

THE ARCHIVIST WHO STAYED TOO LATE

I wasn't trying to stay late.

The clock in the main hall kept skipping backward like a scratched record, and timekeeping in this building has all the reliability of a haunted Roomba.

Around midnight (I think), I passed the south wing and noticed a door I swear wasn't there before. No label. No knob. Just a door-shaped outline glowing faintly blue, like someone traced it in ghost highlighter.

Naturally, I knocked.

The knocking echoed — not backward, not forward, but sideways, like the sound slid between dimensions and came back wearing someone else's shoes.

A voice behind the wall whispered:

"Not this Archive."

Friendly. Love that for me.

I leaned closer because when a wall speaks, you listen.

Dust fell from the ceiling. Pages rustled on their own. Somewhere deep in the building, something large dragged itself across stone.

The voice spoke again:

"The real records are elsewhere."

Elsewhere??

Sir, I barely manage the records HERE.

I asked, "Where?"

Silence. Then a soft scratching sound at my feet. A piece of paper slid from under the glowing outline and stopped against my boot.

It contained only one sentence:

"When the other site opens, do not go alone."

The glow vanished.

The outline faded.

The paper dissolved like ash.



I told my supervisor.

She handed me a cup of tea and said:

“Stop staying late. The Archives shift after midnight. You don’t want to fall into the wrong set.”

The wrong set?

Excuse me??

I haven’t stayed after dark since, but some nights, when the wind hits the building just right, I swear I hear typing... coming from the floor beneath us.

And I get the feeling whatever’s “**elsewhere**” is getting closer.