

The Journey II

By David Silver

If there was one thing I regretted in my later years it was not having done more adventure sports whilst I still had the physical capacity. Oh, I'd managed some climbing, caving, hill walking and distance running, but I'd never trekked the mountains of Nepal, skydived or base jumped.

So I suppose it wasn't altogether surprising that She came to me as she did, unexpectedly, appearing mysteriously as if from another world. A mature woman, around 55 years of age I'd estimate, not especially physically attractive but authoritative and with a reassuring aura of leadership.

"Danny" she said, "I'm here to give you an opportunity. The chance for an adventure unlike anything you've done before in your life, the climbing, the caving, the things you've dreamed about but have never found the time to do. We are going under the sea to a distant place. But you must make a decision right now. We cannot wait for you".

"For how long would I be gone?" I asked. "A couple of months, possibly more. In fact you might never return".

"I have to ask Hanna, I can't just leave like that".

"You must be quick".

"Hanna", I said, "I have the opportunity to do something amazing and life-changing but I've got to go away now or not at all".

"Do it" she said. I could see the worry and fear for me and for her own future in her eyes but in her usual selfless way she wasn't going to stand in my way. "Goodbye" I said, "I'll come back as soon as I can".

The Woman led me away, through a vague sort of exit or entrance into another dimension it seemed, and briefly introduced me to the five or six others in the party, all younger than me by around 30 years. I was equipped with scuba kit and a protective suit that would keep me from feeling any sense of cold or discomfort.

Very soon I found myself swimming through a night ocean at the tail end of the group. Clouds of bubbles from the Woman and the others in our party whizzed overhead and behind us as we proceeded at an uncanny speed. We must have been quite near the surface for moonlight was flooding our immediate environment and illuminating those bubbles.

As we travelled my recent life played itself through my mind. I thought of my son and daughter who I hadn't had a chance to say farewell to. My brother. But most of all Hanna. I was consumed with feelings of guilt because I'd put my own ambitions first and left her suddenly and unexpectedly alone.

But as the hours went by and we travelled on, the guilt, along with memories of my past life, started to fade and be replaced by a yearning for the destination to which we were headed. I was leaving myself behind and looking ahead to whatever might be.

After an indeterminate time we surfaced in a place of polar night. "Northern Norway" She said. We were in a small town with a harbour lit by floodlights. It was quite busy with a hustle and bustle of fishing boats and fishing folk. A distant memory was teased in the back of my mind but I couldn't bring it fully into focus. Something about a Polar Express. "We'll be here for a short time to rest then we must continue our journey" She said.

Soon we were in the ocean again, heading for the polar ice cap. By this time I had forgotten who I was, where I had come from and where we were going. The Journey was everything.

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