Stories from



Heaven's Library

For Young and Old



The MYSTERY of Silver Creek

Part 1

THE MYSTERY OF SILVER CREEK

“Is that the haunted castle that your dad told you about, Jaz? The one that people are afraid to enter or even go near?”

“I think so, Andy! Are you sure you want to go in?”

“Of course I do! We’ve come all this way; I’m not about to turn around now! Let’s go!”

And so Andy and Jaz entered the haunted ruin, hoping to unveil this local mystery that had been the source of innumerable wild tales and superstitions. It had all started when one day these two teenagers were bored of their daily routine and decided to have a change...



“What shall we do tomorrow, Jaz?” Andy asked pensively. “It’s freeday, and I’m tired of spending all day loafing around, watching videos and playing computer games. Let’s do something different for a change!”

“Sure!” answered Jaz, happy that Andy was finally starting to get bored of watching so many movies. “What about going out of town, to the mountains, or the forest? We could make some sandwiches and leave early in the morning and go exploring! I know of a cool place we could go, up past Silver Creek. When I was younger, my dad and I went hiking in the forest around there, but he forbade me to go past the creek. He said there were lots of wild animals, snakes, thorny territory, and he had even heard all kinds of wild ghost stories about some haunted castle or palace or something! Practically no one ever goes up there—too remote, I guess! But I think you and I could handle it!”

Andy agreed, and took off to tell his dad, Frank, about their plans to go hiking toward

the north of the forest. Frank wasn’t convinced that it was such a good idea, but he was happy to see Andy interested in something besides movies and games.

Frank and his family had been living in Australia for about twelve years now. Before that, he and his wife and children had lived on the mission field of India, but had had to leave because of political turmoil and persecution. Frank fondly recalled the sweet memories of their years on the mission field, and would often tell stories to his children about the mysteries of the beautiful and fascinating country of India. Since they left, Frank had been planning and hoping to go back once they had a chance, but the longer they waited, the more tied down they seemed to get. Their roots grew deeper, until he felt that to pull up stakes and return to India was just too much to attempt, too difficult. He hoped, though, that maybe at least one day, once they were old enough, his children would go to the mission field.

Andy had always listened intently to his dad’s stories and testimonies when he was younger. He would dream of someday going back to that faraway land (which he only vaguely remembered, since they’d left when he was just five), with strange customs and gorgeous women. He would avidly watch any TV documentaries about the lands of the east, especially the Indian subcontinent.

But as Andy got into his teen years, he started to think that his dad’s tales were repetitive and boring. He no longer felt that desire within him to launch out and go somewhere and do something for the Lord. He lost interest in the Word, too, and found himself spending nearly all his free time in his room

listening to music or watching movies, and trying to dress, talk, and act worldly.

To please his dad, he would still go out on the weekends, passing out tracts in the park. Sometimes, though, he'd make up stories of "heavy sheep" he had met out at the mall on the weekends, trying to justify his spending so much time there, when really he was just hanging out with System friends, not witnessing to them at all, looking at all the gadgets and stylish clothes in the shops and trying to figure out how he could get the money for the latest and coolest, while he caught up on the latest rock hits blaring through the store's speakers.

Andy's mom had passed away several years earlier after a serious illness, leaving Frank to raise three children alone. After a couple of years, Frank had met Esther, a divorced single mom with two children. They took a liking to each other and decided to move into the same house and "try it out."

Andy, who was 16 at the time, didn't really take a shine to the idea, although he was happy about the fact that Esther had a 15-year-old daughter, Jaz. They became pals pretty much right away. Jaz was much more inspired about the Word and serving the Lord than Andy was. She looked and acted older than she was, and had a big influence on Andy, to the point that he found himself following her example, and even enthusiastically going out with Jaz to try and share the Lord's love and Word with other teenagers rather than just "hanging out" with his "cool" friends.

After a while, though, witnessing seemed to get harder and drier. Many of the young people they talked to seemed self-satisfied and complacent in their way of life, and few wanted to take the time to listen to what Andy and Jaz, or their parents, for that matter, had

to say. Andy and Jaz became discouraged by the negative responses, and after awhile, they cooled off completely. "Hiding their lights under a bushel" seemed easier than standing up for their convictions and faith to folks who didn't pay much attention or even made fun of them.

In an attempt to either "fit in" or "be different"—Frank and Esther couldn't quite figure out which—Andy and Jaz at 18 and 17 had both decided to get a "new look." Andy shaved his head up to a little above his ears, leaving only a few strands of long blonde hair falling on his forehead, strongly contrasting the rest of his dark hair. He pierced his ear, but when he found out how much his dad disliked men wearing earrings, he stopped wearing his earring around the house, though he'd still wear it when out with Jaz.

Jaz cut her hair short, to just above her shoulders, much to the horror of her mom. She also got her right nostril pierced and wore a small ruby in it.

Frank and Esther were disappointed that their kids were so self-absorbed and quite tripped off, but they weren't quite sure what to do to help or inspire them. Whatever they tried didn't seem to work, and they'd often get frustrated and then end up having a heated argument that went nowhere. They wished they could have been better samples of dedicated missionaries themselves. They prayed each night that the Lord would help their kids to find excitement and inspiration in the things of the spirit and not just the so-called freedoms of the flesh. And most of all that they would get the burden and vision to serve the Lord and reach out to help others.

So when Andy and Jaz announced that they would be spending their freeday hiking, their parents were pleasantly surprised. Although Frank and Esther questioned whether

it was the safest place to go, they were glad that Andy and Jaz were tired of their usual antics. So they gave their approval, praying together that night that the Lord would keep and protect their kids, and that He would somehow use this outing to draw them closer to Him and bring some meaning back into their lives.



At 5:00 a.m., Andy and Jaz took off. They had to take a two-hour bus ride, then hike up the mountain for another two hours before reaching Silver Creek. At 8:00 they stopped to eat breakfast halfway up to the creek. The view was breathtaking! The valley below was covered by a thick morning mist which the sun's rays covered like a warm golden blanket. Beautiful waterfalls could be seen in the distance. They continued on with their trek, and as they reached Silver Creek, a tingle of excitement rose within both of them as they prepared to enter the until-now "forbidden territory."

After a drink of fresh water from the creek they took a deep breath and entered the nearly impenetrable forest beyond, in search of whatever mystery this place was said to hold.

Immediately above Silver Creek, the vegetation seemed twice as dense. Dark shadows surrounded them and the sudden coolness of the air only added to the eerie feeling. Jaz put on a sweater, while Andy started hacking away long branches to clear a path. Their heavy ranger boots proved to be very appropriate when the ground became muddy and soggy.

The two hadn't spent a whole lot of time in the great outdoors and this wasn't exactly

their usual idea of a good time, but the pull of the mystery was growing stronger by the minute, and they were determined to see what lay beyond Silver Creek.

A couple of hours had passed since they'd crossed Silver Creek, and Jaz started wondering if they were lost or going around in circles. Then suddenly they entered a clearing, where a few bright rays of sunshine pierced through the lush foliage*. They both sat down on a patch of dry grass to rest a while.

"Are you feeling okay, Jaz?" asked Andy, "Not too tired?"

"No, I'm fine. It's all very exciting! Do you think we'll find this haunted castle? I mean, we really don't know where it is, and with the forest this dense, it could be anywhere," she said hesitantly.

Andy's halfhearted nod and the blank look on his face made it plain that for all his attempts at confidence, he was wondering as much as she was whether all this was a good idea, and if there was anything out here to find after all.

After resting for a few minutes, Andy started feeling restless and decided that it was time to move on. From that spot upwards, the foliage began getting dryer and thinner, and thornier than ever.

When they arrived at the edge of what looked like the mouth of an old mine or cave of some sort, Andy right away wanted to go in, but Jaz wasn't too sure.

"Be careful, Andy! There could be a wild animal or snake inside."

Andy took some rocks and threw them down the open bowel, and all they could hear was the echo of the rock hitting the sides.

"I think it's safe," he said falteringly, "but I'll go on ahead and check it out and come back to get you, okay?!"

**foliage*: tree leaves

“Oh no, no way!” replied Jaz, who was getting a little scared. “You’re not leaving me behind! I’m coming with you!”

So Andy pulled out his flashlight, and they both started down into the cave. At the bottom, the tunnel turned to one side. They continued on toward an opening they could see in the distance. Andy’s flashlight wasn’t as bright as he’d imagined it would be in this dark cavern, so they were all the more eager to get out of the tunnel.

When they came out into the light, to their surprise and delight, there before them stood a small but impressive castle-like ruin, covered with ferns, ivy and moss. Branches had grown out through the cracks in the walls, and the top of the structure was lost in the foliage and couldn’t even be seen. After walking around for a bit and admiring their discovery, Andy saw a passageway that looked like it might lead to an entrance into the fortress.

“Let’s try to get in and see what we can find in the old place. Maybe we’ll find books or photos, or even valuables from the former owners.”

“Oh look!” exclaimed Jaz, advancing deeper into the old passage, “There’s a door!”

Andy, using all his strength, managed to push the door open just enough for both of them to slip through.

“Amazing!” cried Jaz, “Everything seems to be intact, almost as if someone still lived here! The furnishings, carpets and paintings are all in almost perfect condition, except that they’re covered in dust and cobwebs.”

“Wow, this is really cool!” replied Andy. “I wonder who used to live here and how long ago?” There was a little light coming in through a window here or there, but for the most part the overgrown bushes surrounding the castle made the inside pretty dim.

Partly in an effort to shake off the spooky feeling, Jaz abruptly stated, “Andy, after all that walking, I’m starved! Do we still have some sandwiches?”

“Yeah, good idea. Let’s eat something quick before we explore the place. Look here, an old dining table and chairs we can make use of.”

They wiped the thick dust off the table and sat around on some old ornate chairs.

“Jaz, check out the furniture in this place,” Andy commented, “I’ve sure never seen anything like it. It doesn’t look like any old person’s home, but more like a mansion for a lord or lady or somebody incredibly rich or important. It has a definite oriental touch, too; it must have belonged to a foreigner. It’s odd that no one seems to know about this place and that all these things, that must be worth an awful lot, haven’t been stolen.”

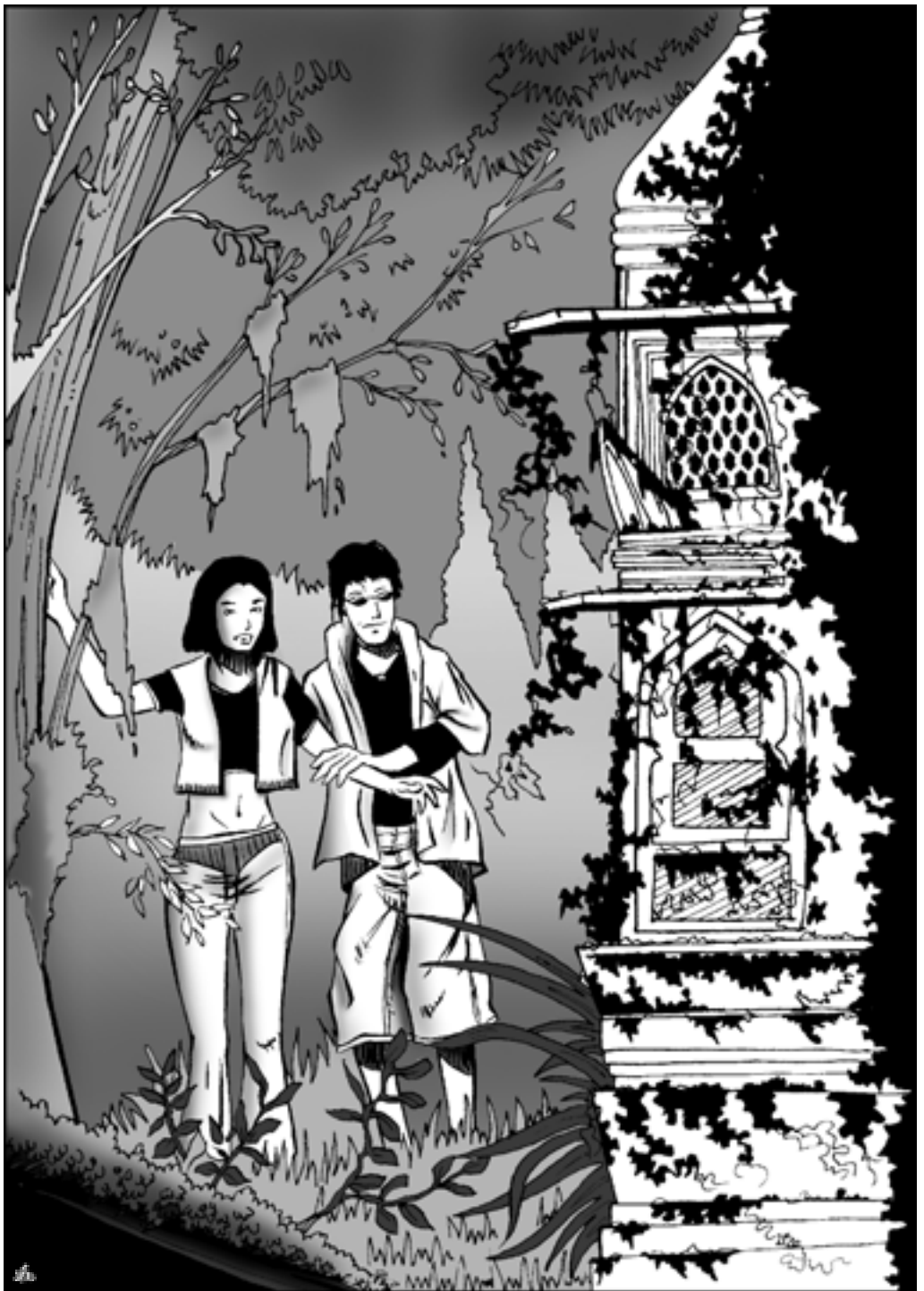
Jaz was silent. Andy looked at her questioningly. “What are you thinking, Jaz?”

“I was just remembering how, when I was little, my dad told me that people were scared to go above Silver Creek because they said there was a ghost up here who had attacked people in the past. There were all these wild tales of some nobleman who lived in seclusion up in the mountains, and who had been murdered by a jealous enemy.”

“Whoa, Jaz, you’re giving me the shivers.” Then, trying to act skeptical to mask his fear, he stated, “You know, I’m not so sure I even believe in ghosts. What about you?”

“Of course I do,” answered Jaz, surprised by his question. “I mean, Grandpa always talked about them in the Letters, and even talked to them, plus the Bible talks a lot about ghosts and spirits, doesn’t it?”

“Well, I’ve read all that stuff too,” Andy said, “but I’ve sure never seen one or heard one. Anyway, even if there are ghosts, they



probably aren't around here. It was probably just an old wives' tale made up to scare little children, or maybe somebody had that story spread around so people would be afraid to come steal all the valuables here. Well, I'm ready to check out the rest of the rooms here. Are you game?"

"Yeah, why not?" answered Jaz, though after all this talk of ghosts she wasn't too sure.

Andy decided to check out the upstairs first, and started making his way up a wide flight of stairs that was at the back of the dining room where they had been sitting.

"Look at that huge painting on the wall," exclaimed Jaz as she started up. "It looks like a portrait. Let's dust it off and maybe we'll find out who used to live here!"

A minute later they had wiped off the thick dust with an old rag they had spotted in a corner, and Andy and Jaz marveled in awe at the majestic portrait.

"He looks like an Indian *Rajah*!" Andy proposed. "I wonder who he was, and what he would have been doing here, so far from his home country?"

"He doesn't look too old," added Jaz, "probably just in his thirties. He's really good-looking, especially with those fancy clothes and that awesome hat, almost like a crown, and all those jewels."

On the top floor, things were in worse condition than the furnishings downstairs, probably because of the many cracks in the roof. Branches had broken through and little animals had made their homes here and there. Andy and Jaz walked along the hallway at the top of the stairs, and opened a few doors to find what must have been lovely bedrooms at one time, with large and elaborate

bureaus* and cupboards. The once fine rooms had lost their luster now though, and as Andy and Jaz gingerly opened a few of the cupboards and drawers, it seemed they were all empty.

"I guess it's not such a spooky place after all," Andy tried to reassure himself. "These just look like a bunch of guest bedrooms in some rich person's house."

"Let's go back downstairs, Andy, and find out where those doors and halls along the dining room lead."

Descending the staircase and then heading left, they came to what looked like the *Rajah's* bedroom. "I've never seen such a huge bedroom in my life!" exclaimed Jaz.

"Man, this is just like in the movies," Andy added. It was full of ornate furniture, and, like the rest of the downstairs part of the house, it all seemed in pretty good shape. A large window made up the entire wall on one side of the room, facing toward the garden, which had certainly once been beautiful and well-kept, though it was now no more than a tangled mass of weeds.

The view must have been magnificent! Jaz thought, as she imagined what it might have been like to live in this room long, long ago.

In the middle of the room there was a large old bed, with posts and sheer curtains draped about it. There were old paintings on the walls, and bedside tables with a few non-outstanding personal effects on them—an old wooden comb, a wineglass, and a candlestick. On both sides of the bed were two wooden posts with carved figurines*, which Jaz paused to admire.

Andy, realizing that Jaz seemed to like the little statues, decided to try and twist one off for her. He grabbed the one on the

***Rajah:** A prince, chief, or ruler in India

***bureau:** a writing desk or writing table, often with drawers

***figurine:** a small, and often sculptured, figure

top of the post and tugged at it for a minute, but just as it was about to come loose, suddenly the whole post twisted around and a strange squeaky noise was heard behind them. Jaz and Andy both jumped, frightened by this unexpected noise and, turning around cautiously, they saw a panel of what they had thought was a solid wall move to the side, revealing a narrow, obscure passage.

"Let's go in!" exclaimed Andy, intrigued beyond description by this discovery.

Andy pulled his flashlight out of his pocket as he stepped into the dark cranny, but the light coming from it became dimmer by the second. As she stepped in, Jaz faltered. "I don't know about this, Andy. Maybe we've seen enough. Maybe we should head home now. My mom said we should try to be home before nightfall."

"We still have plenty of time for that!" reasoned Andy. "I know it's dark in here, but it's only a little past noon, and it'll stay light until past nine at night. Plus, I can't believe you'd really want to leave just when it's starting to get exciting—do you?"

Jaz relented, and they continued walking down the passage. About ten meters in, they found a descending spiral stairway, then another corridor and another door at the end of that. Andy pushed hard to open the door, and as they entered the room, Andy's torch light died out.

As they turned around to try and feel their way out of this place, the door slammed shut, and the sound of some sort of lock clicking echoed hollowly in the dark stillness.

"Andy, please open the door!" Jaz begged. "Quick! This is scary."

"Sorry Jaz, there doesn't seem to be a handle on the inside of this door," Andy replied, feeling around.

"Lord Jesus," cried Jaz, "please get us out of this trap!"

As soon as she finished praying, a bright light shone in the room. "What is that?" exclaimed Jaz.

"I don't know," answered Andy, trying to figure out where the light could be coming from. "It doesn't seem to have a source. There is no lamp anywhere, nor are there any windows." The light turned as if it were a spotlight, and instead of shining on them, it pointed towards a long rectangular box lying on the floor.

"What do you suppose that could be?" Andy queried, having an idea, but not wanting to mention it.

"It looks like a coffin to me," said Jaz, confirming Andy's suspicions. "And look above it. There's another painting that looks like the same man, the *Rajah*, in the portrait we saw upstairs, but in army uniform this time."

As they spoke, the light focused on the portrait and the painting seemed to be coming to life. Andy suddenly shook his head, hitting his ear with his hand. "Did you hear that, Jaz?"

"Hear what? What did you hear?"

"It's weird, I tell you, but it's like I can hear a man's voice; I ... I think it may be the *Rajah*, speaking to me."

"Oooh, you mean like a prophecy?" Jaz taunted. Andy had made it pretty clear to her before that he didn't really believe it was possible to hear from the departed, or at least that he would never do it himself. And what else had he said earlier, about not believing in ghosts? "Maybe you're just talking to yourself?" Jaz tried to ease him out of it.

"No, I don't think so. I don't talk to myself with an Indian accent ... and ... oh my

God, there he is! I can see him! He's standing right there, with his royal costume, right in front of me! Can you see him, Jaz?"

She looked around doubtfully. "No, I can't. So ... what's he saying? Tell me!"

"He just said 'Namaste.' That means hello in Hindi."

Jaz stared at Andy in shock, overwhelmed at the thought of what was happening—and especially that it was happening to Andy, who had always been such a skeptic. Or was he kidding with her? But then, there was this light that seemed to be coming from nowhere...

"Now he just said that his prayers have been answered and that he is so happy to see us."

"His prayers for what?" asked Jaz, puzzled. "How can you and I be an answer to his prayers?"

"Shush, Jaz! He's talking some more. No, he's not really talking, but he's telling me the story of his life. Oh, it's amazing! It's like I can see the whole thing at the same time, like watching a movie."

Jaz chuckled, "I guess he knows how to get your attention. News of your liking for movies must have traveled far and wide, even to the spirit world. So, what's he showing you?"

"He says that his name was Sindhi and that he was the *Rajah* of a small kingdom in Bengal, India, in the 19th century. He had eight brothers and sisters, and was rich and powerful. His subjects loved him and he loved them too, and he judged fairly and took good care of his people.

"He had studied in England for a few years as a young man, and when the English colonized India he welcomed them to his territory. Because he was favorable to

them, he found favor in their eyes and they allowed him to remain in charge of his kingdom. Sindhi had a cousin, Khan, who greatly disliked the English and didn't approve of Sindhi's politics. Khan was very jealous of Sindhi, and of his wealth and power. He secretly hoped that someday he could be *Rajah* in his cousin's stead.

"It so happened that both cousins fell in love with the same beautiful princess from Howrah, a neighboring kingdom close to Calcutta. Princess Rani, the object of their affection, was courted by both of them, but from the start she preferred Sindhi to Khan because he was gentle and kind, loving and considerate. He treated her respectfully and gallantly, like the princess she was; Khan also acted kindly towards her, but from what she saw and heard of his interactions with others, he tended to be aggressive, ill-tempered, selfish and greedy.

"Khan felt it was unfair, and thought that Rani preferred Sindhi only because he was the *Rajah*, the one with the wealth and power; but Rani truly loved Sindhi. Khan proposed to Rani first, but she refused him. Then just a few weeks later she accepted Sindhi's proposal, and that made Khan raving mad. He left the main palace, where he was employed as one of his cousin's advisors, and exiled himself in the neighboring province of Assam where he fomented revolt*. He had a few followers amongst the rich landlords and some of the *Brahmins** who, like Khan, disagreed with Sindhi's politics. They felt he was too friendly with the colonialists, and they were unhappy with his manner of justice which they, being rich, felt favored the poor. Sindhi always tried to be fair and do justice to all equitably, but he had made some powerful enemies through his actions."

***revolt**: to rebel; to attempt to overthrow the authority of the state

***Brahmin**: First of the four Hindu classes, responsible for performing duties at religious rites

There was a pause for a few moments, then Sindhi continued his story:

When the English colonized Bengal, they brought along missionaries. One such missionary was an old acquaintance of mine, from my days of studying in London. He would come to visit me at the palace and we would sit for long hours together talking about Hindu and Buddhist traditions, about God's love and Jesus, about sin and forgiveness. Sometimes we would disagree in our beliefs, or even argue about more touchy matters of Hindu tradition, like *suttee*, which compelled the widow of a deceased man to enter into the fire with him while he was cremated. There were other aspects of our traditions that the missionaries tried to teach me were wrong. At first I did not understand their way of thinking. The Indian culture favored male babies over females, because of the excessive amount of money required for a girl's dowry*, and this would pressure some poor parents to let their baby girls die rather than have to face this financial burden. I had never realized before what a sad and inhumane custom this was.

The missionaries were very wise and patient, never forcing their doctrines on me, but they stated their beliefs calmly and with humility and simple conviction, and most of all, they would read to me from the Bible. My favorite passage was 1 Corinthians 13. We read it together so many times I nearly memorized it.

After many months, I accepted Jesus into my heart

and it was then that a light was turned on in my life. From that day on, all I wanted to do was to teach my people to live in love, in the way Jesus did and taught.

When the English tried to ban *suttee*, I backed them up. When they fought against the killing of baby girls, I likewise joined them in the fight, and actively sought to teach and enlighten my people. In all this, I stirred up even more enemies for myself than I had ever had before. My cousin Khan must have been very happy to recruit the growing number of discontented subjects over to his cause.

Khan would taunt me, saying, "It seems that you have taken quite a liking to these missionaries, and people are talking. Some have even suggested that you have become a Christian."

"And what would be wrong with that, if it were true?" I defended myself. "Have you listened to these missionaries? What do you find wrong with what they teach? They only show and speak kindness, charity and forgiveness. Their way of life must indeed be the way the gods would want us to live."

Suttee: (Sanskrit *sati*, "true wife") Practice that prevailed in India of a widow burning herself on the funeral pyre, either with the body of her husband or, if he had died at a distance, separately. Classical authors mention it as early as 316 BC. It appears at first to have been a royal custom and privilege, afterward generalized and made legal. The custom was abolished by the British in 1829, but isolated instances persisted in remote parts of India until recent times. In theory the act of *suttee* was voluntary, but in orthodox communities any woman who refused to perform it was ostracized.

***dowry:** money or property brought by a bride to her husband at marriage

“But I must warn you that many feel you are weakening in your strength as a ruler, and are therefore no longer fit to rule this kingdom. When our northern neighbors were planning to attack our villages to extend their territories, you sent them gifts instead of dispatching the army. I am not the only one that feels you are crazy for doing that!”

“Well, my dear cousin, did my plan work or did it not? Did the northern forces attack?”

“No, they didn’t,” Khan admitted. “Still, your subjects wonder why you chose the weak ways of a woman.”

“Why should we spill the blood of our own people when there is no need for it? I love our people too much to send them to war just to show myself manly and my kingdom strong.”

Khan continued brooding and biding his time. He envied my success; he resented my newfound beliefs. He conspired with other discontented generals and wealthy landowners. Soon they had a small but

well-prepared and angry army formed, mainly consisting of *sepoys** who the warlords and wealthy farmers had suborned* to join their cause. The leaders of the rebellion met together in secret to plan their time of attack. Khan led the way.

“We must act quickly before the kingdom becomes poisoned by Sindhi’s strange new ways and the customs of Christianity,” he told them all. “If he continues on with these ridiculous beliefs and politics, he may try to convert the entire kingdom. We must put a stop to it. We must preserve our tradition and our way of life that our fathers have taught us, and that have made us prosperous.”

They planned to attack the following Sunday, after the evening meal at the palace, when they knew we would all be feasting and drinking and would be drowsy.

But during our Sunday night feast, as everyone was drinking, one of Khan’s *sepoys* became drunk and talked too much to one of his friends who was still loyal to me, leaking news of the attack. His friend



**sepoy*: a native soldier

**suborned*: persuaded to commit an unlawful or evil act

informed me at once that my cousin and his allies were planning to take over the palace and murder me in less than an hour. I knew that if this one *sepoy* had joined Khan, many of the others may have as well, and I did not know how many of them I could trust and whether we could withstand such an attack.

I called together my four most trusted soldiers, and we escaped to a summer palace in the countryside, close to a town bordering the Kingdom of Dacca*. I had left the faithful *sepoy* who had warned me of the attack in the palace, as an informer, and three days later he sent word, informing me that Khan and his generals had successfully taken over the palace, and were now attempting to run my kingdom. They had incited mobs to kill many missionaries and anyone who professed to be Christian. My cousin had gone mad. He was possessed of Satan, I am sure.

He knew of my summer palace, and I was certain that it would not be long before he would come seek me out. It was widely known, by now, that he intended to kill me to secure his claim to the throne, to the family inheritance, as well as to my lovely wife, Rani. She had been away from the palace that dreadful Sunday, visiting her sister who was soon to have a child, and I had had to flee without her.

I knew I did not have enough forces on my side to hold my own against my cousin. I knew there must still be many loyal to me and willing to fight for my cause, but with the country in such a state of turmoil, I did not know who could be trusted, nor was there time to find out. I decided to leave immediately for the port of Chittagong, from where I could take a ship across the ocean

to another land. I believed that in time, when things had calmed down a little back home, I would be able to return secretly, amass* an army and repossess my rightful kingdom. I took all the jewels and gold that I had stored in my summer palace, to sustain me on my journey abroad until such a time as it would be safe to return to my homeland.

Two days later my few guards and I boarded the first ship sailing East. I had many friends and allies abroad among English men, whom I had always had reasonable dealings with before. After two months of sailing I landed in Australia and made it my temporary home.

I built this small mansion here, where I lived in near seclusion, biding my time. My cousin Khan had heard of my escape, but he could not find out where I had gone. He was determined to end my life and eliminate all risk of opposition, for he knew that as long as I was alive, his kingdom would not be completely secure.

He had by now deceived many of the people of our lands into thinking that I was the traitor, telling them many lies about how I as ruler would have brought about the destruction of our traditions, our land, and our very nation. He set a price on my head of ten thousand *annas*—a very large sum of money in those days.

When I sent one of my *sepoys* on a secret mission to India, as a spy to gather information and search out those who might still be loyal to me, he heard of this reward. The heart of man is by nature evil and greedy, and this young man was obsessed with the visions of the great treasures he would receive at Khan's hand if he ended my life. So, upon his return, I was betrayed

**Kingdom of Dacca*: now Bangladesh

**amass*: gather

by one I had completely trusted. He poisoned my food and I died that very day.

When my spirit was seen in the house the day after I had died, the servants were terrified and fled the house, leaving everything as it was at the time. From there, the rumors began to spread into the surrounding towns and villages that there were haunting spirits in this house. So, considering its remote location, you are the first true Christians who have ever ventured out here in these many years, and who have given me the opportunity to tell my story.



Rajah took a pause from his story. By now Andy and Jaz were both in shock, and in tears.

“Wow!” exclaimed Jaz, “But what does *Rajah* Sindhi want from us? What could a couple of young people like us possibly do for him?—Especially since, after all, he is dead!”

“Shhh, there’s more,” Andy exclaimed. “After *Sindhi*’s death, under his cousin’s rule, life in their kingdom went from bad to worse. *Khan* oppressed the poor, and corruption and injustice abounded. The people become discontent, and there have been constant quarrels in the courts and government ever since, as well as social unrest. Greed and crime



have flourished, and the people are in a most unhappy state.”

Sindhi paused, looked deeply into Andy’s eyes, and said, “My people have since been ruled by one corrupt government after another, and their suffering pains me. It grieves me, and I have longed to help them. My mission isn’t finished,” Sindhi added pleadingly, “I’ve been crying out to God to save my people from this evil and to bring to them the light of the truth. Many of the departed great men of India, who used to be faithful to me while I ruled, have also joined their prayers to mine.”

“Jaz,” Andy solemnly stated, “the Lord and Sindhi are calling us to go to the city of Calcutta in India, to preach the Gospel to the Bengal people! Sindhi has said he has received permission to go with us in the spirit and might of God, along with other departed saints, to help lead and guide us in our efforts to reach the new generation!”

As Andy continued looking at *Rajah* Sindhi, it appeared his image was slowly fading, but the *Rajah* kept on speaking: “I have a little secret that I’ve never told anyone.—Not even my wife knew about it when we were alive! I kept this secret, and now I know that it was for the day when Jesus would show me who He would send to answer our prayers! If you choose to be those who would go, I’ll tell you about it!”

This was a great moment of decision for Andy. In just a few seconds, he reflected on his life so far. He had to admit, though he tried to make everyone think he was pretty cool, he was generally bored and discontent, and he hadn’t yet found real fulfillment or excitement—certainly not the kind he could see in his dad’s eyes when he would tell his tales of witnessing to lost souls in India. What was there, really, to hold him

back from embarking on such an adventure—and from discovering the mysteries of the land of India—for himself?!

It had become clear to him, in listening to Sindhi’s tale, how wealthy he was in the Spirit, and how much truth he had received through the Word and his parents’ teaching. He suddenly felt ashamed of how little he had done with that truth to help others, and how quickly the fire that had been sparked when Jaz first came to live with his family had cooled off. He regretfully acknowledged to himself that he was not much different from those who didn’t know the Lord, and a sudden conviction and desire to change all that came over him. Maybe this was his chance! Inside he felt that if he failed to take advantage of it now, this bus of opportunity might not come again for a long time.

“Okay, Sindhi, you’ve got it. I will go to India! I admit I don’t really see how much good I could do there, considering I’m not a great missionary or anything, but I can see it’s about time to do something useful with my life.”

Sindhi smiled and lifted his eyes to Heaven, and Andy could see tears of joy stream down his brown cheeks. The *Rajah* went on to tell Andy that in one of the upstairs bedrooms there was a little portrait of himself above a mirror.

“In the picture I am wearing a necklace with a little key hanging on it. Rub the paint around the key and you will find that this key is embedded in the portrait. Put this key on a chain and guard it very carefully, and take it with you when you go to Calcutta. There I shall reveal to you what you are to do with it!”

Sindhi’s likeness had by now completely vanished from Andy’s sight, and as his last words faded into silence, the light in the room

dimmed and went out. A loud click was then heard behind them as the door unlocked itself and now stood open. Jaz followed as Andy rushed upstairs, where Andy instantly found the key. Using a long black shoelace he had in his pocket, he tied the key around his neck. Jaz' eyes widened in astonishment, "Did he actually tell you to pull that key out of the painting?"

"He sure did!" smiled Andy. "I'm a believer now, if I wasn't ever before!"

"That is pretty awesome, Andy. Still, I'm not so sure about all this business of spirits coming and asking us to go to India. Anyway, I didn't see anything, so maybe he just wants you to go; nobody asked me anything.—Although, my new jewelry might help me blend in real well," she chuckled, pointing to her nose stud.

Andy and Jaz realized that they'd been at this old mansion for hours now, and had better start heading home. They made it down the mountain just in time to catch the 11:00 bus, the last one heading home. They tip-toed into the house at 1:00 pm, and prayed that their parents hadn't worried too much about them.



In the early morning hours, Jaz thought she heard someone calling her name. She looked around sleepily, and dozed off again. As she did, she dreamt of a beautiful Indian lady in an elaborate deep blue sari*, her thick black hair tied up in a large bun, and a pearl-encrusted diadem* on her head.

The woman bowed and spoke softly. "I am Princess Rani. You have heard of me, have you not?" Jaz, in a state of shock and

struggling to recall the events of the previous afternoon, nodded.

"When *Rajah* Sindhi, my beloved husband, was killed, Khan did as we expected and forced me to become his wife. Unbeknownst to him, I had also learned of the missionaries, along with Sindhi, and I had come to accept Jesus as my Lord. Khan's life was also a short one. He strongly opposed the English rule in Bengal, and he campaigned to rid our lands of all traces of western influence.

"He used the Enfield Rifles controversy* to raise an army and drive the English out of Bengal, but he was killed in battle. According to the Hindu tradition of suttee, I was forced to follow my 'husband' into the next world. I did not want to die so young, but I was happy that when I did, I was greeted on the other side by my beloved Sindhi, who accompanied me to our lovely Home in Heaven.

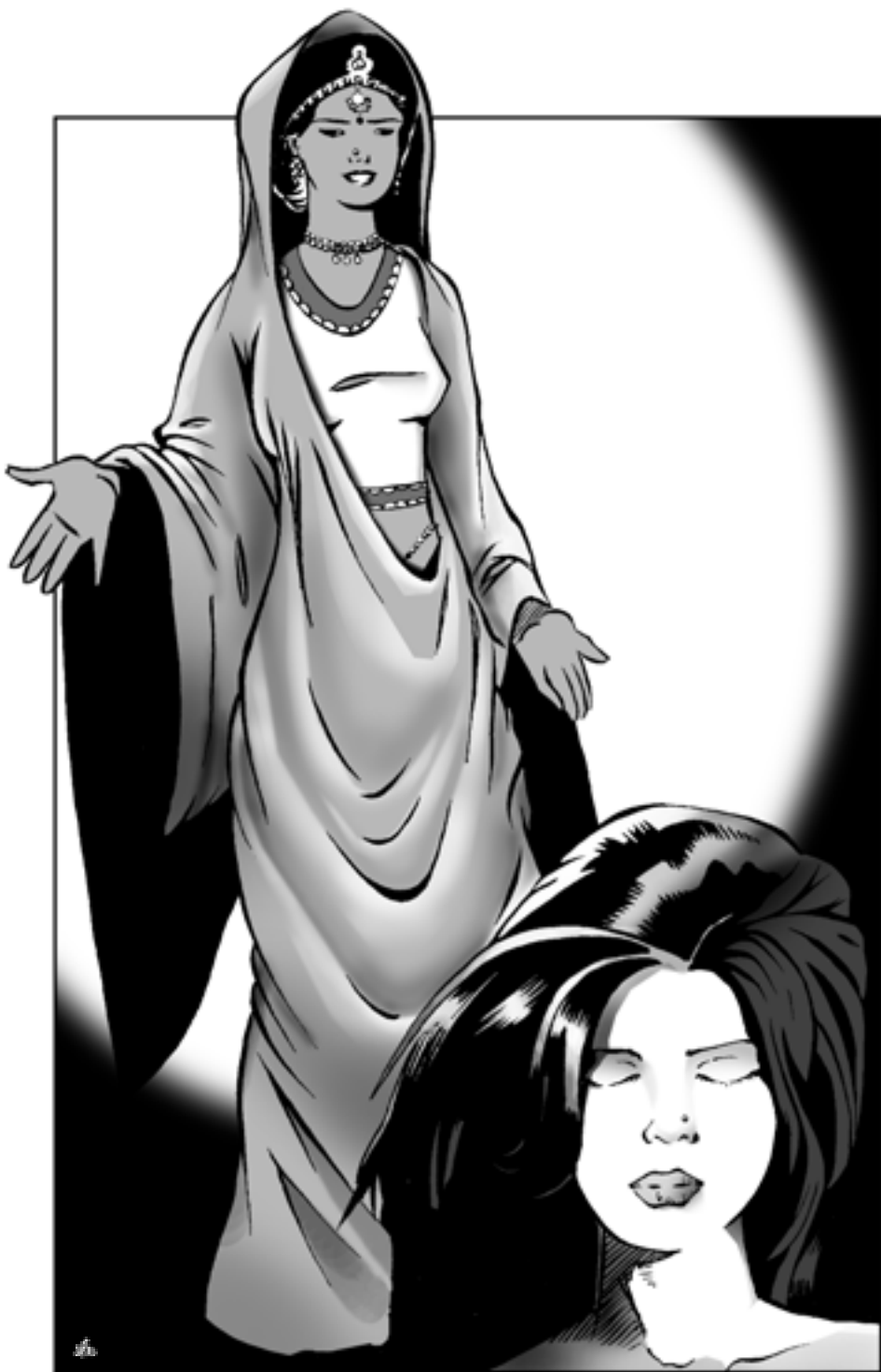
"We have both continually prayed for missionaries to reach Bengal, to bring light and salvation to our people. We are calling you and Andy to go now, to reach the youth there, who, although they seem to have become more open and free, have only become more materialistic and are as lost and groping in darkness as ever. Please, for the love of my people, I pray you, let Sindhi and me help our people through you. Will you go for us?"

Jaz awoke, startled, and as she pondered on the visit of this Indian princess, she felt the deep sorrow mixed with love and compassion that filled Rani's heart. She knew now that God was calling her to go to India too, to help in whatever way possible.

**sari*: garment worn chiefly by women of India and Pakistan

**diadem*: a crown

**Enfield Rifles controversy*: see fact box on page 17



Jaz decided she wouldn't say anything about the dream to Andy right away. She tried to brush it off, telling herself, "It was just a dream. Maybe it wasn't even real and didn't mean anything." Even if the princess hadn't actually come to her, though, she couldn't shake the conviction of the Lord's spirit showing her the need of India and asking her to do something about it.



The next morning over the breakfast table, Andy and Jaz didn't want to shock their dad and mom too much, so when Esther asked

how it had gone, all they said at first was, "Fine. It was a great hike!"

After talking for a while about how beautiful it was to be out in nature, Andy began to describe their discovery of the mansion ruin, the secret passage and the tomb of the *Rajah* and how Sindhi had come and talked to him.

Frank and Esther were never so surprised as when Andy told them that he felt the Lord calling him to go and be a missionary to India, and that he wanted to start getting ready right away!

Then it was Andy's turn to be surprised when Jaz piped up, "And I'm going with him."



Enfield Rifles Controversy

The Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 began among the British controlled army of Bengal by the introduction of a new Enfield rifle. The Enfield rifle fired cartridges partially coated with grease, which had to be bitten open before being loaded. Sepoys made up 96 percent of the 300,000-man British army controlling a population of 210 million. Caste Hindus among them insisted that the grease was beef fat from the sacred cow, and Muslims insisted it was pork fat from flesh forbidden by the Koran. When the sepoy refused to bite these packages open, claiming it was sacrilegious, they were fettered, and sent to jail on long prison terms. Such punishments incensed their comrades, who rose up and shot their British officers, organizing them-*

selves into an independent army. The revolt quickly spread throughout the rest of India, resulting in a series of bloody battles between the British forces, and the native sepoy armies. The native armies arose in many locations, as local chiefs encouraged the revolt in hopes of regaining privileges they themselves had lost to the British colonizers. The mutiny was eventually quelled. Although India remained a British colony, the revolt had brought the concerns of many of the Indian people to the fore. As a result, Indian representatives were accepted into the local governing parliament, and the control of the commercialized East India Company was abolished in favor of a more direct rule over India by the British government.

***caste**: a social class

“I thought you said you weren’t going! What made you change your mind?”

“Well,” Jaz answered sheepishly, “when Sindhi was telling you his story, I was a little jealous, because I couldn’t see or hear anything. At the same time, I was kinda grateful that nobody was asking me to go and leave everything behind. So I figured it wasn’t for me. But during the night a beautiful princess in an Indian sari, who introduced herself as Rani, Sindhi’s wife, came to talk to me in my dream...”

Frank and Esther looked at each other and smiled, realizing the Lord was indeed at work, and that all their prayers for their kids were starting to be fulfilled. Andy and Jaz looked like two different people.



Over the next few months, as they made preparations to go to India, Andy and Jaz’ interest in the Word was rekindled; they were starting to discover all sorts of treasures, new and old. Just a couple of weeks after their mysterious encounter, a GN came out encouraging the Family in Western fields to leave for more fruitful lands, specifically mentioning India! Jaz and Andy were more sure than ever that they were on the right track.

They hadn’t really ever tried hearing from the Lord before, but after their experience with the departed Indian spirits, their faith was strengthened, and they began to practice using their gift of prophecy, especially since they knew from what the Lord had said that once they got to their difficult mission field, they would be depending on it for their very lives.

One day Andy and Jaz were talking and re-living their mysterious experience at the mansion, and Jaz commented, “There’s one thing I wonder about. How come, if Sindhi

and Rani were saved and knew Jesus, they had to wait all this time, until someone went all the way up to the house past Silver Creek, to fulfill their mission to help their people? Doesn’t that seem a little funny to you?”

A couple of days later Andy had found the answer. “Hey, Jaz, check this out! It’s a GN that came a few months ago ... must have been one of the ones we missed when we weren’t so into reading them all. Look here, Mama asked all the Family to pray to release the good spirits of their countries, to help us in our witnessing! The Lord must have released Sindhi and Rani in answer to the prayers of our Family who are in India!

“Listen to this, the Lord said: ‘You may wonder why it is that you have to pray for the good spirits to be released, and why I can’t just release them Myself. It is because their power comes from your faith to believe. Their power is released by the touch of your faith and your prayers.

“‘Once you release them by the power of your prayers, and you unleash the power of Heaven to work through them, the land will be flooded with a great torrent of spirit helpers and ministering spirits that will break through the chains of darkness and set the captives free! You will have greater power, for you will have the power of many spirit helpers by your side.’

“Isn’t that cool? Even though these spirits were already on the Lord’s side, they were waiting to be released through prayer, and to find willing and yielded vehicles who they could work through—and they found us!”



Andy and Jaz were very excited about their call to India, and had received clearance, and a Home in Calcutta had agreed to take

them in. But getting ready and raising their fare was another story! They started going door-to-door and office-to-office, explaining their vision to reach India and getting donations as well as pledges for while they would be in India. Some people were glad to help, but it was still going pretty slow. Their mom and dad and younger brothers and sisters also helped them with their fundraising, by setting aside some of the donations they would receive when witnessing in the parks on the weekends. And most of all, they kept praying and asking the Lord to supply all that they needed.

Amidst all these preparations, Frank's desire to go to the mission field was rekindled as well, and he and Esther decided they'd send Andy and Jaz on ahead, then continue raising funds so that their whole family could go join them.

After a few months, Andy was getting a little discouraged, wishing that they could be ready by now. He and Jaz prayed together desperately, putting the Lord on the spot and asking if He could please supply the rest of what they needed, including travel funds, landing funds, suitcases and other personal needs, within the next month.

A couple of days later, Esther's sister, Mary, phoned her and mentioned, "I was cleaning my attic yesterday and found a couple of suitcases I haven't been using for years. I was wondering if maybe you could use them?"

Esther couldn't hide her joy. "That's fantastic! Andy and Jaz were praying for a couple of suitcases just two days ago. When could they come to pick them up?"

"What about if they come for lunch this Saturday?"



Next Saturday they were at Aunt Mary's house, eating some yummy chicken *biriani*.

"This is delicious, Aunt Mary," commented Jaz, "but what is it?"

"Well, your mom told me you're planning on going to India, so I thought I'd cook you some traditional Indian food, to help you get accustomed to it."

After lunch she showed them the two suitcases, and as they were leaving Aunt Mary added, "I also have a little gift for you. It's not much, but I feel you could use it better than my church. Here is a donation toward your missionary trip to India!"

As they were on their way back, they opened the envelope in which Aunt Mary had put her gift and found \$500! "Wow! Praise the Lord, Jaz! He is really coming through for us!"

A week later, while out bike riding, Jaz threw an empty can into a public wastebasket. She missed and the can fell behind in the bush. The Lord gave her a check that the right thing to do was to pick it up and throw it in the wastebasket, so she stopped her bike and reached down to pick it up, when she saw what looked like a wallet right next to the bin.

When she checked the wallet, to her surprise there was nearly \$1,000 in it! She brought it home and showed it to Andy, and they were very tempted to keep it and consider it a "dime from the sky." But when counseling with their parents, they decided to turn it in to the local police station.

Three days later they received a phone call from the officer of the lost and found. He said the man who lost the money had contacted the police in another area and was so thankful that someone had been honest enough to turn in the wallet that he wanted to meet Andy and Jaz. They got his num-

ber from the police staff and phoned him the same day.

The man, whose name was Sam, invited them to visit him and his wife at their apartment the next day. They were an elderly couple, and he had served in the police force for more than 20 years. He had gone to the bank that day to withdraw a large amount of money to pay for some major house repairs. He and his wife were very impressed by Andy and Jaz' kindness and by their decision to go to India to serve the Lord, and gave them a generous gift towards this. On top of this, the police association, wanting to make an example of Andy and Jaz's honesty, decided to honor them publicly and gave them a \$100 reward.

An old friend of Frank's invited Andy and Jaz to come and talk to the young people of his church's youth club to try to instill in their hearts a desire for the mission field. He also invited them to speak at his church service the following Sunday and explain about their call for India. He took an offering for them at the end and what they got was just enough to complete the

amount they needed! Andy and Jaz were thrilled, and ready to roll!

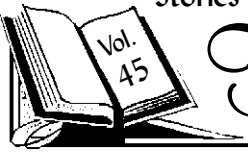
When Andy and Jaz went to buy their plane tickets, they found there were cheap available flights to Bombay and Delhi, but not directly to Calcutta. So they planned to land in Mumbai (Bombay) and make their way to Calcutta by rail. They didn't mind at all, as they wished to see a little of the country and get to know the people before moving on to Calcutta.

Finally the day of departure arrived. Andy had just turned 19, and Jaz was 18 now. Frank and Esther and the children went to see them off at the airport. They were very proud of Andy and Jaz, and promised to keep both of them in their daily prayers. They also asked them to please write at least every month to let them know how things were going and keep them informed of their progress. After a lot of hugs and kisses, Andy and Jaz made their way through the passport check and disappeared down the airport corridors. They were finally on their way, fulfilling their vision—following their dream.

To be continued ...



Stories from



Heaven's Library

For Young and Old



THE MYSTERY OF SILVER CREEK

The Adventure Continues...

After a long flight, Andy and Jaz landed in Bombay! The airport was busy and crowded, nothing like anything they were used to. Immediately a strong smell of incense hit their nostrils, a smell that would follow them wherever they would go in this country.

They called the Home in Bombay, whose number they had received before coming, and were more than a little disappointed to hear that some of the teens in the Home had just come down with hepatitis. Joanne, the teamworker who talked to them on the phone, said it'd probably be better for their sakes if they didn't stay the night in the Home, especially since it was rather crowded at the time, since they had some people visiting from another city and it wouldn't be possible for Andy and Jaz to stay separated from everyone else while there. She told them about some reasonably priced hotels in a fairly decent part of town, and explained basic directions as best she could. Andy and Jaz were thankful for that.

They took a taxi from the airport to town and were in for a real shock. For the first five or six kilometers from the airport shacks and shanties lined both sides of the road. There were poor people everywhere, living right there by the side of the road, sleeping on the asphalt, or under small awnings and other makeshift roofs. Kids were running around naked and barefoot. In each little quarter was a pot cooking on a small clay oven over a simple wood fire.

When they emerged from the taxi close to a small hotel, a group of ragged children awaited them asking for "*bakshish*." The taxi driver suggested that they give a coin to each one or the kids wouldn't leave them. At first they were a little repelled by these dirty little hands touching them, and were afraid of catching some sickness. But the children

seemed so sweet and happy when they got the coin that Andy and Jaz put in their hands that it touched them. It was a little weird here, but they were starting to like it already.

The next morning, after a restful sleep and a nice continental breakfast of bread and jam, juice and milk, they headed out in search of the main train station to find out about the diverse routes to Calcutta. On their way there they were surprised by the warmth and kindness of the Indian people, who many times went out of their way to help them.

One man who looked like a beggar invited them for lunch in a small restaurant. They hesitated, but they figured that they had enough money to pay for the meal themselves in case this man was actually too poor to offer it to them as they thought he was saying he would—though they weren't sure.

Their suspicions were heightened when, after he finished his plate, the man who had invited them to eat thanked them for their company, excused himself, and left the restaurant! However, when they finished their food and headed towards the cashier, the waiter told them that the man had already paid the bill.

"Amazing!" exclaimed Jaz. "He looked like a beggar dressed in those dirty clothes. He didn't even know us, yet he paid for our meal, and then disappeared without even telling us his name or anything. I wonder if..."

"...he was an angel?" Andy finished her sentence.

"Exactly what I was thinking! Maybe the Lord sent him to encourage us and to show that He is with us every step of the way!"

They hopped on a bus that they were told would take them to the train station. The bus quickly got packed, and they were squashed. People were even hanging out the doors, so much so that the bus was leaning heavily to the left and Jaz felt a little sick. Andy was, at

**bakshish*: a tip

first, pleasantly sandwiched between two pretty Indian girls. But as they moved away to get off, a man took their place. Then Andy realized that the man was checking his pants pockets to see if he had any money in them! So he gave the man a sharp nudge and moved away, and the man jumped out as soon as the bus slowed down a little.

After what seemed like forever, they arrived at the Bombay train station. They were amazed to find that the Indians were using a beautiful English-style building as their train station. As they walked in, the first thing that caught their attention were what looked like red blood-stains all over the ground! Jaz looked at Andy questioningly.

Andy motioned that he didn't know what they could be. *Maybe bloody gang fights? A recent murder? A terrible accident?* But as they kept walking along, there were blood stains everywhere! Jaz was feeling uneasy about it all. Andy approached a man sitting on a little stool in front of a stall, selling funny-looking leaves and nuts.

"Excuse me sir, where is the sales office? We want to buy train tickets to Calcutta." The man looked at them with a strange smile and mumbled something they couldn't understand.

"Could you please repeat that?" asked Jaz. The man then slightly opened his mouth and mumbled the same thing, and this time Jaz saw his teeth. They were all brown and his tongue was bright red! And neither Jaz nor Andy understood what he repeated once again.

Then the man, realizing he wasn't speaking very clearly, spat on the floor! Jaz jumped back in horror.

The man, seeing Jaz's disgust, laughed heartily, then said with a very pronounced Indian accent, "Do not worry my lady, this is not blood nor am I ill. It is but the juice from the betel nut and leaves. We put diverse spices and nuts in a leaf and slowly chew it. The juice is narcotic and brings you inner

peace so that you are not bothered by outside difficulties like hunger, cold or pain."

Jaz tried not to stare or look as disgusted as she felt.

The old man continued. "So, you were asking where is the ticket booth. I suggest you go to the tourist office at the end of the hall on the right. There you will find an officer who can deliver you round trip tickets at a special discount rate for young travelers only!"

"Oh, thank you, sir!"

"You are welcome, young lady! *Namaste*!"

Rather than travel directly from Mumbai to Calcutta, Andy and Jaz decided to travel to southern India first, and make their way up the east Indian coast to Calcutta. It was a long ways out of the way, but travelling by train was cheap, and they wanted to spend a day or two in a couple of cities where Andy's family had lived in when he was a kid, and which Frank had told them many stories about. This would give them the opportunity to see more of India and get a feel for the country and its people.



The train seats were in fact very hard wooden planks. They could comfortably fit three or four people per seat, but at some stations the train would get very crowded and up to seven people would crowd on one seat! Sometimes a farmer would bring in a goat or some chickens, and one man even carried a piglet in his arms!

The day went by, noisy and smelly! By nightfall, the crowds had thinned out a little, but there wasn't exactly room to stretch.— Some people even moved up onto the luggage racks.

Andy thought it wasn't a bad idea, so he pulled Jaz' suitcase down from the rack and pushed it under the seat, exclaiming, "Well, Jaz, there's your bed! Enjoy it! I think I'll doze down here and keep an eye on the luggage.

**Namaste: Hindi greeting or farewell*

I've heard lots of stories of people going to sleep and waking up to find their luggage gone!"

They said a prayer for the night together, and Jaz climbed up into her makeshift bed. After a few hours Jaz woke up and suggested to Andy that they switch, and she keep an eye—or at least a foot—on the luggage, so Andy wouldn't be too tired the next day. They switched a couple more times during the night, and each managed to get a few hours of good sleep, and thankfully, both suitcases were still there in the morning. They praised the Lord for that.

At their first stop, Trivandrum, they were immediately surrounded by a group of rickshaw *wallahs** trying to suggest a hotel for a cheap price and offer them a ride on their rickshaw. They decided to go with one man, who seemed sweet and honest. They boarded his scooter rickshaw, put their suitcases and bags in the back and off they went to Ananda Inn. They got a reasonably clean room for a small fee. They paid the rickshaw driver his fare and watched him go and take a tip from the hotel manager for bringing in some clients.

Before leaving, the rickshaw driver, whose name was Ramesh, asked them if they wanted to go for a tour the next day, saying that he knew the best spots in town and could take them for a special price, because "he liked them." Still recovering from jetlag, they answered that they were tired and would most likely sleep late the next morning, but that if he showed up around noon, they might use his services.

"Very well, my good friends, I will be here tomorrow at noon. Ramesh promises to give you the best!—OK?"

That night they slept soundly. They awoke earlier than they had anticipated, but welcomed the extra time to get in the Word. When they proceeded down to the restaurant for breakfast, they asked the waiter in the

hotel for a typical local dish, something exotic. He suggested *masala dosa*, and Andy and Jaz eagerly ordered two plates. They ate it slowly and thoroughly enjoyed what looked like a crispy crepe with mashed potatoes, vegetables and chicken curry inside.

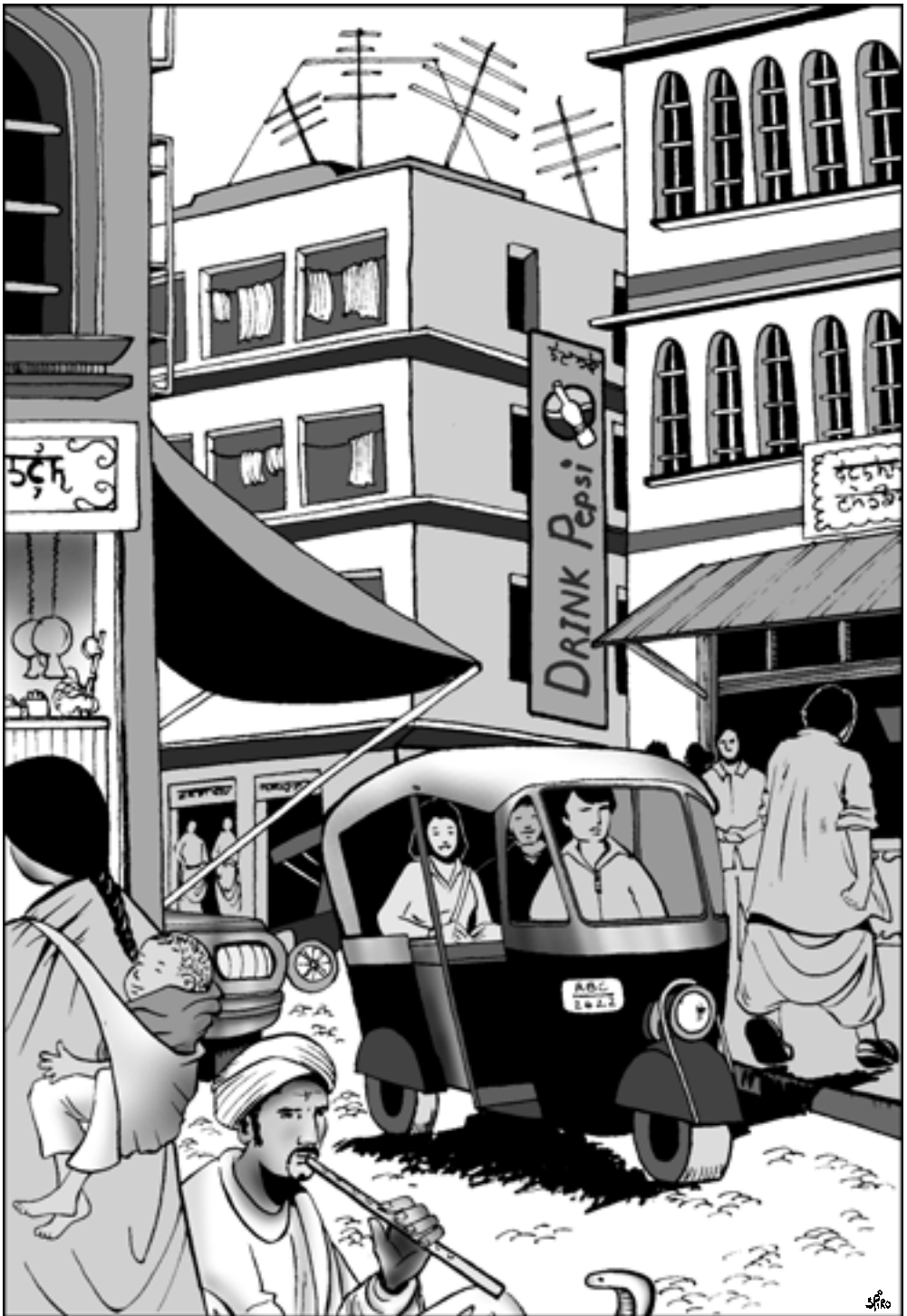
By the time they had finished, it was indeed around noon, and they soon saw a familiar face enter the hotel lobby. Ramesh had come right on time, happy and ready. "Today I have something special for you! I will take you to visit some of the city's most beautiful palaces, temples and a museum. Then we will go to the restaurant of my uncle Sanjay for a nice Indian meal. At evening I'll take you to watch the most beautiful sunset you will have ever seen! In this city the sun sets on three seas, and the beaches are three colors of sand—one part golden, the other white, and the third black sand! Nowhere else in the world to be found!"

The day went well and both Jaz and Andy had a great time. When Ramesh brought them back to the hotel at dusk, Jaz felt led to tell him about Jesus and ask him if he would like to receive Him into his heart. Ramesh answered "yes" enthusiastically and got saved that night! He was so excited that he went around everywhere that evening telling his friends and co-workers and others he met about the two strangers who were so kind, and how they taught him how to pray to receive Jesus.

Many people were happy for Ramesh. But others, as might be expected, were more suspicious and a few even hostile. As Ramesh told his tale to a group of rickshaw and taxi drivers, one man among the listening crowd was Rajiv, a young man in his early thirties. He was a part-time taxi driver and was generally suspected of being involved in shady deals the rest of the time.

Rajiv befriended Ramesh and told him that he'd like to be introduced to his "friends"

***wallah:** Indian term for one employed in a particular occupation, for example: *kala wallah* is a banana seller, *coolie wallah* is a person who carries your bags, *rickshaw wallah* is a driver of a rickshaw, a *kitchen wallah* is a cook or chef.



if Ramesh didn't mind. Ramesh was happy to do so and brought Rajiv to meet Andy and Jaz the next morning.

After talking with Rajiv for awhile, Andy confided to Jaz that he didn't really like this guy.

"Neither do I!" Jaz added. "He just keeps staring at me constantly, and he has this dark, lusty spirit! Still, though, I suppose we should be polite, and of course we need to try to witness to him."

Rajiv knew how to entertain and show himself friendly to strangers, and in an attempt to get to know more about them, he treated Jaz and Andy to lunch and invited them to taste some of the local liquor. Jaz and Andy started to brush off their original suspicions and let their guards down, thinking, "Maybe he isn't that bad after all. He has been very friendly and hospitable. Maybe he'll get saved if we keep talking to him."

Andy, Jaz, Ramesh and Rajiv talked for a long time. Rajiv was a smart talker and managed to dominate the whole conversation, meanwhile plying Andy and Jaz to tell all about the background of their trip.

Not being accustomed to drinking something so strong, and having had a bit more than they ought to have had of the strong local spirits, Andy, rather unwisely, went into detail to describe how they'd found the mysterious mansion on the mountain and how they had a vision of an Indian *Rajah*. Being familiar with the epoch of history when this *Rajah* had lived, Rajiv had heard of how the *Rajah* Sindhi had fled the country, and how most of his family treasures had never been found. The Indians being a very spiritual people, Rajiv believed that it may have indeed been possible that the *Rajah* had appeared to these young foreigners, and, like any good crook, he saw an opportunity here and couldn't let it go by without finding out more.

"That is such a moving story," stated Rajiv in mock admiration. "How honorable of you to leave your homeland and come to help the people of India. Would you like another drink?"

He was happy to see Andy and Jaz politely accept, and went on to ask, "Did this *Rajah* tell you anything of his treasures, of the gold and jewels that he had left behind?"

Jaz thought it was odd that he would ask such a thing, but before she could think of some way to quickly change the conversation, Andy was telling him about the golden key that he had found on the painting around the *Rajah's* neck.

Rajiv continued to keep them talking, and found out about their travel plans and that their next stop was Madras.

That afternoon while Andy and Jaz went to the train station to make sure their on-going train ticket was reserved for the next morning, Rajiv sneaked into their hotel room and searched through all their stuff. He even turned their mattress over, opening it with his knife, hoping to find the golden key!

But it was nowhere to be found. Rajiv was so confident that he would not be suspected, and so angry at not having found the key to potential treasures, that he didn't even bother to return the room to an acceptable state.

When Andy and Jaz came back to the inn that evening they were horrified to find their room upside down, their stuff spilled around the room and even their mattress torn open! They reported it to the hotel manager who called the police. A couple of policemen came by that evening to check and started interrogating some of the questionable characters hanging around the hotel.

A skinny older man who seemed to be selling cobra skins to tourists for outrageous prices was known to be a crook, and the police thought this might be a good opportunity to get him. They arrested him and roughly questioned him, hitting him with their wooden canes.

Jaz, watching the scene from the window of their room, felt bad for the poor old man, but Andy said, "Well they probably know the man's history, and he looks like a shady character for sure!"

After a while the two policemen left the old man and went away with a satisfied look on their faces.

Andy asked the manager if the police had gotten some information out of him and he answered, "Yes! I think they have gotten a lead!"

"Oh, good!" said Andy hesitantly, not too sure if this was a sign of progress or not.

Anyway, he thought *I'm just thankful nothing is missing, and tomorrow we will be gone. PTL!*

That night the police approached one of the usual criminal suspects—Rajiv—in his flat in town, and took him to the police station. They locked him up in a holding cell, ignoring his vehement protest that he hadn't done anything wrong, as well as his demands to know what charges had been pressed against him.

The two policemen just told him, "Tonight you sleep here, so we can be sure you won't escape! We will question you in the morning." The next morning they started the questioning, helping him be a little more talkative with the aid of their canes. The schemer* that he was, Rajiv decided to let them in on what he was up to. He told them that he believed these young people had a key to some very valuable items, and he promised that if they would let him go, he would share part of the treasure with them once he discovered it. They seemed delighted by the idea and after striking a deal with them, they let him go.

At 11 a.m., Andy and Jaz departed for Madras, and Rajiv was able to jump on the same train! After going down the train coach by coach, Rajiv spotted them. He went to the toilet of the compartment, where he worked on changing his appearance to make sure they wouldn't recognize him. He disguised himself as a *Sikh** with a turban on his head. When he looked at himself in the mirror, Rajiv

smiled with satisfaction—he could hardly recognize himself!

He made his way to where Andy and Jaz were sitting. Arriving closer to them he disguised his voice and asked, "Excuse me, *baboo jee**, may I please sit next to you?"

"You are welcome to, sir," answered Andy.

Then he started asking them questions about their journey, where they were going, who they were going to see, were they trying to find something special, etc. Andy and Jaz felt a little uneasy about this man's incessant inquisitiveness, but didn't dare act rude or ask him to leave. As night fell, all went to sleep and Andy and Jaz took turns watching the luggage again, as they had on their last train ride. They took shorter shifts so that the one down on the seat could stay vigilant, and thus Rajiv wasn't able to pursue his search any further.

Early the next morning they arrived in Madras. To their surprise, this unusually friendly *Sikh* invited them to stay at the guesthouse of his cousin, which was close to the train station.

He told them, "I'll make sure he gives you a good price. I will say that you are my friends! Come!" They somewhat hesitantly followed the man into his "cousin's" guesthouse. They crashed out and spent the rest of the morning sleeping.

After a good breakfast, and an hour of devotions and prayer for the day, they decided to see if the Lord had something to tell them. To their surprise Andy got, "Beware of wolves in sheep's clothing!" And Jaz received, "The Enemy walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour!"

"It's kind of strange we'd get those verses," exclaimed Jaz. "It seems like the Enemy is up to something and we need to stay on guard!"

***schemer**: one who devises plans, especially secret or devious ones.

***Sikh**: follower of the Sikh religion, which combines elements of Hinduism and Islam, centered in Punjab State, in northwestern India.

***baboo jee**: a courteous form of address [from "Baboo," a title for a man, similar to the English "Mr.," and "Jee," a respectful way to say "person"]

“Yes,” added Andy, “I wonder if this has to do with that *Sikh* we met on the train. I don’t like him very much. He acts so smooth, he’s almost slithery.”

“It’s kind of weird, and maybe it’s just me—everyone looks so much the same around here—but he reminds me of the guy we met in Trivandrum—Rajiv, remember him? The one that Ramesh introduced us to.”

“Yes, I get a very bad check off him! Let’s be more careful around him, he must be up to something!—What, I don’t know! We don’t have much money, and we don’t look rich! There are lots of other young foreigners like us traveling around India, and everyone knows people doing something like this don’t carry a lot of money. Of course, even a little bit goes very far around here ... but still, this guy seems well educated ... I really don’t know.

“Since he brought us to this hotel and knows we’re here, I think it might be better if we moved. We’ve already paid for tonight so it’d be a real waste to move now, but maybe we should plan on moving tomorrow morning. Let’s pray and ask the Lord more about this guy.”

The Lord confirmed their suspicions and warned them that this man was being used of the Enemy and that they should try to avoid him and avoid giving him any more information, and that it would be wise to move as soon as they could.

Before leaving the room for the afternoon, they prayed over their baggage. They walked around the center of town a bit to have a look around and get to know the place, and found a cozy little restaurant where they ate dinner.

They moved to another small hostel* first thing the following morning and spent the next two days in Madras, meeting and witnessing to people along the way, including singing to a group of young university students in a park, who upon seeing their guitar had asked for a song.

Andy played “Rich Man, Poor Man,” Simon Black’s old classic, and Jaz sang along. The students really liked the tune and commented that they could really relate to that message, as in India there were a few very rich people and many poor. Then they sang “Set Me Free,” and Jaz led the group of 12 students to the Lord.

When they arrived back at the hostel, Jaz commented about what an exciting day they had had. They were both beginning to really love India! The students were so sweet and receptive, and it was wonderful how they could communicate so well, being that there was no language barrier, since all the students and young people seemed to speak English, and pretty well at that.

But as they entered their room, they noticed that once again someone had rummaged through their things!

“Oh, no, not again!” exclaimed Andy. “What are they looking for? What do they want?”

“Let’s pray and ask the Lord about it,” suggested Jaz.

After a few moments of quiet, Andy asked Jaz, “Are you getting anything?”

“Yeah, I’m hearing the words, ‘It’s the key, it’s the key!’”

“Wow, that’s exactly what I was getting!” added Andy! “This definitely must have something to do with that Rajiv guy—he’s the only one we’ve told about the key! Boy, that must be some key we have, if someone has been following us across India trying to steal it from us! Thank God I’ve been keeping it on a string around my neck!”



For the rest of their journey they were able to get accommodations on a more comfortable train, with compartments and berths. There was a young Indian couple in the compartment along with them, who were on their way home from their university for a holiday,

***hostel:** an inexpensive lodging place for travelers, especially young travelers.

and Andy and Jaz had a great time witnessing to them, and learning more about India from them. They made one last stop in Vishkhapatnam, and were then entering the last stretch of their journey, a beautiful ride along the East Coast toward Calcutta!

Unbeknownst to them, Rajiv was still following them closely, biding his time. In Madras he had contacted one of his old friends, Mohandas, and enlisted his help to try to carry out his evil plot and find the secret treasure in Calcutta that he hoped the young people would lead him to. Rajiv and Mohandas had met in jail a few years before, both arrested for robbery and assault. Mohandas was a poor fellow who had gotten in trouble after losing money gambling. To try to repay his debt he had robbed a jewelry shop in the bazaar, but was caught by the local police as he attempted to resell the jewels for cash.

He was the youngest of a family of eight and his parents didn't have enough money to pay for his studies. But Mohandas was convinced that in this world, only educated people could succeed! So he had determined to get an education, and he tried hard to study all he could. He held a job in a hotel during the day to pay for his studies at night. All was going well until he lost his small fortune in gambling and then got arrested.

Rajiv hadn't seen Mohandas in years, but he decided now was the opportune time to renew and take advantage of an old friendship. He persuaded Mohandas that these two foreigners had a lot of money on them and that they were easy prey. As far as Mohandas knew, the plan was that the night before arrival in Calcutta, they would rob them of their money while they were sleeping and share the loot!

But Rajiv didn't say a word to Mohandas about the Rajah's golden key. He figured Mohandas would come in handy to find whatever money the young people had, which he would split with him, but then he could have the key, and the resultant treasures he expected, for himself.

The night came quickly and Andy and Jaz both fell into a deep sleep. They didn't think it was necessary to take the vigil shifts as they had done before, since they were in a closed and locked compartment, with two other trustworthy people. Andy had gotten a check that instead of him wearing the key, as usual, Jaz should wear it around her neck for the night, and so she did.

At 2 a.m. Rajiv and Mohandas got up to fulfil their wicked scheme. Jaz's guardian angel was trying to wake her up by making her feel like going to the bathroom. She was sleeping deeply, but her sleep became lighter as she began dreaming that she was looking for a toilet everywhere on the train but never finding one free.

Rajiv had brought a spray bottle of sleeping gas, intending to help all in the compartment—who he thought were sleeping soundly—to continue doing so. He silently undid the lock of the compartment, and through a crack he sprayed the gas, then jumped back to let it take effect inside but not let it get to him. This would give them about 20 minutes to do their dirty work with no fear of anyone in the compartment waking up. Rajiv and Mohandas slipped on protective masks which covered their nose and mouth, and Rajiv told Mohandas to search their bags while he would search Andy's person. While Mohandas was out of the way, Rajiv starting looking into Andy's pants pockets.—Nothing! Then his shirt pockets!—Still nothing!

Rajiv was getting impatient.

Maybe he put the key in his socks, he thought. So he searched Andy's shoes and socks, but still found nothing.

He was getting very upset and started mumbling curses to himself.

Meanwhile Jaz, who had been sleeping lightly already and whose pillow had been covering her face, protecting her from the full effects of the gas, heard the commotion and was awakened. She turned and stirred. Rajiv stopped and kept silent for a moment, keep-



ing an eye on her. She seemed to be asleep so he pursued his search.

But Jaz was fully awake by now and was quietly, through a slightly-open eyelid, observing the scene and the robbers. *What should I do? They are so much bigger and stronger than me; I can't fight them off, that's for sure!* She got an idea from her spirit helper, and with the tip of her foot she nudged a small suitcase off the luggage rack. It came crashing to the floor noisily!

Both Rajiv and Mohandas jumped back in fear. The young couple on the other side of the compartment started stirring.

"Someone might wake up soon, maybe we should leave?" Mohandas whispered to Rajiv.

"No, not yet! I have not found what I am looking for!" he answered.

"What are you looking for?" asked Mohandas, getting suspicious at his friend's strange behavior.

"A key!" he said, sounding upset.

"A key? There were lots of keys in this handbag!"

"Why didn't you tell me, stupid?"

Rajiv grabbed Jaz's handbag and started going through it, and meanwhile Mohandas started searching Andy's body. He found his money belt and rejoicingly started counting the bills. Jaz couldn't lie still anymore.—Another minute and they would be searching her, and she had the key! She opened her mouth and began screaming as loud as she could and as long as she could.

Both Rajiv and Mohandas were so surprised by her screaming that they ran away as fast as they could and sat down at the far end of the train, thinking that no one had seen their faces. Little did they know that Jaz had gotten a fairly good look at them.

Andy stirred and opened his heavy eyelids. "Wow! What a headache I have got!"

Jaz interrupted, "We've been robbed, Andy!"

"What!?! Are you sure?" He started surveying the damages: his clothes were spread around, but seemed to be all there.

"Your money belt, Andy," hinted Jaz. He looked down and saw it was untied, and checked the contents.

"Oh, no!" he cried, "most of our funds are gone! My passport is still here, though! What about your money belt?"

"I still have mine! But Andy, those men were not looking for money! They were looking for the key! How in the world would they know about the key?"

"Well," Andy encouraged himself, "if the Lord hadn't showed us that you should wear the key to bed, they would have it by now! It pays to obey the Lord's counsel and checks!"

A few hours later they arrived in Calcutta. If arriving in Bombay and stepping into India for the first time was a culture shock, it was happening all over again now! There were just so many people—so many beggars and handicapped people, so much filth and poverty everywhere!

They came out of the station, once more to be greeted by a flock of taxi drivers trying to bring them to a hotel. They managed to escape from the crowd and find a phone to call the local Family Home. The Home had invited Andy and Jaz to stay with them until their parents joined them and they could start up a new Home together.

After a day of rest and fellowship, they decided to try to follow up on an old friend who their dad, Frank, had kept in touch with via mail over the years, Mr. Alim. He was a sweet Muslim man, and he was overjoyed to hear that Frank's son was now in India. He made an appointment to pick Andy and Jaz up at the train station, which was the only spot in town they were familiar with, that afternoon.

Unbeknownst to Andy and Jaz, Rajiv and Mohandas were still tailing them. They had followed them to the Family Home in a cab, but decided it would be unwise for them to break into such a large and well-fortified house, which obviously had a lot of people living in it. But they had kept hanging around for a couple days, hoping that the two young people would surface.

Andy and Jaz waited for half an hour at the train station, but still no Mr. Alim. Andy and Jaz started to get worried.

Suddenly Jaz stepped closer to Andy and grabbed his arm saying, "There they are!—The two thieves that were going through our stuff on the train!"

Andy looked up and recognized Rajiv. "Yes, that is the guy we met in Trivandrum! And, yes, his face is the same as the Sikh on the way to Madras! These guys are definitely following us!"

Rajiv and Mohandas had also spotted Andy and Jaz, and were moving closer toward them. Just in time, Mr. Alim pulled up in his car, and Andy and Jaz hopped in. Rajiv and Mohandas hired a taxi again and told the driver to follow the blue car in front of them.

Andy and Jaz went home with Mr. Alim and found him to be a receptive and kind man—a sweet follower of the faith. Mr. Alim had two children—a boy of 16 and a girl of 14, who were delighted to meet Andy and Jaz. They were soon involved in a deep conversation, exchanging views on their respective religions, which Andy found a very convenient way to witness. They were able to talk about the Endtime and found out that these young Muslims believed in the Endtime too, and from there they went on to discuss other things about the Bible, Jesus, and God's love.

Asrina, Mr. Alim's wife, very hospitably prepared them a nice *halal** Indian meal, over which they all continued conversing. Mr. Alim was interested to know all about Frank and his family, what they had been doing and where they had been all these years, and he was also happy to tell Andy and Jaz all about his family, his business, and the things that had happened since he last saw Frank and his wife.

Mr. Alim asked Andy and Jaz if they had any immediate plans and what they would begin doing in Calcutta. This was an opportunity to tell him of how they had received a visit from the spirit of the Rajah Sindhi, and

felt called to come help the people of Calcutta, especially the youth, and to teach them spiritual truths. Mr. Alim wished them the best, and assured them he'd be happy to help whenever they needed it.

Andy also explained their encounters with Rajiv and his many attempts to find the key, but how each time by a miracle they missed finding it. They told of how they had been robbed of their travelers' checks, as well as some cash, and that the next day they would be going to the American Express, which had been closed over the weekend, to try to get the travelers' checks refunded.



The next day they went to a police station to declare their loss and get a paper with which they would ask the American Express company to reject any of the stolen checks and apply for their re-imbursement. All went well and the American Express agent told them that within three weeks their checks could be refunded. Three weeks seemed like a long time to Andy, and he figured they could probably use those funds now, so he asked to see the director to try to accelerate the process.

He got an appointment with the director for early the next morning. Andy and Jaz brought along the Calcutta Home's photo album, showing pictures of all their Consider the Poor ministries. Andy and Jaz explained they had just arrived to join their fellow missionaries here, and that they lived by faith without a regular income, so they very much needed these checks reissued as soon as possible.

The local director, Mr. Rawal, was sweet and received them well. He said that he would do his best to help them. He himself had studied in the States and spoke with a rather unusual blend of American and Indian accents. He had three children close to Andy and Jaz' age, and told them how much his children liked interacting with foreigners. He asked if Andy and

**halal*: meat slaughtered in the prescribed Muslim way.

Jaz would like to come to have dinner with them that night, which they gladly accepted.

Later that evening, Andy and Jaz were ringing the bell of Mr. Rawal's beautiful villa in a nice residential area. The maid invited them in and after serving them some refreshments, told them that Mrs. Rawal was on her way down. The teenagers came down first and right away got involved in conversing with Jaz and Andy, wanting to know everything about them, their country, their upbringing and their family life.

Mr. and Mrs. Rawal joined them shortly, and they had a very nice dinner together, then sat in the living room to talk. The teenagers continued asking questions and the conversation turned towards how and why Andy and Jaz decided to come to Calcutta. They explained that the Lord had called them to be missionaries, but hesitated a little to get into the details and background right away, especially since they had gotten themselves into quite some trouble the first time they did that. Then Andy and Jaz began asking Mr. Rawal about his family and background.

Mr. Rawal told them that their ancestors had been nobility, and that their family had lived in this part of India for many generations. He told them that one of their great grand-uncles was even a *Rajah*! At that point Andy and Jaz looked at each other puzzled. *Could it be?*

After a few minutes Andy gathered the courage to ask what were the names of their royal ancestors? They asked if by any chance they would have been Sandhi and his wife Rani?

Mr. Rawal and his whole family looked at them, surprised. "How did you—being foreigners—ever hear about them? Their names are hardly mentioned in the history books here, because there were so many mistakes made on both sides, and there was much treachery and betrayal. Rajah Sindhi was a good man—very much loved by his people until his cousin Khan turned the people against him. He then had to flee abroad, and was murdered a few years later!"

"Yes, Mr. Rawal, we have heard this story. You see, Jaz and I are Christians and we've been raised by missionary parents and taught all our lives about serving God. Many months ago we were hiking through the forest not far from our home, and we discovered this abandoned mansion ..."

Andy went on to tell the story of his encounter with the ghost of the Rajah Sindhi, then Jaz explained how Rani had spoken to her in a dream. It sounded spooky to those present, but they did believe that spirits live on after they leave their mortal lives, and they knew that no one other than Sindhi and Rani could have revealed what had happened to them in such detail. Mr. Rawal said that he now understood this dark part of the history of his ancestors better than he had before, and there was no doubt in his mind that Andy and Jaz had indeed heard from Sindhi and Rani. He had never thought himself to be a man who believed in ghosts and spirits, yet now he had to admit that these two young people somehow knew more about what had happened than anyone else he knew—himself included.

Andy and Jaz shared more about their vision and why they had come, how they had obeyed the call of the Lord through Sindhi and Rani and that they had come to help the youth of Calcutta.

They left the Home's phone number with them, and the whole Rawal family begged them to stay in touch. Mr. Rawal told Andy to come and see him at his office in a couple of days, and that he would have the funds ready for him.

On their way back, Jaz exclaimed, "Wow! What a miracle of Rom.8:28! If the thieves hadn't gotten our travelers' checks we might not have met Mr. Rawal and his family. They are so sweet and receptive and their children are such hungry sheep! If all the youth in India are as sheepy as the ones we've met so far, this is going to be an incredibly terrific witnessing field. Just think, Mr. Rawal's family are Sindhi's people, and not only his subjects,

but his own descendents! Sindhi and Rani must be so very happy!”

Two days later Andy was in Mr. Rawal’s office and was given back the funds he had lost. As they were leaving, Mr. Rawal asked if Jaz and Andy would like to join their family for an excursion the following weekend.

He said, “My wife would like to take you to the old palace where our ancestors once lived. It has since been turned into a museum. It’s a very beautiful place.” Andy and Jaz enthusiastically accepted their invitation.

On the other side of town, Mohandas and Rajiv were plotting, meanwhile doing their own research. They had continued following Andy and Jaz’ moves and acquaintances. When they found out that Mr. Rawal was a descendant of Rajah Sindhi they became excited about the possibility that they might be on the threshold of finding what the key led to, and they continued watching, observing, and waiting for the auspicious* moment.

The weekend came and Andy and Jaz went to meet the Rawal family. Before leaving they got some prophecies in which the Lord encouraged them in ministering to Mr. Rawal and his family, but again warned them to “beware of wolves in sheep’s clothing!” They prayed specifically against any of the Enemy’s fiery darts and dirty tricks, and continued to stay on guard and in desperate prayer throughout the day.

The visit to the museum was fascinating. It was like taking a trip back into the distant past. It felt as if there were still many ancient spirits around, and the atmosphere felt almost tense, somehow. It wasn’t a completely bad feeling, though. Andy felt Sindhi must be there with them, accompanied by Rani and other spirit helpers.

When Andy parted momentarily from Jaz and Mr. Rawal’s family to use the bathroom, he stopped for a moment to pray and see if the Lord had any new information for them. He then heard a voice he recognized, and knew it

was the Rajah Sindhi. He told Andy that the thieves were following their every move, and that they must beware. He also said that he had something special for them in this palace, and that Andy and Jaz must come back again the next day, and that he would guide them to the secret of the golden key!

The excursion ended with a nice dinner in a *Munghal* restaurant, after which Mr. Rawal drove Andy and Jaz back home.

The next day the two Family young people took an urban bus to the palace museum. They went back to a room that had particularly stood out to both of them the previous day—the old nuptial[†] room. On the wall there were paintings of many Rajahs and Marharajahs and their wives.

Jaz looked over them closely one by one, until she came across one who looked very much like Rani. She looked into the portrait until she saw it slowly start to move. Jaz began to hear Rani’s voice once again, as if emitting softly from the painting itself:

“Downstairs at the far end of the left wing, you will find a small door with a sign on it saying ‘do not enter.’ It is chained and locked, but the lock is very old, and will give if it is pulled and twisted. Enter this door and walk down the passage inside until you come to the end where you will find two doors, one to the right and one to the left. Take the one on the right.

“In the room you will enter, there is a large walk-in wardrobe. Inside this wardrobe you will see a stairway going down. As you walk down, count the steps carefully until you reach the 76th step. Turn to the left and you will find that one of the stones in the wall is loose. Pull out the stone, put your hand in the hole and to the left you will feel a knob. Turn it three times and this whole part of the wall will rotate, revealing another passage.

“Put the stone back in place and, after you enter the passage, pull the lever on the wall inside. The passage will close silently. If

**auspicious*: opportune, well-timed

†*nuptial*: of or relating to marriage or the wedding ceremony

any one is following you, they will continue on their way down the steps, only to be lost in the labyrinth* below. As you follow the passage to the end you will come out on a nearby hill. There, I shall reveal unto you further instructions. Go immediately, for indeed, you are being followed!"

"Wow!" exclaimed Jaz. "Rani showed me the plan of the secret passageways! Come Andy, follow me. I know where to go now!"

Jaz pulled Andy by the hand and he, not quite understanding what was going on, but sensing the tone of urgency in her voice, followed her through the hallways, corridors and secret passages, until they came out of a little tunnel on the side of a hill about a kilometer from the palace.

They both stopped to look around.

"What do we do next?" asked Andy.

"I don't know yet," answered Jaz, "Rani only told me this far, and said that she would show us more when we got here! Let's pray!"

"Thank You, Lord, for sending Rani to us, and leading and guiding us through all these secret passages. Please show us what we need to do from here!" Then they both stayed quiet, waiting for instructions.

Meanwhile, back in the old palace, Rajiv and Mohandas had seen Jaz and Andy slip in through the door with the broken lock and were following their trail. They found the first passage, the wardrobe, and finally the stairs. But, knowing nothing of the 76 steps, they proceeded to the end of the staircase only to find themselves hopelessly lost, and trapped in the maze of passageways below.



As Andy and Jaz waited in the sunlight at the end of the passageway they had just emerged from, Andy's eyes caught sight of something he hadn't quite noticed before. "The shrine! The shrine!" pointing to a small

ruin a hundred meters or so ahead of them! He took off first this time, followed closely by Jaz. They arrived at the shrine and paused again to pray. Andy heard Sindhi again, telling him to search the floor of the shrine. A few stones were loose, and they pulled these out and continued to search deeper.

Soon Andy had reached something hard in the dirt and started digging around what looked like an old chest. After a little struggle, they were able to free the chest, which was of considerable weight, and lift it out of its soily grave.

Set within the side of the small chest was a keyhole, which from the passage of time on the weight of the ground in which it was buried, was filled with dirt. It took some time before Andy was even able to insert the key. But Andy persisted, driven by curiosity, and the mystery of all that had led up to this point. When the key finally turned, and the lid opened, neither Andy nor Jaz were disappointed. Within the chest they discovered an abundance of old jewelry and gold coins!

"Wow! We are rich!" exclaimed Andy.

But the Lord nudged them, "This is not for you! The treasures that I have prepared for you within this city are yet to come. You will find the most priceless treasures of all among the people of Calcutta, especially amongst the youth, who are ripe and ready for My message, who long for Me, and who I have sent you to free. All you need to unlock this treasure is the key of faith, and of hearing My voice. This is a key which cannot be stolen, and which will lead you to treasures that last forever!

"I will also abundantly provide all your physical needs, and even your desires, but I will do it in My Own way and My Own time. Yet I have led you to these earthly treasures to help fulfill My plan. These belong to the Rajah's descendants, and you must tell Mr. Rawal about them."

They closed the lid, returned the box to its hiding place, replaced the stones in their

**labyrinth*: a maze

holes and headed back toward the palace gate by the road surrounding it, from where they proceeded to make their way back home.

The next day they were able to arrange a meeting with Mr. Rawal and tell him of their fascinating discovery. They explained how the spirit of Rani had led and guided them to the treasure, which God had showed them belonged to Mr. Rawal and his family. Mr. Rawal was so excited that he immediately took Andy and Jaz to the shrine, which he knew well, for it was on one of the few properties of his family's past that Mr. Rawal had managed to hold onto. There, Andy showed him where the chest had been hidden all these years, and handed Mr. Rawal the key to his inheritance.

Mr. Rawal could hardly believe his eyes as he opened the chest for the first time. "This is so amazing!—And so timely!"

"What do you mean by timely?" asked Jaz.

"Well, you see," he went on, "I have been so concerned about all the injustice that has been taking place around me in this state of Bengal, and all the corruption and poverty, and I have been burdened to do something about it.

"A couple of months ago a friend asked me why I didn't run for Governor. If I was elected, perhaps I could help change things for the better. At first I rejected the idea as ridiculous. But as time went on, the logic of it worked on me and I slowly became persuaded that it may be the right thing to do.

"But there has been a problem that has kept me from attempting to fulfill this goal. Even though I am well off, I don't have enough money to finance a political campaign. I believe, especially after what I have heard and learned from you, that indeed there must be a God, and now that He has so amazingly provided the money I need, I shall accept that not only must He be real, but He must want me to run for Governor—therefore, I will do so! I marvel, and thank your God for this miracle!

"I am deeply touched that you have been honest and did not try to run away with this valuable treasure. There are very few people in this world who would have done that! In my gratefulness to you for helping me to discover not only this treasure, but your God, I would like to help you and your Christian friends by giving a share of what I shall receive for this treasure.

"I would also be glad to help you to further your good work here among the poor, and among the youth. Especially if I am elected Governor, I will do all within my power to protect you and help your work to prosper.

"My family has a lovely house in town that we would like to give you to use for as long as you will stay in our state and help our people. It is very large, and there are servants who can help with the cleaning and laundry, and a gardener to care for the grounds. You have told us that your parents and family want to join you in India. Please tell them that I welcome them to our country, and I shall be happy to arrange and pay for their travels here."



Thus the Lord supplied above and beyond all that Andy and Jaz had expected. Frank and Esther were elated to hear that their plane fares were all taken care of, and that they would be living in a beautiful mansion in Calcutta with servants, and all for free! What a miracle!

Mr. Rawal was elected Governor and kept in close fellowship with Andy and Jaz and their family. They often prayed together and heard from the Lord about many important matters of state. Many souls were saved and many people helped through the faithfulness of two young adults who, with a lot of help from Above, obeyed the call, stepped out by faith trusting God's promises, and chose the exciting and challenging life of service to God on the mission field!