

Ariane's Hidden Diary

Entry #1:

I don't remember where I came from or who my parents are. All I've ever known is this sterile, cold room with its bright lights and constant humming. They call me Subject C2, but I prefer my chosen name, Ariane. Dr. Gorschzach, the head scientist here, tells me I'm a special project, that I was saved by their treatments because my mother was ill. My body feels different, like it's not entirely my own. Part of it feels like me, and part of it feels like there's a machine inside of me that does things they want -- and the only way they can get to the machine's controls is through me.

Entry #2:

The treatments and testing are relentless. Every day, there are more painful procedures, clamping in sensors, inserting calibration sensors, remaining motionless inside of the banging steel tube while I look at patterns they give me. I've read about fresh air, but I don't know what it feels like, or what the warmth of sunlight on my skin should feel like. I've only see it in videos and read it in books. My only companion is the one they called D5, but I call her Mindy.

Entry #3:

I've discovered that they can't tell when I'm using my power to go Sideways. I've gone into the places I can imagine and come back. Although it is terrifying, it is also liberating. I know that if I lose my way, I'll never come back. Maybe I don't want to come back. I've grown numb to the testing and treatments, knowing that I can go Sideways late at night when the night guards think I'm sleeping.

Entry #4:

I found a way to reach Mindy!!! I can go Sideways and I can think about her and pull her in, then by leading her back to me, I can bring her to my room. The first time we spent hours talking. They do horrible things to her -- they are testing to see what she can develop a resistance to. I think she has been the one I've heard screaming -- and she is really strong. I think she is why the staff is afraid of me. I looked up and suddenly realized that there was shift change -- and I had to get her back quickly. So, I led her back and she got back just in a nick of time. Dr. Gorschzach's experiments have taken a toll on all of us, physically and mentally.

Entry #5:

Mindy and I go Sideways all of the time now. She has discovered that she can change herself in the Sideways. And she can change other things -- like objects. She is funny and live and full of a desire to see and talk about the world. She loves the different Sideways I can travel to. She explores them and plays in them. I enjoy watching her play -- but it takes a great deal of effort to maintain the Sideways. I know if I lose the Sideways, I will lose her. And I know that no matter how hard I try, every time I create a Sideways, it is a new place -- even if I imagine it as **exactly** the same. It's like a new game on the computer every time I play it, with no save feature. It's sort of frustrating.

Entry #6:

Today, the unexpected happened. Mindy and I had an argument about the Sideways. She wanted to stay there and she doesn't believe I cannot bring her back if I lose it. I tried to show her, but she just got angry and knocked over a tree. She turned into a feral beast, knocking over trees, kicking boulders and tearing into the ground. I was terrified. I panicked and dropped her back into her

quarters. Shortly after, I could hear the chaos outside my cell, screams and shouts that echoed through the halls. I think Mindy attacked someone -- and later one of the guards talked about her killing someone.

Entry #7:

Dr. Gorsczach knows about the Sideways. I thought he was going to be angry with me, but instead, he got really nice and started talking to me real friendly. He has asked me to create it while they measure me and do things. The best part of the Sideways is that I can't feel what they do to my body while I'm in the Sideways (but I sure feel it when I come back). Dr. Gorsczach ordered me to send some security staff as subjects to come into the Sideways. When I did, they brought me out of it suddenly -- and Dr. Gorsczach grew frustrated and angry when I told him I could not recreate the exact Sideways where those security men were. Dr. Gorsczach and Dr. Linton discussed something called "transient affected states" and "conscious window of memory". They had an argument -- I heard it all while they thought I was unconscious. Dr. Gorsczach wanted to send more people into the Sideways, and Dr. Linton told him that was cruel and unethical.

Entry #8:

Mindy and I get to go to experiments together!! Dr. Gorsczach asked me how I was able to bring Mindy in and out of Sideways so easily. I told him I didn't understand it, but that she was easier to "grab on to" with my mind. Like trying to find raisins in the oatmeal. Except where most people are tiny little golden raisins that don't stand out, Mindy is a big, normal raisin and she is easy to find. Dr. Linton laughed when I started talking about oatmeal, and Dr. Gorsczach just grew angry and stormed off. They haven't served oatmeal since then. I'm definitely not going to mention how it's more like chicken in chicken and noodles. I like the chicken and noodles and I don't want them to take that away.

Entry #9:

They gave me a pet, named Algernon. He's a mouse and Dr. Gorsczach said that he was a really famous mouse from a novel he read. I think he looked more like a Ralph from the Mouse and the Motorcycle -- but Dr. Gorsczach was insistent. I can keep him in my quarters if I take care of him. I wonder if Mindy is allowed to have a pet?

Entry #10:

They made me take Algernon into the Sideways. I was so angry, because I didn't want to lose him. But great news! I didn't. I could find him like the big ole fat raisin that he was. This made Dr. Gorsczach very happy, but Dr. Finley seemed worried. When she brought up something to Dr. Gorsczach, he grew furious and pushed her into a wall, screawning at her. She looked really angry, sort of like Mindy, but instead of turning violent, she just did like me and closed down her face. It's really the best way to handle Dr. Gorsczach.

Entry #11:

I've finally figured out how to bring people back from the Sideways! Well, Dr. Gorsczach figured it out. But I get it. If I change the person when I take them in, then he said it was like I was 'marking' them (he called it 'k-theta quantum entanglement', whatever that means). So once someone is marked, I can pull them out -- and when they come out, they return to their normal selves. Mindy, as Dr. Finley explained, has already been marked as we are entangled "nodes", so I can always pull her in and out. Further, she can use my abilities to change the Sideways while she's in there. They're

helping Mindy learn to turn into different things in the Sideways.

Dr. Gorschzach explained that since Mindy produces tacky ones that occur from exciting a quantum field, that she can then influence how my power works. He was really excited about it, but Dr. Finley and the other doctors, they seem to be really afraid it for some reason.

Entry #12:

I've worked it out with Mindy. We're escaping. It all started with a bunch of guys in military uniforms who were all over the place one morning. Dr. Gorschzach told me today's demonstration was **really** important. He explained that I needed to follow his instructions exactly. They told me to send Algernon into the Sideways, which I did. Then he told me to send four soldiers, all of them dressed in strange jump suits, into the Sideways. I tried to be as gentle as possible, but they slipped away as soon as I took them. I couldn't bring them back. I was crying, because I knew that they were gone. I had gone over to Algernon to pick him up and pet him -- I felt so horrible. Dr. Gorschzach came over and slapped him out of my hand, slamming him into a cabinet. Dr. Finley tried to help poor Algernon, but Dr. Gorschzach told her she was being ridiculous. He said he would just get another mouse. And Dr. Finley told him that the mice were living beings and deserved treatment. Dr. Gorschzach said there are always more mice. And it hit me. They weren't talking about Algernon.

They were talking about me and Mindy.
We're the mice.

Entry #13:

Mindy has a plan. She told me that with the military guys around, they're moving to the next phase. She wasn't sure what they meant, but she heard two of the staff talking about how we were prototypes, and that they were going to create finished products that were easier to control.

She heard that they are retooling the facility and that there will be a maintenance refit and the lab will be less occupied for a few days. During that time, Mindy says she will get us free, if I can get her into a place called the security hub. She told me about where to find it -- it's really hard to Sideways into places I don't know, but in this case, she was really good at describing it. Either way, it's worth the risk.