

## Maya and Pepper's Journey to the Center of the Earth



**M**aya was an adventurous little girl who loved asking big questions. One night she lay on the grass with her fluffy dark grey tabby cat, Pepper, staring at the stars.

“Pepper,” she whispered, “what if we could dig all the way through the Earth and pop out on the other side? What would we find?”

To her surprise, Pepper meowed, stretched, and talked! “Well, let’s find out!”

Before Maya could blink, Pepper tapped his tail on the ground and—ZOOM!—a shiny drill-shaped elevator appeared. They climbed inside, and with a whirl and a rumble, the drill began to dig straight down.

### The Crust – Our Rocky Shell

The drill shook as it chewed through the crust, the Earth’s outer skin. “This is where we live,” Maya said, recognizing bits of soil, rocks, and even a fossil or two.

“That’s right,” purred Pepper. “The crust is like the crunchy top layer of a pie. It’s where mountains rise, rivers flow, and sometimes... volcanoes erupt!”

As if on cue, the drill broke into a glowing tunnel. Hot, red lava bubbled nearby, lighting the walls.

“Volcanoes happen when melted rock from deeper inside escapes through cracks in the crust,” explained Pepper.

### The Mantle – The Slow Dance

The drill dove deeper, leaving the crust behind. Soon they were floating in a thick, gooey layer.

“This is the mantle,” said Pepper. “It’s made of hot rock that moves very, very slowly, kind of like slime stretching.”

Maya watched glowing blobs drift upward while cooler ones sank down. “It’s like a lava lamp!” she laughed.

### **The Outer Core – A Sea of Metal**

Now the drill floated in a swirling river of melted iron and nickel. Sparks danced all around.

“Whoa! It’s so hot here,” Maya fanned herself.

“This is the outer core,” Pepper explained. “It’s liquid metal, always moving. All that swirling makes the

Earth’s magnetic field—like a giant invisible shield around our planet.”

Maya’s compass spun wildly. “So that’s why my compass always points north!” she said.

“Yes,” Pepper nodded. “The magnetic poles are at the top and bottom of Earth. They guide birds when

they fly and even protect us from dangerous space rays from the Sun.”

### **The Inner Core – The Shiny Heart**

Finally, the drill reached the very middle of the Earth. Maya’s eyes grew wide.

Before them was a glowing ball of solid metal—the inner core. It shone like treasure, brighter than

gold.

“It looks like the Earth’s secret jewel,” Maya whispered.

“It’s made mostly of iron,” said Pepper. “Even though it’s hotter than the surface of the Sun, the pressure here is so strong that the metal stays solid. This heart keeps Earth’s magnetic shield strong.”

### **Back to the Surface**

“Ready to pop out the other side?” asked Pepper.

The drill zoomed upward. “That’s Earth’s rotation,” said Pepper. “It spins once every 24 hours, giving us day and night.”

Suddenly—POP!—they burst out of the ground. But instead of landing in a new country, they landed... right back in Maya’s backyard!

Maya laughed. “We dug through the whole Earth and came back home?”

Pepper purred. “Sometimes the greatest adventure is just discovering what’s beneath your feet.”

And with that, the two explorers fell asleep under the twinkling stars—dreaming of their next big journey.