

A Mountain on top of a mountain

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A short story celebrating a daughter's 6th birthday, inspired by Richard Feynman.



Figure 1: The wall of ice. Credit: sf.co.ua

A deep black rock caught her eye. She leaned over, and gently blew the dust off of the flat surface. She looked for her compass for a while, and found it in the 6th pocket. She gently put it on the flat rock. "This can't be true! Just few minutes ago, it was showing the opposite direction as the north!" Her friend agreed: "There is something wrong in this weird place. Are we lost?" Before she could say anything, his face lit up: "Or, maybe the rocks are magnetized, and they are affecting the compass." That was a brilliant observation, not quite right though, as she put the compass elsewhere on the ground, the north was still all over the place. They were indeed lost.

It had been two hours since Mavi and her friend Calder decided to go out for an adventure to celebrate her birthday. They always wanted to see what was on the other side of the mountain. They were well prepared: lots of snacks, water, warm clothes, ropes and some tools, just in case... Now they were desperately trying to get their bearings and figure out where they were.

After another half an hour of climbing, they reached to the top of the mountain. It was nothing like they had expected, even nothing like they could have imagined. It was an extremely flat surface with nothing in the horizon, except for one thing: a bright reflection of the sun from a crystal like mountain. "Another mountain on top of a mountain?" asked Calder, "And a crystal one?" added Mavi. They both knew they had to explore this mysterious mountain, and started walking towards it without thinking twice.

It was a long walk, and it started getting colder. As they got closer, they realized that it was a mountain made of glass covered with ice crystals which made it to reflect the sun light. Icicles sticking out provided them with a path to climb up. What a terrific birthday adventure it was, thought Mavi, she was climbing a glass mountain, which itself was already on another mountain. It just couldn't get better. They helped each other to the top, which was a very narrow strip of at most ten steps. They moved in closer while holding hands. They were both trembling because of the excitement and the freezing cold. It was all white down there, with few black rocks scattered around. "This must be a ski area" they thought. They had never heard of such a place, though. They walked around the edge to find a path down to the valley, and they did find a smooth one. They slid down with joy. They were really curious about the rocks. They both took off their pocket knives to check how hard the rock was. It wasn't hard at all, as small pieces came off easily. It also smelled so nice and so familiar... Both took tiny pieces to taste. Yes, it was chocolate! One of the best they had ever tasted. They noticed another giant, perfectly spherical rock. They started racing towards it. Mavi slipped and fell, face first! They were laughing hysterically, since her face was covered with ice. While she was licking her lips, Calder broke a small piece from the round rock, and tasted it. "It is blueberry!" / "It is ice-cream!" they said at the same time. Could that be real? A mountain of ice-cream sprinkled with chocolate and blueberries? They were living the dream. There was so much more to discover in this place. There, another shiny, mysterious object... They ran to it to get a bite. Not this time: it was hard as a real rock, maybe even harder. It tasted like metal. Calder got closer to inspect this shiny wall, and his necklace just stuck to it. "This is definitely a metal, look my necklace has magnets, and it is attracted to the wall." "Really?!" said Mavi. She was a bit angry. "You can think of the possibility that the rocks are magnetized, and could affect the compass, but forgot about the magnet on your neck? That's why the compass was not working!" At least they could now find our way home. They were very confused, though. They were inside a glass mountain filled with ice-cream, chocolate and blueberries, and there was that metallic object that extended all the way to the sky as far as they could see... Where were they?

It was just a little too late when they figured it out. It was a spoon, and they had climbed in an ice-cream cup! As they just realized that, the ground started shaking. The metal wall lifted up only to come down to fill with ice-cream, chocolate pieces, giant blueberries, and, unfortunately, with Mavi and Calder. It raised up quickly. They know where they were going: into the mouth of the giant!

In the very last second, Mavi made a jump for her life, and grabbed on to a thick hair just above the lip of the giant. She climbed up, and looked around for Calder. He was nowhere to be seen. She didn't know what to do, and was screaming desperately. She then remembered the trick from her favorite book *How to Train Your Dragon*. She climbed further up, into the nose. She started pulling and shaking the hairs in there. In a split second, it worked! The giant sneezed throwing Calder away from the mouth. Mavi could see him slide and roll down gently from the giant's clothes all the way to the ground. Then came the second sneeze, throwing Mavi down as well. Hers would have been a hard crash if it were not for Calder, who caught him for a soft landing. They were both OK, and ran away thinking that they were very lucky to happily end the adventure without injuring themselves.

As they walked away, they noticed that there was an even bigger giant next to the one that almost ate them. The bigger one asked "Are you OK, honey?". "I am fine, daddy...", she responded "I felt a weird tickle in my nose, and sneezed ice-cream all over the place!". "That's OK, I can help you clean up", said the bigger one gently.

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