

## Farralls comp

### **The Invitation 842 words**

As I opened the letter, a ticket fell out... and floated gently onto my desk. It was shiny and silver, with stars etched along the edges and strange writing in glowing ink. I held it closer and read aloud:

Intergalactic Zoo Pass — One-Time Use — Valid Tonight Only

"Intergalactic?" I whispered. Was this a joke? A secret game? But there was more. Inside the envelope was a folded note:

*"Stand beneath the old oak tree at 8:00 PM sharp. You've been chosen to see the universe's rarest wonders. Bring only your courage."*

It was signed with a symbol: a spiral made of tiny stars.

I read the message five times. I had never heard of an Intergalactic Zoo, but something about the ticket felt real. Magical even.

That night, I packed a small backpack with snacks, my flashlight, a notepad, and the ticket. My heart pounded with excitement and nerves. At exactly 8:00 PM, I tiptoed through the back door and stood under the big oak tree in our yard.

Nothing happened at first. Just silence and wind rustling the leaves.

Then the air shimmered.

A beam of light shot down from the sky, brighter than the moon, and a spaceship slowly floated down like a huge jellybean covered in glitter. It hovered for a moment, then gently touched the ground with a soft hum.

The door slid open, and a robot shaped like a spoon zoomed out.

"Passenger Jamie," it said in a musical voice. "We've been expecting you. Please present your ticket."

I handed over the shiny pass. The robot scanned it, beeped, and nodded.

"Welcome aboard. You've been selected to visit the Intergalactic Zoo—home to the rarest creatures across time and space."

I stepped into the ship. It was glowing inside, with soft seats and windows that showed hundreds of stars whizzing by. The robot gave me a safety belt and a fizzy drink called *StarPop*. We zoomed through space so fast that the stars became streaks of light.

Soon, we landed on a planet made entirely of glass. The sky shimmered in rainbow colors, and giant flowers opened and closed like breathing lungs.

The zoo looked nothing like Earth's zoos. Instead of cages, every creature had its own floating habitat—like glowing bubbles that hovered in the air.

"First stop," said the robot, "The Snorbit Pen."

A little fuzzy ball bounced toward me. It had googly eyes and made a sound like laughter when I waved. It bounced into my hands and snuggled into my hoodie.

"Snorbites are emotional companions," the robot explained. "They connect to people with brave hearts."

Next, we visited the Ice Fields, where snow leopards made of crystal danced on frozen lakes. I watched one twirl so gracefully, it made snowflakes form shapes in midair.

Then we entered the *Room of Mirrors*, where a tall, shiny bird called a *Mimic* copied my every move—even when I made silly faces. I laughed until my stomach hurt.

After that, I wandered into the *Fog Zone*, where a quiet four-eyed creature sat playing music from its nose. It was haunting and beautiful. I listened, feeling peaceful.

With each creature I met, the robot gave me a stamp on a card shaped like a galaxy. “Collect ten stamps,” it said, “and you earn a souvenir.”

I asked, “What kind of souvenir?”

The robot smiled. “Something that chooses you.”

We kept exploring—watching flying turtles swim through lava clouds and starlight worms paint pictures on the walls.

When I reached ten stamps, the robot led me to a glowing fountain in the center of the zoo.

“This,” it said, “is the Heart of the Zoo.”

From the fountain floated a small orb. Inside it was a baby Snorbit. It giggled and spun before settling into my hands.

“It chose you,” the robot said. “You are its person now.”

I smiled, holding the orb close. “What’s its name?”

“You may choose one,” the robot replied.

I looked at its twinkling eyes and said, “Nova.”

Suddenly, a gentle chime rang through the ship. The robot checked its clock.

“Zoo’s closing soon. Return shuttle ready.”

We boarded the jellybean ship again. Nova curled up in my lap. I watched the planet shrink behind us, then disappear in the stars. Soon, I was back under my oak tree. The robot handed me my souvenir card and waved.

“Thank you for visiting the Intergalactic Zoo. Keep wondering.”

The ship rose, glowing brighter than ever, and vanished into the night.

I stood in silence.

My backpack felt heavier—Nova was nestled inside the orb, softly snoring. The ticket? Gone, just sparkles where it had once been.

I ran inside, heart buzzing. No one believed me the next day. “A space zoo?” My friend laughed. “Nice dream!”

But every night, Nova giggles and glows on my shelf. And when I lie in bed, watching stars outside my window, I smile.

Because I know the universe is much bigger than anyone thinks—and sometimes, the most magical adventures start with a single, mysterious letter.