

## A TERRIFYING EXPERIENCE

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Life is full of varied types of experiences. Strange, in fact, are the ways of God. If a man is happy today, he may be quite unhappy the very next day. Some experiences are pleasant and joyful while others are full of pathos and pain. If at one time a person finds himself on top of the world, at another time he is depressed and downcast. In my own life I once passed through a very terrifying experience.

We were a group of four boys. One day in the summer holidays, we found the weather extremely know how to drive. We collected some eatables and other things and left for Kasauli by road. By 10 a.m. we reached the Timber Trail near Parwanoo. We decided to have a ride on the ropeway trolley and spend a few minutes on the mountain top restaurant connected with the ropeway. Everybody was so excited about the joy-ride. We purchased the tickets and entered the trolley. There were four more persons in the trolley. In a few minutes, the trolley started moving along the ropeway. It was an exhilarating experience.

All of a sudden, there was a big jerk. One of the ropes supporting the trolley appeared to have given way. In a jiffy, the trolley lost its balance and started skidding backward at a terrific speed. We were at a height of several thousand feet in the air. A horrible death appeared to be certain. In a matter of 6-7 seconds, there was a big thud. Lo and behold, the trolley got stuck up and tangled amongst the steel ropes and came to a standstill! It was hanging in the air at a height of several thousand feet above the ground level. Life appeared to be hanging with a fine thread, ready to break down at any moment.

Everybody in the trolley, including the operator, was terribly afraid. There appeared to be no way out except to pray to God to save us through a miracle. We could see death face to face as there appeared to be no escape. The trolley kept hanging up in the air. Various possibilities were discussed but no escape was in sight. The situation appeared to be hopeless. Nobody could have even a wink of sleep in the night. The entire stocks of food, drinks etc. were exhausted and some of us started crying. One of us got a high fever and started vomiting. It was a terrible traumatic situation. For several hours on end, we kept sitting terrified, huddled in that trolley, waiting for the final hour.

After full 48 hours, we heard the buzzing of a helicopter in the sky. It kindled some ray of hope in our minds. Within minutes, the helicopter stationed itself right on top of our trolley at a distance of some 2 feet. A brave Air Force

Officer came down the helicopter with the help of a rope ladder and joined us. We heaved a sigh of partial relief. In an excellent operation lasting for a few hours, all the inmates of the trolley were carried back to the base one by one. It was a grueling period full of suspense, hope and fear. At long last, every single life was saved. It had, however, been an extremely terrifying experience. Everybody thanked God for a lease of new life given to him.

As a result of public pressure, the government had to set up a commission of enquiry. This commission was asked to go into the whole episode and suggest ways and means to ensure the safety of the holiday makers using such rope way trolleys in future.