

# The Key Room



**A really strange thing that happened  
in an open thread**

# The Key Room

By DurnedYankee and BJM

Comment from DurnedYankee | Time: September 4, 2018, 5:01 pm

## Chapter 1: A surprise

Weasel approached the “key room”, as they liked to call it, with some trepidation. Over the course of years the stacks of boxes had grown, spreading from the least used corner of the room adjacent to the kitchen wall further and further into the center of the room until there was only a small, not quite winding path that led from the kitchen to the living room through the wilderness of boxes.

These boxes were generally filled with books, at least that’s what they were filled with when they came into the house, through the kitchen door, to be placed, more and more precariously over time, in said ‘key room’. Now years of stacking and shifting, and dust, had tended to make for a rather dramatically rickety forest despite efforts to the contrary. Still, it would have to be dealt with, because she had cousins coming from America and, well, it wouldn’t do to have them see it that way.

Charlotte the cat strolled in from the living room as Weasel contemplated her starting point, gave her a look that said “probably best to just leave this be” and continued on into the kitchen with a flick of her tail.

“Thanks for the welcome advice, the least you could do is wait and see if there’s a horde of mice gone native in here” Weasel said as she watched the cat’s strolling retreat.

“Ah well, this ain’t going to get done if I don’t get started” she sighed, deciding on the obvious nearer, lower stacks as her starting point. It wasn’t exactly the Augean stables was it.

*(all right – I don't want to go too far into this – are we doing light never ending story or horrid?)*

**Comment from DurnedYankee | Time:** September 5, 2018, 1:38 pm

*I'm goin with not horrid...*

Two hours later Weasel had made a nice dent in her pile clearing and hauling. Not to mention the additional bits of necessary cobweb cleaning.

She'd felled a few stacks of boxes and began sorting the books onto the shelves she'd bought. Now they were stashed in various places around the house, which naturally made the moving slower, but they wouldn't go where the boxes were, because, well, there were boxes.

Knocking out 10 had taken longer than she'd liked, but she was slowly triumphing over the wilderness.

"Time" she thought "for a much deserved break."

"How about a lovely cup of tea dear?" she said in a high and very British falsetto.

Not that hot tea was needed, temperatures had gotten completely out of hand lately, but the English alleged drinking hot tea made you feel cooler.

Which turned out to be perfectly true, because the additional heat made you sweat more, helping you cool you down faster.

Not exactly a lady-like thing to sweat, but her southern-born mother had assured her "ladies didn't sweat, they glistened'.

Whichever, she was a bit soggy around the edges no matter what you called it and a bit more would hardly be noticed.

The process of making tea, properly, would give her a reason to take a real break and catch her breath.

She wondered for a moment where Uncle Badger was, realizing he probably wouldn't be back for at least another hour.

"Heh – won't he be surprised to see how much I've cleared" she said aloud, making her way into the kitchen to put on the kettle.

Charlotte was curled up peacefully on a chair.

Raising her head briefly she "merrowed" to acknowledge Weasel's presence before stretching and settling her chin across an outstretched paw, watching Weasel through drowsy eyes.

"Lucky for you I didn't get taken by the Mouse King" Weasel said without looking at her.

"Then you'd be here alone with those three maniacs", referring to the new unnamed male kitten they'd recently taken in, the infamous and legendary "Mad" Jack, and Uncle B.

"We ladies, we must stick together" she added.

Charlotte lifted her head, giving her a wide eyed stare for a long moment. She meowed softly this time and then turned her head away, shifting in place.

"Yes, that's right, go ahead, ignore me, it's your job as a cat after all" Weasel said with a chuckle.

A sound, like a box pile shifting, came from the other room. Charlotte's ears twitched alertly and she sat up, staring intently at the doorway before giving Weasel an equally intense look and yet another "meow".

But then she shook her head briskly and lay back down, though this time she kept half lidded attention on the door from the kitchen in a way that only a cat can do.

"Hm" Weasel said, turning briefly, "must have unbalanced something", but there was no further noise, no crash of a box tower coming down, so she carried on, prepping the tea cup and bag.



That done she sat herself, closing her eyes and leaning back comfortably to enjoy the slight breeze from the kitchen windows as it billowed the sheer curtains across the sill and red and white checkered table cloth.

**Comment from BJM | Time: September 5, 2018, 4:08 pm**

*....That done she sat herself, closing her eyes and leaning back comfortably to enjoy the slight breeze from the kitchen windows as it billowed the sheer curtains across the sill and red and white checkered table cloth.*

Then she heard it....a low hum.

Weasel began to sway, her face ghostly pale as the room was humming harder; the ceiling flew away.

Charlotte growled and leapt into the void. A book fell on the table with a resounding thud as a galaxy of uncharted stars dissolved back into her white beadboard ceiling.

Weasel blinked and shook her head, thinking she had nodded off, she stared blankly at the object laying on her freshly ironed red & white checkered tablecloth.

The book was richly bound in fine Spanish leather “Resera Portam” enlaid on the cover in silver. Weasel set her tea cup down and reached for the book. Although the book was rather thick, it felt light in her hand as she ran her fingers over the cool silver a bright blue light outlined the letters.

Startled, Weasel stood up tipping her chair over with a resounding bang!

“Stoaty? You okay?” Uncle B called as he entered the empty kitchen and righted the chair. Hmmm... he thought must have been the cat. Then he noticed.

**Comment from DurnedYankee | Time: September 5, 2018, 7:12 pm**

*Startled, Weasel stood up tipping her chair over with a resounding bang!*

*“Stoaty? You okay?” Uncle B called as he entered the empty kitchen and righted the chair. Hmmm... he thought must have been the cat. Then he...*

... noticed the tea cup sitting on the table. Touching the side he could feel it was still warm. Odd.

“Stoaty?”

He peered into the key room, noting she had done sterling work in clearing away the clutter.

“Stoaty!” he called again, passing on into the living room.

He saw the book shelf she’d added in the far corner, some of the shelves already partially filled, but no sign of herself.

“Where the devil has she gotten off to?” he wondered aloud.

## **Chapter 2: The Other Side.**

She felt a dizzying rush for an instant and stumbled against the table, rocking it hard against the sill.

“Shit!” she grabbed hastily for the teacup to prevent it from spilling onto the flagstone floor. But....there *was* no teacup.

Charlotte was crouched at her feet, facing the key room, back arched and fur puffed, the tip of her tail kinked and flicking furiously.

“What the hell? Charlotte what gives?”

A low, very masculine voice, not Uncle B’s, spoke from behind her in a stilted accent.

“That took you long enough madam, my patience was wearing thin.” Charlotte’s throaty growl made her turn quickly.

A tall dark haired man, dressed in a style reminiscent of a German mercenary Landsknecht, stood in the doorway to the book room.

He wore a beret made of bi colored wool, crimson and hunter green. His tunic was slit and ruffled and he wore a knee length grey wool coat with puffy sleeves, his woolen breeches one leg green, the other red, with yellow underlay visible in the slits. His shoes were of fine soft brown leather.

And his ears were – pointed.

He was quite a sight, and she couldn't help but titter at first. This *was* England after all but even so.

So she had dozed off then. What mischief had Uncle B gotten up to now, this was just like him.

The man's piercing look stopped her initial laughter dead.

"The books." he said with what was obviously barely stifled anger. "What have you done with the books? Return them immediately. They *must* be returned, and the room set back as it was."

**Comment from BJM | Time:** September 6, 2018, 1:18 am

*...He saw the book shelf she'd added in the far corner, some of the shelves already partially filled, but no sign of herself.*

*"Where the devil has she gotten off to?" he wondered aloud.*

As Uncle B turned to leave, he saw that the straps were undone on the battered campaign trunk he and Weasel recently bought at a fair; the lid was ajar. "Odd" he thought we hadn't a key.

A faint hum emanated from the trunk as he approached. He hadn't noticed the fine leather and wondered how Weasel cleaned it up so well. Uncle B lifted the lid to reveal three compartments, all but one locked. Gingerly lifting the lid revealed a deck of Medieval face cards with the motto "Pam and Flush we are all Loo'd", and a small red leather pouch. The pouch contained a single black pearl and a deep

blue cabochon gem.

Holding the gem to the light revealed a fiery interior like an Opal. As B turned the gemstone a beam of light passed through the gemstone striking the lock on the second compartment. It popped open. Empty. As B contemplated on how to proceed he rolled the pearl gently in his palm and it occurred to him that the lock on the third compartment had a round opening. He dropped the pearl in and the lid slid back.

“MEOW!!”



**Comment from DurnedYankee | Time:** September 6, 2018, 2:25 am With visuals no less!!!!

[http://www.britishmuseum.org/collectionimages/AN00608/AN00608377\\_001\\_1.jpg?width=304](http://www.britishmuseum.org/collectionimages/AN00608/AN00608377_001_1.jpg?width=304)



*As B contemplated on how to proceed he rolled the pearl gently in his palm and it occurred to him that the lock on the third compartment had a round opening. He dropped the pearl in and the lid slid back.*

*“MEOW!!”*

Weasel visibly recoiled at the bite in his words.

Obviously *not* some participant in a fete that Uncle B had roped into a joke, and under the circumstance of being in *her* house, uninvited, his imperious tone certainly left a lot to be desired.

What was he even doing here?

“I don’t know who you are, but you can’t just come into a person’s house dressed like some Venetian fop and order them around buster.”

*And how had he known she had cleaned the books in the key room?* the thought flitted through her mind.

“Imperial Landknecht” he corrected “and just so, I cannot, as you say, just come in here. The old hex wards in your framing beams bar me from every room of this house but one” he motioned to the key room behind him.

“If I could, I would amend this situation myself, but as it is I must demand you put it to rights. The books must be returned to this room or I will not be responsible for the consequences.”

“Had I not been otherwise occupied I would have stopped you from proceeding, now...”, he left the thought uncompleted.

Weasel eyed him with more than some suspicion, at her feet Charlotte was poised crouched, ready to pounce.

“Maybe you better explain all of this bub. Why and *how* are you in our house and what difference does it make to you whether or not I move the books, and more to the point, what do you think you’re going to do about it if I *don’t* cooperate with your....demands?”

That was when Charlotte spoke.

“The games afoot again, you ratty bastard. It is good for you you cannot come in here. I would swipe your nose off for the way you abandoned me to the unkind ministries of that fox Rupert, I came away barely alive, and I have not forgotten.”

Weasel’s mouth dropped open in amazement as she stared down at the cat. Her command of English appeared to be surprisingly good, rather surprising indeed.

Charlotte stared back at her, steel green eyes wide, but the pupils narrowed.

“I told you to let that mess be, but what do I know, I am only a minor malk set to watch over Uncle B and his own. Americans.....pfffffffffff”.

**Comment from BJM | Time: September 6, 2018, 4:10 pm**

*“I told you to let that mess be, but what do I know, I am only a minor malk set to watch over Uncle B and his own. Americans.....pfffffffffff”.*

Somewhat taken aback, Weasel looked from Charlotte to the menacing figure and back again before realizing that she was no longer in her kitchen. Well, it was her kitchen but gone were all trappings of modernity.

Logs burned upon study iron firedogs beneath the massive oak lintel of the inglenook. Pottage bubbled in a pot hung over the fire, a haunch of mutton roasted on a grate at the side, bacon and two hams smoked in the chimney. Two bread ovens with their massive stone lintels whitewashed a pale blue were arrayed on either side of the brick fireplace. A large copper tub stacked with faggots stood at the ready for the next baking or bathing.

The fireplace was equipped with side niches, which provided a dry place for the saltbox and sugar loaf between use, away from vermin that might have escaped Charlotte’s attention.

“Well”, she thinks “no sending victuals out to the village baker, and plenty of fuel and meat indicating a prosperous household”.

The room was simply, but comfortably, furnished, with a long table crafted from two thick oak planks, a master's arm chair, benches and stools, a meat safe on the wall. Pots and equipment suspended from the walls and hearth. Pewter tableware and pottery of all shapes and sizes line shelves between the windows.

Suddenly the kitchen door flew open and a small woman in a long bright yellow silk dress glided into the room; peppering Weasel's interlocutor with questions. "Aeden, why are wearing that uniform? Have you secured the books? and who is this person?"

Aeden hesitated, unsure of himself.

"I am not English" Weasel interjected for no particular reason, "I'm American". The woman turned to Weasel "Oh, well then, that explains it" she remarked. Weasel noticed that she too had pointed ears and dark blue eyes, like blueberries.

"Where am I?" Weasel inquired "and who are you?"

Aeden stepped forward menacingly "We'll be asking the questions."

The woman turned her gaze to Aeden "Away with you, you've right mucked it up; I'll tend to this." Tiny sparks trailed from her dress as it swept the floor.

"WTH?" Weasel thought as Aeden cast shade at her and left the room.

"Now dear, please sit down and we'll sort this out. Could you let me have the book?" The woman smiled gesturing toward the chair.

Weasel held the book tighter against her body, she hadn't played all those games for naught. Weasel instinctively sensed that the book was the portal she inadvertently entered. Perhaps it was the only way back to Uncle B.

"I think not, what the bloody hell is going on and what have you done to my cat Charlotte? Weasel exclaimed, standing her ground.

**Comment from BJM | Time: September 7, 2018, 12:53 am**

meanwhile back in Kent...

*...Perhaps it was the only way back to Uncle B.*

“I think not, what the bloody hell is going on and what have you done to my cat Charlotte? Weasel exclaimed, standing her ground.

Now, now dear, let’s not become overwrought...” the diminutive woman began.

“OVERWROUGHT?!! Weasel snorted “I’ll give you overwrought!” as she quickly crossed to the hearth and with one swift motion snatched a large cleaver from its hook. The heavy cleaver tumbled end over end across the room embedding itself in the pantry door with a thud.

Before Weasel could regain her aplomb, the woman raised a be-ringed index finger and the cleaver reversed its path to the hook, gently swinging there as if in a light breeze.

“As I said, please sit down and I’ll try to explain.” The woman said quietly as she pulled the chair out for Weasel and sat, settling her skirts over a wide stool with a faint twinkling sound.

Charlotte leap onto her lap. “Well, come on Weasel, sit. Whom do you think taught me to speak? It’s a ripping yarn, I promise“ Charlotte purred.

Weasel eyed the pair suspiciously, tucking the book firmly down the front of her jeans; she gingerly perched on the edge of the chair. The woman toyed with a stray lock of golden red hair that had fallen from her coiffure as she began to speak.

“I am called Evelyne. This house has stood for many centuries in Aelfdene, as you may know the Shell Grotto is nearby, so our paths often crossed and my people mingled easily with yours. We knew the ways of childbirth, and your people taught us how to brew a pale ale with fine golden bubbles. We enjoy bubbles you know dear...what did you say your name is?” Evelyne asked.

“Weasel.... no, that’s my web name. I’m called Eléonore, Dad was stationed in France...” Weasel trailed off as the bright blue eyes keened.

“Really? that is one of our names too!...do continue dear...what is this web of which you speak and how did it snare you?” Evelyne softly trilled, clapping her small elegant hands together in anticipation of a story.

“Wait. You were explaining how Charlotte and I came to be in this predicament.” Weasel insisted.

Evelyne sighed and began her tale.

“I trust you’ve heard of changlings? Charlotte is such a creature, and you have another called Jack I believe. When one of your wee ones can’t be saved and is near death the parents leave the child on a soft cushion of sweet moss near the spring in the dell near the Grotto. The child crosses over to live with us and a kitten finds its way to a family. My Aeden is your Jack. A right pain in the arse the both of them too.” Evelyn chuckled “Changlings don’t lose the ability to learn language and to speak, but remain mute until released to do so.”

Evelynn cupped her hand under Charlotte’s chin and kissed her pink nose. “Charlotte is my Amrynn, I sent her to you for safe keeping until her destiny is fulfilled.”

**Comment from DurnedYankee | Time: September 7, 2018, 2:27 am**

Meanwhile in a very near other part of Kent...

*“MEOW!!”*

### **Chapter 3: Schrodinger’s Librarian**

A yellow moggy leaped from the third compartment with a piercing yowl, causing Uncle Badger to jump backwards and stumble over the ottoman.

The cat came down in front of the partially filled bookshelf, arching and stretching as though waking from a long slumber.



“Well well, what the deuce...” he started to say before the cat cocked it’s head in an unusual way, lifted it’s right paw and began tracing a pattern in the air before it.

The spot where it traced took on a decidedly glass look, as if a string of water were curling in mid air. The cat’s paw, though blunt, delicately wove a Celtic knot pattern that began to shimmer and smoke.

The humming he’d heard coming from the trunk grew immeasurably louder and he noticed a logo branded on the inner lid of the trunk that he hadn’t notice when he opened it.

A logo that probably every Englishman, man, woman or child, has seen at one time or another even if they didn’t know what it meant – that of the East India Trading Company.

Before he could move or say anything more he suddenly began swaying, or perhaps it was the whole house swaying. The ceiling erupted upwards and a million stars flashed white and dissolved returning it to the same beadboard as before.

The cat, however, was gone, replaced by a diminutive woman in a floor length yellow silk dress. Her ears were pointed, her hair the color of spun honey hued flax, and her eyes were dark blue.

” ‘the deuce’ you say” she chuckled at him “it was Pam and Flush that left me bound.”

She sized Uncle B up with a quick look, started to ask a question of him, and then stopped.

A worried look creased her brow, “what day and month is it scion of Arthur, what year? Quickly!”

Uncle B responded without thinking “September the 6th, 2018”. It had all happened so suddenly he really hadn’t had time to think or even panic.

The woman stared intently at nothing, mumbling about Christian calendars and nodding her head lightly as if mentally jotting numbers on an unseen slate.

“Damn his eyes” she said after a moment, in a more tender fashion, in Uncle B’s opinion, than seemed appropriate for the phrase.

“Herself will be inspecting the tomes two days from now, and I can only imagine what he’s left undone. We’ll be lucky if we don’t hang a 100 of your years on the outer wall. Oh that boy.”

She scurried for the front door, practically shouting even as she fled. “I am pleased to meet you, scion of long dead Arthur. My name is Evelynne, when I have set this matter right perhaps we might talk more”.

The door slammed to behind her, and she was gone.

The otherwise unflappable Uncle B admitted he was rather flapped. And it got worse when he noticed the living room was rather different than it had been.

In fact it was no longer a living room, but more of a craft room, the sort of thing you would expect to find a tradesman like a leather worker or artisan would be quite comfortable in.

Only the trade would be, it appeared, alchemical in nature. There were several copper alembics, grinding pestles, hanging dried herbs, jars full of liquids of varying colors, and bottles, boxes, bins, pouches, bags and sacks, not quite scattered higgledy-piggledy, but certainly verging on organized chaos.

A long swing arm held a copper kettle above a small fire in the hearth and smoke rose lazily up through the flue.

The book case, however remained as it had been – and looked thoroughly out of place. He stepped over to it and lifted one of the books out.

“Alchemy of the Byzantine Mages?” he read a hand lettered gilt title off the spine. The next carried the improbable title “Trans-formative spell casting for mortals”.

He began to read them aloud, each more improbable than the last – “Common poisons and their Creation? Dissertations on Particle Matter and Portal travel theory? Creative Curses and their definitive rules and

uses!”

At that point a voice behind him brought him round.

“So you’re responsible for her release and....oh....and you....ah....that explains Amrynn’s presence. I didn’t realize you were in her charge.” Uncle B gave him a hard unflinching stare and the man looked away, obviously a bit cowed.

“Quite a costume, mind explaining all this?” B motioned around at the change in the room.

“Start with the yourself, and the cat in the box, and then these books, which are certainly none of ours, and” more emphatically and with a dangerous undertone “where’s Weasel?”.

**Comment from BJM | Time: September 7, 2018, 6:58 pm**

*“Start with the yourself, and the cat in the box, and then these books, which are certainly none of ours, and” more emphatically and with a dangerous undertone “where’s Weasel?”.*

## **Chapter 4. A fine silk square of many colors.**

Weasel was curious as to why Aeden set Rupert on Charlotte.

“Because he is jealous and too callow to realize that foxes are untrustworthy. He did not intend Charlotte harm, just to frighten her for his amusement as siblings and cousins do. He ran to my side when he saw his joke was going wrong and an guardian wolf intervened in the nick of time. Rupert will bother her no more.” Evelyne said in a satisfied tone.

“Your tender care and our nightly visits to minster healing potions proved successful. Needless to say Charlotte was not pleased, nor was the Council. There would have been serious consequences had Amlynn’s spirit animal met a hasty end. Aeden was stripped of his apprenticeship and banished to Warwickshshire for a year of living rough.” Evelyne recounted, pursing her lips. “That’s when the trouble really began.”

“Okay, fair enough, but what has this to do with the books and why were we chosen as unwitting keepers?” Weasel asked.

“Oh, that’s easy; location, location, location. We knew the house well, the hex marks, hidey holes and secret passages.” Evelynn explained. “We observed that you were not obsessed with cleaning, tidying or organizing, you are...what is the expression in your native dialect?... laid back. We also enjoyed watching you explore and embrace our customs and country. Your love for all things old, drawings and paintings revealed an old soul, and Uncle B the gentlest of men. We felt sure that you would never find the books. You and Uncle B are not the first custodians of the books and may not be the last.” Evelyn sighed and rose to fetch a pair of pewter ale cups and a ceramic jug covered with beads of condensation, and an immaculate square of linen cloth with small pewter weights in the shape of a dolphin sown on each corner.

Evelyne poured the cool ale into the cups and passed one to Weasel as she settled in to recount Aeden’s adventure in York.

“Hmmm...should I drink this?.” Weasel wondered, as the aroma carried on fine bubbles rose to tickle her nose, she realized that she was parched and pulled a long draught, emptying the cup and slaking her thirst.

Evelyne cast a side eye as Weasel downed the ale, she refilled Weasel’s cup, and delicately sipping her ale, continued the telling of Aeden’s misadventures.

“Aeden is a novice mage and while he knows the books have tremendous the power, he doesn’t yet understand their meaning or purpose, and as in the incident with Charlotte, he is immature, impulsive and easily lead by his desires. His making skills were such that by keeping his cap pulled down over his ears and not being picky about lodgings he survived well enough. He blended in with Warwick’s flotsam of humanity and soon fell into the habit of frequenting pubs to idle the days away. He told of one where a disheveled, drunken youth said to be a Prince of the realm recited

treasonous verse and a fat old man disported with whores and spouted philosophy much to the delight of said Prince and the whore mistress. Therein he met a traveller who was jolly good company, and plied with drink he boasted of the rich leather and silver books that held secrets to obtain great wealth.”

...

Weasel woke with a start, realizing that she had been asleep and sat bolt upright, her heart pounding as she felt for the book. It was still tucked into her pants. She was fully dressed, sneakers and all, lying on the counterpane in a large bed, a quilt had been thrown over her sleeping form...she shifted and the ropes under the down and straw mattresses creaked. She could hear the hustle and bustle of a meal being prepared in the kitchen below. Had she been drugged? If so why didn't her hosts taken the book?

A knock on the door. “Mistress, are you awake?” A young girl wearing a white apron and cap peered around the door. She entered with a tray containing a wedge of farmer's cheese, bread, a pot of honey, a few figs and a jug of warm ale. The maid set the tray down.

“Is there any water? Weasel asked.

The maid timidly pointed to a stand near the window “Aye, a jug and bowl for your ablutions. Would you like it warmed?.”

“No, I mean for drinking” Weasel said.

“Oh no, Mistress you cannot drink water, it will make you mightily ill. The ale is for the drinking.” She made a little curtsy and left.

Weasel rose and used the chamber pot...a tricky business in skinny jeans...now she understood why Medieval women didn't wear knickers. She washed her hands, combed her hair with her fingers, splashed cool water on her face, and tucked into the contents of the tray. She was famished and consumed every delicious crumb and drop. Now what? she thought. Do I go downstairs or wait to be fetched? The door swung open, making the question moot, as Evelyne, swept into the room.



“Good Morning Eléonore, did you sleep well? I’m afraid my tale bored you to sleep” she said with a warm smile.

Weasel, still not feeling all that gracious about being hijacked or whatever this was, bluntly asked “Why didn’t you take the book?”

Evelyne exclaimed “Oh my, I couldn’t do that. You and the book are co-joined, surrounded by the energy flow of an open portal. You may relinquish it but you cannot be forcibly parted from the book. That is why we put you on the bed fully clothed. “

“Come, I would like to show you something I think you will find interesting. Here, cover your head and shoulders so you will not be seen. We can’t have you tramping around dressed as you are.” Evelyne handed Weasel a large sheer square of pale blue silk that changed colors in the light.

**Comment from DurnedYankee | Time:** September 7, 2018, 10:40 pm

*Quite a costume, mind explaining all this?” B motioned around at the change in the room.*

*“Start with the yourself, and the cat in the box, and then these books, which are certainly none of ours, and” more emphatically and with a dangerous undertone “where’s Weasel?”.*

Aeden sighed and skulking into the room and sitting on a low stool by a long oak plank table.

B thought it looked uncomfortable, being more of a cross legged sit than a regular chair, but the clownish fellow was obviously inured to it.

“Based on your tone Uncle B, I’ll answer the last question first” he said, avoiding B’s gaze by observing his shoes as if they were about to flee his feet.

Cheeky bugger!, Uncle B thought, calling him by Eléonore’s name for him, and how did he know *that* . These – people – seemed to know a great deal about them. More than he thought he liked.

“‘Weasel’ as you call her, is safe, with Evelyne, in, “and he paused as

if trying to sort out how to explain ” the kitchen” he settled on the easiest version for now.

“The kitchen; *my* kitchen or the one attached to this version of my house?” he waved around him.

Aeden looked up with surprise and genuine respect in his eyes.

“Yes, I’ve got some inkling of what’s going on here, though for the life of me I can’t imagine how we’re caught up in it. Those games...” and he shook his head ruefully. “At least I’m guessing it’s something like that” B said with narrowed eyes.

“Indeed, you have grasped the basics of the matter. As I said, the kitchen, and I assure you she is safe, probably safer than in our home in the mortal realm.”

“Our home?”

“ah, the one I live in...with you.” Aeden came to his feet and sketched a low bow from the waist.

“As to the first question you asked – myself – I am named Aeden, you’d know my spirit self as “Mad Jack” ” he said raising back up and extending his hand.

B looked at him skeptically but took the proffered hand and shook it lightly.

“You’re...Jack?”

“It’s rather hard to explain” Aeden said.

“Your third question was about the cat in the box, who I assume you already divined to be Evelynne, the senior librarian of Mab’s Great Faerie Library.”

At that point he stopped and smiled.

“That’s three” he said as if B understood.

“That was an answer, and not an answer.” B tilted his head, rifling

back through his memories looking for whatever this chap might be playing at that he thought B knew.

Then it came to him.

“Oh, three questions...you’ll only answer three, is that it?”

Aeden smiled and nodded proudly.

“That last was not well answered.” B pursed his lips and looked Aeden/Jack up and down.

“This is faerie Uncle B, there are rules.”

“Well how about if I violate them by suggesting you give me a better answer for that last one AND an answer about the books as well. Because there are things going on here, in my house, that I don’t exactly approve of, and I don’t have any intention of playing a silly game to get the answers I want.”

Uncle B placed a hand on his shoulder and forcibly sat him back down on the stool, looming over him.

“I’m bound, by the laws!” Aeden yelled, “I...I...well...I could make an exception owing to your heritage, you’re a, special case I suppose, being some bit fay yourself”.

“Then take advantage of my specialness and carry on or I might consider tossing you out and not letting you back in when we get back to the mortal realm” B threatened.

“Why was Evelyne in the campaign trunk, and what is the bloody thing anyway?”

“That’s four and five you know...” Aeden started until B kicked his foot slightly and leaned even closer. He ducked and flinched.

“We were playing Lanterloo, I dealt. I set the pool to confinement to yon trunk. I had flush and Pam, and she was looed.”

“I don’t know the game, but you’re saying the loser was to be confined? For how long?” B asked sternly.

Aeden’s face grew red, then pale.

“for, uh, not as long as I left her there”.

B glowered at him.

“It’s not so bad! You don’t really feel the passing of time, you go in, you’re there, and then you’re out! It’s not that bad! it’s like sleeping!” Aeden squirmed.

“I’m thinking she didn’t bargain on being in there long...how long should it have been?”

“Two weeks, in faerie time” Aeden sulked.

“And how long *was* it” B pressed.

Aeden visibly went through the calculations as he’d seen Evelyne do, his face grew even more pale when he looked back up at B.

“Uh, about...8 years.”

**Comment from BJM Time: September 8, 2018, 12:02 am**

*“Uh, about...8 years.”*

## **Chapter 5: Aeden returns**

“Oooohhhh!” Aeden groaned...his head ached and his stomach churned. He slowly became aware that he was lying in putrid straw and foul smelling water and that the room was heaving to and fro rhythmically. Gradually his eyes focused in the semi-darkness, he could discern a barred door and beyond, an overhead hatch. He rolled over and stood up. His purse was gone, as was his dirk and the carved walnut serpent charm. He chuckled to himself as he thought about the fate of the thief who took the charm. He checked his left boot and the small leather pouch was still in a pocket in the lining. What luck that his assailants were too drunk to thoroughly search his person or didn’t



**Comment from Durnedyankee | Time:** September 8, 2018, 2:00 am

okies – and I’ll continue with Uncle B and Aeden and “the library”. I have a picture you see, courtesy of DailyMail UK –

[https://i.dailymail.co.uk/i/newpix/2018/09/07/12/4FD2519600000578-0-Wiblingen\\_Abbey\\_Library\\_in\\_Germany-a-58\\_1536318214424.jpg](https://i.dailymail.co.uk/i/newpix/2018/09/07/12/4FD2519600000578-0-Wiblingen_Abbey_Library_in_Germany-a-58_1536318214424.jpg)

Apparently Weasel lives in the stationary version of the Tardis.

need boots themselves. His were pretty scruffy he thought, wiggling his toes.

The door and hold locks were child’s play and soon he was on deck . “The wide beam and shallow draft of a coastal cargo ship” Aeden thought as he untied and unfurled his neckerchief, a flash of blue as he slipped the silk over his head and shoulders. The ship was laden with casks of Spanish wine, bales of Persian carpets and stout wooden spice



chests. He peered into the captain's cabin and saw a campaign trunk that obviously did not belong to the captain as it was standing on its side with an array of tools nearby on the floor. Memories of the evening flooded back, rowdy games of 3 Loo and the winning of that very trunk from a swarthy merchant in a French Brocade waistcoat and large boots of Moroccan leather...then the rum fog set in and here he was, apparently shanghaied.

Evelyne is going to be very displeased he thought. Aeden crouched low on the deck and waited as the crew went about their work. No one bothered to check his cell so he was safe for now.

BOOM! Crack!! A cannonball sailed over Aeden's head, shattering the port side of the fantail. All hands on deck as the crew hoisted all the sail they had and raced for the estuary chased by what could only be a privateer's cutter. It was no good, the ship was taking on water and several hundred yards off shore it listed. Aeden could feel the cargo shift. "Uh-oh" he thought, "time to get the hell off". He retrieved the pouch, tying it around his neck with the blue silk and slipped over the side reciting a charm, as the water closed over his head he flipped his tail and and swam away.

The trunk popped free of the ship as it foundered and sank...floating towards Smugglers Cove.

**Comment from BJM | Time: September 8, 2018, 6:36 am**

*The trunk popped free of the ship as it foundered and sank...floating towards Smugglers Cove.*

Aeden joined a boisterous pod of young bucks, navigating by the stars until he saw the signal fires at Point Margate and home.

Aeden was nervous, checking his appearance and straitening his cuffs as he walked toward Stoa House, what would Evelyne say or worse; do? She could send him down, out of the line of succession and Amrynn's time was running out like the grains of sand in an hourglass. He quietly pushed the kitchen door open a crack to see who was there.

“Ow! You did give me a fright” exclaimed Mayril the kitchen maid. “Where you been? Herself is right unhappy since she heard of your shenanigans in Warik. Go on, take your licks.” she added with a wink and a nod towards the Hall.

Evelyne was seated near the fire, painting butterfly wings. “Don’t creep about, I know you’re there. Come sit” She patted the velvet bumper next to her. Aeden poured out the whole story in great gulps of trepidation.

“Show me the leather pouch” Evelyne softly commanded. She tipped the pearl and gemstone into her palm. The gemstone began to glow and hum when it contacted her skin. Where did you say the chest may have landed? She asked

“Smuggler’s Cove in Cornwall” Aeden replied. “Were there other survivors? Evelyne inquired. “I saw none alive, but I could return and inquire.” Aeden volunteered, relieved that he was no longer the focus of Evelyne’s inquiries.

“Never you mind, if the men from the pub survived, the books may be in great jeopardy and you’ve done quite enough. Now go, Mage Elric Firestrike is willing to take you back. Do not return here until you have been summoned” Evelyne said dismissively and waved him toward the kitchen.

Aeden wondered why Evelyne was so interested in the chest, but as soon as he saw the platter of freshly baked moonapple hand pies Mayril proffered he forgot all about pirates, travellers and thieves.

Evelyne opened her writing desk, and penned a short message to the Council “Albion Melchior’s Chest has been found.”

**Comment from BJM | Time: September 8, 2018, 5:58 pm**

*Evelyne opened her writing desk, and penned a short message to the Council “Albion Melchior’s Chest has been found.”*

Chapter 6: Albion

Albion Malchior was what is known as a physicist in the modern world, an alchemist in his time and an inventor in both. Albion was moderately prosperous, creating and selling instruments for navigating, weighing and measuring, but after his wife died of the sweating sickness, he grew weary of the misery and grime of London and purchased the land on which he built Stoa House. A pretty little gold striped cat with the bluest eyes, claimed him as her own. Albion named her Phoebe and was content, the weald was quiet and he could write in his journal and tinker in his workshop.

One day while walking in the weald Albion mis-stepped and tumbled through a thicket into a small dell. A clear spring bubbled into a shell shaped stone basin. As he approached the spring he saw the child, a small pale male, barely breathing, lying on a bed of moss. Albion looked around, calling out hopefully, but he and the child were alone. Country folk were superstitious, had the child been abandoned for some birth mark or deformity? The boy looked perfectly normal to Albion's eyes. "What to do?" he thought. "Well there's nothing for it, I cannot leave him here, I shall take the child and then the parents can be found." he thought as he carefully scooped the child into his arms.

Albion wrapped the boy in one of his shirts from the mending basket and mixed a sop of goats milk, cooked apples, honey and stale bread to entice the boy to eat. He didn't notice the odd colored mold spores on the crust.

The boy recovered and was soon hale and hearty. The parents did not come forward in spite of much trouble to find them and offers of a reward. Interfering with a changeling was taboo and the boy might now be cursed.

Albion named him Raphe, after his own father, and gave him his surname. The years passed and Raphe grew into a fine strapping youth of a pleasing countenance, although possessed of a temper he struggled, often unsuccessfully, to control, he and Albion rubbed along nicely enough. Phoebe avoided him.

**Comment from BJM | Time: September 9, 2018, 1:22 am**

## Chapter 6: Albion...cont

Albion, often returned to the dell on his daily walk, it was peaceful and the cool water from the basin crisply refreshing. He would sit near the spring to daydream, sketch and doodle in his notebook with a piece of sharpened charcoal he kept in his waistcoat pocket. Albion was absentmindedly sketching when he heard the grating sound of stone on stone and a large round shell shaped stone, rose from the ground.

A woman with golden red hair wearing a bright yellow gown emerged, she seemed oddly familiar to Albion. She froze when she saw Albion, neither moved or spoke.

“Hello Albion, I am called Evelyne, and yes, we have met.” She smiled as she offered Albion her hand. Albion instantly recognized her dark blue eyes, smiled and placed her hand in the crook of his arm. Together they descended the steps.

Evelyne guided Albion through the corridors lined with shells, “it’s beautiful” Albion thought, until they came to a large open chamber wherein chairs made of coral with cushions of pale blue velvet were arrayed in a semi-circle. They sat and Evelyne told Albion of herself, her people and the changelings.

“Why didn’t you intercede in the dell?” Albion asked. “The changeling charm cannot be altered once the child is placed on the moss, and we knew that you would give the child a proper burial and he would ascend to the afterlife. The gruell you prepared healed him and now he too must fulfill his earthly destiny, although I warn you, it is not the path you would chose for him. Evelyne explained.

“Today when we met I was coming to seek your help. We have a dilemma that you may solve.” The legends of men tell of our kind sailing to the West many eons before mankind’s time on earth. This is only partly so. We can chose when it is time, so many are still among you. Our King and Queen of The Weald of Kent have decided they want to join their kith in Avalon, but the heir and the spare have not yet been chosen by fate, as only fate may choose. The elders

council must secure the Books of Crowning until the heir appears. Our mages have tried, but men have foiled their devices. You, we feel will succeed.” Evelyne said as she rose and beckoned Albion to follow her into an adjacent chamber, where Mage Firestrike waited.

Together they crafted a solution, a chest with powers to safeguard the books and to move between man’s world and the netherworld as a trap of sorts, a one-way portal for the impure of heart and motive. It was decided that the chest would be kept in Albion’s storeroom among the common, ordinary household stores and bric a brac. None but Elder Pence, Evelyne, Firestrike and Albion would know of its existence.

Thus it was so until a decade after Albion’s passing; Raphe in a drunken fit of rage threw the wine jug at a fleeing parlour maid and went looking for the cask.

**Comment from DurnedYankee | Time:** September 9, 2018, 2:46 am

*“Uh, about...8 years.”*

Uncle B’s lips pursed into a hard straight line.

“8 years” he shook his head in amazement.

“She’s a better person than I am, I’d have....I don’t know what, but if I were you I’d steer clear of her. I’d be looking to balance the scales of justice with you if it were me and you’d locked me in never land for 8 years.”

“I only wish avoiding her were possible ” Aeden said with what sounded like genuine remorse, “but now she’ll take up where I left off trying to undo what Weasel has done. And I’m sure she’ll want my help, if only to find out what has been done in her – absence.”

“I can hide from her and maybe she’ll hang, but in the end we shall hang together if Queen Mab inspects the library and it’s doesn’t suit her.”

“Mab? Queen Mab? Queen of the fairies Mab?”

Aeden merely nodded.

This day had taken – calling it an unexpected turn would be like claiming Australia was just a fair sized island.

B didn't think this could possibly be a dream, too detailed, too linear. Too full of things he'd literally never dreamed of.

And he didn't 'know' things as it always seemed one did in a dream where things *in* the dream seemed to make sense in context of the dream, even if it didn't make sense when one awoke.

Rather than spend time wrestling with the 'how' he decided what was, *was*, and if knowing 'why' would help him find Eléonore and get them both out of, whatever this was, then why mattered more than how.

"Not just legends then" he said aloud.

Aeden quirked his sysbrows – "for a scion of a *legend* that's rather amusing really."

Uncle B gave him a sharp look.

"So what was it that Weasel did that brought all this on?"

In response Aeden pointed to the partially filled book case.

"That. Those. They are...here, but...not here...they don't belong here..." to make his point he strode over to the book case and pointed to the book Uncle B had picked up, the one called "Alchemy of the Byzantine mages".

He reached for it and his hand passed through the spine and his fingers disappeared into the book case up to the first joint.

He turned his head to look at Uncle B and wiggled his fingers around to emphasize his point.

"See? Here, but not here. And that good sir, is going to raise a row unless they are returned to the library."

"How is that possible? They're our books, boxed and sitting in the other room."

"The word you use I think is 'analog'. These aren't your books

precisely. You see them differently.”

“Differently?” B queried.

Aeden pulled his hand out of the book case and pointed to another of the tomes on the shelf, ‘Trans-formative spell casting for mortals’. He motioned for Uncle B to come closer.

“What do suppose would be the effect if you were to go to a fete, buy an old book with this title and content and take it home?

Then for a lark, because you all know there *is* no magic, try some of the things in it. And find they really worked?” he asked as B came to stand beside him.

Now it was B’s turn to quirk his eyebrows.

Aeden made several passes with his right hand over the book on Byzantine mages. The letters re-arranged themselves as though composed of miniscule silver bugs till they reformed new words and the cover now read –

“Dr. Chase’s Recipes – Information For Everybody, Enlarged and Improved Edition”.

Aeden stuck his hand through the cover again.

“Go ahead, pick it up” he instructed B.

B reached down, though it made him a bit queasy to see Aeden’s hand sunk up to the wrist in the book, and he easily lifted it.

He’d expected to feel some resistance but it was as if Aeden’s hand was no more than a shadow and it became visible again once the book was clear of the top of the book case.

“Open it, to, anywhere, it won’t matter.”

B opened the now much older looking and somewhat delicate book to page 160, headed “Medical Department”.

He read aloud from the middle of the page – “7. Teeth – extracting with little or no pain. Dr, Dunlap, a dentist in Kent, while filling a tooth for me called my attention to the following recipe given by a dental publication to prevent...”

And he stopped and nodded to Aeden.

“So, you, what’s the word, enchant them so we can’t read the real book?”

Aeden shook his head but then nodded.

“No, yes. Different content. Your book’s content is real content, that’s a real book, in the mortal world. It was really written by that Dr Chase fellow. But it’s analog in Faerie is the other title. And really does contain a work on alchemy.”

“Are you telling me you keep them in boxes in your library, and by putting them on book shelves Weasel has upset your, filing system?” Aeden giggled.

“No, no no no no. Analogs, it’s all analogs.”

Uncle B gave him an annoyed look but Aeden continued.

“I once read an entertaining quote about an old mortal woman who heard how the earth orbits the sun and so forth. ‘Rubbish’ she said ‘the world is a flat plate on the back of a giant tortoise’.

‘Then what is that tortoise standing on’ the scientist asked her. She said – ‘You’re very clever, young man, very clever, but it’s turtles all the way down!’

Aeden chuckled.

“Heh, if only you knew how the world really looked...” but here Uncle B leaned into his face nearly touching nose to nose and he stopped his digression.

“So, to paraphrase, it’s analogs, all the way down.”



B stepped back and ran his hand through his hair before saying slowly, and then faster with more and more certainty, “The boxes are your library shelves, and when she unpacked them she took the books off your shelves” as the realization hit him.

Aeden clapped his hands.

“Well done!

Uncle B frowned.

“She’s NOT going to want to put them back in those boxes” he said with certainty.

Then another thought hit him.

“If it’s all analogs, you can make these book cases she bought the analogs for your own book cases can’t you?”

Aeden’s head shot up like he’d been electrified.

“Yes, yes, yes yes yes yes!” and he did a little odd hop step jig.

“But not if they’re in this room, or other rooms, it has to be in the room they were in” he said.

“What’s so special about that room?” B asked with a frown, “isn’t it all...”

Aeden motioned for him to stop.

“This room is not the library, if it were, you, you would...know it.” He pointed to the door from the living room that led to the kitchen through the key room.

“If you’ll follow me, I’ll show you, and then you’ll understand.”

Aeden walked through the door to the key room, Uncle B close behind and for an instant Uncle B thought Aeden had stepped into a mirror or vertical pool of water because he slipped into the air, as if he were going below the surface of the air itself.

B halted suddenly, reaching his hand out to the door, and watched with amazement and not some little alarm as the air took on a silvery hue around his hand, which disappeared up to the wrist. It didn't feel wrong, or bad, just....

He pulled it back and gave it a close look, running his other hand over it to see if it felt at all different.

Aeden's nose appeared in the air in front of him, followed by the rest of his head.

"Ah, I should have warned you, but you've done so well I just...." his hand came back through and waved in front of his nose.

"It's really quite all right you know, no harm, you won't feel a thing, come on."

And he disappeared again.

Uncle B took a deep breath, closed his eyes and stepped forward through the door frame.

[Comment from DurnedYankee | Time: September 9, 2018, 12:23 pm](#)

*Uncle B took a deep breath, closed his eyes and stepped forward through the door frame.*

A room, rather far more vast than the key room, opened before him. Well lit by apparently natural means with the high framed arched windows discretely set in niches.

Statuary of pure white marble accented with gold depicting various heroic or mythic figures stood guard over the alcoves flanked by

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Statuary of pure white marble accented with gold depicting various heroic or mythic figures stood guard over the alcoves flanked by cinnamon or sea green marble columns with scroll worked gold capitols and bases.

Between the windows, shelves of books rose from floor to ceiling, and a balustrade gallery above indicated another floor, and another above that.

The vaulted oval ceiling was painted in a vast mural of battles, creatures, and what Uncle B assumed would be meaningful vignettes of people, not quite on the scale of, say, the Sistine Chapel, but it certainly could be likened to that.

And the colors, rich, vivid and incredibly real.

Realer than real, they were colors the world *should* contain, like the colors of a deep blue sky over a long field of brilliant flowers of every imaginable kind, or a pale blue sea, clear to the bottom, bordering a pristine and lush tropical island.

A photographer might consider selling his soul to capture this image B thought.

The floor?

An inlay of marble tile that swirled in pattern depending on one's focus, now diamonds and chevrons in long straight runs, now six pointed stars of varying hues, the points of each star working to compose the point of an adjacent star, some more obvious than others because of the color.

Uncle B was reminded of the works of graphic artist M.C. Escher. There were probably dozens of patterns on display, intricate or simple depending on how one chose to focus their attention.

Uncle B was, to say the least, impressed.

Aeden stood next to him with a very pleased and self satisfied smile

decorating his face. His confidence was clearly restored by returning to his element.

“I gather you like it” he said in deliberate understatement. Uncle B shook his head in wonder.

*This* was the analog for their key room?

Clearly it wasn’t necessary for an analog to look even remotely like the thing it was tied to in his world.

“Is this room actually ‘in’ our little cottage?” he asked, nearly out of breath in astonishment.

Aeden giggled again.

“No, not precisely, as you might guess it’s tied to the cottage though” he tilted his head back to the door behind them.

“Travel here isn’t what it is in the mortal realms, that door truly expresses the meaning of the word portal” he said.

“How would The Bard say it? A door by another other name perhaps? There *is* a reason you people have so many words for the same things you know, only you don’t even understand why anymore.

You’re so clever, you think it’s just differences in language, words moved from one country to another. Sometimes yes, I suppose, but often times not. ”

He patted the high three panel inlay door that stood to bar the passage if closed.

“In this case, not.”

Uncle B wandered out on to the floor and spun slowly in place to take it all in. Magnificent.

Aeden coughed slightly, and politely, to regain his attention. B’s reverie was broken and he remembered, feeling rather guilty for having forgotten even for an instant, why he was in this room in the

first place.

“There is still time, properly used, to set this to rights, and of course to return you and Eléonore to the real world.”

He said the word real with another of his fits of giggles.

“Evelyne said it was 2 days before the, uh, Queen, would come to inspect here” B said.

“And indeed, 2 Faerie days, a little less than that, but, near as dammit” Aeden agreed.

“Time is different here isn’t it?” B said, catching his indirect reference. “In the present instance, that works out to be, oh, about 4 hours in mortal time” Aeden answered before B could ask.

“I thought Faerie time was slower than ours?” B said.

“Oh, so *now* you believe the legends *now* you’re an expert on the realm of the Fay folk.” Aeden chortled.

“Humans, you’re so entertaining! It’s why we keep you around!” B stared daggers at him.

“All right, assume for the moment I don’t know anything about it,” B bit out, “and explain, because in legends people who are spirited away by fairy folk for a night return to find that decades have passed.”

“We are not mastered by time!” Aeden exclaimed, “Time is, as we want it to be, as we want it to flow. We are the master!”

“And right now it pleases her majesty to have it run faster here, for whatever reason is not mine to question” Aeden said in a way B could tell meant he *was* questioning it.

“So, you have two days” B said, thinking he understood.

“Yes, two days, that I can do nothing with, because,” and here it was obvious he was angry, displeased and feeling powerless all at once “*I cannot correct the situation, it must be done from your side.*”

“So we are on the mortal clock, not ours. The books must be returned to this room, the key room in your world.”

“In boxes, or shelves, I care not where you stash them on your side. But in this room they must be, and you must do it.”

“Ah, masters of time are you” B said putting him rightly in his place. “Whatever shite is headed your way isn’t headed mine” B said, realizing he held the upper hand.

“I’m not leaving here without Weasel.”

**Comment from DurnedYankee | Time:** September 9, 2018, 3:04 pm

Meanwhile, back at the tranche (of Weasel’s story).

*“Come, I would like to show you something I think you will find interesting. Here, cover your head and shoulders so you will not be seen. We can’t have you tramping around dressed as you are.”*  
*Evelynn handed Weasel a large sheer square of pale blue silk that changed colors in the light.*

She snapped it out and slung it around over head and shoulders. Evelynn stepped back to view the effect. Which was to make Weasel invisible to the casual observer.

“I’m guessing this makes me disappear.” Weasel said matter-of-factly. “and I’m assuming there’s some flaw that someone can detect, because that’s always the way it works” she added for no apparent reason.

“Clever woman” Evelynn smiled “but there’s no flaw. Only practitioners on a higher level would be able to detect you. And it’s unlikely any of them are about at this hour. They tend to be busy by now or sleeping late.

But do have a care moving about dear, you’re invisible, not insubstantial. Don’t go mucking about trying to walk through anyone. It will put off the charm in more ways than one.”

She gave Weasel a knowing wink.

“If you can see me either way, how do we know it’s working?”  
Weasel asked.

Evelynn nodded.

“You won’t be content until someone ignores you eh?”

By way of demonstration she leaned out the door and called down the hall.

“Estelline dear girl! Can you come tidy the room and clear the tray?  
The lady won’t have further need of it.”

The young maid appeared in the doorway after a moment.

“Has the mistress gone then? ” she asked looking around the room before entering.

She headed straight for Weasel, who of course out of normal politeness stepped aside.

The girl breezed past her as if she weren’t there, which at least to appearances, she was not.

Weasel smiled broadly and by the look on her face Evelynn thought she was about to tap the girl on the shoulder in jest so she gave her a look under lowered brows and a shake of her head. Weasel got the message.

Evelynn stepped out into the hall and she followed.

“Thank you dear girl, your good service is always appreciated” she said, turning to look back into the room, through, as it were, Weasel. The maid turned and curtsied to her, again looking through Weasel, convincing her completely that she truly was invisible and they weren’t just playing at it.

“You’re welcome your ladyship, it’s so nice doing for the Seelie court, folk are so much nicer than the Unseelie...” and she stopped as though suddenly realizing she could be saying more than she should.

“I understand dear girl, completely” she replied .

“Well, I’m off. Good day to you” and she turned and bustled down the hall, with Weasel close behind.

They turned at the stairway which doubled back on itself to come down to the kitchen below.

When Weasel thought they were out of earshot of the room she said “So, the Seelie and Unseelie courts are real”.

But Evelynnn turned and tapped the side of her nose in the “secret” gesture.

“I should have said, not insubstantial, *and not inaudible*” she commented, as if to the breeze on the stair.

They came down into the kitchen but no one was in sight so Evelynnn crossed to the door to the key room and bustled through.

The effect on Weasel was nearly identical to the one Uncle B had, but Evelynnn didn’t come back to cajole her through the portal and she was forced to make the quick decision to follow.

‘If they’d meant to do me harm, there’s no need for this elaborate ritual’ she reasoned ‘I’ve been at their mercy all along’.

And with that thought still fleeing her mind she stepped through the door and into The Library.

[Comment from DurnedYankee](#) | [Time: September 9, 2018, 5:53 pm](#)

## **Chapter 7 – Weasel returns home**

She entered the Library behind Evelynnn. From, more or less the opposite side Uncle B had entered. Didn’t matter, the effect was just a dramatic.

“Holy shit! *This is our storage room?*” she exclaimed.

“Shhhhhhhh” Evelynnn said with a stern look, followed by a smile.

“No, I jest.”



“Feel free to speak here, there’s an enchantment that contains sound. You could bring in a brass trumpet quintet and have them play and those outside your ‘party’ would never know. In fact Lord Aradyll did that very thing, having them play Jeremiah Clarke’s “The Prince of Denmark’s March”.

Weasel smiled “right party was it?”

“Yes, for Prince George of Denmark of course, he was married to your Queen Anne. They enjoyed the effect tremendously. The acoustics in here are remarkable if let be...”

Weasel chuckled slightly and started to say “I’m Amer...”

“Oh yes dear, of course, you’re American. Well it was for Queen Anne of England and her consort.”

“I myself haven’t quite worked out how he accomplished it, but then again, he was who he was and that’s the reason he was who he was.” she said, as if Weasel would know who she was talking about.

“I’m going to take a stab that ‘he’ is Merlin.”

Evelynn shook her head, “”they always go for that he” she smiled again.

“No dear, I’m talking about Prospero. Merlin isn’t much for worrying about trivialities like noisy patrons, though I dare say he could read this enchantment in his sleep. Pity the way he ended up, but there it is, your fate is what it is, trust the Unseelie courts and you get what you get. Prospero I mean, not Merlin” she clarified.

“Come”.

Evelynn glided across the floor, minor sparks trailing off her gown as she went, and came to a stop in front of a set of book cases with no books lining the shelves.

She pointed.

“I know you did not intend harm, but, sadly, this is your handiwork dear.”

Weasel came to stand beside her.

“I’m not sure I understand how.” she said, an inkling suspicion nibbling around the edges of her thoughts.

“You moved the books. Perhaps we were, forward, in guiding them to you as they came, but frankly I worry about the most of them less than I do the trunk you moved.”

“The trunk? The old campaign trunk?”

Evelynn pointed to low, empty, marble pedestal.

“There should sit Albion Melchior’s chest, vault for the Books of Crowning for the succession of the King or Queen of the Weald of Kent. And in it, the books.”

At Weasel’s look of horror Evelynn took her hand in her own and patted it gently “the book’s absence has naught to do with you. That is an ongoing tale and will no doubt right itself in the fullness of time.”

“But the books, they were in boxes, piled higher and deeper than a PHD” Weasel said, still not quite sure she comprehended.

“They are our books, your books. Boxes in that world, books shelves in this. Storage room in your world, Library in ours. You made them unavailable to our use when you moved them around the house. And I have but short time to fill these shelves again, with the proper books, before the Queen comes for her bi-centennial visit.”

“How does that work?”

“Every two hundred years...”Evelynn started but Weasel shook her head, “the books”.

“Ah, they are in a place where the, uh, fabric between our world and yours is in harmonious overlay. Albion’s house was, modified and spelled to make it so. And we’ve” she was obviously trying to be delicate “guided it’s ownership over the years.”

“So you chased out anyone you didn’t like” Weasel translated bluntly.

“Rather say anyone we could not *trust*” Evelynn corrected.

“And you trust us?” Weasel said.

“In a word, yes” Evelynn replied, patting her hand again before letting it go.

“and you’ve been coming and going the entire time I’ve lived here with B?”

Evelynn smiled.

“Oh my yes, have we bothered you?”

“Not so we really noticed” Weasel said. “Why do you ask dear?”

It was Weasel’s turn to take Evelynn’s hand and pat it.

“To see if I can trust *you*” she said “People who deal with the legendary fairy folk don’t always come off the better for it”.

Evelynn’s eyes brimmed with delight.

“American you may be girl, but you learn fast. So, do you trust me?”

“I, guess. Am I right in thinking things would change between you and us if I refuse to help?”

Evelynn’s eyes now darkened.

“I cannot promise what the next Librarian might or might not do. As it is, I have held sway here for hundreds of your years, and up until now, with no end in sight, not that I wanted one.”

“So it would be bad for employee/management relations if we don’t help fix what I’ve unknowingly done” Weasel said firmly.

“Very possibly, as I say, if the Queen were to punish me, and that scamp Aeden, I cannot say what might come afterwards.”

“Then...” Weasel looked up thoughtfully for a moment.

“I assume I have to go home to fix this.”

“Bright as ever girl” Evelynn said with a warm smile.

“And I, what, have to bring the books back in here and stack them or...”

“They need not be in the boxes as you had them. They only need to be in your storage room” Evelynn corrected her.

“oh, and the trunk, you must bring the trunk back into the storage room” she added.

“I only moved it to get it out of the way. We don’t even have the key for the silly thing” Weasel said with a snort.

“Someone does dear, I was trapped in there and your Uncle B freed me. Which is interesting” she mused to herself.

“Eh?” Weasel asked.

Evelynn ignored what she thought the question to be.

“Aeden had the outer key, and obviously still does.”

“Eh?” Weasel tried again.

“Yes dear?”

“You were trapped in the trunk?” She sized Evelynn up and down.

“That must have been tight quarters.”

Evelynn let loose a very un-lady like fit of laughter.

“No dear”, she traced a pattern in the air and an instant later a yellow moggy stood at her feet.

“I was trapped in the trunk, yes a trifle tight, but a tale too long to relate for now, perhaps later.”

‘And a talking yellow moggy no less’ Weasel thought.

“Speaking of cats? Where’s Charlotte?” she said aloud.

The moggy twined itself around Weasel’s legs arching her back as she did so.

“Gone home”.

Then the cat sat up straight again and traced her paw in the air. An instant later Evelynn stood in the cat’s place.

‘Niiiiice trick!’ Weasel laughed merrily.

“So, I need to move the books back, and bring the trunk back, into the storage room. And that’s it?”

“Yes” Evelynn confirmed “and we will handle the rest from this side.”

“Great, simple!” Weasel said.

“Now, how the hell do I get home?”

“You’ve had the power all along dear. You just click your heels together and say ‘there’s no place like home’” Evelynn said with a grin.

Weasel gave her a dead pan stare.

“Pull the other one, it has bells on it.”

Evelynn chortled “I loved that movie, we all did” she said.

“You...go to the movies?”

“later dear, when this is all cleaned up I promise I’ll stop by and we’ll have a spot of tea and a nice chat.”

“So...?” Weasel waited expectantly.

“Part of what I said is true, you’ve had the power all along” and she pointed to the book still tucked in Weasel’s belt.

Sweasey drew the book out her belt and looked at it expectantly.

“Do you remember what you did?” Evelynn asked patiently.

“I...picked up the book...and rubbed my hands over the title on the cover” and she ran her fingers over the bright silver as she said it.

For a moment she swayed wildly and Evelynn’s words came back to her “Your Uncle B freed me” she had said.

“Uncle B!” she called out even as the world swirled around her as though she were the center of a maelstrom.

“Gone home already!” she thought she heard Evelynn call, but then she was standing in the storage room where she found Uncle B manhandling a book case through the living room door.

“We have to put the books back!” they yelled at each other at the same time.

[Comment from DurnedYankee | Time: September 10, 2018, 12:50 am](#)

## **Epilogue –**

Between the two of them they returned all the books Weasy had taken from the room more quickly than they had been taken out. And most importantly, in the time frame Evelynn had requested.

Since they weren’t required to put the dust and cobwebs back those remained in the bin.

The trunk was returned from the living room after the books.

“And look what I have” Uncle B said, pulling a red leather pouch from his pocket.

He poured the contents into her open hand – a blue cabochon gem, a single black pearl, and a short ornate golden key.

“Didn’t Aeden have that?” Weasel asked curiously, taking the key and examining the craftsmanship.

“He did...” Uncle B rolled his eyes a little and looked away somewhat guiltily.

“I would have thought they needed to keep that with the chest on their side” she said sliding it back into the pouch.

“They probably do, I’ll return it, I promise.”

“Why do you have it?”

B motioned to the trunk.

“Because at some point I’ll have to let our ‘Jack’ out.”

“Uncle B! You didn’t!”

“I damned sure did” B countered, “he lied to me, the rotter! He swore you were already home to get me to use the portal in the trunk.”

“He forgot about the time difference between here and there and I had time to see you were most certainly NOT here.”

“And?”

“And when he came through I jumped him, took the key off him, and stuffed him in the middle compartment. Most amazing thing, you sort of shrink down to fit you see, and....” he paused at the frown on her face.

“I’ll let him out in a little while, he wants punishing” B said.

“I didn’t think you had that in you” Weasey hugged him.

“I was a bit angry,” he gave the trunk a nudge with his foot. “Truth be told I was worried about you.”

She gave him another hug “promise you’ll let him out after supper?”

“Yes, I promise.”

They surveyed the work they’d done, books on shelves, fairly neat, though they hadn’t carted out all the boxes, but that could be done in

short order.

“What about a cuppa? We’ve had quite a day” B said heading towards the kitchen.

“Or two” Weasel corrected.

When they passed through the door they found Charlotte drinking from a saucer of milk on the table, she meowed at them pleasantly.

“that sounded like well done” B said, ruffling her ears.

Perched next to her were a pair of pewter ale cups and a ceramic jug wet with beads of condensation and shrouded with an immaculate square of linen cloth with small pewter weights in the shape of a dolphin sown on each corner.

“What’s this then?” he asked poking one of the dolphin weights and making it swing.

Weasey smiled merrily, lifting the linen cloth off the pitcher.

“Oh, this *is* a ‘well done’. In fact I’m sure of it. I think it would be a good idea if you let Aeden out *now* rather than later...” she said pouring a cup of ale for each of them.