

Raiders of the Emerald Tablet

July, 1943, Somewhere in the Peruvian Amazonia...

Dr. Henry "Indiana" Jones Jr. brushed aside the thick layer of spiderwebbing in front of them. Indy was in his usual "work clothes", a worn out leather jacket, a dusty brown fedora and had a coiled whip at his side. Professor Jones was an archeology professor at Marshall College, although he was better known by the U.S. army as an 'obtainer of rare antiquities'.

The adventurer adjusted his fedora resting on his head as he examined the limestone doorway he had just revealed. Surrounding the entryway were an odd mixture of ancient writing - including Egyptian and Olmec hieroglyphics as well as cuneiform, ancient Greek and other languages he couldn't make out. In the center of the doorway was a carving of Thoth, holding a tablet. The Emerald Tablet, which some believe to contain a guide to the lost civilization of Atlantis.

"What kind of bizarre cross-over is this?" asked the soldier standing behind Indy.

Stepping into the sunlight streaking through the gaps in the jungle canopy was a large muscular man, golden yellow hair peaking out from under a blue army helmet. Strapped to his back on a brown leather harness was an unmistakable large red, white and blue disc with a Star in the center. To most of the world, he was known as Captain America. A symbol that the country had rallied behind in the midst of the war. His friends knew him as simple Steve from the Bronx.

"Slow down, Steve, This is usually where things get a little rough."

"Rough? That, I can handle," said Steve.

Indy grabbed Steve by the shoulder. "Better let me go first." Indy stepped into the entrance, then turned pointing a finger sharply at Steve. "Step where I step and don't touch anything."

"I'll follow you." Steve replied.

"I've heard that before." Indy said quietly as he stepped closer to the archway. Indy examined the various carvings around the doorway. A couple of times he compared the archway and symbols with notes from a beat up diary he kept in his messenger bag hanging over his shoulder. Using a small pencil he added some details to his original sketch, before slipping both back into the bag.

"Do you think it's still here?" asked Steven.

"Don't know." Indy looked around. Hard to be sure, but the ground showed signs that someone - or something - had passed by recently. "Hydra held the map for a while before you recovered it. They could have made a copy. They could have already come looking."

"The writing indicates a warning and a curse, for whoever seeks the tablet. It says that they will suffer a tremendous fall, and face the 'jaws of the underworld'," Indy said, as he stepped carefully into the dark tunnel.

“Well, that’s not terrifying then.” Steve said, swallowing, as he followed the archeologist into the darkness.

Inside the dark tunnel, Indy felt a shifting of the floor beneath his feet, and felt the floor start to break away under his foot. Getting the torch out of his knapsack, he lit it with his lucky lighter, and tossed the torch ahead into the corridor.

"We have flashlights now," Steve reminded him. Indy ignored the comment and scanned the floor and hallway. The hallway was lined with statues of different gods from various cultures - all gods associated with writing, wisdom or messengers, including Thoth, Hermes, and Nabu..

He could also see the sunken portions of the floor that looked like what he had almost fallen through. If he was right, there were huge sections of the floor that they would have to jump over.

With a short running start, Steve jumped across the trapped corridor. Indy took a bit longer, using his whip to swing from statue to statue.

The tunnel curved to the left and began to descend. It was a gentle slope at first, but grew steeper and steeper. Indy stepped onto a patch of loose dirt, and as he started to slide down, Steve grabbed his flailing arm. The two were frozen for a second, then as Steve pulled Indy up, Steve lost his footing and the two tumbled end over end down the quickly dropping hallway as it turned sharply vertical!

And suddenly they splashed into a raging underground river! The cold water hit Indy hard and immediately he felt himself being whisked down river. He struggled to pull himself up to get a breath, but the messenger bag, knapsack, and leather jacket were getting heavy with water, pulling him down. Indy squirmed out of the knapsack, letting the river take it away. He was able to swim and catch a breath, refreshing his burning lungs. He crashed into a rock, and felt the blood start dripping down his face from where he had collided. Reaching up he felt the cut on his head, but his favorite hat was missing!

Ahead he caught a glimpse of light shimmering through the water ahead. Suddenly, they were out of the dark tunnel. Looking around, they appeared to have come out at the bottom of a very deep sinkhole. Looking straight up, they could see sunlight streaking down through the jungle canopy. The unfinished rock wall was draped with green vines, ferns and even a few trees jutting out from the sides.

But below the sink hole and ahead of them, was a small beach, which stretched back about 50 feet or so under a cliff set back.. On beach in the shade of the cliff sat a limestone temple of modest size, with a statue of Thoth standing in front..

"We made it!" said Steve.

"Look at the dark patches of water near the beach," Indy pointed out.

"Shadows?"

"It's moving."

"What is it?"

"Schools of fish. Based upon my luck, Piranha." Indy responded.

As they swam closer to the beach, Indy realized that he was right, it was a large school of Piranha. And the fish were getting riled up at the scent of Indy's blood in the water! The deadly fish swarmed the two heroes! Their blunt noses hiding razor sharp teeth. Indy brought up his arms to cover his face and head as the piranha came in for the kill. His jacket protected his arms and back. A few got lucky with a bite of his scalp or chomping through his pant legs. Indy scrambled through the water, trying to get to shore before the fish tore him up.

The water was shallower here. He could put his feet down and almost get his nose above water. One painful step at a time, Indy pushed through the swarm of fish, batting them away as best he could.

Steve used his super-strength to swim as fast as he could through the Piranha. A few fish latched onto him before he got to shore. Climbing up out of the lagoon, Steve looked for Indy, finding him a few feet away, shaking a stubborn piranha from a jacket sleeve. Indy's khaki work pants were torn and bloodstained. His white button up shirt seemed to have a few brown spots and new tears in it. But otherwise, the archeologist seemed ok.

Indy walked with a slight limp, favoring his left leg. As he neared Steve, he paused and altered course. Another artifact had washed up on the beach: a well worn beat up brown fedora. Indy picked up his soaked hat and plopped it onto his head. With a grin, he started towards the small temple.

The temple doorway had been broken, but only so far as to confirm the contents were inside it seemed. On a pedestal in the back was an ornate carved obsidian box that still bore the unbroken seal of Thoth.

"If the map and legends are correct, that box contains Thoth's Emerald Tablet, and the secret to the location of Atlantis." Indy said with a crooked smile.

Above them they heard the sound of rotor blades.

Hydra.

"It might be time to call in help," Captain America said, reading his shield for a fight.

"The radio was in my knapsack. We have to hope Secord saw them" Indy said.

Elsewhere in the Jungle, Cliff Secord, the Rocketeer, put on his helmet, and launched himself into the air. Ahead, flying just over the jungle canopy were four Hydra Gyrocopters armed with machine guns! "Howard," he muttered, "what did you talk me into!"