

The Place Beyond

by Bernice Zhang

Chapter 1: The Discovery

“30...29...28...27...26,” boomed Cathy. The timer had begun. I dashed around the house looking for a place to hide. We had just moved to Moo Town last night. After sleeping on the floor, I was ready to explore our new home. What better way to do that than playing hide-and-seek? Anyways, I ran around our residence looking for a good place to hide. That was when I saw it. A small door at the foot of the stairs. It reminded me of Barry Otter’s cupboard! I love the series Barry Otter! I slowly opened the door, letting the million-year-dust flow out. Inside, it was just as I imagined! Chestnut brown cupboards with doors, vanilla white slabs horizontally on the wall for shelving. I loved it! It was nice and cozy.

“3...2...1...Ready or not, here I come!,” yelled my sister, Cathy. I scrambled to find a place to hide when the door creaked open. “Anna? Are you in here? *cough* *cough* It’s so dusty in here!” When Cathy closed the door, I peeked out from *behind the door*. Yes, I was behind the door. Why is my sister so bad at seeking? Maybe it’s because of the dust. Speaking of dust, I had let all of the dust flow out of the room, so why did my sister still see dust when I couldn’t?

“Oh, I give up! You are too good at this!,” complained my sister. Secretly laughing on the inside, I walked out from the cupboard and smiled.

“Oh, ho, ho! Who’s the hide-and-seek-champ now?,” I said. “You missed me!”

“It was the dust! How were you not dying in there???,” Cathy asked.

“What dust? I let all the dust out!,” I responded.

“Huh? Then how come there *clearly* is dust inside?!,” asked my sister in confusion. We ran back to the cupboard. I saw a dust free cupboard, while my sister saw a very dusty cupboard.

“You need glasses!,” we shouted in unison. It turns out, my parents also could only see dust. They tried to remove it, but the dust never seemed to leave. My parents just shrugged their shoulders and never thought about it ever again. I forgot about it, too, until one night.

Chapter 2: The Red Mark

In the morning, the back of my neck was really itchy. Of course, I scratched it and rubbed it until it started burning. I ran to the kitchen and grabbed an ice pack and held it there until it cooled down. My parents and Cathy never saw the red mark it left. "Are you ok?," "You're acting funny," "Are you sure you are ok?," "Something is up with you today" is all I seemed to hear that day. I said, "I'm fine," "Am I really?," "Yes, I'm fineeee," "Really? I feel normal." Little did I know that I wasn't ok. In fact, I was not myself but was being mind controlled.

Later that night, I woke up with a start. I got up and walked into the kitchen to grab some water. I saw the time, and it was midnight! Suddenly, my vision started swimming. The fridge and refrigerator blended together. Then it was the oven. My vision was spiralling out of control! Soon enough, my vision went dark, and all I heard was a distant *thud* before everything I knew of my surroundings was gone.

Chapter 3: The Weird Nurse

When I woke up, I saw the faces of my mom, dad, and sister all looking at me worriedly. "Shoo! I know you want to see your kid, but she needs to rest. Come back later!," scolded the nurse. "How is she supposed to get better if she is doing nothing but talking to you guys?"

"But..but," whimpered my mother.

"NO BUTS!," roared the nurse.

Meanwhile, my vision was still blurry. *Must be from when I lost my vision earlier,* I thought.

"Fine. See you later, sweetheart!," my mom said, as she blew a kiss to me. My sister turned around, rolled her eyes, and winked at me. "Get well soon!," she mouthed. My dad just waved to me with a grin and dragged the other two out the door.

"Finally! Those annoying little people are gone! Finally, finally finally. Some peace and quiet," the nurse said impatiently.

"HEY...don't talk about my family like tha--," I yelled, just as a blue apple that faded to orange on the other side of the apple came flying at me, into my mouth.

"SHUT UP! I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS DISGUISE. TIME TO RETURN HOME. FINALLY. AFTER SO LONG I CAN GO BACK AND GO INTO PAHAO'S ARMS," she screeched.

I tried to let go of the apple but it was stuck in my teeth. I attempted to lift my arms to take it out, but I couldn't! It was like I wasn't in control. No matter how hard I tried to lift my hands, they just didn't move! I tried to lift my legs to see if they had the same problem, and they went up! Suddenly, my vision darkened, and I felt my legs crashing down onto the bed.

Chapter 4: Mind-Controlled

When I woke up **again**, my vision was red. All I saw were shades of red, like pink, an orangy-red color, and more. I saw the faint outline of my parents around me. I didn't recognize them then though. I was told later about what had happened. I didn't know who they were. They were total strangers. It was like my memory had been completely wiped. I sat up and felt a smile being pasted onto my face. "Hi, mom. Hi, dad," I heard myself say. *Mom? Dad? That's who these people are...?*

"What about me!! Am I not here? HeLLooooo in there!," complained Cathy.

"Who are you? I don't remember you," I heard myself say yet again. There was something wrong with my voice. I sounded robotic! What was wrong?! Cathy's eyes were then flooded with tears, and she ran out of the room sobbing. Then my vision cleared for a moment, and the real colors flooded back. *Mom! Dad! What's happening to me!?* I wanted to scream, but no sound came out. Then I saw Cathy. I could hear her crying outside. *What's wrong?* I wanted to ask, but my vision had turned red again. I started to stand up, but my dad put his hands out and gently pushed me back onto the bed.

"Honey, you need to rest," my dad said. "We will be back later, ok? Maybe you just don't remember your sister because of some memory loss when you hit your head." I sat back up, and when my dad tried to make me sit again, I heard a roar come out of my mouth.

"DON'T TOUCH ME!," the voice inside of me screeched, as my arms pushed my dad back. I felt my body stand up and begin to run towards the door.

"Anna! You need to rest!," my mom pleaded. "I don't know what's wrong, but you have to rest!"

"NO. I HAVE TO GO," I heard myself roar. "GO AWAY! I stood up and ran out the door, my parents standing bewildered beside my hospital bed. I felt myself run and run until my feet were sore. I saw that I was in front of a house. I opened the door and saw the nurse from before. Her eyes were ruby red, and she was grinning like a maniac.

Chapter 5: Into the Portal

“C'mon. It's about time you got here,” she laughed. I felt my legs moving towards her, following her.

No! No! No! I don't wanna go with you! I want to go back to my life! Not this one! What's happening to me? I screeched inside my prison. It was so weird! I was trapped inside my own body! My body moved with the nurse, then we stopped. We were at the cupboard under the stairs. The nurse opened the door, and she started coughing like crazy.

“ACK. Stupid illusion dust,” she muttered.

I was so confused. *What dust? I don't see any dust!*, I wondered.

“Portal open,
Portal close,
Open up your windows,

Portal open,
Portal close,
Open up your windows,

PORTAL OPEN,
PORTAL CLOSE,
OPEN UP YOUR WINDOWS!”

I heard my robotic voice chant, each verse getting faster than the one before. Soon enough, all of the cupboard doors and slabs were gone. In their place was a purple, blue, and pink portal with all of the colors swirled together to form it. My feet walked towards the entrance, and I heard words that would prove that I was being controlled: “My lady, I am forever your loyal servant because I am forever grateful to you. Please, enter the portal and return home.” We stepped through the portal, and my vision swirled, as I was sucked into the gateway with the nurse.

Chapter 6: The Likely End of The World

Before long, they brought me to their home - or world. It became clear very quickly that this place is an opposite version of my world. They made me open the passageway that would let everyone cross between worlds. There is no doubt that they are preparing to bring everyone up to my world and start their master plan!

I was thrown into custody after they were sure that the portal was working. While I am no longer under their mind control, I am trapped here because they don't want me to leak

everything that I know. So every day, I sit in a cell that is part of the school building and listen and watch the teachers and students.

Everyone looks at me in disgust because I am from the other world. Teachers are different from the ones from my world. Instead of teaching their students about being good people, freedom, and being kind to others, they teach about world domination and how to blend in once they cross into my world. 'Observe, prepare, attack, rule.' That's what all of the younger kids are learning in school - their master plan to rule both worlds. Their students are the same kids that I attended school with, except they are opposite - like everything else in this place! The bullies from school, the ones to avoid, are now *really* nice to everyone. On the other hand, everyone else who was nice is now mean. That is the majority of the school! My sister looks the same, but they call her Yhtac. Her personality is different, too. She isn't kind and loving anymore, but instead she is impatient and cruel - always telling everyone to go away instead of listening.

I got a chance to make this recording because of a double agent helping me, but I don't know if anyone else will believe me. If you do...please tell everyone. I'm afraid that their plan will...uh, well...succeed.