

PROLOGUE

Patrick Birch has not been seen or heard of since he left England five years ago for South East Asia on a business trip.

His daughter, Kate, a lawyer in England, decides she must journey to South East Asia and attempt to find her father for she is convinced he is still alive. The vast deep jungles of Borneo can be hostile, but Patrick Birch is no complete stranger to the region, for this is where he spent his early years.

The search begins in Kuching, the capital town of Sarawak, home of the 'White Rajahs', where Kate contacts and meets several of her father's business associates. Amongst these is an intriguing Sarawak Chinese business mogul whose devious conversation suggests that mystery surrounds her ancestors.

Kate sets out into the rainforest with her small band of guides: an interesting bunch of local characters, including a retired Scottish doctor who has practised tropical medicine in Sarawak for more than fifty years and is a riveting raconteur.

Kate soon realises that the rainforest is as terrifying as it is magnificent, and not all as the tourist brochures describe, for many dangers are encountered.

En-route she discovers her adoptive grandmother. She also meets the love of her life. They become caught up in the whirl of the Gawai celebrations in an Iban longhouse where gruesome shrunken skulls are displayed proudly: souvenirs of their headhunting past.

In this world of jungle dwellers; where Paganism runs in tandem with Christianity, several mysteries are solved, including the fate of Kate's father, which leads to the greatest surprise of the whole adventure.