

The Door

I hear the phone ringing and quickly answer it. It's my friend Theo, wondering if I want to have a sleepover at his house. His house is a bit weird because there is a random door high up on the wall which is pretty obvious if you know to look for it. His family did the best job they could to cover it up by removing the handle and painting the hinges, but Theo and I still knew exactly where it was. Since we weren't supposed to go into it, he tells me his plan to do what all immature nine-year-olds would do: go inside. At night. With nobody to help us.

After eating lunch, I run over to Theo's house, where we play games, eat dinner, and mess around until about ten, when we go to our beds. Theo and I wait until it seems everybody is asleep, then hop out of our beds. His baby sister starts crying. The last thing that we want is to get caught, so we dart downstairs to hide inside the door. The only problem is that once we get in, we fall.

We plummet into a mud hole. Luckily, it completely breaks our fall; but unluckily, we are in a cave. It looks like there is no escape, until I realize that there is a hole in the ceiling. The wall going up to it is fairly smooth, but then Theo finds a spot on the far wall where you can climb up and then climb on the sides to get over. After about ten minutes, we both are in the tunnel.

But then, just as I climb in, a swarm of bats come swooping down, barreling into us and sending us tumbling forward. I brace for impact, and close my eyes. I soon open my eyes again, resting upon a wall and I look for injuries. I find none, but as I wait for Theo, minute after minute, I realize he might have tumbled into a different path.

I start on the path, but soon my back hurts from bending over so much in the tunnel, so I decide to stop, and rest for the night. As I lay down, I think about the next day, when I will slowly starve, devoid of food and water. Laying my head against a rock, I slowly fall asleep, only to wake up the next morning to a long, grueling hike. After completing two miles of walking, I decide to give myself a long break. After doing that, I begin walking again but this time, I find a bigger tunnel that I hoist myself into so I can finally stand up.

After walking four more miles, I find a huge cave at the end. Just as I walk in, I find a rope slithering toward me. I sprint away, but it gains on me. Just as it lunges to choke me, a flaming bird comes down and burns it. “I feel energized from your brush with death,” the bird says cheerily. “My name is Bob, and I am a torch bird, NOT A PHOENIX.”

“I was just looking for some water and coconuts since a kind person named Theo released me from a torch holder,” he continues.

“Where is Theo?!!!” I ask ecstatically. Bob points to the tunnel with his wing, and I see him stumbling down from the tunnel. I dart toward him and hug him.

We walk along talking about how we got here, and soon, we see an oasis with coconut trees surrounding it. We run towards it, but suddenly see a dark shape coming towards us. It’s massive, black, and has eight legs.

“What is that?!!!” Theo screams.

“Oh!” Bob says delightedly. “That’s Anansi! He’s a giant Egyptian mythological spider from ancient stories like…”

“Not the time Bob!” We both shout.

“Okay!” He runs over to the plantain tree, picks one, and throws it to Anansi. The giant spider devours it in about two seconds. “Oh, no!” He says “He wants another one!”

Theo doesn't have time to grab another plantain before Anansi charges at us. We run as fast as we can but he is quickly gaining on us. Suddenly a huge turtle bursts out of the lake, right in front of Anansi. “ARE YOU TURTLE FROM THE STORY OF ANANSI?!!” Bob exclaims. “I'm a HUGE FAN!!!!!!”

“Thanks!” Turtle says, then holds up his flippers. “Anansi, stop chasing everyone, you look like you're trying to murder them!!!”

“But they had plantains!!!” Anansi complains.

“Yeah, whatever, go get your own, you don't have to be a lazy eight legged thing!!”

“Okay, sorry,” Anansi sighs. “Um, sorry for... looking like I was trying to murder you.”

“Uh, it's okay, I guess,” I say. “Nice meeting you.”

“You too.” He crawls back to the plantain tree.

“Sorry about that,” Turtle says. “I told him that most people find spiders terrifying, but he says he's too handsome to be terrifying. He usually brags about his well-manicured fangs.”

“I guess they are, for a spider,” Theo says.

“Yeah. Do you want to have dinner with me?”

“Sure, thank you!” I say eagerly.

“You're welcome. You seemed pretty hungry the way you ran to the plantain tree.” Turtle laughs. “Anyways, come on down. Can you hold your breath for just a few seconds?”

“Yes!” Leo and I both say. “I’ m assuming your house is underwater?”

“Yep. But it’ s not a very long swim, don’ t worry. Oh, hey, will you be able to come?” he says to Bob. “Because you’ re made of fire and all.”

“Oh, I can come, if you dry my torch off once we’ re inside. I’ ll just go out while I’ m underwater. Just don’ t lose my torch.”

“Of course not!” Turtle says. “By the way, what are your names?”

“I’ m Oliver, this is Theo, and the torchbird is Bob,” I say. “And you’ re Turtle, I gather?”

“Yep, my parents weren’ t very creative.” We share a laugh.

“All right, follow me!” Turtle says. We dive into the lake, and swim to Turtle’ s house. It’ s basically a big bubble that air is somehow in. Turtle explains that it’ s a huge air bubble that he can make.

“Cool!” I say.

We sit down at the table and dry Bob off with a piece of cloth. He springs back to life. “What did I miss?”

“Not much,” I say. “You were only out for about one minute.”

“Oh, good. Say, Turtle, do you happen to have any twigs down here?”

“Oh, sure. Do you eat twigs?”

“Yep.”

Turtle finds a few twigs in a corner, and Bob happily eats them up.

“I actually don’ t have that much food,” Turtle says apologetically. “I didn’ t really plan on having guests over for lunch, but I can swim back up and grab some plantains” he says.

“Of course!” I say. We swim up and pick plenty of plantains, and then swim back down, and eat happily. There’ s delicious fish, coconut strips, rice,

and fried plantains, all with garnishes on top. There' s sweet coconut milk to drink, too. We eat it all up, and it tastes absolutely amazing after so long without anything. Turtle also loves telling stories, it seems, and he and Bob talk all through dinner.

“Thank you so much, Turtle,” I say.

“You' re welcome!” Turtle says.

“Turtle, if you know so much about this desert, do you happen to know a way out of it?” Leo asks hopefully.

“Actually, yes, I do,” he says. “There' s a tunnel that leads to an exit. Go back to the plantain tree, then go straight until you reach the wall of this cavern. Then turn left and go along the wall until you see a tunnel. Follow that tunnel, and you' ll get back.”

“Turtle, thank you so much!” Leo exclaims. “We' ll finally be able to get back home. “Thank you so much for all your help,” I say.

“You' re welcome. And I hope I' ll see you again.”

“Yeah,” Leo says, “I have a weird feeling that we will...”

“Bye, Turtle!” we shout. We swim up to the surface of the lake, dry off Bob' s torch, and then find the plantain tree. Bob carries us, as he doesn' t get tired, being made of fire. We walk according to Turtle' s directions. Then, we turn left after about thirty minutes, when we reach the cave wall.

Then we spot the tunnel. While we are walking we talk about how we can get Bob to stay with us. We hope he can live in one of our closets, sleeping there, and secretly going places with us. Of course, if he promises not to set anything on fire.

We fly into the tunnel. This tunnel is much shorter than the other ones, and after only about an hour of walking, we reach a door. I hesitate, then open it.

The door swings open. Standing in front of us are Theo' s Mom and sister. We have a lot of explaining to do.