Evermore

Grade 11th
Fiction ✓
Poetry
Nonfiction

Life is normally simple, but ever so often things will change. I'm not talking about an unexpected move or a friend leaving you, I'm talking about the kind of change that involves being sucked into a portal sending you to a world you never prepared to have to be a part of. Yeah, not what I expected either!

The sidewalk twisted and turned on my way to school. A cold breeze blew past my face as a few orange and yellow leaves skidded across the concrete. The houses around were decorated with jack'o lanterns and fake skeletons. Halloween was the next night and my friends and I were planning on going out that night to find a fun place to hold a Halloween party. I walked in the cool fall morning with a blank mind until my phone made a sound alerting me that I had received a text message.

I pulled the phone out of my pocket and raised it to my view. My home screen was a picture of my girlfriend that I had taken with an old-style camera. My girlfriend was the one who texted me, her name was Marie. The text said good morning and asked if I wanted a ride to school. She would always ask if I wanted a ride even though I only live a few blocks from the high school. I texted back and told her I was already halfway there and that I would meet her in the parking lot. She responded quickly and said okay.

When I arrived in the school parking lot, I was met by my friend Joshua, but everyone just called him Josh. Josh was the friend that would always cause you to make unwise choices. He already had a dragon tattoo on his right shoulder and was always talking about when his parents would let him get another. He had experience with hard drink and was very active with the girls. He and I were the unlikeliest of friends, yet we were loyal.

I was the kind of person to try to set others straight believing I could help everyone. I was also very logical with little understanding of emotions. It was a miracle Marie said yes when I

asked her out because of my limited experience with relationships. I didn't start to date her until I was 16, but I had a crush on her years before that. She was a bit of a loose bolt. After we got together she began to tell me that I had helped her piece her life back together after she had some bad relationships. Hearing that I then devoted myself to protecting her, even if I would get hurt in the prosses.

Marie pulled into the parking lot at her normal reckless speed. She drove a silver pickup truck that year. I had a small grey stick shift truck that I would drive rarely because I lived so close to school. She got out and walked over to me and Josh, she was wearing a sweat shirt and tight blue jeans. She had her arms cross on her chest, I assumed she was probably cold in the October air.

"It's so cold out here! How can you walk here with nothing but a light jacket?" She said arriving next to me and Josh.

"I like the cool weather. I don't understand why you don't," I joked.

"Just get inside!" she yelled.

We walked over to the doors and I held them open for my friends. We had about ten minutes before we would need to get to class, so we sat down on the student couches and started talking. We talked about the previous day and if we had a good night, the day before. The bell rang and my friends excused themselves, I proceeded to pull my phone out as I walked to my class. I shot Marie a text saying I loved her and to wish her a good day. In a matter of seconds, she sent a message back saying she loved me too and put a heart emoji at the end of her sentence.

At lunch I sat down at the table I would regularly sit and opened the paper bag I packed my lunch in. I was normally first to the lunch table, but this time my friend Eric beat me there. Eric was sitting at the table with his arms crossed and staring at his empty lunch box, I assumed

he had already eaten. Eric didn't acknowledge my arrival at the table, and a few seconds later Marie slid into the seat next to me.

"Okay guys, if someone comes by and asks if I put firecrackers in the bathroom stalls, tell them that I would never do something like that." Josh said dropping his lunch tray on the table.

"That sounds believable," I sarcastically responded.

"So anyway, are we still going to find a place to hold a party tonight?" Josh asked quickly.

"I believe that was the plan," Eric said before I could.

Eric was still staring at his lunch box as he spoke. Something was occupying his mind, but it seemed best to leave him alone. Eric was a very skinny person, too skinny for his own good. Me and Josh were of a good build. I swam for the swim team and Josh played football. Marie was an in between of Me and Eric.

"Well, I heard of a cool place, but Silvia will have to take us there because she won't tell me where its at." Josh said.

"Who's Silvia?" Marie asked.

"Oh, yeah. she's my new girlfriend," Josh said as if we should have known.

I let out a small laugh. "She know that you're a player?" I chuckled.

"Ha, ha, very funny," Josh responded.

We spent the rest of lunch talking and saying jokes. We decided to meet up after school at the old park we used to play at when we were little. Marie told me she would take me there, it wasn't an offer. When the final bell rang I made my way to the front door where like always Marie was waiting for me. I had no reason to go home and my parents knew I was going out so I just hopped into Marie's car, and we went to her house so she could grab a hoodie.

When Marie came back out to the car she was wearing my swimming hoodie, I had wondered where it had gone. Honestly Marie could steal my car and I wouldn't care, mostly because she didn't know how to use a manual vehicle. Marie walked down the steps and got in the car, she noticed I was staring at her.

"What?" she said as she put her seat belt on.

"I'm just admiring how beautiful you are when you wear my clothes." I said with a small laugh.

"Shut up!" she said playfully bumping my shoulder.

We drove to the park and parked. We were the first at the park, so when we arrived Marie took the opportunity to take my hand and put her head on my shoulder. I liked it when she would nuzzle up against me, I never deserved her love, but she gave it to me anyway. She would only really get close to me when we were alone, I feared that she was embarrassed by me but when I asked she would always say otherwise.

Josh's Mustang pulled into the parking lot. I couldn't believe Josh's father let Josh have his Mustang, especially considering his track record. He had tinted windows, so you would never know what was happening inside the cab of his car. Then again, I wasn't sure I would want to know what happened in there. He parked and stepped out of the driver's side, a girl who I assumed was Silvia stepped out of the other side. Silvia was a short, black-haired Latina girl. She wore a light jacket and was wearing one of Josh's long sleeve shirts.

Marie let go of my hand and we both got out of her car. Josh had a big smile on his face. He had changed from his short sleeve t-shirt from earlier to a sleeveless red shirt. I opened my mouth to speak, but paused as I watched Eric pull up riding his brand-new red bicycle. He wore a

shiny red helmet and black knee and elbow guards. I couldn't help but hide my laugh as he strode over to us.

"Don't say anything about this! My mom made me wear all this." Eric said.

"No, we would never do something like that," Marie mused while taking a picture of Eric.

"Hey! Delete that picture right now! Don't send it to anyone," Eric pleaded.

After he said that all of our devices gave off a notification sound. I never did learn how Marie became so good at posting things on social media. It would only take her seconds to post a picture like this. She smiled as Eric looked at her and pulled up his phone. His face drooped more as he saw what the notification was, the image of him had just been posted to Facebook.

"Oops, sorry. Should have said it sooner," Marie said with a sigh.

"You know if Tim wasn't your boyfriend I would tell you that I will get my revenge, but Tim can be scary sometimes," Eric said.

We all had a couple laughs and then decided to get on with what we were going to do. Silvia started to lead us to a spot past the park and a little way into the forest surrounding our town. The path was almost unreadable and the foliage was thick. Eric told us that if he got poison ivy, his mother would ring all our necks. He must not have known that poison ivy didn't grow where we lived. We finally arrived at a clearing big enough to house a party of about fifteen people. It was perfect. It had a large gear in the middle, with five rungs for someone to push on. It reminded me of a medieval grain mill.

"Hey guys. If we can move that thing in the middle it would make the place a lot more open," Josh exclaimed.

"Then, maybe we should move it." I said.

Josh walked over to the strange object and tried to lift it up. He grunted as he pulled up on one of the rungs. It didn't budge, but Josh wasn't going to give up there. He tried a few more times before finally asking for help.

"Maybe someone could help me?" Josh offered.

"Okay guys might as well make this easy, there are five rungs and five of us, we can move it with that much manpower I think." I said with enthusiasm.

Everyone then walked over to the large object and grabbed a rung. We all pulled up, and nothing happened. We, like josh, tried a few more time before an idea came to my mind. If it was like a medieval grain mill, then it should spin. I told the others about the idea, they decided to give it a try. We all pushed in the same direction as hard as we could. Slowly but surely it started to turn, once we made a full revolution something made a loud clicking noise.

Something shook the earth we were standing on. Whatever we had done wasn't good. The rungs of the turning table pulled in and the object started to lift up. We all jumped back and stood watching what was happening. Eric's face was filled with fear as he decided to run. I turned and glanced to find that Eric was running away with his phone in his hand, likely calling the police or his mother. When I turned back to see the gear like structure I discovered it was now completely vertical and that a strange glow was slowly spreading from the middle of it to the edges.

I tried to take a step back, but my feet wouldn't move. For a second, I thought that maybe fear had gotten the best of me but the others seemed to have the same problem. The trees around us began to bend in towards us, and a steady, strong wind began to blow into the center of the clearing. Then I felt a pull on my mass, I was being pulled into the now large glowing thing in

the clearing. It changed colors, red to blue to green to purple. I saw colors I had never seen before. If I wasn't terrified at that moment I may have even said it was beautiful.

The glowing mass was forcing me closer and I couldn't fight it. Marie slipped and was being pulled rapidly into the center. I grabbed her arm and tried to pull her back, but my action was in vain. As I tried to pull her back I was pulled off my feet, lifted up in the air I flew to the center. I had Marie's hand, I pulled her close and angled my back to the center of the clearing. Then I hit it, the strange object in the center of the clearing. It wasn't solid, as I passed through it felt like water and strings passing over my skin.

The next thing I saw was a man with a long orange beard standing over me. My head hurt, a throb made its way through my whole body. The sun cut through the trees and a cool breeze hit my face. The man standing over me had long orange hair on top of his head, but his clothes looked wrong. I tried to think of a time I had seen his style of clothing, I remembered an old book I read once. The people on the cover were dressed like this man, almost old-style clothing, cotton shirts and canvas pants.

"Is he up?" Marie's voice said from behind me.

"Yeppers, he's up!" The man said in an accent I had never heard before, "You have quite the woman, you should keep her. She hasn't stopped pestering me about your wellbeing." The man said leaning in close to me and whispering.

I heard a shuffle as Marie slid to the ground next to me. She pushed the man away and embraced me. I was already in pain, and her hug made it worse, but I said nothing. A small grunt escaped my mouth as she squashed me in her arms.

"I'm sorry, so, so sorry." Marie said with much concern and letting go.

"No, no it's fine." I said.

"No, it's not fine, I was so worried for you." She pleaded.

"Well, I'm alive." I said and gazed around. "Where are we?" I asked.

"Well…" Marie sighed.

She had no idea what had happened or where we were. I sat up, and looked around. We were surrounded by trees, trees so thick no one would be able to get through it. In the center of the thicket was a large stone archway, in-between the stones were several differently colored glows. Then the man who was standing over me came to my view. He was standing, but he was only a foot taller than me sitting down.

"Well, it's nice to meet ya!" The man said holding out his hand.

I shook his small hand, the only thing I could think was that he had dwarfism. I stood up as I heard a yelp from the arch. In a bright flash a girl flew through the archway and tumbled right into me. It was Silvia, she ran right into me and came from seemingly nowhere. Another yell, this time startled yell came from the arch. This time Josh flew through. I grabbed Marie and Silvia and leaped away from Josh as he rolled into the clearing.

"Any more of you going to fly through that portal?" The bearded man asked.

"What do you mean portal?" I asked.

"Well, let me explain that," the man said.

He pulled out an instrument from his backpack. He started playing, and dancing. He sang a song about a portal and a place called Evermore, the performance was amazing but when he finished I thought I knew less then I had before he started singing. He must have seen the look on our faces and decided that he would need to try again.

"Welcome to Evermore, a magical land of light and wonder. You are known to us as world walkers. Because we provide the valuable service of orientation, we do ask for a fee. We will let you out into Evermore, but you will owe us sixty gold pieces. Once you pay that you will gain citizenship in Evermore and you will be allowed to leave." The man announced.

"That's nice and all, but how did we get here!" Josh asked.

"What part of world walker do you not get? You went through a magic portal. You are very lucky to be here, Evermore is the best place in the multiverse. Where ever you came from, what ever your old rules, here we bend those rules. You guys are fairly young, maybe you couldn't drink before, boom, you can now!" the man excitedly said.

He pulled a large wooden mug out of his tunic and took a drink and tossed it to Josh. Josh caught it spilling some beer on the dirt. I couldn't comprehend what just happened, he just pulled out a full mug of beer from his pocket. Josh looked at the mug confused, but decided to take a drink anyway. As he razed the mug and gulped it down, he didn't stop. I watched him down the whole mug. When he lowered the mug, his face was adorned with a huge smile.

"Wow! Woo! That is some good stuff!" Josh exclaimed. "I'm down! Take me to Evermore!" He continued.

"Right this way," The short man said.

The short man pulled on a branch from one of the trees and trees across the way bent and moved out of the way as if they were alive. My knowledge reminded me that this was impossible, and yet I was watching it happen right in front of me. I noticed Marie was gripping my arm, she had likely been doing that the whole time. As I followed Josh, who followed his new beer dealer outside the thicket, Marie stayed as close to me as she could.

We walked through the tree way and bright light hit our faces. It took a second for our eye to adjust, but once it did we beheld a vast lush urban environment. The houses had colorful roofs and the sidewalks were made of beautiful cobblestone and marble. People walking in the street looked at us as we appeared. Everyone sent us a smile and went on with their lives. The stone work of the houses was amazing and some building reached five stories.

"It's a beauty, isn't it?" the short man asked after taking in a long breath.

"Yes, it is," slipped out of my mouth.

The man led us to a building with a large sign hung above the door. The sign read Tinkleton's Tailor. The building had a window to each side of the door with displays that I would have thought of a Halloween costume shop. The door was painted red and a joyful spirit resided in the air.

"Here in Evermore we wear only the finest clothes. These rags you're wearing will never do," The short man said pulling on Silvia's shirt slightly.

He walked forward and opened the door and a plume of leather scents leaked from the opening into our faces. Inside colorful clothing was everywhere: on hangers, on mannequins, on the walls, and even on the ceiling. Every style of clothing could be seen in the room, and in every color. We all shuffled in and then stopped.

"Tinkleton! You home?" the short man asked. "Tinkleton is a great guy you see, he has supplied world walkers with a first set of clothes for free for years now. I don't understand why he does it for free, but it seems that you word walker are very glad he does." The man finished.

"Tinkleton! That's his name," Josh said with a laugh.

I looked over to Josh with a stern look, telling him that it was no time for jokes. He noticed and his slow laugh ended. A clatter came from behind a tunic covered wall. From a doorway a ball of twine rolled into the room.

"One moment, I'm just putting a few things away," an elderly man's voice sounded from around the corner.

After a few more clatters a tall man, with a grey and white beard wearing a small hat, appeared in the room. The man was full of life despite looking like he was seventy years old. He wore a smile on his age worn face. He reminded me of my grandfather who had died a few years before.

"Ah, some new world walkers! It's been a few weeks since I have seen any world walkers." Tinkleton said with a wicked smile curling up his lips.

I wanted to be afraid of the situation I had found myself in, but strangely I felt at peace. Everything that was happening seemed impossible and I couldn't answer to it all. Was it true, or was it a dream? How far would this go? I wondered all these things, but in the end, I felt as if my presence there was necessary, for what, I could not tell.