

## BOOK 1 - THE PAST

### PREFACE 1



#### Tale of a Lost City – 1755AD

The monk cast his line into the gently flowing river and gazed intently at the cork float bobbing in the water as he waited for a fish to grab the bait on the hook dangling beneath. After a few moments, he cocked an ear towards the sound invading the tranquil setting he so enjoyed. Something was moving noisily through the jungle towards him. He had been looking forward to a couple of hours relaxing while he fished, but it seemed fate had decided otherwise. With a sigh, he lifted the rod from the water and stood to focus his attention on the noise. He wondered, if it was an animal, was it of a species that should cause him concern. He doubted that the noise came from the normally stealthy actions of a Panther or Jaguar, not unless they were in pursuit of prey - a deer or wild boar perhaps. However, his keen hearing picked out a solitary movement. Many animals came to the river to drink and some were best avoided. As a precaution, he edged back up the slight rise of the riverbank, ready to flee if danger threatened. As the sound grew louder, he stared at the edge of the jungle across the river where he deduced whatever was coming would emerge there at any moment. Suddenly, a man stumbled from the jungle and on spying the stream, rushed towards it and collapsed to his knees beside its edge. He dipped his face into the river and drunk so much the monk had the impression water had not passed the man's lips for many days. For the moment unseen, he observed the stranger's haggard appearance, the cuts and grazes on any bare skin not covered by his torn stained clothing. All were evidence that he had been in the jungle for a prolonged length of time. Equally evident was that he had suffered from the experience.

With his great thirst quenched, the man stood to survey his surroundings and noticed the monk across the stream staring at him. A smile of relief spread across his haggard features. He knew the monk would not be alone and help would be close by. He had made it. He waded through the shallow stream, walked up to the monk and fell to his knees before him. 'I thank God that he has brought me to you, father. I had all but given up hope of escaping from the jungle alive. My name is João da Silva Guimarãe, field marshal of the 1753 Portuguese jungle expedition. For many years have we been in the jungle. All others of my party have deserted me or perished, and I feared I would soon join them. Do you have any food? I have not eaten for many days,' he rambled barely pausing for breaths between sentences.

The monk smiled as he nodded behind him. 'Yes come, follow me and you will be fed.' He turned and walked off along the path worn through the jungle undergrowth.

The hardships the man had recently endured, along with the lack of food, had weakened his body, but the fresh hope of at last being able to eat boosted his energy, and he eagerly followed the monk, albeit more slowly.

'I am Domingos Garcia,' said the monk moments before stepping out into a clearing, where he paused to let the stranger catch up. 'This is my home, the Monastery of Our Lady of Aparecida.'

João marveled at the stone and wooden buildings rising above the high stone built walls surrounding them. The tallest being the church - its bell tower rising forty feet to dwarf the surrounding buildings. He then burst into laughter.

Domingos stared at the man, fearing he had gone mad. 'What makes you react so?'

'It is your bell. For a night and a day have I heard it toll. Though I thought I was going mad with hunger and thirst, I followed its sound. Now on seeing it, I am much relieved.'

Domingos smiled at him kindly, 'come, inside is food and shelter. You are safe now.'

The two men entered through the arched entrance into the grounds of the monastery.

Five days later, Domingos rushed through the monastery with a piece of paper, quill and inkpot clutched in his hands. Skidding to a halt outside a simple wooden door, he nudged it open with his shoulder and entered. With a look of concern, he glanced at the man stretched out on the bed for any signs of life. His wounds, though not serious in themselves, had become septic. As he took a step nearer, a look of relief swept over his face as João opened his eyes.

'Fear not my friend, I have not passed on yet,' he said weakly. 'But I fear that time is almost upon me.' He glanced at the paper and ink the monk held. 'I see you have come well equipped.'

'As you requested. Shall I leave so you can rest a while longer before we start?'

He feebly shook his head. 'If you do I might not be alive when you return. No, I must tell you my story so you can record it.'

The monk laid the paper, quill and ink on the small wooden table beside the bed, pulled the chair nearer to the table and sat down. João watched as he smoothed out the paper with the flat of his hand and pulled the cork stopper from the ink bottle.

Domingos picked up the quill, dipped it into the ink and wiped the excess off on the bottle opening. He then turned towards the man who had become his friend during the few days they had spent together. He would be sad when he passed. 'I am ready.'

João nodded, 'thank you father, you have been a good friend to me since I arrived. I know my illness has caused you much labor and at times kept you from your other more pleasurable duties.'

The monk dismissed his concern with the wave of a hand. 'Think nothing of it. I am only sorry I could not have done more. I pray constantly for your health, as do my brothers.'

'It seems that God has other plans for me, ones that are not to be carried out on this earth. If that be His will then who am I to complain, however, before I go to Him my story has to be told. You must record it and then send it to Viceroy of Salvador, Don Luiz Pedro Peregrino de Carvalho de Menezes e Athaide.'

'It will be done,' promised Domingos as he made a note of the lengthy name. Then with quill poised above the paper, he looked at the sick man. 'I am ready. Please begin.'

'Please title it thus, *Historical Relation of a hidden and great city, of ancient date, without inhabitants, that was discovered in the year 1753*'

The monk raised his eyes in surprise as he quickly scribbled the title down and when João continued, faithfully recorded his story.

*'The purpose of the expedition was to see if we could locate the famous silver mines of the Great Moribecca, who, by the wickedness of the Governor in charge of the area, refused to grant him a letter of patent. The Governor wanted to take the silver mines for himself and the glory thereof, and he, the Moribecca, was kept prisoner in Bahia, until he died. This was done to worm out of him the location of the silver mines. After long and wearisome wanderings, incited by the insatiable lust for silver and gold, we were all but lost when we arrived at a cordillera of mountains. So high that they drew near the ethereal region and served as a throne of the winds. Under the stars, their luster, even from afar, excited our wonder and admiration. Principally, when the sun shining on them turned to fires the crystals of which the rocks were composed. The view was so beautiful that none could take their eyes from the reflections. It began to rain before we came near enough to take note of these crystalline marvels.*

*On arrival, we saw our way blocked by a crevasse and when we walked along its edge we found no way or bridge to gain access to the other side and thus so to reach the mountains. So there resulted for us, from this disappointment, an inexplicable sadness. We grew weary and intended to retrace our steps the next day, when it came to pass that one of our negroes, gathering dried sticks, saw a white deer, and, by that accident, as it fled, he discovered a route down to the river below that appeared to have been made by man and not the work of Nature. We were made joyful by this discovery and we started to descend the ancient steps. The spectacle we found amidst the depths of this was bare and sterile rocks with a waterfall flowing from the heights. Its waters, foaming white, like snow, glistened and were turned to fire by the rays of the sun, like thunderbolts. Delighted by the pleasing vistas of that, the waters and the tranquility of the weather, we determined to rest while we investigate these prodigious marvels of nature, spread out before us, at the foot of the mountains. We found a great boulder that had fallen and broken all to pieces at a spot where, we judged, a paved way had been violently up heaved in some far-off day. A bridge of stone allowed us to cross onto an ancient path into the mountain beside an unnatural river that rose steadily deeper into the mountain than we could pass. We spent a good three hours in the ascent of that ancient road, being fascinated by the crystals, at which we marveled, as they blazed and scintillated in many flashing colors from the rocks as they reflected our flaming torches. On the summit of the pass through the mountain, we came to a halt. Thence, spread out before our eyes, we saw a great spectacle for our vision of admiration and wonder. Below us at the foot of the pointed mountains we saw a great city. We estimated, by the extent and sight of it, that it must be some city of the court of Brazil; we at once descended the road towards the valley, but with great caution for we knew not who dwelled*

*there. The territory was abundant with ferocious tribes, some known and some of myth. Blindly wondering in would be folly and could lead to all our deaths. I ordered we were to wait and cautiously determine the danger ahead. Before long, we found our caution rewarded when a plume of smoke rose from the city. It was as well we had not blundered forth as that being one of the evident signs of people inhabiting the place.*

*Two days we waited, wondering whether to send out scouts, for the end we longed for, and all alone, we waited till daybreak, in great doubt and confused perplexity of mind, trying to guess if the city had any people in it. But it became clear to us there were no inhabitants. An Indian of our expedition determined, after two days of hesitation, to risk his life in scouting by way of precaution; but he returned, amazing us by affirming he had met no one; nor could discover footsteps or traces of any person whatever. This so confounded us that we could not believe we saw dwellings or buildings, and so, all the scouts in our party, followed in the steps of the Indian who had gone before.'*

For the next hour, the sound of the quill scratching paper accompanied João's weak words as he completed his account of what they had discovered during their expedition into the jungle. When he had finished, on his friend's insistence, Domingos left to dispatch the papers etched with his fascinating story to their recipient. On his return an hour later, the monk found that his patient had left this world. He knelt down beside the bed and said a prayer for the man's soul.

Don Luiz Pedro Peregrino received the manuscript a few weeks later. He had all but given up hearing from the expedition ten years after they had left. He believed them all to have perished. He had read the account through a few times and found its contents fascinating, but infuriatingly, there was one very important detail João had failed to include; the actual location of the city they explored. Though an expedition was arranged in an attempt to discover the city, without its exact position it was a fruitless task, and its location seemed destined to remain a mystery.

The document was eventually filed away until it reached its new home, the library archives at Rio de Janeiro. It was simply labeled, Manuscript 512.

### **Colonel Fawcett and Manuscript 512 - 1920 - Library Archives at Rio de Janeiro**

Colonel Fawcett turned towards the footsteps he heard on the tiled floor to see the archivist walking across the large room towards him with a plain box file held in his hands.

The archivist laid the box on the table in front of Fawcett and flipped back the lid. 'This is Manuscript 512. It arrived in Rio de Janeiro in 1754 and details a Portuguese expedition into the Amazon interior in 1743.' He then looked at Fawcett. 'Is it the file you requested?'

Fawcett stared at the ancient document, brown and yellowed with age. At the faded ink of the monk's neatly scrawled handwriting. After carefully lifting it from its box, he placed it on the table. He then fingered the edges of a rough hole that seemed to be on all its pages, and wondered what had caused the destruction.

'It has been eaten by the Copiem worm,' explained the archivist, 'before it arrived here,' he added quickly lest the colonel thought the archives' storage conditions, of which he was proud, were in any way insufficient.

Fawcett nodded. 'Thank you. This is exactly what I wanted.'

'When you are finished, bring it to my desk.'

The man's footsteps faded as he walked across the room to exit through one of the double doors he let swing shut with a bang that echoed around the large bookcase filled room.

Turning his attention back to the document, Fawcett began reading story, filling in the missing words the Copiem worm had feasted on as best he could. His excitement grew at the mention of the stone built city and wondered what the men had found when they entered. He eagerly read on to find out.

*They now saw for themselves that it was true the great city was uninhabited. We all, therefore, now decided to enter the place, our arms ready for instant use, at daybreak. At our entry, we met none to bar our way, and we encountered no other road except the one which led to the dead city. This, we entered under three arches of great height, the middle arch being the greatest, and the two of the sides being but small; under the great and principal arch, we made out letters, which we could not copy, owing to their great height above the ground.*

*Behind was a street as wide as the three arches, with here and there houses of very large size. Their facades of sculptured stone already blackened with age; stood alone, all roofless and open to the sky with no one to read the inscriptions. Observing, by the regularity and symmetry with their terraces open to the day, without one tile; for the houses had, some of them, burnt floors; others large flagstones. We went, with fear and trembling, into some of the houses, and in none did we find vestiges of furniture, or moveable objects by which, or whose use, we might guess at the sort of people who had dwelt therein. The houses were all dark, in the interior, and hardly could the light of day penetrate, even at its brightest, and, as the vaults gave back the echoes of our speech, the sound of our voices terrified us. We went on into the strange city and we came on a road of great length, and a well set-out plaza besides. In it, and in the middle of the plaza a column of black stone of extraordinary grandeur, on whose summit was a statue of a man with a hand on the left hip and right arm out-stretched, pointing with the index finger to the north pole. In each corner of the said plaza is an obelisk like those among the Romans, but now badly damaged, and cleft as by thunderbolts.*

*On the right side of the plaza is a superb building, which seemed to be the principal town-house of some great lord of the land; the entrance there is a great hall. Still being awed and afraid, not all of us entered in the house. Those who did not being so many and those that retreated to form a rear guard lest we encounter any hostiles. The large house was a mass of extraordinary rooms. The walls adorned with strange carvings. In one room, we encountered a large stone covering part of the floor, a metal ring in one end. Even though it was difficult for our strongest man to lift it, he succeeded with help from another. A dark hole revealed was suddenly filled with bats disturbed by our actions.*

*The bats were so numerous that they fluttered in swarms round the faces of our people, and made so much noise that it was astonishing. We left the bats alone in the house and exited back onto*

*the street. Above the principal portico of the street is a figure in half relief, cut out of the same stone, and naked from the waist upward. Crowned with laurel, representing a person of youthful years without beard, with a girdle around him, and an under-garment open in front at the waist. Underneath the shield of this figure are certain characters, now badly defaced by time, but we made out the following:*

KVΦIY

Fawcett paused to examine the strange symbols drawn in ink so many years ago. He found them fascinating and copied them into his notebook besides the notes he had already taken. Satisfied he had drawn them faithfully, he returned to the story.

*At the far end of the plaza lies a macabre entrance in the form of a skull. As we enter with fear in our minds we see an ancient city of an age unknown. We venture forth within caverns so large our torches were insufficient to show their walls or great size in entirety. Suddenly we are attacked by demons that materialize from the darkness like phantoms. Nearly all are slain in the ferocious attack that besieges us. We flee from that place but few make it out to the plaza again. The few survivors that we now number are haunted by the nightmares. Madness, thirst and hunger whittle our numbers until I only remain in the realm of the living. I dare not rest, I dare not sleep. I flee until I reach the safety of the monastery. This is where my tale and my life must end.*

*This news is sent to your Honor from the interior of the province of Bahia and from the rivers Para-oacu and Una, and assuring you that we shall give information to no person, whatsoever; for I judge the city is empty of people and confident that great wealth in silver and gold remains to be discovered there for those brave enough to enter and take it as their own to become the richest of all men.*

Fawcett closed the manuscript and stared at its pages as he digested the words he had just read. Although he did not believe all of the tale, contributing the talk of demons to João madness, his description of the lost city he discovered tallied with the tales he had been told. For years during his expeditions into the Amazon jungle to map out the surrounding countries borders, he had been told rumors of a lost city built of stone by the Indians who lived there. What he had just read, although he suspected the details and wonder and been somewhat embellished by João, it nevertheless confirmed to him that a lost city was waiting to be found - and find it he would. However, with his limited funds, he would need backing. In two days he would leave Brazil to return to London, there he would put his case before the Royal Geographic society. When he presented his evidence, they would surely wish to finance the expedition. They would be fools not to, he thought confidently. Pushing back the chair, it legs screeching across the tiles, he stood. After returning the manuscript to its box, he picked it up and walked towards the exit.

Colonel Fawcett stormed from the lecture hall, barging aside anyone in his way on his route to the exit, pushed open the main entrance door and letting it slam shut loudly behind him, stormed off down the road.

'Percy. Please wait,' called out his wife Nina as she exited the building and rushed to catch up with her husband.

Though he was fuming, Percy heeded his wife's words and waited for her to reach him. He had just spent the most embarrassing hour of his life presenting his case for a lost city waiting to be discovered in the Amazon jungle. Explaining that although he had high admiration for the Amazonian Indians, he did not believe that the native Indians themselves had created this great city, but no doubt some lost European tribe. Perhaps the Phoenicians or the Lost Tribes of Israel had built the city before intermarrying with the Indians. He had told them he had seen with his own eyes white and fair-skinned Indians on his travels throughout the jungle. It was all in vain and his ideas were ignored. Where he had expected enthusiasm and praise from his peers, he received ridicule, jeers and laughter.

'They are all idiots. They call themselves scientists, bah!' he ranted as his wife took his arm.

'Calm down Percy. You will prove them wrong. I know it.'

'Yes, you are right dear. I will find Z and then it will be my turn to ridicule and laugh at them.'

'Quite so, dear, quite so. But you will still need funding.'

'That shouldn't be a problem if I keep the team small, then I won't need as much. I already have a couple of ideas. I am also thinking of asking Jack if he wants to come along this time.'

'You know he will jump at the chance, dear.'

They walked in silence for a few moments before Nina spoke. 'Tell me, dear. I'm curious to know why you called your Lost City, Z.'

'That is easy to answer. I believe Z is the last important lost city to be discovered, and Z is the last letter of the alphabet, so that is why I called it Z.'

His wife smiled, 'You never were very creative, were you Percy?'

Fawcett shook his head, 'no, not really. But I do have other talents.'

'Like exploration and finding long lost cities?' she offered.

'Yes my dear, just like that. If it's the last thing I do, I will find Z.' Arm in arm, Nina and her husband headed to the train station and home.

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