

THE DARK CLIFF

DON'T FOLLOW OTHERS BLINDLY

A BOY NAMED KENNY PLANNED TO GO WITH A GROUP OF HIS CLOSEST FRIENDS TO A NATIONAL PARK WHERE A RACE WAS BEING HELD. HIS PARENTS WOULD BE TAKING HIM. THE PARK WAS LARGE AND LUSH, SURROUNDED BY MANY TREES, AND MYSTERIOUS. FAMOUS FOR PEOPLE ENTERING AND NOT RETURNING, THAT DID NOT DETER HIM.

HE'D BE GOING WITH A LARGE GROUP OF HIS FRIENDS - 12 TO BE EXACT - PLUS HE HAD ALWAYS BEEN GOOD WITH DIRECTIONS.

THE FOREST COMPETITION WAS HELD ANNUALLY WITH TWO GROUPS OF PEOPLE. THE CHALLENGE WAS SIMPLE: WHOEVER STARTED IN THE SOUTH OF THE FOREST AND MADE IT OUT OF THE OTHER END FIRST, WAS THE WINNER.

IT WOULD BE A PIECE OF CAKE, KENNY THOUGHT. HE WOULD FOLLOW HIS INSTINCTS AND NOT LET ANYONE CONVINCHE HIM TO STRAY FROM HIS PATH.

THE DAY OF THE COMPETITION ARRIVED. ONE GROUP STOOD AT THE STARTING LINE ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE FOREST WHILE THE OTHER STOOD ON THE RIGHT. KENNEY'S HEART POUNDED AS HE ANTICIPATED THE START. IT FELT LIKE IT WOULD THUD OUT OF HIS CHEST. "3...2...1 GO," THE JUDGE CALLED OUT THROUGH THE HORN. THEY WERE OFF!

THE FIRST 20 MINUTES OF THE RACE WERE NO PROBLEM FOR KENNEY'S TEAM. THOUGH KENNEY WAS JUST FOLLOWING THE GROUP, HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THEY KNEW WHERE THEY WERE GOING BECAUSE, AS HIS FRIENDS, HE HAD ALWAYS JUST FOLLOWED THEM. KENNEY WOULD JUST FOLLOW THE PERSON HE WAS BEHIND.

BUT AFTER SEVERAL HOURS, KENNEY BECAME CONCERNED. IT WOULD BE NIGHTFALL SOON. HE STARTED SAYING TO HIS FRIENDS, WHO WERE NOW WALKING IN A LONG ROW, THAT THEY WERE GOING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION. HE SAID THIS AGAIN AND AGAIN, BUT THEY WOULDN'T LISTEN. "GO WITH US," EACH WOULD ECHO.

HE KNEW THAT IF HE JUST WENT IN THE DIRECTION THAT HE KNEW IN HIS GUT FELT RIGHT, THEY WOULD WIN THE RACE. BUT INSTEAD, KENNEY JUST CONTINUED TO FOLLOW THE PERSON IN FRONT OF HIM.

SOON, SOMETHING VERY STRANGE BEGAN TO HAPPEN. ONE BY ONE, THE PEOPLE ON HIS TEAM STARTED TO DISAPPEAR. STARTING FROM THE FRONT, THEY WOULD DROP OFF AS IF THEY WERE SQUATTING DOWN. THERE WERE 12 PEOPLE - AND SOON IT TURNED INTO JUST A FEW PEOPLE IN FRONT OF HIM. KENNY COULDN'T SEE CLEARLY, BECAUSE IT HAD ALREADY REACHED NIGHTFALL, BUT AS HE APPROACHED THE AREA WHERE EVERYONE SEEMED TO DISAPPEAR, HE REALIZED THAT IT WAS A CLIFF - THE EDGE OF A VERY HIGH MOUNTAIN.

EACH PERSON HAD BEEN FOLLOWING THE PERSON IN FRONT OF THEM WITHOUT ASKING WHICH DIRECTION THEY WERE MOVING, AND EACH OF THEM HAD FALLEN FROM THE CLIFF. KENNEY HAD LET OTHERS HOLD HIM BACK, AND NOT ONLY DID THE OTHERS HOLD HIM BACK FROM WINNING THE RACE, HE NEARLY FELL OFF THE CLIFF WITH THEM.

REMEMBER- DON'T FOLLOW OTHERS BLINDLY, OR YOU MAY FIND YOURSELF ON THE EDGE OF A MOUNTAIN WITH NOWHERE TO GO BUT DOWN.