THE TREE THAT TURNED GREEN

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Chapter 1



It was midmorning when Ellie arrived at Grandma's house. There were beautiful roses and sweet-smelling tulips. Here and there were yellow patches where there had not been enough rain for the grass. All around you could hear the soft chirps of robins in the trees. Close by was Dorothy, hopping like mad.

Dorothy ran over, hugged her cousin and exclaimed, "I thought you'd never come."

"Of course I'd come," replied Ellie. "What do you want to do first?"

"I'd love to climb that tree over there," replied Dorothy.

"NO WAY!" exclaimed Ellie. "I'd just like to sit and read."

"NOOO! My idea," said Dorothy.

"Mine!" shouted Ellie.

Then Grandma stepped in and said, "I've got a surprise."

"Uhh!" exclaimed Ellie suspecting something boring like making dinner, before Grandma went on to say, "It's exciting!" in a sing-song voice. "Grandpa made a tree swing just

behind that oak tree over there," she said, pointing to the tree Dorothy had suggested they climb earlier.

"OK," said the girls cheerily.

Chapter 2



It was late afternoon when Ellie and Dorothy stepped onto the cold, damp leaves. They could hear some ancient trees whispering in the soft breeze. When they got to the oak, the first thing they noticed was that the tree had gotten older… scarier… and more mysterious.

“This tree swing is so fun!” said Dorthy hopping on.

“I know,” replied Ellie, ‘but I’ve got more interesting things to do.” She picked up her book.

Then she jolted, as if remembering something. All of a sudden, both Dorothy and Ellie spun around and saw a glow coming from the tree.

The glow grew larger and larger and then it started sucking things up. Then it began sucking up the tree swing! Dorothy jumped off and Ellie ran over to hug her. By now the whirlwind portal was huge. It even sucked birds out of the trees!

Chapter 3



“Don’t go near it!” cried Ellie.

“Awww,” shouted Dorothy, “it looks cool.”

“NO WAY!” was Ellie’s reply. “I don’t want to risk my life!”

“But it will be fun,” said Dorothy.

“Fine!” said Ellie with a harrumph, because she knew she had to say that to keep the peace. They both jumped in.

The portal had landed them inside a pitch-black tunnel. It was cold and damp and felt like November. They were scared and weary. There were bats hanging from every corner

of the roof and, standing a few metres away, a knight.

The knight approached them and said,
“This is my kingdom. I’m King Nectarini.”

Ellie sat up straight and said kindly,
“Hello King Nectarini. Have you seen a portal around here?”

“A portal?! There’s no such thing,” he chuckled. “Come with me and I’ll show you around my castle.”

“Sure,” Ellie said quietly. “C’mon Dorothy.”
And off they went, guided by an enchanted lamp.

Chapter 4



"This here is a cage," explained King Nectarini. "Do you want to look inside?"

"OK," replied Ellie and Dorothy.

Just as they stepped inside, they heard a bang behind them and saw King Nectarini, but now he looked hideous and evil.

"Now you are in my trap, I can seize your grandma's secret charm so all people will be in my power, bwa ha ha ha ha!" he thundered. Suddenly everything was plunged into darkness.

“Wh…what shall we do?” stammered Ellie.

“I don’t know,” replied Dorothy and, for the first time, she felt like giving up.

Instantly, Ellie sat bolt upright and said, “UP!”

“Huh?” said Dorothy, puzzled. Ellie was right – going up was the only way out.

They found a rope and, just as they were about to make a lasso, a voice came from outside.

“So, you thought I wasn’t watching?”

They span around to see a guard in full uniform peering at them.

“I’ll need more back-up if you’re so determined to get out,” he said slyly and he left.

Just as the situation seemed hopeless, Dorothy cried out.
“The ventilation system! Can you feel that breeze?”

Ellie nodded. There was a soft breeze coming from the corner of the room. Ellie walked towards it. She hurried over to the

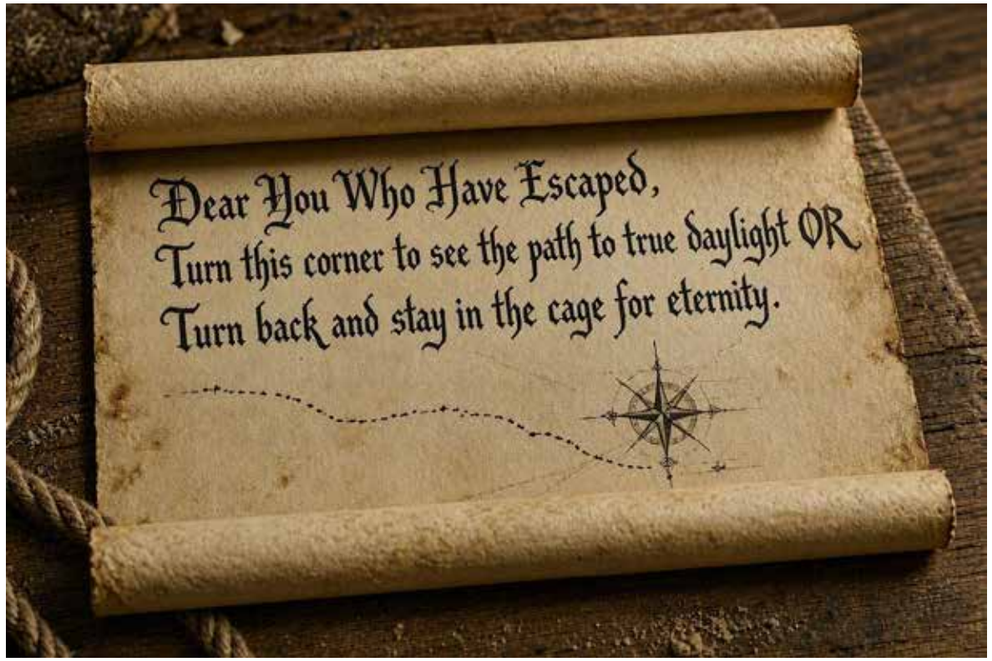
cage door and found a crowbar, thinking to herself, *what a coincidence*.

"This seems to be a trap," Ellie whispered to Dorothy.

"We have to get out and this is the only way," replied Dorothy, folding her arms, believing there was no alternative.

"OK," said Ellie, as she began using the crowbar to open the vent.

Chapter 5



The vent was big enough that a grown man could fit, so the girls could definitely scramble through. It was dark but their eyes had adjusted. As they crept, Ellie suddenly shrieked, “WHAA!” Dorothy moved back to let Ellie see what was in front of her. It was a note, and Ellie read it aloud.

“Dear you who have escaped,

turn this corner and see the path to true daylight or
turn back and stay in the cage for all eternity.”

Once Ellie had finished reading Dorothy said, “Well, it’s obvious that we should turn the corner.”

“Alright,” said Ellie, sighing as she knew that it was definitely a trap.

Once out of the vent, they realised they were back at the place the portal had dropped them. They stepped forward and heard a click. Suddenly the ground beneath them began to sink. Ellie cried out in shock, but Dorothy ran over to the other side and lassoed the rope they had found around a hook on the wall. She pulled herself up as

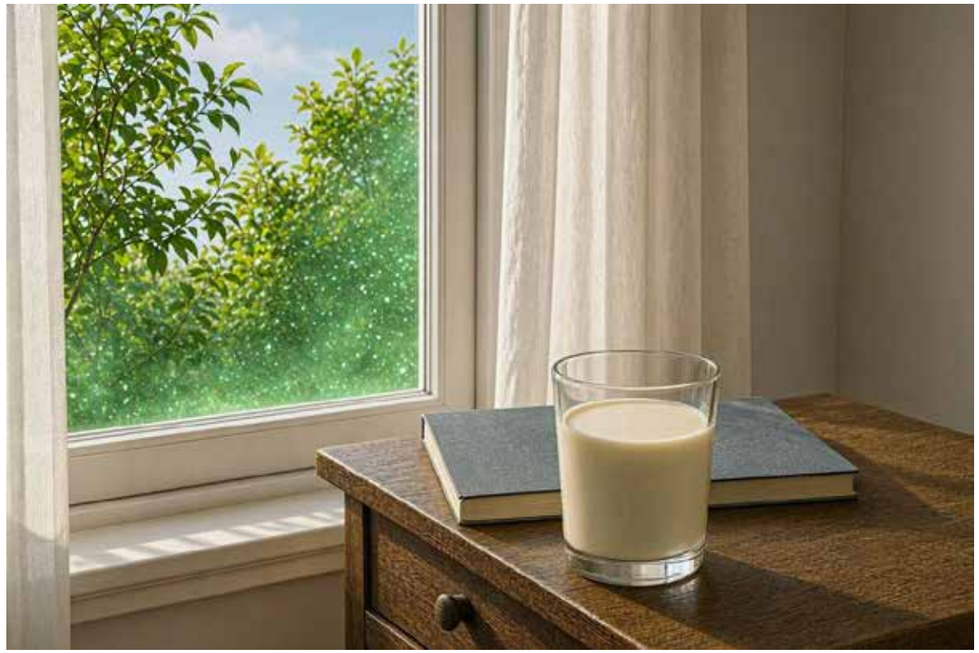
though it was the easiest thing in the world. Ellie followed suit with a little less ease. Dorothy held her hands and pulled her up to the place where the portal had dropped them and… nothing happened. It was still and silent.

After a few minutes of trying to summon the portal by calling out ‘Come to me my beloved portal,’ Dorothy gave up. Ellie walked up and shoved Dorothy out of the way. She looked up at the ceiling and muttered something under her breath. Suddenly, green swirling mist rose up, and

Ellie and Dorothy jumped into the portal just as some of the guards came into view.

Ellie woke up. It was 5am and far too early to wake up Grandma or Dorothy. As she pondered her dream, she got up to get a glass of milk. Suddenly, she saw a small puff of glittery green smoke and she knew that it hadn’t just been a dream after all.

The End



When Ellie and Dorothy are visiting their grandmother’s house, they discover something when playing with a new tree swing. Suddenly they are whisked off on an adventure where they get into a little bit of trouble. Will they get back to Grandma in time?