

FIELD TRIP

By Olivia Hu

It was night. The dark clouds obscured the moon and blotted out the stars, and it was nearly pitch black. The only thing that gave light was the dying flashlight that I held. Nervously, my friends and I stood in the middle of the clearing, the flashlight flickering in my hands.

“No...please don’t die. Not now,” I whispered to the flashlight.

The flashlight gave one last flicker, and then we were smothered in darkness.

“What do we do now?” Grace panicked.

I could understand why she was so upset. A wave of guilt washed over me. I was the one who brought her, and everyone, into this.

“I don’t know...ask her,” Indah’s wavering voice sounded to the right of me. I could tell she meant me. We were in the middle of the forest near our camp, but we had been wandering for about a half-hour, and I couldn’t remember which direction we had gone.

It was almost the end of November, and my teacher, Ms. Keller, planned this camping trip, hoping it would be a fun and educational experience. All throughout the day, we learned about the animals of the woods and the ecosystem.

A few hours ago, all of my classmates and I were sitting around a s’mores campfire, toasty, content, and enjoying the sweet treats. Maybe it was at this moment I decided, *What else could we do out here?* I thought this would be a fun adventure, like in the books. Well, now that I was standing here in the darkness of the woods, I regretted my decision immensely.

“I knew it was a bad idea!” Maddie whispered behind me. “We should have stayed behind with Tallulah and Megan and Debbie and everyone else.”

Suddenly a twig snapped somewhere in the distance. We all froze, and the only sound was the rustling of leaves.

“Who’s there?” I squeaked. I held up the dead flashlight and waved it around. “Who’s there?”

The sounds faded, but I could sense the fear around me. Slowly, I took a step forward.

“I guess we’ll have to find a place to stay for the night,” I said, dreading what might happen to us if we did. I listened for protests, but none came. Indah sighed. Again, I felt bad for what I dragged my friends into. It was bad enough already, and now we had to spend the night in this creepy old forest.

“Does anyone have an extra flashlight?” I asked, hoping we could at least find a few branches to make a fire.

“No,” all my friends answered in unison.

“But look,” Indah pointed up. “The clouds are gone!”

I grinned. The light was just enough for me to see clearly. We started to gather branches and put them in a small pile. Grace lit a match and the sticks burst into bright red flames. It was

lucky that we had some wilderness survival training, or else we wouldn't know how to start a fire.



I looked around. We had made ourselves beds out of moss and leaves, which was more comfortable than I thought it would be. We had decided one person would be on watch while the others slept. Maddie was the first one to be on watch.

"Here's the plan," Maddie had said. "If there's a bear or something, I'll scream and then you wake up and we all run as fast as we can the opposite direction,"

"Sounds good to me," Indah said approvingly.

Now we were lying in bed. We stared up at the stars, and I wondered if Ms. Keller knew we were here, and if she was looking for us...then I let darkness overcome me.

Crack. Crack-crack. I opened my eyes slowly and murmured, "Is it my turn to watch?" Then I leapt up. Nobody was on watch, and I heard the sound of twigs breaking. Oh no.

"Wake up!" I whisper-shouted. I didn't want to draw attention. The fire had died, and I grabbed the largest branch in the pile and took a step back. Maddie was the first one to wake up, and the rest of my friends followed, scrambling to their feet, crowding around me.

It's too late to run. The sound seemed to circle around us, daring us to move. Then I saw the glint of a flashlight, and the smiles of the faces around me.

It was my classmates, and Ms. Keller was with them.

We were saved.



Yes, we got a LOT of scolding and lecturing and punishments, but at least we made it through. Plus our teachers were very impressed that we made a fire and made it out alive. Everyone was joking and talking about us on the way back to our neighborhood.

I couldn't wait to go home.

It would be a good story to tell.