

# The Mirror of Destiny

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*Owen, a young boy with a crazy imagination, discovers that there may be a world beyond Earth, and tries to unsolve the mystery of the "Vanishings". However, his undying love for his girlfriend holds him back.*

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# 1 - Hero at First Sight

## The Mirror of Destiny Part 1: Headstrong Chapter 1: Hero at First Sight

He was four years old when he realised that the world was crazy. And not just in a metaphorical sense either; things happened with seemingly no logic at all behind them. Not that he was the voice of reason or anything, but why, oh why did they always happen to *him*?! There was no use trying to avoid it. Something drastic was taking place, and he just happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time. It was 199X. Nobody had foreseen it coming; they all lay unsuspecting and cosy in their beds. Even the usually noisy, yapping neighbourhood dogs were too busy sleeping to notice anything strange. It started slowly. A rumbling, a quiet rumbling. Not enough to stir the village into trouble, however. It grew loud, fierce. Faulty streetlights began to flicker on and off, as if blinking in confusion. It was rapidly increasing; trees were shivering down to their very roots. Before anyone could expect it, a massive crash, an explosion, sounded, booming across the entire town, causing immediate panic to those who had heard it.

Owen was no exception.

“What the hell was that?!” he screamed out loud, sitting upright and covering his ears with his pillow, even though the sound had long gone. Brown eyes darted around the room. Everything seemed to be fine, although one of his action figures had fallen off the shelf. He tip-toed over to the window and peered outside to see what was happening.

Nothing was going on... Well, apart from car alarms screeching endlessly, dogs barking, cats yowling, and neighbours running to each other's houses in their jammies to see what was going on. Deciding to see if his family were following the same trend, he left the window and went out the door.

The first thing Owen saw as he was coming downstairs was a black, shaggy mess. He didn't recognise it for a few seconds, and then discovered that it was actually his mother's hairstyle. She was always the kind of woman who seemingly cared more about that bit of fluff on top of your head than life itself. She never let anybody outside the family see her head in a state like this, and those who did see her... Well, they were never heard of again. This was probably why she was talking on the phone instead of running around the neighbourhood.

“Hello? Hello?!” she was roaring at the handset like it was some sort of... miniscule, deaf old man.

“I'm sorry, we are unable to – beeeeeeeeeeeeeeeep.” His mom cut off that monotone voice and slammed the handset back on the telephone. “God, none of the telephone lines are working!” she screeched at Owen, like it was his fault or something.

“Uhh...” Owen began, but was unable to finish as the doorbell rang, not once, not twice, but four times. His mom groaned in irritation then turned to a wall mirror to put on some make-up gunk or something.

“Harvey!” she called. “Harvey, answer the door!”

“Huh... what?” A sleepy voice droned from upstairs. Owen's dad was unbelievably lazy, probably didn't care about the whole mayhem.

“Someone's at the door, answer it!” she called again, continuing to attempt to pretty herself up, but she simply could not even dare to answer the door with her hair still being a frizzbomb.

“What was that, Jennifer?” His dad asked, stumbling down the stairs in stripy, blue and white boxers, rubbing his still tired-looking eyes.

“ANSWER THE frackING DOOR, HARVEY!” she screeched, holding her lipstick as if she was about to throw it at him, but she managed to stop herself. She gave him “the glare”, and the poor, half naked husband scurried to the door to answer it.

There was a general rule in this household, and that was if she gave you “the glare”, you had to do what she wanted right there and then. The glare itself consisted of no more than furrowed eyebrows and narrowed hazel eyes, but it was darn well effective. If you didn’t do what she commanded, well... Let’s just say that her bite is just as bad as her bark.

“Oh, hello M-Mr Mueller, I was wondering...”

Owen didn’t really pay attention to the conversation, and was instead distracted by a rabbit cage in the far corner of the living room... Or rather, what was in it. A rabbit, still in its youth, was chewing ravenously on the gate. Probably was starving, and Owen doubted that the metal bars of the cage would have tasted very nice.

“Here ya go, Peanut,” he said, opening the door and pouring in some brown pellets from a nearby bag into his little red bowl. It wasn’t long before it began to nibble on its lunch. He reached his finger through the bars and tickled Peanut’s ears. It didn’t give much of a reaction, but it still made him feel warm inside.

Owen glanced sideways to see that his mother had moved on from plastering those disgusting chemicals to her face and had gone one to pouring all sorts of lotions and potions onto her do. A baby cried from upstairs. Actually, there had been a baby crying for a while now, but it had gotten much louder to the point where he knew it was actually coming from inside the house, and not someone else’s baby or anything.

His mom looked frustrated, and Owen recalled yet another general house rule. You never, EVER interrupt his mother during a hair-fixing session. Those who broke this rule were given no mercy, in the form of shouting, screaming, and a harsh, harsh punishment. 6 month old babies were no exception. However, given the current circumstances, little Wendy Anne Mueller managed to get off lightly with a simple “SHUT UP!!”

It didn’t work, of course it didn’t work! Wendy hadn’t even learnt to talk yet!

Seeing as her shouting had failed to get any satisfying result, she called on the next best thing – her husband. Unfortunately, he was still at the door, having a casual conversation with his neighbour.

“HARVEY!” she howled.

“Yeah?” his dad called back, not nearly as crazy sounding.

“WENDY’S CRYING. YOU BETTER GO FIX IT.”

His dad sighed to the neighbour. “Sorry, but... I’m gonna have to go.”

His companion shrugged it off. “Yeah, I understand. She sounds really pissed.”

His dad winced at this. “It’s not as bad as it seems.” Shutting the door on him, he screeched back at his wife. “WHY DON’T YOU FIX IT?!”

“I’M DOING MY HAIR!”

“YOU CAN DO IT AFTER!”

“NO, I’M DOING IT NOW!”

Owen was feeling awkward, especially since his parents were screaming as if they were miles apart, yet they were in the same room. Peanut twitched his ears in annoyance.

“Fine,” his dad growled in defeat, and began to climb up the stairs. He glanced back once at Owen, and frowned. “And why’re you still up? Don’t you know how late it is?”

Owen simply shrugged, and his dad just took that as his answer and continued to go upstairs.

He was getting distracted from his real aim, so much had happened in so little time. He wanted to see

what had caused the crash.

Taking extra caution not to be noticed by his ever-busy mother, he began tip-toeing to the front door in a comical fashion.

“Owen, where are you going?”

Busted. Slowly, he turned around to face his capturer. With a sweet, innocent smile playing on his lips, he sweetly cooed “I just wanted to see what was going on outside, mum.”

His mother shrugged, as if un-interested in his sweet talk. “Whatever. I know you’ll just go out whether I tell you to or not, so I’ll just leave you to it. At least have the decency to change out of your pyjamas first though.”

Either his mother was unaware that lettering her four year old son roam about in the dark was irresponsible, or she officially rocked. His heart leapt anyway, and he scurried up the stairs and almost did a world record quick change. *Almost.*

When he returned downstairs, everything was quiet again, aside from his mother still fumbling around with hair products.

He decided to have a peep out the window, only he couldn’t really see anything... apart from a big row of bushes that completely obscured the sight outside the window. Whoever designed the garden sure did a lousy job at it.

Deciding that he didn’t want to go out alone, he opened the cage door for Peanut and lifted him out. The brown haired rabbit was squirming in his grasp a little, and Owen held him tighter. His mother seemed to be paying no attention as he swung open the front door and stepped outside.

He was half expecting to be dumped in some sort of wonderland with munchkins greeting him from everywhere, but everything was just the same as normal, except it was night. He’d never really been outside at night time, and was almost as if stepping into some sort of alternate universe.

Peanut was still struggling in his grasp, and Owen decided to loosen his grip *just a little bit* should his pet rabbit be uncomfortable. Unfortunately, this did more bad than good, as the furry little creature leaped out of his grasp and bounded away into the bushes, never to be seen again. Owen blinked in confusion, the whole thing happening too quickly to get his head around it. Then the truth hit him – he was hardly more than two steps outside his front door, and he’d already lost his pet rabbit.

“Muuuum!” he cried, running in. His mum was still doing her hair. Typical. “Peanut ran away!”

“That’s nice.”

Well, that went over like a lead balloon. Owen furrowed his eyebrows, not pleased at all with his mum’s reaction. “That’s not nice, mom.”

His mother paused, and then turned around to face her son with a frown firmly fixed on her face. “Sorry, what was that, darling?”

Owen let out a big sigh. At least she was listening now. “I said, Peanut ran away.”

“Oh.” Much to his dismay, she simply turned around and continued to fiddle around in front of the mirror. “Then you’d better go and find him.”

“But-!”

“You know the rules of the house; you lose it, you find it.”

Owen had never heard that one before, or maybe he had and had just forgotten it. Either way, as much as it seemed to be that she was just making up these rules, he had to obey them if he wanted to live another day.

He stepped outside the second time that night, and it was just the same as the first, albeit in lower spirits. The first place he looked was underneath the bushes that Peanut escaped through. He didn’t expect to find him there, and his prediction came true in a matter of minutes, so he continued to search elsewhere.

As he exited the garden, the whole world seemed like some dark, moonlit maze, but as his eyes

adjusted to it, he found he could recognise some familiar landmarks. He could see his neighbour's house across the street flashing at him – their Christmas lights were still up. Owen scoffed at this, and called them dummies under his breath, despite the fact that his own house was also littered with neglected holiday decorations. He never noticed this though.

Two amber, cautious cat eyes glared at him from underneath someone's car. Owen frowned at this – he was not fond of cats at all. All they did was scratch, spit and meow all the time, and it wasn't even worth filling their bowl with food because all they would do is turn their nose up at it and walk away. He was relieved that his family shared his same philosophy – they wouldn't allow anything to do with cats in their house, no matter how vague it was. He secretly hoped at the car would suddenly come to life and run the greedy thing over, even though it was too much wishful thinking.

Tearing his eyes away from the flea-ridden beast, he briefly remembered that he was supposed to be looking for Peanut. He half-heartedly looked underneath a discarded newspaper and sighed. Peanut could be anywhere by now... The furry little thing had probably gone to another planet for all he knew. Nevertheless, if he couldn't find his beloved furry friend, the least he could do was find out what caused the noise. He peeked around the neighbourhood, looking for some clues. There wasn't as many people running around now, but there was still quite a few, toddling around in bedtime clothing, looking like complete numpties while doing so. If the situation at hand wasn't dire, he would have laughed at them. One of them stopped by him, looking at him curiously.

"What're you doing in the middle of the night?" he asked, looking a bit tired. He let out a yawn, and Owen found himself compelled to yawn too. Darn its contagiousness!

He didn't really have the chance to reply, because the man continued. "Anyway, have you seen a small, brown dog anywhere?"

Owen tried to think back and remember. What was that thing he saw under the car earlier...? Nah, that was a cat. The man frowned and continued. "Furry, short, and it has four legs..." He knew what a dog looked like, darn it! Excuse him for actually thinking before he replied!

"Nope," he simply said.

"Oh, okay, if you do, be sure to tell me!" the man said, toddling off to another house. Owen snorted in defiance – even if he did see a small, brown dog, he wouldn't tell him anyway, mostly because he didn't even see what the man looked like, nor did he have any idea where the hell he lived. There were probably over a thousand small, brown dogs in Solace Woods.

Feeling slightly awkward due to the fact that it wasn't often that grown men in pyjamas would leap out at him at night in the middle of the streets, he decided to try and clear his head and look for a solution (which, at this point, he didn't care what it was the solution was for, he just wanted one).

He came to the conclusion that whatever had caused the explosion, it hadn't come from the street he was in right now. He was certain of that. Although, he soon realised that there wasn't really anything to draw from this amazing conclusion, because he still didn't have a clue what to do next.

He looked over place, hoping to find something that would give him some sort of clue where to look next. Leaves and litter were carelessly strewn over the road, garages were decorated with all sorts of faded graffiti, and there was a very distinct smoke coming from the top of the hill... Wait, what? Looking again, he was sure enough that there was a pinkish-looking fog on the peak of the hill that his town resided on. He wasn't sure if this is what caused the noise or not, but it definitely wasn't normal, and Owen felt that he had to investigate. Had no one else noticed this...?

Owen began to hike up the hill. It wouldn't be a long walk or anything, but Owen was already tired, and not just because of the late night. There was something exhilarating as he climbed up, and just the sense of knowing he would finally know what was going on.

Of course, all of his hopes were dashed before he even reached to top. For a start, he actually wasn't able to get to the top because the only path to the peak was littered with police and random roadblocks.

He realised that he wasn't the only one there too. There was a hefty bundle of angry citizens crowding the police shouting things like "What's going on?!" and "I need to go up there!" despite the fact it was usually the most desolate place in town. Owen swerved through people's legs to take a closer look. "Alright, everybody stay calm!" one of the officers said. "We're just going for the world record for pointless roadblocks."

"What about that smoke on top of the hill?" a woman asked.

"Oh yeah, that too."

More bickering ensued. The police didn't seem to be doing anything remotely useful; they were just lounging around and munching on a donut or two, and then conjuring a lame excuse that they didn't know if it was safe enough to go near the cause of the smoke. What pansies!

He noticed that there was a police car parked very close to him that led right past the rabble. Nobody had noticed him yet, and he thought that he could use this to advantage. He could easily sneak under the car right past them!

He bent down on one knee next to the car, realising that it was lower down than he thought it was.

Taking chances, he ducked his head right under and began to crawl.

It was dark down there, and the ground was wet and cold. He bumped his head a few times on the metal stuff above him, but considering that the car belonged to some guys with guns, the two minute journey was relatively safe. He recalled that cat he saw earlier, and wondered why it would even think of nesting under a car.

He reached the other side, feeling satisfied. The problem was that the path ahead of him was clear.

There was nothing to hide behind. If he tried to make a run for it, somebody might see him... He didn't have anything to lose though.

Holding back a valiant cry, he leaped forward, and then ran for the nearest bush, constantly tripping his own legs. Time dragged on forever while he was out there, and it almost felt as if everyone was looking at him. When he finally reached the sweet sanctuary of the bush, he peeped out to find that nobody was so much as even glancing at him; they were all still arguing with the lazy policemen. He sighed in relief; at least now he didn't have to worry about prying eyes seeing him sneak past the police. He felt a stinging urge to jump up and make a run for it to the top of the hill; it must be determination.

As prepared himself to run, he soon realised that it wasn't determination at all, there were thorns digging into his side. Letting out a yelp, he quickly jumped, pulling the thorns out. They had only dug into his t-shirt, and they were easy to get off. As he moved, he noticed a rabbit jump out of the bush too. Was it...?

He didn't have the time to see if it was Peanut or not, as it quickly dashed out of sight as soon as it had appeared.

He hurried up the hill, despite the fact that there was no real danger, just anticipation.

His eyes brightened when he saw a dark brown shaggy pelt, recognising it even in the dim moonlight. It was Peanut! However his joy was short-lived when saw what was in front of it. The source of the smoke. In all honesty, he didn't expect it at all. A giant meteor was embedded deep into the earth, without leaving much of a crater at all. He saw it was dark blue or purple, he couldn't tell, but through the holes, there was a thin trail of oddly coloured smoke trickling. The abnormality of it all; he could see why the policemen didn't want to get near it.

However, Peanut was fearless, and seemed undeterred by the whole thing, reaching forward with a small paw to touch the strange object.

A sudden growl interrupted it, and Owen recalled how hungry he was. It sure was a while since he last ate-

The growl swiftly turned into a bark, and Owen immediately realised that *that* didn't come from his stomach. He turned around slowly to see a dog... a small, brown dog. It looked menacing, it's small

black eyes narrowed into slits, and every single one of its gnarly teeth showing. It wasn't facing Owen however; it was facing his furry companion. Owen looked at Peanut to find that its fur was standing on end – it looked terrified.

Before he had a chance to think, the dog leaped forward, and Owen found himself shielding his pet. "Raaaaaawwwrrrrgghhh!"

The dog was stronger than it looked for its size, and it knocked him back roughly, so he bumped into the meteor.

A sudden pain in his left arm brought him to his senses. The dog, now snarling viciously had grappled onto him, sharp teeth digging into his skin painfully. As he screamed in horror, he shook his arm off to get the monster off, but to no avail. His head was throbbing from the impact of his landing, and the direness of the situation. He couldn't think straight... He just wanted this dog off him!

As the dog clung on tighter, red liquid began to trickle down his arm. It... hurt! He kicked the dog in the side, again and again. "Get OFF!" he screamed, kicking it as hard as he could, and watched it let go and blunder away. Good riddance... Despite the size of the dog, it left more than just a mark on his arm, but a spewing red mess. It excruciatingly painful, and it became too much of a task not to burst into tears.

Through blurred eyes, he could see Peanut across from him, doing nothing but stare at him through emotionless, black eyes. Why wouldn't Peanut say anything?!

Wiping away some of the blood and tears, he took another look at the wound. It already seemed to be swelling, and although the blood had stopped coming out at a fast rate, there was still some left. He snivelled some more and briefly remembered what his father told him one night when he fell over and bruised his knee: "*Crying is for babies!*"

Wiping away the last of his tears, he did his best to contain the rest of it, however much he wanted it all to come out. There was no time for crying now, and he definitely wouldn't be called a baby!

Peanut jumped up next to him, and Owen stroked its ears lovingly.

*Now I call that bravery...*

Owen's heart skipped the beat, the suddenness of the voice frightening him. Had Peanut just spoken to him? Or was it his conscious talking to him, or something deeper that he did not understand?

*Is he the one...?*

It was a different voice from the first one, but it still had the same manliness to it. He wondered briefly if the police had found him, but the voice sounded way too close to be anybody more than a few inches away.

The one voice broke into many different voices, and all he could hear was incoherent murmurs, supposedly talking about him.

He remembered that he was leaning on the meteor, and came up with the idea that it had something to do with that. He leaned forward slightly so that he wasn't touching the meteor anymore, and the voices immediately stopped. He touched the meteor and the voices started again... That was more than a little odd...

The voices died down, and Owen felt a bit disappointed; he wanted to listen to them. He was about to give up and go back home when one of them spoke again.

*No, wait!*

Owen decided that he would wait; he wasn't in the mood to be rebellious.

*Thanks.*

Yeah, whatever. Owen didn't have all day, or night, in his case.

*We need your help!*

Owen paused in confusion. They needed his help? Then again, he was most likely the first person to touch it, and they were falsely convinced by his "heroic deed" that he was someone who would be

willing help. All he did was get bitten though, and he failed to see why that should be known as bravery. *The "humans" are corrupting our planet, and we need one from the planet "Earth" to stop them!* "Huh?" Conducting... contracting... constipating? What the hell was that word? His face marred into a frown, he began to hear more murmurs, but this time, they sounded more uncertain.

*Perhaps he needs time... Perhaps it is not now he shall save us...*

"Time for what?" he questioned, but the voices said no more. Everything was silent as it had been a few minutes ago, and all he could hear was his own breathing and a car beeping in the far distance. He waited, he was clueless of how long he had waited for, but it became clear the meteor, or whatever the voice came from, wasn't going to reply. The smoke had stopped trickling out of the holes. He felt reluctant to leave the meteor however; if he could only hear the voices when he was touching it, then he might not be able to hear them again if he left!

Seeing a chip of the meteor lying on the ground, he bent over to pick it up. It seemed to twinkle a little in his hand, and he smiled. He was going to keep this safe, so he could hear the voices again another time. Stuffing the sharp little stone into his pocket, he picked up Peanut and began to head home. His arm was still stinging, but there wasn't anything he could do about it at the moment, except from hope that his family never saw it, or they'd never shut up about it. The rabbit was strangely limp in his arm, but he thought nothing of it, but good behaviour.

"I'm home!" he called as soon as he stepped through the door. Nobody seemed interested in greeting him though, mostly because nobody was even there. Sighing in disappointment, he locked Peanut back into his cage and made his way upstairs.

"Owen, is that you back?" his mum called from her bedroom. So somebody was still awake...

"I found Peanut!" Owen called back.

"Good... Just don't let that happen again..." There was another yawn and the sound of someone moving around under covers. Owen couldn't help but notice that it was a bit pointless to be doing her hair just before going to bed. Then again, she was a woman, and Owen knew that he could never truly understand the opposite gender.

He went back inside his room and closed the door. It was just the way he had left it; the fallen action figure was still on the floor. He picked it up and put it back on its shelf, but a bit further back so it wouldn't fall off next time, if there would be a next time.

After digging around in his pocket a little, he brought out the stone from the meteor, to find it was still twinkling a little. He opened the drawers with all his underpants in them, certain that nobody would be raking through them. It was the best hiding place he could think of at the moment.

Slumping down on the bed, he pulled the covers over him to catch up on that much needed shut-eye. The meteor, the message, the voice – all of it could be forgotten, for now.