



A Lonely Man On A Wakeful Road

by Dan Ford

An Episodic Adventure

Episode #4

Images Of A Connected Soul

In Episode Three, Matt and Kareem embarked on a boat journey on the Belize River and headed west to San Ignacio. They were bonding as good spiritual friends during this trip, and Kareem continued to teach Matt more about developing a meaningful Vision Quest.

Matt had been taken by Kareem on a journey into the Spiritual Timeline to an incarnation in 750 AD where Matt's connected-soul, Yac K'uk Ma' was a Mayan leader in a village called Chaca Ja, on the banks of the current Belize River. Unfortunately, no sooner had he arrived to join with his connected-soul in that period, the village came under attack from another Mayan City State to the northeast of their village.

Matt will have to be the one to let us know what happened during this Spiritual Timeline saga. Matt continues to dictate in his first-person narrative as and begins again here.

Yac K'uk Ma was near the top of the temple steps with his family when the attack started on the river bank. Many canoes that carried the invaders were landing on the shoreline, and the warriors were casting spears using an *alatl*, which is a type of sling that increased the distance a spear could be thrown. That and a fury of arrows was followed along with the use of knives by these warriors. When combatants were close, knives were the primary weapons used by both the invading forces and the defenders of Chaca Ja.

The possibility of an attack was not unexpected by the village as they were on an active war status with a City-State of Lamanai. Lamanai was attempting to expand its territory, and Chaca Ja was a major blockage in the way of that campaign. Yac K'uk Ma's speech was about preparing to rally the village, and its warriors to prepare for such an attack. Although the timing was quicker than expected, they were prepared for just such an attack, and Chaca Ja's defenders were quick to respond. They were all well trained.

The Lamanai were not aware that Chaca Ja had made an alliance with the City-State of Xunantunich to the west of their village, and their warriors were to be in Chaca Ja for this support rally. They had already been entering the village when the attack occurred. The enemy had the first advantage due to their rapid arrival from the river. Still, most of the first casualties were simple village folk washing clothes and preparing to go fishing after their leader's speech. Their screams alerted the warriors within the village. The village warriors were able to quickly arm themselves and get to the riverfront before the enemies could advance very deep into the village.

Yac K'uk Ma' instructed his wife to take their children and head back down the temple's steps. They were then to head into the jungle behind the village. She knew where to go from there, for their safety. Yac K'uk Ma' headed directly into

the village to join with his village's warriors and the Xunantunich warriors who were streaming into the village to help Chaca Ja in its defense. Yac K'uk Ma's second-in-command had gathered up Yac K'uk Ma's weaponry from his hut, and handed them to him. Very little time had been lost in turning this surprise attack into a good defensive position that was slanted in favor of the village.

A second warfront had developed when additional Lamanai invaders came into the village from the Southeast jungle border. This would have been disastrous if the additional warriors from Xunantunich had not been there to support Chaca Ja. But, as it turned out, these invaders ran directly into the larger group of these fighters and were quickly dispatched.

Yac K'uk Ma' was struck by an arrow penetrating deep into and then through his shoulder, but that did not stop him from leading the villager's attack on the Lamanai forces, who were now attempting to get back into their canoes. But it was too late for them, as the Chaca Ja forces had greatly increased in number, and they were able to kill all of the Lamanai before they could relaunch their boats to escape. The invasion was quickly over.

I was surprised at the pain I felt from the arrow in Yac K'uk Ma's shoulder and asked Kareem why that was. He told me that sharing consciousness was quite complete between Yac K'uk Ma' and me. He also told me that I could simply decide to ignore that pain. I did that and immediately felt guilty that I was leaving my connected-soul to suffer that pain on his own. Kareem told me that this pain was part of Yac K'uk Ma' planned experience, and he needed to deal with it, but it was not necessary for me.

I stayed with Yac K'uk Ma' while his wound was attended to by his village shaman. He addressed his village warriors with compliments for their battle performance, give compliments to and thanked the Xunantunich warriors. At that point, I decided to end this visit and found myself looking into Kareem's eyes back on our boat.

He asked me. "What did you take from this happening, Matt?"

I had to think about that question a bit before I answered it. "I was surprised at how quickly the attack from the Lamanai forces took place and how well my connected-soul and his village handled that attack. I was also surprised at how that dammed arrow hurt when it entered my, or rather his, shoulder."

"OK!" Kareem responded. "Was that all you took from this happening?"

"Let me think about it for a moment." I did some thinking and then responded. "Perhaps I overlooked the fact that my connected-soul acted like the leader he was. He quickly protected his family and told them what to do and where to go. Then he joined his men and waded into the fight. Was that it?"

"Somewhat! But you overlooked the big picture here, Matt. Yac K'uk Ma' had previously made plans to protect his village by negotiating a mutual protection agreement with Xunantunich. He had also trained his people to jump into action when they knew they were under attack, and he even had his second in command make sure he brought weapons to him. A defense strategy for Chaca Ja had been planned for, and implemented under his leadership. Your connected-soul was a strong man and a trained, competent and intelligent leader. And there is more to him than that if you continued to study him. This is what a Spiritual Timeline visit is for. You watch, listen, learn and remind yourself of what you had experienced in a previous incarnation and what you had learned from it. Your first impulse in answering my question was to see it from the ego's perspective, and that is a very limited viewpoint."

"Wow! You are right, Kareem. I didn't really study my connected-soul very well. I got so caught up in the action that I felt that I was a part of it. He was all of those things and probably a lot more. I didn't pay attention."

Kareem added. "You will often visit a Spiritual Timeline and find out that your connected-soul was a total failure, or worse. All of our reincarnations do not show us to be heroes, Matt. Remember, when you look around in your current life, you will see many pretty bad characters. Things happen in every life to cause a soul to increase or decrease their moral values. None of those acceptances are permanent, but they cause major delays or setbacks in the soul's evolution. And we want to minimize that if we can."

"Can I go back into the Spiritual Timeline to see how my connected soul-mate progressed in that timeline?"

"Of course, Matt. You can do this as often as you want to or need to. Just don't use this spiritual traveling as entertainment. It is serious stuff, my friend, and if you minimize the importance of spiritual analysis, you will find yourself getting off track really bad."

"I don't think I would want to make these spiritual trips for fun. They appear to be too dramatic and stressful for my tastes. Also, I'm not into warfare or such."

Kareem laughed, somewhat lightly. He said that the vast majority of people have very routine and rather boring existences. He, however, also said that you must know that the lifelines you are investigating would have some interest and relevance. If not, you will quickly find that it is more rewarding to go to a movie for your edification.

I told Kareem that I felt it would be important for me to find out how my connected-soulmate would fare for the rest of his Mayan life. Therefore, I would like to follow through on that, and I asked Kareem to assist me in finding out what would happen. Without comment from him, we immediately appeared again in Chaca Ja. We saw that Yac K'uk Ma' had his warriors assembled, with the intent of invading Lamanai in retribution for their attack on Chaca Ja. This was an obvious intent on Lamanai's part to destroy the Xunantunich alliance. Yac K'uk Ma' had all of his village warriors in place. More were requested from outlying associated areas of the village to support this battle. In addition, he had several hundred warriors from the Xunantunich City State that would be under his control during the invasion.

Kareem had then arranged that he and Matt show up for the actual battle for Lamanai and saw that it was to be a total victory. Lamanai had been in political disarray after their loss at Chaca Ja and had not prepared for this retribution to happen so quickly. The result was immediate and beneficial for Yac K'uk Ma', as he became the leader of both his village and the captured Lamanai City State. This placed him at a power level comparable with the King of Xunantunich, and he became the King of Lamanai. Although they were part of an alliance, this political change meant that King Yac K'uk Ma' could eventually become a challenge to the King of Xunantunich.

They then jumped further along on the Timeline and observed that the Lamanai and Xunantunich alliance did indeed fail within five years, and war broke out between the two City-States. King Yac K'uk Ma' and his forces were victorious, and he was now King of the combined City-States of Lamanai and Xunantunich and an obvious threat to the neighboring City-States of Tikal and Caracol. The die was cast, and the politics of this situation determined how the rest of King Yac K'uk Ma's life was to go. Matt was sad to see that his connected-soulmate became ruthless, as did most Kings in those times. He was eventually defeated by Caracol,

and he and his family were both slaughtered in a public victory ceremony by the King of Caracol.

Back on the boat on Belize River, with no time having passed, Matt and Kareem discussed all that they had seen from this trip on the Spiritual Timeline from this lengthy years-long observation. Matt was astounded at the clarity of his observations. And how his remembrances of every detail began to illuminate his mind.

Kareem asked him, "What did you take away from this big picture Matt?"

"I had the impression that my connected-soulmate, Yac K'uk Ma was a decent and well-meaning soul, but he let political leadership and his ego take over the control that he once had over his activities. He had many opportunities throughout his lifetime to perhaps create more alliances with the various Mayan City-States. He could then have evolved them into a more peaceful and fruitful existence. However, the more I observed him, the clearer it was to see him lose the battle against his ego. Do you agree, Kareem?"

"I do!" Kareem replied.

"But how does that help me now? I'm certainly not in any rulership position and I'm not likely to be in one anytime soon."

"It has to do with you absorbing everything you learn in every incarnation. Once you have that experience or lesson within you, you can modify its essence and use it in any number of other ways into future incarnations. For example, from this learned viewpoint, that knowledge could keep you from being a vicious and vindictive leader or might also keep you from being a bad husband or wife. The scope of activity is not necessarily important, but the intent is."

"What exactly does that mean, Kareem? It doesn't make sense to me."

"It's complicated, Matt, but here we go. When humans or other animals consume something, the sustenance is ingested, digested, and then converted into an essence that supplies everything that the body needs to function, such as energy, storage, growth, etc. This is largely automatic, and the body knows how to do that very well.

"It is also a similar process concerning the mind. When you learn a lesson of any kind, the specifics of the lesson are taken in by the brain. And as well into your consciousness. That information resides therein to be used to assist you in making decisions when needed and then recalled. Those decisions are based on that lesson and other information that you have ingested into your brain and consciousness."

"Really, Kareem? Now that sounds overly simplistic to me."

Kareem ignored me and then went on to explain more. He said that all of the basic essences that the body or brain will need to make a decision is received and stored, so the individual soul can use it, ignore it or modify it as it sees fit. He said the influences as to how that soul will apply the information are numerous, which makes this whole subject complicated and interesting. Particularly within your consciousness and your brain, a soul's decision on any matter of the action is influenced by its ego's needs, desires, emotions, goals, fear, and attractions, as well as many other human and spiritual influences.

I was overwhelmed with these statements and asked Kareem how we could make a proper decision on anything when considering all of those influences. He responded by saying. "It's based on using your Free Will, my friend. In almost every case, a soul actually knows the difference between good and bad. It's virtually instinctive, and the basis to make those decisions was imprinted within each soul. Just as an animal instinctively knows what to do when conducting their daily lives, humans know what to do when making judicial decisions. They may be modified as determined by the culture the soul resides in. When making a good or bad decision, that cultural factor is essential when having a life experience is the primary goal of a soul's evolution. An aggressive hunter society will have one set of rules concerning good or bad, and a less aggressive gathering or agricultural society will have a distinctly different set of rules."

I told Kareem that I would need some time to think about these things, but I definitely would do so. He suggested that this was a great strategy, and perhaps we should do this thinking while we were chugging up the river. He told me to retrieve the anchor and he would get the motor started. To help us start the relaxation process, he handed me a cold Belikin beer out of the cooler.

The rest of that day was leisurely spent and very pleasantly experienced. I have come to love my life. I loved this boat, and I loved this river, and I loved my

friend Kareem as a soul mate and not for physical reasons. My Vision Quest had been successful if only for those dictates.

We had motored past some really unique and typical Belizean named places along the river. Some of the names were Roaring Creek, Banana Bank, Little Orange Walk, Never Delay, Mount Pleasant, Kitty Bank Cocos, Saturday Creek, Bull Run, Salomon's Place, Cotton Tree Bank, Meditation, More Tomorrow, Dancing School Eddie, Joe White Bank, Perry Guts, Beaver Dam, Baboon Eddie, Laboring Creek, Married Woman Point, Monkey Run, Big Haulover, Big Falls, Cock Lof, Society Hall, Johny Young's Bank, Double Head Cabbage, Jim Cotto, Isabella Bank, Bamboo Patch, Flowers Bank, Lime Walk, Burns' Pen, May Pen, Black Creek, Double Run, Tiger Bank, Baking Pot, Morning Glory, Iguana Creek, But Palace, Black-Man Eddy, Warric Head, and Teakettle. And these were just a few major places along the river. The names alone kept you smiling as you sailed past them, and I pondered upon their history and those people who named these places as Kareem called them out to me. And here again, these I have mentioned are only a very few of those names.

And I also thought a lot about those Spiritual Timeline experiences, and they certainly served their purpose. I had now arrived at a place where I was not taking my everyday happenings for granted anymore. Instead, I was ingesting and digesting them, as sort of mildly disgusting as that sounds.

I had also discovered, thanks to my friend Kareem, a new entertainment that was also instructive. I could join consciousness with animals, and they did not know or care that I was doing this, unlike human souls who valued their privacy a lot more.

On our way upstream, I spied a harpy eagle in the treetops on the river bank. I willed myself into that eagle and found out that he was focused on a small spider monkey leaping from limb to limb in the dense rain forest. The eagle made its decision and leaped off his limb and soared through the rain forest foliage, zipping by branches, leaves, limbs, and tree trunks while gaining tremendous speed. I actually did not want this to occur as I had developed a liking for spider monkeys. However, this was nature and really not my business to interfere. This was designed by a higher authority, and I knew I must either accept its happening or not get involved. Unfortunately, the harpy connected with the monkey before I could make that decision, and his claws penetrated the monkey's neck and killed it immediately. The deed was done, and I left the scene arriving back in my body on the boat with a bit more wisdom than I had before this happened. Not too happy

about this harpy and monkey affair, but understanding the need for each a bit better.

We had passed Belmopan, the capital of Belize, while sailing westward on the Belize River and heading toward San Ignacio. San Ignacio was the 2nd largest of the cities after Belize City and was close to the Guatemalan/Belize border.

Unfortunately, this would be the end of my journey with Kareem, as this was his destination. I dreaded the separation, and I would sorely miss his company, the boat, and the Belize River, but my Vision Quest was the primary reason I was here, and it was too early to end it at this time.

We landed and tied the Gaia to the dock and then walked into San Ignacio. Kareem suggested that I check into the San Ignacio Belize Resort. Otherwise, he said I was welcome to stay with him in his apartment until I headed out on my Vision Quest. I turned down his offer and told him that it would be difficult enough to part from him, even if I did it now. I didn't need to make it any harder by delaying the separation. He smiled and told me he understood and gave me a really nice hug. He said that he would, like his sister Gaia, be available if I needed him and that they would both know it if I really needed them. I thanked him for the boat trip, especially for the spiritual lessons and fabulous companionship he gave to me. I told him that I could never repay him. He told me that I had already paid him back in full. Love is like that. I walked away from him and refused to look back. Kareem would see that my kidneys were way too close to my eyeballs and the occasion would make them leak.

I only spent one night in San Ignacio. The hotel was great, and the food was great as well, but I was determined to get back on the road and get my legs and lungs acclimated to the heavy walking ahead. And I had decided early on that I would reward myself with a vacation at the Blancaneaux Lodge at the mid-point of my Vision Quest. So I left San Ignacio and started walking towards the Mountain Pine Ridge Forest, where the lodge was located. The lodge itself is situated on the banks of Privassion Creek, surrounded by tropical pines, oaks, palmetto, craboo, and ancient melastome shrubs. The dense surrounding jungle has steep ravines, spectacular waterfalls, and fast-flowing rivers. The area is home to many rare and endangered species of flora and fauna.

The resort was developed by the famous movie director, Francis Ford Coppola, who visited the area and found the abandoned Blancaneaux Lodge in the 1980s. He originally bought and used the lodge as a family retreat. He opened it to

the public in 1993. I had heard so much and read a lot about this unique tropical paradise and was determined to go there. The walk from San Ignacio should take me about 6 hours on rugged dirt and gravel roads. I could have taken a cab or arranged other means of travel to get there, but I wanted to return to trekking by foot.

The natural mountain scenery changes quickly in this part of Belize. I could see that I would be walking from a subtropical environment into heavy tropical foliage and then entering mountain pine vegetation, all in that relatively half-day walk.

The transition from the large village environment of San Ignacio to the relatively high mountain terrain of Mountain Pine Ridge was quite amazing. Not only did the vegetation transform as I walked along, but the sounds, smells, and visual impacts also changed dramatically. Different animals began to appear, and my path crossed with ocelots, magnificent birds, iguanas, and species of frogs that couldn't be found anywhere else. There was a sharp contrast to the tropical landscape once I entered the Mountain Pine Forest, as pine needles rather than palm fronds and large leaf tropical plants dominated the landscape. There were also deep ravines and dramatic granite expanses on upper regions of the Maya Mountains. I loved walking along meandering streams, seeing waterfalls and pools, and ingesting the sweet fragrance of the evergreens. It ended up taking me longer than the original six hours that I had estimated to get to my destination.

It still seemed that I arrived at the Blancaneaux Lodge all too soon, as I had been enjoying the trek to get there so very much. But I was also looking forward to experiencing the tropical luxury of this famous get-a-way location. I reasoned that for me to become a well-rounded man, I needed to experience both a luxurious interlude as well as a rough-hewn existence. This attitude helped me justify this break of my Vision Quest, as I didn't want to become spiritually ridged.

However, I already knew that my days on the boat with Kareem were far from strenuous activities. I had to remind myself that this Vision Quest was more a mental than a physical challenge, but I wanted to make it a little of both.

A small watercourse, having the name of Privassion Creek, meandered through the Blancaneaux resort. The resort took advantage of this absolutely beautiful watercourse by having parts of their major buildings and villas with suspended balconies over it at various points. I would challenge anyone who said

they did not benefit mentally from sitting on these overhangs when having coffee or happy hour beverages.

The resort was everything I had anticipated, and I knew that I would have a problem not delaying my Quest any longer than I had planned. Still, as it was, I stayed four days, justifying that I was gaining strength to support my future journeys.

On the last day of my stay, I went out at dusk to sit in a remote palapa structure situated at the base of a beautiful waterfall. This cohune palm-thatched roofed building was a beautiful sanctuary to ponder the day you had just experienced, and to consider what was to take place in the days to come.

I leaned back in a chair with a glass of the very best chilled Chardonnay wine I had ever had. The cascading waterfall was creating a sound that would relax even the most hardened listener, and I was not one of those, so you can imagine what it was doing to me. I was admiring these falls and enjoying a sip of my wine.

Suddenly I saw some activity on the top of the waterfalls. Whatever it was, it was moving down the side of the falls and then disappeared into the tropical foliage. I was disappointed that I did not get a good look at whatever it was, but I kept peering for it nonetheless.

Then, to my great surprise, a spectacular ocelot strolled out of the jungle.

The cat started walking up the steps and into the palapa. I was so entranced that it took me off guard for a moment, and then I thought of entering the cat's consciousness, as I had other animals on this Quest. It didn't work. I couldn't enter its consciousness, and I wondered why.

Then the ocelot walked over to me and, turning its form into a circular pattern, laid down on the palapa floor. The ocelot started to glow and then mist up in a silvery aura. I relaxed at this point, kinda knowing what was going to occur, and stared at the beautiful cat dissolving before me. Then the aura turned to gold, and a beautiful female form started to evolve from that. And then, there she was with the beautiful silvery-blue hair and dressed in a shimmering golden threaded dress.

I smiled and held out my glass of wine to her and said, "Its great to see you again, Gaia. Would you care to have a glass of wine with me?"

I don't know about you folks, but I was very glad to see Gaia return to join in on Matt's Vision Quest. She is always good for some neat action and good advice. I will miss her brother Kareem and hope we can hear about him again as well. Matt had told me that he may take a break for a little while after this episode, but apparently this will not be the case, and he will fill us in on the next leg of his Quest, so don't go away.