

Wild



T H E H E I G H T S™



Chapter 1



“A trip to Africa?” Lilia asked. “Are you kidding, Dad?”

“No, I’m not kidding,” Rafael said. “Africa is one of the last wild places on earth.”

“I remember a lot of our trips too well,” said Antonio.

“So we’ve had some bad trips. But we always handled it, didn’t we?” Rafael asked.

“All of our trips end in disaster,” Lilia replied.

“Well, I think it will be fun,” Ana said. “We haven’t gone on a trip in a long time.”

Franco Silva was in college. But he was home for spring break.

“Well,” Franco said. “I’ve always wanted to see Africa. I’d love to go.”

“I guess I’ll go too,” Antonio sighed.

“Hey,” Lilia added. “I’m not staying home alone. Someone has to keep Dad out of trouble.”

“Great!” Rafael said. “This will be our best trip yet.”

“Hey, Dad. Africa is big. Where *exactly* are we going?” asked Franco.

“Africa’s the world’s second largest continent. There are a lot of

places we could go. But we'll fly to Nairobi, Kenya. We'll spend a few days in Serengeti National Park. Next, we'll fly to the Zambezi River. We'll stay at a lodge. We can explore the river by canoe."

"Sounds like a great plan," Ana said.

Rafael had already made the reservations months before. Everyone checked the days off on the calendar until it was time for the trip.

Ana wanted the trip to be fun. So she gave everyone a box. "Here's a gift for the trip," Ana said. Inside each box was a digital camera.

"We can have a contest," said Ana. "Let's see who can take the best picture."

“What’s the prize for winning?” Antonio asked.

“Don’t worry about that,” Lilia laughed. “You won’t win. I’m going to take the best picture.”

“Well, we’ll see about that,” Antonio stated.

“The prize,” said Ana. “Well, how about the winner decides where we go on our next vacation?”

“You’re on, Mom,” said Franco. He really wanted to go diving again.

It was finally time for the trip. The flight from New York to Nairobi was long. As they were landing, Lilia looked out the window. She saw a big city.

“Look at that!” Lila exclaimed. “I didn’t think Nairobi would be so big.”

The big jet landed. Then it sped along the runway. Soon the flight attendant announced, “Welcome to Nairobi.”

“I can’t believe we’re finally here!” Rafael exclaimed.

“He’s more excited than the kids are,” Ana thought.

Chapter 2



Everyone grabbed their bags. Then they all went through customs.

A man met the Silvas near the exit. He was tall and blonde.

“I’m Eric Gibbons,” he said.
“Your guide.”

“Nice to meet you, Eric,” Rafael replied. “We’re excited to begin our adventure through the Serengeti.”

“Welcome to Africa,” Eric said. “Are you ready for an awesome time?”

“Oh yes,” declared Antonio. “We are so ready.”

Eric led them to a large four-wheel drive vehicle.

“This isn’t the best car for the city. But it’s good for the bush,” said Eric.

Eric had an accent. It sounded familiar. But it didn’t sound African.

“You don’t sound like you’re from here,” Lilia said.

“Right you are,” Eric said. “I’m from Australia. I came to Africa four years ago.”

“What made you come here?” asked Ana.

“Well, Australia was too small for me,” Eric laughed. “I want to see all

seven continents. Being a guide in the Serengeti is one stop along the way.”

Antonio and Lilia asked Eric about the animals in the Serengeti.

“You’ll see *lots* of animals,” Eric stated. “The park is loaded with predators and prey. This is the best time to visit.”

The ride to camp took four hours. The Silvas were happy to get there.

Even though they had to sleep in tents, the camp was nice. The tents were set up on wooden platforms. A bed, desk, and chairs were in each tent. The tents were a lot nicer than the ones back home. Oil lamps provided light.

The kitchen was in the middle of the camp. Four African employees

ran the kitchen and cooked all of the meals. The kitchen staff was kept busy with all of the tourists.

After dinner, Franco asked Eric if an animal had ever attacked him.

“We’re always alert and careful,” Eric answered. “Animals are unpredictable. One day one may be scared of me. The next day it may charge at me. But I’ve never been scared for my life. My friend Kevin has though.”

“Who’s Kevin?” Antonio asked.

“He’s a mate back in Australia,” Eric answered.

“What happened to him?” asked Antonio.

“Well,” Eric said. “He was swimming. He was attacked by a