

A Portal of Fiction

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8 March 2019

Reading in bed is something I do – or try to do – every night. After doing the last bit of homework (or getting home if it's Friday night and D&D ran this week), I'll go to the bathroom and brush my teeth, probably put a mug that held drinking chocolate in the kitchen, get into my pyjamas and slide into bed.

How I read depends on what I'm reading from. If I am reading a physical book, the lights will stay on, I'll position my pillows properly so that I can lean back against them, especially the big pillow, and I'll sit back, open the book in my lap or against my knees, and read. When I'm done, I'll place the bookmark back, sliding the paperclip to the appropriate spot in the page so that I know exactly where to continue, and then put the book away.

I only read physical books some of the time. Every night, though, regardless of if I'm reading a physical book or not, I'll eventually get my tablet out, throw the big pillow on the floor, and adjust my other pillows so that I can lay down on my side, turn the lights off, pull the doona up, unlock my tablet, and start reading.

When I read on my tablet, I make sure to adjust its settings to do so. Since the lights are out, the brightness will go down as low as possible. If it's a book on Google Play or the Kindle app that I'm reading, I'll invert the page's colour scheme to have white text and black pages. And last but not least, since I'd be reading before going to sleep, if they're available, any blue light filters or night modes would get switched on to make it easier to fall asleep.

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Consulting the portal of fiction is something I like to do every time I have to go into a temporary coma. After working on my world-destroying AI or getting home from being attacked by elves or murder-gnomes with my friends, I'll clean myself up, change into a more comfortable skin, and get into my coffin.

How I consult the portal depends on what I want to consult it for – or rather, the brightness, weight and bulk of what I want to consult. If the portal would expand and become heavy, I'd prop my bags of hair and feathers up against the back of my coffin and the stone wall, sit and get comfortable, rip open the portal, and begin to consult my chosen story, its content spilling forth from the portal.

I don't consult bright, heavy stories every night, however, and even when I do, I finish off the night with something darker and more lightweight. In either case, when I'm ready I'll snap my fingers and extinguish the flaming torches on the walls. I'll lay back, adjust the soft bags I rest my head upon, and close the coffin. I'll make myself comfortable, probably rolling on my side (my coffin being quite roomy so as to accommodate such consultation habits), rip open the portal, and gaze into darker depths as I absorb a different narrative to before, hoping to consume a decent portion before my coma starts to grasp at me and pull me under its still influence.