

MENTOR TEXT – BOOKLET 21

Last Tuesday, my whole class went on a super cool field trip to the Pitch Lake! It's like a giant lake of asphalt, and it's in La Brea, which is pretty far from our school. Everyone was really excited because Mrs. Davis said it was a natural wonder. The air smelled a little bit funny, like tar and the ground was like a bumpy paved savannah. Our tour guide, a nice lady named Ms. Betty, met us at the entrance. She had on a special hat and strong boots.

Before we even started walking, Ms. Betty gathered us around and gave us a really important warning. "Listen carefully, boys and girls," she said, "the Pitch Lake is amazing, but it's also tricky. Some parts are solid, but other parts are soft and squishy, and you can sink if you step on them! Always stay on the marked path and never, ever, step where I tell you not to." She pointed to some darker, wetter-looking spots. We all nodded our heads, promising to be careful. But then, there's always one, right?

My classmate, Alex, who sometimes thinks he knows everything, wasn't really paying attention. He was more interested in trying to spot little bubbles coming up from the pitch. As we walked along the path, Ms. Betty kept pointing out things, like how the pitch moves and how people used to dig it up for roads. Suddenly, Alex, who was lagging a bit behind us, decided he knew a better way to get a closer look at a big bubble. He completely ignored Ms. Betty's warning and stepped off the marked path, right onto a dark, shiny spot. WHOOSH! Alex's foot went down instantly! He yelled, "Hey!" as his leg sank deep into the sticky black pitch, almost up to his knee! He tried to pull it out, but it was stuck fast. He looked really scared and embarrassed.

Ms. Betty rushed over right away. She didn't even get mad. She calmly showed him how to slowly wiggle his leg out by pulling it sideways. It took a few tries, and he was covered in gooey, black pitch. He looked like a muddy monster! After he finally got his leg out, Ms. Betty helped him wipe off some of the pitch with leaves, but his shoe was a lost cause. Alex looked really awkward. "I'm so sorry, Ms. Betty," he mumbled. "I should have listened."

We all learned a valuable lesson that day. It's super important to listen to instructions, especially when you're in a place like the Pitch Lake. Alex definitely learned his lesson, and for the rest of the trip, he stuck to the path like superglue. Even though he had a sticky shoe, he had a pretty funny story to tell about the time he almost became part of the Pitch Lake!