

## **MENTOR TEXT – BOOKLET 9**

Our scout troop, the ‘Adventurous Antshill Gang,’ was hiking through the trails near the Asa Wright Nature Centre last Saturday. The forest was super green and noisy with all the rustling of leaves, birds and insects. I was walking with my two best friends, Kevin and Sarah, and we volunteered to carry the first-aid kit, mostly because Sarah always packs extra snacks in it. The sun was shining when we started, but then the sky suddenly turned all grey and gloomy. Big fat raindrops started to fall, splish-splashing on the leaves. Our scout leader, Mr. John, shouted, “Quickly, everyone! Let’s find some shelter!”

Kevin, Sarah, and I spotted a dark opening in the side of a small hill. It looked like a tunnel, maybe for water to flow through. “Let’s go in there!” Kevin yelled, and we all ran towards it, trying to stay as dry as possible. The tunnel was dark and a little bit spooky. Water was dripping from the roof, and it smelled damp and earthy. We huddled together, waiting for the rain to stop. “Maybe there are bats in here!” Sarah whispered, and I shivered a little.

Suddenly, we heard a soft rustling sound coming from the deeper part of the tunnel. “What was that?” I asked, my heart beating a little faster. Kevin held up his flashlight, and we slowly shone it towards the sound. Our eyes widened! Sitting on a pile of leaves was a small, furry creature. It had big, round eyes and long whiskers. It looked a bit like a cat, but its fur was a brownish-grey colour, and its tail was bushy. “It’s an agouti!” Sarah whispered excitedly. We had seen pictures of them in books, but never up close.

The agouti looked a little scared at first, but it didn’t run away. It just sat there, twitching its nose. We stayed quiet and watched it. After a few minutes, it seemed to get used to us. It even started nibbling on a fallen leaf. We watched the agouti for a long time, amazed by how cute and gentle it looked. It was way more interesting than just waiting for the rain to stop! Eventually, the rain did slow down to a drizzle. The agouti scurried further into the tunnel, disappearing into the shadows.

When we came out of the tunnel, Mr. John and the rest of the scouts were waiting for us. “Where were you all?” he asked. We told him about our unexpected encounter with the agouti. He was surprised and said we were very lucky to see one up close. Even though the rain made us seek shelter, it led to a really cool adventure inside the tunnel. Seeing the agouti was way more exciting than just a normal hike. It’s something I’ll definitely remember!