

Quenarden

THE PROPHECIES



PAULA VINCE

Quenarden: The Prophecies - excerpt from Chapter 3

Nathan was lost for words during their trip along the dark passage. Beth's torch beam showed up many details she'd missed before. Thick, dusty cobwebs hung above them with fat, black spiders in some of them. The trip took longer than it had the first time as Nathan walked far more slowly and cautiously than Troy had, looking all around him. At last she shone the beam on Troy's face.

'What kept you? I was getting worried,' he hissed.

Nathan had shed his cocky attitude like a robe. 'Now I'm worried! You don't really want to push those rocks away to see what's behind there, do you?' He nervously eyed the glowing chinks.

Troy already stood with his hand poised upon one of the rocks. 'Yeah! What's up with you? Did you leave your guts behind?'

Nathan shook his head and blurted, 'Troy, don't be crazy. It could be some sort of radioactive gas for all we know. It could kill us. I think we should tell your dad about this.' Beth could not see clearly but he appeared to be trembling.

Although Nathan was a year older than Troy, nobody would guess it to look at them as Troy was the stockier of the two and he never paid any attention to his cousin's misgivings. The little girl, who had been tearing at one of Beth's apples with her teeth, suddenly became angry. She flung down the core and shook her head so hard that her damp tails of hair swung like whips. She seized Troy's hand, pointed to herself, at the rocks and back again. She seemed to assume that Troy was the person in charge.

'She's trying to tell us that her home is behind there,' Beth cried. 'She called it Quenarden. That's where she came from, Nathan, so it's perfectly safe.' She would hate it if he decided to throw cold water on their plans and tell his uncle.

'Oh, yeah? Then if it's so safe, why can't she talk now?' The look on his face was like the resentful expression Christine often wore. In return, the small girl lifted her chin and glared at him.

'She was talking fine when I saw her,' Beth told him. 'It was only after she came to Acacia-field that she lost her voice. If anything, our world is the dangerous one.'

'Our world the dangerous one!' Nathan echoed. 'Do you really think there's some space-aged world through there? Get real, Beth.'

'There's only one way to find out,' Troy stated. 'We'll take this little girl back to her home, have a look around, then come back. Are you going to be a wet blanket all your life? You sound just like your mother.' He glanced up from beneath his heavy fringe to see if his taunt worked but tried to hide how eager he was to explore.

Nathan's lips tightened. He raised a hand to one of the rocks. 'I didn't say I wouldn't,' he snapped. 'I was only trying to make you aware of the possible danger.'

'Yeah, if any weird creatures zap us with their laser guns, we won't blame you.' Troy's blue eyes danced. 'You'd be mad if Beth and I went through and found something fantastic and you missed it.'

'You couldn't get through without my help or you would've gone already,' Nathan braced his muscles in a resigned manner. 'C'mon, let's get it over with.'

He was the only reluctant person. Beth saw her own excitement mirrored in Troy's eyes and the little girl almost danced with delight. Troy breathlessly counted to three, then together they pushed with their combined strength. Beth felt a grinding, sliding sensation and knew

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with a surge of triumph that this time it would work. There was a grating sound and then the four of them were sprawling on the ground on the other side of the barrier. A luminous haze surrounded them and it seemed to come from a creamy substance which dripped down all the walls.

Troy stood and slowly let some of the cream run over his hand. 'What's this?'

'Be careful,' Nathan warned. 'It might be some sort of acid.' Yet by now even his face glowed, although he hung back against the stones.

'Troy slowly shook his head. 'No, it feels cold.'

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They stepped into a lost civilisation and disturbed the balance of power. Their destiny is unknown as they hope for an escape.

Beth, Troy and Nathan follow a lost child through a gap in a cliff and find themselves in a strange old world where they are hailed as heroes. However, the rulers plot to kill them for reasons the three cannot understand. Troy and Nathan uncover some shocking truths about their own family but it is almost too late to save themselves. They and Beth must draw upon reserves of courage and resourcefulness they never knew they had.



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