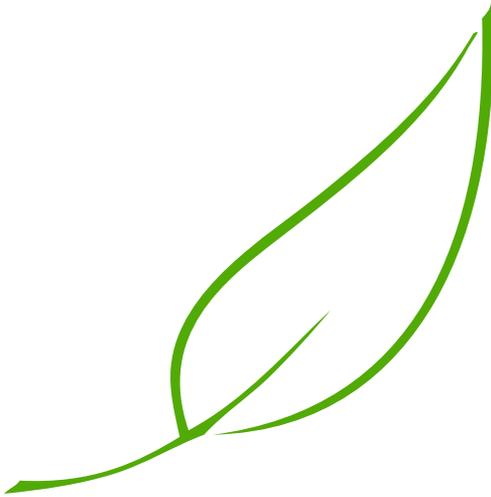


LOST CITY OF THE NUNUS

By Martin Follose



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SYNOPSIS: HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO in the deepest jungle interiors lived an ancient civilization of Nunus rumored to have collected great riches of gold and precious artifacts—they were also well-documented cannibals. Ignoring the last part, archaeologist Shirley Price is bent on discovering and looting this legendary Lost City. When colleague Conrad Cain discovers an ancient map to the Nunu ruins, Shirley Price convinces him that it's time to ditch the backyard digs and search for the riches of the Nunus. Shirley cons the wealthy Mrs. Breezley into financing the trip and hires two experienced jungle guides to cut the trail. Before long, the expedition includes Conrad's fiancée, Mrs. Breezley, who insists on searching for a new species of orchids herself (Shirley told her they were going on an orchid outing), and J.D. Hunt and Brian Tate, the not-so-experienced expedition guides who are being chased by two nature-disrespecting loan shark goons. Just when you thought it was safe to go into the jungle, the Nunus, who are not at all lost, capture Shirley and Conrad and plan a tremendous feast. Not a bad idea until Shirley and Conrad overhear Chief Pow-Pow order the Witch Doctor to “remove all evil that might be inhabiting their delicious entrees . . . sauteed Shirley and candied Conrad.” So the goofy Witch Doctor summons the tasty duo but instead of cleansing the entrees, he mistakenly casts Shirley into Conrad's body and Conrad into Shirley's body. Devastated, the Witch Doctor resigns determined to find a more suitable occupation until he's captured by the expedition members and forced to either eat vegetables or reverse the spell. Easy jungle set.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(9 females, 8 males, extras)

THE EXPEDITION:

J.D. HUNT (m) Guide (74 lines)
 SHIRLEY (f)..... Archaeologist (155 lines)
 CONRAD (m)..... Archaeologist (189 lines)
 MRS. BEEZLEY (f) Financier (31 lines)
 SOPHIE (f)..... Conrad's girlfriend (70 lines)

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DEANNA (f)..... Mrs. Beezley's granddaughter
(13 lines)
BRIAN (m) Guide (50 lines)

THE GANGSTERS:

LOAN SHARK WILLIE (m)..... Mob boss (29 lines)
BABY DOLL (f)..... (20 lines)
BUD (m) Willie's sidekick (15 lines)

NATIVES OF THE LOST CITY:

JUJU (m)..... (38 lines)
FIFI (f) (28 lines)
CHIEF POW POW (m)..... (83 lines)
SISI (f) (4 lines)
NINI (f)..... (23 lines)
LILI (f)..... (16 lines)
WITCH DOCTOR TUTU (m)..... (26 lines)

ACT ONE

SETTING: *This scene opens in the middle of a rain forest. There are trees and bushes everywhere including rocks that may be used as seats.*

AT RISE: *As the curtain opens, the expedition members enter. They carry small packs, water containers, etc. They are dressed in hiking clothes. J.D. HUNT leads the group followed by SHIRLEY and CONRAD. MRS. BEEZLEY, SOPHIE, and DEANNA follow behind. SOPHIE is constantly swatting at bugs. DEANNA has her nose in a book, studying.*

BRIAN: *(Rushes on stage.)* Hold up everyone.

BRIAN exits. Everyone stops, except DEANNA who runs into SOPHIE.

SOPHIE: Watch where you are going!

DEANNA: I'm sorry, Sophie, but I was reading about the cannibalistic rituals of the native tribes of this area. It is absolutely fascinating.

SOPHIE: Don't be ridiculous. There are not cannibals in the world anymore, unless you want to count my lawyer.

SHIRLEY: *(To JD.)* Why did you stop?

J.D.: I don't know, but I'll find out.

J.D. crosses center stage and is met by BRIAN as he enters from left.

J.D.: *(Continued.)* What seems to be the problem?

BRIAN: It's the porters. They won't go any further. *(He looks around, quietly.)* They say that we have crossed into Nunu country.

J.D.: Nunu country? What's that?

BRIAN: It's where the Nunus live.

J.D.: *(Sarcastically.)* Thanks. Who are the Nunus?

BRIAN: They say that the Nunus are cannibals and it's too close to dinner time to go any further.

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J.D.: Cannibals? Don't be ridiculous! There aren't any cannibals in this area.

BRIAN: Oh yeah! When's the last time that you were here to find out?

J.D.: Shh, keep your voice down. You know that I've never been in this area. And we can't let the rest of them know that. If they find out that I lied about knowing this area like the back of my hand. I'll be fired and I need this job. And so do you.

BRIAN: You're right. I do need this job. But how am I going to get the porters to go on?

J.D.: Why don't we just stay here for the night. That will give us more time to think of a plan.

BRIAN: Okay, I just hope we can think of something by then. *(He exits.)*

J.D.: *(To everyone.)* The porters are tired so we're going to camp here for the night.

SHIRLEY: Camp here? So early? We still have several hours of daylight left.

J.D.: Yes, I know, but we can't let our porters get too tired. We don't want any of them to get careless with our equipment.

Scene switches to CONRAD and SHIRLEY. Other EXPEDITION MEMBERS mill around and then slowly exit.

CONRAD: Sophie.

SOPHIE: *(To CONRAD.)* Conrad, I can't believe that we're going to stay here. Why, there is nothing but bugs and trees. Where's the Embassy Suites?

CONRAD: Sophie, I told you that this was going to be a rough trip and we were going to have to sleep in tents in the middle of the rain forest.

SOPHIE: I didn't think we were going to have to live like cavemen. This situation is unacceptable.

CONRAD: You should have stayed home.

SOPHIE: And have you traipse through the jungle with that woman clawing at you? I had to come to protect my investment.

CONRAD: *(Trying to appear tough.)* Is that what I am to you? An investment?

SOPHIE: (*Patting him on the cheek.*) I love it when you show a little fire. Now run along and set up the tent that, if I must, call home. And please dear, don't set it up near the others, I don't want to smell them all night long. I don't think I could handle it. (*CONRAD begins to leave.*) And please get me a glass of cool water, my throat is parched. (*CONRAD smiles and begins to leave again.*) And could you please do something about these bugs. They are so annoying.

CONRAD: Yes, dear. I'll talk to the bugs after I get you a cool glass of water.

CONRAD crosses over to SHIRLEY who is looking at a map.

SHIRLEY: (*Sarcastically.*) Well, did you get your fiancée settled in?

CONRAD: Well, she has given me a list of things to do.

SHIRLEY: A list?

CONRAD: Yes, I have to set up her tent, get her a glass of water and then talk to the bugs about their annoying habits.

SHIRLEY: Did she tell you which to do first?

CONRAD: (*Looking confused.*) Tent, water, bugs. I think.

SHIRLEY: (*Grabbing CONRAD before he could leave.*) Remember what I said, the first time that she slows us down we leave her behind.

CONRAD: But...

SHIRLEY: No "buts," now look at this map and help me figure out where we go from here. I have a feeling that JD has no idea what he is doing.

CONRAD: Right after I get Sophie a glass of water. (*She grabs him again and gives him a mean look.*) Which I will do right after I look at the map.

SHIRLEY: Do you have the map to the Lost City that you found in the archives?

CONRAD: Right here. (*He pulls out a map from his pocket and unfolds it.*)

SHIRLEY: Now, what we have to do is compare the maps and see if we can find any common landmarks. (*She looks at the map that CONRAD is holding.*) It would help if you would turn the map right side up.

CONRAD: Oh, (*Turns the map.*) Sorry.

SOPHIE: (*Calling to CONRAD.*) Oh, Conrad. I'm waiting.

SHIRLEY: (*Sarcastically.*) Oh, Conrad.

CONRAD: Yes, dear. (*Begins to leave.*)

SHIRLEY: Let her wait.

CONRAD: Right.

SHIRLEY: If we can just find the spot where these two rivers converge and where these two mountains are just on the west side, with a small mountain on the east side on this map, then we will know which way to go.

CONRAD: Don't we need to know where we are right now first?

SHIRLEY: Minor details. And besides, that's JD's job anyway. Now do you see a spot like that on this map?

CONRAD: Nope.

SHIRLEY: Maybe we better get JD over here. (*Calling.*) JD! (*JD crosses over to them.*) JD, can you locate our position on the map?

J.D.: Well, of course I can. We are right-right-here. (*Points at the map.*)

SHIRLEY: How can we be there? That is in the middle of a mountain range and we are obviously not in the middle of a mountain range.

J.D.: Oh, well, then, maybe we are here.

SHIRLEY: What do you mean **maybe**?

CONRAD: He means that he's not sure.

SHIRLEY: I know that. Do you mean to tell me that you are not sure where we are?

J.D.: Well, not exactly.

SHIRLEY: So you do know where we are.

J.D.: Not exactly. But I'm sure that Brian and I will be able to scout around and find some landmarks to locate our position on the map. You know, it would help greatly if you two would tell me our destination.

SHIRLEY: As I told you before, we will tell you that once we are deep in the jungle.

J.D.: I don't understand all the secrecy.

SHIRLEY: You don't have to understand, just guide us deep in the jungle, that's what we are paying you for.

J.D.: What ever the lady wants. *(He moves away.)*

CONRAD: Maybe we should tell him.

SHIRLEY: Absolutely not! I told you that we can't let it out that we have a map to the Lost City of the Nunus until we are sure we aren't being followed. This could be the biggest archaeological discovery of the century. I don't want to share it with anyone.

CONRAD: Ah-hem.

SHIRLEY: Except you, of course. I knew the first time that you brought me that map that we had something. That's why I have worked so hard to get the financing and put this expedition together.

CONRAD: How did you get Mrs. Beezley to finance the expedition without telling her what we are searching for?

SHIRLEY: I told her that we were searching for orchids.

CONRAD: Orchids?

SHIRLEY: Yes, Mrs. Beezley is the president of Maine's Chapter of the Orchid Society and of course, she's rich.

CONRAD: You told her we were looking for Orchids?

SHIRLEY: I had to tell her something and I knew that orchids would get us the financing we needed. I just didn't think she would want to come along as well.

MRS. BREEZLEY crosses near SHIRLEY.

SHIRLEY: *(Continued.)* Mrs. Beezley, I hope that everything is okay.

MRS. BEEZLEY: As I was saying. I haven't seen a new species or orchids since our arrival. I hope that everything is okay. I hope you were correct when you said that we would be able to discover a new species. I do want to name it after my dear departed husband.

SHIRLEY: I'm sure that it is just a matter of time, Mrs. Beezley, just a matter of time.

MRS. BEEZLEY: I do hope so my dear. *(She moves away.)*

CONRAD: Liar!

SHIRLEY: Hey, it got us the money we needed didn't it? And besides, maybe we will find a new species of orchid.

CONRAD: Yeah, right. What will we find, when we find, the lost city?

SHIRLEY: Didn't you pay attention in Archaeology 101? The lost city of the Nunus is supposed to have great wealth. More gold than any of us can imagine.

CONRAD: Gold? Aren't we looking for the lost city for the knowledge of a past civilization that it will bring to the world, the discovery of a culture that may shed light on our own habits and traditions?

SHIRLEY: When's the last time you went on a dig of any significance? Something other than digging up a few arrowheads in the back of someone's yard? When was the last time that you were even asked to analyze and catalog any newly discovered artifacts? When?

CONRAD: Well.....

SHIRLEY: I'll tell you when, never! All we do is sit in the classroom and teach about the Mayas and other past civilizations to knot heads who couldn't tell the difference between an artifact and a hockey puck. That's why this discovery is so important to me. That's why I'm keeping everything secret. And that's why we have to find the lost city of the Nunus. I brought you along so we could both make the discovery.

CONRAD: You brought me along because I have the map.

SHIRLEY: That too. Don't you see, this could be our ticket to the top. No more knot head classes. No more backyard digs. We're going to be famous. We'll be on talk shows and written up in magazines, maybe even on the cover of Time Magazine.

CONRAD: Do you really think so?

SHIRLEY: Of course I do. I wouldn't have come this far if I didn't think the payoff was going to be big.

SOPHIE: *(Calling.)* Conrad!

SHIRLEY: Better run!

CONRAD: I have to see what Sophie wants.

SHIRLEY: *(Grabbing CONRAD.)* Of course you do, but this stays between me and you, Conrad. Got it?

SOPHIE: *(Yelling.)* Conrad! Get over here!

SHIRLEY: Tell her to keep her trap shut, she might catch something out here in the deep dark jungle.

CONRAD: Right.

SHIRLEY: And remember, keep this a secret!

CONRAD: Right. *(He crosses over to SOPHIE.)*

SOPHIE: What took you so long? I asked you hours ago to get me a cool glass of water.

CONRAD: I'm sorry. I was talking to Shirley.

SOPHIE: And what were you talking to Miss Piranha about?

CONRAD: I don't think I know a Miss Piranha.

SOPHIE: I'm talking about Shirley!

CONRAD: Oh, just about the expedition. Don't you think it's going well so far?

SOPHIE: Going well? I'm baking out here in the middle of nowhere without room service, no television, and bees and other loud things buzzing around my face. There can't be anything out here worth this horrid situation.

CONRAD: Oh, but that's not what Shirley says. She says... *(He abruptly stops.)*

SOPHIE: What does she say, Conrad?

CONRAD: I can't tell you.

SOPHIE: What do you mean you can't tell me?

CONRAD: Shirley told me not to tell anyone.

SOPHIE: Not even me, you fiancée?

CONRAD: Especially you.

SOPHIE: *(Dramatically.)* Oh, Conrad, you have hurt me so. You are keeping secrets from me, your lovely wife to be, a wife that you could entrust your last breath to. *(Suddenly angry, she grabs CONRAD.)* And it will be your last breath if you don't tell me.

CONRAD: All right, all right! *(He looks around to be sure that no one is near.)* We are looking for a lost city.

SOPHIE: A lost city? Does it have an Embassy Suites?

CONRAD: No, but it is made of gold.

SOPHIE: *(Loudly.)* Gold!

CONRAD: Shhh. Do you want Shirley to hear you?

SOPHIE: It's really made of gold?

CONRAD: That's what Shirley says. And we are keeping it secret until we find it. There are a lot of unscrupulous people out there who would just take the gold and run.

SOPHIE: I'm sure there are. Tell me more about this gold.

CONRAD: There's supposed to be more gold than we could ever imagine.

SOPHIE: Really?

CONRAD: And when we find it we are going to be famous.

SOPHIE: Famous!

CONRAD: Yes, and Shirley thinks that we will be on talk shows and in magazines.

SOPHIE: We'll be rich?

CONRAD: Well, we won't be able to keep the gold. We will just bring it back for the world to see.

SOPHIE: For the world to see? What about me? Don't you think I deserve some kind of compensation for putting up with these dreadful conditions?

CONRAD: What conditions?

SOPHIE: (*Grabbing CONRAD.*) The bugs, they're loud. I can't sleep. And the dirt, and the heat, and the squawking birds. I deserve something for putting up with all this. (*She lets him go and straightens up his clothes.*) Just a few things. A small golden statue, or a cup, or both.

CONRAD: We can't keep the artifacts. They belong to the world.

SOPHIE: Forget the world. Think of me. (*She becomes very romantic. Blowing in his ear, tickling him under his chin, etc.*) You could take a few things for me, couldn't you Pooh Bear? After all, you do want little old me to have all the things that I deserve, now don't you?

CONRAD: Well... (*She blows in his ear.*) Well, maybe just a few things.

SOPHIE: (*Changes quickly back to herself.*) Good! Now go set up that tent before these bugs eat me alive.

CONRAD: Yes, dear. (*He begins to exit.*)

SOPHIE: And don't set it up too near the others.

CONRAD: Yes, dear.

SOPHIE: (*With anger.*) And get me that glass of water!

CONRAD: Yes, dear. (*He rushes off.*)

SOPHIE exits.

DEANNA: (*To MRS. BEEZILY.*) Grandmama, I was just reading about the tropical rain forests. Do you know that 214,000 acres of the rain forest are lost every day? And that 50-70% of the world's

species of life forms live in the rain forest? And that the tropical rain forests once covered more than 14% of the earth's land area and that they now amount to less than 6%?

MRS. BEEZLEY: Yes my dear. That sounds all very interesting, but can't you see that I am studying these orchids in search of a new species? I must discover a new species of orchid and take it back to Maine with me.

DEANNA: You mean you're going to take it from the rain forest?

MRS. BEEZLEY: Well of course I'm going to take it. The Orchid Society is depending on my discovery. Why don't you go count the number of different monkeys you can see.

DEANNA: Fourteen?

MRS. BEEZLEY: Fourteen?!

DEANNA: Yes. There are fourteen different species of monkeys in this area. I've already counted them. There are the howling monkeys, the spider monkeys, the squirrel monkeys, and the...

MRS. BEEZLEY: Deanna, my dear. I'm sure that this monkey business is all very interesting but I have work to do. Your dear departed grandfather and I have spent years cultivating orchids and after losing him last year I decided that I wanted to discover a new species so that I can name it after him. But I simply won't be able to find one if you are constantly pestering me. Since you have already counted the monkeys, why don't you move on to birds.

DEANNA: Twenty-one.

MRS. BEEZLEY gives DEANNA a dirty look.

DEANNA: *(Continued.)* But I'll count them again.

DEANNA moves off counting the birds in the trees. BRIAN enters and crosses near MRS. BEEZLEY. MRS. BEEZLEY is looking closely at an orchid when she notices BRIAN.

MRS. BEEZLEY: Mr. Tate, could you please look into this orchid and tell me how long you think the column is. My eyes just aren't what they used to be.

BRIAN: What's a column?

MRS. BEEZLEY: A column is where the stamens, which is the pollen-producing reproductive organ of a flower, have united with style.

BRIAN: (*Shocked.*) Mrs. Beezley, do you think we should be discussing such things in public?

MRS. BEEZLEY: Mr. Tate, will you please grow up. I am trying to identify this orchid to find out if it is an unknown species. I simply must discover a new species and name it after my dear departed husband. Now, will you please help me, Mr. Tate? The column is the little thing that sticks up from the middle of the flower.

BRIAN: Mrs. Beezley, really.

MRS. BEEZLEY: It's length, Brian. How long is the column? (*He looks closely at the flower.*)

BRIAN: It's short.

MRS. BEEZLEY: Oh, dear. That means that it is a *Spiranthes Romanzoffiana*. I simply must discover a new species. (*She exits without saying anything to BRIAN.*)

BRIAN: (*To himself.*) You're welcome.

A few moments later J.D. enters from the right crosses over to BRIAN.

J.D.: Well, did you get the porters to stay?

BRIAN: Not exactly.

J.D.: What do you mean not exactly?

BRIAN: They're gone.

J.D.: Gone? Do you mean gone (*Emphases and draws out the word.*) or just gone?

BRIAN: What's the difference?

J.D.: Gone is like when you go to the bathroom or to the refrigerator for a drink and you'll be right back. Gone (*Draws out word, as before.*) is when you head for the hills never to be seen again.

BRIAN: That settles it, they're gone.

J.D.: Oh no! We can't carry all that equipment ourselves. What are we going to do?

BRIAN: I don't know, but you better think of something fast. Here comes Shirley.

SHIRLEY crosses over to J.D. and BRIAN.

SHIRLEY: I just saw all of the porters take off into the jungle. Where are they going?

BRIAN: Maybe they all had to go to the little boys room.

SHIRLEY: Don't be ridiculous. Now I know something is going on and I suggest that you tell me what it is.

BRIAN: Maybe you better talk to JD.

SHIRLEY: JD?

J.D.: Well, it seems that someone dropped an earring and they all went back to look for it.

SHIRLEY: JD!

J.D.: Okay, they're gone.

SHIRLEY: Gone-gone or just gone.

BRIAN: Don't you mean **gone**.

J.D.: I mean that they decided to go home and catch the late show.

SHIRLEY: This is just great. Look JD, I paid you to get us deep in the jungle with our equipment and that is just what you are going to do.

J.D.: But how are we supposed to carry all that equipment?

SHIRLEY: That is your problem. *(She exits.)*

J.D.: This is just great. Now you and I are going to have to carry all of that equipment.

BRIAN: Me? I didn't sign on to this expedition as a pack mule.

JD grabs BRIAN.

J.D.: Look Brian. Do you want to go back and face Loan Shark Willy without the money we owe him?

BRIAN shakes his head. JD lets BRIAN go.

J.D.: *(Continued.)* You and I owe him big money and if we don't come up with the money soon we are going to be fired. And that means that if we have to carry the equipment, then we carry it. Do you understand?

BRIAN: Yeah.

J.D.: Now, let's go through the equipment and throw out anything we don't need.

BRIAN and JD exit. Moments later LOAN SHARK WILLIE, BABY DOLL, and BUD enter. WILLIE is dressed in full suit and acts and talks like a mob boss. BABY DOLL is dressed in a flapper style dress. She hangs on to WILLIE'S arm and is chewing gum wildly. BUD is WILLIE'S sidekick.

WILLIE: Are we still hot on their trail?

BUD: Yeah, boss. They're right over there, just on the other side of those bushes.

BABY DOLL: Willie, honey. Can't we go home, this humidity is messin' up my hair.

WILLIE: Later, Baby Doll. We have a job to do.

BABY DOLL: You always have a job to do.

WILLIE: Quiet!

BABY DOLL: Umf! *(She turns her back to WILLIE and crosses her arms.)*

BUD: What are we going to do now?

WILLIE: We wait until they make a move. JD and Brian aren't out here on a picnic. There has to be a reason. And it smells like money to me.

BABY DOLL: Money? *(She giggles and hangs on to WILLIE'S arm again.)* I like money.

BUD: But what if they are just trying to get away from you and repaying the money you loaned them?

WILLIE: Then we break their legs.

BUD: Both legs?

WILLIE: Both legs.

BABY DOLL: Can I watch?

WILLIE: Sure, Baby Doll. No one runs out on Loan Shark Willie and lives to tell about it.

BUD: What about Sticky Fingers Steve?

WILLIE: *(Grabs BUD.)* I told you never to say his name again or I break your legs?

BUD: No. I'm sorry, Boss. I won't mention Sticky Fingers Steve again.

WILLIE glares at BUD.

BUD: *(Continued.)* Oops, sorry Boss.

WILLIE: I might not be so forgiving the next time.

BABY DOLL: Yeah, remember that. If you mention Sticky Fingers Steve's name again Willie's going to break your legs. Even if you whisper *(She whispers.)* Sticky Fingers Steve. Willie's going to break your legs. Even if you....

WILLIE: Enough!

BABY DOLL: Uhmf! *(She turns her back to him again.)*

WILLIE: Now what could this expedition be looking for?

BUD: The word on the street is they are looking for orchids.

WILLIE: Orchids? There's no money in orchids.

BABY DOLL: *(She hangs on to his arm again.)* Oh, I don't know. A lady likes flowers. If a guy would buy them more often...

WILLIE gives her a dirty look.

BABY DOLL: *(Continued.)* Uhmf! *(She turns away.)*

WILLIE: Orchids is just the front they're using. What they tell everyone they are looking for. No one would come all the way out here looking for a flower. There has to be another reason.

BUD: And it smells like money to you, right boss?

WILLIE: Right!

BABY DOLL hangs on his arm again.

BABY DOLL: I can't smell anything. *(She sniffs the air.)*

WILLIE: JD and Brian would only be out here if there was money involved. And we have to find out the reason. And then make a little profit from it ourselves.

BUD: Right, Boss.

BABY DOLL: I can't smell anything. *(She sniffs the air again. WILLIE gives her a dirty look again.)* Uhmf! *(She turns away.)*

WILLIE: Now lets keep out of sight and wait for them to make their move.

BUD: Right, Boss.

WILLIE and BUD begin to exit up stage. WILLIE pauses and notices that BABY DOLL is not with him. He snaps his fingers and BABY DOLL rushes to him and hangs on his arm. They exit. Moments later JUJU and FIFI enter disguised as trees. They wear grass skirts. They also have a grass skirt around each leg so their lower leg and feet are hidden. Palm or other type of large leaves are tucked in their grass skirts at the waist. The leaves hide their upper bodies and faces. They also have a group of leaves in their hands. When they start to talk, they move their hands away from their faces. They should look like short trees. A few moments later, SOPHIE hears something and starts looking around but as she looks up stage the trees are not moving. When she looks back again, the trees are in different places. She becomes very frightened.

SOPHIE: *(Quietly at first.)* Ah, Conrad.

Natives move again.

SOPHIE: *(Continued.)* Conrad, dear.

Natives move again, this time SOPHIE sees them move. Screaming.

SOPHIE: *(Continued.)* Conrad. *(She runs off stage.)*

JUJU: *(Parting the leaves so that his face is seen.)* Fifi.

FIFI parts her leaves.

JUJU: You see pretty?

FIFI: No, Fifi see ugly woman with painted face.

JUJU: Juju like painted face. Fifi paint face for Juju?

FIFI: Me not paint face. Ugly.

JUJU: Too bad. Juju like.

FIFI: Someone come.

They move back up stage and take their tree stance. SOPHIE and CONRAD enter.

SOPHIE: There. (*Pointing.*) That one and that one. They moved.

CONRAD: Sophie, trees don't move.

SOPHIE: These do. I'm telling you Conrad. I saw it myself. I saw them move.

CONRAD: It's okay, Sophie. Maybe the heat is getting to you.

SOPHIE: The heat is not getting to me. I'm telling you they moved.

CONRAD: Maybe it was just the wind.

SOPHIE: (*Getting upset.*) It was not the wind. They moved.

CONRAD: Take it easy. (*Putting his arm around her.*) Now, why don't we find a place to put up your tent so that you can get some rest.

SOPHIE: (*Almost in tears.*) I didn't see the trees move?

CONRAD: (*He begins to lead her off stage.*) No, you didn't see the trees move.

The Natives move and CONRAD pauses and looks around. SOPHIE exits. CONRAD shrugs his shoulders and then exits. FIFI parts her leaves.

FIFI: Juju. (*He parts his leaves.*) You see pretty man?

JUJU: No. I see ugly man with ugly hat.

FIFI: You maybe wear hat like man?

JUJU: No. Me not wear ugly hat.

FIFI: Too bad. Me like.

JUJU: Someone come.

They hide behind leaves. JD and BRIAN enter. BRIAN is carrying a hatchet.

J.D.: If we are going to camp here for the night, we are going to need some firewood. Why don't you chop down one of these trees. I'm going to try and find out where we are.

JD moves down stage and is studying a map. BRIAN moves over to JUJU and raises his hatchet. BRIAN then crosses to JD. JD does not turn to look at him.

BRIAN: Why do I have to do the chopping? (As *BRIAN* speaks *JUJU* moves away.)

J.D.: Because.

BRIAN: Oh.

He turns back to the tree and finds that it is gone. He reacts with puzzlement, pointing to where the tree was and then where it is. He shrugs his shoulders and moves over to FIFI. He begins to raise his hatchet. He crosses to JD again. Again, JD doesn't turn to look at him.

BRIAN: Because why?

As BRIAN speaks FIFI moves away.

J.D.: Because I said so.

BRIAN turns back to the tree and again finds that it has moved. Now he is afraid. He crosses down to JD.

BRIAN: JD. JD.

J.D.: What is it now?

BRIAN: Can trees move?

J.D.: Well, if the wind is blowing.

BRIAN: No, I mean, can trees get up and walk away?

J.D.: Is your malaria coming back again?

BRIAN: No.

J.D.: Then get back to work.

BRIAN: Okay, but if it moves again....

J.D.: Please Brian, I'm trying to find out where we are.

BRIAN cautiously moves back to one of the trees and raises his hatchet. DEANNA enters, see BRIAN and rushes to him.

DEANNA: Stop! Just what do you think you are doing?

BRIAN: I'm chopping down this tree for firewood.

DEANNA: You can't do that. Did you know that 150 acres of rain forests are destroyed every minute? I simply will not allow you to

add to the destruction of the rain forest by chopping down that tree.

BRIAN: Listen little girl, why don't you go and play with your Barbie dolls or something and let me do my job.

DEANNA: Don't talk to me that way! My Grandmama is the one that is financing this expedition and all I have to do is talk to her and it would be, bye bye expedition and bye bye to the extravagant fee that you are most likely squeezing out of Shirley and Conrad.

BRIAN: You heard me, beat it.

J.D.: *(Crossing to BRIAN and DEANNA.)* Brian please. Don't talk to Deanna like that. *(Pulls BRIAN to the side.)* Do you want to get her grand-ma-ma mad enough to all off the expedition?

BRIAN shakes his head.

J.D.: Keeping Deanna happy will keep her grand-ma-ma happy and us paid. *(To DEANNA.)* Deanna, I'm sorry but Brian didn't understand when I told him to chop some firewood. I didn't mean for him to chop down a tree.

BRIAN: But...

J.D.: What I meant for him to do is chop some firewood from a tree that was already down.

DEANNA: The rain forest has a very fragil ecosystem.

J.D.: Of course it does. Brian just didn't understand and I think it is wonderful that you are helping him. *(To BRIAN.)* Brian, I hope you understand now just how fragile the rain forest is. Please find a fallen tree for firewood, Brian.

BRIAN: But...

J.D.: I think I saw a fallen tree right other there. *(He pushes BRIAN off stage. To DEANNA.)* I hope that you will keep this little incident from your grand-ma-ma, we wouldn't want to bother her with such a minor event. I'm sure that she has much more important things on her mind.

DEANNA: She does seem to be preoccupied lately.

J.D.: See what I mean? And I'm sure that you have many other things to do.

DEANNA: Well, I was planning to read up on the mating habits of the African tree frog.

J.D.: Please, don't let me keep you from something so interesting.

DEANNA exits.

J.D.: *(Continued. To himself.)* Boy, the things I have to put up with just for a few bucks.

J.D. exits. After a few moments the Natives part their leaves.

JUJU: That close.

FIFI: Too close.

JUJU: You see many people?

FIFI: Me see.

JUJU: Will make good dinner.

FIFI: All but pretty man.

JUJU: And painted woman.

FIFI: Tell chief.

FIFI and JUJU tiptoe out. Moments later CONRAD and SOPHIE enter.

SOPHIE: I thought that I told you that I wanted my tent set up away from the others. They are just too noisy. I won't get any beauty sleep with them around. Not that I will anyway with these flying creatures.

CONRAD: I had to set up the tents close together, for safety. Besides, I put your tent at the end of the row.

SOPHIE: For safety? Safe from what?

CONRAD: The wild animals that roam the forest.

SOPHIE: Wild animals? You mean there are dangerous wild animals in this forest?

CONRAD: Of course there are. But they will probably leave us alone.

SOPHIE: Probably? Conrad, I insist that you move my tent to the center row.

CONRAD: To the center?

SOPHIE: Yes, I have no intentions of being some wild rat's dinner.

CONRAD: BUT...

SOPHIE: No, buts. I insist. I'm going to remove my things from the tent right now so that you can move it to the center before it gets dark. *(She exits.)*

SHIRLEY enters.

SHIRLEY: Trouble in paradise?

CONRAD: I always have trouble with women. Sometimes I wish I wasn't a man.

SHIRLEY: Be careful what you wish for, it just might come true.

CONRAD: Have you figured out where we are?

SHIRLEY: No. And I don't think JD has any idea where we are either.

CONRAD: You mean we're lost?

SHIRLEY: And our porters have taken off, too.

CONRAD: You mean we're lost?

SHIRLEY: And we don't have anyone to carry our equipment.

CONRAD: *(In disbelief.)* Lost.

SHIRLEY: I think it's time that we get some answers around here. *(Calling off stage.)* JD! JD!

JD enters.

SHIRLEY: *(Continued.)* All right, JD, time for some answers.

J.D.: Answers?

SHIRLEY: Yes, I have a feeling that you have no idea where we are and I doubt that you've ever been in this area of the jungle before.

J.D.: Of course I have.

SHIRLEY: Conrad, why don't you please tell JD what happened to the last man who lied to me.

CONRAD: It wasn't a pretty sight.

J.D.: It wasn't?

CONRAD: *(Whispering to him.)* I hurt for weeks.

SHIRLEY: Now, let me ask my question again. *(Grabs J.D.)* Do you know where we are?

J.D.: *(With fear.)* Not exactly.

SHIRLEY: Just what I thought. Well then, we will have to follow the blazes that you made back to where we started and try again.

J.D.: Blazes?

SHIRLEY: Don't tell me that you didn't make blazes on the trees as we hiked along. Every guide knows that you blaze a trail so that you don't get lost.

J.D.: They do?

SHIRLEY: That means we are not really lost.

CONRAD: Really lost.

SHIRLEY: I guess we will just have to radio for help.

J.D.: Radio?

SHIRLEY: Don't tell me. You didn't bring a radio.

J.D.: Okay, I won't tell you.

CONRAD: We're going to die!

SHIRLEY: Pull yourself together, Conrad. We are not going to die. We are going to find the Lost City of the Nunus if it's the last thing we do.

J.D.: The Nunus?

SHIRLEY: I guess it's okay for you to know now. Conrad and I have a map that shows the location of the Lost City of the Nunus.

J.D.: But the Nunus are cannibals.

SHIRLEY: Don't be ridiculous. There aren't any cannibals anymore. And besides, the village of the Nunus was buried hundreds of years ago.

J.D.: Not according to the porters. That's why they left. They were afraid of being invited to dinner, where they were the main course.

SHIRLEY: Nonsense. Now in the morning we will try and make our way back to where we started and try it again.

CONRAD: What if we can't find our way back?

SHIRLEY: Don't worry, I'll be guiding us this time.

J.D.: Are you saying that you are firing me?

SHIRLEY: No, I'm just reassigning you for the moment. Besides, I think you are going to be busy carrying our equipment.

J.D.: What?

SHIRLEY: That is, if you still want to get paid. *(She exits.)*

J.D.: Women!

CONRAD: I know the feeling! She's a little head strong.

J.D.: Head strong is an understatement.

SOPHIE: *(From off stage.)* Conrad, I'm waiting for you to move my tent.

CONRAD: I'll be right there, darling.

SOPHIE: Please hurry, I want to take a nap before dinner is served.
(*She exits.*)

CONRAD: Yes, dear. (*Sits on rock.*) Oh, these women are driving me crazy, they push me around, and tell me what to do all of the time.

J.D.: Don't let them.

CONRAD: Easier said than done. You see what Shirley is like and Sophie, well, you see what she's like too.

CONRAD stands and crosses down stage, not looking at JD. As he speaks FIFI and/or JUJU enter and grab JD and take him off.

CONRAD: (*Continued.*) Just once I wish I could do what I want to do. Just once I wish I could make my own decisions in my life. Just once I wish I could make my own decisions in my life. Just once I wish people would listen to me like I mattered. Just once... (*He turns and sees JD is gone. He is puzzled.*) JD? Just once I wish people would give me a little respect. Just once.

A few moments later SOPHIE enters.

SOPHIE: Conrad! I have been waiting far too long! I insist that you come right now and move my tent.

CONRAD: (*With determination.*) Sophie, I'm busy.

SOPHIE: Busy? Busy doing what?

CONRAD: I'm thinking.

SOPHIE: Thinking?

CONRAD: (*With forcefulness.*) Yes, and I think that it's time that we have a little change in our relationship. It's time that you listen to what I have to say.

SOPHIE: Oh, Conrad. I love it when you show a little fire but we just don't have time for that. You must move my tent now so that I can get a nap before dinner.

CONRAD: I am not moving your tent!

SOPHIE: Conrad!

CONRAD moves down stage, not looking at SOPHIE.

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CONRAD: Sophie, our relationship is at a turning point. It is time that we have a 50-50 relationship—

SOPHIE gives him a sudden dirty look.

CONRAD: *(Continued.)*—or at least 40-60.

While CONRAD speaks, the Natives enter and capture SOPHIE covering her mouth so that she can not make a noise, and takes her off stage.

CONRAD: *(Continued.)* It's time that I should have some say in the decisions made and it's time you know that I do have an opinion. It is time that you treat me with some respect and that you listen to what I have to say. It's time... *(He turns, SOPHIE is gone.)* Sophie? Sophie? *(He is depressed again.)* Maybe it's not time for that.

A few moments later BRIAN enters with wood and puts the wood down.

BRIAN: Where's JD?

CONRAD: I don't know. I was talking to him and he just left. It's not the first time.

BRIAN: Sounds like you have a problem.

CONRAD: Problem?

As CONRAD speaks the Natives enter and capture BRIAN and take him off stage.

CONRAD: *(Continued.)* My problems started way back when I was three being pushed around by my older sisters. You know, having three mean older sisters can be hard on a guy. And then when I went to first grade, there was Tina. She beat me up at recess. And art class. And homeroom. And when I tried to tell someone, no one would believe me. And then there was second grade... *(He turns to see that BRIAN is gone.)* Brian? Brian? Not again!

A few moment later MRS. BEEZLEY and DEANNA enters.

MRS. BEEZLEY: Conrad, have you seen JD?

CONRAD: Not lately. We were having a discussion when he just disappeared.

MRS. BEEZLEY: I hear that we will have to turn back. Since I am financing this expedition I think I should have some say in what happens. I want to know if this is true and who made the decision without consulting me.

CONRAD turns away from MRS. BEEZLEY and DEANNA. As he speaks again the Natives enter and this time take MRS. BEESLEY and DEANNA.

CONRAD: Well, I am certainly not the one making decisions around here. In fact, they don't consult me about anything. It's as if I don't even exist. People just don't listen to me about anything. Most of the time, they don't even hear me out.

SHIRLEY enters, unseen by CONRAD.

CONRAD: *(Continued.)* It's just like the time in second grade when I was trying to tell the teacher what happened and she wouldn't listen. I told her that.

SHIRLEY: Conrad, who are you talking to?

CONRAD: Mrs. Beezley and Deanna. *(He turns to see that they are not there.)* To the only one who will listen to me. Me.

SHIRLEY: Have you seen any of the others? There's no one in their tents, no one down by the river and no one's here.

CONRAD: What about me?

SHIRLEY: Not counting you.

CONRAD: Most people don't.

SHIRLEY: There's something very strange going on around here.

CONRAD: Like what?

SHIRLEY: Like everyone is gone. They've disappeared! When's the last time you saw anyone?

CONRAD: Well.

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CONRAD turns away again and the Natives enter and capture SHIRLEY and exit.

CONRAD: *(Continued.)* I was talking to Mrs. Beezley and Deanna a few moments ago and then before that I was talking to Brian and before that JD, and before that I was talking to Sophie. Seems as though everyone I have talked to has disappeared. *(He turns to see that SHIRLEY has disappeared.)* Shirley? SHIRLEY?

The Natives enter from behind and then CONRAD turns around to see them. They grab him.

CONRAD: *(Continued.)* Finally, someone to talk to. It all started with Tina in the first grade. Do you speak English? *(They take him off.)* I guess not. Where are you taking me? Hey! Hey!

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SETTING: *The Nunu's village. There is a large bamboo or wicker chair up center where CHIEF POW POW sits. Large leaf fans are on each side of the CHIEF'S chair. There can be huts, baskets, and other "native" items throughout the village. There should be a rock or large bush up center for SHIRLEY and CONRAD to hide behind.*

AT RISE: *As the curtain opens, CHIEF POW POW is sitting in his chair and SISI is fanning him with a large leaf. The CHIEF can be eating grapes or other fruit and has lots of gold bracelets, necklaces, and other gold items on him. Several other gold vases, statues, etc. are sitting around the CHIEF'S chair.*

SISI: Chief Pow Pow cool now?

CHIEF: Chief never cool when Sisi near.

SISI: Chief better behave, wife come.

CHIEF: Chief never have fun.

NINI enters.

NINI: Why Chief not make law that wife ask for?

CHIEF: What law?

NINI: Nini ask Chief to make law for men to help with dishes.

CHIEF: Men not do dishes.

NINI: Does Chief want wife to stop make food?

CHIEF: No, Chief like food.

NINI: Chief not have food if not make law.

CHIEF: *(Loudly.)* Chief not make law! Other men mad at Chief.

NINI: Does Chief want wife mad at Chief?

CHIEF: No, Life bad when wife mad.

NINI: Then Chief make law?

CHIEF: *(Hesitating, reluctantly.)* Chief make law.

NINI: Good.

CHIEF: Next week.

NINI: Next week?

CHIEF: Chief not talk more. Chief hot.



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