

The tattered map led me deep into the heart of the forgotten forest, where the boundaries between reality and legend blurred. I found the map hidden in a wooden chest in Gran's attic, its edges crumbling and stained by time. A red trail snaked through the paper, leading to a place labelled Eldergrove. The name stirred something in me, a sense of mystery, like a secret waiting to be uncovered.

The forest was thick and verdant, full of rich green leaves and the scent of damp earth. Light fell in dappled patches through the high canopy, making the ground below flicker like it was underwater. My boots sank slightly into moss that felt like soft sponge, and the air was cool on my skin. As I walked deeper, a silence settled around me, not empty, but watchful, as if the trees were holding their breath.

Eventually, I came upon a clearing. In the centre stood a stone archway, covered in ivy and faintly glowing in the light. It wasn't marked on my map, but something about it felt enchanted, like it had been waiting for someone to notice it. The vines clung to the stone like fingers, and a single butterfly rested at the top, its wings bright and still.

I stepped through. The air on the other side was warmer and smelled faintly of flowers and rain. The trees here were taller and spaced wider apart, letting golden light fall across the path like spilled treasure. The forest felt different—quieter, but also more alive. Sounds layered over each other: birds calling, leaves rustling, and water trickling somewhere nearby. It felt like walking into a tapestry woven with sound, colour, and scent.

As I moved forward, the forest seemed to guide me. A fox darted past, a blur through the thick plants. Blue mushrooms glowed near a log, and the leaves shimmered when the wind passed through them. I heard the chirp of crickets and the flutter of wings above. It was as though every part of the forest had its own voice, gentle and steady. The light above was radiant, casting long shadows that shifted as I walked.

Finally, I reached a tall oak tree with an arrow carved into the bark. At its base, half-covered by soil and leaves, was a wooden box. I opened it slowly. Inside, wrapped in cloth, was something I had buried a long time ago and the nostalgic memories hit me like a wave, the placing of souvenirs, the digging and the map making. The time capsule was like a little piece of me planted in the woods.