Finally Found You

By Rangerkitty

Chapter 16

Illuminating the cave's darkened entrance with the help of lanterns, Panthro and Tygra entered the condemned cave. It was very late in the day now, quite dark in fact, and the temperature had dropped, along with the setting of the evening sun. They carried with them some geological equipment that they had removed from the Thundertank before Lion-O and Cheetara had left for the Tree-top Kingdom to see Queen Willa. They carried a seismography machine, a thermal camera, litmus paper, and shovels. As they made their way deeper into the man-made cavern that had been intended to be constructed as a safe and stable home, Tygra frowned as he recalled the last day he had been here, where he had almost met his fate. He remembered the suffocating feeling of panic, his inability to dig himself, and his despair over not seeing his friends or Melonia ever again.

He shined the lantern up at the rafters so that the beams were illuminated in its light. They inspected them as they walked, everything appearing to check out as normal. Once they were approximately 120 feet inside, Tygra immediately noticed the alterations in the construction. He pointed it out to Panthro, who took a minute before he noticed the subtleties in the design. To most, it did not appear any different, but it was Tygra's design, so he knew every angle and proportion. Further inside, the architecture took a more drastic turn, which he also immediately noticed, and he chided himself for not noticing it earlier that fateful day. He had been so intent on seeing the lovely Melonia that he had been oblivious to the errors.

He again pointed this out to Panthro. "Here is where the erroneous building started. An incredibly inferior structural method." He commented as they arrived at the site of the collapse. Panthro checked the seismography machine which indicated no earthquake activity or shockwaves below. It indicated that this was a very stable area to build, as Tygra had calculated prior to even drawing the original building plans. He checked the soil using litmus paper and found it within all the normal parameters that they had expected.

Tygra looked at the construction right around the area of the cave in, where they now stood. This is where he had originally noticed the design flaws. "This was just begging for trouble. A child would have known better." He commented. "Whoever did this was calculating and dangerous. They risked the lives of every person that ever helped build this cave."

"So, it was premeditated." Panthro said, confirming his suspicions.

"Calculated and planned down to the very last detail. Someone wanted this to happen." He said, indicating to the pile of dirt, split beams and rocks that trapped off the rest of the cavern.

"Tygra, you haven't yet seen this." Panthro said, standing behind his friend. Tygra turned to see the panther holding up two pieces of a rafter beam that had obviously been sawed through. His

eyes widened and approached as he reached out and touched the cut beam with his fingers as he again remembered the weight of the collapse and the taste of dirt filling his mouth and lungs. He held the beam as Panthro scanned the pile of dirt and the surrounding walls and rafters with the thermal camera to discover that there were 2 detonators and 2 sets of charges strapped to the beams of the ceilings that remained unexploded. “Who was the foreman of this cave, Panthro?” he asked with his eyes closed and head bowed, certain he already knew the answer.

“Mol dun, Melonia’s friend.”

“He is no friend.”Tygra seethed as his eyes flashed open. “He must have been the one trying to have me killed. I suspect he is profoundly jealous of Melonia’s like for me.”

“Her like for you?” Panthro repeated. “I think it’s become much more than like since that day.”

“And I’m certain he picked up on that.” Tygra said, his eyes narrowing, remembering the way Mol dun had glared at him with menacing eyes earlier. He suddenly dropped the beam and turned towards the Panther in a panic. “I left her alone asleep at her home! I need to get back there and warn her!”

“You think something’s happened since we’ve been in here?”

“This guy is dangerous, calculation and devious. I don’t trust him. This is a perfect opportunity to get to her while we are distracted.”

“I’m with you!” Panthro called, and ran alongside Tygra as they made their way out of the cave and back to the village.