

# The Prince and The Cavern of Fear

- **Plot: Ivandoe and Bert must travel through the infamous Cavern of Fear, a cave that torments all who enter with illusions of their fears. Now Ivandoe and Bert must face their fears or remain trapped within the cavern forever.**

“Behold Bertie! The Cavern of Fear!” said Ivandoe. He pointed to a large, massive cave with stalactites that looked like fangs. “Legend says once you enter the cavern, when you think of something that frightens you or you fear the most, the cave creates an illusion to fool you into thinking it is reality. Luckily, I have no fears, so this should not be too bad.” Ivandoe lit a torch and confidently walked in. “Okay sire,” said Bert nervously. As they entered the cave, Bert already found himself thinking scary thoughts. The two began to sweat nervously as they traversed through the dark cave. They could hear water dripping from the ceiling and noticed how the cave sounded like it was laughing at them maniacally. “Remember... do not think of anything-.” Ivandoe said before he heard a low growl. “What did you think of Bertie?” Ivandoe said anxiously. The prince looked back at Bert and saw a hulking mountain lion bearing its fangs. “You're afraid of mountain lions!” exclaimed Ivandoe. “Yes! I am a bird, and they are cats!!” The mountain lion roared as Ivandoe and Bert ran through the cave. It clawed and chased them relentlessly with its fangs bared. “How do I make the lion disappear!” shouted Bert as he flew quickly behind Ivandoe. “According to legend, you must confront the illusion and conquer your fear! Just remember it is not real! The cave wants you to stay here!” Ivandoe and Bert were cornered by the mountain lion as it flicked its tail and hissed. Bert flew over, puffed out his chest and stood confidently. The lion growled and raised its massive paw at the bluebird. He took a deep breath before shouting, “You are NOT real, and I am not afraid of you!” As the lion's paw struck him, the illusion dissipated. “Phew,” said Bert as he heaved a sigh. Then, he noticed Ivandoe had a look of terror on his face. “Sire... what did you think about.” Bert noticed a deer dressed like a mime pretending to climb a rope. “Mimes sire? You are afraid of mimes?” “They freak me out Bertie! They always have! Ever since my fifth birthday party! I hid under the table the entire time!” Ivandoe backed away from the mime and lowered his ears and tail. “Just

look at him Bertie... they make no noise and wear that creepy makeup.” The mime walked toward the prince moving his hands in a freaky motion. “Do not touch me and back away!!” exclaimed Ivandoe. “Remember sire, just like with the mountain lion, do not be afraid! Conquer your fear!” Ivandoe quivered in fear before taking a deep breath, puffing out his chest, grabbing Titans Thunder, and striking the illusion. The mime disappeared as Ivandoe and Bert continued through the cave. It did not take long before they saw a massive golden eagle wearing a beautiful crown land in front of them. “Is that the Eagle King sire?” asked Bert. “You seek the most powerful object in the forest, but I will ensure your quest ends in failure!” Ivandoe took another deep breath before striking the illusion with Titan’s Thunder. “Good job sire!” exclaimed Bert. “Thank you, Bertie, but I think you thought of something again.” Ivandoe pointed at falcon as it flew at Bert and continued diving down at the bluebird with its talons out. “Ahhh!” Bert shouted as he hid behind the prince. Ivandoe nudged him and gave him a look of reassurance. Bert flew toward the falcon and charged at the illusion which dissipated once he flew through it. “Take that Cavern of Fear!” exclaimed Ivandoe. “You have been conquered by Prince Ivandoe!!” Unexpectedly, water fell from the ceiling onto the torch causing the cave to become pitch black. “Oh dear!” Bert said nervously. “Clear your mind sire! Do not think about anything that frightens you!” Ivandoe gulped and sighed. “You thought of bugs didn’t you.” Bert said as he heard a low buzzing sound. The young bluebird frantically searched for the cave floor until he found the flint. He struck the torch as Ivandoe lifted it revealing a giant ladybug and dragonfly behind them. The insects made terrifying shrieks as Bert looked aggressively at them. “We got this sire! You must----.” When Bert turned around, he noticed Ivandoe was gone. Bert chuckled as the enormous insects went after the fearful prince. “Hold on sire!” he exclaimed while flying through the cavern. Bert had to slow down as he could not see as well without the torch. He spotted Ivandoe clinging to a jagged rock as the insects closed in on him. “Sire! They are not real remember! Dragonflies and ladybugs are harmless!” Ivandoe pointed his sword at the two insects but looked away in fear. The dragonfly hissed as it hovered over him. “How can I not be scared Bertie! They are massive! You know bugs creep me out!” “I know sire, but if you want them to go away you must face them!” Ivandoe was disgusted by the large bugs but thought about what Bert had said. “I am Prince

Ivandoe!" He shouted. "And you... bugs are fake! If you were smaller, I would step on you!!"

The insects shrieked as Ivandoe huffed and confidently yelled at them to go away. The illusions slowly faded as Ivandoe exhaled in relief. "Oh! You did it sire! You stood up to those terrible bugs!" "We really need to find the exit Bertie!" Ivandoe exclaimed. "Before we think of any other fears.... too late." Bert said as an illusion of his mother snuggled him causing him to feel embarrassed. "I thought the same thing, Bert. I am afraid of my mother embarrassing me too—."

Ivandoe noticed a illusion of his mother stroking his head, hugging, and kissing him. "My whittle Ivandoe." It said while hugging him. "I REALLY, REALLY HATE THIS CAVE!!!" Ivandoe exclaimed as his voiced echoed throughout the cavern and he tried to break free from his mother's grip. After dealing with those illusions, Ivandoe and Bert finally arrived at a pool of water in the cavern. "How do we leave this dreadful place! Exclaimed Ivandoe. Ivandoe noticed a large group of animals and magical creatures like ogres, trolls, gnomes, and goblins surrounding the pool. Some were rocking themselves back and forth, laying in a fetal position, and others were skeletons. An elderly possum wandered over to the prince and grinned with a toothless smile. "There is no escape!" exclaimed the possum. "I have been here for sixty years!" "What do you mean there is no escape!!" shouted Ivandoe. "How are we going to get out of here! I must complete my quest, why did I travel through this cavern in the first place! I should have listened to Bert!" exclaimed Ivandoe as he ran around in circles. "Sire," Bert said. "What Bertie!" "It's an illusion. We are seeing an illusion of you being afraid of not escaping this cavern." Ivandoe was surprised and said, "This cavern is good at creating illusions of your fears. A little too good..." Then he took a deep breath and exhaled slowly as he watched the illusion of himself fade away. "Are you sure we cannot leave this cavern?" Bert asked the old possum. The elderly possum coughed before replying, "There is one way.... but very few succeed." "Tell us!" exclaimed the prince and his squire. The possum coughed again before explaining, "Legend says that the only way you can leave the cavern of fear is by conquering or confronting your GREATEST FEAR! The cavern creates a realistic illusion of the fear you dread most in the hopes you will fail to conquer it. If you do not confront your fear, you will stay here.... forever."

"FOREVER!" exclaimed Ivandoe and Bert. "Indeed. If you two wish to leave this wretched place, you both must conquer your greatest fear without interference. In other words, you can cheer

or encourage your best friend that the illusion is not real, but you cannot stop the illusion itself. If you do... you fail, and the cavern will trap you here for all eternity." "Thank you... kind sir." Ivandoe said. "No problem you two. I wish you both luck. Trust me, you are going to need it! Just remember this cave will do anything to keep you here, so the illusions will be much more realistic." the possum walked off shaking in fear as Ivandoe and Bert discussed what to do. "We cannot stay here Bertie." Ivandoe said with determination. "So, we just have to think of our greatest fear...huh." Ivandoe said sheepishly. "I guess I will go first." Bert said with terror in his voice. "Do not worry Bertie! I'm right here." Ivandoe said reassuringly. Bert sighed and saw his family sitting on the branches of a tree. They smiled, laughed, and hugged each other before his mother exclaimed, "Join us, Bert!" As Bert flew toward them, he watched as a fox pounced at his family fangs bared. Bert landed watching in horror as they were chased by the vicious predator. "Bert!" they shouted. "Help us! Save us!!!" The fox grabbed his mother by her tail feathers and struck his father with its right paw. "Bertie!" shouted Ivandoe in a reassuring voice. "Your family is not here; it is only an illusion remember! None of this is real!" Benjamin's wing was injured, so he hobbled around on the forest as the fox cornered him. "Do something Bert! Help them! Do not be a weakling!" his siblings shouted. "I can't!" Bert said fearfully. "I'm.... I'm scared!!" Tears formed in Bert's eyes as he exclaimed, "I am a coward! I cannot even save my family!" Ivandoe stood behind him and smiled. "Bert, you are the bravest bird I have ever known! I am proud you are my squire, and most importantly my BEST FRIEND!!" Bert smiled and inhaled slowly. When he looked at the illusion again, he flew to the fox and stood between it and his father. "I much braver than I look!" Bert exclaimed. "And I will not let you intimidate me or harm the ones I care about most anymore!" As Bert stood his ground, the illusion faded away and he could see light at the end of the cavern. "You did it Bertie! I knew you could do it!!" Ivandoe exclaimed while hugging him. "I could not have done it without you sire!! I can see the exit to the cavern!" "I cannot." Ivandoe replied. "Well, that is because you must face your greatest fear sire." "Oh....yes." Ivandoe said in a solemn voice. "Now, think of your greatest fear." Bert said.. Ivandoe gulped and sweat. "My..... greatest.... fear..." he said nervously. Suddenly, Ivandoe looked up and saw his father shaking his head in disappointment. "Papa!" Ivandoe exclaimed. "Son, why have you failed me!" The Mighty Stag illusion said in

anger. "You must be like me, the king!!! A brave, strong, wise, and selfless leader! Instead, you are cowardly and weak! You bring nothing but shame upon our family legacy! Your ancestors would be displeased!!" Ivandoe lowered his ears and frowned. "Sire!" said Bert. "You must remember he is not real! We are far away from the kingdom! Your father is not here! The cave is playing a trick on you!" The Mighty Stag King looked Ivandoe in eyes once again and approached him. "You must understand that when you look weak it makes me look weak!!" he exclaimed. "I know Papa, I'm sorry." Ivandoe said quietly. "Speak up! A prince does not mumble!" exclaimed The Mighty Stag King. "I said I'm sorry Papa!" Ivandoe shouted. The illusion of the Mighty Stag King huffed and stood over Ivandoe. "I refuse to have a goofball for a son! Yet you have the nerve to call yourself Stag Royalty! You're a failure, disgrace, and embarrassment to our kingdom!! You should be ashamed of yourself!!" Ivandoe got on his knees and pulled his father's cape, begging the illusion to reconsider. "I am stronger than you think Papa!" exclaimed Ivandoe. "I will not let you or the kingdom down! I promised to retrieve the golden fea----." "SILENCE!" exclaimed The Mighty Stag King as he pulled his cape from Ivandoe's hooves. "Spare your lies!! I should have known this quest would be too difficult for you! Instead of growing up and preparing to be king, you goof off with Bert and wander through the forest carrying that ridiculous sword!! Your PATHETIC!" "But... but... father." Ivandoe said teary-eyed. "I... I... I only want to be a hero like you..." "ENOUGH!!" exclaimed the illusion. "You have and will always be nothing more than a disappointment! I am ashamed to be your father! YOU'RE NOT MY SON!!!" Ivandoe sat down on the cave floor with tears in his eyes. Bert flew over and comforted him. "Sire... it is okay. Just like you said, this is not real. That is an illusion and a trick! Your father would NEVER say anything like that. I had no idea this was your biggest fear." Ivandoe heaved a sigh before replying, "Everyone wants me to be just like him, but I keep messing up! I must complete this quest and prove myself a worthy heir Bertie. I cannot disappoint my father!" "Sire, you are not your father, and you will never be him! You're Prince Ivandoe! My best friend who is not going to let this illusion tell him he is not good enough!" Ivandoe wiped the tears from his eyes and smiled at the bluebird. "You're right!" he said as he looked up at the illusion. "You're wrong..." Ivandoe said confidently. "What did you say!!" replied the illusion in anger. "I am not a failure! I have been braver than ever while on

this quest, and I will never be you! And you cannot expect me to be like you!" The Mighty Stag illusion looked at him furiously and exclaimed, "Impudence! How dare you speak to me that way!!" "I will speak to you however I please because you do not exist." Ivandoe shouted. "You are an illusion NOT my father!" "IVANDOE!" exclaimed the illusion of The Mighty Stag. "Not only as your father, but as your KING, I command you to stop!!" "I will NOT!" replied Ivandoe as Bert sat on his antlers. He approached the illusion and looked it in the eyes. "I am the bravest, noblest, and strongest prince in the forest, and I will not let an illusion tell me otherwise!! I am not afraid of disappointing you anymore!" Ivandoe stood confidently with his head high as the illusion faded away.. Then, he heaved a sigh of relief as he could see light at the end of the cavern. "Are you alright sire?" Bert asked. "I know the illusion was not the real Mighty Stag, but that must have been hard." Ivandoe sat on the cave floor and cried while Bert gave him a hug. "The legend said the only way to exit the Cavern of Fear is by confronting or conquering your greatest fear. I confronted mine and you most certainly confronted yours. Ivandoe wiped the tears from his eyes and smiled as they walked out of the cavern feeling braver than when they had entered.