

Word Count 418

“The Girl Who Escaped the Page”

By Isabella F.

Sometimes I feel like libraries hold secrets, but I never thought I'd find one myself. That afternoon, while searching for inspiration for my story, a book fell off the shelf. When I bent down to pick it up, I noticed a strange glimmer in the aisle. I walked toward it... and there she was: a little girl who looked like she'd been drawn by hand, as if she'd stepped right off the page. She whispered, “Can you see me?... finally.”

Fearfully, I whispered, “Wh-Who are you?” She began to tell me who she was. Her name is Liora, and she's 11 years old, but what confused me most was that she said she was a character in a forgotten story. That story... had lost its last page, and without an ending, she was trapped outside of her own story.

I was so confused, I didn't know what to do or say, and if I'm honest, I was terrified. She's made of ink, and her hands disappear when she's scared. I thought it was a dream, but it wasn't a dream. She wears a tiny key around her neck, but she doesn't know what it's for. And she told me that she only appears while her book remains open. Liora is trapped because her story was left unfinished. She told me that the portal will open if someone from the real world writes the correct sentence, but that there will be no turning back once the clock strikes 7:00. I glanced at the clock: it was 6:59 PM.

We quickly began searching through magic books, old stories, and special words... but nothing worked. Liora began to fade: first her fingers, then her arms, then part of her face. When I finally found a clue on a torn-out page that read: “Every story is reborn when someone writes it with truth,” I realized that I had to write the right sentence myself, from my heart - not with magic. I wrote: “Liora deserves to return to her story to finish it.”

The portal opened like a whirlwind of shimmering letters. Liora smiled at me, hugged me, left ink stains on my shirt, and gave me her key: “For when you need a story.” The book closed. I picked it up and opened it... and on the first page was a new dedication: “To the one who gave me back the ending.” The next day I submitted my story—inspired by her.