

Loyalty Destroyed

By

Harold J Fischel

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Printed in the United States of America

Digital Ebook 2020
Van Velzer Press

Editor and Typesetting by: solfire@phoenix-farm.com

Chapter One

“We’re going to rot in this cave, bunker, whatever you want to call this hell hole.”

“Easy, Hayden. Calm down. All of us are anxious and scared, but getting angry won’t help. The captain is doing his best to get help.”

“Yeah, great. Like climbing out of this dungeon late at night and sending yet another S.O.S signal will help.”

“It will. We have to trust the captain. He knows what he’s doing. As soon as they intercept our signal, they’ll come and get us out.”

“Dream on, Jerry. The only thing it does is get him into the fresh air away from the stench in here. The signal is too damn weak to reach anyone, and he’ll run out of battery power.”

“Talk like that will get you into trouble.”

“Great! Maybe he’ll shoot me. At least that will stop me from dying of starvation.”

They had been stuck for three days in an underground silo left over from the days the US maintained arsenals of underground short range missiles in the area. Ten years after a peace treaty had been signed and the US installed a democratically elected government, a local terrorist group, the AOTP (Action to Overthrow Tunga Party) , started a movement to take back control of the country. The US deployed more

than fifty thousand troops in support of the elected government. A US unit under the command of Captain William Stanton was ambushed by the AOTP and lost contact with the local government troops who, supported by US forces, were hunting down the AOTP rebels. Fearing capture by the rebels, Captain Stanton and his men sought shelter in a hidden underground silo. The rebels combed the area, but hadn't discovered the men in the silo yet.

The food rations Captain Stanton's men carried with them were quickly disappearing. They were lucky to discover a source of water in the silo. Corporal Hayden approached the captain. "Sir, we can't hold up much longer in this place. Food is getting scarce, and the water will probably run out pretty soon. I'd like permission to go get help."

"Never! You'll immediately get captured, and they'll torture you to find out where we are."

"It's unlikely they'll capture me. I'll travel by myself, and I can slip past their patrols in the dark. Anyway, I'll never give away your location."

"You have no idea what you're talking about. They have this area locked down tightly, and they are a ruthless bunch. They can break anybody. Nobody can withstand their form of torture. They have no limits."

"I'll take my chances, sir. You have to trust me. I won't crack under torture!"

"Forget it. You're not going."

Sergeant Walters standing nearby heard the conversation.

"Captain, sir, if I may ... I would suggest you let Corporal Haydon try to

get help. Without the help of reinforcements, we'll never get out of here. The AOTP out there is too strong for us to take on. Staying here much longer isn't possible. Let Haydon try. He's a tough cookie; it will be hard for the rebels to crack him"

"I said no!"

"Sir, he might be our only hope to get out of here alive. It takes guts to volunteer to try to get help. Sir, please let him go."

Sergeant Walters had served almost thirty years in the Army. He'd seen a lot of combat, and Captain Stanton had great respect for him. He turned to Stanton. "Corporal I'll never order you to do this, but I won't forbid it either. God bless you and keep you safe."

Chapter Two

Corporal Hayden held his breath, afraid the rebel would hear him. He could see the scuffed military boots of the AOTP rebel less than ten feet from the fallen tree trunk he was hiding behind. He squinted trying to get a better look to see if there were more insurgents. It was a dark night, and he could only make out the one figure. His instincts told him to attack the rebel and take him down, but he realized, even if he successfully neutralized this man, leaving a dead body behind would alert the rebels that the American soldiers were holing up in the vicinity.

Corporal Hayden lay behind the log for what seemed like an eternity. He finally raised his head and surveyed the surrounding area. The little bit of moonlight was not very helpful; even so he decided the coast was clear so he could continue on the way to get help.

For the next fifteen miles, he carefully moved through the densely wooded area avoiding open spaces where the enemy could spot him. After he had been traveling for five hours, dawn was breaking and he started looking for a place he could hide during daylight. He had to keep going for another mile before he found what he sought; a suitable place to hide.

He lay down between a group of fallen trees and pulled some branches over his body for camouflage. He promptly fell asleep.

He woke to loud shouting and several men pulling the branches back. He jumped up ready to fight. He pulled his knife, but immediately realized his situation was hopeless. He did not have a prayer against the six men pointing their rifles at him. A seventh man, the one who pulled away the branches, spoke to him in English. “Drop that knife or we’ll blow you to pieces.”

Hayden dropped his knife and put his hands up. The man approached him and frisked him searching for additional weapons. When he found nothing, he commanded Hayden to turn around and bring his arms down and to cross them behind his back. With a rope he tied Hayden’s hands together. The rope was long enough to serve as a leash which the man held while Hayden was marched off to the rebel camp.

Once they reached the camp, Hayden was placed in a hut. Two guards were stationed outside to watch him. The hut was bare except for a mattress in one corner. To Hayden’s surprise, a woman in combat fatigues brought him food and water. In fluent English, she said, “This is to keep you healthy, so you can show them where your buddies are hiding.”

Hayden was hungry and not ready to refuse the food. “I’ll take their fucking food, but you can tell them I’m telling them nothing.”

The woman smiled. “Good luck with that. These boys play rough. They are uncivilized bastards.”

Hayden looked at her. She was dressed like the rebels, and he was sure she was one of them, yet now he started to have doubts. “Aren’t you one of them?” The woman just turned and left.

The next day Hayden had to endure what the woman meant by playing rough. When they threw him back into the hut he was bleeding on one end from his mouth and on the other end from his anus. He did not have any broken bones but his body was covered with welts and black and blue marks. With his finger he felt inside his mouth; he was lucky he still had all his teeth.

He lay down on the mattress but all sides were so sore he couldn't lie comfortably in any position. They had left him with a message, "You have the night to think it over. If you don't want more of the same, or even worse, tell us where the rest of the Americans are hiding."

In the middle of the night Hayden was sitting on the mattress wishing he was dead when the door to the shed opened. It was the woman who brought him food. She came over to the mattress and took a close look at his injuries. "Can you walk?"

It hurt to talk, but Hayden managed to mumble, "Yes."

"Okay, get up. The guards have gone back into the main camp, and the coast is clear. Time to get the hell out of here."

Hayden couldn't believe what he was hearing. "Aren't you one of them?"

"No comment. Stop asking questions and hurry."

When she realized Hayden could barely stand, she stood next to him, slung his arm across her shoulders and pulled him with her right arm. With Hayden partially leaning on her back the two of them left the hut and disappeared into the darkness.

They had covered only a few miles when Hayden could no longer keep up the pace. He begged the woman to stop so he could rest for a while.

“We’re still too close to the camp. Can’t stop here. I’ll take you on my back.” She knelt down in front of Hayden and instructed him to get behind her, lean over her and put his arms around her neck. “Hold on while I get up, but try not to choke me. Swing your legs around my middle and get a firm grip.”

Even though Hayden’s whole body still ached like hell, being carried on the woman’s back was better than trying to walk. The woman kept walking at a brisk pace until the first sign of daylight. She kept going until she spotted a place where she thought it would be safe to rest.

“This looks good to hide in and rest until we can continue in the dark.” She slowly slid Hayden from her back and helped him lie down in an alcove between two thick bushes.

“Ow,” Hayden flinched as his body touched the hard ground. The woman quickly lay down next to him and pulled him partly on top of her body. A smile crossed her face, “Sorry I didn’t bring any pillows or blankets. You’ll have to make do with my body. I hope it’s softer than the ground.”

The pain was still bad, but Hayden had to admit to himself that it felt good having her body under him. But who was she? “What you doing for me is beyond great. It’s fantastic, but who are you and why?”

“For now I’m just Helga. It’s not important who I am; you don’t want to know. The why is because I hate them.”

“You hate them. Aren’t you part of the insurgency?”

“Later. Time to eat.” She moved Hayden slightly to the side and unhooked two flasks from her belt. She gave one to Hayden. “Here, don’t drink it all at once. Save some for later.” Next she reached into her pockets, pulled out several chocolate bars, and gave two to Hayden. “Same, save some for later. That’s all the supplies we have.”

Hayden wanted to ask more questions but she cut him off. “Your name tag says Hayden, what’s your first name?”

“Jimmy.”

“Okay, Jimmy, I intend to bring you to the American Army base in Sarnis. I estimate Sarnis is roughly thirty-six miles from here. As soon as it gets dark, we’ll be on our way, and hopefully, we’ll arrive at the Army base before dawn. By this evening, I hope you feel well enough to walk part of the way. When you get tired, I’ll carry you the rest of the way just like we did tonight. Now, I’m going to get some sleep. I’m exhausted; carrying you is not nothing!”

Hayden desperately wanted to find out more, but Helga closed her eyes and waved him off. He tried to relax and not think of the terrible pain, while his mind tried to comprehend what was happening. This was surreal. A total stranger came to his rescue and actually carried him to safety. Too much to comprehend. His mind blurred with the strangest theories, but eventually fatigue caught up, and he, too, fell asleep.

He woke when he felt her stirring. The movement of her body had been very slight, but it sent a flash of pain through his entire body. In his sleep he had moved enough so he was laying face down covering most of her body. Embarrassed, he tried to sit up.

She was awake. “Go slow. I know the hard ground hurts you, and I don’t mind being your pillow.”

“Helga, you’re the most fantastic thing that ever happened to me, but can I please know a little more about you. Judging by your combat outfit you’re part of the rebel army, and yet you say you hate them.”

“They raped me!”

“Holly Christ! They raped a fellow soldier?”

“Don’t be so surprised. It happens in your military, too.”

“I know, but I thought the insurgents were a closely knit group of like-minded people.”

“So did I. I fought alongside my so-called comrades for more than two years. But when they got drunk, they grabbed me and raped me. Never mind that I was senior to most of them.”

“How many were there?”

“Don’t want to talk about it!”

“I understand that. But it might be good to unload some of your anger by talking to me. Look, you rescued me. You’re carrying me to safety, and you used your body to shield my aching body from the hard ground. The least I can do is listen while you vent your anger.”

“Men like hearing about women getting fucked. Like watching porno.”

“Where did you get that idea? Every man I know is outraged when he hears about a woman getting raped. You’re wrong, men despise a rapist!”

“You’re on my side then?”

“More than that. I’d castrate them if I could.”

“Okay, then. The group I’m attached to is comprised of fifteen insurgents. All men except me. We operate out of the camp in which you were held prisoner. The night they raped me, we were having a party to celebrate successfully blowing up the City Hall in Sarnis. Liquor was flowing. I didn’t drink much, but most of the others were pretty tipsy. One of the men said, ‘I need a woman. It’s months since I got laid.’ Another guy shouted, ‘We don’t have to look very far, we have one right here.’”

“They all laughed and looked at me. I saw trouble brewing and headed for the door. Before I could escape from the room, they grabbed me. They ripped my clothes off and passed me around. Around the room I was pushed and pulled, each man taking a turn to feel me up. They touched me everywhere, I won’t describe it. Then two of them grabbed me and pushed me to the floor. They took turns holding me down while the others, one by one, had their pleasure with me. When the last one stood up, they let go of my arms and feet, and I ran from the room. Upstairs, I locked myself in the bathroom. I spend the rest of the night crying while sitting in a hot bath.” Tears were streaming down Helga’s cheeks. “The next day the bastards acted like nothing had happened!”

Hayden reached out and took Helga into his arms. His chest hurt like hell, probably a broken rib; he didn’t care. He squeezed her to his chest and slowly rocked her in a soothing motion. “Those God damn bastards. As soon as I can, I’m getting a whole battalion to burn down their camp with all fourteen of them inside.”

Helga sobbed in his arms for the longest time. Finally she raised her head. “Thank you, I needed that. From the moment they brought you in, I knew you were a good man. Nothing like that filth I used to think were my comrades.”

“Helga, can you tell me your real name?”

After a short pause she nodded. “I might as well. You slept in my arms and I cried in yours. I guess that makes us buddies. My name is Anouska Jovanovic.”

“Why didn’t you escape before I arrived?”

“No place to go.”

“We’re heading for the American base now. Why couldn’t you escape to there? Mind you, I’m very grateful you were still around to help me get away.”

“I can’t go on the base. Once we get there I’ll disappear.”

“That’s ridiculous. Yes you were a member of the insurgency, but that doesn’t mean the Americans won’t take you in and protect you.”

“They’ll capture me and put me on trial as a war criminal.”

“You’ve got some strange ideas. That you were a rebel soldier won’t matter. You rescued me and because of that you helped rescue Captain Stanton’s men. The US Army will be grateful; they’ll owe you one.”

“Oh, Jimmy, you don’t know. The world knows me as Anne the Bomber. I’m the AOTP’s ordnance handling expert. I’m the one they

would send to blow up buildings. For two years, I have killed not only combatants but also many innocent people in major cities.”

Hayden was visually shocked. He stared at Anouska. Her soft facial features belied the fact she had been a hardcore insurgent. He knew all about Anne the Bomber, the cold-blooded killer who had skillfully evaded being captured despite being on the World’s Most Wanted List. Should he be scared? Was this a trick? Was she using him to get onto the military base at Sarnis? Was the whole rape story a ploy to win his confidence?

“Jimmy, your face tells me you either don’t believe I’m Anne the Bomber or you think I’m tricking you into something bad. Tell you what I’ll do. I’ll start by giving you my pistols.” She pulled a military issue forty-five out of a leg holster and handed it to Hayden. Next she unbuttoned her shirt and retrieved a Glock 19 from a holster strapped beside her left breast. She also gave the Glock to Hayden. “Now you’re the one who is armed. Consider me your prisoner.”

Now she had Hayden really confused. What the hell is she up to? Anouska continued, “I’ll bring you to the base at Sarnis but you have to promise to immediately send troops to destroy those bastards who raped me. When we reach the base, I’ll hand you a top secret rebel map. Besides the camp, the main ordinance depot of the rebels is clearly marked on this map. If the depot is destroyed, the rebels will be left without ammo, explosives, or fuel. The insurgency will be crippled.”

Hayden interrupted her. “You’re getting revenge on the bastards you say raped you. I get that. But are you telling me you’re turning against the movement you fought for?”

“Jimmy I’ve been a brainwashed fool. My father worked for the United Nations. I went to high school in Queens, New York. My best friend was born in a poor section of Harlem. She lived there until she was twelve and her father, a doctor, was transferred to a downtown New York City hospital. She took me to slum sections and showed me the great disparity between the life of the rich and the poor. When we went back home, my father joined a group that tried to overthrow our corrupt government. He was killed, and I joined the insurgents. Our methods were cruel and extreme. We killed innocent people, thinking our scare tactics would enhance our cause. When I got raped, I realized I was not fighting for a righteous cause; I was fighting along the side of cruel sadists who have no respect for human life and dignity. When we reach Sarnis, shoot me. Kill me. I deserve it. I don’t want to spend the rest of my life in jail brooding over the innocent men, women, and even children I killed.”

“After you rescued me, dragged me to safety, you expect me to kill you? No way! I can’t and won’t do that.”

“Please, Jimmy, I don’t want to be captured.”

“Look, you’re not the first one who’s been on the wrong side. I can name you quite a few statesmen who went from terrorist to respected national leader. It’s not only terrorists who kill innocent people. In polite circles, it’s called collateral damage. I myself have been ordered to blow up buildings to flush out terrorists. Never mind the innocent family members inside. We bomb villages; do you really think only so-called combatants get killed? Nobody is going to get killed. You’re coming onto the post with me. Everything is going to be okay. You’re my hero, and you will be to all those guys trapped in the silo.”

“Jimmy, I’m scared.”

“Come here and let me give you a big hug. Without you they would have broken me and I would be responsible for the death of my fellow soldiers who trusted me to get help.”

Chapter Three

It was still dark when Hayden and Anouska reached Sarnis. Carefully they followed a path around town to the army camp. At the gate they were challenged by the guard. Hayden identified himself and explained he had been captured and was rescued by Anouska. The guard held both of them at gunpoint and called in reinforcements.

After a short interrogation, Hayden's identity was verified, but Anouska was carted off to a secure holding area better known as the brig. Hayden desperately objected. When he realized his protests were in vain, he decided to take care of freeing his comrades first. He was sure everything else would fall into place once the troops were freed.

It took no time to retrieve the exact location of the abandoned silo. The coordinates of the location were recorded, and within the hour, two Chinook transport helicopters escorted by three Apache attack helicopters were on the way to rescue the men hiding in the silo.

The safe arrival in the camp of all of Captain William Stanton's men opened a renewed opportunity for Hayden to plead Anouska's case. He explained that she was carrying a map that would be extremely valuable to the allied forces and prove she was no longer siding with the rebels.

After notifying all US and government troops to avoid the targeted area and grounding all flights on the route, three fully equipped AH-64E

Guardians, the newest version of the Apache helicopter, were dispatched to destroy the rebel ordinance depot.

By three that afternoon, the commander of all US forces in the combat area declared the operation a complete success. Photos and films from the three Guardian helicopters showed the underground fuel tanks broken open and on fire. All vehicles lay twisted and burning across the field in which they had once been invisible due to camouflage covering. It was the biggest setback for the rebels since the beginning of the insurrection.

Hayden pleaded once again to have Anouska set free. But, again, higher command decided she had to stand trial for what amounted to war crimes. Hayden cornered Sergeant Walters and begged him to help. “She got you out of that dungeon. You would have died in there or been shot to death when trying to escape.”

Sergeant Walters agreed. Hayden and he were discussing ways they could put pressure on the commanders to reverse their decision or maybe even organize a group to let her escape. Captain Stanton overheard them. Sergeant Walters was afraid the captain would turn them in. Luckily the opposite was true.

“You better let me handle this. The brass won’t budge: I tried and got nowhere. I have a plan to help her escape, but it will involve you Jimmy. Are you ready to desert from the Army and hide for the rest of your life to help this brave woman who rescued us?”

Hayden didn’t hesitate. “Yes, sir!”

“In two days a complete set of women’s clothes, Anouska’s size, will be delivered to our company dayroom. It will be an unmarked box,

addressed to you. In addition to the clothes it will also contain a key to Anouska's cell and a wad of money. Exactly at noon, you'll get to the brig. You'll be wearing civilian clothes. Moments before, the guard will have been called away to help tend to an emergency in another building. Except for Anouska, the brig will be empty. The female section for sure. Have Anouska change into the civilian clothes. I don't know about your relationship with her after she carried you that long way, but be a gentleman, and turn around while she gets into the fresh underwear."

Jimmy almost blushed, but managed to just nod.

"The two of you will proceed to the area behind the building housing the brig. Nobody will notice you; the fight which called for the assistance of the guards will still be going on. The perimeter fence right behind the building will be cut. It won't be noticeable, but when you pull at it, it will come apart. After the two of you slip through, push the fence together, so the cut won't be detected for a while. From then on you're on your own. I know you'll be okay. The two of you have pulled off a miracle before. I speak for all the men in my unit. We are deeply indebted to you. The two of you are the bravest people I have ever had the privilege of knowing. We'll be praying for you."

Chapter Four

Once they cleared the fence, Hayden headed straight for Market Square in Sarnis. From a vendor with the reputation of keeping a transaction secret if the buyer was willing to pay double, Hayden bought four prepaid cell phones. He persuaded the same vendor to let them hide in the back of his shop until he closed up for the evening.

Business was slow so the vendor frequently came into the back of the store to chat with his ‘visitors.’ From the fact that Hayden and Anouska conversed in fluent English, he assumed they were American military personnel from the local military base. Anouska wisely hid the fact that she was fluent in his native tongue. They asked if he could arrange a private place for them to spend the night. The vendor assumed they were a couple having a secret affair and wanted to keep out of sight from anyone connected to the base while indulging in their illicit affair. The man was somewhat of a romantic, and offered them a room in his house. If they didn’t mind riding in his old truck, he would take them when he closed shop.

During the time he spend talking to them the vendor discussed all the services he could supply. He proudly revealed he was the leading supplier of false passports in the entire country. He stressed that these were real passports either stolen or lost on which the pictures and some of the printed details were changed. Hayden expressed interest. “We

could use a set. That would come in handy if we want to take an unauthorized trip together.”

The vendor eagerly offered to supply a set. After Hayden agreed to the price, this enterprising vendor didn't waste any time. From under the floor boards, he pulled a studio camera and a complete set of professional lighting equipment. It was obvious he had done this many times before, and it took no time at all to get the two head shots he needed. He made notes of their respective height and weight and promised to spend the evening looking through his inventory to find two suitable passports from the same country.

The vendor's house was bigger and more luxurious than Hayden and Anouska had expected. It was located on a narrow dirt road on a hillside about ten miles from Sarnis. The vendor, apparently a bachelor, turned out to be a perfect host. He prepared a very nice dinner and assured them he was grateful to have company to share it with. To get the passports ready would take about two days, and if they were required to go back to the base the next day they could pick them up at his shop. Hayden told him they were on official leave, and if he agreed, they could stay until the passports were ready. Naturally, they'd pay for their room and meals. The vendor winked at Anouska and said he would be delighted to have the pretty lady and her friend stay. The price he quoted was reasonable; the amount of money Captain Stanton included in the un-marked box was substantial, and they could afford it.

The house contained several bedrooms, but when it came time to turn in for the night, the vendor, assuming they were having an affair, directed them to a gaudily decorated room on the second floor.

They didn't have any clothes to sleep in. Anouska suggested they not try to sleep in the clothes they were wearing: he only had the one set, she had only two, and they had no idea how long it would be before they could get a change of clothes. "Why don't we sleep in our underwear? That way our clothes won't get all wrinkled."

"If you don't mind seeing a lot of black and blue marks, it's fine with me."

When they got undressed, Anouska lay down on the narrow bed. Seeing how narrow the thing was Hayden headed for a bunch of pillows stacked in a corner. Anouska stopped him. "Jimmy, don't be ridiculous. You're not going to sleep on the floor with a bunch of pillows. Come here; hop on the bed with me."

Hayden protested. "I'll be okay. That bed looks much too narrow for the two of us. Besides, we're not wearing much."

Anouska burst out laughing. "The man is sure we're having an affair. We don't have to prove him wrong, but the least we can do is sleep in the same bed. It's narrow, but if I remember correctly you can sleep quite well stretched out of top of me."

Hayden blushed. "But...."

She cut him off. "Honey, I know you're an honorable guy. You respect me, and that means the world to me. We took turns rescuing each other, and now we're in this together. We've been lucky so far. Let's make the most of it. I won't let you sleep on the floor with that sore body of yours. Over and out!"

Chapter Five

The next evening, the vendor arrived home early. He had an alarming message for them. “American MPs swept through the market. They questioned every store owner, including me. They were very rude and pushed me around asking about two escapees from the base, a man and a woman. From one of my friends I got the full story. I now know who you are: Corporal James Hayden and Anouska Jovanovic, better known as Anne the Bomber!”

Anouska burst into tears. “Are you going to turn us in?”

Hayden was ready to jump the man, but before he could reach him, the vendor calmly responded, “No need to be frightened. You’re safe with me.”

Hayden was still ready to pounce on the man but a smile on the vendor’s face made him hold back. “It would be stupid for me to turn you in. They’d arrest me for hiding you here in my house. They would never believe me if I claimed I did not know who you were. Anyway, I will not cooperate with them no matter what.”

Hayden was suspicious. “Why not?”

“Cause I hate them. I hate all of them!”

Anouska had recovered from the shock and asked, “Why do you hate them? Does that include me? Because I blew up all those buildings?”

“No, I don’t hate you. I’m going to help the two of you get away.”

Hayden was still suspicious. He didn’t trust the man’s motives. The vendor realized he had to explain things. “Ten years ago an American bomb missed its target and hit my house. My wife and children were killed, I was in my shop. They never even apologized. To them, it was just collateral damage. I already hated the new government; it was totally corrupt. The insurgents were even more corrupt, and now I hated the Americans, too. I went rogue and started dealing in contraband. From small side arms, I expanded to major military equipment, and now I am a major arms dealer. I supply both sides, no questions asked. This has made me very rich. But having more money than I can openly spend is not very satisfying. I’m going to help you get away safely as my way of getting back at the Americans. Fate brought you to me, so I can poke them in the eye.”

Two days later, the vendor presented them with a bunch of authentic looking passports from a variety of different countries. Two of them were identical. One was for Alice Hopkins and the other for Jerold Hopkins. Anouska’s picture was cleanly inserted in the passport for Alice Hopkins. Hayden carefully studied his. The passports were from the island nation of Seychelles. His date of birth was correctly filled in. Nationality listed as Seychelles. Place of birth New Zealand, Sex Male, Date of issuance was a year ago, and the passport had an expiration date of nine years from the present. He took Anouska’s passport, and all the identifying information, except for Date of birth and Sex, was identical to his. Looking at their respective dates of birth, he had to smile. The

dates were correct; they were only one year apart in age. Anouska was older than he was by a single year.

The vendor lent them a laptop computer to research the Seychelles. They were happy to see that the languages spoken were English, French and Seychellois. Anouska was fluent in French; Hayden had had some French in school. The Seychelles have three main islands: Mahe, Praslin and La Dique. Looking at the pictures of Praslin, Anouska fell in love with the island. "I would love to actually live there."

Hayden looked at her. "You mean that!?"

"Yes! That would be wonderful."

Hayden said, "Done deal!"

Anouska looked at him. "Be serious, how would we get there?"

"I am serious. It will take a while, and we'll probably have to endure some hard times. But it will be worth it. Trust me we'll get there."

"If I didn't trust you, we wouldn't have slept in that narrow bed together for two nights. Lead on, my prince."