

Yielded Captive (Sample Chapter)

“Is there anything new out in the gardens this morning?” Allison asked her husband.

“Nope. Nothing,” Eric replied. “It’s driving me crazy. There was a ton of activity last month, and now there are no signs of the Shampiri at all.”

“Well,” Allison said as she put her arms around him, “There is always tomorrow.”

Eric grinned down at her. It was her standard line. Nearly every day for the last three years she had voiced the hope that they all felt about their endeavor. The Carters, along with their missionary teammates, had been living in a little camp on a small tributary of the Amazon River around 150 miles from Iquitos in the Amazon jungle of Peru. Their intention was to make contact with the Shampiri tribe that was said to travel through the area seasonally. It had been three years of little success and a lot of boredom. Occasionally their gardens were raided, and once in awhile the men of the team found foot tracks while hunting out in the jungle. They were positive that the Shampiri knew they were there, but it was up to the tribe to decide when and how they would show themselves.

Just a month ago, some of the team’s efforts had been rewarded. The cooking pots they had left in the gardens as gifts went missing. A few days later, the tribe had taken the knives that had replaced the pots. It was a great sign to the missionaries, and they all dreamed that the day they had been working for was in sight. The Shampiri would be contacted, and the team would be able to befriend them, learn their language, and eventually share the Gospel with them.

Eric held his wife in a tight hug and smiled into her adoring, green eyes. “What are you up to today?” he asked.

“After Isaac wakes up Jamie and I are going to the river to do some laundry. It’s unbelievable how much clothing a little kid goes through.” Allison motioned through the doorway to the bedroom of the two room, palm bark home where their thirteen-month-old son was asleep in his homemade crib.

Eric kissed his wife’s cheek and gave her long, brown ponytail a tug before walking toward the door. “I’ll be working on the strong house with Kyle and Tim if you need me. I noticed some of the boards are rotting in one of the corners, so we’ll probably have to replace them.”

The strong house was the very first structure the team had built when they arrived - even before they built the airstrip at the edge of their base. It was a small building, but large enough for their entire team to fit comfortably inside. It was stocked with enough food and water for all of them for three days and was also where the shortwave radio was kept. In the unfortunate event that the camp was attacked by unfriendly natives, the team would gather inside and call for help on the radio.

Luckily, there were nearly always warning signs before such a thing happened. Broken gifts left in the garden, arrows shot into the camp, and other threatening messages were all reasons for the team to go on high alert. They had seen nothing but positive responses, few though they were, and were hopeful that the Shampiri would soon attempt friendly contact.

Allison washed up the breakfast dishes in a bowl of boiled river water while she waited for Isaac to wake up from his nap. She thought about the missing gifts and wondered how close they really were to the next phase of their ministry. *Lord, help us to be patient for Your timing. I know you love the Shampiri and have a plan to bring them the good news about Jesus. Let it be Your plan and Your way, and not ours.*

With a smile on her lips, Allison continued praying for the people that she had never met, but loved nonetheless. She had loved the Shampiri since she had sat in her adult Sunday School

class in Texas five years ago and listened to Kyle Huntington explain that no one in the tribe had ever had the chance to hear the Gospel. He told the class that he and his wife, Jamie, would soon be returning to Peru along with another family to begin working toward making contact with the group. They were based out of the jungle city of Iquitos, but spent the bulk of their time at a camp they had carved out of the jungle.

A quiet knock broke Allison out of her reverie. She opened the door and smiled at her blond haired best friend. From the moment they had met, Allison felt a deep connection to Jamie Huntington, almost as if they had known each other their whole lives. Jamie had taken Allison under her wing when the Carters had arrived in Peru and patiently showed her how to survive in a place totally foreign to someone raised in the modern world. Cooking over a fire, doing laundry by hand, and preserving food without refrigeration were among the chores that Allison had quickly grown accustomed to.

“I think you are starting to show.” Allison patted Jamie’s pregnant belly.

Her friend beamed. “I know!” she said excitedly. “I can hardly button these jeans. It’s about time. I’ve been ready to look pregnant for years.” Jamie’s was a long awaited pregnancy. The rest of the team had been almost as thrilled as the Huntingtons with the news that a fourth child would soon be added to the team. For several years, Tim and Kathy’s twin girls were the only little ones running around. Isaac had come along as a surprise two years after the Carters’ arrival. Jamie’s baby would make the number even again.

“Is Kathy washing today too?” Allison asked.

“Maybe later. She told me that she wants to finish up the girls’ math lesson and get them started on their homework first. Are you ready to go?”

Allison pointed to a bucket of dirty cloth diapers soaking in bleach. “Yes, and I have a ton to do. I hear Isaac babbling in the bedroom. Let me grab him, and we can go.”

Walking toward the bedroom, Jamie said, “Oh, let me get him. I need the practice.”

Allison followed her to the crib. “Fine. I’ll carry your laundry. You shouldn’t carry both.”

“I would argue, but the truth is, I am already tired from my morning chores.” Jamie picked up the baby who immediately snuggled his dark curls into her shoulder.

After Allison had retrieved the laundry from the front room, Jamie held the door open. Allison used both buckets of laundry to keep her balance as they walked the trail through the tall grass down the hill to the river. The rainy season had only just started, so the river was still receded, creating a wide, sandy bank full of washed up logs and branches that Isaac loved to explore. Allison had long ago lost her fear of germs and allowed him to play with the rocks, sticks, and leaves as much as he liked.

The women set their buckets in the shallow water of the shore and began to scrub detergent into the dirty clothes. They chatted while they worked and kept watch over Isaac’s explorations. He had recently begun walking, but was still unsteady on his feet.

After an hour, both women had finished the scrubbing and rinsing, and together they wrung out the clothing to carry back to the camp to be hung on the clothes lines strung next to their houses. It was a hard, hot job, but doing it together made it much more enjoyable for both of them.

Jamie yawned. “I think I am going to go catch a nap before lunch. I am beat.” She picked up her bucket of laundry and started for the trail up the hill to the camp. “Are you coming?”

“Go on ahead. I am going to play with Isaac for a few minutes and wash him off. I’ll see you later.”

Allison waved her friend away and turned to her son who was stuffing pebbles into his

mouth. She gently swept her finger in his cheeks to rid them of the stones before she picked him up and carried him to the river. “Don’t eat rocks, Isaac.”

The two lingered at the water’s edge for a long while, tossing sand into the slow current and looking for tadpoles in the small puddles of water that had formed by the retreating river. For Allison, it was among the sweetest moments in her days. She had loved the years she and Eric had together before Isaac came along, but there was something indescribable about having a child to watch grow and begin discovering what was around him. She delighted in seeing his dark green eyes light up with the introduction of the new sights and sounds landscaping his little world.

“Hey, guys!” Allison looked up to see Kyle making his way down the trail to the river bank. “Where’s my wife?” he asked.

“She went home to take a nap. We were just playing for awhile before we head back. Are you guys done with the strong house floor already?”

Kyle stooped down at the edge of the river and began washing his face with the cool water. “Yes.” he replied, “We decided that it’s not as rotted as we thought. We replaced one board, but that’s all we’re going to do with it for now. I left the guys to put all of the tools away. I thought I would take a dip in the river and carry Jamie’s laundry back for her, but, since she isn’t here, I’ll carry yours if you’ll wait for me.”

“Take your time. We’re having fun, although I think Isaac is getting hungry.” As if to confirm his mother’s words, the toddler began pulling at her purple T-shirt.

Kyle chuckled. “You know, when your kid starts asking to eat, it might be time to quit nursing.” he teased.

Allison turned her son’s attention to a short, fat stick before saying, “He is still a baby. He isn’t ready to give it up yet, and neither am I.”

“Fair enough.” Stripping off his filthy short-sleeved, denim shirt, Kyle waded into the river. He ducked under the water a few times to wash the grime off of his body and to cool off his steaming skin.

After several minutes of relaxing in the water, he slogged to shore and began re-buttoning his shirt. He paused with his head cocked to one side. “Do you hear that?” he asked.

Even as the words left his mouth, Allison heard loud whoops break the peaceful sound of the river. Then screaming began. Her eyes lit with understanding, then fear. “Do you think—?”

“The strong house. Hurry. I think the camp is being attacked.” Kyle grabbed Allison’s arm and propelled her to her feet. He shoved her forward, and they both dashed toward the trail.

Allison clutched Isaac tightly as she ran the path back to the camp. He began crying, but she scarcely heard. *Oh, God, please don’t let them be in the camp. Protect Eric and Jamie and—*

Allison stopped and a terrified scream gurgled up her throat. With Isaac dangling from one arm, she dropped to her knees. Eric was lying unconscious on the trail near the clearing of the camp with one long arrow pierced into his back. Blood was seeping from his wound and into the dirt below him.

“There is no time.” Kyle said firmly and forced her up again, “Take Isaac and get into the strong house. *Now!*” Barely breaking his stride, Kyle dragged Eric’s body into the tall grass beside the trail and ran after her.

Isaac. Save Isaac. Run. It was all Allison could do to command her body to leave her husband and scramble toward the strong house fifty yards away. Clasp her screaming son to her chest, she focused on the door of the strong house, but still she saw chaos all around her. There were half a dozen native men, their faces smeared with red paint, wielding long, drawn

bows and yelling to one another in an incomprehensible language. It was clear to her, however, that they were very angry.

Thud. Allison looked over her shoulder to see Kyle on the ground, an arrow through his shoulder. “Go!” he shouted, his face twisting in pain.

Thirty yards, twenty-five yards. Allison’s chest heaved in exertion and terror. Then an arm reached out and plucked Isaac from her like fruit from a tree.

“No!” she screamed, charging at the warrior who had stolen her son. He pushed her to the ground, but she was back on her feet a second later. She dove for the strong brown hand that held Isaac by his arm as if he were nothing more than a rag doll. She scratched and bit at him as a rage like she had never experienced filled her soul.

His eyes glittering with rage, the warrior dropped the child onto the dirt and grasped her by the throat. He pushed her to the ground with one hand, and, in a heartbeat, had an arrow loaded into his bow. As the warrior pulled back the bow, Allison scrambled to cover Isaac with her body. She waited for the impact of the four foot long arrow that she knew could easily impale her and her son’s bodies at such a close range. *Lord, this was not how it was supposed to end. Please, don’t let Isaac feel any pain.*

To her surprise, she was yanked back to her feet. She whirled around to find herself staring into the face of another native man. This one’s eyes lacked the fury of the first man’s. The second warrior held her tightly by the elbow and began arguing animatedly with his comrade. Though she could not understand a word of their language, she knew that they were speaking about her. The warrior that held her fast motioned to her and to Isaac who was still sitting on the ground wailing.

Whatever was said angered the first man who again drew back his bow and pointed it at her chest. Smoothly, she was pulled safely behind her captor’s back.

Before the argument could continue, a third man joined the pair. He was taller than the first two, a little older, and obviously in charge. He listened as the two warriors yelled simultaneously. Finally, he put his hand up and uttered one word that ended the discussion. Allison was handed to him, and he began dragging her back toward the trail that led to the river.

Her heartbeat was wild with panic, and she could not seem to catch her breath. She had no idea what their plans were for her, but she knew that they could not be good. Kicking and flailing, she tried to wrench her arms from his grasp. It was futile. Though not much taller than she, he was broad shouldered with thick arms corded with muscle.

He continued pulling her toward the trail. When they passed by the mouth of the trail where Eric’s body had lain, Allison struggled to catch a glimpse of her husband in the grass, but she was unable to see him through the foliage.

At the river, Allison managed to break free from the strong arms that held her. She ran back to the trail, toward Eric, toward Isaac. Not even three steps to freedom, she was seized from behind and thrown onto the ground. On the way down, her head came in contact with a rotting log that was sitting on the bank. A searing pain ripped through her temple, and the world went black.