

The Magic Door

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Published by Saronti Ltd

<https://www.saronti.com>

Facilitated by Clare Ford

At SwitchedON!

<https://www.switchedonglobal.com>

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FIRST PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 2024

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Written & illustrated by

Adyan Ahmed

Chapter One - The Woods

Zara had always loved flowers. She loved their colors, their shapes, their scents, their names. She loved to pick them, to arrange them, to give them as gifts. She loved to learn about them, to read about them, to draw them. She loved everything about them.

That's why she was so excited when her parents told her they were moving to a new house with a huge garden. She imagined all the flowers she would find there, all the flowers she would plant there, all the flowers she would enjoy there.

She could not wait to see her new home and her new garden.

But when she arrived, she was disappointed. The house was old and shabby, the garden was overgrown and neglected.

There were no flowers, only weeds and bushes. Zara felt sad and angry. She hated her new home and her new garden.

One stormy day, she decided to explore the woods behind the house, hoping to find some flowers there. She followed a narrow path that led her deeper into the forest. The trees were tall and thick, blocking the sunlight and creating shadows. The air was silent and still, with no signs of animals or birds. Zara felt a sense of isolation and danger.

She was about to turn back when she saw something that caught her eye. It was a bush, but not like any bush she had ever seen before. It was covered with bright red flowers that looked like roses, but bigger and more beautiful. They had a sweet and spicy fragrance that filled the air. Zara was mesmerized by the sight and smell of the flowers. She wanted to touch them, to pick them, to take them home.

She reached out her hand and touched one of the flowers. It felt soft and smooth, like velvet. She smiled and plucked it from the bush. She held it close to her face and breathed in its aroma. She felt a surge of joy and wonder.

In her bliss she did not notice the soft but eerie voice that greeted her from the bush. It said, "Hello."

Chapter Two - The Boy

The mystery voice made Zara jump. Slowly, she approached the bush and suddenly, a silent, transparent figure arose from the thicket. It had ragged clothes and was in the form of a boy, aged about thirteen. Zara screamed. The ghost blinked and blinked again. He looked both confused and curious. He opened his mouth and asked, in a faint whisper, "Who are you? What are you doing here?"

Zara stopped screaming and stared at him with open eyes. She felt a mix of fear and empathy. Who was this boy and how did he die? She stepped back and in a trembling voice, she said "I'm Zara, I came here to pick some flowers. Who are you? What are you doing here?"

The ghost smiled sadly and said, "I'm Kai. I died here a long time ago when I was playing hide and seek with my friends. I

believe I hid here in this bush before..." He looked away and sighed.

Zara felt a surge of curiosity and compassion. She wanted to know more about Kai and his life. "Do you have any family or friends here?" she asked, "do you ever see them?"

Kai shook his head as he answered, "No, I don't have anyone here. I lost them all. They all moved away or they... they didn't make it. I'm alone here. I never see anyone. Except you. You're the first person who can see and talk to me without running away."

Zara felt a pang of sadness and guilt. She wondered how long Kai had been trapped here, in this lonely and haunted place. She also wondered if she could help in any way.

"I am so sorry. That is awful. You don't deserve this. You deserve to be happy and free. Is there anything I can do for you?" she asked the boy ghost.

Kai looked at her with a grateful and hopeful expression. Brightening, he said, "There is one thing. One thing that might help me. But I need your help to do it. Will you help me, Zara? Please?"

Zara felt a surge of curiosity and courage. She nodded and said, “Yes of course. I’ll help you. What do you want me to do?”

Kai smiled and said, “Follow me.”

Chapter Three – The Door

Zara and Kai walked through the woods. They followed a narrow path that led them deeper into the grove and even further away from civilization. The trees were very tall and thick, blocking their path, blocking the moonlight, and creating immense shadows. The air was silent and still with no signs of any animals. Zara pondered where Kai was taking them.

“We’re almost there,” said Kai.

Soon enough, Kai had taken them even further into the woods and Zara started to have second thoughts about following this ghost. Her anxiety mounted as they ventured further and further into the ever-darkening forest.

Then, just when Zara was about to ask where they were going, an old wooden door popped out of thin air in front of them, blocking their path.

“This is it,” said Kai, “the magic door.”

Although the door looked tattered and ancient, it also looked peculiar and dark. Besides, Zara could not handle the enticement that was right in front of her. “Should we go in?” she said in excitement.

“Not yet,” replied Kai.

Before Zara could question this unexpected response, a large, shadowy creature jumped over the door and landed right in front of them. There was a flash of lighting and a thunderous roar.

She could not believe what she was seeing...

Chapter Four - The Creature

Standing about three meters tall, was a large bear. But this was not any ordinary bear. It had glowing red, demonic eyes and bloody teeth. Its claws were like sharpened knives and its body was big and muscular. The fur of this beast was glistening with dark magic.

Just looking at it, Zara knew this was a pure beast, the beast which had killed Kai and now was coming for her.

It suddenly swiped at Zara with its arm, its claws missing her by an inch but cutting a tree down in the process. It stamped its front feet on the ground, making the earth shake underneath Zara's feet. Then the beast stood on its hind legs and towered over them. It now blocked the moonlight that was peaking through the trees of the forest and deafened them with its thunderous roar.

They were now in darkness and Zara was terrified.

Zara looked for some way to defeat the monstrosity. But she found none. Not in any nook and cranny. The beast attacked once again, making a dirt bomb with its huge paw and blinding Zara and Kai for a second or two.

They had no choice but to run. But it had other ideas for them. The monster ran around Zara and Kai, making a ring which trapped them both. It was like a hurricane swirling around them, with them being in the center of the eye of a storm of leaves and other debris of the forest.

"We gotta jump!" Kai exclaimed.

"But how!" Zara replied, "we won't make it!"

"I promise you, we will!" said Kai.

Chapter Five - Defeated

The creature ran towards them at full speed like an angry bull, you could just see the glee in its eyes as it came ever closer to Zara and Kai, ready to rip them to shreds or to devour them whole. But just before the beast came into contact with them, they both jumped through the hurricane around them and before it could react, the beast slammed into the nearest tree which crashed to the ground into large splinters. The bear roared in anger and frustration at missing them again.

It turned around and ran towards Zara. Suddenly she felt a surge of anger at the bear herself and grabbed one of the large splinters as the bear ran towards her and used it as a spear.

With all her might and bravery she thrust the spear at its chest and pierced its heart.

The brute lay there, dead and motionless.

They had done it.

They had won.

Chapter Six – Homecoming

Zara and Kai walked through the magic door and entered another world. It was a world of wonder and beauty, where flowers of all kinds grew and bloomed. It was a world of peace and harmony, where people and animals lived happily together. It was a world of adventure and discovery, where new things awaited them at every turn.

Zara and Kai felt a sense of joy and freedom. They explored the world and made new friends. They learned new things and had fun.

But they never forgot their old world and their old lives. They often visited the magic door and went back to the woods.

They planted flowers and cleaned the garden. They fixed the house and made it cozy. They also helped the other ghosts who were trapped there. They helped them find their families and friends. They helped them cross over to the other side.

They helped them be free.

Zara and Kai lived a happy and fulfilling life.

They had the best of both worlds.

They had each other.

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SWITCHED ON!

This is the story about an adventurous girl called Zara who journeyed to the woods one day to pick some flowers. But she did not think about the dangers that lurked there.