

## No Place I'd Rather Be

### Message Start

*America is under attack.*

*From what?*

*Nothing.*

Hello. My name is Annalise Rose. I am an American, and I need to tell you what happened.

It was the fall of 2040, and the presidential elections were in full swing. The favorite candidate was Robert Danton. His slogan was, "The perfect life for the perfect people." Of course people loved that, especially since he was promising free healthcare and schooling. It was foolish to think that his promises would actually happen. Anyways, the elections go on and Robert Danton wins by a landslide. He's sworn in as president January first, and what's the first thing he does? He keeps his promise. He gives every person in America and its territories free healthcare. Well that was completely shocking. How did he even get that through Congress? But it didn't matter, nobody cared because they were all benefiting from it. There was only one catch: a mandatory blood test. Hmm free healthcare vs. a tiny poke in the arm? It's not that tough of a decision and everybody got the blood test. Even newborns..

Well the year continues on and everything is great, why can't we just keep this president forever yada yada yada. Then he introduces free schooling. Woo hoo! Forget 8 years this guy can be president forever! No one else is ever going to be as good as him. So there's a vote, and Robert Danton is our first ever President Justice. It's like with the Supreme Court, you're in that position until you either die or resign. Why he would ever resign I don't know, his life's got to be pretty good.

Continuing on, it was the age of technology. New things kept being invented every other day. The big thing though, was virtual reality. Everywhere you went you saw at least three people immersed in their own little virtual world. It was creepy to look at really, they all looked like zombies, mouths hanging open and a blank look in their eyes as they stared off into whatever screen they were looking at.

Nobody thought their life could get any worse. Free healthcare, free schooling, any technology they want just at their fingertips, what could go wrong? Nothing did. Everything was fine, everything was great. Then the gracious President Justice Danton sent everyone a little package. It was nothing really, a tiny, tiny package that was from the President Justice? No big deal. He sent out things to random people all the time. But to everyone at once? That was a

first. Everyone's greedy hands ripped open the flimsy paper packaging to reveal two things: a pair of contacts and instructions.

These contacts were the absolute newest release in virtual reality wear, researched and developed by the special technology division in the government. You couldn't get them anywhere else. Yeah! Go President Justice Danton! He's the best!

The instructions were simple really, you just had to put them to see if they fit. If they didn't, you would want to contact the government right away so they could make a replacement and send them to you as soon as possible. So of course everyone tried them on as soon as they read the instructions; but at that point it didn't matter if the contacts fit or not, because as soon as the contacts went in, they became lost in the Dreamscape.

And that's where I came in. I was like everyone else, I was excited about this new tech., I completely trusted our President Justice; then I put in the contacts. *And they didn't work.* It's not like they didn't fit or something, it's just that they didn't work. I wasn't immediately immersed into the Dreamscape. I didn't know at the time what had happened.

I do now. I have what is called Chimera Syndrome. It means when I was in the womb, I wasn't the only one in there. I had a twin. For a short while, at least, only in the early stages of my mom's pregnancy. Then my twin's egg sack broke open. And I absorbed some of her genes. How do I know she was a girl? Because as soon as my blood was drawn during that mandatory blood test it was checked. It was checked to see if that was really my blood, if I had filled my veins with someone else's. Why would I? I don't know. The government was paranoid I guess. Anyways, I know my twin was a girl because instead of my DNA, they drew hers. And they didn't question it, because the test showed I had girl's blood.

Now you ask, Wait how do you know they drew your twin's DNA? Because of the contacts. Because they didn't work. My hypothesis is that the government used everyone's DNA to sync them to the Dreamscape. That way they could never willingly leave. After the "bombings" of 2027, syncing became strictly illegal, lest more people get stuck in a "war zone".

Anyways, ever since the Dreamscape, reality has been falling apart. In America, our motivation has always seemed to rotate around money; but now, in the Dreamscape, people are so rich they don't need any more money. Everyone is happy where they are. Those of us still stuck in reality, aren't. And since this is still America, money still has to be made for the government. So if you're in the Dreamscape, and you don't even remember reality, then you are automatically free labor. You may think you're playing your favorite video game, or steering your humungous yacht, but in reality, you're working in a factory, putting together parts in horrible conditions.

In reality, everything that was ever good is gone. No more home-cooked meals, no more stable homes. All of that is gone, because of the Dreamscape. Well that, and the PCT.

PCT- Pest Control System. A converted National Guard. Zombie-like Dreamscape

residents shuffling around by themselves? That was never going to work. So President Justice Danton created the PCT to watch over the residents. They also have another objective, to look for Realwalkers. In other words, people like me. People who are not in the Dreamscape. So anywhere I go, I have to pretend to be a Dreamscape zombie. The PCT moved my entire family out of our house into this tiny apartment. They can monitor us better there. I don't usually have to worry about food or anything, because the PCT provides the basics. But having the PCT come into our apartment means more pressure for me. Whenever they come in, I usually pretend I'm sunbathing and lie on the ground, staring up at the ceiling.

But how did you get here, you ask, how were you able to tell us all this? Because all of the Dreamscape residents are doing free labor, I have to go to work also. Fortunately for me, I work in a factory that produces computer parts. I was able to scrounge together enough parts to build a computer, which I am typing this message on. I can't believe the internet is still out there. That people from other countries are still out there. I don't have much more time. Sooner or later the PCT will catch me or the government will track this computer. That's why I'm going to smash this up and throw it into the sewers as soon as I'm done typing this message.

*Please.*

*Help us.*

*I am not alone.*

**end message**