

THE SECRET DOOR

Looking through a narrow corridor upstairs in my house, I could see a door waiting to be opened. No one had ever opened it before. I always imagined that when you did, it would make a creaking, disturbing noise. Dust would fall from the sides as if they would never reach the bottom. The door handle would slegeshly turn to the right and would force the door to open.

Mum and Dad said that the door was forbidden and that if they ever saw me near it, they would ground me for iternaty

Every morning I get up wondering what is on the other side of that door. What I would see if I could just open it. Every morning I walk past that corridor wondering what it is that's waiting for me to enter.

But one day, I turned and asked myself why I am a I still here? Why don't I just end this fury that I've had all this time wanting to figure everything out. So that morning I got out of bed and headed towards the dark, mysterious corridor. Walking towards the door, my legs pulled my feet step by step, forcing them to reach the door. Sweet dribbled down my neck, and my spine shivered like electricity.

My hand reached towards the antiquated door handle. Everything was just as I had imagined. But there was one thing I wasn't expecting. Once the door had been opened, a dark tunnel appeared with just a spot of light at the end leading me the way.

I used my hands trying to make way from all the spiderwebs. I finally reached the other side when my heart skipped a beat. I couldn't believe what I was seeing.

Dinosaurs, monkeys, lions and bears all together in the same forest. It was unbelievable. This was something that no other human being could ever experience.

Now I knew where I could go - when I needed to escape from reality.

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THE LAST TIME

Maria opened her eyes and sat up on her bed. Her room was pitch black, but her sight was used to the darkness. She glanced at the clock on her left. It read 3:25. That's a good time for having dreams that won't let her sleep, she thought. She slouched her shoulders and stared at her sheets, recalling the last time she saw him, thinking ^{about} how she didn't know that would be the last time. That was a long, long time ago.

She knew he was gonna call. She let the phone ring. She fluttered her eyes open and sat up from her lying position on the living room sofa. She turned her legs over the edge and stood up, taking a moment to yawn and then walking towards the phone. She let it go to voicemail.

Maria didn't like phone calls; she thought talking over the phone was quite meaningless. Also, she wanted to build up the excitement of seeing him when he got back, so the less they talked before that, the better. She wondered what to do until then. Maybe she could surprise him, too.

She pondered on it and settled on not preparing anything. She wasn't sure he'd like that and even so, they weren't the type to. Thinking about finally seeing her best friend after such a long time brought a smile to her face and a certain lightness to her heart.

She heard the door bell ring. Her heart started racing, although she already knew it wasn't him. She walked to the front door and opened it.

A middle-aged, clabby blonde woman stood on the other side. She was carrying grocery bags by the elbows and sweating a lot.

"Hi mum," Maria stepped aside to let her in.

"Hi sweetheart. I'm sorry, I forgot my keys again," Her mum chuckled at the end. "You excited to see Tim tonight?"

Maria smiled and nodded, closing the front door behind them and letting her mum mumble about the groceries while heading to the kitchen.

Maria went up the stairs and into her room. She threw herself on her bed, laying flat on her stomach.

She thought about the past few weeks, and how different they'd been without her best friend there. She knew she could text him, but she felt she was a bigger burden like that. She let herself feel a little sad as the memories of the time without him got to her. She wasn't doing that again. She also let out a heavy sigh of relief. Her eyelids were heavy and her body warm, relaxed.

A familiar voice woke her up. She wasn't quite listening to what it said, but rather how bright and heartwarming it sounded. She immediately sat up and threw herself in the arms of the boy standing there, suitcase in hand and coat still on. He let go of his luggage to hug her back.

"You didn't answer my call" Tim slipped the sentence out of his mouth before Maria hugged him tightly, not letting him breathe for a second.

"I missed you so much". She shifted her head on his shoulders.

"I know" he paused. "But I'm here now". Tim leaned back to smile at her best friend, and resumed to holding her and rubbing her back gently.

Maria would always cherish that last time they had together, no matter how bittersweet.