The Library Between Worlds

The air tasted like dust.

Liora stood at the edge of the old city, looking at the broken buildings. They leaned on each other like they might fall at any second. People said the place was empty, but she didn't believe them.

She always felt invisible. The quiet girl. The one who noticed everything, but nobody noticed her. Today felt different. The silence didn't feel empty. It felt like it was trying to pull her in.

Then she saw it, a crack between two walls, just wide enough to slip through.

On the other side was a staircase spiraling down into darkness.

Her footsteps echoed as she went down. At the bottom was a silver-and-glass door. Strange glowing symbols covered it and seemed to shift whenever she blinked. Her stomach tightened, but she reached out and pushed.

She gasped.

It was a library, but not a normal one. It was huge. The shelves went so high she couldn't see the top. Some books glowed softly, almost like they were alive. Ladders floated between shelves. Staircases hung in the air. The whole place felt awake, like it was watching her.

"You shouldn't be here."

Liora spun around.

A tall, thin man stepped from the shadows. His fingers were covered in ink, and his silver eyes shone.

"I'm Mr. Gray," he said. "This is the Library Between Worlds. Every book is a doorway. But every doorway comes with a price."

"I'm not here to steal," Liora said quickly. "I just want to know why everyone forgot about this place."

Mr. Gray studied her for a moment. Then he nodded. "Because they chose to forget. But the library remembers. Watch out for the Ink Wraiths. They protect the secrets."

Liora walked between the glowing shelves, her heart racing. Then she saw a blue leather book. It looked old, but special, like it had been waiting for her. She picked it up and opened it.

The library disappeared.

She was back in her city, but it wasn't broken. Streets were busy, buildings stood tall, and people smiled as they passed. Her heart lifted. This was how the city used to be.

Then the sky went dark. Shadows moved in the corners of her vision. Ink Wraiths. They hissed and reached for her. Fear ran through her. Hugging the book tight, she ran.

She burst back into the library, gasping. Mr. Gray was there.

"You've seen what was lost," he said. "But can you help them remember?"

Liora climbed staircases that twisted and shook under her feet. The books whispered as she passed. Shadows tried to grab her, but she kept going. At the top, she found a window looking down at the city.

Her hands shook as she opened the book. Pages tore free and floated into the air like glowing birds. Light spilled over the streets.

The city stirred. Buildings straightened. People stopped and blinked, like they were waking from a dream.

The library began to vanish. Shelves turned to mist. Books faded to dust. Mr. Gray smiled, proud but a little sad.

"You were the one we were waiting for."

Liora stepped back through the crack. This time, the city wasn't silent. For the first time in her life, she didn't feel invisible. The city remembered itself, and so did she.

High above, the last spark of the library drifted into the sky, a glowing ember waiting for the next brave soul.