

Praise for Jonathan Williams' Novel

Jungle Sunrise is a unique and captivating novel, written by a member of the Xtreme Team, an inimitable group of men and women who risk their lives and endure unthinkable physical deprivation while attempting to find and assist native people in the most remote areas of the world. Author Jonathan Williams has written this novel out of the rich background of that experience. He unlocks the secret of how to begin life anew, as the book's central character moves from a depressing, directionless life to a rewarding and incomparable adventure. One warning: do not start reading until you have some time because you won't put it down.

— Paige Patterson
President, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

JONATHAN WILLIAMS skillfully transports the reader between two worlds in a captivating and suspenseful book. Having traveled in this setting with young missionaries seeking to reach isolated jungle tribes, I can attest to the authenticity of experiences encountered in this rich yet challenging environment. It is evident the author has been there! A subtle Christian testimony is effectively woven into the novel through intriguing personalities as they discover the ultimate meaning in life through trials and tragedy.

— Jerry Rankin
President, International Mission Board, SBC



Jungle Sunrise

A NOVEL

JONATHAN WILLIAMS



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Jungle Sunrise is a work of fiction. All names, characters, places, and incidents are the products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to current events or locales, or to real persons living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

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CHAPTER 1

MEMPHIS gripped his four-foot-long wooden bow in his left hand as he knelt on one knee behind the thick brush. Two hand-carved arrows, as long as the bow, leaned against the trunk of a tree just a few inches away. Sweat from his hairline ran through the dry mud on his forehead and into his eyes. An orange sun peeked into the jungle foliage from the edge of the horizon, and Memphis's body began to feel the wear of the two-hour wait.

Although he could not even slightly hear or see him, Memphis knew that Artone endured the same exhaustion nearby. Memphis shifted his weight without making a sound or flinching from his fixed stare set on the shallow pool of fresh water twenty feet in front of his shield of bushes. His parched lips, dry throat, and unquenched thirst begged him to run and dunk his head into the clear pool.

Memphis dipped his right index finger into the open coconut sitting on the ground by his calloused bare feet. Running the wet finger over his tongue and lips, he enjoyed the last drops of the coconut milk, one of the few amenities of the Peruvian Amazon jungle.

I should be good for another half hour he thought, shifting his kneeling stance to his left knee.

Memphis heard a small stick break. He froze. He knew his movement had not caused the sound. There were no limbs lying in the spot where he waited, for he had cleared out all

debris when he settled in the night before. Something else had snapped the twig. A pile of leaves rustled. Another cracking of a stick sounded.

Memphis slowly reached for an arrow, his eyes fixed on the clearing between his hideout and the pond. By the time the jaguar stepped out of the forest and into the clearing, the arrow rested firmly against the taut rope and wood of Memphis's bow, the point aimed a few feet in front of the approaching cat.

The young male flaunted black spots artfully painted across his yellow canvas. His long tail swayed like the body of a dancer as he strode toward the water. Threat rode on his shoulders. Fierceness lived in his eyes. His walk seemed prideful and fearless as if he were fully aware of his wildness and strength.

For a moment, Memphis forgot that he was the hunter.

It was agreed that Artone, the more experienced hunter and, by rule, the better shot, would make the first move. Memphis followed the unsuspecting prey with the tip of his arrow. The bowstring lined Memphis's palm, ready for release.

He's all yours, Art, Memphis thought to himself. Just pull your arrow back to your cheek and fire that thing right into his neck.

Memphis could picture Artone tucked away out there, hidden in the dense jungle. Some lingering dew rolled off a leaf onto Memphis's head as he attempted to will his friend into action.

Come on, Art! Catch us some dinner.

The young jaguar continued on a steady, predictable path. He methodically closed in on the pond. At just a stone's throw

away, however, the jaguar hesitated momentarily, just enough to escape the unforeseen arrow.

Artone's shot ripped through some high weeds across the clearing from Memphis and severed the jaguar's left ear. Immediately, the wounded animal streaked away. Simultaneously, Memphis and Artone exploded out of the brush and into the clearing. Arrow still drawn, Memphis raced into the jungle, following the bloodstained trail. Artone lifted his spear high as he chased after a second chance.

"*Mente? Mente?*" Memphis shouted, having lost sight of the jaguar.

"*Keyo!*" Artone yelled as he pointed to their right.

Zigzagging through the trees, the two men sprinted over logs, under limbs, and through thorns that promised pain to come. Artone split off to Memphis's left up onto a ridge that afforded him a view of the entire area. He now ran parallel to Memphis, only ten feet higher.

Drumming feet echoed through the jungle and Memphis caught a glimpse of the jaguar. He narrowed in on the sound of his steps. Just when he thought he had pinpointed the direction of the sound, another noise from behind broke his concentration.

Memphis slowed his pace and listened to differentiate the sounds. His confused ears failed him and he decided to keep tracking in his current direction. As he hurdled a cluster of exposed roots, his adrenalin racing as fast as his legs were moving, he turned to see the male jaguar running straight for him.

Memphis could see Artone running directly behind the beast down the small ridge adjacent to the hunting ground. Memphis knelt on one knee, pulled his arrow back, and aimed

at the jaguar, a mere twenty-five yards away and closing quickly. In a weak attempt to calm his nerves, Memphis breathed in deeply and then slowly exhaled.

Artone flew off the hill onto level ground racing against the rapidly approaching showdown. Chasing the jaguar as the jaguar charged Memphis, Artone launched his spear. The jaguar leaped and the spear missed its target, sliding across the jungle floor toward Memphis. Without flinching, Memphis released a true arrow. The jaguar fell at his killer's feet with one ear missing and an arrow protruding through his upper-body.

Before Memphis could breathe again, Artone cried out Memphis's native nickname, "Budteré! Budteré!" Running toward Memphis hysterically with his arms waving around as if he were trying to fly, Artone desperately tried to warn his friend.

Startled, Memphis peered over his shoulder in time to witness the single most fearful sight life had yet to present him. Another larger cat bore down on him, her eyes intently locked on her prey.

Filled with dread, Memphis struggled to pull the arrow from the first jaguar. Unable to dislodge the weapon, he turned, trembling with fear and helplessness, to see the object of his fright. As he did, Memphis noticed Artone's spear lying next to a tree halfway between the jaguar and himself.

Like a madman, Memphis darted for the spear. He reached it only a blink before the jaguar and, sliding leg-first, grabbed the spear, setting the dull end against the base of the tree. He erected it just as the snarling hunter leapt for the kill – mouth agape – and swallowed the point of the spear.

The spear's end protruded through the jaguar's neck, lifting

her nearly straight up before the weight of the beast flipped the spear over backwards, slamming the dying animal to the ground. Its thrashing quickly ceased, leaving nothing more than a lifeless carcass just behind the tree where Memphis sat in shock.



CHAPTER 2

THE melodious chimes of nearby church bells danced throughout the city before penetrating Jonah's bedroom window like uninvited beams of sunlight in the early morning. Jonah cursed the obnoxious invasion, wishing he were deaf. If he could afford to move, he would.

Holding his pounding head, Jonah slithered out of his bed and into the bathroom where he splashed cold water on his face, ignoring the hand towel hanging next to the sink. Still wearing his jeans and shoes from the night before, he had slept – or, better put – passed out in his clothes, and was, therefore, already halfway dressed for work. Jonah put on a long-sleeve, wrinkled blue dress shirt, the same shirt he had worn to work the day before.

He stumbled into the kitchen where he put on a fresh pot of coffee. Plopping into one of the chairs at the kitchen table, Jonah pulled his laptop computer to face him and exhaled a deep sigh. He clicked the space bar and, out of habit, looked out the window while the computer woke up. His seat afforded him a modest view of the usually crowded downtown. At five in the morning, however, a strange mix of midnight shadows

About the Author



PHOTO BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

JONATHAN WILLIAMS served as a missionary with the International Mission Board's Xtreme Team in the jungles of Peru for two years. It was there, lying under a mosquito net in a hut in the middle of the Amazon jungle, that Williams began to write his first novel, *Jungle Sunrise*. Living with a previously unreached indigenous tribe, the Amarakaeri, Williams experienced firsthand the beauty and danger of native life as he had the opportunity to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ, hunt with bows and arrows, fish with spears, navigate rivers, and encounter every aspect of the tribe's culture. This breathtaking Amazon scene serves as the backdrop for *Jungle Sunrise*.

Williams, twenty-nine, writes and lives in North Texas with his wife, Jessica, where he pastors Body Life Church as he pursues a Masters of Divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. His passion and desire is to inspire readers with creativity and truth.

Write him at PeruMission@hotmail.com.

Publisher's Word

The Great Commission:

*All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.
Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them
in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you;
and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*

(Matthew 28:18-20, NKJV)

WE are pleased to present *Jungle Sunrise* as Nordskog Publishing's third fiction book in our series of *Noble Novels!* Man's imagination can be a marvelous gift of God as it is employed in fiction storytelling, not just to entertain but to enlighten and inspire readers.

The Lord's Great Commission is always a worthy Christian focus. Our part, to publish peace and salvation (Isaiah 52:7), is enriched by bringing to you a Christian missions adventure—fiction, but authentically rooted in the author's experience in the field.

When a creative writer manages—in history, biography, or even a fiction story—to impart to us a virtual sense of the transforming power of Christ to redeem a human life, we believe the Lord is glorified, readers edified, and workers may be encouraged to fulfill His Great Commission.

We believe that godly writers are amongst God's gifted artisans, doing their best to present themselves to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly

Publisher's Word

dividing the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15). Writers, insofar as they glorify the Lord with their words, are craftsmen not unlike those called to create the sacred furnishings of Moses' tabernacle: "See, I have called by name Bezalel... And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship... [And] put in his heart the ability to teach" (Exodus 31:2, 35:34, NKJV).

The author Jonathan Williams is a pastor but for two years he was an Xtreme Team missionary living deep in the Peruvian jungle with indigenous tribes. The characters in this story are fictitious, but you will find them vital and reflective of a remote mission-field experience. They include a missionary couple, a linguist, a photo-journalist, and an anthropologist, along with the boatman they hire and several tribes of natives. Into this mix is cast the main character, Jonah, whose life is falling apart, leaving him at the extreme end of his rope. Dragged on this adventure by his linguist brother, we see him first as a New York City college professor slipping into depression, to a man outside his element learning the ropes of the Amazon jungle, and then suddenly stumbling into a situation that could likely lead to his imminent death.



The author gives us an intimate glimpse of lives being transformed by the Gospel. So enter this jungle adventure, but know you will find it hard to put this book down!

– Gerald Christian Nordskog
PUBLISHER