

We entered the cave, and suddenly we were in another era!

We must have seemed like aliens to the people we met, though they didn't even know what the word "aliens" means. We are kids of the present: we have televisions, computers, and mobile phones, yet for just a few hours we went back in time many years.

Here we are, during the most significant moments of Israel's War of Independence. Here we are, under siege in the capital city of the newborn state. Here we are, witnessing the struggle over the foundation of Israel.

Many questions remain. Can something that happened in the past be altered in the present? What happened to those people we met? How can we help them?

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Chapter 1

We Find a Tunnel and Some Mysterious Barrels

So, like I said, Sharon and I decided we'd explore the tunnel. We decided to go on Monday at 3:00 p.m. Why then? Because that's when I'm supposed to be at karate and Sharon's supposed to be at gymnastics. We knew that if we left the house as if we were headed to practice, our parents wouldn't ask any questions, and we'd have enough time to do what we wanted.

We took two backpacks, making sure to pack flashlights, candles and matches, a long coil of rope in case we needed to climb up or down, a cell phone with a camera to record anything important we might find, and last but not least, some snacks. Sharon brought two bags of chips and a bottle of

Coke. I brought my water bottle, some pretzels, and a candy bar.

The first opening we found was on the right side of the tunnel. It was really narrow, and we had to crawl to get through. Sharon said she'd go first, and I was okay with that. I took out the rope and tied one end to Sharon's wrist and the other to my own wrist. This would be our lifeline. If Sharon fell into a pit at the other end, I could pull her back up.



I hope by now you see what a cautious kid I am!

We crawled and crawled, and for a while it seemed like this side tunnel might not have an end, but it did. It wasn't a pit, but the opposite. There was another opening overhead, in the tunnel roof. Light came from it—not blinding sunlight, but a weak beam, as if from a lamp.

Sharon stopped, turned to me, and asked, “What do you say? Should we climb up?”

“We’ve come this far,” I replied. “Let’s do it.”

“Who’ll go first?” she asked.

“I will,” I volunteered.

“You’ll have to let me give you a boost,” Sharon said, pointing to the opening. “It’s too high up.”

“Don’t worry,” I smiled. “I don’t weigh a lot.”

She pressed herself right up against the tunnel wall and I squeezed past her. Then she bent all the way over and I climbed on her back. I grabbed on to some rocks sticking out of the wall, trying to take some weight off her. I stretched my whole body upwards.

Luckily the opening was almost as narrow as the

tunnel, so I could support myself by pressing against the surrounding walls.

I reached up as far as I could and groped around the rim of the opening. My fingers struck something—it seemed to be a wooden board. I felt it all over, making sure it was actually attached to the floor, so that if I grabbed onto it, I wouldn't fall. The board didn't budge, so I hoisted myself up bit by bit into the light, until my whole body was through. I found myself in a little room.

"What's up there?" Sharon yanked on the rope, still tied around my wrist, and almost pulled me back down into the tunnel.

"Come on up," I said.

"How?" she shot back. "I haven't got anyone to boost me up."

"I'll pull you up," I offered.

I spotted a ladder attached to the wall, leading up to another opening in the ceiling. So the light didn't come from a lamp, as I'd thought, but from the opening overhead. I hooked my arm through the ladder and held the rope as taut as I could.

Sharon shimmied up the rope—but because she’s not exactly a lightweight, she nearly dislocated my shoulder. It wasn’t until she’d reached the board and grabbed hold of it that the rope slackened and I could take a breather.

“Wow,” said Sharon. “What are all those barrels?” She went over to some barrels standing by the wall. Why hadn’t I noticed them before? Sharon began investigating.

“It looks like a warehouse,” she whispered.

“But whose could it be?” I wondered.

“How should I know?” she shrugged.

I got my flashlight out of my backpack and aimed it at the barrels. Each barrel had a lid. I shone the light on each one, looking for a label, but there was nothing.

“I’ve got a bad feeling about this,” I said.

“Why?”

“I think this must be some gang hideout,” I explained. “What normal person would dig such a deep hole in the ground just to store some barrels?”

“Let’s try opening a barrel and see what’s inside,”

Sharon suggested.

“Have you lost your mind? What if they’re rigged to explode?”

“Why would anyone set a bomb to explode underground?”

“Maybe this is a terrorist stash,” I said.

Sharon laughed.

“Even if it does belong to terrorists,” she said, “nothing’s going to explode down here. Most terrorists aren’t so crazy that they’d rig their own stuff to blow up when they open it! Maybe this is where they make their bombs.”

I still wasn’t convinced. I tried to pull her back so she wouldn’t do anything stupid. But Sharon was quicker than me and, before I could grab hold of her, she’d already yanked the lid off a barrel—then leaped in panic to the far wall.

“What’s wrong?” I asked.

“Yikes! You . . . were . . . right,” she stammered.

“What’s in it?” My heart started pounding hard and fast with terror.

“Weapons . . .” Sharon whispered.

“Explosives?”

“No,” she shook her head.

I swung my flashlight round to the tunnel entrance.

“Let’s get out of here,” I said, my voice shaking.

“Quick! I don’t want to get into any trouble!”

But before we could take even one step towards the tunnel entrance, we heard a noise. It came from overhead. Then a shoe appeared on the top rung of the ladder I’d hung on to just moments before.

Sharon and I froze in our tracks and grabbed each other tight. Another shoe appeared on the next rung.

“Halt! Password!” said a voice.

And in that moment, we knew—we couldn’t possibly escape, not even if we were the fastest runners in the world.



Chapter 2

We Don't Know the Password and Get Taken Prisoner. Scary!

"Halt! Password!" the voice said again.

Sharon and I looked at each other. A boy of about thirteen or fourteen, dressed in khaki shorts and a khaki shirt, was coming down the ladder. He jumped off the bottom rung into the room and eyed us suspiciously. In one hand he held a strange-looking lantern with a handle, like the propane lantern my grandma keeps around in case we lose power. The boy was wearing a funny wool cap, also khaki-colored, that looked a bit like a sailor's cap.

"Hey!" he shouted, "Say the password!"

"What password?" I was at a loss.

"The password they gave you," he insisted.