

Chapter 1

That night

W

hile lying awake late one night, staring at

the ceiling with the aid of the soft glow of the night-light, I listened to my pug snore contently beside me while my wife slept quietly and comfortable on the other side. Suddenly I heard and felt a growing rumbling and wind-like sound.

Knowing that Korumburra was prone lately to earthquakes, I began to brace myself for a huge tremor. Turning to look at my wife and then my pug, I noticed that they were sleeping, ignorant of the shaking and noise that finished with what sounded like a loud thud in the front of the house.

I jumped up out of bed to investigate and to see if there was any damage and heard something moving across the front veranda, the noise ended in a strange thud-cum-knock at the door. I grabbed my sword, which I had kept from the time when I studied martial arts, and quietly crept over to the door, preparing to open it so anyone trying to get in would get the greater surprise.

‘Who’s there?’ I demanded in an angry but nervous tone.

There was no reply.

Suddenly there was a sliding sound moving off the veranda followed by two loud thud-like footsteps of a great metal monster. I pulled the front door open pausing to see what would happen. After a few seconds of silence I slowly exited

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the house, quietly closing the wire door and slid to the end of the veranda. I jumped over the end onto the garden.

‘Damn my eyes,’ I thought as they took so long to adjust to the darkness. There was a strange sound in the front yard much like an enormous snake moving about.

Still half-blind, I crept beside the lemon tree at the front of the house, but still not seeing anything, I hurriedly climbed over the small fence and waited.

Directly I heard a whistling snigger, ‘Poor, Tedanill, with such piercing blue eyes, why do you have such trouble seeing in the dark?’ said a harsh voice from overhead.

Startled, I jumped out brandishing my sword in front of me and looked about. I was confronted by a great golden wall.

Looking up I noticed two large emerald stars while falling backwards. I thrust my sword forwards towards the stars,

laying there stiff and frozen in horror. I could not move mouth or muscle and after pulling my thoughts together I focused on and realised suddenly they were eyes. There was a glow and red fire shining out between its teeth as it spoke, 'Tedanill, you look a little surprised to see me? Are you still alive? Breathe, my friend, or you soon won't be.' The thing then chuckled to itself.

As I stared, the outline of a large face slowly became clearer in the night, I then realised I was holding my breath. I let my breath out with a loud, 'U-u-uh.' Regaining my body I dropped the sword down to my side and sat up, trying to get the knot in my throat untied. I said in a slightly higher pitch to my voice combined with a muffled cough, 'Thankfully I must be a friend and not a snack.'

The voice returned, 'Some courage and a sense of humour; we were right to keep an eye on you!'

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The Realm of Believe

Gathering my senses I observed that the two houses on either side of us were still in darkness and their occupants apparently asleep.

I said, 'How come I am the only one out here?'

'You and Silvanill are the only one with the insight to see and hear us. You were also given special gifts by the fourth Realm when you were younger the day of that operation when you moved spiritually from your body. From that moment we knew you were different to the rest of your fellow humans. Since then we have sent guardian animals as a test of both your insights, hoping you would stay true to the good in your heart. We believed and trusted that you would follow your insight and choose them as companions. In turn, they would watch and guard over you and we watched with great happiness to see you had taken the direction you and your wife had chosen.

'Now is the time to see if you will choose to take your adventure further. Your wife has shown us in her painting that the time is almost right. We need your help; we need you to step into your rightful role in this life; if you are willing!'

At that moment, our pug burst through the doggy-door, barking aggressively, stopping at the stranger's feet. Looking up she placed her paw on his massive foot and gave a friendly bark.

'Good to see you too, Orumkin,' the stranger said with a small laugh. 'You seem content with your family not to have woken or were you protecting the wife,' the voice chuckled. Orumkin barked several times.

Looking confused, my head spun as I muttered, 'I feel like I'm dreaming a Tolkien or Rowling storyline.'

'You're not far wrong,' returned the voice, 'except for the dreaming part, this is real! I am real!' he said playfully reaching forwards and prodding my leg.

‘Maybe there is more truth in your world’s fantasy books – far more than you all realise. Most of your writers have been and have chosen to return. It is not an easy life on our side of the Realm. As your Realm’s people come and go, we allow or disallow memories of our side. From signs in our Realm, we are shown which people from your Realm are chosen. From birth we watch and follow your life by following your lifestyle and then the final test is your personalities to see if you are worthy of our Realm.

‘Your family, for instance, has been chosen for your love and caring for those animals and people around you, your dislike of the way in this Realm in which the people have no respect for the world or anything in it. You now have the chance to come with me and live on our side, with dualinteraction in both Realms to make a real difference to both the worlds. One cannot survive without the other! Go now, Tedanill, and awaken your wife then we can continue our talk.’

I stood and returned my sword to the sheath. Picking up Orumkin, I headed indoors to wake my wife who was still sleeping peacefully. Sitting on the bed I went to wake her. Wait a minute, I thought to myself. Getting back up I went outside to check if it was all really true or just a dream, even though my feet and dressing gown were all wet from the dewy grass.

Walking back out the front and seeing the golden wall and emerald eyes still there I asked, ‘What is your name?’

‘I am Simanill from the line of the Anilltres Dragons. Your protector as soon as you willingly chose to place me on your right arm in the form of a tattoo when you turned thirty.’

‘I noticed you called me by a strange name. Why? Am I, in this Realm of yours, known by this name?’

‘To come with me tonight, your names would be Tedanill and Silvanill, both in the line of the Anilltres.’

Pondering for a second, I nodded with acknowledgment of the names.

I returned once again inside, this time waking Silvanill. I related the story so far.

Sighing as she sat up, Silvanill said, ‘Look at the time!

If you want me to stay up, I think I need a cup of tea to digest this one, Tedanill,’ she added in a jestful tone. ‘But I’m not sure of my name. S’pose it will grow on me in your story.’

‘This is not a story! Well it could be later, but gather yourself, then go outside and greet the dragon,’ I said moving to the door and pointing toward the front of the house.

Getting up, Silvanill put on her track pants. She was only

about one hundred and fifty-five centimetres in height with long dark hair. Her hazel eyes, sleepy as though they were now, always seemed to hold an air of mystery deep within. She had high cheek bones leading down to her mouth, which held a delicate form with feminine lips that were usually in a beautiful smile. Her stature was slim and was usually, during the day, clad in a flannel shirt and jeans.

Silvanill sleepily wandered outside, lit a cigarette and said, 'Simanill, the great, are you there?'

Flames and smoke shot across the front yard and a voice said, 'Silvanill, can I join you in smoking?' Simanill laughed and blew more fire and smoke.

A startled Silvanill fled backwards through the gate gasped with fright.

'Shit, you're real!'

'Did you not believe Tedanill and his words?' Simanill asked.

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Peering out from under the veranda trying to regain herself Silvanill then said, 'I thought he was just pulling my leg. I thought there could be no way a real dragon would be sitting in the front yard.'

Coming out through the front door I said to Silvanill, 'No use hiding under here. Come on let's go out front; I have the cups of tea. Is there anything I can get you, Simanill,' I asked, walking across the grass.

'Well, I have already drained your cattle trough, much to your bull's disgust.'

Just then, Orumkin came crashing out of the doggy-door to re-join us, sitting proudly between Simanill and Silvanill, her soft, little black face glowing and her eyes shining like stars in the depth of the night.

'You have done well my young and trusted friend. Booloomar said you were the correct choice to watch over them.'

The two little shining eyes of our pug seemed to shine even brighter as she lowered her head in appreciation of the kind words bestowed upon her from Simanill.

'I had better go and refill the trough.'

Walking off to do as such I heard Silvanill starting to regain her composure and ask some questions of Simanill.

Upon returning to the front yard, picking up my cup as I went, Silvanill was still staring awe-struck at the great dragon resting on the front lawn.

'So how long have you been waiting for us?' I asked

'We have to wait until you're of a certain age in this Realm, both of you. Also, destiny drives people in all directions. We have to just wait and see how and in which way you turn and walk – straight and true, as well as you can, or if you bend to be corrupt. Most, unfortunately, become people with small,

narrow minds all rapt up in their own small, narrow lives.'

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'Well then, let's find out all about this Realm of yours.'

Silvanill turned to me and said, 'Simanill said we have only a few hours to do this as he has limited in time in which his spell works on this side of the Realm.'

'Firstly,' said Simanill, 'in my Realm there is none of what you have here, which is why humans find it so hard to adjust; it's no worse than when your fore-fathers had it but people have become lazy. There is no power, no supermarkets, none of your modern, lazy ways, just large open lands on which to grow food and keep your livestock. Simply put, you just live an honest life. You swap for things with others and feed yourself or you die! Simple, but hard.'

'The good part is your age. As I mentioned before, you are rejuvenated in body and live a longer life. For example, Tedanill, being forty-seven, would be returned to a fitness of a seventeen year old of this Realm. Two point seven years there to about one here is how lifespan goes. You can live well into the hundreds compared to on this side.'

'There are medicine men to heal you and everyone helps the aged, not just family. Everyone looks after everyone else.'

'There is evil though, bad evil crossing both sides. This is what you fight for, to keep your Realms people and animals safe; you have to defend and defeat the evil both around and within. Too many people find the going too hard and wish to return to this Realm and their old lazy ways. Some are enticed into the evil way.'

'The balance is a long and hard toil to maintain. We are forever looking and waiting for people like yourselves to be ready. Sometimes we have to push them along a little, but slowly we are losing, hence me being here tonight.'

'What then does your Realm look like?' I asked.

'Believe,' replied Simanill simply.

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Silvanill and I looked at each other, then looking confused turned our gaze back to Simanill as we both asked, 'Believe?'

Simanill laughed, 'You should know, Silvanill, you painted it a few months ago; your house on your land, no neighbours, no electricity poles, no roads just peace and quiet. That is how we knew. Orumkin told me on one of my visits and looking through the kitchen window, I saw for myself. Preparations in my Realm were then made to receive you. But I must warn you of the journey. Some have not made it through the regeneration, by which you will then go to the Fourth Realm of life, called death.'

'There you will meet those who have passed before, like Booloomar, your faithful protector for all those years before

Orumkin became yours but, a Realm of no return.'

'What about Orumkin and our cattle are they to come too?' asked Silvanill

'What does your painting say?'

'What about here – family, friends?'

'They will know no different,' said Simanill, 'they will simply go on. You will still visit from time to time, but due to the differences in the Realms to them there will be no change! Humans on this side don't see all, just what is needed; they, themselves, do this through their narrow sense of themselves.'

'Time is drawing on, so have you any more questions, or are you ready to consider your decision?'

Sitting there under the night sky, thinking on all that had happened in the last hour and wondering if we should go I asked, 'Do we need to pack or take anything?'

'Only the possessions that you feel you really do want.'

'What do you mean?'

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'Modern things you do not want to disappear in the new world.'

'My paints,' said Silvanill.

'Yes, that type of thing,' said Simanill, 'Once gone, you can't get them back so think carefully and only what you can carry.'

'This trip,' I asked, 'is it long, walking, flying or do we just pop here and there?'

'Only one way to find out,' said Simanill. 'You must hurry for time is nearly up and I sense evil approaching. They know I'm here.'

Rushing inside, Silvanill grabbed her paints, brushes and pens, pushing them all into a bag. 'Think, you ninny, what else? My photos; yes.'

Silvanill rushed to and fro whilst I grabbed the swords and fastened them to my waist. Also, pulling another sports bag from the cupboard, I threw in the binoculars and some spare batteries for the two small LED torches and all the matches in the draw. Rope, I thought.

'Is there's still room in the bag,' shouted Silvanill from a different room.

'Yes, but it's for Orumkin; she will get young with us.'

Fire seemed to engulf the house, 'TIME TO GO,

NOW!'