

The Magical Path Between Snow and Sand

Thursday morning, 8:15am, Salida, CO It's snowing outside. On the bike ride to school, I glanced up at the mountains and it looked like it was snowing up there too. I thought of the big powder flakes piling up at Monarch Ski Area. From that moment on, I knew what I was doing this weekend.

"Do you want to go snowboarding tomorrow?" I whisper ask my friend in the middle of math class.

"There is supposed to be some powder!" I say.

"I would love to, but I need to ask my parents first" said my friend Liam.

Liam is in the same grade as me, 6th, and we both go to school in Salida, Colorado. Liam is a smart kid. He gets the best grades in the class. He also loves to snowboard so we are great friends.

Throughout the whole day of school, I was anxious for the day to be over. Snowboarding is my favorite winter sport. When I'm sliding over the snow, it feels like I am flying when I carve through the powder. And in the park I am working hard to learn new tricks. It is so fun!

RRRRRRRRRIIIIIINNNNNNNNNNGGGGGGGG!!! The bell finally rings at the end of history class, waking me from my snowy daydream. I look at the clock and realize it's time to head home. I grab my stuff, load my backpack and hurry out the door. I jump on my bike and pedal home fast.

After the short bike ride to my house I throw my bag down and get my gear ready. I immediately text Liam and tell him my Dad and I will be at his house at 8:30 tomorrow morning to get to Monarch in time for the first chair on the lift.

After dinner, I help with the dishes then head up to my room. I get ready for bed, excited for the next day.

Beep! Beep! Beep! Beep! Beep!

My alarm sounds the next morning. I crawl out of bed and start getting ready to shred. In no time I was dressed and ready to go. After we eat breakfast it is time to hit the road. We pick Liam up, then we start up the mountain. Just like I thought, it was snowing hard.

We got to Monarch and jumped on our favorite lift, Garfield. On the way up the mountain, I spotted a small hut and we decided to check it out. It was off to the right of North Forty. Once we reached the top, we headed toward the hut. Hidden in the trees, the hut was constructed of roughly cut logs and snow had blown into it. It had four walls and a roof just like a tiny house. There was a small entrance, barely big enough to fit though. Liam decided to be brave and climbed in first.

"How is it bro?" I ask, joking around. After a few moments I asked again, thinking he didn't hear me.

"How is it?" I asked once again in a louder voice. After he didn't respond for a second time I crawled in. Inside it looked like I thought it would - a snow floor with a small seat made of snow. I waited for a few seconds and everything seemed fine...at first.

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Then I got a weird sensation in my stomach. It felt like I was falling, then I realized I actually was! It felt like I was falling forever spinning over and over.

When I finally stopped, I realized I was in a different place. A completely different place. I looked around and it seemed like I was at the beach. Liam was there too, but he wasn't moving. We were both still in our snowboarding clothes and it was super hot.

Indeed, we were at beach and the ocean was crashing right by us. I stood up and walked around. I saw a town right on the beach. The houses were brightly colored and there were fruit stands everywhere. Getting totally caught up in my surroundings, I had forgot about Liam. I ran back to the place where we landed and Liam was laying there unconscious. I started to worry, but then he woke up after I splashed water on his face. I grabbed his hand, pulled him up and we headed towards to town. "Let's go exploring!" I said.

Based on the language people were speaking, and the flags hangings around town, I concluded we were in Mexico. After a while of exploring the town, and getting lots of strange looks from the locals, probably because of our winter clothes, Liam and I went back down the beach.

We were to hot we decided to take a swim. We jumped into the water and started off into the ocean. We swam for a while straight out, then we saw something crazy. There was a giant whirlpool!

Liam and I tried hard to swim away from it it, but we got sucked into it. Spinning and spinning we were sucked down in the ocean. Then poof! We landed on our feet inside the snow hut, With all our clothes on. I was so confused. Did Liam and I just find a way to teleport to Mexico in the middle of winter - from a frozen mountain to a hot sunny beach? We looked at each other with a confused look on our faces.

We ran from the hut, strapped on our boards and headed down to the base of Monarch mountain to find my dad waiting for us by the ski patrol yurt. "Where have you guys been? I've been looking everywhere for you" My dad exclaims.

After that first experience, Liam and I have traveled this magical path though the portal many times and had such great adventures. We always come back through the whirlpool. But lately my mom keeps looking funny and asking me, "Why is there always sand in your ski socks?"