

THIS EXCERPT IS FROM CHAPTER THREE OF "DELWYN OF THE REALMS" - ENJOY!

Standing there in the clearing, facing the dark building, she felt as though time was standing still and that she was at a crossroads. Even though she had made the decision to come out that night and go back to the mirror, it was as though someone or something had made up her mind for her. She had always felt like she was living someone else's life - like her own life had yet to begin. The expectations of others and pathways decided for her, were like mazes for a mouse in a lab that belonged to someone else. That's why she had never felt like an adult, although she had gone through the motions - such as getting a job, moving out, getting married, setting up house, etc.

Duncan had always said that he could have kicked himself for falling for the broken dove routine. She had never understood that analogy and how she fit into it, as he had been the one to pursue her, even after she had turned him down - politely, so many times. She contemplated her tendency to run and hide as she stood there, possibly about to embark on an incredible adventure that amounted to the opposite of what her life had been. Or was it? Hiding wasn't the same as exploring. Not exactly.

She flicked on the flashlight again, training it on the broken path to ensure even steps. She heard a short scream of a busy possum, but didn't falter. Slowly making her way to the door, she noticed a cat shadow stretching in front of her. She spun around and whispered loudly, "Peter!" He meowed a response, as though telling her to calm herself. She resigned herself to the fact that he was along for the ride, no matter what. Besides, he had a right - it was his property!

When she got to the door, she realized that she had forgotten to bring the seahorse she had found on her last trip. Shining the flashlight up and down the door for another intact specimen, she swore quietly to herself - although she had no idea why she might need it. Even though she had never been superstitious, the idea of a touchstone calmed her. At any rate, when she looked up at the top of the door, there was an even larger one hanging by a thread, which was a pale red in the light of the moon. She snatched it down and put it in the pocket of her pajamas.

Feeling better about herself, she turned the handle and opened the door, noticing the thick darkness inside. Without skipping a beat, Peter ran in ahead of her and didn't look back. She shone the flashlight after him but he was already gone. Stepping inside, she gingerly closed the door behind her and it was then that she became just a little afraid of the dark. The light of the flashlight was enough to illuminate a small shard wherever she pointed it, and apart from her own footsteps there was nothing but silence.

Deciding not to delay, even though her heart was thumping loud enough to hear, she made her way to the back room. Peter was already there, sitting patiently in front of the mirror. She could sense almost every hair on her skin prickling and standing to attention. She crept closer and pushed past the boxes and baskets. Peter was rubbing himself against the velvet curtain, purring - with apparently no clue as to what was behind it.

With a whoosh the curtain fell down and Delwyn squealed, instinctively shining the flashlight at it, but it was just herself standing there - no Peter!

What she saw next made her blink hard to make sure she wasn't seeing things. Only his head popped out of the mirror, at floor level. He was looking up at her. She jumped back in fright, nearly knocking over a stack of baskets. He meowed again and put one paw forward, but was eyeing her cautiously. In a panic she leapt forward, trying to get a hold of him but he turned around, with only his tail sticking out of the mirror. She went to grab it but it disappeared. As she stood there - almost hyperventilating - half bent with her left hand holding onto the frame, she realized that she had to try again.

With a deep breath she straightened up and this time put her right foot forward. She saw the mirror ripple very slightly as her toe effortlessly slipped through the surface. Slowly but surely she kept inching her foot through, feeling a gentle 'pins and needles' sensation running up her leg. Nothing was grabbing her like last time. Propping the flashlight on the box next to the mirror, she was able to place her foot on a solid floor of some kind. Once she felt secure enough she started leaning her face in, as both hands gripped the frame - her knuckles white and trembling. The mirror was cool on the tip of her slightly upturned nose, and the pins and needles started spreading throughout her face.

There was no stopping her now, so she pushed her whole head through. At first all she could see was static - like on a t.v. screen - but silver. It was completely silent, and she could breathe normally - as much as she could with the excitement! She could still feel the solidity of the frames and her left foot still on the floor of the flat, which was odd and made her feel a little unbalanced. She slowly brought in her other foot and her right hand, but kept her left hand firmly on the frame. She noticed as she moved slightly forward, the static morphed somewhat, to a more solid silver consistency - like liquid - and became more transparent. She didn't want to let go of the frame, but realized that she would have to if she wanted to venture further.

Before she did so, she decided to call for Peter. When she tried to speak, her voice came out like she was underwater - but with a faint echo. It was very peculiar, so she tried again. "B-e-e-d-e-r-!" She called again a little louder, and then she heard his meow, also like underwater. "M-o-w-w!" He sounded further away, and a little annoyed. It was like he was trying to tell her that he was fine and to leave him alone. How did she understand this? As she came to grips with what was happening and where she was, she absentmindedly let go of the frame. At once she freaked and turned around, trying to find the mirror - yet to no avail. She waved her hands around wildly, but tried to calm herself so that she could retrace her steps and not get lost.

She slowly walked back to where she thought the mirror was and then realized she was starting to see through the haze of the static. The silver atmosphere became more like water, and then like liquid crystal. Slowly but surely, faint light filtered through and she could see that she was in some kind of a huge cave.

She moved forward, and her footsteps made soft echoes as she went along. Curiosity had slowly chased away her fear and she walked more purposefully now, taking greater strides. She started hearing what sounded like an ocean in the distance, and when her surroundings became clearer, she noticed that she was now in a massive cave that opened out onto a deserted, moonlit beach.

Even though she couldn't see any source of light in the cave, it was lit well enough for her to see that she was walking on a smooth, rock-like surface, and eventually she could hear the soft crunching of sand underfoot.

It was wondrous - like a dream, and she marveled at the idea of this incredible world being on the other side of a mirror in an abandoned granny flat!

As she continued - contemplating the experience and wondering if she was dreaming or hallucinating - she heard Peter meowing in a friendly manner, as though he was feeling the same way. Just then she saw him rolling around in the sand at the opening of the cave. She ran over to him and knelt down, rubbing his head saying, "There you are, you little shit!" She looked up and out at the magical scene, her jaw dropping as she stood back up to take it all in.

It was night time and the sky seemed enclosed, like they were inside a huge sphere or tunnel. There was a pale pink moon in the distance, throwing hazy beams onto the rolling waves that lapped quietly on the violet shore. The edge of the cave was part of a landscape that stretched around as far as her eyes could see, with dark woods and black rocks meeting the beach. Delwyn started walking along the shoreline to explore, and Peter lazily followed - stopping here and there to sniff the air and investigate. She took off her slippers and felt that the sand was slightly warm to the touch.

She said aloud "This is so bizarre!" Peter meowed in response. Then she walked over to the water and waded in just to her ankles. It was also warm, and the waves and foam tickled her like lemonade. This prompted her to scoop some of the liquid up in her hand to smell and taste it. It was salty, with a hint of something long forgotten. She tried to remember but couldn't. Was it aniseed? Or dill?

She got out of the water and stood on the sand, watching the strange purple waves slapping the shore. The lavender foam sprayed Peter as he curiously attempted to catch it with his paws. He hissed and ran over to Delwyn as she laughed quietly at him, despite the unease that was growing in her belly. She had to keep reminding herself that this could be a hallucination, but everything that had led up to her entering the mirror had been so mundane - and she had not yet gone to bed for the day.

Also - Peter was with her, although that in itself was no evidence. The sky was almost black - the blackest purple she had ever seen, and it became clear that almost everything in this world was some shade of purple; such as lilac, lavender, indigo, violet, fuchsia, amethyst, magenta, maroon, plum, orchid, grape, eggplant. She decided to explore, but before she took off she looked around for something to use as a marker - so she could find her way back. It was as though Peter understood her intentions, and he ran to the bushes behind them and meowed at an old branch that had fallen.

"Thanks, matey!" she said warmly and tickled his left ear, making him purr triumphantly. She dragged out the branch - which was the same length and width as her arm - and was such a pale lilac that it was almost white.

She impaled the sand with it near the entrance of the cave, and then took off her pajama jacket - seeing as the temperature was so mild - and she was wearing a tank top underneath. She tied the jacket to the branch - like a flag, and they took off down the purple shoreline.

To most people, ending up in an alternate realm such as this would have been a shocking development, which might have resulted in a psychotic break, irreversible damage or dementia. For Delwyn - this was par for the course, yet the sane side of her had all the questions and knew that this was impossible in the real, scientific world; to be exploring a mirror realm. Notwithstanding new developments in quantum physics, alternate or parallel universes - the insane side of her accepted this new development with open arms.

The dreamer in her was a strong alter ego and had always sought dominance, fighting against the will to fit in to a "normal" society. Even though her experiences with the paranormal hinted at another realm that begged to be explored, she had heeded her doctor, husband, family and society at large - when she turned her back against these "abnormalities" and grasped the flimsy, cure all safety nets they had given her - such as they were.

The pills, inadequate therapy and leaden expectation that went along with the panaceas - that she would behave herself and recognize those bizarre "turns" as nightmares or synapses misfiring, felt to her like an iron lung. Too heavy to do any good and too cumbersome to shake off easily, when she deemed it time to do so. Those shackles that her keepers had placed on her had weighed her down to the point of making her feel as though she would plummet into an early grave. She had felt it in her bones. Her very spirit had been squashed.

Now here she was - free - roaming around in a world where none of those robots could find her. They would tell her that she was having a breakdown for sure. She laughed and was surprised to see small, violet birds flying out of her mouth, into the dark purple sky! In shock, her hands involuntarily went up to her mouth in case more flew out, and Peter meowed excitedly, racing along the shore trying in earnest to catch them. Delwyn gasped and noticed that sound still had a strange echo - like a reverberation - although different to when she was in the cave.

As she wondered about the possibilities in this world, she heard a boiling sound coming from further out in the sea. She looked over and saw - about thirty feet away - the ocean bubbling and frothing, with the sound of hissing building in her ears. She strained to see what on earth it could be - but she wasn't on earth, was she? Looking over to check on Peter - who was rolling around in the sand, oblivious to the commotion - she started backing away, just in case danger was approaching.