

A Forest Mystery

By Malena

There was no doubt about it, I would have to go back. The secret door I had found in a tree in the middle of a dark forest last winter was calling me to see what lay behind it. Although the woods were uninviting, the urge to go back was too strong. I packed a few of my possessions and set off. After a few hours, I arrived at the forest. The gnarled, twisted trees stood looming and intimidating but I didn't let that stop me. I stepped inside, a canopy of leaves blocked out all daylight and I shivered, even though it was summer. Outside of the forest, it had been a balmy evening, the scent of blooming blossoms wafting around. Inside, it was gloomy, and, under my feet, brittle leaves crunched.

I wandered around, battling past bushes and leaping over roots. A while later, I came to a clearing. Above me, there were still many leaves, but the canopy was not as dense as before, so I was grateful for the light that filtered through and cast an eerie glow. I wondered if I had seen the clearing before and decided that I had. I tried my luck by going left because I didn't have much idea where the tree was. Finally, after having looked at many trees which seemed similar to the one with the door, I found it. I whooped silently. I took a slow deep breath and opened the door, ready to face the secrets it withheld.

Eyes locked shut, I walked in. Once I was inside my eyes snapped open and were met with a breath-taking sight. It was not like any world I had ever imagined. This was a civilisation of fantastical creatures. I was standing on a patch of giant puffball mushrooms on a hilltop village; fairies flitted around me and elves trod on my toes, trotting energetically in and out of toadstool homes. These creatures clearly had a very sweet tooth for sweetshop after sweetshop lined the streets. I drifted around, entranced, for what felt like minutes but transpired to be hours. When I realised that it must be late, I gazed around for the door I had come through, but I knew I was lost in this enchanting but peculiarly unsettling sugar-fuelled world. My high spirits plummeted and what seconds before had seemed beautiful, filled me with a sudden panic.

All my thoughts turned on getting back to the forest. I tried my best to navigate my way through the maze of shops until I at last found the puffballs I had first stood on. I trod carefully, as to not step on an elf and soon saw the door. Relief filled my body, for I had thought that perhaps I was going to be trapped in this world forever. I pushed open the door and trudged homeward, my head spinning with puzzlement and confusion. Would I ever return to make sense of what I had seen? I doubted it.