

Exploring Your World

# Adventures in the Canyon





People always tell Maria that she is brave. She rides all the fast rides at amusement parks, never sleeps with a light on, and isn't nervous about reading in front of the class.



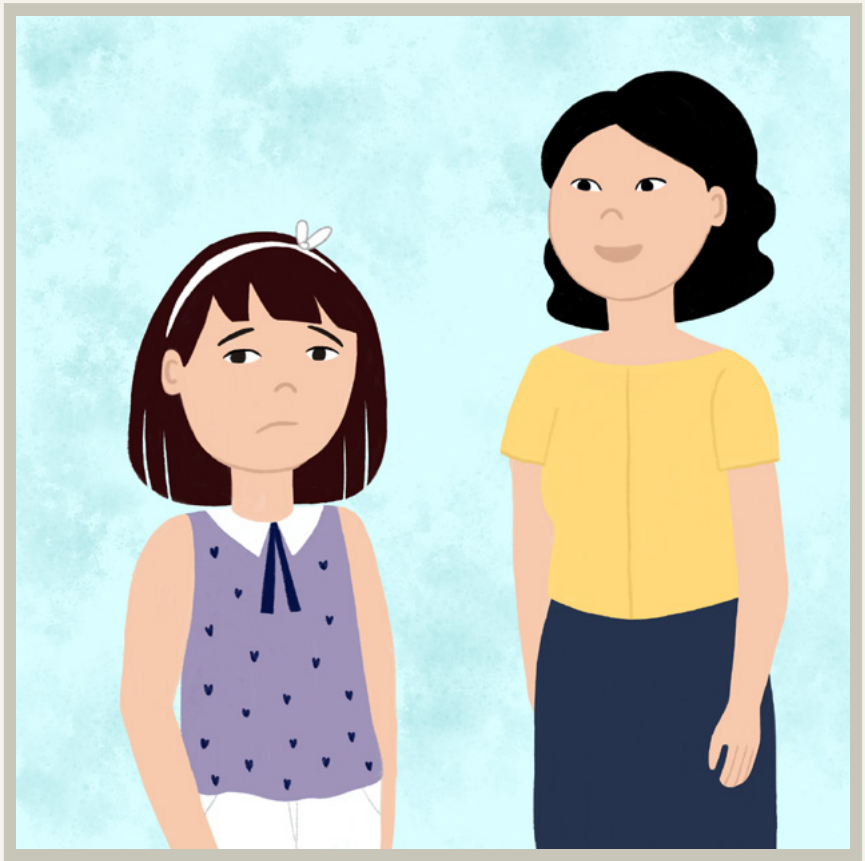
One winter, she was the first kid to sled from the top of the steepest hill. The hill was so high that most of the other sledders were afraid to ride down it. Even though she fell off the sled and rolled the rest of the way down the hill, she got right back up and tried again.

Maria Butler is brave. At least, that's what people think. Deep down, Maria doesn't always feel brave. Deep down, Maria often feels nervous to try new things.



At breakfast one morning, Maria's mom seems more cheerful than normal.

"Maria, I have exciting news," her mom says. "Next month, while you are off of school for spring break, we are going on an adventure to see the Grand Canyon. We'll be camping, hiking, and even rafting on the river. I have the trip all planned out!"



Maria tries to smile. She tries to feel excited and brave, but deep down she feels something different. She feels scared. Should they be doing something so dangerous? With all of these thoughts swirling in her head, Maria is only able to respond to her mom with a simple, “Cool.”

“Maria, I thought you’d be excited! This is the type of trip you love! It will be filled with adventure!” her mom exclaims.



Maria quickly rebounds and smiles. “I am excited! It will be awesome. Thanks for planning this, Mom,” she says. “I have to leave for school, but maybe we can look at pictures of the Grand Canyon online when I get home,” Maria says with as much excitement as she can muster.

“That sounds great,” her mom calls as Maria walks out the door.



Maria can't stop thinking about the trip. What if they get lost? What if wild animals come to their campsite? What if it starts to rain and there is nothing to protect them but some tent fabric?

At lunch, her friend Travis interrupts Maria's thoughts.





“Earth to Maria,” he teases. “Did you hear a word I have said? You aren’t even making your normal comments about how bad the school lunch is today. What has you so lost in thought?”

“Sorry,” responds Maria. “I am just thinking about this trip my mom planned. We’re going on a camping trip to the Grand Canyon next month.”





“Wow! That sounds awesome,” Travis replies. “I have always wanted to visit the Grand Canyon. There’s so much to do there. Did you know that the deepest part of the canyon is 6,000 feet? You can look down at the canyon from a tall cliff! But don’t worry, they have a railing to keep you safe.”

Maria feels her stomach turn. That seems like a really deep canyon!



That night, Maria and her mom are watching TV. “Maria, let’s go to the computer, and I’ll show you some details about our trip,” her mom suggests.

“Sure.” Maria can feel her stomach turn again. “I can’t wait to see everything,” Maria says, trying to sound excited.



As Maria and her mom look online at the pictures of the campsite, the river rafting, and the canyon, Maria feels something different in her stomach. This time it isn't fear, it is excitement!

Without thinking, Maria says, "Wow, maybe this won't be so bad after all."

Her mom gives her a puzzled look. "Bad?" she asks. "Maria, did you think this trip would be bad?"



Maria shares everything that's been on her mind about the trip. She explains all of her worries to her mom, who simply smiles in return.

“Maria, I'd never plan anything that would put us in danger,” says her mom. “We will always be working with a guide or park ranger, and they know this park like the backs of their hands.”

Maria feels instant relief. She should have said something to her mom sooner.



“I am glad that you told me how you feel,” her mom says. “Being brave doesn’t mean keeping your fears bottled up inside. Being brave means facing your fears. And we will face this one together!”

Maria begins typing away at the computer.


“What are you doing?” her mom asks.

Maria turns and grins. “I am looking up the closest camping store. We have some shopping to do before our trip.”


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