

Visit the exciting Web site for kids at www.cool2read.com
and the Abby Web site at www.abbyadventures.com

Copyright © 2002 by Pamela Walls. All rights reserved.

Cover illustration copyright © 2002 by Jean Paul Tibbles/Bernstein and
Andruilli. All rights reserved.

Interior map © 2001 by Magellan Geographix/Maps.com. All rights
reserved.

Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New International
Version®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible
Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights
reserved.

Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Transla-
tion, copyright © 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers,
Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

This novel is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents
are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously.
Any resemblance to actual events, locales, organizations, or persons
living or dead is entirely coincidental and beyond the intent of either the
author or publisher.

ISBN 0-8423-3632-X, mass paper

Printed in the United States of America

11 10 09 08 07 06 05 04 03 02
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Chapter One

OCTOBER 1848

Abby Kendall bent over, grabbed a handful of wet black sand, and rubbed it between her fingers. Raising her eyes in wonder at the sapphire lagoon, she inhaled the scents of this new tropical island. The salty sea wind carried the sweet fragrance of vanilla, which Uncle Samuel said grew wild. “We’ve arrived in paradise!” Abby gushed to Luke Quigley, her best friend. “Just look at that view of Tahiti.” She turned and pointed inland, toward jagged mountain peaks, each one cloaked in rich green velvet and ribboned with silver waterfalls.

Luke chuckled as his dancing green eyes roved Matavai Bay’s black-sand beach, where they’d landed a few minutes earlier. He nodded at Abby’s nine-year-old sister. “Sarah loves this special sand for building castles.”

“And Sandy loves it for digging,” Abby added. Luke’s eight-month-old, blonde-and-white pup was burrowing furiously into the dark sand, nosing for crabs alongside Sarah. “*Arrr!*” The pup’s head came

up suddenly, and Abby could see she'd found more than she'd bargained for. A two-inch crab had attached itself to her nose!

Sandy yipped and backed up, shaking her head to dislodge the crab, but it wouldn't budge. When the pup peered down her nose to get a good look at what pinched, her chocolate-brown eyes almost crossed with the effort.

Sarah and Luke doubled over in laughter, but Abby hurried to Sandy and batted the crab off her tender face. "Poor baby!" she crooned, kneeling next to the dog and giving her a squeeze. Sandy's plumed tail wagged in appreciation. "Shame on you, Luke Quiggley!" Abby chided. "I've a mind to stick a sand crab on *your* nose."

"Aw, come on, Abigail *Patience*," Luke said with a chuckle. "It's been a long sail from Indonesia and we were cooped up for weeks. Have some fun!" He scooped up a small piece of driftwood and threw it for the pup. "Let's take Sandy on a walk so she'll forget her troubles."

Sarah, her white-blonde hair bright in the sunlight, glanced up from her work of digging a castle moat. "I'm too busy to go."

Abby fell into step next to Luke, her cinnamon curls dancing down her back. She glanced back at her mother, Charlotte Kendall, and Lani, the lovely Hawaiian woman who now traveled with them. Together they sat on a beach blanket.

"Speaking of busy," Abby said, her eyes on the

two women, “Lani’s chattering like a magpie about this being the perfect place for her upcoming wedding. I’m glad she and Ma are busy planning. We’ll have time to explore Tahiti.”

Luke shook his head in amusement. “I’ve never seen Lani acting so girly before—she’s tied up in knots over all those details. I plan on staying out of her way until it’s over.”

Abby grinned. It was clear the romance of Lani’s big day was lost on Luke.

The soft *swish* of waves spilling onto the beach, then receding, blocked out Lani’s animated voice as Abby and Luke walked down the curved shore toward a distant point. Coconut palms swayed in the breeze up the dunes. Colors seemed bolder here, the air more perfumed. Abby could see tall Mount Orohena rising in a dramatic peak, wearing a garland of swirling mist. A faint rainbow arched above a rain-spent cloud.

Luke slowed his longer strides to match her shorter ones. Abby was glad he understood the leg weakness she’d inherited from her ma and let her rest when she needed it. Now Luke followed her gaze. “I wonder if there’s a pot of gold at the end of that rainbow,” he teased.

With each step, Abby’s feet squished in the warm dark sand. “Gold or not, it’s heavenly here,” she said in wonder. “It’s even more beautiful than Hawaii, and you know how I feel about home.” Indeed, she and Luke had fallen in love with the

Hawaiian islands they'd already seen: Oahu, Maui, Lanai, and Kauai. And even though Abby's family now lived aboard their trading ship, the *Kamana*, they all thought of Hawaii as home base.

But as she stood on Tahiti's beach, Abby knew she could fall in love with this island, too. She already enjoyed the cool feeling of the lacy surf that rushed up to kiss her bare toes. And she couldn't wait to draw the view of sharp mountain peaks she could see from the beach.

Luke tossed a piece of driftwood into the waves. Water splashed onto his blond sun-streaked hair and freckled nose. He wiped it with the back of his hand. "Uncle Samuel said the marine life is richer in Tahiti than in Hawaii. It has something to do with cold water welling up from the bottom of the lagoons."

"There are more fish—and they're more colorful," she said, remembering the short rowboat trip from the *Kamana* to shore in the glasslike water. She glanced at their schooner now as it bobbed on the bay. Duncan MacIndou, their Scottish captain, was belowdecks with Thomas Kendall, Abby's pa, and Uncle Samuel. They were still taking inventory of the silk, rice, and spices the *Kamana* carried for the upcoming trade they hoped to make in Tahiti's Papeete Harbor. They'd traveled thousands of miles since Duncan had purchased the abandoned ship in San Francisco and formed a trading company with the Kendalls.

Luke began to walk again and Abby fell into step next to him, shaking sand from her lavender dress skirt with one hand. Cinnamon curls danced down her back as she glanced back at her mother, Charlotte Kendall. Ma and Lani, the lovely Hawaiian woman who now traveled with them, sat talking together on a beach blanket.

It was during a trip to Kauai that they had discovered Lani, Duncan's half sister. And now she was engaged to marry Abby's biologist uncle, Samuel Kendall. One of the main reasons they had come to Tahiti was to give Lani the wedding of her dreams.

"I think Lani wants the wedding to take place soon," Abby said with a sigh.

"There can't be much to do, since there's no one to invite but us," Luke said in his practical way. "But I'm beginning to think Lani would like to invite everyone who lives here."

Abby laughed and squinted up at him. "But Luke, you're missing the point. Weddings are celebrations . . . and so *romantic*."

Luke only rolled his eyes.

"Who could have guessed," Abby said, ignoring him, "a year ago, when your Aunt Dagmar wouldn't let you leave California with us, that we'd be sailing the South Seas? Remember how we always wanted to go traveling together?"

Abby thought back to the day she'd met Luke, four years ago, when he'd come to California as an

orphan to stay with his aunt. Abby's family had offered the lonely boy love—something Aunt Dagmar seemed unable to give—and Abby had been rewarded with a best friend.

“Are you still drawing everything in your journal?” Luke asked.

“Yep.” Abby looked inland again at the soaring peaks. “In fact, there's a quality of light here that makes colors more vibrant. I wish I could paint what I'm seeing. Chalk and pencils can't capture those shimmering blues and greens.”

“Maybe we could buy you some paints,” Luke said.

“Even if we could find some,” she said, “I've never learned. Painting takes a special skill. I'm not sure I have it.”

They walked on in silence for another minute before Abby suggested they head to the distant point.

“Okay, as long as we get back in time for lunch,” Luke said with a wink. “A 15-year-old boy needs lots of food to grow.”

“You're not 15 *yet*,” Abby challenged, her sapphire eyes snapping. “Right now, we're *both* 14.” She cast him a smug glance, but the truth was, she only had 10 more days to enjoy “catching up” with him in age.

“Ha!” Luke countered. “Just 10 more days, Abigail *Patience* Kendall, and I'll be a year ahead of you again.” He sighed with satisfaction and then

sniffed the breeze. "I smell something cooking!" Hurrying ahead of her, he pointed. "Look, a woman up ahead is tending a fire. She's cooking . . . bacon! Do you think she'd share it with us?" Abby saw the dark-haired woman bent over a cook fire. Smoke rose lazily from it, and blankets were spread out nearby. Like the Kendalls, someone else had come to enjoy this tranquil bay.

Below the busy woman a burly Tahitian man walked in the surf. Every now and then he would gaze seaward, as if looking for something.

Abby shook her head. "If you're that hungry, let's head back to our picnic. No doubt the Tahitians are as generous as the Hawaiians, but I hate to see a grown boy beg."

They turned around and retraced their steps, soon rejoining Sarah. Sandy began digging again, but she backed up and growled this time when she encountered a crab.

Smiling at the puppy's antics, Abby glanced up and noticed the Tahitian man had drawn much closer. Now he was only 10 yards off, still gazing out to sea as he hiked through the foam.

Sarah stopped molding wet sand into a castle turret. "I wonder what that man's looking at," she murmured.

Abby shaded her eyes from the bright sun. The man had a tall, powerful build and a handsome face. He wore a green wrap of *tapa* cloth, secured around his waist.

Abby looked beyond the Tahitian to the darker blue water. "I think someone's swimming out there." She could just make out an arm splashing. Whoever it was, they were in deep water.

Sarah stood up and walked toward the surf. The Tahitian man was just a few feet away now. Abby joined Sarah. Through the foaming water Abby noticed a knife sheath strapped to the man's calf. For a brief moment she wondered if he could be dangerous, and she put a cautious hand on Sarah's shoulder. But he glanced at them and smiled, showing white teeth.

Abby grinned back as he nodded to her, but Sarah kept moving forward into the surf, almost barring his path. "Look," she said to both Abby and the stranger. "There's more than just a swimmer out there . . ." Sarah swallowed and pointed. "I see a shark!"

Abby's eyes frantically sought out the swimmer. *There!* A large triangular fin kept pace about 30 feet behind the swimmer. The instant Abby saw the size of the fin, she knew the shark must be huge.

"Luke!" Abby shouted. "The rowboat—"

Sandy started barking as Luke leapt to his feet, racing toward the small craft drawn up on the sand. But the Tahitian man didn't hesitate. He ran into the oncoming wave and dived under the glassy curl, then pitched into the deeper water with the strong, sure strokes of an athlete.

Abby couldn't believe her eyes. *He's swimming toward the shark!*

She raced after Luke, who was dragging their ship's rowboat into the foaming waves. Soon they had it bobbing on the water, and he held it steady while she gathered her long lavender skirt and climbed in. Luke pushed it farther out, the water sloshing over his waist, then threw himself over the gunwale. Settling onto the wooden bench, he gripped both oars and began heaving with all his might. The little skiff leapt forward and plowed through the next wave. Abby's eyes widened as she turned to peer ahead.

Don't let us be too late, God! Abby prayed.

As the boat drew near the Tahitian man, Abby could see he was almost to the swimmer—a woman. She was treading water, her lovely copper face almost ashen with fear.

"Where's the shark?" Luke asked.

"There!" Abby shrieked. Its huge fin closed in on the woman, who turned to face it as it circled her in a deadly game.

Just then the man dived beneath the surface. Abby's heart raced. No doubt the cold-blooded fish was readying for the kill. Could that stranger save the woman?

When the man resurfaced, his right hand came up first. Sunlight glinted off the silver knife blade as he positioned himself directly in front of the woman.

The shark fin plowed straight through the water toward him, then disappeared beneath the sea. In the next second the man disappeared, too!

Abby let out a bloodcurdling scream.