

Impending Disaster

By Colin Guest

Text Copyright © 2017 by Colin Guest

All rights reserved. This book is a piece of fiction. Any resemblance to persons living or dead, or place, events or locales is purely coincidental. The characters are productions of the author's imagination and are used fictionally

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval systems without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Prologue

Three friends survive a terrifying plane crash on top of the mountain. While making their way down to the town below, they make a shocking discovery. One survivor then makes a dash down to warn of an impending deluge of disaster.

Impending Disaster

Ian, Mark and Jane were enjoying a pleasant sightseeing trip over the mountains. All of a sudden, as they flew through some light hazy clouds, it turned into a nightmare. Their light banter changed to shrill cries of alarm as the windscreen cracked, with blood and feathers flying everywhere. They had flown straight into a flock of geese. Mark gasped in horror as one bird flew beak-first into the cockpit screen. Already damaged, it broke under the impact with the now dead bird's head stuck partly inside. With the single-engine Cessna Skyhawk engine jammed, and damaged wings, the plane plunged down towards the tree-clad mountain-top. A glimpse through the shattered screen made Ian recoil in horror. They were heading straight at the communication tower. Using all his strength, he made a last-ditch attempt to avoid it. As he did, he yelled out, "Hold tight, we're going to crash." The right-hand wing swept past the tower then sheared off as it smashed into a tall pine tree. The force sent the plane spinning sideways. There was a loud bang as they hit another tree that tore off part of the rear section of the aircraft. What was left of the plane then slid down and ended up lying on the ground. The force of the crash had thrown the three occupants this way and that, and knocked them unconscious.

On coming to, Ian let out a curse as he felt a sharp pain in his left leg. His eyebrows shot up when a glance showed his trouser leg soaked in blood. A groan brought his thoughts back to what happened to Mark and Jane. He turned to see Mark half in and half out of the ripped open side of the cockpit. On reaching across, Ian shook him.

"Are you okay Mark?" His eyebrows rose in alarm when he did not receive a reply. He shook Mark again, this time a little harder. Mark responded with a groan, then turned towards him. Ian saw blood trickling through Mark's fingers which were pressed against his forehead.

His voice trembled, "Christ Mark, are you okay?"

He gave a half smile. "Yeah, I think so. My head hit something after we lost the wing. I think maybe the cut looks worse than it is."

When Mark removed his hand, Ian saw that he was right. There was only a slight gash on his forehead. “He took a handkerchief from his pocket and passed it to Mark. “Here, put it over the cut and hold it for a bit,” he said, “I think it will soon stop.”

Mark suddenly realised they had forgotten about Jane. She had

been sitting behind them. As he turned around and saw she was not there, he swore aloud. He realised she must have been thrown out when the rear section of the plane broke off.

His voice trembled as he cried out. “Ian, Jane’s not in the plane.”

To his surprise, Ian replied, “We have a bigger problem, I can smell kerosene. We have to get out; the plane is liable to catch fire.”

They scrambled out and had only just got clear when it exploded into a fireball. Fortunately, due to several days of heavy rain earlier, the fire soon burnt itself out. However, apart from Mark’s backpack that he grabbed as he got out of the plane, they were left with nothing, but what they were wearing.

After recovering from the shock of the blast, they looked around for Jane. Mark gasped in alarm when he saw her some distance from the remains of the plane. She was lying draped in some bushes. Between them, Ian and Mark pulled Jane’s limp body out of the bushes and gently laid her down on the ground. She did not look good. Her face was cut and bleeding, and her left arm appeared to be broken.

Mark looked at Ian; horror showed in his eyes. “Christ, Ian, Jane looks in a bad way.”

Ian nodded, “You’re right, and here we are stuck on top of the mountain, what a mess.”

As they looked around, Jane gave a soft moan of pain. Both men turned towards her.

A smile flickered across Ian’s face, “Well, that’s a relief, you had us worried for a bit.”

Jane forced a grim smile. Her voice trembled as she said, "Only for a bit." As she tried to sit up, she cried out in pain. "Oh, I think I've cracked some ribs. Also, my left arm feels like it's broken."

Mark tried to make light of the situation. "Is that all that's wrong with you?"

Blinking back the tears of pain, Jane muttered, "I think that's enough, don't you?"

Ian chuckled. "Right," he said, "now that's dealt with, we have to somehow get down to the town." He turned to Mark. "I don't suppose you have your cellphone in your bag by any chance? I don't have mine."

Mark, looked downcast. "No, I'm afraid not. I had plugged it in to recharge. It went up with the plane."

Jane shook her head. "Sorry, I never brought mine. I didn't think it necessary."

Ian shrugged his shoulders. "Well, in that case, we have no choice but to walk down." He forced a grin. "Who knows, we might see someone in a truck along the way."

On looking around, they picked up a few bits and pieces that had escaped being burnt to a cinder in the fire. There wasn't much. A small coil of rope, and more important, a parachute. They had fallen out when the rear section opened up, and would be most useful. They could use the chute to make up a shelter if the rains started again.

They strapped up Jane's ribs as best they could and put her broken arm in a sling. By the time they set off, it was late afternoon. They wanted to get as far down the mountain as possible before nightfall. On finding a well-worn trail, it made walking down relatively easy.

A few hours later with the light fading, Mark said, "I think it's time we found somewhere to spend the night."

"I agree," Ian said. Before he could continue, Jane sighed, "You won't find any arguments from me. I've had enough for today."

Mark nodded. With concern in his voice, he said, "I'm sure you have. How are your ribs?"

Jane forced a smile. “Well, apart from feeling like a mule kicked me, not too bad.” Her smile widened. “With my arm in a sling, I now know what a bird feels like after breaking a wing.”

On coming to an open area backed by a rocky outcrop, Mark stopped. “Well, I think this will do. Jane, you sit down while Ian and I make up a cover with the parachute. From looking at the cloud build up, it might rain during the night.”

Ian nodded agreement. He grinned, “Good idea, after surviving a plane crash, we don’t want to go down with pneumonia.” As he went to help Mark, he said quietly, “I think we should make up a fire.” On seeing Mark’s look of puzzlement, he continued, “There is the odd bear here and there. I think it’s better to be safe than sorry. The fire will do two jobs; help keep us warm, and also help deter any bears that might come sniffing around.”

“Right, lets first make up a tent, then sort out a fire,” Mark said.

With the use of some branches and the parachute, they soon had a makeshift tent erected. After helping Jane inside, Ian said, “We’re going to gather some wood for a fire. The temperature will drop during the night, and we don’t have any warm clothing.”

Jane looked up and smiled. “Yes, it will also help scare away any bears that are wandering around.” Her smile widened as she added, “I heard what you said to Mark. I know bears have been reported up here. All being well, a fire should prevent us being attacked by one.”

Once the boys had gathered enough dry wood and had the fire lit,

they joined Jane in the tent. Despite having a fire, Mark and Ian agreed to spend shifts as a lookout during the night. That way each would get some sleep. The one on guard would be able to warn the others should an unwelcome guest decide to drop in.

“I think that’s a good idea,” Jane remarked.

Mark said he would take the first watch. In his backpack, he had an old book along with a headlight torch. He would pass the time away by reading. While sitting with his back against a boulder, despite their situation, Mark felt at ease. From working all day long in an air-conditioned office, it was good to breathe in clean, fresh air.

Unfortunately, apart from a bar of chocolate and a stale sandwich he found in his backpack they had nothing to eat. Maybe they could find some wild fruit on the way down. If not, they could find the going tough. Shaking these thoughts from his mind, he carried on reading. Around 3 in the morning, Mark felt tired as he closed his book and went to wake up Ian. He would then keep watch until daylight.

After a few shakes, Ian stirred. "Okay," he muttered, "I'm awake." He stood up and stretched. So as not to wake Jane, he murmured, "So did we have any late night visitors?"

Mark grinned, "Only some six-foot blond who said she was lost. After I helped her on her way, she left. It was a pity you were asleep, but I didn't want to wake you and spoil your beauty sleep."

Ian stifled a chortle. "In your dreams," he snickered. "Now if you had said a female wolf or a bear I might have believed you."

Mark's eyes widened. "Wow, do you mean I dreamt it?" With that, he lay down. As Ian walked outside, Mark murmured, "Should she return, you have permission to wake me."

Ian turned. In a quiet voice, he replied, "Just remember you said that. I don't want you complaining if I wake you." However, his last words fell on deaf ears; Mark was fast asleep.

Upon going over to the fire, Ian put on some more wood. He then sat down and picked up Mark's book. He thought by reading it would help keep him awake. However, several hours later Ian's eyes closed and the book fell from his hands. Due to the heat from the fire and tiredness he had fallen asleep.

Not knowing this, Jane and Mark slept peacefully. However, due to her aching ribs and arm, Jane slept in fits and starts. A deep growl com-

ing from outside woke her. She knew it was a bear, but wondered why Ian had not yelled out a warning. She reached out and shook Mark. As he came to he also heard growling and realised it was a bear.

His yell of alarm woke Ian. Shock crossed his face as he stumbled to his feet and saw the bear. His feeling of horror was replaced with one of disgust, he had let his friends down. Ian reached down and grabbed hold of a smouldering branch from the fire. The sudden movement caused it to burst into flames. Holding it out in front of him like a lance, Ian advanced towards the bear. As he did, he yelled at the top of his voice, "Get out, Get out." No doubt it was the sight of the burning branch he held that did the trick, not his yelling. Whatever, to Ian's relief, the bear turned, then slowly ambled away. The next minute it had vanished from sight.

As Ian rushed towards the tent, he called out "Are you okay?"

First Mark then Jane came out of the tent, Mark glared at Ian. "Yes," he snapped back, "but no thanks to you. If Jane had not heard the bear and woken me, I hate to think of the consequences. You were supposed to have been keeping watch."

Ian looked downcast. He put his hands up. "Yes, I know. What can I say but sorry? I must have fallen to sleep."

Before Mark could say any more, Jane diffused the situation. "Okay, let's cool it. Just thank our lucky stars nothing serious happened."

"Yeah, okay," Mark mumbled. He glared at Ian, "but don't fall asleep again."

Jane gave a half smile. "No problem," she said, "I'll stay up with Ian. After all, I've had more sleep than both of you." She then went over to the fire with Ian, who put on more wood. With the fire once again blazing bright, Jane sighed, "That's better."

She and Ian sat talking. Around 7 am Jane said, "Well, I think it's time we woke Mark. We still have quite a distance to go."

Ian nodded agreement. "You're right." He grinned, "shall I wake him or will you?"

Jane looked at him and raised her eyebrows. "After last night, I think its best I do." She then went and gently shook Mark. He grunted, then opened his bleary eyes. "It's time we were on the move is it?" he asked.

Jane smiled down at him. "Yes, and sorry to say there is nothing for breakfast."

Mark chuckled. "Well," he said, "that's not a problem, I need to lose a few pounds in weight."

Once they had packed up their parachute tent, Ian tied it up and threw it over his shoulder. "Right, let's go. Oh, by the way, how are you feeling Jane?"

"Apart from a bit sore, under the circumstances not too bad." She chuckled. "Nothing a week in bed won't put right," she said.

They then set off down the trail. A few hours later as they came out from the trees, they stopped dead in their tracks.

"Wow," Mark exclaimed, "this is not right."

In front of them was a large lake; it should have been far smaller. "You're right," Ian said. "The outlet channel must have become blocked."

Jane's eyes were wide in shock. "This is extremely dangerous. If whatever's blocking the channel gives way, it will release all this water. By the time it gets down to the creek through the town, it will be like a tidal wave. It will cause devastation, especially to the houses near the river bank. We have to get down and warn them ASAP."

Wearing a grim expression, Mark said, "Now I can see why the trail is so overgrown. It's obvious no one has been up here for some time. If they had, the trail would be clear. More importantly, this lake would not have been able to form."

"Forget that," Ian snapped, "first let's see what's blocking the outlet. Maybe we can clear it."

Mark shook his head. "We can look, but it must be jammed pretty solid. If not, the water pressure would have forced a way through it."

Jane cut in, "Look, forget it; we have to warn the town somehow. If this build up of water continues, for sure it will burst its banks."

Mark nodded agreement; He paused for a minute. "If I remember rightly, there's been a cutback in funding for the Parks Department. For sure, this is a result."

Wearing a frightened expression, Jane said, "If this water hits the town the costs will be enormous. It will make the park savings insignificant compared to the cost of rebuilding." Her voice trembled as she added, "to say nothing of the possible loss of life."

On coming to a rocky outcrop, Ian said, "Right, you stay here while I climb up and see what's blocking the channel."

As Ian made his way up, Mark called out. "From what I remember, the outlet is over on the right."

A short time later, with excitement in his voice, Ian called down. "You're right Mark. I can see what seems to be a dam of some sorts."

Once Ian had re-joined them, they set off in the direction Ian had pointed. About an hour later they came in sight of the problem. Some fallen trees had become jammed across the outflow channel. They were now mixed with branches and a variety of other things.

"Jesus, what a mess," Mark said. "It looks as though the trees came down in a storm, fell into the water and were washed down here."

Ian nodded. "Yeah," I think you're right. From looking, the problem's been made far worse by what seems to be beavers. I think it's them that've made it into a dam."

"Never mind that," Jane snapped, "can we do anything to help release some of the water?"

Mark & Ian made their way down and completed an inspection. They soon found it an impossible task.

"It's no use, Jane," Mark called out, "we can't get through it. It's going to take something pretty strong to open it up."

"That's for sure," Ian added. He gave a grim smile. "Either that or dynamite."

“Christ Ian, I hope you’re joking?” Mark said. “It needs opening but not too much. It’s got to be big enough to release some of the water but not all of it.”

The expression on Jane’s face said it all. “Look, we have no choice but to warn the town,” she said. “If we do nothing and the town gets devastated, I couldn’t live with myself.”

“But how can we do that,” Mark said. “If the trees were not so wet, we could set them alight and make a big fire. As it is, they won’t burn.”

“Well, in that case, you two will have to leave me and get down ASAP,” Jane said. Before either Mark or Ian could comment, she added, “In my state, I can’t go with you, I would only slow you down.”

Mark and Ian exchanged glances. Ian grinned, “Well, as I’m one of the front-runners on the hash, I think it’s best I go.” As Mark went to speak, Ian said, “Sorry, Mark, but I wouldn’t dream of leaving Jane all alone. We’ve seen one bear, and there could be others.”

Despite their arguing, Ian insisted on going down alone. “I can make good time on my own,” he said. “Although I may not be able to continue when it gets too dark.” As he went to set off, Ian gave a chortle. “Take care of Jane Mark, but don’t take that too literally,” he said.

Jane gave a short laugh, “Not much chance of that,” she replied, “considering the state I’m in.”

Ian called back, “Who knows; I might meet someone on their way up here. If he or she has a cellphone, we can call and warn the town.”

Ian set off at a steady pace. He knew it was no good trying to run too quickly. Under the circumstances, a fall could prove to be fatal for the town. Although running downhill, after a couple of hours, with the light starting to diminish, Ian felt himself tiring. Suddenly, his tiredness vanished. Through the fading light, he had caught a glimpse of a flickering campfire. It gave him a second wind. As he neared the fire he called out, “Hello the fire; I need help.”

From out of a bivouac tent, a burly man appeared holding a rifle. "Who are you and what do you want?" he demanded.

"My name is Ian, but more importantly, do you have a cellphone? If so, we have to call and warn the town to evacuate A.S.A.P."

The man lowered the rifle, his face twisted in puzzlement. "What are you talking about?" he asked. "What's the problem?"

Ian quickly explained about the plane crash and the flooded lake. The man cut in, "There's not supposed to be a lake of any size up there," he said, pointing up the hillside.

"No, under normal circumstances you would be right, but some fallen trees have blocked the outlet. To make matters worse, beavers have made a dam around them. The lake is now twice its usual size. If it bursts through, it will result in a tidal wave of water and rocks descending on the town."

The man, who said his name was Stan, exclaimed, "Holy Cow, that would cause catastrophic damage. I don't have a cellphone, but you're in luck, I came up on my quad bike. You can use that to get down to the town." He shrugged his shoulders. "I would go myself, but my eyes aren't so good in the dark. Anyway, you had better get a move on, the sooner you're down and warn everyone the better."

As he walked towards the bike, Ian said, "Many thanks, I'll try not to damage your bike."

Stan chuckled. "No problem if you do," he said, "I've got good insurance." He gave a grim smile. "The main thing is for you to warn the town."

After shaking Stan's hand, Ian set off down the trail. He was making good time when as he rounded a bend, a wolf shot out of the bushes. As it ran across in front of him, Ian slammed on the brakes and swerved to avoid it. Despite his best effort, the bike left the trail and went crashing through the bushes and undergrowth. He swore as branches hit his face before one larger than the others knocked him off the bike. As he col-

lapsed to the ground, the bike hit a tree. The force stalled the engine, then the bike toppled over. On getting to his feet, Ian felt a sharp pain in his left arm but was relieved to find it not broken. He then went to where the bike lay on its side. As he lifted it back on its wheels, pain shot through his arm. Disregarding this, a check showed the bike appeared undamaged. It started as soon as he switched it on. Once he had managed to turn the bike around, he made his way back to the trail. A quick check showed no sign of the wolf. He hoped it had escaped injury.

As he set off down the trail, each bump sent a spasm of pain shooting up his arm. Although not broken, it was apparently severely sprained. Despite this, Ian gave a grim smile. He had been lucky to escape so lightly from his brush with the wolf. To add to his distress, the bike's headlight kept going on and off. No doubt due to the crash. Given this and the constant switchbacks, Ian couldn't risk another accident, so kept his speed down.

By the time he reached the outskirts of town a few hours later, Ian felt exhausted. Nevertheless, once on the road, he increased his speed and headed straight for the sheriff's office. On reaching it, Ian pulled to a stop and staggered inside. With blood streaks down his face, he must have looked a mess.

John, the deputy sheriff, looked up from his desk; his eyebrows shot up in alarm. "Jesus, Ian, what the hell happened to you?"

"Never mind me," Ian exclaimed, "you have to sound the alarm and warn the town."

A look of puzzlement and alarm crossed John's face. "Why? What's happened?"

Ian gave a grim smile. "Nothing yet, but it could at any moment." He then quickly explained about the dammed lake.

On hearing this John sprang into action. He called Bert the sheriff who was at home. Upon hearing Ian's news, Bert gasped in shock but recovered in an instant. "Sound the alarm; we have to get people away from the creek. I'll cover the Westside, you the South. Let's hope nothing hap-

pens before everyone is out of the danger zone.” With that, he closed the phone.

John reached out and pressed the town's alarm. It had been

installed some years ago, but until now had been unused. Its loud wailing broke the early morning silence. John then shot out of his chair and headed out the door. He jumped into his car and sped towards the creek. As he did, he called out through his car's megaphone for everyone to get up to high ground. Fortunately, the population had long known of a possible danger arriving from flooding. In a short time, those living near the creek had heeded the warning. While John sped around shouting out his warning, he stopped to pick up a few older adults. These he knew would have difficulty in getting up to higher ground. While he was doing this, the Sherrif had gone to warn those living further down the hillside of the danger. Cars, trucks and a few tractors packed with people and some animals were soon on their way to higher ground. They were the lucky ones.

Above the sound of the alarm and pandemonium, a terrifying

roaring was heard. Ian knew his warning had come in the nick of time. The dam had broken. From where he stood among a crowd of people, they watched in awe as a massive tidal wave of water, rocks and trees came crashing down the mountainside. In minutes, the gently meandering creek became a raging torrent of muddy water. Trees and large boulders were swept along as if they were matchsticks and pebbles.

In front of their disbelieving eyes, the creek width doubled in size. People gasped in horror on seeing riverside houses reduced to matchwood as the surging water smashed into them. Fallen trees swept along by the surging water burst apart what were once lovely summer cabins. In one place, with its support columns washed away, a large balcony roof came crashing down and was swept away.

Those on the high ground looked in horror and helplessness as two cars and a pick-up truck appeared. Frantic cries of alarm went up on seeing them packed with people. Like models floating down a flooded gutter, they swept past and disappeared from view. The occupants must have left it too late to escape to higher ground.

Although a terrible sight, Ian knew that without his warning, many more people would have perished.

Just when he thought things could not get worse, from around a bend, a small cabin appeared. Ian remembered it as belonging to Charlie and his wife, Susie. It had been set back from the edge of the creek and swept intact off its foundation. As it passed by, cries of horror went up. Clinging to the chimney stack, frantically waving and shouting for help, were two people. They were Charlie and Susie. The next minute the cabin must have caught on something submerged. It suddenly tipped up and swung around. As it did, Charlie and Susie were flung from the roof and into the raging river. They had no chance of escape and were swept away to a certain watery death.

Slowly but surely the pounding and roaring of the rushing water decreased. As the river level dropped, it left smashed houses and a variety of wrecked vehicles in and along its banks. The whole scene looked like a disaster zone.

On glancing at his watch, Ian noticed that only two hours had passed since he had burst into the Sheriff's office to raise the alarm. He gave a grim smile. The town owed Stan an enormous thanks for lending him his quad bike. Without it, he would never have reached the town in time.

Apart from some houses and Charlie's cabin, the two bridges across the creek had also been destroyed. They had taken the full force of the tidal wave of water, rock and trees that crashed into them.

Thankfully, most of the town including the police station were on the higher side of the creek. They had escaped the devastation. Once things had quietened down, people started to search along the banks of the river in a desperate hunt for any survivors.

On seeing Jeff, one of his friends, standing next to his 4-wheel drive pick-up, Ian went over to him.

“Hi Jeff, glad to see you got out okay.”

Jeff gave a grim smile. “Yes, fortunately, someone sounded the alarm. We just grabbed the kids and high-tailed it up here.” He looked sad, “Unlike poor old Charlie and Susie, we were lucky. They must have thought the water level wouldn’t affect them. Big mistake, we saw them pass by on the roof of their cabin.”

Ian nodded, “Yes, I saw them, they never had a chance when they were thrown off into the river.”

“That’s for sure,” Jeff said. “All being well we’ll find their bodies further downstream.”

“They were not the only ones to lose their lives,” Ian stated. “I saw a pick-up truck and two cars packed with people swept away.”

“Christ, what a mess,” a voice said. It was George, the owner of the local garage. He was dripping wet.

“Wow! What happened to you?” Jeff asked.

George grinned. “I was lucky. On my way back here after taking some people to safety, the bridge started to collapse under me. I just made it across when a windswept branch smashed the windscreen, and water poured into the cab.”

“That was a close call,” Ian said, “By the way, is the truck still running?”

George grinned. “Yes, but it’s rather drafty.”

“How do you fancy taking me for a ride up the mountain?” Ian inquired.

“What? Why on earth do you want to go up there?”

Ian gave a half smile. “I had to leave Mark and Jane up there. Plus Stan whose quadbike I used to get down here to warn the town.”

“You did!” Jeff exclaimed. “I wondered who had raised the alarm.” His look turned to puzzlement. “What were you doing up there without transport?”

Ian shrugged his shoulders. “Long story. I had taken Mark and Jane for a sightseeing trip when we crashed on top of the mountain.”

“Wow, not the best way to end a flight. Anyway let's go and get my truck, we can talk on the way.”

A short time later with headlights and spotlights lighting the way, they were bouncing their way up the trail.

“So, tell me what happened,” George said, “and what about Jane & Mark? Are they okay?”

“As for what happened, we ran into a flock of geese. The engine jammed, and we came down on top of the mountain. We missed the radio tower, but a wing broke off as we hit a tree. We then hit a few more trees that ripped off the tail section before coming to a stop.”

“Jesus Christ, it sounds as though you were incredibly lucky.”

“Yes, we were. Mark took a crack across the head, but apart from that, he's alright. As for Jane, she was not so lucky.”

George threw Ian a sideways glance, panic was in his eyes. “Don't tell me she's dead?” he gasped.

“No, but she was thrown out during the crash. We found her lying unconscious. When she came to, we discovered she had a broken arm, and possibly some ribs. We were making our way down when we saw the lake. To our astonishment, it was twice it's average size. On checking, we found the outlet blocked by some fallen trees.” George interrupted him, “but a few trees wouldn't have caused a huge lake to form.”

Ian chuckled. “You're right,” he said, “but beavers decided it was a perfect place for a dam. Had they finished building it, no water would have reached the creek. We would have then realised something was wrong.”

George shot him a quick sideways glance. “That must have taken them a while. Damn, I bet that's a result of the cutback to the Parks Department. The government seem to be cutting back on everything. With fewer workers, there is less control of everything.”

After about an hour, up ahead they saw the glimmer of a fire flittering through the trees.

"That must be Stan's fire," Ian said. "He was camped out at the side of the trail when I found him."

As they drew nearer, a figure appeared, then two more. "Great!" Ian exclaimed, "That's Mark and Jane with Stan. They must have kept on walking down after I had left them."

George chuckled, "Well, that's saved us having to go looking for them," he said.

As the truck came to a stop near the fire, George and Ian climbed out. Seeing Ian, Jane called out. "Did you get there in time? We heard the terrible sound as the dam gave way and rocks and trees came crashing down. I prayed you had reached the town in time."

Ian grinned, "I did, but only thanks to Stan who lent me his quad bike." Ian's smile turned into a frown. "Most people managed to get clear in time." He looked sad as he continued, "but I saw a couple of cars and a pick-up truck washed away." In a solemn voice, he added, "they all had people in them." Before he could continue, George cut in. "Don't forget Charlie and Susie."

"How could I?" Ian asked, "I saw them flung off the roof of their cabin into the raging river. They never had a chance."

"Christ," Mark said, "was the water that high?"

"Yes, but they must have thought their cabin was not in danger so stayed put. By the time they realised their mistake, it was too late. The cabin was swept off its foundations and into the water."

"Oh, no," Jane cried, "they were such a lovely old couple."

"Yes, they were. Anyway, we have to get back down to town. I'm sure there are plenty of people in need of help."

"You're right," Stan said, "let's go."

"What about your tent?" Mark asked.

"No problem, I can collect it later."

With Jane sitting in the front alongside George, Ian, Mark and Stan climbed into the rear cab. Once back in town, they made their way towards the creek. As they drew nearer, Jane gasped, "Oh my God, what a mess!" Tears welled in her eyes as she caught hold of Ian's hand. "I hate to think of the consequences had you not been able to warn the town in time."

"That's for sure," Mark said. "I can only imagine what it must have looked like when the water came crashing down."

George gave a grim smile. "It was a sight I'll never forget. I only just got clear of the bridge when it was washed away."

When Mark, Jane and Ian were later seen by a doctor, he confirmed that as Jane thought, she had three cracked ribs. An x-ray showed her arm had a clean break. Once set, it would heal without requiring an operation. On the bright side, the gash on Mark's forehead did not require stitches. Ian needed a few stitches where the branch had struck him and knocked him off the quad bike. The doctor also said that in a few days, no doubt Ian would have a real shiner of a black eye. In general, considering they had survived a plane crash, with Jane thrown out, they had escaped relatively well.

It was later in the day when some fantastic news broke. Searchers looking for any survivors came across Charlie's body. It had been washed up on the bank about a mile downstream. As they went to lift him up, to their astonishment, they found Charlie was not dead. He had given out a weak moan. After he was rushed back to town, and checked out by a doctor, unbelievably, apart from numerous bruises, Charlie was okay.

When asked what had happened to Susie, tears welled in Charlie's eyes. "As we were thrown off the cabin roof into the river, I tried to grab hold of her," he blubbered. He sobbed aloud, then with an effort continued. "The current was so strong it pushed us apart, and I lost sight of her." Charlie shrugged his shoulders. "I thought I was a goner and must have passed out," he said. "I don't remember any more until I woke up here."

Unfortunately, apart from two dogs, Charlie was the only person found alive. The two cars and the pick-up truck were found mangled and twisted together. With all the occupants dead, it was not a pretty sight.

In total, seventeen people, including four children and a baby, had perished. However, it was nothing compared to what the death total could have been.

At a solemn service later held to commemorate the dead, Ian's name was mentioned. The speaker said, "On behalf of all the citizens of Tumbling Creek, I would like to thank Ian Webber. Had it not been for his action, the town would have lost far more lives than it did."

A big cheer went up as Ian was called to the microphone. He raised a hand. "I'd like to thank everyone for their kind thoughts. Nevertheless, I feel sure anyone would have done the same as I did." He pointed towards where Stan stood. "Also, without Stan Tomkins' quadbike, I would never have made it here in time. We have to thank our lucky stars he decided to take a trip up the mountain." His smile then changed into a frown. "I'm glad I could be of help, but feel sorry about all those who died."

An official investigation into what caused the devastation put it down to a lack of control. Although not stated, it was generally accepted that the cut-back in the Parks Department funding was the culprit. Whatever, the town council was granted funds to repair and replace all the destroyed houses.

Also by the author

A Dangerous Love affair

When a struggling author meets and falls in love with an attractive and famous author of erotic novels, little did John know that by falling in love with Tara, her ex-lover would be incensed enough to attempt murder, with him as the victim.

For the Greater Good

Jeff went to Yemen to learn how his brother died but becomes involved in a plot to assassinate the President. The method he chooses may be novel, but the result is deadly efficient.

Terror Holiday:

Based on events during the attempted coup in Turkey on July 15, 2016, and related through the eyes of a fictitious English family on holiday there at the time.

Follow in the Tigerman's Footsteps: sub-titled the Adventurous Life of an Expat.

Although a memoir, this reads more like an adventure story. It is written as a means of informing people that there is more to life than a tedious nine-to-five job. After becoming an expat, the author lived a life most only dream about. He knows only too well the advantages and disadvantages of being an expat worker.

An Expat's Experiences of Living in Turkey:

This covers over twenty-five years of an Englishman living as an expat in Turkey. It includes the good and the bad of living there, and issues related to Turkish customs, sight-seeing, outdoor activities, and sports. Included are numerous notes of advice to those both living in, and thinking of moving to Turkey. These are intended to hopefully ensure readers do not find themselves in situations that would cause stress and loss of money.

It will be appreciated if readers leave a review on whichever site you found the book.

About the author



Colin Guest, an Englishman living in Turkey, started his working life with a five-year apprenticeship as a joiner/shop fitter in Plymouth, Devon. Early on, he travelled around England on a variety of projects, before working on two postings abroad. Sometime after returning to the UK, a back injury brought a temporary end to any labour-intensive work, thereby reducing Colin's earning potential. Finding themselves in severe financial difficulties, after discussions with his wife, Colin decided his best option out of this was to become an expat worker. For the next nineteen years, during which time they moved to live in Turkey, he worked mainly on high-class interior-fit-outs to several palaces and a number of five-star hotels. These were spread through fifteen countries in the Middle and Far East, and North Africa. As a result, he lived a life most only dream of. He started writing after retiring, with the intention of encouraging others to think positive, when the going gets tough. An optimistic attitude that Colin believes will always help you climb back into the driving seat of life.

Social media contacts

<https://www.colinguest992@gmail.com>

<https://www.twitter.com/Tigermanguest>

<https://www.facebook.com/tigerman55>

<https://www.pinterest.com/colinguest9>

<https://www.google.com/+ColinGuest>

<https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/9857414>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/colin-john-guest>

<https://www.turkmed.wordpress.com>

<https://www.colinguestauthor.com>