*The Tunnels (3112 words)*

“Do you really want to go in the there? Probably we won’t even find anything, and we’ll just get super dirty and wet for nothing!” Peter asked me for the 100th time.   
I can’t stop myself and roll annoyed with my eyes: “Oh just shut up! Probably you are just afraid that there actually *is* something. Come on! I mean we’ll get freaking famous if we’re able to get something good in front of our cameras in these tunnels!”   
Peter was always such a scaredy cat, overthinking everything. I mean we are already here and now he has second thoughts? A little bit late if you’d been asking me.  
Peter sighs, but otherwise keeps his mouth shout, for which I am grateful because on the whole way here he wouldn’t stop telling horror stories about this place and how many people already died in these tunnels and how many more told their stories about how they only escaped closely the creature which was supposed to live here.   
Some even said there were several monster*s* and he slowly started to freak me out too. But I don’t believe in monsters and these stories are the exact reasons why we came here, to find out and record what really is here. We might even go viral!!  
“Ok, I’ll turn the camera on now, so no more whining Peet.   
Hi there, fans! So, right know we’re right in front of the famous tunnels and today we’ll find out what really is in there. So, let’s go!” I turn my phone around, so I could record the front of the tunnels.   
I have to admit that they are kind of scary. The entrance to the tunnels is basically a black whole in a huge mountain. We are able to look maybe 10 meters into them but after that everything seemes to be swallowed by darkness. The water which comes out of the tunnels is green and dirty and flows in to a little river and when you look further in to the tunnel it almost looks greasy before it is consumed by darkness too. I swallow. But then I take all of my courage and ask, as if I wasn’t in awe by this old construct, Peter: “So, is everything ready to go in? Do you have the flashlights?” He nods and takes the flashlights out of his bag, gives me one of them and smiles bright into the camera “I’m ready to go.”   
I couldn’t help it but to roll my eyes again; he always had to act super cool and calm in front of the camera, but before that he always freaks me out with his whining.  
So we enter the tunnels. Water is dripping from the ceiling. The smell is super awful in here and I wrinkle my nose. As we go further the only light came from our flashlights and we aren’t able to see anything beyond or behind.   
We were already walking for some time and non of us dared to say a single word, the only sound there was, was the sound of the dripping water and the sound of the little river made in the middle of the tunnel.  
All the sudden we hear something. It was coming closer. Both of us freeze and point our flashlights and the camera at the direction the sound was coming from. It stopped. On the one hand I was super scared, but on the other also exited. Maybe that was the moment we were able to find out what all the stories were about! I clench my teeth and slowly start to go forward.  
Suddenly I hear Peter laughing. I turned around a little confused and raised my eyebrows.   
“Don’t you see? It’s just a rat. Haha! You should’ve seen your face! You looked so scared!”   
Now I was able to see it too. There in the edge of the river a fat rat was sitting. I feel so stupid. I turn around to Peter again and say a little bugged out: “I wasn’t scared! And as if you weren’t scared yourself.” Peter was still laughing, and I had to start to smile too. I shock my head: “Let’s go on Peet. I guess that little guy definitely wasn’t the monster we were searching for.”   
“Yeah, let’s hope not, I mean we wouldn’t get many clicks for that, though your face was pretty great, maybe we already get a few for that.” Peter says, still grinning.  
“Yeah, suuuper funny.”   
We walked on, deeper into the tunnel system and it wasn’t long until the tunnel split into two.   
We try to get a glance to the tunnel on the right side, but because of the water in the middle we weren’t able to take a closer look and we just continued to walk on our side of the river. That happened a several more times, but it was always the same with the river and so we always had to stick to our left side, which I was kind of grateful for because this way we wouldn’t have any problems finding our way out again.   
The further we got, the colder it got as well and I tried to put my jacket tighter, though it didn’t helped much and also Peter didn’t look too comfortable. After a while he said: “I don’t think we’ll find here any more than some fat rats and this gross water. It’s just super cold and disgusting, lets go back.”   
Actually, I totally agreed with him, and I wanted to get out of here too, but on the other hand I didn’t want to back up in front of the camera, so I answered annoyed: “Oh come on, what did you think how it would be? I mean there were already some many people who tried to find out what was going on here and no one, did you really think it would be easy? We already came so far, we’ll go on!”  
Peter sighed again, but said nothing more.   
My flashlight began to flicker. I got goosebumps. With that flickering light these tunnels looked even more creepy. And if mine already started to flicker, Peter’s flashlight’s battery probably wasn’t far from being dead either.  
“Shit. Did you bring any new batteries or another flashlight, Peet?”   
“What? No, that was your job dude.”  
“Uhm, what? That was definitely yours, you are the one with the bag pack here!”   
We looked at each other with wide opened eyes. We were in here for at least 40 min.   
I checked my phone and saw that it was actually already recording for 1h 04 min.  
And as soon these kinds of flashlights began to flicker, we only had around 15 more minutes.  
“Fast Peter! Turn your flashlight off! Then we’ll have at least a little more time before we’re totally out of light. He immediately turned his off and only my flickering light stayed on. Now it was way harder to see, and the fear slowly crowed down my back.  
I sighed and tried to get myself under control. No way I’d show how scared I actually was.  
“Well, if we’ll walk very fast, we can probably make it back in time and also my phone light should last for a bit, though it’s not very strong and to be honest I don’t want to walk back with that light.”  
“I agree, lets start walking!” Peter nodded with his head and already started to walk back. After a few steps he took I already had problems to see him with the flickering lamp as our only light source and I hurried so I wouldn’t fall back.  
All of the sudden I heard Peter beginning to scream panicky. I couldn’t see why he was screaming, and I ran the last steps to him. Then I felt something around my had. I heard wing beats and I wasn’t able anymore to see anything, while something continually scratched off my face.  
Through the flickering light I saw flashes of a big moving black sea all around me.  
The dread filled me and I tried to run but I couldn’t break through this wall of wings and claws which were all around me and so I tried to at least protect my head from these claws that seemed to be everywhere. It already seemed it would never stop again.  
But then, as sudden as it started, it was over.  
I shivered.  
Peter did too.   
I saw him sitting close to me, also trying to protect his head. I looked around and tried to figure out what *that* just was, pointing my flashlight around. And what I saw was bats.   
I let myself fall to the ground and leaned against the tunnel wall. Then I began to laugh. This time Peter was the one looking confused, but I couldn’t stop myself and after a few seconds he began to laugh to.  
I mean really? Bats? That’s why the both of us totally freaked out? I think my laugh sounded a little hysterically, but I didn’t care my heartbeat was still super high and I felt the blood pumping through my body and all I was able to do was sitting here and laugh. Peter was no different from me, but after a while when we calmed down again, we both noticed, how the light of my flashlight got weaker.   
“We should continue to go back if we don’t want to walk a big part of our way in the dark, dude”, Peter said. I looked at my clock. We already wasted 10 more minutes laughing at ourselves and calming down again.   
“Maybe we can turn this light out for a little while, I remember that there are no curves for quite a while and I think I’d rater have the lights for the end part, because I remember, that there were way more rats, and it was more slippery. What do you think Peet?”  
“Yeah, I think that’s not a bad idea”, he tried to say calmly, but he was still giggling a bit, I was too. I think it was the shock. I looked a little closer at him and saw scratches all over his face and arms, from some of them even was dripping some blood. I wondered how I was looking like and when I thought about it I felt how my face was burning all over it. I looked at my arms and saw several wounds on it as well.   
I really hoped it wouldn’t get infected, but we couldn’t worry about that now. We should turn out that light to save what we still have and start walking. I took a last look at our surroundings and turned the light off.  
so we walked through the darkness, with my phone display, which was still recording, as the only light, always staying close to the wall so we wouldn’t accidently fall into the water.   
After a few minutes Peter began to talk:” Hey, it’s pretty weird just walking here in the dark, aaand to be honest… it’s kind of scary too. I think I heard somewhere that it scares most of the animals away, when you start to sing, so what do you think? Should we give it a try?”   
I scoffed. Singing? I hated singing. And I was super awful at it. “You do know that we want to *get* new followers here, not to scare them away, right?” I thought for a second. I felt super uneasy right know too and I almost had the feeling that someone, no, some*thing* was watching us “I mean on the other hand though we can always cut that part out, and you’re right, we still have a long way in front of us… and with our voices we’d really scare pretty much everything away.”  
Both of us had to laugh. “So, any ideas what we want to sing?”   
A moment of silence. Non of us could think about a song to sing. And while I thought how incredible it was how much more I was able to hear on the total darkness, Peter suggested:” Let’s start with ‘Ich hab nen knallrotes Gummiboot’!”   
I had to smile: “Haha, that one? Really?”   
“Well do you have anything better?”   
I shrugged and then remembered that Peter wasn’t able to see that. “Nah, why not”.  
And so we started singing and joking around and we almost forgot that we were in these creepy tunnels. This way we were able to out quite some way behind us without any further incidents and when I checked my phone I saw that we already walked for 30 minutes.  
“Hey Peet, I just looked at my phone and we should only have around 30 more minutes, I think it should be fine if we turn one of the flashlights back on.”  
“Sounds good to me. Give me a sec., I get them out of my backpack.”  
I heard his backpack rustle. Then that sound stopped. “What’s up, Peet?”   
I heard how he sharply blew air through his teeth. “Peter? What is it?”  
“There... is… something… *right at meg leg*.” I rolled my eyes “Oh come on Peet, you won’t be able to scare me that easily. I think by now we can be pretty sure that in here is nothing more dangerous than these crazy bats. Probably they are the reasons for all of the stories about that place here.”  
“No dude, there *really is something*!”   
All of the sudden I hear a deep growl from right where Peter should be standing. I jump back and Peter ripped out the flashlight out of his backpack, turned it on and pointed it down at his legs. And there was… nothing. Peter looked super confused, just as I probably did “What the hell??” We both said at the same time.   
Unfortunately, he had to grab the flashlight with the lower battery and so it was flickering again.   
Then I saw a shadow hushing away to the direction, where the exit of the tunnels was, right behind Peter. A huge shadow. A shadow that looked like it was from a monster. We heard another growl, this time from where we just came. I was filled with horror. There were two of them?! But then I remembered that that was exactly what we came for and I lifted up my phone, trying to record what was waiting for us in the shadows. My hand was shaking slightly. I felt my heart pumping against my ribs. Another growl, closer this time. Peter began to run to the entrance. I did too. For a second I worried that we’d just be running into the first monster’s arms right now, but apparently my legs didn’t care about that. And in that moment, I didn’t care either. I just wanted to get out of here. Somehow. Away. Now.  
How have I even been able to get such a dumb idea to go in here?!  
I heard running steps getting louder behind me. I tried to get faster. Something was panting right behind me. I passed Peter and I was running like I’ve never been running before. I couldn’t really see very much, but I also didn’t care, as long I was able to get more distance between me and that thing.  
I stumbled. I screamed. Peter fell over me. I felt a dull pain.   
The steps were slower now, but still coming closer. With wide open eyes I stared into the darkness, but I couldn’t see a single thing.   
Peter must’ve lost the flashlight during our fall. “Damn it! Where is that stupid light?!” he cursed.  
The steps were getting closer and closer, and I was already able to hear the creature breathing.   
“Hurry Peet! That light has to be somewhere!”, my voice slipped into a squeak in the end.  
Finally, the light turned on, but only for a second, in which I was able to see a huge shadow, as horrible as the one I saw before. Why didn’t we remembered to get extra batteries?? I felt my phone in my hand, and I absently lifted my phone until it was right in front of me, ready to record anything that might jump at us in any second. I heard Peter hitting the flashlight and surprisingly that actually worked. The light turned on again and we were able to see what was hiding in the shadows.  
And standing there was: a baby wolf. I turned around and from the other side there was a baby wolf sitting too. And I felt so ridiculous. I looked at Peter who’s shivering hand was still holding the flickering light and he just looked puzzled.   
“Oh man”, I said, “Oookay so that was really a lot freaking out for nothing for today. I feel super dumb right now.” I let myself falling to the ground and put my hands on to my forehead. I’m totally out of breath and my ankle hurt really bad, I think I twisted it during the fall.   
And still a victorious grin appeared slowly on my face.   
“Hey Peet. We made it! We have that whole thing on my camera! We really found the ‘monster’.”  
Peter still seemed completely perplexed, but she slowly breaks away from his rigid and let himself fall to the ground too. A small smile appeared on his face as well.   
“Oh man”, is the only thing he said.  
In the meantime the little wolfs came a little closer, sniffing around. It seemed, that they just wanted to play all along. I wonder how they came into here. Poor little ones.   
When the one, who came from our front was almost right next to me, I sat up and hold my hand out so he could sniff on it too. He came closer. He clanged his head into my head and seemed to be happy, then he looked up. I don’t know what it was, but something seemed wrong here. But what? Somehow it almost seemed as he was grinning maliciously. But that couldn’t be, right? Probably it was just the light.   
Then, all the sudden, it seemed as if he started to grow, bigger and bigger. What was going on here? Did I hit my head, when I fell?   
“Uhm, Peet? Do you see that too or is it just me?”  
No answer.   
“Peter??”   
I looked around to him.   
But he wasn’t there. Instead, there was a giant wolf sitting, licking his mouth. The flashlight was laying on the ground. I put my hand over my mouth. Was that blood dripping down from this monster’s mouth?  
“Peet?” Again, no answer. I turned around to the baby wolf who was next to me again. But it wasn’t a baby wolf anymore. It was a giant beast, looking at me hungrily. It opened its mouth and reviled a series of long and pointy teeth. I didn’t understand anything anymore. I tried to rob back, away from this monster, but *it* just made one giant step and was right above me. I stared into his throat. Then it sank his head down to eat me.