

## Chapter 29 – Beast of the Amazon

Gordon saw the bandits in the lead boat about to open fire and gunned the engine of his own boat towards the shore. “Get down!” he roared as he heard the chatter of the rifles. The twins and the doctor and Amy ducked their heads as the bullets started to fly. Within seconds, it seemed as if they were in a war zone. The chatter of the AK-47’s, the popping of handguns and the dull boom of a shotgun was deafening. Bullets raked their craft and suddenly Scarlett yelped. A dark red splash blossomed on the sleeve of her t-shirt as she realised she had been shot. She was sick in the bottom of the canoe from shock. Gordon kept shouting for them to keep down as he drove them into the shallows on the far bank. As soon as he was near the shore, he deliberately capsized their canoe with the keel facing towards the gunmen just as more bullet holes stitched across the boat, puncturing the inflatable sides. Everyone ended up in the water, bags and backpacks were swept away and people splashed and spluttered in water that came up to their chests. Ollie came up for air and grabbed onto the arm of a person next to him in the warm shallows. The river tugged at them both and Ollie suddenly reeled back in horror as he saw it was the body of Pamela, the technician, floating lifeless in the water, three small bullet holes clearly visible in the back of her jacket. He jerked his hand away and the body quickly disappeared downstream.

His father was still roaring with urgency, “Everyone out of the water now! Stay low and get into the jungle. Hurry!” Bullets continued to pepper the water and the riverbank around them.

Ollie scrambled up the bank and caught a glimpse of Terry wreathed in gun smoke still on the other canoe, firing his shotgun with quick precise shots at enemy craft. At the top of the bank, Ollie helped pull Amy and Scarlett up the muddy sides. Scarlett shouted in pain from her bullet wound and lay sobbing at the top of the bank. Everyone lay flat and Gordon pointed for them all to get into the nearest bushes. Bingo pulled out a sodden handkerchief from his pocket and used it to tie around Scarlett’s wounded arm. He then crawled towards the wall of dense foliage in front of him, the others following close behind with Gordon bringing up the rear. Bullets continued to spatter the jungle ahead of them as the Raoul’s men shouted in Spanish and tried to catch their escaping prey.