

A Frightening Experience

1. Stop! Look at the title and make a prediction about the kind of frightening experience you think the story might be about.

(Is your prediction written for #1? If so, keep reading.)

Just before March Break in 2007, a seventeen-year old girl was flying over the jungles of South America in a small plane. This girl, whose name was Zoreka, lived with her grandmother in Canada so she could go to high school. She had lived in South America most of her life, because her parents worked there studying different kinds of plants and animals. Zoreka was on her way to spend March Break with them.

The plane flew into a terrible storm. When Zoreka looked out the window, she saw that the left engine had been struck by lightning and was on fire. She felt the plane plunge toward the ground, and then there was an awful crash. Zoreka was knocked out by the impact.

2. Stop! What do you predict will happen to Zoreka? Explain.

(Is your prediction written for #2? If so, keep reading.)

When she woke up, everything was quiet. She found that she was still strapped into her seat, but when she looked around, she saw that the plane had been cut in two. There was a lot of wreckage and parts of the plane laying all around her, but where were all the other passengers? Where was the pilot? As she tried to get up, Zoreka discovered that her arm had been badly injured in the crash.

She searched all around the wreckage of the plane, but could not find anyone else. It was very, very strange. Why was she left behind? How long had she been out? Was she the only survivor? She knew she couldn't stay there, so she started walking through the jungle to find help.

Luckily, Zoreka's parents had taught her about the various plants and animals of South American jungles. She knew what she could eat and what was poisonous. She also knew how to stay away from certain animals, bugs and reptiles. If she had not known this, she could have been poisoned or killed within a couple of days.

As it was, she walked through the jungle for seven days, eating berries and roots to stay alive. Her arm hurt a lot, and she was bitten by many exotic bugs. One particular bite caused a major reaction. Zoreka had night sweats, day sweats and felt dizzy and sick to her stomach. There was no way she could make herself feel better, no matter how hard she tried.

After seven days of walking and suffering, Zoreka came to a big river. She followed it downstream for a day and finally came across a camp. Soon, some men who worked in the jungle came along and offered to help her get to a nearby village. They took her to the hospital, where her parents came and stayed with her till she got better. It took a while, but Zoreka finally recovered from this horrible experience. She was happy to be back with her family, but looked forward to going back to Canada to finish high school. After graduation, she wanted to study to become a scientist like her parents.

3. Re-read your predictions in # 1 and # 2. Were they different from what actually happened in the story? Explain.

4. What do you think happened to the other passengers and the pilot?

5. What were some of the challenges that Zoreka faced while she was in the jungle? Explain.

6. What helped her survive in the jungle? Explain.

7. How many weeks did Zoreka spend walking through the jungle?

8. What caused Zoreka to have night sweats and feel sick?

9. If you were Zoreka, what would be one of the first things you would do after leaving the hospital? Explain.
