

## The Cave

Pure darkness. The pitch-black fog of uncertainty engulfed us, as if our future was as dark as this cave. Why would I even take the very first step to enter this cave? Despite apprehension filling my mind, I unconsciously rekindled the memories of this daunting expedition.

With the sky brightly lit by the sun and tress dancing along with the breeze, Tom and I decided to immerse ourselves in the natural greenery under this balmy weather. We headed to hike on Lantau Island without a second thought as we have our hiking equipment prepared anytime.

The engrossing picturesque lush green hills were always a lovely sight to behold, while the sound of breeze and chirps of birds interwound perfectly to become calming music to our ears. The ‘uphill battle’ with gusts were so enjoyable that we didn’t even feel exhausted during the journey.

Everything was relaxing until we stumbled across a mysterious cave. ‘Have you seen this cave before?’ I asked. ‘No, we have trod on this trail for several times. Why have we not noticed this obvious cave?’ Tom answered with a frown. ‘To clear the mist, why not step inside and have a look?’ ‘I suggest with a dauntless confident grin. ‘Are you sure?’ ‘Tom timidly asked, setting his foot backward. ‘Don’t be such a coward, Tom! We have our phones and equipment! What is the worst thing that can happen?’ I exclaimed, knowing nothing about the peril in front of us. ‘But... but...’ Tom stammered. ‘No more “buts”! Let’s go!’ I spoke with resolve. Audacious, I took the very first step, entering the realm unknown to us.

As we trod into the cave, sunshine outside completely vanished, leaving us in sheer darkness. Trembling, Tom immediately took out a torch to lighten up our surrounding. ‘Click’. ‘Ah!’ Tom’s scream followed. Our jaws were dropped. The unfathomable sight reaped our hearts from our chests. The ‘click’ did not give us the sense of comfort. Instead, fear spread through my whole body as if an electric current passing through my body. As much as I wanted to escape, my body was paralyzed with my legs being glued to the ground.

The light-hearted question ‘What can be the worst thing that follows?’ had an answer that was right in front of us – swarms of poisonous centipedes and spiders.

Those black creatures flooded the ground like a flowing river. ‘Run!’ We both exclaimed, lifting our heavy legs and darting towards the opposite direction. However fast we ran, we could not find the ‘light at the end of the cave’ as if the entrance had vanished. ‘What can we do?’ ‘What can we do?’ Tom asked desperately, panting as he was short of breath. ‘Take out our phone and call the police for help! Quick!’ I exclaimed with my mouth also trembling. With the immense fear engulfing us, we acted so frantically that we even dropped our phone. How preposterous of the past me to say having a phone can ensure safety and security. We were thrown into the bleak future, having no means to escape. At this very moment, Tom’s torch went off.

Pure darkness. The pitch-black fog of uncertainty engulfed us as if our future was as dark as this cave. Swarms of centipedes posed the unprecedented menace that may took our souls out of our bodies — death. Why would I choose to enter this horrifying cave instead of enjoying the scenic wonder outside? ‘I don’t want to die,’ Tom wailed. Tom’s wail woke me from my thinking. My perturbed and troubled mind had been focusing on myself instead of my dear friend who was staying with me amid of this predicament. ‘Sorry!’ I uttered with immense guilt that made my heart sink like a piece of heavy lead. ‘How could I be that apathetic and self-centered, disregarding Tom’s opinion and treating his act as cowardice? ‘You’re right. We should not enter this cave in the first place. This is my fault,’ I wept.

‘At least we are together before our death,’ Tom stopped wailing, ‘That’s what friends are for.’ His benevolent words bring me inordinate amount of warmth, rekindling the fond memories we had together. When I fell into a flowing river last time, he saved me with equanimity and intrepidity, making the right decisions of inspecting the landscape and rescuing me in the right spot. ‘If we could go through the adversities in the past together, we could also surmount this problem!’ Tom encouraged me a tinge of smile on his initially frightened face.

Suddenly, we hear laughters and echoes from the cave. ‘Can you hear that laughter? Who else is here?’ I asked Tom. We were utterly clueless. With our bewildered minds figuring out the puzzling laughters, a voice reminiscent of Goofy suddenly thundered at our back. ‘What are you two doing here? Got lost in this Halloween Haunted Mansion?’ The cave was suddenly brightly lit, expelling the sheer darkness that we were engulfed by in precisely the last second. No sooner had we seen a man in Goofy’s costume and a few more visitors than we realized the cave was part of the Disneyland Haunted Mansion. Under the bright light, the true identities of the crawling

spiders and centipedes were revealed — black mechanical insects crawling on carpets. Our sunk heart become as light as feather. We answered ‘Yes!’ to Goofy.

How lucky we were to survive! The exciting FREE rides were even waiting for us! The horrifying expedition did teach me an invaluable lesson on friendship and not to behave recklessly. Yet, Tom and I darted towards the rides without a second thought, as if we had already forgotten our ‘touching and heart-felt’ gratitude and encouragement towards each other in this ordeal.