

I trekked my way through the dimly lit smooth stone cave. Thankfully, the stones weren't as smooth as the term suggested, allowing my feet to grip the grooves in the steepness of the cave's slope. As I climbed further and further up I was again thankful to find steadiness by grasping the rocks that were jutting out on the sides. I was happy to know I no longer had to worry about balancing and guiding myself through the cavern. Now I got a chance to really look around. The cavern was accurately named because the stones did give off the appearance of smooth silky surfaces. They were just smooth stone that also jutted roughly out of the sedimentary compositions that surrounded me.

I had a much better view of where I was headed and what I was doing this arduous hiking for due to my more relaxed breathing. I inhaled the cool crisp air of the surroundings and allowed the rush to calm my lungs and relieve me of the perspiration that was accumulating along my body. I used a free hand and my teeth to tighten the ponytail pulling my strawberry-colored hair back and away from my face. Excitement bubbled as I realized that I wouldn't have to worry about the excessive length much longer. Not when I was rapidly approaching the end of this long quest. I would have no more obligations after this. Not when I finally acquired what I'd been thoroughly searching for.

I heaved myself up the last upstretch and adjusted my footing on the now flat ground. I would have to be careful as there were no more grooves like there had been on the inclimb. I cautiously made my way across the stone ground to a slightly lowered depression and audibly gasped at the sight of the large chest in the middle. This was it. This was really it. It was here! All of this effort and I wasn't going to leave empty-handed! I had to strictly urge myself not to run toward it. Instead I gingerly stepped forward and gently propped open the lid to stare into the depths of the box.

My spirits sank. This wasn't what I had been told was here. This was... nothing. Practically nothing. I had gone all this way and done all this work and sitting right in front of me was nothing more than junk! I angrily left the lid opened and sat on the ledge above the depression it had been so lazily perched in. What was I going to do now?! This had to be a trick! This couldn't be what I was supposed to look for. Brimming with renewed excitement, I searched for hidden compartments around the depression. But after what seemed like hours I was still left with nothing. I left the chest propped open, brimming with gems, gold coins, and dollar bills that could never be of any use to me.