



**Title: The Secrets of Time**

It was just another ordinary Tuesday when I arrived at school, backpack heavy with books I probably wouldn't use and my mind spinning about the math test I definitely wasn't ready for.

The sky was a dull grey, and a light drizzle tapped against my umbrella as I rushed through the gates. Most of the kids were outside for sport, but I wasn't in the mood for running laps or pretending I liked netball. Instead, I headed straight for the library—a quiet place that smelled like old paper and ink, my own little escape from the chaos.

As I wandered through the aisles, brushing my fingertips along the spines of forgotten books, something unusual caught my eye. Behind a tall shelf near the back wall was a door—a wooden one I had never seen before. It looked completely out of place, with peeling green paint and a crooked iron handle, like it belonged in a castle, not a modern school library.

“Weird,” I muttered. “This wasn't here yesterday.”

Curiosity tugged at me. I grabbed the cold handle and pulled. The door creaked open to reveal a small, dark room. In the centre sat a pedestal, and resting on it was a thick, ancient-looking book titled *The Secrets of Time*. Without thinking, I stepped inside.

Blue fog rolled in behind me, curling around the edges of the door. I walked cautiously toward the pedestal and picked up the book. Suddenly—THUMP!—the door slammed shut behind me. My heart pounded. I rushed back and tried the handle—it wouldn't budge. My palms were sweaty. I didn't know where I was or how to get back. But sitting still wouldn't help. I had to figure this out.

I moved deeper into the shadows, where brick walls lined the corridor ahead. Then, a shout: “Little girl, move it or you'll get hit!” I jumped aside just in time as a man carrying bricks passed me. My hands shook. I looked down at the book again—it was glowing. I opened it, and glowing words appeared:

Welcome to 500 years ago. This is the time your school is being built. Lena, I hope you are ready for what's to come. This is only the beginning. Follow the clues to reach your destiny. Help the builders construct your school—only then will you return. Sincerely, your trusty friend.

I shivered. 500 years ago? I was in the past? The thought was terrifying... and thrilling. I had no choice but to go along with it. I approached the man who had shouted.

“Hi, I'm Lena. I'd like to help build this school.”

He frowned. “Lena? Haven't seen you around before. How do you know we're building a school? No one's supposed to know that yet.”

I paused. “I overheard someone talking about it.”

He studied me for a second, then nodded. “Alright. If you're here to help, check the blueprints on the table.”

I turned to leave, but glanced back. “What's your name?”

He smiled a little. “Greg.”

“Thanks, Greg,” I said, then hurried off.

The table was crowded with parchment sketches and scattered tools. I scanned the blueprints, looking for anything that might explain why I was here. That's when I noticed it—a gap. A big one.

"Greg," I called out. "I think something's missing."

He came over and leaned in. "What do you mean?"

"There's no plan for the back section—where the library should go. It just stops here."

He rubbed his forehead. "Strange. That page was definitely here yesterday. Maybe it blew away in the wind. Or got buried in the supply crates."

If the library was never built, the door might never appear again. My way home could depend on that one missing paper.

Determined to find it, I searched the construction area—through crates, under tables, inside barrels—but no luck. Just when I was about to give up, I spotted an old woman under the shade of a large oak tree, scribbling notes in a leather-bound journal. She had kind eyes, silver hair, and something oddly familiar about her.

"Excuse me," I said. "Have you seen a missing blueprint? For the library section?"

She looked up with a soft smile. "It hasn't been found yet. But that doesn't mean it's gone. Sometimes the past hides what it needs most."

My eyebrows lifted. "You sound like you know something."

"I know you, Lena," she said gently. "I'm your grandmother."

I froze. "What?"

"I was sent here too, long ago. And I've been waiting for you. I believe the blueprint is hidden behind a puzzle—one only you and I can solve."

She reached into her satchel and handed me a folded page with a wax seal. I opened it. Inside was a riddle:

Where whispers live and sunlight hides,  
Beneath the oak where stone divides.  
Count the steps from root to wall,  
Then search the shelf that's barely tall.

"Follow me," Grandma said, taking my hand. We hurried to the large oak tree she had been sitting under. Together, we counted fifteen paces from its roots to a nearby stone wall. Just beside it was a wooden crate, no taller than my knee.

Inside, covered by dust and tied with a red ribbon, was the missing blueprint.

My heart leapt. "We found it!"

But something else was tucked beneath it: another message glowing with faint gold ink.

You have done well, Lena. But the story is not finished until the last stone is set. Build the library, and time will return the favor.

We brought the blueprint back to Greg. He unrolled it, eyes wide. “Where’d you find this?”

“Let’s just say it was waiting in the right place,” I replied.

The workers cheered. Construction on the library began at once. I helped where I could—carrying nails, fetching tools, even suggesting where the reading windows should go. As the final stone was placed, the air shimmered with warmth.

That’s when I saw it again: the wooden door, now glowing faintly. It stood at the edge of the clearing, almost see-through, like it was made of light and memory.

Grandma gave me a hug. “Time to go, sweetheart. But remember—this story stays with you.”

I stepped toward the door, heart pounding not with fear, but with wonder. As I crossed the threshold, the sounds of the past faded. I blinked—and I was back in the school library.

Bookshelves stood quietly around me. My backpack still sat on the table. The wooden door behind me had vanished. The book in my hands was now closed, dusty, and still.

I slipped it into my bag and looked around. Everything was just as it had been... and yet, nothing felt the same.

Because now I knew the secret.

Our school wasn’t just built with bricks and stone.

It was built with stories.

And I had helped write one.