

When The Truth Washed Over

I never knew I'd be the person to get stuck like that on a hike. I've always been the type of kid who would plan ahead, avoid unnecessary risks, prepare for the worst. But today, it was different.

"Yay!" I bounded through the cliffs, feeling the soft, velvety sand on my shoes, and the cool breeze blowing on my face. I knew we were reaching the end of the trail.

"Even at this time of the evening, the hike is so beautiful, isn't it?" my mom told me. The salty sea air was settling everywhere.

"Definitely. I love hearing the sound of the waves as we descend. This is one of my favorite hikes in San Diego," I responded. The sound of the waves was as gentle as the purr of a kitten, yet as powerful as a cheetah when it is chasing its prey.

We walked, admiring the scene around us for a while. Soon, I spotted the beginning of the series of steps. The sun was just setting, leaving streaks of pink and orange in the sky. It looked like nature decided to paint on the canvas of the sky. It made me think about the time I was sitting in my backyard on a comfy chair, watching the sun say goodbye for the day. I was holding a cup of warm hot cocoa and sipping it on a cold day. Watching the sunset that day left me in a feeling of awe and wonder. It was beautiful...

"What are you doing?" my twin called, snapping me out of my memory.

"Sorry!" I mumbled as I ran toward her. "The sunset is just beautiful." I felt so peaceful.

Little did I know *how much* it was going to change.

"The high tide may be coming soon, while the sun is setting. We must hurry!" My dad told us, a look of worry spreading over his face. We started jogging toward the series of steps,

which were now barely a yard away. I saw clouds of silt flying up behind my shoes, I heard the clunking sound of metal. *That is weird. Why would the metal steps be clunking against anything now? They lead into soft and compact sand,* I thought to myself. When I saw the steps, I could not help but gasp.

Really? Now?

Waves gushed everywhere, splashing up a thick mist that blinded us. Foaming bubbles were surrounding everything. Only then I realized why the stairs were clunking. The waves were battering it. It was high tide!

" Oh no!" I yelled. "We really should have been a little more prepared and started the hike earlier!" I was struggling to figure out a way to walk back to the parking lot by the beach where we had parked. I could imagine us soaking wet and miserable. We would be frustrated and annoyed. And we would be cold. Or if we decided to turn back, I could imagine us running in the dark, groping around and trying to follow the path. We would stumble on thick roots protruding out of the sand. Also, all of us would have only reached the end late at night if we decided to turn back and walk the whole trail again. Both options sounded pretty bad to me. I turned back to my family, ready to hear what they were going to say.

"Unfortunately, I don't think there is another way around this. If we turn back and go, it will be very dark and we did not come prepared with flashlights," my mom announced, trying to be positive.

"But, but..." I stammered. "We will get drenched. I am not even in a swimsuit."

“Come on. It is not so bad! Maybe a little uncomfortable, but, so will be turning back in the dark. Going in the water at least is a bit more adventurous and fun.” my twin said, already rolling up her pants.

Down the “foaming water steps” she went. “I mean, we have to get through it anyway. The sooner the better. What is the point of just standing around like this?” she said. Ms. Enthusiastic right there.

Soon, I had rolled up my pants like her and was walking in the cold water. When I first dipped in my toe, I shivered because the water was colder than regular San Diego beaches, which were supposed to be the perfect temperature. I felt the sand squish beneath my feet. I started to walk with the water up to my knees. “It is actually not *that* bad,” I told my parents who had no choice but to follow.

In a couple of minutes, we were all walking, or I should say part swimming. Water was up to my waist now. We were chatting as we moved by the cliffs. “I wonder when we will reach the end. I am soaked!” my twin told my dad.

“I think we are almost there. I am wet too. Like. Really. Wet.” My dad answered, a bit of a smile on his face. Exactly at that moment a huge wave completely drenched me! Finally, as I peered through the twilight, I saw a couple of cars parked and a lifeguard station.

“Phew! We have reached the drier area at last!” I plopped my wet self on the sand. I moved my drenched hair out of my eyes and looked at the turquoise waves in front of me. They had gotten calmer, and splashed down on the sand with a layer of white foam. Slowly they retreated back, and it was a beautiful scene to see. I turned around and looked at my happy and

relieved family. Though we all were tired more from stress than the hike itself, we all were also grateful to be done.

We had been through this together. After all, wasn't that all that mattered? At that moment, I knew the experience we had been through would forever be embedded in our hearts along with the truth that being impulsive and not exercising prudence and self-control can sometimes have unexpected and unpleasant consequences.