

# **the white cat**

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*STORY*

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# 1 - the white cat

## The White Cat

*Finally!* We made it! Were the last words I would hear for a long time. It all began when we drove to the Great Wall of China on a tour bus.

The Great Wall is located in the megalopolis city of Beijing. her Chinglish voice was audible through all of the frantic, excited conversation. I stared out the window, eyes wide with anxiety and fear. The reason was because of the tragic accident when I was little, my dear sister's death.

We were in the Tibet when it happened. Samantha was eight years old, a child filled with curiosity and happiness unimaginable. The image I recall most was the icy clear sky. The blue was unreal; so pure and rich, as if it were right out of a fictional movie. The landscapes were breath-taking, it all felt like we were in a canvas painting, the colors vivid and details precise. The beauty was almost swept away as it dawned on us: we couldn't run. Even trying to jog would literally suck the breath out of your lungs. The thin air and high altitude was almost unbearable. It was affecting all of us, but mostly Samantha.

*Mommy, can we turn back?* Samantha pleaded, trudging up the hills in her thick vest.

Oh, but we're almost there, sweetie. She would say, determined to get to the top. Among all the complaints from Samantha, I was staring at the remarkable blue sky. It seemed so close, so curious. I pondered at the thought, and felt the immense urge to reach out and grab the sky. The strange looks from my mom and sister were questioning, and I decided to look ahead, projecting each foot in front of me.

One by one, our breaths were getting shallower and rapider. Our orthodox mom started to notice our exhaustion and sadly declared that we should turn back. The last glance I took at Samantha was right then. She had this expression on her face, almost an unintelligible, dazed look. Her little body tried to suck in one last breath as she blanked out and tripped. I was looking away when it happened and all I heard was a ghastly scream from my mother. From my sister came no sound, her lungs were empty.

*Belle!* an irritated voice whined in my left ear. I turned towards the sound. Angela was looking at me with frantic eyes.

I said your name almost *five* times! She shouted.

Oh, sorry. Lost in thought. I responded. Those were the only words I needed to say as she shook her head. You were going to say something..? I questioned.

Yeah I was! she paused; my eyes were filled with question.

We're here! She proudly exclaimed as she jumped up and bent her knees in frustration: they were still recovering from her sitting on them for two straight hours. Everyone was pushing and yelling to get off the bus, their voices enthused. I slowly got up and walked behind the others, the last to get off the bus.

Hurry! Or you'll have no time to climb the entire way! The tour guide's voice was unnaturally enthusiastic. *That's what I want.* I silently shouted. Although terrified, I managed an annoyed expression as I walked off the bus.

The heat. The dreaded heat. I could almost see the heat waves as I looked around for Angela.

Belle! Her voice was hard to hear in the packs of people. The place was extremely populous. I frantically searched and saw her bright red embellished cap with the words: BEIJING, CHINA and camera around her neck; two things you *do not* want to wear if you don't want to look like a tourist. I ran

to her and we tried to catch up with the others.

Look at all these people! she shouted, trying to make her voice coherent over all the noise. I merely nodded, thinking, there s the tourists, over there are the bright colored clothing extroverts, and behind us are the over accessorized kids, with their ponytails and bright smiles. Even halfway across the world, there are groups of people within the crowds, segregated by personalities.

All around us were the stands of cheap globes and fans with the impatient Chinese businessmen trying to get our attention. We ignored the hectic shouts as we reached the Great Wall. We both paused, gazing ahead of us at the throngs of people. I felt the burning stare of Angela on my face.

What?! I questioned.

You re hyperventilating. She stated. I blushed as I realized I was, probably because of my overwhelming fear of heights. I simply averted my eyes and stumbled along.

It was at the point where it was simply too high for the businessmen to pester us any longer into buying merchandise when we saw the cat. It was an eternal white, mesmerizing to the naked eye. Angela and I were the only two to notice it. The rest kept walking on as we stared. To this day, we still wonder if it was real. Its fur was so clean and flawless, although its eyes looked weary and old, as if it had been climbing on the Great Wall for years. It simply gazed at us, almost as overwhelmed as we were, and turned around with such grace we couldn t take our eyes away. It flicked its white billowy tail and delicately walked away on the edge, a foot out of place would have led it to its immortal death.

After two exhausting hours of climbing and clinging to the edge with our dear lives, we made it to the top. There was this little tower where we had to climb very tall and steep steps to poke out the top and sit on the roof. We sat there on the edge for five minutes, although it seemed like an hour as we stared out the vast horizon. The people were tiny specks inching closer and closer, trees that were at least ten times larger than the specks; swaying to the soft wind. It felt like a dream, all of the hurried voices were blocked out as we stared blankly at the alluring sight.

Among all the beauty, a familiar blood-curdling scream erupted beside me. I tumultuously turned my head and saw the pair of hands reaching out and brushed against mine as I fell into a peril less dimension. Well, at the time it felt like it. The reality was I only fell about forty feet and landed on some poor tourist drenched with sweat.

I fell into a coma for six weeks, having endless nightmares about the blinding white cat. I d be floating on the air, that same pair of hands desperately trying to grab me. All I d see was the cat. I would run towards it for hours and never move an inch, until he turned around angrily and hiss, blaring its white teeth at me. I would often have dreams about my sister, wishing I had caught her when ironically, a similar event had just happened to me. Sometimes the dreams were blank. Just my thoughts of waking up from the endless sleep drifting in my empty head.

*Please, please wake up!* a worried voice whispered next to me. I wearily opened my eyes as I heard the muffled voice. It hurt to open my eyes; the bright lights of the hospital were in my face. I groaned slightly and turned my head, trying to get a look at the person next to me. I saw her eyes, sad and teared; blush and make-up smudged all over her face. Her silent sobbing was filling the room until she looked at my face.

Belle? she cautiously questioned, her voice shaking from sobs.

Where am I--OUCH! I shouted as I attempted to move my arm in vain. It looked like half of my body was a corpse, wrapped up in casts. She half chuckled to herself at my pained look and told me not to move.

I thought you were going to... pass away. She said as she stated a euphemism.

Well, I m here breathing now, aren t I? I verified as closed my eyes to rest.

This I considered to be my greatest feeling of success. I felt so achieved when I opened my eyes, out of the endless coma. It was exuberating to finally be awake, and relieving to know that I survived the brutal

fall. I still wonder about that cat, was it real? I believe that the cat represented people in the world, filled with pain, but covering it up with a fake identity. I accomplished a new way to look at life: not as if it were a drag and every day was simply the same, boring routine; but that life is a gift, and every moment should be lived with appreciation.

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