Alice in Night Vale

by FriendlyCurse

Summary

This story takes place in what may or may not be a point in the possible future of Night Vale. It's hard to say. Time is strange, you know. Perhaps this happened in the distant past and after a particularly bad day Time decided to scrap the whole thing and start over. All anyone really knows is that they finally got rid of the oak doors but now red doors have begun appearing in Night Vale.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.
The warm spring sun created dappled pools of light along the winding path in the woods. There was a lovely park nearby with perfect paved walkways and colorful flowers but Alice preferred the less popular unkempt trail that meandered along the eastern edge of the city.

She never went far, of course. Her mother would be terribly cross if she somehow got lost or ruined her dress. Already she had to be careful not to scuff her shoes so she never explored quite as much as she wanted to. Even with such frustrating limitations, she enjoyed walking the leaf strewn path and daydreaming about all the fantastic adventures she might have in a perfect world.

Alice paused at the large old stump that marked the end of her walk - she always imagined it to be a guard tower warning her away from dangerous lands where knights hunted dragons and other monsters. She sighed and looked longingly over the peaceful trees and berry bushes. Birds sang encouraging songs, beckoning her to follow the path just a little longer.

"Oh, but I really mustn't." She protested weakly, looking at the narrowing trail ahead. The plant life grew closer to the dirt path and it would be much easier to lose her way. "Perhaps... Perhaps next time..."

However much sense her protests made, they scattered as she saw movement. Fear was replaced with delight as a fawn picked its way through the trees, pausing to nibble now and then. It was not far and she wondered whether she might be able to pet it. If she asked nicely... perhaps...

Caution forgotten, she picked her way along the trail, glad the cute baby deer was not far. When it finally noticed her it froze, staring at her briefly with beautiful dark eyes before jumping a little farther away.

"Oh, no! I won't hurt you!" Alice said soothingly, slowly raising a hand. "I want to be your friend."

It paused, looking back nervously. Ever so slowly, Alice took a step toward it. Two steps, three... four... It watched her with such sweet uncertainty that she wished she could hug the poor thing and let it know she would never, ever hurt it.

Five steps... six... and again it leapt back. She hesitated, wondering if she was just being foolish. But it was so close and all alone just like her... She smiled reassuringly at the fawn and resumed her careful progress forward.

It seemed only a few more steps before the little deer turned and ran, this time not stopping. Alice sighed sadly, deeply disappointed by the loss of her friend and looked back to see only more trees and bushes just like those ahead of her. The stump was nowhere to be seen, the path invisible.

"Oh dear..." She whispered to herself. "I couldn't have gone that far..."

She was about to turn when she heard a noise, a giggle. The soft laugh of a child with a secret joke. Looking around she saw the hint of a person's shape duck behind a tree.

"Hello?" She called uncertainly. She quickly felt rather silly as she took a few more steps and saw that there was no one hiding behind the tree but an adorable little rabbit.

"That is a pretty dress." The rabbit whispered. "It really does look good on you."

"Oh!" Alice almost took another step back in shock. "You can talk?"
"Would you like to play?" It asked softly, twitching its fluffy tail. "You look like you would be good at games."

"Oh, yes." She smiled, though it quickly faded. "...but I'm afraid I might be lost and really should find my way home. Would you like to come with me? We have carrots at home and I'm sure my mother would like you!"

"If you play with me I will show you how to get back to the path." It promised quietly.

"Well, just for a little while, then." Alice smiled brightly. A talking bunny! She had always dreamed of a cute, furry pet that she could share her secrets with. She took a step and the rabbit bounded off through the bushes and low plants covering the ground.

"Catch me!" The whisper encouraged, giggling. Laughing, she chased after the rabbit, trying to keep up with the small creature. Before long she could no longer see it but she could hear its laughter and followed the sound.

Suddenly the trees ended and she found herself in a clearing. It was much warmer than felt normal, the grass and plants seemed to be avoiding the center of the clearing where there stood a door. Nothing more than an odd red door with a shiny silver knob.

"Curious..." She said nervously as she stepped a little closer and circled around. "Why would someone put a perfectly good door in a forest without a house?"

"It's a magic door." Her friend whispered.

"A magic door?" She asked, looking around for the rabbit but there was nothing where she thought she heard the voice come from. "Mother says there is no such thing as magic."

"Mothers are often wrong about things, aren't they?"

"Sometimes..." She admitted as she moved closer still, curious where the door might lead if it truly was magic. Perhaps just a peek through the keyhole...

When she got close enough to touch the door it swung open to show a dark night sky and the strangely bright lights of a city ahead. Alice gasped, barely able to believe what she was seeing. She took a breath to ask her friend where the door went when a great wind began to blow and however much she tried to brace herself the dry, cracked dirt around the door offered no purchase and she found herself tumbling through into the night... only to hear it slam shut behind her.
Alice picked herself up out of the dirt in a daze. All around her were strange new sounds, the air smelled different, the sky was a vast field of darkness that hardly seemed to be affected by the stars that appeared so much smaller than she remembered. She watched the sky with concern - she had never been anywhere without trees and houses limiting the view of that vast nothingness and the sound of insects in the unfamiliar, flat desert seemed to enhance the feeling of insignificance.

She spun and tried to open the door again but the knob was quite firmly stuck in place. Even though she tried both sides it stubbornly refused to open again and she could not even see her old home through the dark keyhole.

Alice bit her lip as she looked away from the pine trees on the other side of the door and back to the bright lights of the town. They looked… wrong. It was not the familiar warm yellow glow of the street lamps and homes she knew, it was harsh and white. In spite of the terrible sense of foreboding that seemed to grow stronger with each step, she made her way toward the only sign of human life.

She nervously dusted off her dress as she got closer to the strange buildings and almost empty streets. There must be people here somewhere. She reasoned with herself as she walked along the strangely bright, oddly perfect sidewalks. The windows of the buildings were all dark and though she heard nothing but an unnerving noise she could not identify, she was quite certain she saw hooded figures watching her from around corners. When she looked more closely there was never anyone there so she simply scolded herself for allowing her imagination to get carried away.

Of course, she had stepped into a strange world through a strange door so she could hardly blame her imagination for any mischief it may cause. She felt like she had been walking for a long time when she finally saw something other than the unnerving, buzzing lights casting bright pools of illumination along the oddly perfect streets.

The sign made with green tubes of light that glowed so brightly they hurt her eyes proclaimed the building to be the ‘Moonlite All-Nite Diner’. Through the window she could see a few people sitting at tables, each ignoring the others in a most deliberate manner. Their clothing was so strange and simple, nothing seemed to fit anyone quite right. Nothing like the dashing gentlemen in tailored suits and ladies in grand dresses she was used to seeing. She hesitated, nervously watching the woman standing behind the long counter who stared vacantly through one of the windows, then took a deep breath and pulled the door open.

“...tepping into the bright glow of the Moonlite All-Nite Diner where she thinks she may find answers. Of course, dear listeners,” She froze as she heard the mellow voice issuing from black boxes attached to the wall near the ceiling. “Of course she will discover nothing. The strange new girl in the blue dress with a white apron and dusty black shoes will still be lost long after she leaves in search of help elsewhere.”

Alice glanced down at her dust coated shoes and stumbled back, letting the door close silently between her, that strange voice and the silent people who never even looked in her direction. How had that man known where she was? Was he watching her from somewhere? She looked around but saw nothing. No movement, no lights, no life.

Tears sprang to her eyes as she realized she really was lost and might not be able to get home
again. If only she hadn't approached the door, if only she hadn't listened to the talking rabbit, if only she had stayed on the path as she always did...

"Are you alright little girl?" A light but friendly voice asked.

She quickly wiped her eyes and curtsied to the man with kind eyes, perfect hair and a bright smile. "Sir... If you please, could you tell me where I might find a constable? I seem to have lost my way. I am sure my mother will be terribly worried..."

"Yes, I'm sure she is." He said as his smile faded just the slightest bit. "Your clothing looks almost new... What year do you think this is?"

Alice stared at him in uncertain silence. "1865 of course, sir."

"Well, at least they decriminalized time travel." The man said with a sigh. "Come on, I think it might be best if I took you to meet a friend of mine."

"Are we going to the constabulary?" She asked nervously. Her mother had warned her not to trust strangers though she had little choice in this place. She would feel much better speaking with someone she knew she could trust.

"Hmmm... It's a little different in this city... They do know you are here and will be watching if it makes you feel better." He said with a strange waver in his voice that made Alice quite certain it did not make him feel better. "My friend works at the radio station not far from here."

"Radio station?" She asked in confusion as he began walking.

He paused. "Oh, right... 1910. Radios are contraptions that allow people to send music and speech to large groups of people over long distances."

When he resumed walking she followed though his explanation had not set her at ease. "There was a voice in the diner... The man described me..."

"Yes, that's how I knew you were lost and needed help." The man said as he looked back at her with a smile.

"But how did he know, sir?" She asked. "I only just arrived and I have seen no one except the people in that building."

"Honestly, I'm not sure. He keeps up with events really well and any time I ask he... distracts me." He said uncomfortably.

"Oh." She frowned, troubled to think one friend would keep such important secrets from another. If she knew how to see everything that was happening she would surely want to tell her friends.

It was a short walk as the radio station appeared to be the dark and unfriendly building next to the diner she had so recently backed away from. Alice felt much better seeing the empty windows looking out over the street. He had simply seen her walk by as she had walked along one side of the building then turned and walked along another side to reach the diner.

The small amount of comfort she felt disappeared quickly as they walked up the steps to the building and stood before the strange door that seemed to be made of some kind of stone rather than the much more practical wood she was used to seeing. The man tugged but the door did not so much as rattle.
“Oh yeah…” He frowned, drew a small folding knife from his pocket and pricked one finger. Alice watched with wide eyes as he touched the bead of blood to the door then easily pushed it open. Though he held the door for her she remained frozen in place. Had he gone mad? Had she? “I know it seems strange at first… and… well… most of the time after that. I’m still trying to figure out how that works, actually. It’s alright, though. Don’t mind the door. None of the rest are like this one. In this building.”

Though his reassurance utterly failed to be reassuring, he did seem very confident and she was certain he was not a bad man so she took a deep breath and inched her way into the dimly lit building. The man led her down corridors and so far from the windows looking out on the street that Alice was once again very nervous and wondered how the man on the radio had known about her. He clearly could not see from so far back…

“Oh, there’s the new intern!” Her guide said cheerfully waving at a young man down the hall. “I’m sorry I can’t remember your name yet…”

The intern seemed to ignore his prompt for a name as he stared at Alice with wide, empty eyes and a slack jaw. She was not at all sure what to do so she held very still. Her mother spoke harshly of such ill-mannered boys but it was even more rude to speak such things aloud where they could hear.

“Well, then…” The man said as his smile faded. “We’ll just wait for Cecil by the booth.”

With a very light touch on her shoulder, he guided Alice forward and stayed between her and the rude boy. In time they came to a door with a large window and a glowing light. On the other side was a friendly looking man who smiled peacefully and spoke to himself while staring at strange equipment with lights and dials. After a few seconds he glanced up, his smile widened and he beckoned them to enter.

“He’s on air right now so be very quiet unless he indicates that he wants you to speak, alright?” The man said softly as he reached out and opened the door. She nodded and followed him in.

“Well, listeners, you will never believe who just walked into my booth! My favorite scientist Carlos who is so caring and generous that he has gone to rescue the lost girl in the blue dress with a white apron and dusty black shoes! Isn’t he just the best, listeners?” The man named Cecil said with a strange, adoring gaze at her companion. She glanced up at Mr. Carlos to see him blushing as he grinned back. “I would ask the girl in the blue dress with a white apron and dusty black shoes where it is she comes from and where she is travelling to but I’m afraid we are out of time for today. Perhaps we will be able to arrange an interview tomorrow. Stay tuned for the unique musical stylings of a toddler with a chainsaw. Until tomorrow - good night, Night Vale, good night.”

He flipped a switch and the lights on the equipment went dark. Mr. Carlos returned to his normal color but still smiled at the radio man. “It seems this little girl is from the year 1865. It’s possible all the red doors that have been appearing go to different times rather than other dimensions like the oak doors did.”

“What if it’s 1865 in another dimension?” He asked.

Mr. Carlos’ smile faded and his eyes widened. “That’s… possible… I need to run some tests…”

“Well, then.” Mr. Cecil said, looking down at Alice with a wide, friendly smile and dark, knowing eyes. “Welcome to Night Vale.”
Of course this little fanfic is not endorsed by or probably even known of by the creators of Welcome to Night Vale but does that affect its value? Not at all! This is a fun deviation that celebrates the wonderful town created by Joseph Fink. If you have a moment and enjoy the terrifying wonders of Night Vale as much as I do, take a moment to visit their website and donate or buy some awesome merchandise to show your support!

Today’s proverb: Money is the root of all evil. Greed is the stem and violence is the flower. You are a terrible gardener. Stop that.
"Where is the door you came through?" The scientist asked. "I don't believe that was mentioned."

"No, my sources only reported her entering town on Oak Trail."

"The door was near some trees not far from the town." Alice answered, once again feeling the edge of her fear worn away by the rational answer. Someone else had seen her and told him. That was all. Perhaps the rude boy.

"Ahh, yes." The radio man said with a satisfied smile. "The one in the whispering forest. You're lucky you didn't get absorbed."

"Absorbed, sir?" She wasn't sure what he meant by that. She had been to many forests but had never heard of anyone being absorbed. Perhaps he did not know what the word meant...

"Don't worry." Mr. Carlos said calmly. "There is no scientific proof people actually turn into the forest. They probably just get lost."

Mr. Cecil gave his friend a pitying look before shaking his head. "Well, either way you should avoid the forest and ignore anyone you can't see who compliments you. You know, it might be best to run if that happens. Away from the forest of course."

"Cecil, you are scaring the poor girl. She's been through a lot today and Night Vale does take some getting used to. Especially if people start that 'interloper' thing again." Mr. Carlos gently scolded. "For now we need to find her a safe place to stay."

"What do you mean?" He asked with a frown. "The Sheriff's Secret Police can keep track of her. Everywhere is safe... well, safe as it can get. It's not like she's ever alone."

"But where is she expected to go, Cecil? I doubt she has the money for a hotel and I'm not really comfortable with the thought of asking the Sheriff to keep an eye on her. I doubt the police station is a nice place..."

Alice fought back tears again as they discussed her predicament. What was she to do? This town sounded more terrible every moment and she had nowhere to go.

"Well... I bet the mayor would like a house guest. She always did like children..." Mr. Cecil mused.

"Maybe." Mr. Carlos said, looking over at Alice thoughtfully. "What do you think... Oh... I never did ask your name! I'm sorry, there's just a lot on my mind."

"I'm Alice, sir." She said with a small, nervous curtsy.

"Well, Alice, what would you like to do? The mayor is a really nice woman but... If it wouldn't worry you too much... You are welcome to stay with us. I know it's not something that would be considered proper in your time but I promise you'll be safe."

Alice wrung her hands as she considered. Her mother certainly wouldn't approve of her staying in
the same home as a man without supervision... but of all the people she had met in this strange place he seemed the only sane one. Even Mr. Cecil was a bit unusual. His eyes...

"Perhaps tomorrow you could introduce me to the mayor... but I think I would rather stay with you Mr. Carlos. If it is not too much trouble."

"Oh, that is just adorable! " Mr. Cecil grinned. "Mr. Carlos!"

“It’s no trouble at all. We have a spare room you can use until we find a way to get you home. It’s getting late, though. Are you hungry? Cecil and I usually get something to eat after his broadcast.”

Breakfast did seem so very long ago... Alice nodded and Mr. Carlos smiled. They led her out of the building and around to a strange contraption behind it. Though one of the doors was held open and the long seat inside looked quite comfortable, she hesitated. It looked a bit like a low, heavy enclosed cart but there was nowhere to connect a horse. “What is it?”

“It’s a horseless carriage.” Mr. Carlos said as he nudged Mr. Cecil with an elbow to silence a small burst of laughter. “They weren’t very well known until some time after 1900.”

Alice frowned as she considered that. 1900 wasn’t for a long time and if that, too, was past… “What year is it now, sir?”

“2015. The best year to be alive.” Mr. Cecil said cheerfully as he circled the carriage and opened a door on the far side.

“It is?” Alice looked from one man to the other. “Why?”

“Because it’s where we are, of course! Ten years ago is just a memory and that’s hardly better than right now. Now is an adventure! Now is a constant surprise!” An eerie howl sounded in the distance and Mr. Cecil pointed in the direction of the noise. “See?!”

“That... didn’t sound like a coyote.” Mr. Carlos said with an uncertain frown. “Almost like a wolf but not the right direction to be the petting zoo.”

“That’s what makes it so interesting!” His friend grinned and slipped into his seat.

“Is he always so strange?” Alice whispered, looking back to Mr. Carlos.

“Oh, yes.” He said with a small chuckle. “It’s part of his charm. You’ll get used to it.”

Finally she carefully climbed into the carriage and followed Mr. Carlos’ instructions on using a seat belt. She held her breath and pressed herself back in the seat when the machine roared to life and began to move, turning out onto the road and gathering speed. Already she found she greatly missed horses.

After a couple of street intersections passed by she began to relax and look around. They went by a few unimpressive buildings but then there came a long, high metal fence that seemed to not have a gate on the side visible to them. Watching them from beside the fence was someone in a hooded robe.

“What is that?” Alice asked, trying to see what might be within the fence.

“That’s the dog park.” Mr. Carlos said.

“Do not look at the dog park.” Mr. Cecil added, his voice heavy with warning. “It would be best
not to think about the dog park. And never look at the hooded figures.”

“Why?” She asked, turning her head forward but straining to see beyond the fence out of the corner of her eye.

“Because.” He answered with finality.

They paused at an intersection where a man stood on the corner waving two flags. After a moment they turned and went down another street where there were more machines like this one visible but not many. Most were stopped outside of buildings and they paused beside one with four of the machines sitting empty. Mr. Carlos was about to turn when there was a loud thump as something dropped onto the front of the machine.

Alice gasped as she realized it was a boy a little bit younger than her wearing almost no clothing! He wore only strange underpants! She quickly covered her eyes and listened to another, smaller thump as the boy jumped down.

“Oh my!” Mr. Cecil said disapprovingly. “That young man seems to be climbing the side of the Subway building as if it were a tree! I certainly don’t remember seeing a child like that before. Most people disapprove of having their buildings climbed and surely would have complained…”

“Yes.” Mr. Carlos said thoughtfully before turning and stopping the car. “I’m a little more concerned with the hood of the car than the building, though. He left quite a dent…”

“Doesn’t your insurance cover falling bipedal creatures?”

“No… only aquatic creatures and quadrupeds.”

“Oh, Carlos… I told you to make sure they included bipeds and reptiles! Those lazy insurance companies are always trying to pull one over on people. I’ll have to bring that up in the next broadcast.” Mr. Cecil grumbled.

“I really didn’t think any of it would be an issue. I keep forgetting this is Night Vale.” Mr. Carlos sighed before turning back to Alice and instructing her on unbuckling the belt. “This is Big Rico’s Pizza and… well… it’s not the best example of pizza since they can’t have crusts anymore but I’m sure it’ll be an interesting new food for you.”

She nodded, unsure what to say to so much nonsense. It seemed only yesterday she daydreamed of being in a world filled with nonsense but now that she was in one it was really quite… scary.

The three entered the Pizza place where quite a few people sat in near silence. Most ate almost mechanically with no sign of enjoying the experience. A few seemed to be pretending to eat while huddled close and whispering. Alice stayed close to Mr. Carlos and kept reassuring herself that if any of these people were dangerous he would get her to somewhere safer. She simply had to believe that one uncertain thing.

Once they were seated each was given a bowl of what appeared to be mashed tomatoes, melted cheese and sliced meat. She poked at it uncertainly but the other two were eating and seemed to be enjoying it so she took a deep breath and tried to separate a bite as the stringy cheese fought to remain intact. It was surprisingly good and unlike anything she had known before.

Before she finished Mr. Cecil excused himself and returned a few minutes later looking quite amused. “My sources tell me there is a strange loincloth-clad child who has broken into the petting zoo and begun communing with the wolves. I sent an intern to see if anything more can be discovered from the child.”
“He’s with wolves?” Alice asked nervously. She had heard many stories of dangerous, vicious wolves that loved to eat children who stray from the safe paths.

“Oh, don’t worry, Alice.” Mr. Carlos smiled. “They’ve been eating so many rabbits most of them are too fat to run anymore.”

“They’re like sad, furry pillows rolling around out there.” Mr. Cecil confirmed morosely.

Alice nodded in confusion and followed silently as they returned to the carriage and drove a while longer before pulling up to a tenement building. She followed, not at all sure what to expect and was greatly relieved when the door opened on a bright, clean room. There were a great many strange and wonderful things she wished to ask about but all of it disappeared from her mind as she noticed the low table in the middle of the room. On it among papers and other random objects was a pile of silverware. Stuck in the middle and pointing straight up was a long metal skewer piercing three dead mice and a half eaten apple balanced on top.

“Will you look at that!” Mr. Cecil said with a cheerful smile. “It seems the faceless old woman who secretly lives in our house likes you, Alice!”

“Are you sure?” She asked weakly, taking a nervous step back. “That… doesn’t seem very nice…”

“Oh, of course it’s nice! There are three mice, they all have their skin on and the apartment isn’t on fire!”

“I just washed the dishes, too.” Carlos sighed wearily. “Cecil, would you mind… uhh… thanking the old woman while I get Alice settled in?”

“Why is there an old woman living here, Mr. Carlos?” Alice asked “And how is it a secret if you know she is here?”

“The old woman lives where she pleases since no one can stop her, anyway.” Mr. Cecil answered cheerfully as he began disassembling the pile of silverware to free the skewer. “Just because we know she’s here somewhere doesn’t make it any less of a secret. Do you know where she is? Of course not! No one knows exactly where she is so it still counts.”

“Will I get used to this, too, Mr. Carlos?” She asked weakly as she looked up at him.

“I honestly hope to get you home before you have to.” He said, patting her shoulder comfortingly. It didn’t take long for them to change the linens of a narrow spare bed for her and while it seemed odd that she only noticed two rooms, she was far too tired to ask further questions. Though it had been little more than two hours since her morning stroll in the woods it felt like days since she last slept so she settled into the bed and closed her eyes hoping to wake again back home in her soft, safe bed.

Instead she dreamed of faceless old women chasing her with dead animals.

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Chapter End Notes

The Sheriff’s Secret Police have issued a warning for all residents of Night Vale - Do
not speak to Alex Amari. Do not let your children speak to Alex Amari. Do not THINK about Alex Amari. Alex Amari will fill your head with lies, ideas and other things that are not municipally approved. Beware Alex Amari.

Today’s Proverb: We are here to help. We are here to help. We are here to help. We are here to help. We are here to help. We. Are. Here. To. Help.
The light seeping out from the edges of the simple but nice curtains nearby did nothing to brighten her day. Alice felt terrible. Her sleep had been restless and unpleasant, she missed her mother and home so much her stomach hurt and there was no way to know how long it might take to go back. She was trapped in this strange place where she wasn’t supposed to look at things but there were many things looking at her…

She cried quietly for a few minutes before getting out of bed and doing her best to unwrinkle her dress. Oh, her mother would be furious if she saw what had happened to the lovely outfit! What was she to do for clothing? She had only this dress and could not possibly ask Mr. Carlos to buy her something new! Tears of frustration stung her eyes again and she quickly wiped them away as she chided herself for being such a baby.

Surely they would find a way to open the door today and she could go home. Repeating those words until she started to believe them, she went to see if Mr. Carlos was awake.

She froze at the end of the short hallway - Mr. Cecil was sitting on a chair with a cup and what looked like a newspaper but the pages were blank except for small page numbers in the top corner of each. Only the familiar scent of coffee offered any comfort.

"Good morning, Alice." He said though his back was to her and she had been careful to walk silently. "Carlos asked me to apologize for his absence - he had some science to do but he will try to leave early this afternoon."

"Oh..." She said softly, unsure what else to say. There was a strange tone in his voice that reminded her of when her mother was angry but trying not to let it show.

"So... I was thinking I could show you around town while we wait. Carlos said we should find you some new outfits since most people prefer to wear clean clothes every day... though I have met a few who insisted upon clothing stained with pickle juice to keep evil spirits away." He turned to look at her, his eyes narrowed as he held her gaze. "Of course that is silly... Evil spirits can only be deterred by mustard. Everyone knows that."

"Of... course." She nodded.

Mr. Cecil's serious demeanor shattered and he smiled brightly at her. Well, whenever you are ready we can go explore this great city together! Are you hungry? Carlos cooked some eggs for you before he left but I got hungry and ate them... I can make more if you like. He is a better cook but I can do quite well, you know."

"Oh, thank you Mr. Cecil but I'm not terribly hungry. Perhaps just a slice of toast?"

"No." He said so sharply she jumped and took a step back. "Wheat and wheat byproducts are illegal in Night Vale. They are dangerous and cannot be trusted. Not... at... all..."

“But... wheat is.” She began uncertainly.

“ Illegal. ” Mr. Cecil growled and the word seemed to reverberate and echo off the walls. Then again he smiled as if nothing had been said. “Perhaps some fruit instead?”
She nodded nervously as he set his paper down and strode lightly into the kitchen. After she had eaten they went for a walk and Mr. Cecil told her a lot about the town though very little of it seemed to make sense. She asked about some strange noises she heard but he didn’t seem to know what she was talking about. Most of what he had to say amounted to dire warnings to avoid touching, looking at or talking about certain things they saw. By the time they reached their destination she was not at all certain she would remember even half of what he had said.

They entered a large store that seemed to sell everything but Mr. Cecil ignored all of it until they reached a section filled with clothing that would fit her. She was shocked to see trousers in the girls section but though there were many pretty choices, Mr. Cecil picked out a number of blue dresses for her. He ignored any other color and since these were gifts she knew it would be terribly rude to point out that she much preferred green to blue.

After trying some on and being reassured that modern dresses were not worn with petticoats, he purchased four pretty outfits for her. It was very strange to have no sleeves on a dress but she did feel much better in the heat of the sun that seemed almost to be the wrong color. Of course it was a pale gold but she could not remember if it were the exact right shade of pale gold.

They had not quite made it back to the apartment when Mr. Carlos pulled up beside them in his car. Mr. Cecil smiled brightly and opened the door for her, set the bags beside her on the seat and got in the front beside his friend.

“Have you had fun today, Alice?” He asked as they pulled back out onto the street, once again moving with unnerving speed.

“Yes, sir.” She said politely though she was not entirely sure whether ‘fun’ was the proper word.

“I thought we might take you bowling this afternoon. I’m certain you will enjoy it.” Mr. Carlos said with a big smile.

“Oh, yes!” Mr. Cecil agreed. “It has been so long since we’ve been to Desert Flower Bowling Alley and Arcade Fun Complex!”

But what about the doors? Alice wished she could ask. What about getting me home? It would be very rude to say that, though. She was certain Mr. Carlos would tell her as soon as they learned something.

“Science can sometimes take a long time.” Mr. Cecil said without looking back at her. “Doors are quite tricky, too. I’m sure we will figure them out soon enough but until then we should enjoy the mystery.”

“You’re right, Cecil.” Mr. Carlos said cheerfully.

Alice leaned against the door and watched Mr. Cecil silently. How had he known what she was thinking? Sometimes he was very nice but sometimes he was scary… did Mr. Carlos know about the scary times or did he never see them?

The car slowed as they approached an empty lot where a building should surely be. Mr. Cecil was watching with great interest and after a moment she saw that there was a hole in the ground and people crouched within it.

“I think we should see what is going on.” Mr. Cecil said with a smile and quickly jumped out as soon as the car had stopped. Alice sighed in relief as she followed Mr. Carlos while his friend ran ahead.
“That is a bit strange…” Mr. Carlos said quietly. “The people who huddle in that hole are usually pretty quiet.”

There were a number of people who were, indeed, huddled in the hole but bouncing around the hole calling encouragements was a girl perhaps a year or two older than Alice. Below a straw hat her blonde hair fell in two braids over her shoulders. The girls’ red gingham check dress flared as she bounced from one side of the hole to the other, smiling cheerfully at the people who say swaying and singing a round of ‘Row, row, row your boat’.

“Oh, I knew you would all sound so lovely!” The girl said, clapping gleefully. “Don’t you feel so much better now? ‘Twas silly to sit there being unhappy, don’t you agree? Life is but a dream!”

Alice watched the girl sing as she walked around the people though she paused on the next round and smiled brightly at the three newcomers. “Oh! Have you come to sing too? ‘Twould be lovely to have even more voices! Really any song sounds better with more voices but this one especially is great fun when you have a large crowd and ‘tis just so very hard to be unhappy or scared when you’re singing so won’t you come join us?”

“My sources did mention another of the doors opening briefly…” Mr. Cecil mused. “Have you come through a red door recently?”

“Oh yes!” The cheerful girl said as she bounced over and looked to each person in turn. “‘Twas a very lovely shade of red and just so very inviting I simply had to see what was on the other side and it certainly was quite a surprise to go from the Ladies’ Aid in the evening to a bright day elsewhere but such an interesting place simply begged to be explored! ‘Twas impossible to go back through the door when I tried but this is a much more interesting place than the Ladies’ Aid ever was and the people wear such colorful clothing and sing so beautifully! This is a truly wonderful place!”

“Night Vale is a wonderful place.” Mr. Cecil agreed with a big smile. “I’d love to join the huddle and sing but we were on our way to the Desert Flower Bowling Alley and Arcade Fun Complex. I’m sure Carlos would love to ask you a great many scientific questions so if you don’t mind that would you like to join us?”

“I do so love fun!” The girl agreed, bouncing cheerfully as she looked to each of the three in turn. “My name is Pollyanna, by the way.”

“I’m Carlos, this is Cecil and Alice.”

“‘Tis truly wonderful to meet you all! I do so hope we will get to be great friends! Friends are the greatest blessing of them all, you know! This would be a dark, dark world without them!”

“Right you are!” Mr. Cecil exclaimed as the four of them returned to the car.

Alice had to show her how to buckle the belt and did feel a little less alone having someone else who could understand what she was going through. She was not at all sure what to make of Mr. Cecil’s quick acceptance of another lost girl when he seemed a little bit reluctant when Mr. Carlos suggested they find her somewhere safe to be. He had all but suggested they leave her on the street! It didn’t help her confusion when he gave her a pointed look with those dark, unnerving eyes when Mr. Carlos wasn’t looking. His slightly smug expression implied he had won a fight but she could not for the life of her think what she might have done to upset him.

“What year do you come from, Pollyanna?” Mr. Carlos asked as they resumed driving.

“Is it not 1913 here as well, sir?” The girl asked with a laugh.
“I’m afraid not.” He answered gently. “The red doors seem to lead from different times to this place. Alice is from 1865.”

“Truly?” Pollyanna looked to Alice with a wide, wondering smile. “Oh, that is amazing! Can you imagine what miracle it must have taken to create such doors that would bring together people from so many times to be friends?”

“Yes… amazing.” Alice agreed uncertainly. Did this girl not miss her home? What about her family and friends in the past? She wondered what would happen when the poor girl learned how very peculiar Night Vale was.

The rest of the afternoon seemed to vanish in a matter of moments as Mr. Carlos and Mr. Cecil taught them how to bowl. One of the lanes was blocked off and Mr. Cecil said something about a miniature city being hidden beneath it.

They had a very fun day with Mr. Carlos speaking to each of the girls about their past with great interest between turns. It was through his talk with Pollyanna that Alice discovered why she was not concerned with returning home - her parents had died and she was to be sent to live with an aunt she had never met. She had not lost anything by stepping through the door as Alice had.

They were still talking when Mr. Cecil excused himself to prepare for his job. Mr. Carlos held his hands as they said goodbyes. Alice watched in confusion - would they not be seeing each other again in a few hours?

“Are you two in love?” Pollyanna asked Mr. Carlos when he returned to his seat. “You looked at each other the way my parents… the way my parents did and I suppose it is a bit strange but ‘tis wonderful that you have someone to love, isn’t it? Oh, I do hope someone smiles at me like that some day!”

“I… ummm… yes…” Mr. Carlos stuttered as his ears turned red. “Yes, it is wonderful and I’m absolutely certain you will find someone who will love you just as much some day.”

Alice sat quietly as she absorbed this and realized that Pollyanna was right. It might be strange but they were clearly very happy and it did explain why Mr. Carlos was not upset by Mr. Cecil’s unusual tendencies. Surely Mr. Carlos would not love someone who could not be trusted so even if he did scare her sometimes, Alice decided to trust Mr. Cecil, too.

She smiled at Mr. Carlos and he relaxed. “Well, I think we have time to see Mayor Cardinal before Cecil’s show starts.”

They did not have far to go as the city hall was visible from the door of the bowling alley. Alice ended up clinging to the ever-cheerful girl’s arm as they made their way through the building toward the mayor past people standing in the halls chanting frightening words while staring at the ceiling. Mr. Carlos assured them it was nothing to worry about but it was still one of the most frightening things she had ever seen.

The mayor was a lovely lady who seemed both happy and sad randomly. She was concerned that there were more people coming through the doors but she was very happy to meet them. By the time they were ready to leave Pollyanna decided to remain with the Mayor since there was not room enough for her with Mr. Carlos. Alice was disappointed to be separated from the girl who did make it easier to accept the strange circumstances but the Mayor seemed to be much more in need of her aggressive cheerfulness so she said her goodbyes and they returned to the apartment.

Mr. Carlos turned the radio on and began preparing dinner. Alice frowned at the strange box that
seemed to be doing little more than creating random beeping and whirring noises.

“His show will start soon. I’m not entirely sure why the people of the city like hearing random sound effects but the station is quite popular.”

He had finished chopping an onion before the noises seemed to draw out into a long buzz then Mr. Cecil’s voice came from the speaker. “The days are never as long as they seem, especially now. Welcome to Night Vale. Well, listeners, the red doors with the silver knobs are still scattered in and around the city and let me tell you, they are creating some unusual situations. Not by their existence but through the people who seem to be coming through. Last night I met the girl in the blue dress with a white apron and dusty black shoes, her name is Alice and she is from the past.

“This afternoon when we were on our way to the Desert Flower Bowling Alley and Arcade Fun Complex we met another young girl. This one in a straw hat and red gingham check dress. She, too, was from the past. My sources have informed me that they are not the only ones, either. A young boy wearing only a loincloth has broken into the Night Vale Petting Zoo where the wolves seem to have accepted him as one of their own. When approached for an interview as he was setting up an exercise for the rotund wolves, our poor intern was only able to determine the boy called himself Mowgli before a few of the more determined predators rolled in to prevent his escape. He will be missed.”

Alice blinked at the radio in shock. Was he speaking of the rude boy? Someone died and he hardly seemed to care at all! She missed much of what was said for a few more minutes as she attempted to make sense of his casual acceptance of someone dying.

“Oh dear…” Mr. Carlos said with a sigh, breaking her out of her reverie. “I hadn’t considered that. I think he’s a little upset that I took half a day off to learn more about where you come from and I’ve never taken a day off to spend time with him. He doesn’t see the scientific relevance of learning about your past!”

“You should still take time to spend with only him if you really do love him.” Alice pointed out. Her father sometimes set aside his work so they could go on picnics in the countryside. It always made her mother happy and made her feel important.

“You’re probably right. Perhaps we can go look at doors together…” Mr. Carlos said thoughtfully.

“Pamela Winchell, Director of Emergency Press Conferences for Night Vale, called her daily emergency press conference today where she whispered, ‘Children. Children. Children. Children.’ increasing in both volume and tone until attending reporters were forced to use their municipally approved ear plugs. I must say I have found myself sharing her sentiments at times but then once in a while… once in a while, listeners, I have actually enjoyed the desire to scream about young people. Strange, isn’t it? With that I will take you to the weather.”

Alice frowned at the speaker as soothing music replaced Mr. Cecil’s voice. She made him want to scream? She had tried not to be a bother…

“Oh, don’t worry about that.” Mr. Carlos said with a smile. “He exaggerates a lot when he’s broadcasting. He does like you.”

She nodded but had her doubts.

“During the weather,” Mr. Cecil’s voice resumed when the song ended. “My sources informed me that the Sheriff’s Secret Police have taken another child into custody after the bespectacled boy in
the long nightshirt wandered the streets shouting for directions to a fast food restaurant. When residents directed him to the Wendy’s across the street from Red Lobster, he began to cry. Numerous residents complained about the noise so the child has been detained pending his parents retrieval.”

“That poor boy…” Mr. Carlos frowned. “He probably came through a door, too. It seems to be nothing but children.”

They listened a while longer as Mr. Cecil related other strange happenings and by the time dinner had finished he was home. Alice approached him carefully and looked up at those dark, knowing eyes. “Mr. Cecil… I don’t want to take Mr. Carlos’ attention away. I’m terribly sorry if I did anything to upset you.”

He looked up at Mr. Carlos in surprise. “Oh come on, Cecil, you know I always listen to your show.”

“You don’t want to scream, do you?” Alice asked nervously.

“A little.” Mr. Cecil answered as he knelt down with a big smile to hug her. “In a good way.”

Chapter End Notes

And now a word from our sponsor - Beware the cats. They can not be trusted and are lured by common household products. Just last week a floating cat appeared amid the dresses in the closet of Kat - you know, the woman who runs the Coffee, Cyanide and Tequila blog. It appears to be Khoshekh’s third cousin Zhaghaameg. It has found a way to steal all her tequila and jealously guards the coffee. If you wish to avoid chaos, misery and floating felines nesting in your clothing, do not share anything with or even acknowledge the cats. This message brought to you by a very sober and tired woman.

Today’s proverb: Never underestimate the power of hard boiled eggs.
The next day Mr. Carlos arranged for the other scientists to handle all the work in his lab and the three set out to check all the doors. There had been reports of ten known doors scattered in and around Night Vale so they decided to check each one in turn. The first one they checked was the door Alice came through near the Whispering Forest.

It stood exactly where it had been as if waiting for her to return but once again it failed to open in spite of attempts made by all three from both sides of the free standing entryway. Mr. Cecil even tried bleeding on it as some doors seemed to require but still it remained quite firmly closed. Alice sighed and sat nearby as she watched Mr. Carlos circle the door with boxes and wires, waving and prodding them while Mr. Cecil muttered and occasionally gave the door a sound kick.

It was strange to see the scientist so absorbed as he looked at little glowing dials and numbers. It didn't take long to get bored listening to him mutter 'inconclusive' as he checked and rechecked the equipment.

She began to wander a little further, curious about the innocent looking forest they claimed to be dangerous. Of course she was prepared to run back if anything happened. She simply didn't see what could be so frightening about an empty forest.

"That is such a pretty new dress," She heard her rabbit friend whisper from nearby. "It really brings out your eyes."

"Oh, Mr. Rabbit! I thought you were still on the other side of the doo-" She was cut off by a strong hand on her shoulder pulling her back.

She looked up at Mr. Cecil and immediately felt guilty for the amount of concern in his eyes as he looked down at her. "That is the voice that brought you here?"

She nodded and he guided her back to the door where he rested a hand over the dial of the machine Mr. Carlos was studying.

"Cecil..." He protested in frustration.

"That talking rabbit... It was one of the whispering voices that lures people into the forest."

"Really? So they can get through the doors? Interesting..." Mr. Carlos said, looking back to the door with a smile.

"Does that help, sir?" Alice asked.

"Not yet but new information can help in the future." He said, glancing at the tall trees on the far side of the door. "Isn't this exciting?"

"Yes, sir." She answered weakly. Exciting was one of the last words she would have thought of. They had been by the door for over an hour and were no closer to opening it than they had been the day before.

"I don't expect you to understand." Mr. Carlos said with a sympathetic smile. "I mean, once we
get you home you will see so many scientific and medical advances before you're sixty that it will hardly seem the same world. There is just so much still unknown in your time. These days most places have been explored, few new inventions are made as people just try to improve on old ideas. There's very little that cannot be explained logically and that's why I came to Night Vale! It's almost as if the laws that govern the rest of the world simply don't apply here. This place is so fascinating! It’s the perfect place to do science."

She nodded, considering what he said. In only a few days she had seen many impossible things and other things that were both wonderful and terrifying. It did seem almost like another world and if she hadn’t dreamed during the night and woken this morning she would be certain she was dreaming now.

Alice was still considering his words when they moved on to the next door. This one stood beside a large tree in Mission Grove Park, half hidden behind a strange monument that consisted of a great many metal and stone hands twisted and clasped together to form a pillar. It seemed there should be something held by the outstretched hands at the top but there was nothing there.

“Mr. Cecil?” Alice asked as Mr. Carlos began testing the door as he did the previous one. “Did someone break the statue?”

“Not at all.” He smiled, looking up at the top of the pillar.

“Is it unfinished?”

“Oh, no. This excellent monument was created as a tribute to our hope for the future.”

“But there’s nothing there.” She protested.

“Exactly.” He nodded, smiling back down at her.

She edged away from the monument, entirely unsure what to think of that terrible concept. How could Mr. Cecil so easily accept that there was no hope for the future?

A strange noise erupted from Mr. Cecil a few minutes later and brought Alice’s attention back to him. He took a small box from his pocket, pressed a button to silence it and held it to his ear.

“Hello?”

He said things like ‘Mmhmm’, ‘Ahh, and ‘I see.’ a few times before he pressed another button and returned it to his pocket before turning his gaze once more to Mr. Carlos. Alice tugged on his sleeve. “What was that thing?”

“My cell phone?” He asked, reluctantly turning his gaze to her. “It allows me to communicate with people. If I remember right there won’t be telephones in your time for over a decade. You will enjoy them once they are invented.”

“Oh. What did the person say?”

“John Peters - you know, the farmer - said he caught a girl in a red hooded cape carrying a basket wandering in his field of imaginary corn. When he tried to speak to her she ran into the whispering forest. She’s probably been absorbed by now.” He said with a small shrug.

“Is there nothing we can do to help her?” Alice asked, looking in the direction of the forest though it was too far away to see now.

“Nothing useful. She should have run any other direction.” Mr. Cecil said with a disapproving
“She could not have known to stay out of the forest if she was like me and came through a door.” Alice pointed out with a frown. Why did he always act like everyone should know the rules of this strange town?

“She could have asked over a delicious ear of imaginary corn if she had been at all sociable.”

She huffed at his off-hand comment and went to stand beside Mr. Carlos as he looked at numbers on one of his machines.

“It’s all the same… exactly the same as the other door.” He muttered in disgust. “Surely something has to be different…”

“Perhaps it goes to the same time as mine. We should look at the door Pollyanna came through and see if it’s different since we are certain she is from a different time.” Alice suggested.

Mr. Carlos gave her a wide smile and patted her head. “That is an excellent idea.”

They returned to the car and made their way to the door nearest the empty lot where they met the cheerful girl. Alice looked out the window as they went and held her breath as they passed an alley - almost hidden by the shadows of the buildings she saw a young boy with a sweet smile and two very unfriendly looking dogs. Though she only caught sight of him for a moment she was sure she did not wish to see him ever again.

Pollyanna’s door was behind Cheryl’s Little Princess Dance Studio and since it was getting late and somehow even hotter, Alice and Mr. Cecil went to a nearby restaurant to get lunch for the three as Mr. Carlos did all his tests again.

By the time Mr. Carlos was ready to go to the next door there were heavy storm clouds forming and Mr. Cecil convinced him to stop testing doors for the day. With very little convincing Mr. Carlos agreed that a trip to the Children’s Science Museum would be an excellent alternative.

Though she was very excited at first, her enthusiasm faded as they walked around the museum and Mr. Carlos’ smile faded. He was quite upset about many things he saw and any time he asked where a certain exhibit was Mr. Cecil told him that was no such thing as it was not municipally approved.

They left soon after and returned to the house where Mr. Carlos paced and grumbled about the sorry state of the education provided for the children. Mr. Cecil seemed unhappy about his criticism of approved information but did not argue though he clearly wanted to. They introduced her to the television until it was time for Mr. Cecil to go to work. Once he was gone Mr. Carlos began teaching Alice useful scientific information, though much of what he said was a bit too advanced for her to remember. He gladly answered any questions she had though he spoke in whispers the entire time and encouraged her to do the same. Alice was sure they could have spoken normally and still barely been heard over the thunder and rain outside.

When she asked why, he told her that the police were always listening and disliked people becoming too smart. That seemed a silly sort of thing to be upset about but it was fun to keep such
secrets and by the time Mr. Cecil’s show came on she had learned why the sky is the color it is, what makes rainbows, why grass is green and a great many other interesting facts.

“Seek the truth only at great risk, do you really think it’s worth the price? Welcome to Night Vale.”

Alice shivered, knowing that he had been speaking to her. What would be the price he spoke of? Mr. Carlos knew a lot of things and he seemed to be doing well.

“More children have been appearing in Night Vale, listeners. I don’t know about you but I am certainly glad these are less troubling than the otherworldly children who appeared in the past. Although… there have been multiple reports of a little boy walking around with a growing pack of feral dogs serving as his guardians. When asked for a comment on the situation the representative of the Sheriff’s Secret Police glared at me while chewing on a coffee cup from the Moonlite All-Nite Diner. When only the handle remained he said ‘Children can smell fear’ then stood, paid for his cup and left.”

“We most certainly cannot!” Alice protested indignantly. How could anyone believe such nonsense?

“Most children in Night Vale do seem to have that ability, actually.” Mr. Carlos said as he handed her a plate of meatballs in sauce. After that Mr. Cecil told the story of the girl in the red hooded cape disappearing into the woods when she ran in fear from the farmer. He assured everyone that the cheerful girl Pollyanna had become quite popular at the city hall as she convinced the City Council to play hide-and-seek then arranged a chorus for the daily chanting.

The boy in the loincloth was still in the petting zoo with the wolves and there were rumors that the boy scouts were attempting to recruit him while the Sheriff’s Secret Police continued denying any knowledge of the boy who had been detained.

Mr. Cecil then spoke of the unusual thunderstorm that seemed entirely centered over the town, not moving away in spite of a stiff wind. Even the people huddled in the hole in the empty lot had sought cover and were now huddled in the Deli section of the Ralph’s.

Once the show ended they quickly turned the radio off as Cecil’s voice was replaced by the unceasing shriek of birds of prey. Alice yawned, exhausted from the heat and what felt like a very long day. She said good night soon after Cecil returned and went to bed. She only woke once late in the night as she felt the blankets being tucked in gently around her. Too tired to open her eyes, she smiled and drifted back into a deep and dreamless sleep.

Chapter End Notes

Do I actually have anything to say here? Not really. There are probably things I should say but that can wait.

Today’s proverb: Hold a seashell to your ear and you can hear the distant screams of countless millions who failed to perform the proper rituals and chants.
Alice woke to the patter of rain on the window nearby. A dreary, dim glow seeped in around the edges of the curtains and she sighed. Rainy days were so gloomy…

She climbed out of bed and put on another of the pretty new dresses before making her way out to the main house. Mr. Cecil was awake and reading the paper again. This time there was writing but a lot of it seemed to be blacked out. Such a peculiar newspaper…

“There are eggs and bacon for you in the kitchen.” Mr. Cecil said, once again not looking up from his paper. “We can go see Carlos when you’re done eating. He wanted to do some kind of tests on the rain this morning.”

“Do you think something is wrong with the rain, Mr. Cecil?” She asked.

“Oh, probably. There’s always something wrong, though sometimes things are better for it. He worries too much.”

She looked at him askance then went to get her breakfast. Once she was seated at the small dining table she watched the rain fall from the low, unfriendly clouds. At least there was no thunder and lightning as there had been the night before. She could not imagine what might cause a storm like this - it seemed quite normal and as dry as it had been since she came to this strange place, she would have thought people would be excited.

When she finished eating Mr. Cecil fashioned an umbrella from two coats, half a dozen pins and a broken rake. When she asked why he did not have an umbrella he looked at her as if she had asked why he had only two arms and shook his head. She let the subject drop and simply walked beside him as they strolled through the rain.

Mr. Carlos’ lab was not far at all and for that she was very glad. It was unnerving to see people looking up at the clouds with deep suspicion. Some were even boarding up their windows. Alice turned her mind to the lab and away from the strange people as soon as they were through the door. The brightly lit room had an unusual scent and appeared to be scrupulously cleaned. There was not a smudge, not a speck of dirt anywhere. Even the floor was perfectly polished. She saw Mr. Carlos across the room staring at a jar that held a few inches of water as if waiting for it to move of its own accord.

“It's water, right?” Mr. Cecil asked softly from beside Mr. Carlos. The poor man was so startled he actually jumped and began stuttering until Mr. Cecil rested a hand on his cheek. “Alright, I won’t do that again. Have you learned anything about the rain?”

Once Mr. Carlos calmed down he shook his head. “It seems to be normal water from normal clouds… but I don’t remember seeing it rain like this before. Little storms that only last an hour or two maybe… but this? All night and into the next day? This is weird. Isn’t it, Cecil?”

“A little unusual, yes.” He admitted. “But as you said - it’s normal water from normal clouds.”

“But nothing in Night Vale is normal! That makes this abnormal!” Mr. Carlos protested in frustration. “I have to be missing something…”
“Maybe the storm came through one of the doors.” Alice suggested as she looked around at all the other vials and bottles of liquids. So many pretty colors… She pointed to a clear jar with a black stopper that held a lovely blue substance. “What does this one do?”

“Oh… uhhh… that’s glass cleaner… I dropped the bottle and broke the sprayer…” Mr. Carlos said with an awkward smile.

Mr. Cecil glanced at the long window that let in the dim sunlight and turned back to Carlos with a wide grin. “Alice, would you mind waiting outside for just a moment? I have to speak with Carlos in private.”

“Yes, sir.” She answered and returned to the door, glad this was not one that required the person opening it to draw blood. As soon as she was outside someone grabbed each of her arms, covered her mouth and she was swiftly carried around the corner of the building and along a twisting route until she was quite lost and very scared.

When at last they stopped in what seemed to be an abandoned building of some kind she was released only to find herself surrounded by children. The two carrying her seemed a little older than the others, perhaps fourteen or fifteen. One of them, the girl, stepped forward and narrowed her eyes at Alice.

“You read?”

“Y-yes…” She said uncertainly as she scanned the faces of the unfriendly looking children.

“What’s your favorite book?” The older girl pressed.

“The Boys’ and Girls’ Library by Mr. Goodrich.” She said, grasping at the only one she could think of just then. She was not sure it would be wise to admit she only read the parts with pictures.

The girl nodded in satisfaction. “I’m Tamika and this is my army.”

“Army?” Alice looked around uncertainly. The children did seem strangely confident and quiet. She had honestly never seen so many in one place without someone laughing or playing. “Why do you need an army?”

“Because Night Vale needs us. The grown-ups are too used to the way things are. They won’t stand up for their rights, they won’t even read because the City Council tells them not to. They are scared of what will happen if everyone gets smarter and we are going to prove them right. Now, you’ve been kidnapped and you can either stay as our prisoner or join our army and help us fight for a better future.”

“But I’ve never been in a fight before!” Alice protested. “Mother said girls should never fight… as much as I would love to help make this a nicer town-”

“You mother is wrong.” Tamika snapped, cutting her off. “Girls are just as good at fighting as boys are. Some are even better. Why do you think they tried so hard in the past to keep us docile? Don’t just accept everything you are told. Read more, learn more, think more! You want to help, we’ll teach you to fight.”

“But… what about Mr. Cecil and Mr. Carlos? I really should get back…” Alice protested weakly. She didn’t want to fight - they were going to send her home soon and she would not have to worry about all of this anymore.

“They know where you are.” Tamika shrugged. “Well, they know you are with us. Cecil has
always supported us in whatever way he can. Why do you think he sent you outside alone?”

“He knew?” She felt a little betrayed but if Mr. Cecil approved of them perhaps they were not as bad as they seemed. She deemed it wisest to play along for the time being and hope Mr. Carlos could find a way to open the door to send her home soon.

“Of course. So - what’ll it be? You with us or not?”

“Yes… I will try to help.”

“Good.” Tamika smiled and led the army through hidden tunnels going deeper underground. For the next few hours Alice learned to use different kinds of guns as well as a few other weapons. She was very clumsy and it took some time to use any of them with any amount of accuracy but she found she actually enjoyed shooting targets with a small pistol. The recoil from the larger guns she tried hurt her hands.

It was almost dinner time when they took Alice back to Mr. Carlos’ lab. Once again the storm was building up, thunder and lightning cut through the otherwise still night.

“Did you have fun?” Mr. Carlos asked as she hurried in and brushed the water from her dress.

“I’m not sure. I suppose so…” She said as she looked around. “Has Mr. Cecil gone already?”

“Yes, he said he had some people to talk to.” Mr. Carlos smiled and set aside the papers he had been looking at. “Want to race home?”

Alice laughed and nodded. That would certainly make the short trip back to the apartment more fun. They had not even gone a full block when Alice slowed - huddled in the doorway of a boarded up house was a young boy with pale brown hair who clung desperately to a stuffed bear.

“Are you alright?” Alice asked as she approached. She could hear Mr. Carlos’ shoes close behind her.

“Silly old bear…. The boy whimpered. “Silly, silly bear….”

“Mr. Carlos, I think he needs help.” Alice said as she looked back and froze. Behind them stood a man wearing a cape and a leather mask with holes cut out for eyes and mouth. The man strode by Mr. Carlos and picked the child up.

“Silly old bear!” The boy wailed, curling into a ball around his toy.

“Don’t worry. The boy will be cared for.” The man said before he disappeared around the corner of the house.

“But…” Alice tried to protest but Mr. Carlos rested a hand on her shoulder.

“That was the Sheriff’s Secret Police. I’m sure he’ll be alright.” He was clearly not as confident as he tried to sound and Alice did her best to set aside her concerns as they walked the rest of the way to the nice, dry apartment.

An hour later Alice was in wonderfully dry clothing and helping Mr. Carlos prepare dinner while
they waited for Mr. Cecil’s radio show to start. Once again Mr. Carlos spoke in whispers and taught her about why the world was the way it was. This was quickly becoming her favorite part of the day.

“The sky is falling and it doesn’t look like it is going to stop... Welcome to Night Vale.”

Mr. Carlos grinned and stopped talking as the strange popping and crackling noises on the radio changed to the now familiar voice.

"It's been another busy day, listeners. The storm that has been causing unusual amounts of precipitation shows no sign of stopping and while many residents seem sure it has to do with a botched ritual, Old Lady Josie says Erika insists it has to do with the evil young boy who now commands a sizable pack of feral dogs. He was last seen over by Gino’s Italian where he seems to have made one of the subway stations into his home.

"John Peters - you know, the farmer - has deemed the child a miracle and insists that the so-called angels are just jealous of his rainmaking abilities. He has expressed his gratitude by leaving food and other supplies close as the vicious dogs would allow. All he has been able to learn is that the boy calls himself Damien."

Alice looked over at Mr. Carlos. "Is it possible for a person to make a storm like Erika says?"

"I really don't see how but there are a lot of things that seem impossible yet are true." He answered with a frown. "I would need to run some tests on the boy but the feral dogs will make that difficult."

"The boy in the zoo seems to be good with dogs, maybe he can help"

"Maybe... but he hasn't let anyone get close either. Wolves and feral dogs don't usually get along so avoiding contact between the two might be preferable."

"There are rumors of more doors opening but none have been able to gather details with all this rain limiting vision. The Sheriff's Secret Police have been unhappy with the situation that has grounded their helicopters so concerned citizens need not worry, they are working tirelessly to learn the truth about this situation."

Alice's mind wandered from the radio as she stared out the window. She understood how precipitation worked now thanks to Mr. Carlos' lessons but this rain remained a mystery. He was very excited about it even though he was running out of tests.

As she watched the rain streaks trailing along the window a new thought occurred to her. "What does the faceless old woman eat if she doesn't have a mouth?"

"That's a good question." He admitted. "Though as much as people talk, I've never seen her so I can't be sure she is literally faceless. She might be figuratively faceless since no one knows what she looks like."

"That makes sense." She nodded and yawned. It had been a very busy day and she was incredibly tired. Mr. Cecil's show was only half over when the sounds of low thunder and rain in combination with his voice lulled her into a peaceful sleep.
Questions? Concerns? You're not alone. Let's hide in a blanket fort, pretend there are no listening devices and convince each other it will all be okay.

Today's proverb - Dancing is the best form of communication when you're on fire.
Alice woke in the comfortable bed, carefully tucked in again. Just as the day before there was only the dim light and patter of rain on the window. She sighed as she sat up and thought of her mother, surely very worried for her missing child after so many days. With some effort Alice pushed those thoughts away as they would do nothing to improve the situation. She picked one of the dresses - all those she had worn before were clean and hanging from a line strung rather inconveniently for anyone else. It had not been there they day before and were an adult to not see it they would be caught in the neck just inside the door but Alice was able to walk under it without any difficulty.

It must have been the Faceless Old Woman. She thought to herself and looked around, wondering where she might be hiding. “Thank you for hanging my dresses.”

Once dressed she went to see what Mr. Carlos had left for breakfast. “Good morning, Mr. Cecil.”

He glanced up from the paper that seemed to be covered in strange symbols this time. “Good morning. Glad you made it back alright from playing yesterday.”

“If you were uncertain I would return why did you send me outside?” She asked, indignant.

“Oh, I was certain of everything but your reaction.” He answered casually, turning a page. “Carlos said you fell asleep before the weather last night so you missed some interesting things. My old friend Earl Harlan called the station. It seems one of the children found their way into his restaurant. He’s hired the boy as a dishwasher. Says the boy calls himself Charlie Bucket. Such a strange name.”

“It is a rather unusual sort of name.” Alice nodded. She felt a little sorry for the boy, though. She was lucky to have found nice people to care for her while seeking a way to get her back home. That poor boy was immediately put to work. She would have been most unhappy if it happened to her.

“It seems the editor of the Night Vale Daily Journal, Leann Hart, saw the door next to Teddy William’s yard open and a strange looking girl come running out. The rain made it hard to see much more than her ragged clothing as she darted away.”

“Do you think Mr. Carlos will figure out how to open the doors soon?” Alice asked.

Finally Mr. Cecil set aside the newspaper and looked at her. Those dark, knowing eyes seemed to look right through her as he stared in silence. She was almost unnerved enough to leave the room when he finally spoke. “And what if he can’t?”

“I… don’t know.” She admitted. That was the last thing she wanted to consider. Mr. Carlos was very smart! Surely he would find a way…

He nodded and picked his paper up again. She went to the kitchen and quickly ate the breakfast that consisted of scrambled eggs and vegetables, though she picked the onions out. Surely she would be able to go home to her mother and her nice, comfortable and safe home.

“Since very little was accomplished yesterday, Carlos wants you to return to the lab today. We should probably go sooner rather than later, though, the storm seems to be getting worse.” Mr. Cecil
said with a smile. Alice nodded and followed him to the door where a red umbrella was leaning against the doorknob. “Carlos left that for you, by the way. It seems he wasn’t impressed with my umbrella yesterday.”

“It was quite ingenious.” Alice said, bringing a wide smile from him. Of course it hadn’t worked very well and she was glad for a real umbrella but she saw no reason to mention that.

They hurried through the heavy rain and rumbling thunder. There was hardly any sunlight making it through the dark, low clouds and the ominous feeling seemed to be a little worse. There were even more buildings boarded up and most people were no longer attempting to look outside.

“Are people always so scared of rain?” She asked Mr. Cecil.

“Well, this is the most rain we’ve had at one time in….,” He trailed off in thought but seemed to give up after a few moments when they heard wild laughter from ahead.

A girl of perhaps ten years turned the corner, skidded on the wet pavement and turned their direction before resuming her run. Long orange braids stuck out in defiance of gravity on either side of her head and her scattered freckles seemed to make her gleeful blue eyes brighter as she dashed by still laughing. Not far behind were three of the Sheriff’s Secret Police doing their best to catch her but she was much faster than they were.

Mr. Cecil laughed once they had gone by and it was safe to do so. “So that’s the new girl… Tamika will love her.”

Alice nodded agreement, the girl seemed to be exactly the sort Tamika would want in her army. She could probably already fight. After spending the day before with the army learning to shoot guns and reading on breaks, being in Mr. Carlos’ lab was unusually quiet and calm.

In spite of that Alice enjoyed her afternoon as she asked a great many more questions than she was able to answer and Mr. Carlos did his best to answer though it prevented him from doing as many tests as he wanted. Even with her occasional interruptions he seemed quite pleased to have someone working with him other than his team of scientists. The others were very friendly and he sent many of them to do tests so he could look at the results. Mr. Cecil left to see if he could find out more information from his sources early in the afternoon and even though no tests had proven useful, Alice felt as if something were finally being accomplished.

“The doors are gone.” Mr. Cecil interrupted a quiet conversation between Alice and Mr. Carlos.

“What?”

“The last door was opened some time in the last few hours and all of them disappeared.”

“Uh oh…” Mr. Carlos sighed.

Alice felt tears stinging her eyes but kept quiet. They were too late - she was trapped in this place… never to see her family again.

“Don’t worry, we’ll figure something out.” Mr. Carlos rested a hand comfortably on her shoulder. She nodded but was certain she would cry if she tried to speak.
The door burst open and Pollyanna virtually danced in, smiling brightly in spite of being drenched. “Isn’t this weather fantastic? I bet there will be flowers everywhere when the sun comes out! What’s wrong, Alice?”

“The doors have disappeared.” Mr. Carlos said gently. “Unless we can figure out where they came from so we can bring them back you may all have to stay here.”

“Oh, ’twould be wonderful if that happened!” Pollyanna bounced on her toes and clapped. “Miss Cardinal is such a lovely person and this is such an amazing town!”

Alice took a deep breath and nodded. It could be worse… though some parts of the town were scary, she had met some very interesting and nice people.

“Oh, Mr. Cecil,” Pollyanna grinned over at him. “Miss Cardinal would like you to return to the radio station until the storm is gone. She’s worried about it getting worse and she may need you to make emergency broadcasts.”

“It’s too bad they demolished the Night Vale Harbor and Waterfront Recreation Area. It would have been beautiful after all this rain.” Mr. Cecil said as he made his way out into the storm.

Mr. Carlos turned the radio on and cringed at the odd noises coming from the speakers. Alice shared his opinion of the sound that was not quite music but she simply could not identify. Pollyanna didn’t seem bothered by the noise and simply took to chattering at her about how much fun she’s had playing with the City Council.

Alice was still lost in thought when Mr. Cecil’s voice interrupted Pollyanna and she fell silent.

“People of Night Vale, I have been informed by the City Council and representatives of the Sheriff’s Secret Police that all citizens are advised to remain indoors with the exception of absolute emergencies. The unusual storm that has filled our skies for the past few days has continued building and while the lightning has mostly remained in the clouds there have been reports of strikes to the Brown Stone Spire and near anyone who ventures too close to the subway station near Gino’s Italian.”

“Well, that’s strange… predictable lightning strikes to certain areas are unusual without good cause. The spire is tall enough to draw the lightning but a single subway station?” Mr. Carlos mused.

“The Sheriff’s Secret Police also warns that there is a potentially dangerous child on the loose and for any who see her to start shouting ‘There she is! There she is!’ while pointing. Citizens should be advised the girl is unusually strong, very fast and answers to the name ‘Pippi’.”

“We saw her on the way over.” Alice said with a small smile. “I don’t think she looked terribly dangerous. In fact, she seemed to be having fun leading the police on a chase.”

“Pippi was last seen in the vicinity of Night Vale Elementary School heading east. We will keep you up to date on sightings of this potentially dangerous girl.” Mr. Cecil concluded. His voice was soon replaced by the not-music noises.

Alice smiled to herself. Of course he would keep updating as to the girl’s whereabouts - how else would Tamika and her army rescue the girl from the police? He was a very unusual but good man.

Pollyanna went to visit with Mr. Carlos’ team of scientists and Alice returned to listening to him try to work out what was going on.
The thunder got louder, the lightning flashed through the window more often and much closer. At first Alice thought the wind was howling but then Mr. Cecil came on the radio again and said that the wolves had gotten out of the petting zoo and thanks to Mowgli, they were already in good enough shape to chase people. Those who had not heeded the warning to stay indoors had either changed their mind or it was too late. Alice tried to tell herself everyone was safely indoors. Surely in this town no one would ignore such warnings…

As the sun set the only sign was the dark clouds growing darker still - the weak light that filtered in from beyond the edges of the storm dimmed further and soon only the lightning succeeded in bringing forth any amount of light worth mentioning. Most of the street lights were on but the gloom seemed almost to push back their radius and it seemed with each flash of lightning another light was struck and fell dark.

Alice stayed well away from the windows and tried to focus on Mr. Carlos as he talked to himself, asked questions to keep her mind preoccupied, did everything she could to not hear the howling of the wolves.

Pollyanna seemed entirely untroubled, talking and joking with anyone who would listen and exclaiming about how very exciting this was. Mr. Carlos’ team set up a couple of makeshift beds for the girls and located some food to share. No one was willing to brave the wolves and the weather even just to go next door to get food from Big Rico’s.

Mr. Cecil was true to his word and gave regular updates on the situation and she was greatly relieved when he reported that a gang of children had abducted Pippi and the Sheriff’s Secret Police were forced to give up the chase. By then sightings of feral dogs and wolves were being reported all over town by people peeking out their windows. Whirlwinds had been sighted along the edges of the city and shadows seemed to be moving of their own accord.

She was grateful for Mr. Carlos’ preference for excellent lighting as it left few shadows to see moving anywhere. As much as she wanted to know what was happening she was scared to listen to the radio and hear about it. She wasn’t at all sure she would ever get used to Mr. Cecil’s pleasant voice saying such frightening things as he reported fights between the feral dogs and wolves, sightings of the two boys - Damien in the streets and Mowgli in trees and along rooftops. The boy seemed unaffected by the rain and was somehow sure-footed even in precarious locations.

The Sheriff’s Secret Police were patrolling as well though a few people reported them crossing through dark shadows and disappearing before coming out the other side. Alice fell asleep sitting beside the radio, listening more to the cadence of Mr. Cecil’s voice than his words.

Chapter End Notes

Have you ever had trouble falling asleep? Felt like someone was watching you from the shadows, peeking at you under the closet door? Listening to you breathe from under the bed and waiting for that sound to offer rhythmic proof you are no longer awake? That’s silly. The Faceless Old Woman who secretly lives in your home doesn’t have eyes so you can’t feel her watching you and it’s far too dusty under your bed. Shadows are
unreliable, too. That pile of clothes over there, though….

Today’s proverb: Marbles are abominations. Leave them on the doorstep of people you hate.
The building shook and brought Alice out of a deep sleep in a state of near panic. Mr. Carlos was beside her in a moment to hug her. “It’s alright… that thunder was just really close. I think the lightning took out the street light on the corner.”

She clung to him for a moment before fully waking up and getting control of herself again. The radio was silent.

“Is Mr. Cecil okay?” She asked, looking at the box in concern.

“I’m sure he’s fine. There’s a good chance lightning knocked them off the air temporarily. It would probably be a good idea to stay away from the windows, though.” Mr. Carlos’ words were almost drowned out by another violent clap of thunder that made all the glass jars around them clink together.

She nodded, stood carefully and went to find Pollyanna. As scared as she was she needed a bit of the girl’s cheer.

“Hey! Something’s going on outside!” One of the scientists called. Alice warily glanced back at the long front window where he was peering into the darkness and before she could protest Pollyanna darted by, grabbed her arm and dragged her with.

Looking out over the girl’s shoulder, she saw only darkness except for the narrow band of light cast from their own window and for brief moments as lightning flashed overhead.

In those flashes she could see the feral dogs circling and the young boy they protected strolling by. He seemed entirely unconcerned with the rain and unafraid of the lightning. As he neared the lone source of light on the street he stopped and turned to look in at them. Alice shrank back - though he looked like an absolutely normal and entirely sweet little child there was something in his eyes… it was similar to that dark knowing she saw when Mr. Cecil looked at her but so much worse. It made her stomach twist in knots.

He took a step toward the door and one of the scientists broke away to make sure it was locked. In the next flash of light Alice saw a girl - she appeared to be a year or two older than Damien and looked just as innocent but she was not smiling. Her black hair fell in braids over either shoulder and she wore a simple mourning dress, black with a white collar. As the boy did, she ignored the rain and simply called out to him.

Alice blinked as she realized the feral dogs were not attacking her. This seemed to occur to the boy as well when he turned to look from her to the dogs and back. It was frustrating to be unable to hear what was said.

“What are you doing?” One of the scientists said softly. As he spoke Alice realized the man was matching what the girl was saying.

“I didn’t know you could read lips.” Mr. Carlos said with an interested smile.

“I like your dogs.” The man continued. “Do you want to play? It’s a lovely night.”
He paused, unable to see or hear the response since Damien’s back was to them.

“My name’s Wednesday, what’s yours?” He paused again. “I like that. Want to play ‘wild hunt’?”

Alice shuddered. She wasn’t sure what that was and she was quite certain she didn’t want to.

“Really? It’s lots of fun and you’ve already got the dogs! All we have to do is find someone outside and see if we can catch them before the sun comes up. If we can’t we just have to try again after sunset tomorrow.” The man said uncertainly.

It seemed Damien agreed because he approached Wednesday, linked his arm with hers and they skipped off in search of someone outdoors with the feral dogs scouting ahead.

“What is wrong with those kids!?” The scientist asked, shaking his head.

“I don’t know but I think we need to make a few calls and be sure no one is left outside. I’ll call Cecil and the Mayor. You call the Sheriff… the rest of you get hold of any business you can and have them spread the word. Someone call the hospital, too.” Mr. Carlos said firmly.

“What about Mowgli?” Alice whispered, now worried about the poor boy and his wolves.

“Well, if what I’ve heard is true,” Pollyanna answered cheerfully. “He’ll be able to escape them just fine until dawn!”

Alice nodded and hoped the optimistic girl was right.

Over the next few hours the storm began to weaken, the lightning was less frequent, the thunder softer and the rain became lighter. Few were able to sleep so all were awake to see the sunlight shining below the clouds at dawn. Before long it had burned away the clouds and aside from the wet ground and damage from the lightning, everything seemed quite normal.

By then Mr. Cecil had run from the radio station to the lab so he could be absolutely sure Mr. Carlos was alright. He had been keeping well updated on the situation and let them all know that Mowgli had eluded the two children, both of whom were now sleeping peacefully in the subway station Damien had claimed as his own with the feral dogs standing watch.

City officials were still trying to tally the damage and figure out how much it would cost to fix everything but Cecil said Pamela Winchell, the Director of Emergency Press Conferences for Night Vale, had said the Mayor declared this a day to recover from the events of the last few days and no businesses were expected to be open unless they really, really wanted to.

Since it was deemed a day off and everyone was exhausted, the scientists all went home and Alice went with Mr. Carlos back to the apartment while Mr. Cecil escorted Pollyanna back to City Hall where Mayor Cardinal would be waiting.

Alice was looking forward to sleeping in her nice comfortable bed after the long, fear filled night.
I hope for two things at this point. First and foremost, that you have been enjoying the story. Second, that you are not covered in angry fire ants. Seriously - that would be awful.

Today’s proverb: Don’t throw waffles at proper gentlemen. They prefer pancakes.
Epilogue

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Alice smiled and set aside her municipally approved textbook as the radio fell silent and the news began.

“The sun is shining and lightning never strikes the same place ten times. Welcome to Night Vale. Well, listeners, a lot has happened in the last week but I’m sure you have all found it to be ultimately beneficial. The new curfew may take some getting used to but just remember that it’s a game… and to wear armor if you really must leave the house at night.”

She glanced across the room where three sets of armor hung for emergencies. It wasn’t comfortable but between that and her weapons she really wasn’t concerned about the feral dogs.

“The Night Vale Elementary School released a notice this morning apologizing for any inconvenience but the school board was very concerned about the dwindling enrollment numbers so the Glow Cloud - ALL HAIL THE GLOW CLOUD - arranged to have more children brought in rather than waiting for numbers to rise through more natural means. The doors opened to fictional worlds and none of the children qualify to play sports as they are not ‘real’ but the school board wishes to remind people that this means a probable boost to the overall test scores which will raise us above the schools in Desert Bluffs.”

Alice could hardly see herself getting used to having a sentient cloud on the school board but had learned to simply play along. The people here were a bit strange but they adapted easily to new situations and there was always a new situation.

As much as it hurt to think of her entire life up to the point of walking through that door as being fictional - just words in a book that now no longer had her in it - she was glad her mother wouldn’t be worried. It made it a lot easier to settle into her new life in Night Vale.

She had been adopted by Papa Carlos and Papa Cecil as soon as they learned the truth about the doors. Most of the rest of the children had been adopted as well and all were enrolled in the school, though they still had trouble getting Mowgli to wear proper clothing much of the time. Wednesday and Damien had both been adopted by the Sheriff and since even he could not get close, he simply made sure furniture, food and clothing were moved into the subway station while the kids and their pets were on the other side of town at night.

She was kidnapped three times a week to train with Tamika’s army. Pippi had only reluctantly agreed to attend school after being adopted by Old Woman Josie. The beings who called themselves angels insisted she go but she much preferred to be kidnapped with Alice so she could play with the kids. Though she was not fond of actual fighting, she was excellent with guns and gleefully learning to pilot a helicopter.

Her favorite part of the day was still Papa Carlos’ secret science lessons as they prepared dinner together and waited for Papa Cecil’s show to start. Though she found she also enjoyed talking to the Faceless Old Woman at night even though she never did hear a response. It helped just having someone to listen to her.

Alice’s life had completely changed in two weeks but there was one thing she was certain of - however strange Night Vale may be, she was happy in her new home.
Endings are a little depressing sometimes, aren’t they? Even if they end in a nice way. I’m gonna miss my weird little version of Night Vale… Hope you enjoyed visiting!

All characters taken from non-Night Vale sources in order of appearance:

- Alice (Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll, 1865)
- Mowgli (The Jungle Book by Rudyard Kipling, 1894)
- Pollyanna (Pollyanna by Eleanor H. Porter, 1913)
- John Napoleon Darling (Peter Pan by J. M. Barrie, 1904)
- Little Red Riding Hood (-17th Century Folk Tale)
- Damien Thorn (The Omen by David Seltzer, 1976)
- Christopher Robin (Winnie-the-Pooh by A. A. Milne, 1926)
- Pippi Longstocking (Pippi Longstocking by Astrid Lindgren, 1945)
- Charlie Bucket (Charlie and the Chocolate Factory by Roald Dahl, 1964)
- Wednesday Addams (The Addams Family concept and comics by Charles Addams, novelization by Jack Sharkey 1965)

All characters can be found not only in their original books and sequels but also multiple movies and television shows. All use has been entirely unauthorized and done with appreciation for the characters (even when that does not seem to be the case) and elements used may have been pulled from a combination of sources where necessary and most fun.

Today’s proverb: Close your eyes and wish upon a star - then run because the hunt is on.

This tale is written as of Episode 60 of Welcome to Night Vale and utterly disregards current events in favor of something new.

Today's proverb: The stress relieving aspects of bubble wrap are greatest when the bubbles are popped by the person you are attempting to smother.

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