

## Snippet from **Into Another Dimension** – Kass Harker

When she climbed out, she was confused. The path she thought she'd come down was gone. Maybe she climbed out the wrong side, so she walked around the tree. It was just undergrowth, very green and the dappled light made it look like it was flickering. She looked east, then south. Nothing looked familiar. "It's only a small bush," she mumbled, "I'll just walk until I'm out". So she headed off in a northerly direction. Well, at least that's what she guessed it was.

After ten minutes, she still didn't recognise anything and she couldn't hear any of the usual sounds. Distant sounds of town could normally be heard no matter where you were in the bush if you listened hard enough. Dogs barking, the sound of an engine, someone using a lawn mower. She couldn't hear any of those.

Just when she was starting to worry, she heard the sound of voices and footsteps in the bush nearby. She turned to the sound and there was Edward, walking along, talking to his Futuricator like it was the most natural thing in the world to do. He looked up saying, "Where on earth have you been? We've been looking for you for ages."

Before Gemma could answer, Edward said, "It's a great game, eh sis?" Do you want to play again?"

"Edward have you noticed anything weird?" Gemma asked.

"Like what?" said Edward.

"Like, there's no path. Like you can't hear any normal sounds. Like the trees look different," she said noticing this for the first time. "Look," she said, reaching out to a tree. "It's sort of blue green. That's not right, our tree trunks are brown or rusty coloured."

Edward now started to notice. “Yes!” he said, “the ferns are red and purple,” and as he said that with a questioning tone, he looked up to see if the sun had started to set. It hit him that something was very wrong because he couldn’t see the sky. The tree canopy was so thick, all he could see was trees.

“Hey!” he said. “What’s up here? Look, Gem. You can’t even see the sky. So how come there’s still so much light?”

They looked at each other with the same scary thought. “Where are we?”

The Futuristicator beeped and then in an electronic voice said “Picturedurmia.”

Neither Edward nor Gemma took notice of the Futuristicator, thinking it was some pre-programmed squawk.

They both sat on the ground. “We need a plan,” Gemma said. “We are either really lost or *we’ve* lost it. So, let’s just say we’re lost. Can we programme the Futuristicator to go find home and lead them back to get us?”

Edward pulled the instruction book from his back pocket. He thumbed the pages till he found a chapter on GPS instructions. “Yes! I think we have it here,” he said and began to read. “Oh damn!” he said. “We needed to set coordinates at the beginning, or need to know where we are now.”

“Picturedurmia,” the electronic voice said again.

“So can it get a GPS signal at all?” Gemma asked, feeling quite grown-up. She’d helped her father set his up in the car and knew a bit about the tech-speak.

“I don’t think it has a Wi-Fi connection,” Edward replied, looking at the instructions some more.

“You are in Picturedurmia,” the electronic voice said again.

Edward and Gemma stared wide-eyed at the machine. “Are you talking to us?” Gemma asked tentatively.

“Beep, beep, yes,” was the response.

Gemma fell back in surprise. “You’re kidding, you’re a toy. You can’t talk,” she said to herself really, and shrugged at Edward when the Futuristicator said, “I am a product of space 2025 and I have a sophisticated comprehension and vocabulary databank. I am programmed for over five billion functions and can matriculate, calculate, and compile faster than the human brain at 160 IQ.”

“OMG, Edward! Where did Dad get this thing?” Gemma blurted.

Edward had listened with extreme interest to the Futuristicator outlining its abilities and said, “OK, so you can get us out of here right?”

The Futuristicator was silent. “Right?” Edward demanded.

“I am processing!” the Futuristicator said.

Gemma snorted. “Well, that’s *you* told Edward.”

The Futuristicator started to blink and flash frantically and then . . .

“You are currently in Picturedurmia. The next exit window is 10 a.m.”

“Great,” said Gemma. “We have to stay here all night.”

“On the 4<sup>th</sup> moon,” the Futuristicator said.

“When the heck is the 4<sup>th</sup> moon?” Edward asked.

“Two days in your time,” the Futuristicator said.