

THE FORGOTTEN DOOR



*He fell through the door
into another world!*

Alexander Key

 SCHOLASTIC

He Is Lost and Found

IT HAPPENED SO QUICKLY, so unexpectedly, that Little Jon's cry was almost instantly cut short as the blackness closed over him. No one knew the hole was there. It hadn't been there the day before, and in the twilight no one had noticed it.

At the moment it happened, the first shooting stars were crossing the sky — they were beginning to stream across like strings of jewels flung from another planet — and everyone was watching them. The smaller children were exclaiming in delight, while the older ones stood silent and enthralled. Here on the hill, where the valley people often came to watch the glittering night unfold, you could see the whole magic sweep around you, and you felt close to everything in

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the heavens. Other people, you knew, were standing on other hills on other worlds, watching even as you watched.

Little Jon, whose eyes were quicker than most, should have seen the hole, but all his attention was on the stars. Small for his age, he had moved away from the rest for a better view, and as he stepped backward, there was suddenly nothing under his feet.

It was astonishing at that moment to find himself falling swiftly into the hill at a spot where he had walked safely all his life. But in the brief seconds before the blackness swallowed him, he realized what must have happened: there had been a cave-in over the old Door — the Door that led to another place, the one that had been closed so long.

He cried out and tried to break his fall in the way he had been taught, but the effort came an instant too late. His head struck something, and darkness swirled over him.

Long later, when Little Jon was able to sit up, he had no idea where he was or what had happened. Memory had fled, and he ached all over. He would have been shivering with cold, but his thick jacket and trousers and heavy, woven boots kept him warm.

He seemed to be in a narrow cleft of broken rock. There were mossy stones around him, and just ahead

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he could make out a bed of ferns where water trickled from a spring. He was still too dazed to be frightened, but now he realized he was thirsty, terribly so. He crawled painfully forward and lay with his face in the water while he drank.

The coldness of the water startled him at first, but it was wonderfully sweet and satisfying. He bathed his face and hands in it, then sat up at last and looked around again.

Where was he? How did he get here? He pondered these questions, but no answers came. He felt as if he had fallen. Only — where could he have fallen *from*? The rocky walls met overhead, sloping outward into a tangle of leafy branches.

There was another question his mind carefully tiptoed around, because it was more upsetting than the others. Whenever he approached it, it caused a dull aching in his forehead. Finally, however, he gave his head a small shake and faced it squarely.

Who am I?

He didn't know. He simply didn't know, and it made everything terribly wrong.

All at once, trembling, he got to his feet and fled limping toward a shaft of sunlight ahead. Thick shrubs barred his way. He fought blindly through them, tripped, and fell sprawling. Fortunately he missed the boulders on either side, and landed in a soft bed of old leaves under a tree. He scrambled up in panic,

FAR FROM HOME

Jon has lost his memory. He can't remember who he is or where he comes from. He only knows he fell through the forgotten door to the strange planet, Earth, and he is in great danger. Injured from his fall, he has to find someone who will help him.

Through his extraordinary power to read people's minds, Jon makes friends with a local family. But then rumors of his existence get back to the army and Jon realizes that the family is in danger, too. Time is running out. He must find the secret passage quickly or he may never get home again.

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