

## **The Door Preview**

**By ALR**

A man wakes up on his back in a black void. He inspects himself, and realizes that despite being surrounded by sheer darkness, he can see himself clearly. He also notices that he's naked, and begins wondering where his clothes went. His head is also pounding, and his mind is too cloudy to form thoughts.

"Hello?" he yells into the black. Not a single response. *This is clearly a dream.* He thinks. *I mean I was right in the middle of...* He stops as his head throbs. *The middle of...* He tries to push past the pain to think of what he was doing before he woke up. *The...middle of...* "Fuck!" A shout was all he could muster, and he gives up. Defeated, he finally stands and looks around to the vast nothingness in hopes of spotting something. That's when he notices a speck in the distance. With a shrug and nothing else to do, he decides to walk towards it.

"Hey you're awake." The sudden voice to his side makes him jump. There was no one there, right? He looks to his left and notices a slender and also naked individual. Their facial features were that of a woman with long, flowing hair down their back. There was a distinct lack of breasts and genitalia. "Sorry, didn't mean to scare you, but I was just surprised to find you here."

"Wait wha-" He's interrupted by them placing their finger on his lips to silence him.

"Sorry I'm getting ahead of myself. Where are my manners?"

The man is visibly confused. And the smile forming on their face fills him with a level of discomfort he's never experienced before. He smacks their hand away as his emotions get the better of him. "Wait a minute. What does 'showed up here' mean? And what do you mean 'someone

like me'? Where did you even come from? I was alone a moment ago and I didn't hear you come up to me."

"Yes, yes, all reasonable questions." They swat away his questions. "This is what I meant by getting ahead of myself. It's just that it's been so long since I've seen someone here. No worries though. Let me start from the beginning." The figure steps in front of the man and extends their hand. "I'm Lucy, pleasure to meet you."

"Kevin." He takes their hand and gives it a firm shake. "So Lucy, you a girl?"

"Would that make this easier for you?" before his eyes, small breasts appeared on Lucy's chest, and hair began to grow on her groin. "Or would that be too...distracting...." Lucy says in a teasing manner while licking her lips.

Kevin is speechless. He simply stares at the now beautiful woman that stands before him. Or were they always beautiful, and he hadn't noticed till he saw her naked body? But that can't be right. He was staring at her naked body just a moment ago. His attempt to understand his feelings only seems to confuse him more. But one thing was certain. His body's reaction was pure.

"Oh my, it seems I broke you." She chuckles. "Sorry, I usually don't do things like this in front of people, but I decided to make an exception because of the occasion."

"You...aren't human are you? Where the hell am I? What's going on here? This has to be a dream, or in my head, or..." His breathing quickens, and he grabs his head. "And why the hell does my head hurt so much? What the fuck is going on here?"

"Hey, hey, calm down. You'll only make things worse." Lucy places her hand on his shoulder and gestures for him to sit with her. "Come on, take a break. I'll help you figure this all out. But first you need to relax."

He concedes and the two sit down. For a brief moment, he notices that the speck in the distance is closer. It also looks like a door, but Lucy grabs his face and swirls his head around for a bit, as if she were inspecting it.

“Ah, here’s the culprit.” Without hesitation, she shoves her hand into his head, completely taking him off guard.

“What the fuck are you doing?!” He asks because of the surprise of her action, but instantly realizes that he feels no pain. “No way. No fucking way...”

“Shut up, I’m helping you.” She pulls her hand out and shows what she grabbed. A single bullet lays in her hand. “See? You’ve quite the experience before you ended up here, didn’t you?”

Staring at the bullet, the pain subsides, and Kevin’s mind becomes clear. “That’s right. I was shot. Someone broke into my house.” Moments begin to flash in his mind. He’s in his bed, and he hears a noise coming from his apartment living room. “I went to inspect the noise.” He remembers seeing two people fiddling with his large flatscreen tv. “There were robbers. One of them noticed me and pulled out a gun...” He remembers turning to run back to his room, and then a loud noise. “And now I’m here, in this place...I’m dead, aren’t I.”

“Well...” Lucy hesitates. “Dying...”

“So now what, am I in purgatory?”

She shakes her head. “Sort of.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well if this was purgatory, it’d look different. And there’d be different properties.”

“So...where am I then?”

“Well...” Lucy stands and motions him to do the same. He does, and she continues. “I guess the best way to put it is that this is a sort of waiting room. A special kind of waiting room. One that not many have access to. It’s reserved for people who should be dead, but aren’t allowed to die yet.” She turns and starts to walk forward, and water comes gushing from the bottom of her feet. “There are others like myself. We’re typically the only ones who have access to this place for our own personal reasons.”

“Others like you?” He instinctively follows her, not noticing the water that’s now pooling around his ankles. “What are you anyway?”

“Just how you are a creature that lives on earth, I am a creature that lives here.” She stops and turns to face him. “Would you like to live here with me?”

Kevin stops in his place. “What?” *Live here?* He thinks. The water is now to their waste, but he feels no liquid on his skin.

Yes. She responds in his mind. “Would you like to live here with me? People like you are so rare. I’d love for you to stick around for a bit.” Their eyes lock and she begins to walk towards him. “I can show you so much you know, I think you’d really enjoy yourself, Kevin.”

Kevin, unable to look away, now feels like he’s being sucked into her eyes. “I get the feeling I don’t belong here.”

“*Nonsense.*” Her voice rings clearly in his mind. So clear he wasn’t sure if she said it, or it really did play in his mind. She reaches him, and starts to press her body against his. “You could stay here, and not worry about the petty troubles of your world anymore.”

The water is now up to their neck. Kevin, desperate to get away but unable to move, tries to change the subject. "I thought I saw something in the distance...A door. Maybe..." He feels himself leaning in for a kiss.....