5RELQ LQ 'HOLJKW·V LQWLPDWH HPE
resolution. Security or misery? Safety or risk? Creation or numbness? Joy or sadness? Escape a painful life, still dimly remembered? Embrace future heaven and its possibilities, or return to past hell? Achieve dreamed-of, poly-dimensional performing opportunities ?

Delight walks to the mirror inside the living -room door, studying its reflection. It inhales intensely, cigar glowing in the gloom. Once, twice, three times it removes its cigar, exhales, and replaces the cigar between its lips, determinedly. It runs its hands over its breasts, waist, hips. It examines its manicure, pats its lips. It caresses the silver tips of its wig, touches its cheek, taps its eyes with its nails. It nods. Recognition? Satisfaction? Pleasure?

For Mary, time stretches excruciatingly, memories of the day they signed their agreement. She has done all she can. She feels fear and anticipation, unable³ as always³ to guess what Delight is thinking or feeling, what decision it will reach. Being deprived of its company, in its present and future forms, fills her with « emptiness.

It circles the patio, moving with flawless poise. Finally, it returns to her, slowly, removes its cigar, and stubs it out, delaying its exhale as long as it can, provoking her. It steps close to Mary, face to face, motionless for a long moment. Mary waits and wonders, hopes and dreams, looking into its green glass eyes, seeing human eyelids flicker in the pupils. For the first time in more years than she can recall, shocking herself, she finds her face wet with tears.

It lifts an index finger, asking for time. It walks inside, WR WKH NLWFKHQ LVODQG WDNHV RXW 0DU slowly and carefully, tears off the sheet, replaces pad and pen in the drawer. Then, impulsively, it re -opens and searches the