

When I open my eyes, I am standing in the middle of a busy sidewalk. All around me are buildings, decorated with green ivy, seeming to touch the sky. As I look around the street, great numbers of people are passing me on both sides minding their own business like I do not exist. I make the decision to walk around and explore this mysterious city. Right as I decide to explore, a woman makes her way toward me, making eye contact the entire way with piercing green eyes. Her hair, dyed magenta, is pulled into a messy bun. She wears army green pants with a white button-down shirt tucked in. Her shoes are black lace-up boots. Her ears are adorned with various piercings. As she stops right in front of me, she says nothing. Suddenly, she walks right past me. She looks back, beckoning for me to follow. I do as she requests. I follow a few paces behind for what seems like an eternity. I am apprehensive, but curious about where she is leading me. We turn -right, left, left, right - making a gridlike pattern through the city. I still do not recognize where I am. As we walk, the ivy grows thicker on the buildings and bleeds onto the sidewalk. Flowers begin to poke out of the cracks in the sidewalk. This city is full of life. Continuing on, the streets become more and more desolate. Even though I am in an unfamiliar place, it feels comforting. The woman makes a sharp turn and disappears into the ivy. I wonder, should I continue following? Her hand pokes out and waves me on. I make my way into the ivy. When I emerge onto the other side, a whole new world comes into view. A secret city is hidden from the outside world right under everyone's noses. Groups of people meander around. Men, women, and children - each one with magenta hair. Dogs and cats with magenta fur roam as well. I see the excitement on their faces when they see me. One of the children smiles and grabs my hand to lead me onward. We continue through the secret streets. Something inside tells me that these people are special. The child and I stop walking when we reach a large lake. The lake is filled with fluorescent animals swimming in it. A wooden dock reaches far into the lake. Other children wave as we approach. They smile at me, I return the gesture. They beckon for me to sit on the edge of the dock with them. I oblige. After sitting for a while, all of the children stand and jump into the water. They emerge to the surface, laughing at my surprise. I decide to join them. Under the water, I am able to see the fluorescent fish. They swim around and between my legs. One of the children splashes me. We all begin splashing each other, playing a game. We return to the dock, our clothes soaking wet. We sit, resting after our swim. The same child that led me here sits next to me. He leans his head on my shoulder. I know that this place and these people are special. After some thought, I decide to stay here for a while. Suddenly, I wake up.