

The Chalk That Drew Doorways



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Hannah loved to draw. She drew on paper, on sidewalks, and even on her lunch napkin. One Monday morning, she found a small piece of white chalk under her desk. It was smooth and bright, and it felt a little warm in her hand. She slipped it into her pocket and smiled a gap-toothed smile.



After school, Hannah stayed to help Mr. Penn clean the art room. Mr. Penn wore his brown tweed jacket with elbow patches and carried his wooden ruler. He nodded kindly as Hannah wiped the tables. When he left, Hannah took out the chalk. She looked at the blank wall behind the art shelf and wondered what would happen if she drew a rectangle.



Hannah drew a neat rectangle on the wall. The chalk line sparkled, and the wall inside the rectangle vanished! A warm, green smell drifted out. Hannah stepped through and gasped. She stood in an enormous greenhouse. Strange plants grew everywhere: tall twisty ones, fat round ones, and flowers that hummed like bees.



A tiny creature popped out from behind a giant fern. It was knee-high, with a moss-green fuzzy body, big amber eyes, and a little sprout growing from its head. "Hello! I'm Pip," it said, twirling its twig-like arms. "Welcome to the greenhouse! Did you make that doorway?" Hannah nodded, her hazel eyes wide with wonder.



Pip giggled and did a little dance. "I've always wanted to see what's outside!" he said. He grabbed Hannah's hand and pulled her back through the doorway into the school hallway. "Wow!" Pip said, looking around. "Can you make more doors? Please?" Hannah thought for a moment, then nodded. She drew another rectangle on the hallway wall.



This time, the doorway opened to a sunny meadow with tall grass and wildflowers. Pip clapped his hands. "So many places to explore!" he cheered. Hannah drew a third doorway that led to a rocky mountain path with a cool breeze. She drew a fourth that opened to a sparkling waterfall. Each time, the chalk sparkled, and a new world appeared.



But soon, strange things began to happen. The hallway started to smell like flowers and wet rocks. A trickle of water seeped under the door of the principal's office. Hannah frowned. "That's odd," she said. Pip's ears twitched nervously. "Maybe the doorways are mixing things up?" he suggested. Hannah didn't want to stop the fun, so she ignored it.



The next morning, Hannah arrived at school to find water gushing down the main hallway. The waterfall from her fourth doorway had connected to the school! Teachers were slipping on the wet floor, and kids were shrieking with laughter. Mr. Penn calmly put up a wet floor sign. Hannah's cheeks burned with embarrassment.



Then Hannah heard a shout from the cafeteria. She ran to see a rocky mountain path winding right past the lunch tables. Kids were stepping on stones and looking confused. Pip was chasing a butterfly that had flown out of the meadow doorway. "Pip!" Hannah called. "We have to fix this!" Pip looked guilty and dropped the butterfly.



Hannah pulled out the chalk, but her hand shook. "How do I erase them?" she asked. Pip pointed to his acorn belt. "The chalk can erase, too," he said. "Just rub it on the lines." Hannah took a deep breath. She started with the waterfall doorway. She rubbed the chalk over the rectangle, and the water slowed to a stop.



Next, she erased the mountain path doorway. The rocks faded away, and the cafeteria floor was normal again. But the greenhouse doorway was still open, and vines had started to creep into the hallway. Hannah tried to erase it, but the chalk squeaked and the lines wouldn't disappear. "Why isn't it working?" she cried.



Just then, Mr. Penn walked by. He adjusted his round glasses and looked at the vines. "Hannah," he said gently, "sometimes we need to ask for help." He handed her a small eraser from his pocket. "Try this." Hannah took the eraser and rubbed it over the chalk lines. Slowly, the greenhouse doorway closed, and the vines disappeared.



Hannah erased the last doorway, the one to the meadow. Pip helped by catching the butterflies that had escaped. When the wall was blank again, Hannah sat on the floor, tired but relieved. "I'm sorry, Mr. Penn," she said. "I just wanted to make something fun. But I didn't think about what could go wrong." Mr. Penn nodded wisely.



Mr. Penn sat beside her. "Creativity is a wonderful thing," he said. "But it should be guided by good judgment. Always think about consequences before you act." Hannah looked at the chalk in her hand. It had stopped glowing. "What should I do with it?" she asked. Mr. Penn smiled. "That's for you to decide."



Hannah thought for a moment. She put the chalk back under her desk where she found it. "I'll leave it here," she said. "Maybe someone else will find it and learn the same lesson." Pip nodded and gave her a hug. "You're a good friend," he said. Then he disappeared through a tiny crack in the wall, back to his greenhouse.



The next day, Hannah drew a picture of the greenhouse in art class. She drew Pip with his sprout head and amber eyes. Mr. Penn looked at her drawing and smiled. "That's beautiful, Hannah," he said. Hannah smiled back. She still loved to draw, but now she always thought about what she was creating, and she knew that good judgment made every creation better.