




Reaching the New World



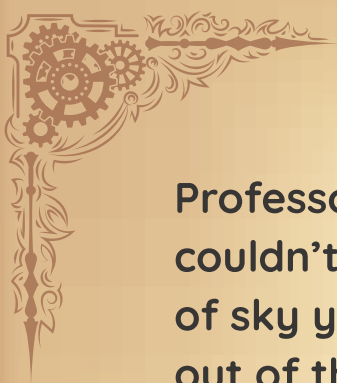
Part 1

In the silent darkness, acrid clouds swirled around the watchtower and the ledge on which it stood. Battering down against the structure's rusting cobalt panels, the toxic rain created a cacophony of chimes. The only light came from the imposing full moon which was closer than it had been in centuries; its glow reflected on the icy mountain side, illuminating the chains, cogs and axels on its facade which allowed the covert tower to function. On top of the domed roof stood two storm-battered chimney pipes, releasing gentle streams of smoke while protruding from the far side was a colossal telescope which reached into the atmosphere.

Suddenly, a raucous whooping and hollering emanated from the tower, dim lights began to flicker on, and frantic chatter began to echo from beneath the doorway.

"Y' gotta be kidding! Y' must be seeing things. Le' me take a look," The professor pushed Briony aside and hurried up the spiral staircase towards the telescope. His heart was pounding: only a few moments earlier he had been fast asleep, and the sound of the girl's shrieking had frightened him half to death.

Briony chased after him protesting: "I'm telling you I saw it! It appeared just like the manual says." She glowered at him as he searched the sky. He never trusted her to do anything. "I took all the measurements as instructed," she continued.



Professor Kenrick ignored her and examined the sky through the giant viewfinder. She couldn't possibly have seen it. No-one had seen it in a thousand years. The vast expanse of sky yielded nothing; the celestial bodies that glimmered in front of him were nothing out of the ordinary. She must be lying.

Behind him, a gentle cough distracted him from his search. Turning around, he saw his young apprentice staring resolutely at him and holding out a tattered piece of paper.

He snatched the sheet from her and carefully studied the scrawl it contained. With a cynical snort, he returned to the telescope and aligned his gaze to match the co-ordinates the girl had scribbled, out across the eastern horizon. His mouth fell open and for a few moments he simply stared. Unable to speak, unable to move, mesmerized by the vision before him.

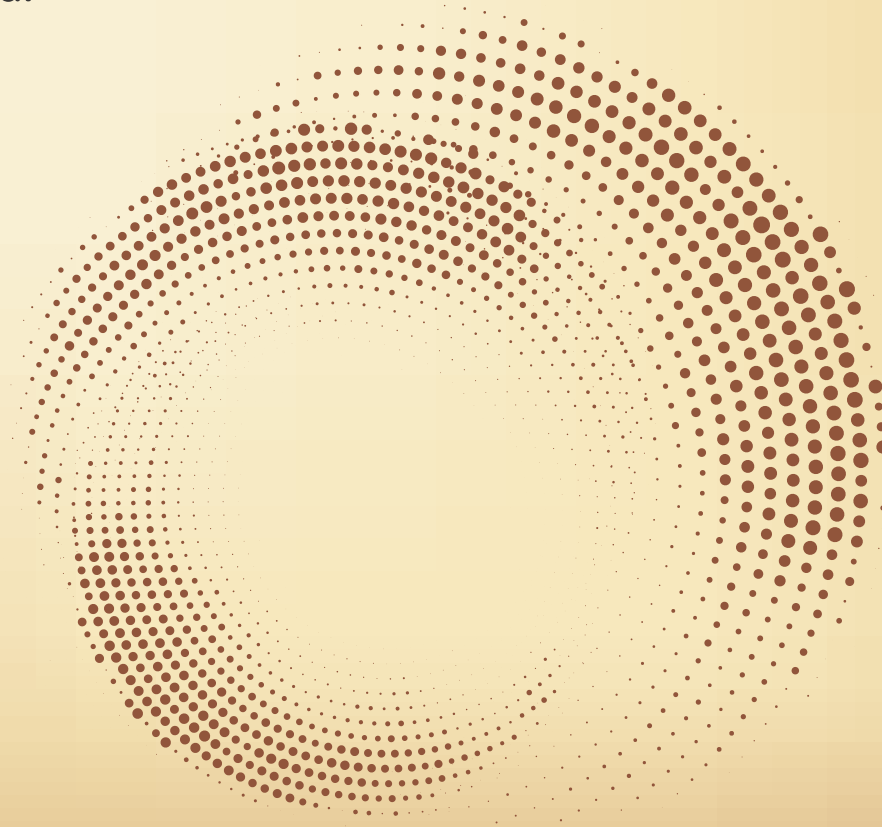
“It can't be,” he muttered. He absently scratched his thick mop of greying auburn hair, before slowly removing his glasses and rubbing his tired eyes. He peered once more into the eye-piece, just to be sure.

It was like nothing he had ever seen before. More beautiful than he ever could have imagined.



Just above the horizon, it shimmered in the darkness - a hazy veil which flickered and crackled with electrical sparks around its edges. At first glance it could have easily been missed, dismissed as a cloud formation, but looking closely, with the full power of the telescope, he could inspect its magnificence. At its centre, a translucent storm of faded blues, greens and yellows raged, punctuated with glowing orbs aimlessly drifting at its core. Every so often, one of the orbs would suddenly begin to glow brighter and brighter until it erupted, shooting forks of golden lightning into the darkness.

It was real. The portal. It really existed.





Maths & English

End of this sample Active Reading story.

Enjoyed the preview?

Subscribe to an Active English or a joint Active Maths & Active English subscription to gain access to 6 Amazing stories featuring 160 lesson plans.