

THE PLACE BEYOND HER DREAMS

by Oby Aligwee

EXCERPT

“How did I—I mean when did I become an Eri?” I asked wide-eyed.

“It started several millennia ago when Luenah was restricted to its original inhabitants—a handful of people living in utmost serenity and joy, never growing old or dying from diseases. Everything changed when a wily princess, Ani, found her way in through a portal in an ant hole. When she arrived in Luenah, panting from exertion, our ruler had taken pity and accepted her into our fold. With time, she proved to be loyal and imaginative, wildly so, that she found immense favor in his eyes, but she wanted more.”

“What did she want?” I urged.

“For her people on earth to inhabit Luenah. At the time, the earth was plagued with famine and diseases, and she felt Luenah would provide the respite they needed. As noble as the idea was, it wasn’t feasible.”

“Why not? There’s enough space here for everyone,” I claimed, looking around at the beauty and riches in Luenah.

“There’s enough space,” he agreed. “But there is no room in Luenah for conflict and turmoil. Look at Ide and Ntebe. See what has become of them.”

I nodded once, and he continued.

“A few years passed, and Ani presented her plea again. She threatened to expose the ant hole so her people could enter if our ruler failed to grant even a few ‘chosen ones’ access to live here.”

“Did they fall for it?” I asked, my heart beating in anticipation.

“The negotiation was tough, but they later struck a deal. Ani was permitted to select a handful of good earthly humans to visit Luenah. These humans, called Eris, were bestowed gifts to be passed on to chosen ones in their future generations, and they were assigned missions to help the earth regain its balance.”

“So, Eris are born?”