

EPILOGUE: AN UNEXPECTED COUNTRY

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Location: Interstellar space

Log note: A new adventure

NO ONE KNEW HOW LONG the brave team of adventurers would be gone when they stepped through the Gate. After all, it was impossible to tell what they would encounter on the other side. They might be gone a few hours or a few years. This was an entirely new experiment – which is what made it so exciting.

Most of the onlookers stayed for an hour or two after the Gate was activated and then left. The universe was a busy place and they had responsibilities to tend to. The only ones who decided to stay were a few intrepid reporters. Although they could not linger forever, they decided to hang around for a few more days so that they could be there, in person, when the expedition returned. They didn't want to miss that triumphant moment – or what might come back through the portal with them. So they settled in for a long wait.

Four days passed and nothing happened. Then, on the evening of the fifth day, the Gate activated once more. Two people stepped out of it – Victor Stryker and Professor Grimes.

Tommy Neal, the reporter from the *Blue Mountain Eagle*, immediately rushed over to them. “If I might have a moment of your time, gentlemen, I have a few questions for you. Our readers would love to know what wonders you discovered on the other side of the Gate.”

Grimes spoke up. “I'll be happy to tell you whatever I can, but first I have a question for you. How long have we been gone?”

“Five days,” Tommy replied.

Victor laughed. “You were right! Time *does* flow at a different rate there.”

“Which is rather convenient for us,” Grimes replied. “There was no other way we could afford to spend that much time there otherwise. For one thing I have classes to teach, and I can only put that off for so long. This opens up some rather interesting possibilities.”

The reporter spoke up. “Do you mean to say you've been gone for *three years*?”

“We have indeed! Of course, we had no idea what we were getting into until we stepped through the Gate. There was no way of knowing in advance.”

“So what else did you find on the other side?”

“Something quite unexpected,” Victor replied.

What do you mean?”

Grimes spoke up. “There is indeed a country on the other side of that gate – a magnificent country that vastly exceeded my highest expectations. But you must understand that it is a *new* country. There are things in it that I had never even imagined before. That makes it rather difficult to talk about. You simply don't have the vocabulary.”

“Are you saying that you can't put it into words?”

“I'm saying that if I did it wouldn't help. Suppose that you were one of the species in this universe who could not see the color red. I could tell you that red exists, and that it's entirely different from green. I could mention that it has a frequency of 620 to 750 nanometers. I could tell you that it is magnificent in sunsets. But none of that would really help you very much. Oh, you might *think* that

you understood red. You might believe that all the facts you have memorized about it have given you some level of insight. But until you have seen the color itself you actually know nothing. You are missing the one thing that matters the most – the actual experience of that color.”

“You seem to have a deep passion for red,” Tommy remarked.

“To be honest, I actually do not have a favorite color. I think it depends on the situation. For example, red is magnificent but I don't think it works very well for grass. But the point is you are making a tactical error. I cannot tell you what is on the other side of that Gate because you have no frame of reference for it. The words would mean nothing to you. If you wish to know what lies beyond then *go there and see for yourself*. Then you will know.”

Victor spoke up. “Of course, you might find it tricky to explain what you find to your readers. But I'm sure you'll think of something! One good bit of news for you is that the universe is about to change. Just wait until what is over there comes *here*. A lot of things are going to be different going forward.”

“So what happens next?” Tommy asked.

“It's impossible to say,” Grimes replied. “All we know is that the Most High God is the undisputed ruler of all the worlds – both the worlds that exist now, and all the worlds that are to come. We are going to spend the rest of eternity glorifying our Savior and enjoying the bountiful riches of His grace. Could there be anything better than that?”