

ADVENTURE STORIES #1



Atharv Patil
& 21 budding Authors

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By

Atharv Patil

&

21 budding Authors

Budding Authors

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Preface

Hi,

My name is Atharv . I am a class 9 student from Mumbai. I launched www.ihavereadthebook.com a free book review portal for the children & YA in April 2015.

It encourages children to read unique books and share their reviews for the benefit of other students. We have conducted various competitions for the children & YA. Writing an adventure story was one of them.

We have received a good response. Our mentor suggested that I should choose 20 stories and compile it into an e-book. I chose 22 stories including one of my story. I am really happy to present this book. I hope you will like it.

I am thankful to my Grand -parents, parents & my teachers for the encouragement, all the participants who sent their stories and their schools for encouraging the children to participate & my cousins Manasee for preparing the cover page & Kaustubh for formatting the document.

Looking forward for your feedback

Atharv Patil

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The Elixir of Evolution

“Once upon a time in Africa, there was a valley. It was not an ordinary valley. It was the valley of creation. Located right in centre of the continent and surrounded by mountains, this place was the place where mankind was born. It had the secret of evolution – a dark secret, if fallen in the wrong hands, might lead to the extinction of humanity.”

In a country far away, there lived a boy called John. He was a very adventurous person. He lived with his grandmother in a hut. His grandmother always told him interesting stories. He liked the story about the Valley of Creation. He always wished that he could go there and see it for real. He was bored of taking care of the sheep and wanted to have his 5th adventure. He had a lot of adventures, but limited only to his town. He had saved the mayor; caught robbers; one time caught leader of the mob and even saved a child from a bear.

One day, when he was grazing his sheep he saw a huge man coming towards him. He then started herding his sheep away and towards the pens. After safely locking up the pens, he came out to do his grandmother’s work-she had asked him to bring some firewood for the evening.

While venturing in the forest he set on a wrong trail and

slipped on a wet rock. He grabbed on a ledge and prevented himself from slipping and falling down in the chasm. He knew that if he would scream for help, nobody would answer, so he tried to climb up but to no avail. Suddenly, the huge man arrived once again and hauled him up, he said that he too was an adventurer like John and was observing him for last two weeks.

He introduced himself as Ren, a famous patron and adventurer. He told John that he was in search of the elixir of evolution so that he could help mankind progress forward by bringing a new era where humans will have evolved. As it turned out, John had no clue about the elixir of evolution, but he readily agreed. He was told by Ren to meet him at the city of Vadun so that he could give important items for the quest. He strictly warned John to not reveal this to anybody.

John went home whistling but when he reached home, he remembered that he had forgotten to get firewood. He looked for his grandmother, but she was nowhere to be seen. He desperately searched for her all over the place, but could not find her. He went to a nearby Inn because he had some money, and had a sandwich.

The next morning he left for Vadun. That night he slept on a tree. Adam was a talented archer. He was practicing archery below the tree. Adam was shooting his target from 500 ft away when something fell on him

& he fainted. When he woke up, he saw that it was a person who was trying to bring him to consciousness. Adam and John introduced each other. When John told Adam that he was on a quest, he requested to join, John agreed. Together, they travelled 24 hours and reached Vadun.

Here, in an Inn called The Rabbit's Burrow, they met Ren who wasn't pleased with the fact that Adam had come but when he realized Adam's talent he was fine with it. He told them, "Listen carefully, I am sending you on a quest to the valley of creation to retrieve the Elixir of Evolution. The Valley lies in the exact centre of Africa. The place is geographically surrounded by mist and cloud. You will have to go to that place by passing through a waterfall. Take these maps and badges for reinforcements. I have heard that the natives are not friendly and please DO not add another member to the quest." They agreed.

The next morning, they left for Africa by a boat. They sailed for the western coast of Africa. They reached the coast of Ghana in seven days. They now were out of the supplies. The chief of the native tribe told them that if they could help them to clear the specific place from the clutches of wild foxes. Their ancestors were growing Cocoa trees in that place and the cunning foxes had made it their home. Then, they would give them the

supplies. John and Adam went along with one of the natives and scared the foxes with flaming arrows. The Natives then gave them the supplies. They thanked the natives and boarded the boat. They sailed for the coast of Gabon. On the shores of Gabon they were welcomed warmly by the natives, who promised to take care of their boat.

John and Adam started inwards. On the first day they walked through a shallow river for the whole day. On the second day they walked in a marsh. They encountered several hungry crocodiles but managed to be alive and cross the marshy land. On the third day they scaled up a rocky mountain. Finally, on the fourth day they climbed down almost 1100 meters. On one side of the valley, was a huge waterfall. Near the basin of the waterfall, a door appeared. The door was closed. They tried to push it. John noticed an impression of a palm. As soon as John put his palm on the impression, the door started opening. They went through it and Voila!! They couldn't believe their eyes; inside the waterfall was a magical world. Imagine the most beautiful place you can think of and it was there. For them it was even better than their homes.

After walking half a mile, they were greeted by the natives. The natives were friendly and spoke John's language. They respected him because he was the

descendant of the King of Guardians. He had royal blood in him. John was enjoying every moment and BOOM!!! The door swung open, Ren stood there heavily armed and his guards at his side.

“Hey! Ren, guess what I found, I am their King.” Said John. “Yes, I see you completed my little quest. Now, it is time. I will corrupt this valley by stealing the elixir of evolution” said Ren. “But why?” asked Adam aloud. Without hesitating, Ren shot an arrow at Adam’s leg. Adam staggered and fell. John was very upset on this and charged at Ren. He punched Ren in the face and knocked him out. He then held his leg in his hands, spun him round and threw Ren into a mountain. Ren was badly injured and could not get up.

Looking at the big question mark on John’s face, his grandmother explained”Look John, there is a long story behind why I am here, now. Your grandfather was the king of this wonderful kingdom. We had an enemy—i.e. Ren’s father. He was the senior minister in your grandfather’s council of ministers and he was very ambitious. During a war with the neighbouring kingdom, he killed your father & grand-father by poisoning them. Your mother could not bear the sudden shock due to the death of your father; she died after hearing the news. I was told by our trusted people that he wanted to kill you also so that he becomes the

King. You were a small baby. I ran away from this place to save you from him. When our Patron God got to know about his killings of your father and grand -father, he cursed him and expelled him out of this place. Now, the grown up Ren wanted to become the King but due to our god's curse he could not have come inside the Kingdom. He was following you as he knew that you are the real heir of the kingdom. He challenged you to come to this place. He knew that you are the only one who could open the door for him. He kidnapped me and brought me here in case you fail the mission as apart from you, I am the second person who could open the door. After opening the door, he wanted to get cleared from the curse given by the god and then kill you but you are brave person and you are very lucky to have a friend like Adam, who is willing to sacrifice his life for you.

Hours later John's grandmother when Adam woke up, she told John and Adam" The elixir of evolution lies here, in that sacred statue, waiting to be released by us, every one million years, and till that time you will be the king and your duty will be to safeguard it."To safeguard it, you need to live for another million years, so take this" saying this she handed them two purple vials.

"Is this the elixir of immortality?" John asked and grinned as he reached out to drink it. Atharv Patil

Journey from

‘WOODS COTTAGE’ to ‘WOODS VILLA’

On the banks of the alluring river running through the heavenly city of London i.e. Plymouth I there dwelled a poor but humble family known by ‘Woods’ to their neighbour. In ‘Woods Cottage’ there decided a widowed woman “Melia” with her three venturesome sons. Sam was eldest amongst the brothers and younger to him were his two little twin brothers Jone and Jack. These poor fellows had never seen their dad and knew nothing about their nasty past. More ever the lady in the family never attempted to reveal their family history. Whatever the children used to say, their desires used to be fulfilled by their affectionate mother. The elder one (18 yrs) although never attended any educational institute but possessed the worldly wisdom. On the other hand, the younger ones (16 yrs) went to school and were picking up language and were implementing the science and mathematics in their daily lives. Jone and Jack’s education was possible just because of Melia’s past time stitching job and Sam’s menial but conscientious tasks. They all lived a happy contented life and never grudged about anything unless one day the concealed photo album of their family was unveiled to the three little guys. In the picture, they

were astonished to see their mom in her younger days posing with a young – affluent man in front of a villa with box wood hedges, lilacs and Cherry blossoms and new model of black Ambassador highlighting the background and both the young loves were dressed in velvets and chiffons. All of them pleaded her to reveal the secret but their mom was reluctant. The children always questioned their mom about the well – off man with their baffled looks. Every time they were given the same response by their mom who was – I don't know and I won't tell anything about him! The constant nagging made the lady speak one day.” Yes! Yes! Yes! He is your dad. And we lived together happily about twenty year's age. But on one dreadful summer day during the world war my millionaire husband expired. At that time, Sam you were just two years old and I was pregnant with Jone and Jack. That pain of separation was unendurable and the very thought of death of your dad made me collapse down due to grief. Out of the worst, assailants threw his dead body somewhere in the trench. Ah! Just after your birth your dad's evil brothers forcibly resided in our home and hurled all of us out. I had lived a part of my life in the street too. Then, I came to Plymouth. People here were genial, accepted me and assisted me. Rest you all know better”. She stopped and the airs of revenge on her sons' disagreeably pleasant faces made her instruct them to lose that chapter then

and there only and resume their lives.

But any child after hearing such an unpleasant history of his life couldn't be stopped of pondering upon the vindictive thoughts. Similar was the case with these fellows. After huge rounds and stages of discussions, they concluded to seize back their past glory. They chose to fight all odds in their way and leave the home before the upcoming weekend. That week, On Thursday night, they loaded their bags with all the required items and available evidences & at the crack of the dawn the three heroes went on for adventurous feats. In the morning, their mom on discovering the letter by the side of the bureau; addressed to her by her sons terrified her. She went on to explore her sons in the city but all her persistent efforts were futile because hardly did she know that the three hence were already set on their journey and couldn't be stopped by any forces whether it be their mom only.

The boys left their native town and tirelessly walked to the adjacent city centre. Jone asked Sam and Jack, "Brothers, where are we all going! What are our further plans? How we will find that villa?" Bewildered with Jone's Volley of questions, Sam out the picture and viewed it once again so that he could think of some plan. Then suddenly Jack pointed out the ambassador's number plate and told his brothers that they can easily

get some clue. With positive attitude in this aspect they went to car's agency, which was fortunately situated in that city only. They would never trace out the location without the aid of a pass by, who happened to be a journalist and was in a haste to reach his office. When the boys showed that picture to him he guided them to their destination. He viewed the picture carelessly but later on, reaching his office he recollected what all was there in the picture. Suddenly, he reconciled that he at those boys were actually his friend's sons left their home to fight for justice.

On reaching the agency, the boys were neglected by manager and they found about that twenty years old ambassador's possessor, but later on an old worker in the agency the boys to tell him whatever they knew because he had been in the job for past twenty five years. What all he required was a little knowledge. Suddenly the unique number 'WTWOOO1' made him shout, "Oh! I got it. It is Mr. Wilson T. Woods. One of the famous businessmen of his times who founded this agency. His unique number-----". Tears welled up in his eyes, on discovering the fact that they were his sons out on an excursion to defeat their enemies. He told them that their villa was constructed in the midst of Loon Mountains. Initially, the worker wanted to accompany them, but the little gentlemen refused to seek any helping hand. But forcibly the worker gave

them few shillings so that they could buy tickets for the train to reach that place. The boys thanked him and under took the full day's journey through train and reached Loon Mountains.

On the other hand, Melia was already half- mad because it had been two days that she hadn't seen her innocent sons. The neighbours solace couldn't soothe her. It was that journalist who came and gave the update of the incident that took place with him recently. The mother was a little satisfied to hear the news of her sons' well- being. She forced the journalist friend to take her to that agency where he dropped the boys and wished them all them the best of their lucks.

The boys, On the other hand hiked the mountain and in the way they found, a pain – stricken cub of a lion howling snappily. Initially, Jack and Jone were afraid of it but Sam took his little brothers to the cub to realize its pain and help him. Sam found that the cub was out of its territory and hunters locked it up in a cage with a lock at the gate. The very ideas of freeing it strike their minds & younger ones got busy finding the key whereas the eldest of them took a stone and banged it at the lock and freed the cub. The cub played with them and they all enjoyed in each other's company. That day, the boys along with that cub, went on the river bed to enjoy the sprays around the bonfire in each other's coziness.

In the morning, they waved a goodbye to the cub and went on for a new adventure.

They weren't aware till what height they had to scale the hill but as all were hungry and thirsty so they found their way till the river speaking with golden beams of light and flowers adorning the scene. They drank water and saw the persimmon tree, when one of the persimmons fell down and tossed and coloured the monkey's head orange which was sitting at the foot of that tree. They all had fits of laughter. As none knew technique to perch the tree, they surmounted themselves on each other's shoulders. In that warm sultry weather, they enjoyed in the central belt of hills with a certain required and minimal temperature for their survival. They climbed the mountain and finally reached a villa which looked somewhat similar one to the in the picture.

The boys banged the door and went inside and shouted, "We are the real owner of this house. Vacate this place as soon as possible."

Their uncle recognized them as his brother's sons and laughed at them. He gave them the fear of their death but the boys were determined in their aim. At last, when he was about to kill the boys with his rifle, he heard the roar of lions. Actually that cub had brought many lions along with him to kill the man so that it

could help them and save their lives. The uncle ran to save his life and the journalist and Melia after a long chase, broke into the place and decided to teach the evil uncle, a good and unforgettable lesson. Journalist's camera captured his voice and image while he was accepting his villainous plans. The boys had a glimmer in their eyes, when they saw that in the picture, their dad was smiling strangely, which was an added up feature in the picture.

The uncle was arrested and the boys along with their mother went to live in the new villa. They thanked the journalist and kissed the cub. They became the unforgettable heroes of Plymouth.

Sahajpreet Kaur

A USUAL INSTANCE IN MY UNUSUAL LIFE

What is life? According to me life is an opportunity given to us by god to enjoy in the world for a limited time till God gets fed up of the mayhem caused by us and calls us back and sends someone else with that some opportunity. Now the fact is that some do take this opportunity and enjoy it to the fullest while the rest lead a boring life with no enthusiasm, adventure, frolic and joy in it Adventure in my life, are some usual instances occurring here and there. Hence my life is termed to be as unusual one as I don't lead a usual life!

It happens to be that on one particular day, I was returning from school after listening some boring lectures on "making our lives simple." How ironical was that as, I, who a search for adventures here and there was made to sit and listen to something which almost damned my ears.

As I was passing by one of the silent lanes which was a kind of a "shortcut" for me. I noticed an over turned car burning and a man sighing with pain. The man had suffered a lot of burns and being pitiful, I provided him with some water. I knew that he was going to die but what that man said, completely shook my world. The man told me that he felt that I was a wise and faithful person and he burdened me with a responsibility.

The man was a senior agent from a secret agency. One of the kingpins of a mafia was going behind him as the man had kept safe with him in his house a small girl who had some important information which would help the agency to get hold of the fierce gang consisting of masochistic men and shook off their foundation resulting in the total extinction of the gang.

The man kept on telling all about the case. On asking him that why was he telling me this, entire he said that he saw one kind of confidence in me which resulted in him placing trust in me? I was now totally aware about what I needed to do and as he took his last breathe.

There were five wells- built men around me who picked me up without any difficulty and locked me up into a godown next to that small girl who sat unconscious. As soon as she gained consciousness, I got to know more about the case. I completely went deep into this matters forgetting the fact that how worried would my parent be, as I did not return to my house for a long time. It sees made that my duty dominated over my life. Somehow I managed to free myself and freed the small girl and fled from the godown with the help of a cycle parked in the backyard.

I tried to contact the agency and they said that they would send the troops to recover the document but I felt some kind of suspicion as they were more

concerned of the document but not the girl. This made me end up giving a wrong address and location to them. So now, I had the agency and the mafia gang behind me. It seemed that my life was more like an adventure and such kind if adventure brought goose bumps to me.

The agency was trying to track us by all means and the gang did the same. I tried to find a shelter for us to stay once managed to get some food to stay. The night was quite dark and when I woke up I found the girl missing. It had been possible that the mafia must have got hold of her as they wrote the location of the place where they took her in pure blood, may be to frighten the freak out of me. With the help of the locals there I managed to convince a kind old man who agreed to take me to that location.

The location was a four storied building with a helipad on the top. I passed through all the floors with great difficulty and strength by stealthily banging the members of the gang with on empty fire extinguisher on their heads. On the helipad, the leader of the mafia gang the only one alive of the gang tried to make a deal with me, he would return the girl if I let him keep the documents. I threw the cylinder of that empty fire extinguisher on his head and pushed him off from the helipad. He went down with a big thud on the ground.

The foundation of the mafia gang had perished away;

the documents were of no use to anyone now, not even the agency. I tore it off and threw it down the building. The girl had suffered some bruises but she received medication after we left that spot. In the hospital, when she was discharged. I held her hand and said, "Girl, finally it is time for us to go home now! The girl smiled back. I contacted my parents. Who in turn contacted the police; the police in turn shut down the rogue agency and sent the girl back to her house safely. My adventurous days were over and I was back with another one this time ---it was of preparing for the exam the next following day!

Arya Shah

Bravery is the key to Adventure

“Come on, sunny! We need to escape from here. Run as fast as you can!” George cried. He was like the uncrowned king or the leader of the group. May be because he was the oldest as he was twelve and had more sense of right or wrong than all of the ten or eleven year olds.

“Yes, Yes,” panted sunny, the second oldest and the fattest or rather heaviest. Finally the group reached an old building where they chose to hide. All of them – George, Sunny, Nicky and Bella were probably the smartest and cleverest kids in town. And their smartness landed them into trouble. They had all seen men kidnapping a boy from their school- Bob. Bob’s father was filthy rich, which is why the kidnappers had taken him away, hoping for a big fat ransom. Unfortunately, for the kidnappers, these four kids were the only witnesses. They kidnapped the four kids also because they didn’t want anything to go to the police.

George, Sunny, Nicky and Bella locked up for 17 hours in a dirty godown by David’s man and as soon as they had an opportunity, the group had fled from there. Mr. David was a shrewd criminal and whose name was always there in the ‘wanted’ list. “How can you be so careless?” he yelled at his people, when he learnt of the children’s escape. “And find them now you monkey!” he said lighting a cigarette. The dark bulky men ran on the wet streets but could not find even a trace of the children. They actually ran past the old building

where children were hiding but never checked that building. They checked all the nearby buildings but just didn't go in that one that was also for a reason.

"Sunny, you need to let go of all the chips and pastries and burgers you've stored in your stomach you can run faster!" Nicky mocked. Everybody broke into a peal of laughter even sunny. He knew he was used as a topic of joke, when there was a tense atmosphere. He took that very casually and soon everyone dozed off in the corridors of the building.

Next morning George was the first to wake up. That was when he heard strange noises coming from above. He woke up all the others quietly and all of them tiptoed to the floor above. There was only one door on that floor and as George peeped in through the keyhole, he saw Bob! He could not control his excitement. That was why the man never came to find them in that building as they knew Bob was there and there would be no possibility of the kids going there, George saw that Bob was struggling to unleash himself from the ropes and the handkerchief on his mouth. There was only one man beside him who was snoring away.

George had a plan. They could go in silently and rescue their friend but later it was decided that only George and Sunny would go in Nicky and Bella guarded the door. George and Sunny crept inside quietly hoping that the burly man wouldn't wake up. Bob started shaking in delight when he saw them. They signaled to him to keep quiet and finally

brought him out after freeing him from thick ropes. There were tears in Bob's eyes.

They were just outside the building when the burly man shouted after seeing them from above. They all started running rigorously and soon reached that area's police station. They told everything that had happened to the inspector who patiently listened. Finally their parents were called and the kidnappers were arrested. The kids were honored by the police for their bravery.

Who says adventure can be only experienced in the jungle? You can have adventure almost anywhere and if you see life itself as an adventure, every second will seem exciting.

Aarushi Degaonkar

The Trekking Trip

The biggest adventure you can take is to live the life of your dreams. Everyone has a dream and an inspiration for himself. Like this a small boy Abhishek also saw a dream to go at the top of the world. He knew that for the fulfillment of his dreams he has to face many difficulties. The difficulties started in his childhood in the avatar of discouragement when he told everyone about his dream. But he wanted to show everyone that he is not an ordinary person.

Once he went to a trip at a hill station. There he saw the big mountains and felt the peace in his mind by going there. From that trip, he got very passionate about mountains and got a way to fulfill his dreams. When he grew up, he decided to take training for Trekking from an institute. But he didn't get support from anyone except his parents. He went to an institute in Shimla. He had to face many problems there, as a fresher like the climate, the friend circle and the study pattern. But later, everything got fine. He performed his best every time and as a result he got the award of the best trekker.

He completed his graduation and in the last days of his college he decided to do more and more training by going with well trained people in mountains. He had a very tough training. Also he didn't sleep for nights. In the forests when they set up their camps, they had a fear of wild animals in the night. For that, each day one person used to guard the area.

When Abhishek turn came, in the midnight he faced a bear that was anxious to eat him. But with Abhishek intelligence, he started shouting and threw utensils on the bear. The bear ran in the jungle and everyone slept with a relief again. The next day they started Trekking the Himalayan ranges.

Abhishek was very happy as it was his first trek on the snowy mountain. They started Trekking but when they covered half distance, they were asked to go back because of the disturbance in weather. When the weather was calm they started to trek again, after about two weeks they reached the top and it was the happiest day in the life of Abhishek as his dream was coming true. There was no limit for his happiness. When they came back from the peak, he decided to stay with them and reach the top of many different mountains.

After the harsh training of three years Abhishek thought that now he is fit to trek to the top of the Mount Everest, his dream to go to the top of the world. He had a fortune as one of his colleagues was going to meet the sponsor of the trip which went to the peak of Mount K2. He too went with his friend. When they reached there, he met that man. He asked about his next plans and he got to know that the man was going to sponsor a team to trek for Mount Everest. He asked if he may come with him to the trip. But the man asked him to complete some challenges first for him to make sure that he is eligible for the task. Abhishek agreed for that and with his extreme talent and experience he passed all the challenges.

Now, he was also a part of that team, the trip which was leading towards the dream of that small child who now has become a very experienced person. Finally the day came; they reached the base camp of Mount Everest. After living some days there, now they were going to start Trekking towards the highest peak in the world. They started their journey, but after covering a distance of 500 m the weather became violent. And unfortunately because of this weather they had to return to their base camp. After a week when the weather was calm again, they started to trek. But when they covered half a way of their journey, they were not ready to face an avalanche and due to that all the companions separated from one another, Abhishek didn't give up and continued Trekking with one of his companion who was in a better condition than others. Again the rain move on but they didn't stop. The oxygen level was going down and due to the avalanche many cylinders were lost. Now they were left with only five cylinders. At every moment Abhishek's dream was approaching in front of his eyes. This gave him the confidence to complete his goal. Finally after the hard work of the months, they were just some steps away from his goal. The peak of Mount Everest was in front of him. Abhishek with his companion was feeling the luckiest people as they were a few steps away from the highest peak of the world. Abhishek went to the peak and host the flag of India. He was very happy as his dream to go to the top of the world.' came true. After spending some time there, they

came back. When they reached the base camp they got to know that all his mates were saved by a rescue team. They returned India and felt proud of themselves.

Shubham Khurana

Hidden Treasure of Persia

Once upon a time, somewhere in Asia, lived an adventurous boy, he was an orphan. He had been living very difficult life. His name was Ashoka. His only dear friend was Nanda. He was a sailor's son and had a dream of becoming a great sailor. They both had the same dream, finding the hidden treasure of Persia.

At the age of 19, they were powerful enough to cross the world. Nanda's father gave them a legendary boat, ' The Dark Emerald' after listening to their thoughts of crossing the world. "We must have a crew to sail the boat." said Nanda." Where will we get the crew from?" said Ashoka. "We don't have to gather them they are already here." said Nanda proudly. Then appeared 22 strong, brave and greatest crew of the world, The Guards." We will leave tomorrow." said the crewman.

The crew kept on sailing, the steering ready and other maintenance of the ship as the sun appeared on the horizon." All hands on deck!" shouted Nanda adventurously. The boat was moving like it was ruling the sea." The journey would take two to three days." said the navigator after measuring the route map. At start they were feeling like nothing will come between them, but as it became night, the sea got quiet. The crows were shouting to show danger is

ahead and the lightning started. Suddenly a huge, a blood curdling and a hair standing sea monster, Mighty Prometheus came out of the water with a speed of lightning. The boat started trembling on the water. The men were falling in the water, the boat was sinking, and the crew was feared of terrible death and there was screaming in the air." I am going to die! I am going to die!" said Nanda in fear. "Nothing will happen to you, just keep calm." said Ashoka with a voice of console. Ashoka attacked the monster with sword and hit in the eye. The Mighty Prometheus disappears in the water. The storm got over, the seagulls were chirping, the sun was shining and the water was calm. They all were injured and only half a crew was left and was much damage to the boat. "Captain, I see the shore there." said a crewman to Ashoka. "Where, where is it!" asked Nanda curiously. "We should move south then." said Ashoka and speeded the boat. As they got on to the shore it was like they had completed a huge mission. But it was not the time to rest because the royal killers were heading towards them to punish for getting on the shore without their king's permission. He would be beheaded as the punishment. Then came a boy who took them on a huge unicorn and flew away. When they landed they saw that it was a big city. He took them in a secret house; there were many people who came like them, without permission. The boy's name was

Sam. During dinner Ashoka asked him, "What is your dream?", "My only dream is that I will find my father who had went to find the hidden treasure of Persia." said Sam sadly. Then, at that time Ashoka decided that he will find the hidden treasure of Persia.

The next morning they were going to leave for the treasure. Ashoka told everybody that Sam is also coming with them. Sam told Ashoka worriedly, "What will happen to the men who are in danger?" Then one man stood up and said, "Don't be worried, you took care of us and for that we will get sacrificed for you." Then Sam gave a final goodbye and went away. They had to cross the Persian Gulf and they needed a boat. "I know a friend who will give us a ship." said Sam. They went to his friend and saw the ship. "Seventy coins for this." said Sam's friend. Sam took him to the corner to bargain. After a lot of bargain he gave the boat for 25 coins of gold! "We should leave tomorrow as it is going to be dark." said Sam and everybody agreed with Sam. As there were ghost spirits and was dangerous to travel at night.

As the first ray of the sun fall they started for gulf. "The compass doesn't work here and if we get lost there, even the Gods will not help us." said the navigator." We will be there in a minute." shouted Nanda. The boat crashed on the shore swiftly. "There are only two things between the treasure and us, the forest and The Deadly Path that is in the cave where we will find our destiny."

The jungle was not a big problem to cross; only a few thorns were hit to few sailors. But the real problem was the Deadly Path. The cave's entrance was like a snake's mouth. As they entered the cave they saw bats sleeping. The walls covered with blood and human skeletons scattered here and there. Suddenly two who were leading them stepped on a tile and hundreds of arrows killed them.

"Nooooooooo!" shouted Ashoka in rage. Nanda and Sam somehow controlled him and moved forward. Many sailors died, some with ghosts, some by falling in acids and some crushed under the walls, but at last the treasure was in front of them. It was glowing like a bright sun in the summer." It's my treasure, Yesss! Yesss!" shouted Nanda in joy and ran towards it." Noooooo!" shouted Ashoka to save him but it was too late Nanda died in a trap. The two boys went towards the treasure carefully. Behind the treasure Sam saw his father and he was very happy and Ashoka also got the treasure. They both lived an extremely happy life, but they can never forget the cries and also the happiness of their people who helped them.

Rajwardhan D. Toraskar

Sana's adventure

Sana had finally moved to her native village with her sister Nisha. It had been a long time since they had gone there but everything was still the same. They lived in a huge house, only smaller compared to the huge deserted mansion at the outskirts of the village.

Sana had always been the one to explore; she did not feel satisfied until she knew each and every corner of the village. So she went out every evening to explore, one day she came across the old mansion and saw that there was a guard guarding that deserted house .A look from outside it didn't seem that there could be anything of value in there, it didn't even seem like anyone could live in there. So she asked the guard about the mansion to which he hurriedly and rudely replied "This house is not your business to mind and don't ever come back here." Shocked she went back home and told her sister about it, Nisha being a very serious child told her to listen to the guard and stay away.

That night Sana couldn't get sleep, with the curiosity of what could be in that house that they wouldn't let her enter.

Probably it was just an attempt to scare kids so that they stay away and don't break anything. Sleep finally came to her but only after she was determined to somehow find some way to get in that house. The next few days became like a ritual,

every day she would try to get in that big house and every day she would fail. She took a whole circle of the house to see for and back entrance; she tried finding a tree with the help of which she could jump over the fall. She even tried looking for any cracks or holes in the wall so that she would crawl in. Finally in frustration she went to the guard 'and demanded an answer of him, knowing that she wouldn't leave without one, he said with some pain in his voice "it is the person for something which is the source of great pain and should be kept away from everyone. You must stay away child it is but for your own good" but of course the answer wouldn't satisfy her, she had imagined something big or great in there that she couldn't believe the old men's tale. Thus her daily search continued.

Two days later while coming from her trip to mansion it had started pouring and the old guard was nowhere to be seen, thinking of it as a gift from the gods she quickly sneaked in the house. Contrary to what she thought of it, it was a very neat and clean place just except this one section, thinking it was very weird she went there, the passage seemed like it went on forever and she thought that she could hear music play, she followed the music and it led her to his old creaky door, it took some effort to open and once it opened she was disappointed. The only thing in a room was a box, it was an

old age music box but suddenly the music seemed to have stopped.

So she picked up the box and turned it's key and it opened to play the most beautiful music she had ever heard and there were these dolls doing the most beautiful dance, it seemed that the dance was coming to life as she was transported to place where a carnival was going on, everything was so colorful and she also started dancing with them, then she realized that something was wrong everyone's mouth was sewn and they had button instead of eyes. She tried scream but no voice would come out and then it was all just darkness.

A few days later worried Nisha goes into the huge mansion to search for her sister there she finds this open box with doll finds this open box with dolls dancing. Coincidentally one of them looked like her sister.

Vishwa Shah

Trek and Thrill

It was a dull & cloudy day when I woke up with sound of my deep pink, strawberry shaped alarm clock but with the sudden thundering that place at five O'clock in the morning. I got ready really fast in my sheer excitement of going on a trip to the Bedra caves, situated in Mavaltalika, district in Pune. The history of these caves dates back to the 1st century BC. Along with the excitement, I was also getting seemingly worried that the bad weather would obstruct our journey to these fascinating and amusing caves. As soon as the sun was up, everything worked fine and brightened up. The roads looked wet and dew was visible on the fresh, green leaves. The moon had gone back into its deep slumber and the buttercup sun was awake and was showering its warm love on all of us. The dark clouds had cleared considerably and again my excitement increased.

All of us sat in the bus and left for Lonavala. Some people had dozed off in the bus. Some were singing song at the top of their voices. Some were busy eating their snacks and some had made a group in one corner and were engaged in gossiping. I just sat neat the window seat and enjoyed the breeze that rejuvenated me and I experienced so much peace and joy.

We had planned that we would go to Lonavala and from there climb up the mountains, see and observe the Bedra caves, come back down and the return home singing songs

and cherishing wonderful memories of the trip. But things never go as per our plan because our plan were planned way too smoothly and then fate says," Aah! Another smooth trip becomes unbelievably adventurous."

It had poured very badly in the mountain area but by the time we reached the foot of the mountain the rain had left back a whole lot of fog for us to tackle. The dusty, dry paths had become wet and slippery. Our back packs were heavy and we took a halt to eat our little meal. Everything around looked aesthetic and alive. I loved the weather; it looked perfect for mountain climbing. Everything was fun and exciting until the time when it started raining again and what was worse it that two of my classmates had got separated from the group by the times we reached the caves.

The caves were damp and cold. There were beautiful sculptures on the walls. The caves were divided into two- one was a Chaitya and another was a large Stupa. I was so amazed seeing the caves that every part of the cave made my jaw drop. When we came out after the guides had shown us the caves, the teacher took a head count and that's when we realized that two children had gone missing. A shiver went down my spine and all that I had seen and all the fun and anxiety was lost in seconds. The weather had gone load again and we had to halt in a small cottage and prepare our own food that we were capable of. We all worked in silence because we all were so scared that we preferred to remain

quiet instead of expressing how tensed and hyper each of us was. The lighting and thundering that accompanied the rain were growing louder and louder and we all were even more scared.

No sooner had we again started our journey than I found myself walking in knee length, cold water. We all searched frantically for our classmates but they were how here to be found. It was getting dark and our fear was now lightened up with the peerless moonlight. We took help of some rescue teams who operated near the caves. Yet, there was no trace of the two children. All teachers were extremely worried to an extent that they actually ran round like little lost kids.

Later after five or six hours, we got a call from the school authorities that the children had somehow reached the highway, and had taken a lift from a helpful truck- driver and had reached Mumbai and were now safe in school.

When we heard of their entire journey from Lonavala to Mumbai, it seemed a bit much, but at least we were relieved that the children were safe. Immediately, we decided to leave but it was too late so we left the next morning.

We all breathed a sigh of relief after a long, cold, scary night finally the sun of relief and peace had risen. The two children who had got lost still looked in trauma but all we friends cheered them up and then our parent picked us up from school. Our parents were no doubt infuriated with such

carelessness but the relief and joy of seeing their children safe made them forget everything else.

I am quite an adventurous person but this trip was for too adventurous for me to handle. We all decided to forget the bad memories and remember and cherish the rest of the fun we had, but somehow we only spoke about the way we made our way through water and how scared we were. Human nature, you know?

This trip to the bedra cave was an unforgettable one. I will cherish it for the rest of my life. It was a very exciting trip which did make our hearts miss a beat, but as we say. "All's well that ends well"?

Hritika Ahuja

Taking of the Flight J360

It was a bright, joyous morning. The warm rays of the sun came streaming through the open window. The atmosphere was full of excitement as it was the Shahs' day to leave Mumbai for good. They were leaving behind their city, their homeland and moving to California. This sudden decision had been taken for Sanaya, their daughter's, future; she was to complete her studies and pursue a career later abroad, so the family decided that they would all move there.

Everything was set and they were ready to leave after one last look at their beloved house. Then they left to follow their ambitions and hopes and dreams, far from India.

It was at the airport that all the doubts and the fear started creeping in. What if their decision had been wrong? What if this choice would lead to a disastrous consequence? Pushing these thoughts away, the family of four boarded the plane. The start was extremely normal and calm. The flight was long; about 16 hours. About three hours in, the ruckus began. From the economy compartment, there were sudden shrieks and frightened screams and cries. It brought chills down Sanaya's back. What was happening back there? Sudden gunshots erupted and now the cause of this fear showed its face. Three men, masked and who had a gun each, were striking fear in the hearts of all those who lay their eyes upon them. That, unfortunately and kind of obviously, was everyone. Now the screams echoed in other places. There

was fear in every eye, desperation to be alive in every shriek and the fire to stop the madness in every heart. Sanaya's heart literally skipped a beat when one of the men eyed her and pointed the gun at her. He finally moved ahead. All the people crouching in fear were picked up one by one, jeered at and finally bound up. The situation was like a dark tunnel with no light at its end: only darkness in sight. Sanaya contemplated her options. She knew that these people would not hesitate to shoot anyone; a passenger had to be given immediate first aid when the bullet grazed his arm. Her heart was beating a hundred miles a second and she was paralyzed with fear. She had two options: the first was to let these men succeed at what they came for, and the second was that she could try to stop them. They were already collecting all the valuables from the people. An idea started to emerge in her mind. Suddenly she knew exactly what to do. She stepped backwards slowly and cautiously, so as not to attract attention. She stood next to an airhostess, who was shivering with fright, her lip trembling. Sanaya nudged her and whispered the plan to her. It was simple. All flights had sleeping pills. She had to add some of those pills into three drinks and make the hijackers have them. If the men were as arrogant and proud as they looked, they would surely fall into this trap. She slowly tiptoed back and prayed with all her might that the plan would succeed. Her parents were worried about her. She calmed them with a small smile and a nod. Everything else fell into place too easily. As expected the men

were too bashful to realize what could have happened. They were soon fast asleep and then they were tied up by the people. All the people were soon freed and everyone congratulated the airhostess on her presence of mind, who gave Sanaya all the credit. It was indeed a happy ending.

This experience taught everyone a very important life lesson. One should never lose their wits and get too frightened to react. If something like this ever happened to us, we must react immediately and use our presence of mind to save ourselves from such a situation. This may not only save us, but would also save the lives of countless more.

Isha Mody

The Tiger's Cave

Kaka woke up to a roar. He shuddered with fright for the people of his tribe always said that in the red mountains, there lived a huge tiger, probably the biggest, seen by the man who escaped alive. Now, he was camping along the banks of the Champa river trying to prove his dad that he was worthy of being his son. His father had scolded him and called him “unworthy” of being his son after he had drunk the sacred liquid.

Nevertheless, he had to get a hair of the huge tiger to prove himself worthy. He had been camping for 10 days but to no avail. He felt tired after a full day of walking. He stepped into an open clearing and rested under a tree. He was on the verge of falling asleep when something orange fell in his lap.

He woke with jolt and saw a tiger cub in his arms. It was mewling and holding up its paw to show Kaka shrapnel embedded. Kaka immediately removed the shrapnel. Once, it was removed, the cub mewed again and it went on a tree branch and slept. “I think I will call you Korin” said Kaka and fell asleep.

Next day, he was woken up by Korin who was getting impatient and wanted to lead Kaka to his mother. Kaka woke up and they set up on a trail which Kaka had never seen before. It was dangerous, wild and exciting. Soon, by mid-day Kaka and Korin encountered a bear from which they barely

escaped. They soon stepped in a grass-land after which the legendary cave was there, where Korin lived.

In the tall grasses, Kaka lost Korin, but the young tiger communicated with him. After the grasslands they reached the cave. Korin went in and came out with the biggest tiger Kaka had ever seen. It was as tall as half of a tree and a full tree long.

With its sharp claws, Kaka thought the tiger would kill him but Korin simply mewed something to it and showed its paw. The tiger understood and shook its tail. Kaka understood that tiger was helping him and took the hair and bowed to it. The Tiger roared, as if saying Welcome!

Soham Mhatre.

Adventure in Antarctica

On 14th day of June, 1986 roads are full of people. Roads tell everything. Who is in rush and who just wants to enjoy walking. Again on a crowd day, people were rushing to their work and shopkeepers opening the shop with the breeze of good No one cares about anyone, just busy in doing their works, this is what we call life in England, starting with the sunrise and ending with the sunset.

On a small street of England lived two brothers- William Gilbert and Thomas Gilbert with their dog- Bruno. Both the brothers were very ambitions and talented and the same was with their dog. It was very good runner and loved his owners a lot. Both the brothers worked in an organization which used to study the increase in level of water due to global warming. The organization was (NECFOS) National England Corporation for Studying of Snow of Ice. For last 2-3 months they were on holiday because last time there was a wreck in Antarctica and they got minor injuries also, that's why they needed some rest. Now, they were somewhat OK and were feeling good. They were now ready to go to Antarctica. Both of them liked their job very much and always took Bruno with them. After hearing from the head office that they were again going to Antarctica they jumped off and started dancing. This was because Antarctica was like their mother land. They rushed to pack their bags and got ready to go to Antarctica!

They didn't know how they passed the night and as the first ray of sunlight falls on their eyes. They jumped off the bed and got ready with their bags and reached the airport for Antarctica. It was 15th June, 1986 Tuesday. It was a twenty hours journey with two breaks. As they reached Antarctica, it was 9.00 am but it seemed to be dark in Antarctica! Now they were going to their headquarters on a hill in Antarctica. As they were going to the headquarters, they were discussing what to do once they reach there. They were still shaking because of cold and the other reason was that their plane had a crash landing.

When they reached the head-quarter, he saw some of his crew members doing some work. When they saw the scale of increase in sea level, they were shocked. The level increased by 19 percent which was not less. They thought that it was because of their carelessness. This made them more eager to do his job. After 2-3 days, they started facing minor earthquakes. But on the night of 17 August, 1986, there was a massive earthquake making 9.1 on Richter scale. It started showing, and there were massive storms. They all woke up and suddenly observed pressure on the walls of the observatory as if some huge thing was pushing it. The whole observatory was shaking and everyone fell on the ground.

Everything was falling and something hit William and Thomas on their heads and they both fainted. After sometime, the walls were unable to stop the pressure and it broke away.

Huge amount of snow entered the observatory and everyone was trapped under the snow. But there was still a ray of hope, their dog, Bruno. As we know dogs are good diggers. It dug the snow and took its owners out. When they woke up they saw Bruno on Gilbert's chest. They both felt very happy to get such a dog. After waking, they tried to take out their friends out of the snow but they found that they were no more.

They were very sad for their friends when they heard the sound of polar bears & wolves. They thought that it would not be safe to stay there for long so they started running. When they were running, they saw wolves & bears running after them. They also attacked Thomas and he got minor injuries but Bruno again saved his life by attacking the wolves. They thought that this trip was the worst in their life and prayed god so that they can be safe.

After running for a long time they reached to a cave where they thought that the bear would have been living. But now it was gone. After sometimes he smells something very unpleasant. Upon searching in depth of the cave, he found a dead body which was looking like a soldier. He was going back when he suddenly saw walky-talky. They thought that now they will be safe.

But the game was not over. The walky-talky was not showing any signal. Then William remembered that if it is taken on certain height the range of Walky-talky will be increased.

They tried to do this and it worked. They soon came in contact with the commissioner of the organization and told him everything what had happened and asked him to send help for them; the commissioner sent the plane to them and launched a sign for 'SOS'. They recognized it and ran to it. By the time they reached near the plane they were fully exhausted but now they were safe. They were taken to England again.

They were very happy and thanked god for giving them such a brave dog. They gave the credit of being alive to their dog Bruno. The dog became very famous for this work.

Harprabh Singh

A Journey through the Renaissance

One splendid evening, Fang, my husky and I were playing with the Frisbee in an isolated park. The sky had a rubicund-amber hue as the Sun was beginning to set. Fang being an agile dog would never miss a catch. To make the boring evening a bit amusing I flung the Frisbee as far as I could and for the first time ever Fang had missed a catch. The Frisbee flew towards the deep, lonely woods which were at the end of the park. I went past the periphery and entered the abandoned forest with. Being a third year engineering student in the MIT, I had my engineering folder with me too.

As I walked a few meters in, I saw a bright light glowing from the bushes inside. As curiosity is in the nature of humans, I couldn't help but walk towards the source of the light. I walked past a huge bush before I saw the most bizarre thing ever. There was an antique machine made of timber with a leather seat placed in the centre and there was a round bulb on the right side of the seat glowing so bright that it looked like a miniature of the Sun. The machine was surrounded by a huge blue circle drawn on the brown burnt grass below a few meters away from the machine. As I put my foot in the blue territory, a robotic voice came from somewhere in the wooden machine 'Welcome to the Time Machine- please have a seat. We hope you enjoy the journey.' I stood petrified for a few moments, appalled at what I just heard

before pinching myself hard. I screamed in pain and realized it was no dream.

I had read about Time Machines before in magazines and seen them in movies but they were fictional. Never in my wildest dreams had I imagined to see a real one, and here today there is one right in front of my horrified eyes. I walked slowly towards the bizarre machine with my engineering folder clung tightly to my chest, feeling a bit nauseated, with my feet shaking. As I sat on the leather seat the robotic voice spoke again- 'Please select a year and the city you would like to visit.' Just to check whether it actually worked, I entered a random date and city from the options given on the tiny screen in front of me. As I pulled the lever, the next moment everything around me started look colourful and hazy and at that very moment I realized I was travelling by time. After a few seconds my experience ended and I realized I had travelled through time.

I got off the time machine and stared at my surrounding. There were inscriptions on every house which I recognized to be written in Italian as I had learned the language before. I immediately realized I was in the magnificent city of Florence in Italy. There were beautiful canals which I had always longed to see and had only heard of. Every now and then I could see Medici banners. I knocked on a beautiful house and a quite old man with a shabby beard opened the door. I recognized the man at once. He was my idol, the one person I

look up to with utmost respect, the legend, Leonardo da Vinci. I had entered the Renaissance period. I was stunned to see him face to face and it was more like a beautiful dream come true. I had seen his pictures, of course, but seeing him live in front of my eyes is a whole different experience. He looked at me as though I had a third eye. I don't blame him for that, of course. My clothes were very different from theirs and he was as stunned as I was. I told him everything and after that he told me to come in even though he was a bit suspicious.

His room was very untidy and surrounded by paintings and drawings which included the Ginevra de' Benci and the Vitruvian Man. He was working on a painting which was none other than the famous Mona Lisa. It was indeed the most beautiful painting I had seen in my little lifetime. We had a long talk about science as he was one of the most intelligent men of his time and I being modern. I showed him my portfolio which consisted of the helicopter designs and parachutes. I told him about the armored car and the diving suit too. I told him about the modern lifestyle and how people lived today with the advanced technology. After a few hours of discussion on various topics like philosophy, the human anatomy, aeronautics and religion I knew I couldn't stay there any longer or it would make people suspicious. We had decided that he wouldn't tell anyone about the time machine and my arrival nor would I as it would disrupt the time continuum and would change history in the modern

world forever. The time machine should remain a secret or people would also fight over it and misuse it. With a finale goodbye I left the hut and sat in the time machine and pulled the lever again after entering the present year.

I was back into the gloomy forest which was, however, bright by the time machine. Everything was back to normal and I had my daily routine. After three years when I visited the Louvre museum in Paris I looked at the elegant painting of the Mona Lisa and smiled to myself knowing I was the only person alive to witness the creation of this masterpiece.

Neerja Mehta

A Climb to Mount Kilimanjaro.

It was the last day of the school. When I came back I felt very hungry. Just then the phone rang, it was Vilok. I was astonished and also overwhelmed with joy on hearing what he said. We are going to climb Mount Kilimanjaro Yeah! When I asked my parents whether I could go, they permitted me. My friends Dhruv Gandhi, Vilok and Dhruv Patel. I started packing the necessary stuff i.e. guide to Kenya and Tanzania, hiking boots, sleeping bag, sweater, clogs, coat, toothpaste, soap, camera, shirts and T- shirts, gloves, toothbrush etc. The most important books were the travel diary and a Swahili mini dictionary. My father reminded me to carry a first aid and a survival kit. The next day we met at Vilok's house to discuss about the experience we will be having. At night, I kept all the things in my backpack and went to sleep. I could not wait for morning to arrive. The next morning dawned bright and clear. We set off to the airport telling 'bye' to our parents. We reached at the Chhatrapati Shivaji airport at Santacruz near Andheri. It was quite early. We gave our bags for checking when Vilok informed us that a trainer and a companion will be there with us. We boarded the flight to Tanzania. When we reached we found the trainer and the companion whose name was Bruce.

In a fortnight the trainer taught us the necessary things to climb a mountain. Bruce took his backpack and set off after fourteen days of training. We too set off with him. We saw

many climbers coming back after climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. They wore blazers with India written on them. They seemed to have an air of prestige. Later I came to know that they had climbed many mountains and represented India in many events. That was my eureka moment. Filled with a sense of mission we walked as fast as we could. In no time we reached the rain forest, when one of Bruce's friends spotted him and said, "HUJAMBO (hello!)" Bruce looked quite happy. He replied, "HUJAMBO, HABARI GANI (hello, how are you)?" We went ahead. After two or three hours of trekking we reached in the dense of the rain forest. Suddenly, Dhruv shouted, "Look, so many animals!" Indeed! There were many different kinds of animals that we have never seen but have surely heard of. There was a red river hog, a mandrill, an okapi, a guenon and a marabou stork. They were all so amazing to watch. We clicked pictures with our cameras of the animals so that it remains stored.

Day two – The next morning Bruce woke us at dawn. After eating a bowl of oatmeal, we set off again. Soon we reached the moors which gave way to grass that were six feet high and swayed in the wind. The way it moved reminded me of the waves of ocean.

"As we climb upwards, the amount of oxygen in the air diminishes," Bruce explained, "We will get tired quickly," added Dhruv Gandhi. Bruce said if you want to make it to the top of the Mount Kilimanjaro there's only one way to do it;

slow and steady. All repeated after him slow and steady, slow and steady.

..... We were soon overtaken by other groups going, faster than us, but we continued saying 'slow and steady'. After six hours of trekking we arrived at the Horombo Huts at, 12,000 feet. It was dusk. I had something to eat. We all had sumptuous meal. I wanted to go to bed but first I had to write in my travel diary about the experience. So that I could read it to my class so that they can get knowledge.

Day three - The next morning we were up at dawn again. We set off without eating anything. A faster group overtook us, "See you later," they laughed. We ignored them and continued at our slow and steady pace. After a while the landscape became a rocky surface nothing grew among these bare rocks and stones. There were no plants non flowers – nothing. The landscape was so barren it was almost as if we had landed on the moon. After a little while, we met up with the people who had overtaken us earlier. They had to come to a halt. We passed them slowly but surely. We said "slowly and steady, tried but inspired". We finally reached the Kibo Huts at 15,430 feet. I wanted to eat but the altitude was really making me nauseous. The higher you climb, and the thinner the air, the more likely you are to experience nauseous and dehydration. The huts were built out of stone and iron. Inside there were beds for the climbers but there was no running water. And the worst part was that it was icy

cold. Desperate to keep myself warm. I put on all the clothes I had. Bruce said, "For us night is the most important night my friends. We have to leave at midnight. We must reach the summit and start coming back down once again. Vilok ignored and slept. He continued, "We must come down before nine o'clock in the morning. That's when the weather starts getting worse! I could not sleep properly on the bed. Oh, how I missed my warm, cozy home in Mumbai. The lack of oxygen made me feel like I was suffocating. It was miserable! We woke up at midnight and set off! Bruce kept on saying "Forward forward"

Suddenly, Vilok shouted, "Look at the incredible view." Good gracious! Dawn on Kilimanjaro was a gorgeous and splendid view. We went ahead. After a great struggle we soon reached the top, the summit. We kept on dancing; Vilok had taken some pictures from my camera of dawn on Kilimanjaro. Bruce quickly warned us that the big dark clouds were above us. We were so scared that we quickly took a picture with our flag. We then inserted the flag into the snow so well that it stuck and it waved like the waves of the ocean. We started coming down too fast that we tumbled and rolled down and soon reached the bottom.

We quickly hurried to the airport and boarded the flight which was to take us back home. We were on time. We played and discussed about the dangerous and amazing adventure that we had. Outside the airport there were huge

numbers of people cheering for us. We were the first group of children to climb Mount Kilimanjaro. Our names were noted in the book of world records. We became the cynosure of all eyes. Our parents were proud of us. We explained them the whole adventure.

(This was just an imagined story but still do you think that we climbed Mount Kilimanjaro)

Sumit Pal

The new Channel

It was a moonless, dark night. Lightning flashed and thunder struck across the black, cloudy sky. My parents had gone out for a wedding and they would not return until the next morning and therefore I was left alone in the house.

I failed in my attempt of sleeping and so went down to the living room.

I flopped down on the sofa and switched on the television. Oops... I forgot to introduce myself. I am a girl of fifteen and my name is Amy Jackson. I am five feet and three inches. I have long dark brown hair and my eyes resemble my mother's electrical blue ones.

As it was night only infomercials were flourishing over all channels. I had surfed through for about half an hour when I came across this new channel which was recondite to me.

It was named "The Intrepid Adventurers" and the show coming on it was termed the same. I was curious to know what it could be about and so did not bother to change the channel. Suddenly the screen turned black and then I don't know what happened then but the next thing I knew I was not on my comfy sofa cushion but in a cave dimly lit by fire torches placed in the holders which hung from the walls of the cave.

I was not even wearing my pink night suit with the cupcake print on it but was clothed in tight-fitting black pants and a round neck white, full sleeved T-shirt. There was a red scarf coiled around my neck and I wore big brown cow-boy like boots.

I looked around if there was anyone there, but no one was to be found. A chill ran down my spine as I hears a growl from somewhere in the cave. I presently was standing in the mid of the cave.

I had no idea how I had landed there. I decided to go ahead although I knew I had to encounter the growling creature that I feared would make me its meal.

Plodding steadily on, I soon reached the creature. I was awe-struck to see that it was not a normal creature but a mystical hybrid of a lion and an eagle. It was called a griffin.

It was apparently sleeping and I was glad to find that it was chained to a pole. I walked as softly as a mouse but unfortunately stepped on something hard which cracked sonorously under the pressure.

With no doubt the griffin woke up, and eyed me suspiciously. I instinctively started to run but the humongous creature broke the chain and in one motion caught hold of me. Its claws holding my tiny body I screamed, and what I heard was more shocking.

The griffin spoke, yes; it did and asked, "Is your name Amy?"

I nodded nervously, at that it put me down and gestured me to move and go out of the cave.

The rest was short path and in no time I was out in a garden across which stood a humongous palace. It was made of stones and had innumerable turrets and towers. There was a river between the grass and the entrance to the palace which was big enough to let two tuskers to pass through at once.

There was a small girl, playing there among the beautiful rose bushes. Her plump cheeks were as red as the roses. I went up to her and asked, "Umm... hello. Could you tell me which place is this?"

"You must be the girl chosen from the outside world", she remarked and then muttering something to herself she said, "Come I will take you where you need to be".

Walking across the garden along with me she said, "My name is Kylie and I live in the palace with my mother who works in the kitchen. By the way this is the kingdom of Dokarsia."

"Hello Kylie, I am Amy... I really don't know how did I get here... could you tell me?" I asked.

By this time we had crossed the bridge and stood at the entrance where one of the guards looking at me became extremely happy and before I could react picked me up and ran in through the corridors, opened a door and put me down on a chair at a study.

There was an old man who had long grey hair, beard and moustache. He wore a magnificent gold crown.

“Hello my dear... we have no time to spare. I know you have many questions but please do this old man a favor by listening to him first. I am King Stephen of Dokarsia. You Amy Jackson have been chosen from the out world to go with the other chosen ones from the out world and the Intrepid Adventurers of our kingdom to go and get the Philosopher’s Stone and the vial of the Elixir of Life from the wicked witch who has stolen it from our wizard”, narrated the King.

“Okay so... why do I have to do this?” I managed to ask.

And then something terrible occurred I woke up as thunder resounded once more and found myself lying on the sofa and some beauty product advertisement was coming on the T.V.

The kingdom of Dokarsia was a mere dream. I surfed once again through the channels but could not find any channel termed as the Intrepid Adventurers.

How I longed to go back to such an elaborate dream. I was curious to know what would then happen.

Swagi Desai

Mighty God's Treasure

I stretched my arms. It was just a few centimeters away, out of reach. I had risked my life for it but now it seems I can never get it. My friend Sam threw rope down. I let go of all my fears and desires, grabbed the rope and climbed into safety.

It all started when Sam and I had a night out at her farmhouse. We had to sacrifice our room because some unexpected guests had showed up. We had to adjust in a small, dusty attic. We started clearing the spider-webs and all the dust in the attic. While I was dusting a wall I came across an unlevelled surface. On further cleaning it, I found it was some ancient symbol. It was a symbol with different positions of a lion inscribed in a ring of circle. The inner circle was clear. Even Sam didn't know about it. We were anxious and curious. We explored it thoroughly but nothing happened. I rested against a wall and accidentally pushed a lamp. Surprisingly, the clear part opened up revealing a scroll. We read the scroll. It had enclosed the secret map to the sacred treasure of the gods. We were very excited to get the treasure.

We set out the same night as we did not want anyone to know about our expedition to the middle of dormant and secluded volcano. No one was ever successful to even have clicked pictures of it. First, we trekked our way to the inhabited forest. It wasn't so easy. Snakes, wild bears, wild

monkeys, wild elephants, and many more. It gave me a creepy feeling. Luckily we had occupied ourselves with sufficient important things for in the dark, it was hard to see. Next what we saw was a river. We looked at the map and were astonished to see that the entire route of crossing the forest had disappeared. The only thing that could be seen was a rough drawing of a river. The map was magical. We moved on. "No, we can't do this" exclaimed Sam. I calmed her down and assured her that we would be alright. We stepped into the river. It was very cold. A trout leapt and moonlight flashed from it. The water was almost waist-deep. We had to go slowly because of slime on the stones. We held each other and slowly and steadily crossed the river. We then opened the map and were glad and excited to see that we were only a few hundred meters away from the foot of the volcano. We quickly reached there. We could see skulls and skeletons there. Our faces turned white. No one had ever come back alive from there. We were nervous. We thought of turning back but now that we had come so far we didn't want to give up. We thought of all the people we could help with the money. I descended into the volcano. Sam held the rope and warned me of the obstruction from above.

As soon as I stepped on the untouched soil of the volcano, there was a loud thunder. I ignored it as I thought it was the way of Gods to scare away those who had a false heart. I proceeded towards the treasure. I was surprised and suspicious because the treasure was totally unguarded. No

dragons, no ditches full of crocodiles and no falling of rocks. I caught hold of the bag of treasure. No sooner had I touched the bag, than the ground began to crack. I stumbled away from the treasure. The ground started shaking violently. I heard Sam calling out to me, "Climb up, immediately"! As I ran towards the rope, the cracks gave way to hot molten lava. I grabbed the rope but unfortunately lost grip of the bag of treasure. I tried to get hold of it but it was out of reach, only a few centimeters away. I was about to get hold of it but the sheet of ground drifted away in the lava. I used all my agility and climbed the rope as fast as I could. I was safe, thanks to my yoga classes. We were disappointed that we could not get the money to help any of the needy. That was our main objective – no greed, no desire.

We headed back to Sam's farmhouse. Morning had arrived. We took some rest as we were exhausted. After some time Sam woke up to show me a bag full of the treasure- the same bag! Something was written on a large flat stone next to it, something in Latin. "Maybe a clue to another treasure", I said, it was only meant for those who had a clear heart.

Hanisha Jatania

The Mysterious Land

I had just finished reading a book on the mysterious land – “Atlantis”. It was past midnight. This book had made me stay awake. Since it was a hectic day for me, so I fell asleep as soon as my head hit the pillow. I had beautiful dreams about this unimaginable land – “Atlantis”.

I was fast asleep, when a loud cackling noise jolted me from my dream world to reality. I am usually not the kind to wake up due to such noises. But this noise was something different. Different from the worldly noises. I woke up to see a magnificent charming parrot. Green and red with large blue eyes. Something drove me towards it. As I advanced towards it, it started saying something that seemed to me as a prophecy. The only words I understood were – “You are the ONE”. I knew an exciting adventure was awaiting me. The parrot flew out from my room, but this time through the door, without even opening it. I was shocked. I must have pinched myself more than twice but I didn’t wake up from my dream.

Something unusual about this parrot led me to follow it. Out of curiosity, I followed it. It led me to the sea shore. There, for once it spoke to me in an understandable language because what it spoke to me earlier was Greek to me. It said “I have come from the world below. The world submerged in water – ‘Atlantis’.” For a moment I thought I was hallucinating. But then the parrot cleared all my doubts

(maybe). It said that I was the chosen one. Sensing my doubt he told me I would be once I spoke to the queen of Atlantis. I was suspicious about the parrot but my curiosity just wouldn't let me sit still without following it. Suddenly like a transformer or a wizard, it turned into a dolphin. I could only recognize it through its large blue eyes. I sat on its back as per its instruction. It took me underwater. Suddenly from nowhere a bubble formed around me and I could breathe as easily as I did on earth. I saw beautiful corals, small fishes and even sharks, who were not interested in eating me up but rather they did something that seemed as if they were bowing down to me.

Hardly had I reached this magical world, when I was welcomed honorably like a royalty. I was taken to the queen – a mermaid named Arianna. Arianna explained to me that they suffered continuous attacks from an evil giant squid – Drako. According to Arianna, the prophecy stated that only I could protect Atlantis from wrecking under the slimy tentacles of Drako. But how? Arianna pointed at my necklace – a blue stone almost shaped like a drop. Arianna said that the sapphire was the only weapon that could actually do some harm to Drako. I was confused. That necklace was simply a small gift to me by my late grandmother.

Then out of the blue it struck to me “What if my grandmother had some relations with this place as she was always narrating stories of the underwater paradise and she

had portrayed herself as the hero of this legend that still lives in the hearts of all of us cousins. She always used to say that she couldn't defeat Drako but she could at least drive him away for some decades until one of us would defeat him completely. When we were younger we all enthusiastically debated on whom would do this heroic task but maybe grandma had already selected me for this dangerous task.

I swore to fulfill my grandma's promise. It took me some time to learn how to use my sapphire. The people of Atlantis also told me legends of my grandma and how she, with the help of the sapphire had driven away Drako. They also warned me that Drako couldn't be killed until he was struck with full force on his weak spot. Nobody including Arianna knew what was that spot. Seemed to me that I had to figure it out myself.

Finally the day had come. According to the prophecy, Drako was supposed to return, redoubled in power. We waited at the outskirts of the beautiful town of Atlantis. Far away we could see dust swirling in the water. As if an army was marching ahead fiercely. And indeed this was an army – not of men but of squids, much smaller than the huge Drako. We all fell into our positions armed with tridents and spears. It was a do or die situation.

Drako was winning. The war was almost over. The casualty on our side was much. I had to figure out quickly before the time slipped away from my hand where Drako's weak spot

was. Just then, like a sudden jolt I had a flashback remembering my grandma saying that she had attacked the monster in her tales right between its two eyes. As soon as the flashback ended, I knew what I had to do. I aimed at the scar between Drako's two eyes. With all my power and all the ability of my sapphire, I attacked Drako. Within a matter of seconds, he was gone, disappeared into dust, dissolving with him his whole evil army of squids. Suddenly the mer-people of Atlantis were revived to full health as if a war never took place.

I started feeling giddy. As I was about to get a shut eye after this eventful day, I saw Arianna thank me and say that it was time for me to return.

When I woke up, I found myself on the same seashore from where this adventure started. The sun dawned on my face and I slowly gained consciousness to realize that I was surrounded by a group of teenagers which included some of my cousins who were looking for me as I was missing for a day or two. They told me that I was almost floating on the water. They helped me back to my senses. I repeatedly thought that it was all a dream but was reassured that it wasn't by the sapphire held tight in my hand. And with the sapphire was a ring drawn into the chain that I remember clearly, was Arianna's. Maybe this wasn't just a dream. Maybe it was more than just a dream or an adventure for me.

Now, I have a tale to tell my grandchildren. And who knows, they might have the similar experience and thank me then for telling them such a story.

Virakti Vora

A Brush with Death

The jeep rumbled through the rough wilderness along a narrow dusty and rock-filled path and I had a feeling that this journey wasn't going to be as smooth as I had expected. The smell of the long dull grass, the wind whistling through the tangled thickets of trees and the occasional snaps of twigs and rustling of the undergrowth had a rather ominous and wild feel about them.

I scanned the horizon for my lodge but it wasn't in sight. The main road to the safari lodge had been blocked by an accident and the only way to the lodge would be through the reserve. It didn't help that there was no experienced ranger with me. Just a young guide named Geo who had volunteered to drive me to the lodge.

Driving along the less frequented trail seemed to take ages. We would have surely been lost in the vast landscape had it not been for the walkie-talkie through which Geo was getting directions to the lodge.

As we ascended a little hill to get into the valley where the lodge was, one of the tyres caught a sharp stony pebble, resulting in a puncture. Our jeep screeched to a halt. My heart stopped for a minute.

"Don't tell me we have a puncture!" I cried out. We were practically in the middle of the reserve. Probably surrounded

by lions and leopards and cheetahs that were surely waiting for an opportunity to attack. The thought of it brought shivers to my spine.

Geo nodded uncertainly before fiddling for her radio. Suddenly she frowned and shook it hard. "And don't tell me that the radio is down too," she muttered.

"What?" I screamed at the top of my lungs. Not only were we stranded in a life-threatening situation but also we had no one to call for help. "It has to work!"

Geo shook her head. "C'mon, hop out," she said. "Let's just fix the tyre as soon as we can and leave. I have a spare tyre in the back."

I blinked. "Are you suggesting that we actually get *out* of the jeep? We'd be walking right into the mouths of these predators? No way!"

"Well, we have no other solution," Geo said. "We have no way to reach the lodge and contact them. We should seriously reach there before it gets dark and the animals come out to hunt. I can't even fix the tyre with you on board."

I went numb. I couldn't believe that I was doing this. Geo hauled out a tyre and began working on removing the punctured one. She handed me a pair of binoculars to make sure no animal was approaching.

I wasn't sure of being able to spot one before it was too late. I had seen the speed, agility and precision of the hunters to know well enough that detection wasn't easy. The brownish-gold grass swaying in the breeze resembled a stalking lioness. The rustling of branches made me imagine a leopard making its way through the tangled thickets. Every sound, movement or feeling made me suspect danger. Geo eventually got frustrated with my frantic signs of panic and ignored me when I gestured for her to hide. She had managed to remove the huge tyre noiselessly and place it in the back of the jeep.

While she was working, I tried counting my heartbeats to calm myself. Our surroundings were perfect for camouflage. On a brief appraisal of the landscape, I was sure that there were lions hiding behind every boulder and leopards on every tree around. A herd of rhinos was planning to chase us down where the cheetahs would eventually catch us. I closed my eyes and willed myself to forget the thought. Seconds turned into eternity and the beads of sweat collecting on my forehead were almost enough to form an ocean.

Geo was almost done. The moment she stood up and patted her hands on her jeans, I jumped with joy. Finally! I couldn't believe that I had survived this.

As we walked round the jeep to the front, my eyes almost popped out as I saw a pale-whitish mane lying right next to the door of the jeep. I pulled Geo behind one of the boulders and gestured for her to keep silent.

The cluster of tangled white hair rose to reveal a majestic white lion, lying right next to our jeep. His sharp blue eyes penetrated the surroundings, as we tried our best not to make a sound. He let out a low growl signifying that he was hungry and I almost died of fear. A petrifying air of authority radiated from him and I felt my knees go weak in panic.

Entering the jeep was only possible through that door. I pinched my cheeks, hoping I'd wake up to find myself in the midst of one of my most terrifying nightmares but in vain. Geo suddenly seemed to have an idea. As the lion looked away, she dragged me from behind the boulder to the other side of the jeep, where the lion couldn't see us. He must have heard the scrunch of pebbles though, and rose with his ears twitching. He moved forward and sniffed the jungle air.

As he walked ahead and began to round the bend, we edged forward too. Slowly we were moving in a circle around the jeep-our hearts in our mouth. He wanted to reach us but our eyes were fixed on the door. Circling cautiously around the jeep

As soon as the side of the door was clear, we dashed towards it. With fumbling hands, Geo unlatched the door and we clambered on to the jeep. The lion had heard the noise but was a bit uncertain about the direction. Going round in circles had reduced his perception and I used that time to slam the door shut. As he hurtled towards the jeep, Geo removed the brake and the jeep careered down the slope.

Watching the bloodshot look of hunger in the lion's eyes as he rushed behind our jeep hot on our trail was something I'd never forget.

Akansha Choksi

The Adventurous Gadget

Once upon a time there lived a robot named Nikoboniko with his friend Raj. After several days Nita, Rima, Nakul and Raj wanted to do some adventure. They all went to Nikoboniko to ask for some adventurous gadget. Nikoboniko had a gadget named "THE ADVENTUROUS GADGET".

Before using the gadget Nita, Nakul, Rima and Raj requested Nikoboniko to leave his gadget pocket in his house. After using the gadget they all landed in an unknown place. They met a young man named Rohan. They later came to know that he was the prince of that kingdom. Rohan took them to his palace where he made them meet his wife, Radhika, his father; King Rohada. They ate a delicious lunch after which they took rest for a while. In the nearby kingdom there lived a witch, the enemy of King Rohada. She had many workers working under her. She wanted to take revenge from King Rohada. They once decided to kidnap the princess, Radhika. In the dead of night he quietly went inside the kingdom and kidnapped the princess. She took her to the old house. Using her power, she began flying and reached the old house. During the morning, everyone was trying to find Radhika while they received a letter from the witch which read "IF YOU WANT THE PRINCESS, GIVE YOUR SON, ROHAN TO US FOR HIS MAGICAL POWERS". The prince decided to leave that moment. His father, Rima, Raj, Nakul, Nita, Nikoboniko and Rohan left for the mission to escape Radhika from the

witch without giving Rohan. Rohan and Raj looked alike. So they decided a master plan. After passing the rocks and the sea, they reached the old house. They saw Radhika unconscious on the stone. After fighting with her gadgets, the robot, the tiger and many others they started climbing the stairs. The witch instructed them that in the midst of the stairs all of them had to stop except the prince. When Raj instead of Rohan started climbing the witch was getting excited. She had a magical wand with the help of that she began changing the day to night. When Raj reached the top he first told the witch to let the princess go. The witch let the princess go. When the witch started chanting the mantra she had put a knife near Raj's neck. When she finished chanting the mantra she put her magic but could not get the powers out of him. She began smelling a rat. She put the knife on his neck and warned all of them to give the real prince. Rohan came in front and told the witch to leave Raj. He was from another country. She left him. Rohan slept and the witch was about to take the powers from Rohan but Raj snatched the wand from her. Rohan stood up and told Raj to break the wand. Raj did it and all the powers from the witch were snatched. Rohan, his father, Nikoboniko, Nita, Nakul, Rima and Raj went back to the palace taking Radhika together with them.

After some time Nikoboniko, Nita, Nakul, Rima and Raj had to go back to their own country. Waving Good Bye, they went out of the adventurous gadget. Nita, Nakul, Rima and Raj

thanked Nikoboniko for making them doing adventure. They all had a lot of fun there and would like to do one more adventure like this.

Prasham Mehta

Rock Climbing

The moment I was leaving, I realized I had left my Camera behind. I rushed to get it. My sister and I were already running late. Our school bus was waiting down to take us to the airport. We were going to Madhugiri in Karnataka! Located at an elevation of 3930 feet, Madhugiri is the second largest monolith in Asia.

We were already running late. We rushed and got into the bus. My sister and I were super excited for this trip. So we finally reached the airport and flew for Bangalore!

The aero plane ride was spectacular. I saw from the window that silver clouds were running in the opposite direction of us. Cold winds welcomed us to Bangalore. We travelled 86 Kms from Bangalore to reach to Madhugiri a Taluka place in Tumkur district of Karnataka. As we reached in the evening it was decided that we would go for rock climbing the next day.

The excitement of Rock climbing prevented me from sleeping. I was awake the whole night. The next day was our pleasant trip to Madhugiri!

The cool winds and scenic beauty astonished us. I could not stop myself from clicking many pictures.

The first activity for the day was Rock climbing! The most awaited adventure activity.

All 20 of us agreed to go for this superb activity. I was the last on the queue. Every one crossed the 500 m long Rock. I was there standing, my legs were trembling with fear. I started my adventure of Rock climbing. My sister was there waving out for me. My face turned blue in fear. I had come halfway when a creepy feeling entered my mind. I looked down to see a deep valley of 500 meters! My teachers as well as friends encouraged me not to get scared. I closed my eyes and tried to overcome my fear. The surrounding cool air made me feel better and I moved on. And I did not even realize when I reached the other end! I could hear a loud thunder of claps and my joy knew no bounds!

And OOPS! I forgot to mention that I had a great fear from heights and I had overcome it today!

It was the best adventure trip of my life & it filled a beautiful page in my book of memories.

Shruti Burad

The Jungle

I was staying at my grandmother's house for the summer vacation. This was the result of the negotiation done between me and my parents about where to go in the vacation, whether to stay at home or to go out of town(which was my preference).From the commencement of the summer vacation I was at my grandmother's house doing nothing, getting bored. As I would be left alone at home and everyone would go out for shopping and even when I was taken everyone would pontificate their opinions. So I always acted as a sycophant and would make them believe that I loved whatever they buy for me, but actually this was a verisimilitude.

One day when I went out to trail in the jungle to ameliorate my mood and placate myself which was abysmal due to the squabble. The wrangle occurred this morning on the trivial matter that I did not wear the clothes which my grandmother gifted me. Coming back to the topic, I had carried my valise with me, it embraced almost everything, like my water bottle, a box with all the delectable sweets I could find at home and even my dad's compass which was maybe my share of the property, which he gave me by his will. My dad had lived his last days in the hospital, it was such as if he was saying the valedictory sentence to end his speech, i.e. his life.

As I entered the forest I envisaged that I might encounter a

wild animal as I have always had this strange penchant for animals and adventures. I have inherited this penchant from my dad who was my pedagogue and he has taught me everything.

When I had travelled for about half an hour I felt like resting so I got my burden against the tree and I had two sweets from my box. After 15 minutes of rest I continued my journey. I came to a place where there was a juxtapose of inchoate plants. Farther away I saw a plethora of clusters of dainty flowers prod me to go ahead in the deep forest so that I could admire the beauty of nature of which I was unaware.

When I was about to go in the dense forest I saw a cobra that was sunning itself on the track leading to the waterfall. When it noticed that I was there it contracted and rose with a hiss, it even spread its hood. I had never seen a snake so closely the creature with green metallic scales was truly a splendid creation of God.

After a moment of silence the cobra, whose tongue played in and out subsided and slid off into the matted grass.

The feeling while the snake was in front of me was a concoction of fear, excitement and curiosity of getting to know something new.

After this I stopped to have water and I even ate one piece of sweet. Suddenly I heard an anomalous sound of water which

evinced me about the waterfall. It was not exactly as I thought it would be as before the waterfall there was river.

The river was broad but shallow; it was so shallow that one could hear the water racing along over the pebbles. At first I thought I did not have to walk through it as there was a bridge built over it, being an impermanent thing it was broken.

Therefore I had to walk through the river in the water. This was not easy as there was slime on the pebbles below. But I somehow maintained my balance and crossed the river.

Then I finally reached the water fall. The view from there was breathtaking and amazing. I could see the sun setting and it seemed as if the sun was hiding behind the cliff. It was even indicating that the day was over and that even I should return back home and keep the memories of this adventurous day forever.

Swara Desai

The Jaws of Death

It was a bright and sunny placid morning. The cool breeze drifted by easing the atmosphere. The crystal clear blue waters of Mossel Bay glittered and glistened as the sun's rays fell on them. The sky took the color of a light blue hue that only added to the charm of this South African wonder.

Quiet and serene, this place is known far and wide for its great white sharks. Mossel Bay is one of the eight operators which have a permit to undertake the most dangerous Great White Shark cage diving expeditions. Today was the day I'd see the true might of a Great White. Today was the day I's never forgotten.

Dressed in my suit, I arrived at the meeting point from where all 14 passengers would be taken aboard The Victoria, the boat that would take us through the bay. The crew carefully checked the equipment and other necessities while an official systematically gave us a briefing about the expedition and its dangers. He clearly pointed out how this journey would surely be a memorable one and we looked at him in amazement and waited with baited breaths for what lay ahead of us.

The other passengers munched on the refreshments provided and chattered about this and that. They made quite a noise but that didn't seem to bother me as I was lost in the sheer beauty and mystique of the place. The cool ocean

breeze hitting me gently on my face, reminding me about the wonders of the sea. An albatross swooped low, almost touching the waters and then flew on to the small piece of land they called, "The Albatross Island." We went a little further into the bay and we were shown the Seal Island that was filled with small baby seals sunning themselves in the broad of the daylight. We could even hear their noisy chatters and we let out giggles looking at these creatures. The instructor then informed us about seal

breaching. Because of the very unique topographical nature of the sea bottom around Seal Island, the sharks go down to the bottom in waters ranging between 20 and 35 meters deep and patrol the outer perimeters of the Island and adjacent area, waiting for Cape Fur seals to either leave the Island to go and feed, or to return to the Island to go and rest after a long hard hunt. Once a shark then either see's or senses an overhead swimming seal that is swimming on the surface, it will rush up from the deep to attack the seal with stealth, surprise and speed, its momentum causing it to sometimes fly 2.5 meters high completely out of the water.

After spending around an hour just hovering around, waiting, as the light grew, we saw some surface action. We race over to get a close-up view and to witness a natural predation taking place. The shark had almost gotten the better of the seal but alas! I breathed a sigh of relief as the poor creature was saved.

Now was the time for the real action. They would now lower the cage down into the waters so that we could get a clear glimpse of the white wonder. The captain said that using their tracking device, they had detected 7 wild sharks in the waters. I gasped. I was hesitant for a moment but then mustering up all the courage I had, I too got into the cage with my colleagues. We held hands, put on our masks and murmured a little prayer, just in case!

Soon, the cage was lowered. Inch by inch as it went down, I could feel the cool water touching my feet, my ankle and then my knees. I had butterflies in my stomach and the thought of seeing a Great White sent a chill down my spine.

"Here comes one", said the boatman, "Ready!!!" and there we saw approaching a might creature. For a moment I couldn't believe my eyes. I felt like letting out a loud scream but I couldn't find my voice. My friend, Ahana, realized this. A girl of courage, she held my hand tightly, trying to ease me. After the shark passed, I breathed a sigh of relief.

One after another we saw 5 sharks and now I was beginning to enjoy this process. But I was naïve to the adventure now. Ahana grew pretty confident by now. A mighty shark now approached our way. When it came closer to the cage, Ahana thought of a little trick. She thought of just touching the tip of the shark's tail. And she did so without any nervousness. The shark flew into a rage and looked Ahana right in the eye. It was then that we observed its blood red eye and small razor

like teeth, the true signs of a dangerous predator. Ahana knew now that's she had made a terrible mistake. The shark went a little further, turned around and charged at the cage banging it. I could see, hear and smell death as I saw the thick steel rods of the cage giving way.

Prayer after prayer flew like birds in the say. I could feel death up close. Horror and numbness engulfed all other emotions. I stopped breathing. But the shark after a while chose to swim away. The crew immediately pulled up the cage and let us all out. We lay on the boat numb, unemotional, and non-feeling. Fear had stained our memory. The boat immediately turned and took us back to the dock.

The return trip was rather silent and quiet. We just stared at each other, knowing fully what could have changed.

This experience, so full of adventure will be etched in my heart until I breathe my last. So that was my hands on experience into the jaws of death!

Drishika Gala

Peter the Valiant

Once upon a time there lived an elf named Peter. Peter used to travel a lot and had done many voyages across the sea. Near his house there lived a horrid witch. He was frightened of her as she was cruel and he was in her debt. He had visited the witch many times for some spells to encounter emergencies. Peter hadn't been able to pay her back. The witch therefore asked for 3 favours in return, that was the hair of the monster that lived on the mountain in the middle of rings of fire which was impossible to go through. The second was the she wanted a herb named 'hililiour' of rings of fire which was found only in witch land. The last favour was that she wanted 200 gold pieces. Peter borrowed money from his relatives & fulfilled her third wish but could not do the 2 remaining. One day the witch threatened him with dire consequence if he didn't bring her what she had asked for. So he decided to go in search for the hair. He searched his house from top to the bottom and found an ointment which protected one from fire. It had been never used for centuries as his dad had told him about it but now it could come in handy. He went to the palace. He gasped as he saw the huge blazing fire like one started by God Mars. He began to feel hot and immediately applied his ointment. He felt cool. He gulped and walked through the fire." Well", he said. "It's a life or death situation, to correct myself it's a death and death situation. One way the witch will find out and turn me

into a bug and here I might get burnt like charcoal. But he got through the fire easily and saw a small castle ahead. He was shocked. "It looked so big before," he said. He went in. He saw a huge ogre as cucumber whose name echoed from the walls around 'dundly'. Luckily, the ogre was asleep. He had only one hair on his head. Peter carefully plucked it and trembled with excitement. Unfortunately, the ogre woke up. He yawned and then shouted out loud. He looked around and then saw Peter. Peter was afraid of the noise and was shaking in his boots. The ogre was surprised to see a boy as no one could ever come. "How did you....." Before he could finish his question Peter began to run. The ogre ran after him. Peter ran to the blazing fire. Luckily the ogre had forgotten to apply his ointment and so he died in the fire. Soon the fire changed into a colourful fountain of spring water. The castle turned huge and bright and was filled with people. Peter went in and was warmly welcomed by all the people there. They all thanked him for setting them free and made him their ruler. Peter went to the witch, astonished and contended with how things had unfolded so far. The witch threw the hair of the ogre and threw it in a pot. She said, "I don't need the herb, I have it already. ".She drank the potion and at once changed into a beautiful young lady. "Peter, I thank you for setting me free. I was trapped here in this form by another powerful witch. I wouldn't have been free if it wasn't for you. So, Peter married the lady as she brought him good luck and ruled in the castle for a very long

time. One day the witch came back for the lady but the Peter defended his wife and defeated the witch. So, at last all their troubles had disappeared and they both lived happily ever after.

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