

LOST

A man stands in the center of a dark cave, holding a glowing torch. The cave walls are illuminated with a warm, orange-red light, creating a dramatic and mysterious atmosphere. The man is shirtless and wearing dark pants, looking towards the camera. The cave's interior is filled with large, jagged rock formations.

a short story for English
reading and speaking

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Introduction

Are there any dangerous places near your hometown?

Do people go to these places sometimes?

Why do they go there?

Have there been any accidents in these places?

Lost

“I can’t see nothing.”

Carl felt in front of his body with his hands. He had never experienced dark like this before.

There was not one fragment of light anywhere. It made him open his eyes wider, as if that would access some hidden source of light and a beam of it would shine in front of him.

“Hang on, I’ve got the flashlight working again.”

Dan was the only one of them with a torch.

Carl had cursed himself for not bringing one from when they first broke into the mineshaft an hour ago. Since then, Dan had held on to the only source of light and the way out.

“Well, turn the stupid thing on then,” he said.

He stayed stock still, his sense of hearing ultra sharp but no sound at all apart from Dan fiddling with the torch in his hands.

Then a brilliant beam of light lit the space up.

Around them, the misshapen rock walls of the mine. A tunnel leading further into the darkness.

“It feels like there’s no air down here,” said Carl. ***“I can’t get my breath.”***

“There is less air,” said Dan. “We’re quite a way down.”

He turned and walked forward. The tunnel was barely big enough for one person to walk. The top of the tunnel had sharp protruding rocks. Carl had already whacked his head on one or two of them.

“How much further?” he asked Dan.

“I don’t know,” said Dan. “But it can’t be too far.”

Carl had long regretted coming down the mine with his friend Dan.

I’ve found a way in, said Dan. We should go this Sunday.

At first, it sounded like a great idea. Going into some place that was forbidden.

But he now realised that he was more interested in the adulation he would receive in school, telling people about going to the mine, rather than the actual act itself.

They had been traipsing around this place for ages now and it had just turned into hard work.

Dan stopped just in front of Carl, and Carl bumped into the back of him.

It was the hundredth time he had done this. No warning of stopping.

Carl gritted his teeth to prevent himself from swearing out loud.

“Let’s go back,” he said. “I’m sick of this now.”

“We can’t go back,” said Dan. “We’ve come this far. We have to get to the end.”

“But that could be miles away. These mines go on and on for ages.”

He looked behind him but just saw pitch black.

Why had he agreed to come down here with Dan?

No other kids at school liked Dan. He was the odd one out.

The kid that all the other kids didn't seem to like. He wasn't bullied by anyone.

But the other kids didn't let him in their inner circles.

Dan shuffled ahead.

“Come on, let’s keep going.”

Carl followed, hoping that they would come to a dead end and have to turn back.

They moved forward for what felt like an hour or more. But in reality, just a few minutes.

Carl's body was covered in sweat and his back ached from walking hunched over along the tight funnel.

Then Dan let out a gasp.

“We’re here.”

The space opened up into a huge cavern.

Dan shone the light against the walls and above.

It was like being inside a huge cathedral. A vast space.

“What is this place?” said Carl. His voice echoed off the walls and reverberated back and forth.

“This is what I was talking about,” said Dan. “The miners found this big cave as they were digging years ago. I think some of them died.”

“What is it, though? Just a big hole in the ground?” said Carl.

“It’s a sinkhole.” Dan beamed the light around the huge space. “It fills with water every few weeks. Then it drains off somewhere.”

“Shine the light to the top,” said Carl.

Dan raised the beam to the top. But the torch was not bright enough to reach. It petered out into a greyish fog.

“When the miners found this, they hacked away at the wall and it filled the mine shaft with water. Everyone drowned, and they closed the mine.”

The other kids were right about Dan. He was weird.

Carl wondered what he did in his spare time.

He had told Carl that he liked to read about local history and especially about the mines.

“Let’s go down there,” said Dan. He shone the light down a ledge that led to a large crevice in the rock.

“It looks too dangerous,” said Carl. “We should go back.”

But Dan had already started moving forward.

Carl stayed put. He crouched down and found a piece of rock to sit on. It jabbed into his backside, but it was much more comfortable than walking through the tunnel.

He tried not to think of the long walk back.

He could just make out Dan scrambling down the ledge, the light bouncing off the walls of the huge cave, and the sound of small rocks and pebbles reverberating off the sides.

Carl saw the light beam as Dan shone it down the crevice of the rock.

“You should come down here,” he called back to Carl. He sounded like he was miles away. “This goes a long way down.”

“I don’t think you should go near there,” said Carl. “It could be dangerous.”

Dan shone the light from under his chin and made a ghost sound.

Ooooo-oooo....

Carl tried to laugh, but he just wanted to get out of this place now.

“I’m just going to get down this bit here,” said Dan.

“Dan. Come on. Let’s go back.” Carl tried to keep the tension out of his voice.

“Just a couple more minutes,” said Dan.

Carl watched as the light disappeared as Dan went lower down.

Then he heard a scuffling sound and a short cry, followed by the sound of small rocks and stones sliding down.

The light disappeared completely.

“Dan!” he called out.

The huge cave was pitch black.

“Dan, where are you?”

Reading Comprehension Questions

Who are the two characters in this story?

Where are they?

Who has a flashlight?

How had the two boys gotten into the cave? Where did they enter?

Is there plenty of air where they are?

Why did Carl go with Dan into the mineshaft?

What do the other kids at school think of Dan?

What building does the story compare the cave to?

Who discovered the cave years ago?

What happened to the people that discovered it?

What is the correct term for the cave?

What happens there regularly?

What does Dan like to do in his free time?

Where does Carl sit?

Where does Dan go?

Why doesn't Carl join him?

What does Carl hear from below?

Essential Vocabulary

experienced	fragment	access
source	beam	shine
flashlight	torch	cursed
to break into somewhere	mineshaft	stock still
ultra-sharp	fiddling	brilliant
beam of light	misshapen	mine
tunnel	darkness	protruding
whacked	regretted	forbidden
adulation	act	traipsing
gritted	swearing	to be sick of sth
miles	ages	pitch black
odd one out	bullied	inner circle
shuffled	dead end	ached
hunched over	funnel	gasp
cavern	cathedral	vast
echoed	reverberated	back and forth
miners	sinkhole	drains
to peter out	fog	to hack away at sth
drowned	weird	ledge
crevice	to crouch down	jabbed
backside	scrambling	tension

scuffling		
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Exercise

There may be a lot of new or unfamiliar vocabulary to you in the story. This is the perfect time to get to know these new and strange words and phrases.

Write down all the new words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look up the meaning of the new vocabulary in a dictionary or online and write down the meaning next to the word or phrase.

It should look something like this:

Concern – *a feeling of being worried or nervous about something.*

Silvery-blue – *a light shade of blue that has a hint of silver in it.*

Then write a sentence of your own that uses the new word or phrase correctly.

My next-door neighbour's dog causes me some concern.

The bird's wings looked silvery-blue in the sunlight.

If you do this correctly, it will help you learn many new words and phrases. This will build your English vocabulary and writing down all the words and phrases, and making sentences of your

own, will all help you to remember all of this new vocabulary.

Discussion Questions

In your own words, give a summary of the story.

How do you think Carl feels being in the cave? Try to describe his exact feelings.

How do you think Dan feels about being in the cave? Does he feel the same as Carl? Why/why not?

The two boys got into the cave via a mineshaft. How do you think they got into the mineshaft?

Are they there legally or illegally?

If something happened to them, should the local authorities be held responsible?

Dan is not popular at school. What do you think made Carl join him to go to the mineshaft and the cave?

What happens at the end of the story?

What do you think Carl will do next?

Do you think Carl can get out of the cave alone? Why/why not?

Are there any forbidden mines or caves nearby where you live?

Do people want to go to these places?

Have you been to one of these places?

If so, talk about your experience.

Do you think this story ends tragically?

Could it end happily? If so, how?

If the two boys die in the cave, what do you think would happen next?

How would their parents feel about it?

What would their parents do about it?

How would the school react?

How would the other boys in the school react?

What would the police and local government do about it?

Role Play

This is a role play activity.

There are two characters in this role play.

Character One

You plan to go to Edgemoor Cliff.

This is a well-known cliff near to your hometown. Some of the other students from your school have been there, so you want to go there too.

You know it is dangerous. But if you go, you can tell all your classmates about it and they will think very highly of you.

Character Two

Your friend has asked you to go to Edgemoor Cliff with him/her. You are very reluctant to go. You have heard how dangerous it is there.

Many other students from your school have been there, but it has become a kind of dare.

You decide not to go. Even though it might make you look foolish in front of your classmates.

The Situation

There is a very high cliff above the sea near where you live, called Edgemoor Cliff.

It is very high.

Many people have gone there to climb down the cliff face and get to the beach below. Then they walk back up to the headland.

There was a news story two years ago of two teenage boys who went to Edgemoor Cliff. They tried to climb down the cliff face, but it started to rain.

They slipped and fell to their deaths!

Now, two friends are discussing going to Edgemoor Cliff to climb down themselves.

In pairs, prepare your role play.

When you are ready, show your role play to the class!

Debate

This is a debate activity.

Close It Down!

The Situation

There is a waterfall near the town where you all live.

It is very difficult to get to the waterfall. If people wish to go there, they have to climb down a very steep side of a mountain.

After arriving at the waterfall, people usually jump down into the pool below.

This has resulted in several accidents.

Now, people and parents are getting concerned and want the waterfall closed off from the public.

But other people think it is a place of natural beauty and we should respect nature.

Team A

You believe the waterfall should be closed off from the public.

It is too dangerous.

The authorities need to build a fence all around the area to stop people from venturing inside.

Maybe some of you have personal stories to tell of the accidents that happened at the waterfall.

If this continues, it won't be long until someone dies.

Team B

You believe the waterfall is a natural part of the local environment.

It would be terrible to build a fence next to it.

Instead, the authorities could build some steps into the rock, so that people could walk down safely.

And make sure that all of the town is aware that the waterfall is dangerous.

Do not let people jump off the waterfall.

You have also heard stories about the waterfall. But this is due to people making dares with each other.

Divide the class into two teams of equal number.

Choose one person to act as a chairperson. The chairperson should make sure there is order during the debate and also allow every person to speak.

In your teams, take some time to prepare what you want to say.

When you are ready, begin the debate!

Writing

This is a creative writing exercise.

The Mineshaft

You are going to write a story about the mineshaft in the story above.

About the miners who were digging through the rock and then discovered the sinkhole.

What do they find there?

What happens to the miners?

Your story can have any genre or style you like.

It could be science fiction or fantasy.

Or drama or mystery.

Write your story.

Then read out loud in front of your classmates and teacher.

Or you can submit your story to your teacher and ask for feedback.

Credits

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