Part I: Part 1 - The Beginnings

Dr. Dee's Demon

**Original Synopsis:**

Time and place: Elizabethan London. 1583 - spring or summer. Note Dee and Kelley fled to Poland with Prince Albert Laski in september 1583.

Dr. John Dee and Edward Kelley are scrying the angels, Kelley acting as medium. One of Elizabeth’s counsellors tells Dr. Dee that he is a charlatan, that he will be exposed and sent to prison. Dee boasts that he can summon angels, or even demons. “God through his Son Jesus has given Christians the power to rebuke and command the demons!”

The counsellor challenges Dee and Kelly to summon an Angel, or a Demon, or see himself cast into prison.

Dee and Kelly try to manifest an angel, but fail several times. They try for a demon, with similar lack of success. Kelley hatches a plot to stage a demon, with poppy seed steeped in wine, and bread made from rye with the ergot fungus to drug the watchers. Dee suggests that Kelly ask the angels via scrying to advise on how best to proceed.

The angels advise how to find a bone in a casket in a coffin, and use that bone to summon an entity from one of the aethyrs.

Meanwhile, Prince Lukeios of Stygia, and Captain Nemo, call upon the Queen to present themselves. They meet Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Sir Matthew Loxton. Loxton does not know he is an immortal, and Nemo and Lukeios have to point this out to him.

Kelley retrieves the relic, and he and Dee summon the entity - Calzirg, the jasper headed prince of wrath. Calzirg tricks Kelley into ordering Calzirg to destroy his enemies, setting him loose to lay waste to London. Calzirg needs blood and souls to anchor him.

Lukeios, Nemo, Loxton have to save the day, but make it appear that Dee and Kelley helped. Lukeios claims to be searching for such relics to destroy them.

The Queen decrees the founding of the Secret Order of Beowulf, herself in charge. Drake, Raleigh, Loxton are members.

The Secret Order of Beowulf came into being and is still a secret order to this day. After some years Loxton became the head of the organisation, and this passed down through his family, father to son, over the centuries. Dr Dee and Kelley decided that they should retire from magical life in England, accepting an invitation from prince Laski of Siradia in Poland, and went to stay in Krakow for several years. Dee later returned to England where he continued his experiments. When queen Elizabeth died, her successor King James refused to permit Dr Dee to continue anything to do with magic. Dee retired and eventually died of old age. Kelley went to Germany where he was knighted, and then to Bohemia, where he was imprisoned for fraud. He either died in prison, or died trying to escape. The so-called enochian language is still used by some magicians today in an effort to invoke the "angelic" beings that spoke to Dee and Kelley. The secret order of Beowulf became secret even from the king, but continues its efforts to keep the world free from demons and monsters.

Angel calling itself DRPWNiel (or Darpuniel) advises Kelley hw to find the ossury of Calzirg at “Heuts Cross”

Kelley returns friday 22 march 1583 with the goods

Outline:

Dee = 56, Kelley = 27

Dee was before the star chamber in 1555 for calculating princess Elizabeth's and Queen Mary's horoscopes and jailed for treason against Mary

Dee married Jane Fromand in 1578 (3rd wife). Had 8 children.

February 1583 Dee proposed a calendar reform similar to gregorian (remove 11 days), but based on astonomical year. Arch bishop canterbury and radclyffe opposed him - too catholic. The eventual failure of Dee's proposal would mean that England retained a calendar at odds with that in the rest of Europe until 1752.

- Radclyffe wants proof of the angel with a physical appearance

- Dee and Kelly try for summoning the angel physically

- Kelley suggests using an actor and drugged wine

- Dee suggests asking the angels

- Kelley receives advice about an ossuary with a relic in the casket of a bishop

- Kelley sets out in search of the casket (may 1583) “Huets Cross, (Hewitts cross - on Northwick Hill near Blockley (now the village of Aston),Gloucestershire)” a grave monument where he found a red powder, a scroll, and a book of magic and alchemy called The Book of Saint Dunstan.

- Kelley finds the casket, a container of red powder, and a white ball

- Lukeios arrives

- Meeting with Drake, Raleigh, Loxton

- Lukeios arranges for an accident, wherein Loxton realises he is immortal

- Kelly summons Calzirg, Jasper Headed Prince of Wrath, and releases him to kill his enemies.

- Lukeios, Nemo and Loxton burst into Dee’s chambers.

- They pursue Calzirg, cornering him in the palace, and banish him. Radclyffe has died.

Chapter 1 - Scrying

Whenever the angels appeared, none of them ever spoke. Instead, one of them, usually Uriel, would point out letters on a wooden board. Sir Edward Kelley had one just like it, a board two cubits by two cubits, about three feet by three feet, divided into four large squares. Each square consisted of twelve columns and thirteen rows, each cell containing a letter or symbol. Kelley peered into the shewstone, a disk of polished Aztec obsidian, and the angel appearing therein would tap a symbol on the board within. Kelley would indicate the same symbol on his board, and Dr John Dee would transcribe the symbol to a sheet of paper. The angel would then tap another symbol, laboriously spelling out words in the Enochian language the angels used.

The two men were clad in white robes, and sat at a square table of dark wood, covered with a red silk cloth. They and the table were enclosed inside a large circle marked with chalk and salt on the floor of the room. About the circle were inscribed the sacred names of God, and a white candle burned at each of the four cardinal directions. Nothing unholy could enter here; the angels could come and go as they pleased.

Kelley was a dark haired man in his thirties, with a bushy beard befitting a philosopher in Elizabethan England. Dee was in his mid fifties, his hair light brown and starting to grey. His grey beard was fashionably pointed. He was possessed of a high forehead, long nose and intelligent eyes. A scholar’s close cap hid his bald spot, and kept his head warm. Dr. Dee was a learned man - he studied Greek, Latin, philosophy, geometry, arithmetic and astronomy at Cambridge University, graduating with a B.A. in 1546. After that he travelled and studied in Europe, gaining his Ph.D. He worked with Gerhardus Mercator, the famous cartographer, developing the Mercator projection for maps and charts. Dee was a leading philosopher, mathematician, advisor to the Royal Navy on charts and navigation, and the Royal Astrologer. He chose the date for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth I according to her horoscope.

When Uriel finished imparting his message, another angel would appear in the shewstone, usually Madimi, who appeared as a young girl. She would give English translations of some words and phrases. According to Kelley, these appeared as if written on paper. These Dee would meticulously copy into his growing dictionary of Enochian, and then they would puzzle out the meaning of the message that Uriel had given.

In the early days it would take days to have enough words to make sense of a message, but as the dictionary grew, and Dee’s and Kelley’s understanding of the grammar advanced, it became easier. But it was seldom straight forward.

Often words had two meanings. For example, ‘teloc’ meant death, ‘vovim’ meant dragon, but ‘telocvovim’, literally Death Dragon, was given as ‘he who has fallen’, which had to be a reference to Satan. Sometimes the purported translations were much shorter than the original in the angelic language, which troubled Dee.

The texts were many and varied. Once Uriel had prophesied that Mary Queen of Scots would be beheaded in three years time, and that the Spanish would attempt to invade England in four years time. Another one had ordered Kelley to marry a particular girl. Others had described the structures and natures of the heavenly realm - four watchtowers, each with twelve gates, giving access to forty eight aethyrs, each with its angelic ruler and supporting bureaucracy.

Some of the translations bothered him - they were shocking to his sensibilities and hard to reconcile with his Christian world view. One passage read “no prayer should be made to Christ, there is no sin, and Christ had robbed God of his honour.” Such writings troubled him enough that he would not publish them, but keep them only in his hand written notes.

Eventually the spirits departed. Kelley and Dee purified the room of any unclean influence that may have floated in to observe the proceedings, using prayer, incense and holy water. Finally they could break the protective circle, and carefully pack their equipment away.

“Still Uriel does not mention gold.” Kelley complained. “There are bits and pieces about alchemy, but nothing about the Philosopher’s stone. Most of what he has given us is about invoking and controlling spirits.”

“One would think we were supposed to invoke a spirit and command it to find a buried treasure.” Dee stated. “This work cannot be hurried. There is a structure behind his teachings, it may well be that we are not yet ready for the the work involved in producing the stone.”

Kelley laughed darkly. “I know, we need to purify our souls as part of the alchemical process. I much fear we will be old men before he tells us how to produce the philosopher’s stone, and much too old to enjoy any riches we can create.”

“We must be careful that we do not over step. Alchemy is a great and noble work, and approved by the church. If we should invoke and command a lesser spirit, we risk being condemned for witchcraft, as you well know.”

Kelley nodded. “I think we should go no further than asking questions, and compelling answers. If we do not ask it to do anything for us, surely it is not witchcraft?”

Dee stroked his beard thoughtfully. “We ask questions now. If we do no more it should be lawful. Depending on the nature of the lesser spirit.”

“We converse with angels. Any lesser spirits would always be angelic by nature, even if we command them. We must always refer to them as angelic, regardless of what we might suspect. No one else can know any different.”

“Of course.” Dee smiled knowingly. “We converse only with angelic beings. And so we might find some we may question.”

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For the next few days, Kelley worked alone, revising the Enochian text Dee had transcribed, and correcting the translation. His explanation was that sometimes the symbol indicated wasn’t clear. The angels would appear in the shewstone to advise him of corrections. Dee had to agree that after Kelley’s corrections, the text made more sense.

Dr. Dee, as Royal Astrologer, had other pressing work. The Queen commissioned him to calculate horoscopes for events she had planned, select fortuitous days, and give indications of future events. Some of the nobles would also give him similar commissions.

Calculation of planetary positions was laborious. Dee was a mathematician of some skill, and had concluded that the theory of Copernicus which held that the planets all orbited the sun gave better predictions than the accepted earth centric version where the planets wandered about, sometimes moving backwards. However, he could not project the circular motion of the planets too far into the future without errors appearing. It would be another thirty years before Johannes Kepler would establish that the planets moved in ellipses, and publish corrected formulas for their motions.

The Royal Navy kept Dee busy with calculating tables of the rising and setting of the moon and certain bright stars, with bearings to aide navigators to calculate their latitude as well as longitude on a ship as sea, as well as helping with the accuracy of maps. If a navigator knew they were in a particular port, and the moon or star rose or set at particular bearing on a particular day, then a more accurate position of that place could be established when drawing a map. Accurate maps in turn allowed a navigator to calculate a course and sail reliably across the ocean to a destination. Accurate star charts in turn allowed the navigator to correct a ship’s course as winds and currents moved it about. All the calculations had to be done by hand.

On the forth day, Dee returned from a visit with the Queen. When his wife asked him how things had gone, he replied “The Queen is very pleased with my work. She entrusted me with more work. Another horoscope is to be calculated.”

“That is always good John. But there is something you are not telling me. Is everything good? Have you upset her in any way?”

Dee demurred, but his wife persisted in her quiet way. She knew him well, and there was something he was hiding.

Dee looked at his wife’s concerned face. She was his third wife, thirty one years his junior, pious, dutiful, loving, and healthy. She had given him two children, with a third on the way. She was his heart’s balm after his previous two wives had died; the first after a series of miscarriages, the second in childbirth. He doted on her, he could not lie to her.

“Jane, I will tell you this in strictest confidence. The Queen is very pleased with me, but not all her court share her feelings. Canterbury and the Lord Chancellor oppose some of what I do.”

“I know they oppose your proposed calendar reform because they believe it is too Catholic. But there is more, isn’t there? Something happened today?”

Dee sighed resignedly. “The archbishop of Canterbury will have nothing to do with it because he claims it is too Catholic. My proposed calendar reform is based on the astronomical year, that of Pope Gregory is not. Mine is more accurate. His cycle of leap years repeats every four hundred years, mine repeats every thirty three years with exactly eight leap years. His calendar will move ahead of the astronomical year by one day in every two thousand years. He would add ten days to align with the time of the Council of Nicaea in 325AD, I would add eleven days to align it with the time of the birth of our Lord. But you are right. Chancellor Radclyffe spoke with me this morning. He made me to understand that he is jealous of the trust the Queen puts in me. She consults me for advice, not him. I fear the Lord Chancellor will work some mischief, for my embarrassment.”

“That is so unbefitting of him. A nobleman should be a paragon of virtue, an example to all of good Christian behaviour. John, I will pray to our lord that his plots will be undone, and that the Good Lord will make him see the error of his ways. You should too. And perhaps you can ask the angels for advice.”

“Yes, we should add something like that to our prayers. I will talk with Kelley when next he is here, and we will ask the angels for advice. Set your mind at ease, my dear, all will be well.”

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Later, he explained in more detail to Kelley. “The Queen asked me about our conversations with the angels. I had to tell her what progress we have made. But Radclyffe was there, as he is every time; he heard everything I said. You know how he and Canterbury feel. He spoke with me afterwards, as I was leaving. He believes you are an impostor, and a rogue, who is inventing what the angels say, and that I am your dupe. He wants to see an angel himself, or he’ll have us up before the Star Chamber for fraud. He’s given us three months to produce one.”

“Dee, I swear to you that everything I say is exactly what I see in the shewstone. You have tested what they tell us many times, lest a mischievous spirit appear and deceive us.”

“I know that, and I believe you are truthful. I trust you, Kelley. But can we make an angel appear physically, or at least well enough to convince Radclyffe?”

“You know we need to use a scrying mirror because they do not appear physically. We could have an actor play the part, and feed our noble guests wine laced with poppy juice to stupefy them somewhat.”

“No, that will not do! I have been up before the Star Chamber once before. I cast a horoscope for Queen Mary at the behest of her half sister, the then Princess Elizabeth. I was gaoled. I will not go before the Star Chamber again.”

“I think your current relationship with the Queen should outweigh anything Radclyffe or Canterbury might say.”

“If we cannot produce an angel, perhaps that will be true. If we use an actor, we are certain to be discovered, and then we should both be pilloried as charlatans.”

“I think, then, that we should ask the angels. It might be possible to make a demon appear, though I am loathe to do that.”

“Huh! Cause a demon to appear and our careers are over. We shall ask the angels how we can deal with this.”

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They asked the angels for an angelic manifestation, but the angels flatly refused. “We are not corporeal beings, we will not sully ourselves with a manifestation.”

Kelly asked about other spirits that might put in a corporeal appearance. “You must not summon any malevolent entities.” The angels were adamant. “We will cease our converse with you should you do such.”

“Then there are spirits that might consent to a corporeal appearance?” Dee asked. “Ones that you will allow us to summon?”

“The wisdom of such a course is open to debate. Many spirits will require some recompense for a physical appearance. Some spirits will consent to appear in smoke, such as from holy incense. Your detractors may not be satisfied with such.”

“If they can see the spirit, and talk with it, that will be enough.” Dee maintained. “We will do what we can within reason to obtain a physical appearance of a spirit. If they are not satisfied with an appearance in smoke, then I think we might have to call Radclyffe’s bluff. I would, of course, invite several supporters to view the appearance as well.”

“Perhaps even the Queen?” Kelley suggested.

Dee permitted himself a smile. “Should she deign to grace our little demonstration, and witness an apparition, there would be nothing that Radclyffe nor Canterbury could say against us. But we must be certain of what will occur before we invite any observers. Kelley, ask the angel for a list of names. Rank them in order of importance. Then we shall try each one to ascertain whether it will appear, and what price it will demand.”

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The list of spirits proved to be planetary spirits subordinate to the ruling angel for each planet, though only fifty four were listed, not the thousands that each planetary angel controlled. It could have been worse.

Over the next two weeks, the pair concerned themselves with contacting each of the nominated spirits individually. Though the spirits appeared in the shewstone, none would consent to appear in the smoke. It was now into the second week of March.

Dee was disappointed, and remonstrated with the angels. “If I cannot show a spirit to the Lord Chancellor, our conversations will be at an end. I will likely be imprisoned. You have to help me. Surely there must be one amongst you who will consent to appear within the smoke? Or surely there is one lesser spirit that you can compel to appear so?”

“I will ask.” was Madimi’s curt reply.

The angels vanished from the shewstone.

Chapter 2 - Prince Lukeios arrives in London - Tuesday 11 March 1583

The wooden ship caused consternation as it sailed up the Themes to dock at London docks. The ship was two masted, schooner rigged instead of square rigged, its mainsails billowing on alternate sides of the ship like wings. The hoi polloi on the banks were agog at the eyes painted on the prow, eyes that seemed to stare directly at them as it sailed serenely up the river.

The Royal Navy was concerned that the ship sailed up river against current, tide and wind, yet its sails billowed as if the wind was behind them. They sent horsemen to alert the Palace, but the boat outstripped the horsemen.

The ship drew near Tower Bridge, which on the north bank was flanked by the Tower of London and the great St Katherine's docks. Rather than enter the docks complex, busy with commercial shipping, it drew up at the nearby wharf. Five crewmen appeared on deck, swarthy bearded men resplendent in spotless white uniforms and matching turbans. They threw mooring ropes to those on the wharf, who secured them to bollards.

The captain appeared at the gangway, a tall, swarthy, bearded man dressed similarly to the crew, except he wore polished leather boots, a blue jacket, a jewelled clasp for his turban, heavy gold chain about his neck, and a large scimitar with jewelled hilt at his waist. He refused to let down the gang plank, but to mollify the navvies hoping to unload the ship he tossed each a silver coin.

The officials arrived soon after, but the captain refused them entry, saying “We are on a diplomatic mission. My master is Prince Lukeios of Stygia.” He pronounced it with a hard ‘G’. “He wishes to present his credentials to your Queen. Please arrange for the appropriate people to meet us.”

The officials agreed and departed, but not before organising guards to cordon off the area of the wharf adjacent to the ship. A small crowd gathered to watch. Several rooks landed on the railings of the ship, near an open window of one of the staterooms. They stayed for a while, cawing to each other, then left abruptly.

Eventually a diplomatic detachment arrived including five gentlemen, all fashionably dressed in Elizabethan style. Two were in their thirties, one in his forties, two in their late fifties.

The gang plank was lowered and the captain ushered the group aboard. “My master is in the main cabin. Please allow me to conduct you there.” The captain was polite but firm, his manner showing he was accustomed to giving orders. He gave all men a hard look, lingering on one of the younger ones

One of the older men spoke. “I am Sir Thomas Radclyffe, 3rd Earl of Sussex, the Lord Chamberlain; I arrange audiences with her majesty. This is Lord Carey - the baron Hunsdon, Sir Francis Drake, Sir Matthias Loxton and Sir Walter Raleigh.”

Drake was in his early forties, Raleigh and Loxton in their early thirties, but all three were dressed similarly in brocade doublets, frilled Elizabethan collars, bulbous pantaloons with slashing that revealed different coloured lining, heavy silk stockings and knee high boots. All three men wore short red cloaks and groomed beards that came to a point below their chins. Drake’s red hair came over his ears, Raleigh’s and Loxton’s brown hair was fashionably shoulder length. The three men wore swords.

Their two companions were in their fifties and more soberly dressed. Their collars were less ornate, their pantaloons less blousy, more suited for walking around draughty castles, their cloaks longer.

Drake added “I am Sir Francis Drake. Perhaps you have heard of me? This ship and its crew have much about them that suggests Araby, but I think you are from further afield?”

“Ah yes, you circumnavigated the globe two years ago. We are from a land south and east of Persia, you may not have it on your maps yet. I am Captain Nemo, this ship is the Nautilus, the seventeenth to bear that name. If your companions can spare you I will show you about her.”

Sir Walter and Sir Francis exchanged a smile - this was exactly what they wanted. “Sir Francis and I are naval men, we would be happy to tour this vessel. My lords, if you can spare the two of us?”

“I believe we can dispense with you company.” the Lord Chamberlain replied.

“May not be room for everyone.” the baron added, ever the gruff old soldier.

Captain Nemo showed the three into a stateroom, announcing all three, and then closed the door behind them. He turned to Sir Francis and Sir Walter. “You may find this ship somewhat different from the square riggers you gentlemen are used to.”

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The Nautilus was about two thirds the size of Sir Francis’ ship the Golden Hind. His ship carried a crew of one hundred and seventy, with several cramped cabins for the officers, his small stateroom, a mess area for the officers to eat or hold meetings. The rest of the crew slept in hammocks in a cramped area below decks. There was little room, and scant privacy.

With the Nautilus a large area of the upper deck was given over to staterooms for the Prince and his staff, the Captain and two officers, a library and a banquet hall. Below decks were private cabins for all the crew and servants. There was a large galley where food was being prepared, and a dining room for the crew and servants. There didn’t appear to be any weapons such as cannon. All this caused the two navy men to shake their heads in wonder.

What surprised them was the smallness of the crew - scarcely thirty in all, including the cook. Captain Nemo showed them the windlasses and pulleys that worked the sails. “Five men can raise and lower all the sails, and in an emergency just one could do so. The sails can change angle swiftly, and their shape allows us to sail almost into the wind.”

Seeing their disbelieving looks, Captain Nemo smiled. “You know the albatross circles and soars for hours yet it rarely flaps its wings. How does it fly? It angles its wings to the wind and is drawn up and forward.”

Drake nodded. “Now that you mention it I have often seen them turn into the wind, as our ships cannot, and fly. How do they do so?”

Nemo laughed. “Can I explain how the albatross flies? No, but I have observed that it does. Can I explain how this ship sails into the wind? No, but we learned from the albatross, copied what it does, and the Nautilus sails into the wind faster than your ships can sail with it.”

“With no heavy weapons and so few crew, what would you do if pirates attacked you?”

“We sail into the wind and none can catch us.”

“But what if they surround you?”

Nemo laughed again. “Some have tried. None succeeded.” Then he turned serious. “No one boards the Nautilus without my permission. No one. Now I expect you gentlemen would like to see the bridge?”

On the Golden Hind the bridge was an open platform at the back of the ship with the ship’s wheel. It was open to the elements, and from here the captain or the navigator could make observations. Charts were either in the captain’s cabin or the common room where the officers ate.

On the Nautilus the bridge was towards the back, but was roofed over, protected from the elements with timber and glass, with charts and navigation equipment strewn around. Two men dressed in white with white turbans and blue jackets stood near the front of the room. They nodded to the captain, then returned to watching through the windows, both dockside and river side.

“Now this is obviously a luxury ship.” Drake remarked. “Is that a clock? And what’s that globe?"

Nemo gave the two men a knowing look. “This is an astrolabe.” He indicated a sphere covered in stars and set on several axes. “You are familiar with the use of the sextant to determine longitude, but you use an almanac of star positions. This device displays the star positions for any given date and time, just rotate the sphere on these axes, and we use it like your almanac. And this is a clock, an accurate clock. It tells the time on a twenty four hour basis, sunrise and sunset, moonrise and moonset, the date and phase of the moon, and this outer band shows the sun's yearly precession through the constellations. All is relative to the great Observatory on Stygia. With these two devices we can calculate our latitude and longitude.”

“Very interesting.” Drake smiled.

“Longitude? How?” Raleigh questioned.

“Ah, I know that.” Drake offered. “May I?” to Captain Nemo.

“Go ahead sir.”

“I had a long talk with Dr. Dee. He worked with Mercator developing Mercator’s charts. He told me that if you know the time of sunrise anywhere in the world, and have an accurate clock that tells the time for the same place it is simple. Look, suppose you know that today the sun will rise at precisely six in the morning in London. You are in the Atlantic and you have a clock that tells the time in London. You observe that the sun rises at nine in the morning by the clock. Thus you may deduce you are three hours west of London, one eighth of three hundred and sixty degrees ...”

“Which would be forty five degrees.” the younger man supplied.

“Yes, you can calculate that you are forty five degrees west of London. It is easy, but you need an accurate clock. Otherwise you need the almanac.” He turned to Captain Nemo. “Can you tell us how the clock is made?”

Nemo laughed and shook his head. “I am a sailor, not a clock maker. I can tell you there are lots of gears in there, but I will not take it apart. I am sure your clock makers could build one if they know it can be done.”

“We can build clocks, but nothing that will be accurate on a ship. These are your charts?” He moved to look at them. All were written in writing he could not read, but the top one seemed to be an accurate representation of the Themes, the one beneath a chart of the coast by the mouth of the Themes.

“These seem to be remarkably accurate and up to date. I imagine England’s enemies would pay well for charts such as these.” Drake remarked.

“I would presume they already have them, and sell them to other nations. I believe the originals may have been purchased from the Persians, or perhaps the Greeks.”

He picked another chart off the table. Both men recognised it as a map of the would, the globe cut into segments like orange skin and then laid flat. “You wanted to know where Stygia is. See here.”

He indicated a land mass south and east of India. Drake exclaimed “I heard rumours of land in that area on my voyage, though we encountered none. There was an old Persian map I saw once that had something marked in that area. And there is land around the south pole too, that was on the old map too.”

Raleigh leaned over the map. “I never knew. How did the Persians know?”

“Well, they told me they copied from an ancient Egyptian map. Mayhap the Egyptians copied theirs from the Stygians?” Drake replied.

Captain Nemo replied “We know the region around Stygia, but we rely on others for maps and charts of the rest of the world. I can tell you that the great southern land is surrounded by ice, we’ve never ventured onto its land.”

The door opened and a sailor walked in carrying a tray bearing a fresh pot of coffee, eggshell size cups, a plate of small pastries, small glasses and a decanter of sherry. “May I offer you gentlemen refreshments?”

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Meanwhile, the other three were ushered into a comfortable stateroom. There was a wooden desk and leather and wooden chairs, a bookcase with glass fronted doors, its shelves crammed with leather bound volumes, several cupboards with doors fast shut. In one corner was an iron stove, bolted to the floor with a brass flue going through the roof. A man clothed similarly to the sailors in white but for a yellow turban was cooking something on the stove.

Another man was in the process of walking around the desk to greet the newcomers. He wore loose yellow pantaloons that came to mid calf, leather sandals with gold buckles, a lavender jerkin, a leather belt with a large golden buckle, a yellow military style jacket with purple swatches, gold braid, gold buttons set with amethysts. Around his neck was a heavy golden torc. His face was clean shaven, his black hair short and curly. His nose was sharp and curved, his eyes a brilliant yellow.

“Greetings gentleman, I bid you welcome.” His voice was mellifluous, warm and deep. “I am Prince Lukeios of Stygia, my titles include ‘The Hawk that Soars at Dawn’ and ‘The Herald of the Sun’. Please be seated. Would you like a drink? I can offer fresh green tea, Persian style coffee which my assistant is making, wine, porter or something you English call sherry.”

He carried with him an aura of power that made the two elder statesmen want to cringe in fear. Both had trouble finding their voices. Loxton answered for them. “Coffee is a prized drink. I think we should all have coffee. And perhaps some sherry to follow?”

Prince Lukeios smiled at Loxton. “A good choice.” He walked to a cabinet near the stove and proceeded to pour drinks for everyone. His assistant had spooned ground sugar into a pot of water and was now stirring it as it came to the boil.

The prince handed out drinks and made small talk while his assistant worked. The pot came to the boil and the assistant removed it from the heat and carefully spooned finely ground coffee into the steaming water. He placed it back on the heat where it swiftly came to the boil, generating a brown froth, despite four pairs of eyes watching the pot. He removed it from the heat, stirred and allowed the froth to subside, then placed it back on the heat. He allowed it to boil three times before he removed it and began pouring coffee.

“Making good coffee is an art.” the prince commented. “The heat must be high, but not too high, the foam must be creamy with fine bubbles. My assistant is very good at this.”

The assistant spooned creamy foam into each eggshell sized cup before pouring in the liquid, giving an espresso style shot of coffee with a layer of crema on top, strong and sweet. Coffee served, he produced a plate of small cakes, made of nuts and dates and pastry.

“Our chef is very skilled. I hope these are to your liking. They are a traditional accompaniment to coffee.”

“They are exceptionally good, you Excellency.” commented the Lord Chamberlain. “My compliments to your chef.”

They quickly agreed a date and time for the prince to meet with the queen and then continued their conversation over coffee and sherry. Loxton asked a question about how the ship could sail so swiftly.

The prince declared “I sail on ships, but I do not sail them. You must ask Captain Nemo any such questions. I dare say your two navel men are doing that right now.”

During their talk, the prince talked about his country. “The river Styx issues from a cave in the central mountain - the ancient Greeks thought it led to the underworld. The only way across the river is by boat - the river is too swift and deep and broad for bridging. There are two pillars, one on either side of the river where it issues - the White Pillar of Order and the Black Pillar of Chaos. In ancient times we had two kings, one for each side of the river - the crystal king on the side of the white pillar and the chameleon king on the other side. Now we have one king who wears the double crown of the two kingdoms. Perhaps you would like to visit some time?” He was staring at Loxton as he spoke.

The lord Chamberlain and the baron Hunsdon both declined “We are getting too old for such a long journey and our duties are pressing.”

“What about you Sir Matthias? I could arrange for you to return with me if you wish, and send you home later.”

“Now might not be the most opportune time, your Excellency, but I thank you for your invitation and I assure you I should enjoy visiting at a suitable time.”

The baron laughed “Hah, the queen might appoint you ambassador and then you’d have to go!”

“It is no matter.” the prince replied. “I hope to be here for several weeks.”

“Where will you be lodging?” the lord Chamberlain asked.

“Oh, I intend to stay aboard my ship, it is comfortable for my needs.”

When they finished their refreshments the lord Chamberlain decided they should leave. The prince rang a bell, and when the servant arrived they escorted the three men back on deck. The captain and his visitors descended the stairs from the bridge to join them.

#

Once the five nobles were safely back on the wharf with their escort, baron Hunsdon asked “What is everyone’s impressions of our visitors?”

The Lord Chamberlain and baron Hunsdon were fulsome in their praise of the prince. He was noble, charming, educated, intelligent, honourable and well intentioned. Loxton looked at them but said nothing. Drake and Raleigh praised Nemo and his ship, pointing out innovations that could be applied to the British navy, and talking about his sails and accurate clock and charts.

“Interesting.” said Loxton after the others were running out of words. “I found both of them to be strange. Nemo is really odd, I don’t think he’s quite what he seems. I feel he’s like a wolf dressed as a sheep, and we are the sheep. And the prince, he was manipulating you in some mysterious manner, making you all think him above reproach. He controls Nemo as well. I think he is dangerous. They had charts of our coast, but nothing of their land. The world map is rather vague; it’s not a chart. I wish I’d seen it for myself.”

“Interesting.” The lord chamberlain replied. “We four concur that they are good men, you disagree. I think perhaps that you are the odd one, Sir Matthias. However, the prince seems to like you, why not make his acquaintance, see what you can find out about him and Nemo and their ship.” Loxton pursed his lips in thought, then nodded his agreement.

#

“What are your impressions of our visitors?” the prince asked Nemo as they stood on the deck, watching their visitors depart.

Nemo pulled a curved pipe and tobacco from a pocket, started packing the pipe. “We seem to have impressed the humans. My two are pirates, both would attempt to loot us if they encountered us on the seas.”

The prince chuckled. “Stealing for one’s country and personal profit is regarded as normal in many shadows. They wouldn’t have a chance though.”

“Yes, but that doesn’t mean I condone it.” Nemo put the pipe to his mouth, lit it with a click of his fingers. He blew a cloud of smoke. “Your two have very bad health, I wouldn’t give either of them more than two years to live.”

“What about Loxton then?”

“He’s an immortal. Do you think he’s the one we seek?”

“Hard to say. I tested him but there was no reaction. It’s as if he isn’t aware of his nature. But that doesn’t make him any less dangerous.”

“We’ve seen a few with an immortal father and human mother. Could that be the case with him?”

“Anything is possible, but I believe he is full blood. I want to keep an eye on him, I will try to strike up a friendship with him.”

“What about the relic? I can’t sense anything myself.”

“It’s here in London, of that I am sure. I can feel it, but not strongly enough to walk to it. I hope it will make its presence known before causing too much trouble.”

“But surely that would mean that someone is using it?”

“It has to attract someone suitable to wield it first. I hope to discover it then, before it is used.” The prince sighed, turning to look Nemo in the eye. “You or I or Loxton must be considered suitable candidates, and Loxton may already possess it.”

Nemo puffed thoughtfully, the prince waited impassively. Finally Nemo spoke again. “What are your plans then? I must confess I am not sure how to locate this relic. Would I recognise it if I saw it? Would you?”

The prince steepled his fingers as if in prayer, then pressed his lips to the tips of his fingers. He rubbed his hands together. “It is a small gold box, an ossuary, lined with red velvet, and containing one finger bone no longer than an inch. I am not sure what carvings or inscriptions decorate the box, but you will sense the power imbued in the bone. I think our first step should be to walk about London, in disguise. If nothing eventuates, then we will visit Loxton, and try to become friends.”

“No time like the present then.” Nemo knocked the contents of his pipe into the water, then placed it in his pocket. The two of them walked into the stateroom. A moment later two gentlemen with superficial resemblance to Drake and Raleigh walked out of the stateroom, down the gangway, across the wharf and into London.

Chapter 3 - Huet’s Cross

They waited two whole days, and not one angel would appear within the shewstone the entire time. Dee fretted nervously, Kelley offered to try summoning a demon, which did not improve Dee’s humour.

On the third day, Uriel appeared, and chided them for their lack of faith. “It is not an apparition you require, but a change of heart within your detractors. Some events take time to arrange. We would advise you to take counsel with Prince Lukeios of Stygia, lately arrived at court. He can help you. In addition, one among us has information concerning your search for the philosopher’s stone.”

The new angel spelled out its name as DRPWN in the Enochian alphabet, which could be pronounced as Darpun, or in Angelic form Darpuniel or Darpunael. It explained “You must find Huet’s cross. This is located on Northwycke hill near Blockley in Gloucestershire. There is a church, and a graveyard. Within the graveyard is a monument with a cross inscribed Huet. Within the monument is a coffin. Within the coffin is a box. This contains that which you seek. There is a manuscript that describes how to perform the work. There is an ossuary, which will aid you with your present problem. There are two stones for the alchemical work, and a small amount of gold.”

#

“Huet’s Cross will be several days ride.” Kelley remarked afterwards. “I could leave on the morrow. Would you give me some money for expenses?”

“Mmm. I am not sure where Blockley is. We need a good map. I should have one in my library. You will need food and lodging for each day. While you are gone, I will see whether I can make an appointment to see Prince Lukeios.”

“Do you know him?”

“I have been introduced to him. He is a courtly man, somewhat Moorish in his looks. He told me he is interested in my work, I therefore believe he will receive me.”

Dee laid the map on a table. It showed Blockley, but not Northwycke hill. “You must take the road through Uxton, High Wycombe, Oxford, but beyond there the road may not be good.” Dee brought out a naval protractor and carefully worked out the distance. “One hundred and five miles, give or take a few. Two days each way?”

“Fifty miles a day is a lot with the same horse. More like thirty five, but I will need some time to locate the monument, and I must break in at night. Three to four days each way, plus two more. How accurate is your map?”

“This is a military grade map, as accurate as we can make it. The palace would have a better map of the area, but I think you will need to ask around for directions as you near Blockley anyway. There could easily be an error of five or six miles in the distance. Ten days at a shilling per day?”

“Could you make it an extra four pence per day? And what if I need to bribe someone? Or hire a labourer?”

“One shilling and a groat seems excessive, but if you have to pay bribes, you might need more. All right, eighteen shillings then.”

“Thank you. I will copy the major towns into my journal, with distances.”

Dee was not happy with the amount Kelley wanted for his travel expenses. A servant would be well paid if he received a shilling a week. However, Dee was paying Kelly fifty pounds a year for his services, almost twenty shillings per week. Perhaps one week’s wages was reasonable for his expenses.

#

Kelley drove at a comfortable pace. He had discarded his gentleman’s attire, and instead wore the garb of a working man. He had also decided against riding a horse, but instead drove a one horse cart, with several wooden boxes aboard. One included stone mason’s tools such as hammers, chisels, rasps, trowels, squares, compasses and rules. Beside that box were a couple of heavy duty pry bars. A second wooden box contained some personal effects, and clothing. The third was empty, save for some blankets, the fourth was empty. He’d use that to hold what ever he found at Huet’s Cross.

He stopped at cheap inns, the sort frequented by working men who had to travel for work. They always had stables for horses, they were clean enough, and dry, and there were always people with whom he could strike up a conversation. Kelly was good with accents and dialects, he was usually able to sound like someone not local, but near by, thus avoiding rousing suspicion of strangers. He’d always just completed some stone work in the last town, and was heading to the next for another commission.

The second day was cold and drizzly. Had the rain been heavier he would have stopped for the day at Oxford, but there were dry spells, and the road was passable, so he pressed on. The innkeeper he’d talked to at the Queens Head in Oxford reckoned there was thirty or forty miles to Blockley, but there were towns every few miles where a traveller might find lodgings. Kelley’s notes made from Dee’s map had Blockley at thirty two miles from Oxford Centre; if he could make another ten miles today, then he’d be in Blockley for luncheon tomorrow. That would give him time to investigate the whereabouts of Huet’s Cross, and the Church and Monument.

He pressed on, passing through Yarnton, Woodstock, Wootton, before the rain closed in again. Turn back? There wasn’t much at Wootton, but at the Coach House in Woodstock, where he’d fed and watered the horse, they’d told him there was a coach house at Enstone, now less than four miles away. He’d decided then to press on, so be it. The die was cast, as Caesar had been fond of saying.

The horse looked at him reproachfully. Kelley gee’d it along. “I don’t like this weather any more than you do, but it’s four miles to the coach house, and then you’ll be warm and dry.”

#

The rain cleared during the night, and Kelley set out early into a damp world. The rutted road was boggy in places, but there was some patches of blue among the clouds above. They reached Blockley in time for a late lunch. Kelley paid for lodging at the largest inn he could find, and over lunch, asked some of the locals about a church with Huet’s Cross. “My grandpa told me one of his sisters was buried there, and I thought I might pay my respects while I’m here. He said it was on Northwycke hill, but he didn’t remember much else. ‘Near Blockley’ was the best he could do.”

That initiated a discussion about the old woman’s name. Kelley invented Mary Warner, adding “I think that was her married name, my maternal Grandpa was Taylor.”

There was a shaking of heads, though one had heard of Taylor, and another of Warner. The confusing conclusion was that it was somewhere around here.

Kelley had better luck with the innkeeper. “There’s a Northwick Hill” he pronounced it differently “north west of here, about a mile and a half. There’s an old church there, falling into ruin now. I don’t know that anyone would have been buried there for nigh on three hundred years though. You might have better luck at the graveyard here, but you could ask the vicar here.”

The vicar was able to add information. “Northwick Hill has a cross on it, and a disused church with a graveyard. There’s also a disused church on the other side of Aston Magna that also has a grave yard. That’s about two miles east of here.”

“Why so many disused churches?” Kelley asked the man.

“Ah, there was a time when almost every large village had a church, but they cost money for upkeep, and you need a village priest. Many churches closed during the War of the Roses, back before Henry 6 became king. And many more closed under Henry 8, during the Protestant reform. If you are looking for a grave, you could check the church records, they would record all burials.”

“Yes, I am aware of that. When a church is closed, what happens to the records and the graves?”

“Oh, the graves are left alone. If a church is no longer required, it will eventually be deconsecrated. The records will be moved to the Bishop’s palace. This whole area is under the Bishop of Worcester, so he would have custody of all the records.”

“Well thank you. I think I might take horse and ride to the graveyards to see what I can find. They are only a couple of miles. I don’t think I want to trouble the bishop. I’ll be on my way tomorrow, it’s just a passing fancy.”

#

Northwick Hill was more of a hillock, overlooking the remains of Northwick Woods. The rest of the land had been cleared for farming, though there were no farms near the hill itself. There was a stone cross on the hill, though it was broken in half, accompanied by a dilapidated church and a small, overgrown graveyard. The headstones were weathered, though Kelley could still make out many of the inscriptions. The newest he found was over a hundred years old. There was nothing that looked like a mausoleum or monument. Perhaps inside the church?

The windows were broken, and some of the slate was missing from the roof. The wooden door was locked, but the lock was a simple latch that Kelley opened with a tool from his trunk. Inside, the church was bare, stripped of any saints’ statues, cross or altar. Birds had made a nest on one of the rafters. Kelley surveyed the scene thoughtfully, then returned to the cart.

This time he returned with an unlit lantern and an iron pry bar; walking slowly and methodically, he tapped the floor every few feet with the pry bar. When he reached the area where the altar had been, he was rewarded by a hollow sound. There was a crypt here.

Now that he knew where to look, it was easy to spot the flagstones that had to be lifted to gain access to the crypt stairs. They were close to the back wall, and to one side of the centre line.

Kelley lifted the back one first, sliding it sideways onto the surrounding stones before moving it out of the way. The stair started here, and if he were careful, he would not need to move the other stone. He wasn’t about to put in a coffin. Methodically he used flint and tinder to light the lamp, crouched down, and carefully walked backwards down the stairs into the crypt.

There were shelves of stone along the left side, bearing nine stone coffins in three rows of three. He wanted the bishop’s coffin, which should be the seventh according to the angel. The dead bodies did not bother him, and he knew they had no need for what he had come to find. But should he count the top coffin as number one, or the bottom coffin? They had not filled the shelves, so they had started at the far end, that much was obvious.

“Well, if it were me, I’d start at the bottom. So, top shelf at the back should be number seven.” If he had to check them all, he would.

Kelly set the lantern down on the first coffin on the top row, then carefully inserted the pry bar into the small gap between the lid and the foot of the coffin. He should be careful not to damage the coffin or leave obvious marks. He lifted the lid just enough to slide it sideways, and peered into the dimly lit interior.

There was a rotting wooden coffin inside, and a smaller wooden box beyond the coffin, at this end of the stone coffin. It seemed to be in good repair. He lifted it carefully, being surprised by its weight, and lowered it to the floor. He recognised some of the magical symbols carved into the box. Part of him wanted to open the box immediately and check the contents, but the box was locked. One he opened it, he might not get it closed properly again.

Kelley carefully replaced the coffin lid, then one by one, he checked the others. Nothing but dead bodies, mostly in a rotting wooden casket, but twice there was just a clothed skeleton. The box was what he had come to find.

Once out of the crypt, he blew out the lantern, replaced the flagstone and scuffed dirt over it with his feet. As he carried the box outside, he had the uncomfortable feeling of being watched. He looked around slowly and carefully, but all he could see were two ravens perched on gravestones, staring at him. Creatures of death and battle. He shivered momentarily, then placed the box into the cart. The hessian sack he’d brought was too small, so he placed it over the top of the box, and then buried it under the blankets. He placed the pry bar and lantern in the cart, then went back to try locking the church door. The latch was harder to lock than it had been to unlock, and he sweated over it for several long minutes. Finally it clicked into place, and he went about his way.

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Chapter 4 - Short Tour of the Streets of London

The prince and Nemo walked the streets of London. While their walk may have seemed random, they covered the four main axes and the centre. Nemo could sense nothing of the relic, the Prince was adamant it was somewhere near the palaces of the queen and nobles. “There are forces at work hiding it from my senses, deliberately so.”

“Then we should search for the people who would use it.”

“We will, old friend, but I fear it may be more difficult than you think. But if you are looking for trouble, there is some just around this corner.” They were in a seedy part of town, with dingy winding narrow streets and run down houses. Around the corner was a broader way that led past a disused warehouse, its doors smashed and windows broken. Ruffians appeared from both ends of the street, and more issued from the disused warehouse.

“Bring it on!” Nemo exclaimed.

“Well, well, what ’ave we ’ere?” exclaimed one of the knaves, dropping his H’s and his L’s. “A couple of nancy boys by the look of it. What’s it going to be gentlemen, your purses and jewellery or your lives?” Most had swords, the rest were brandishing cudgels or daggers.

“Is that all of you?” Nemo asked. There were about twenty of them, moving to surround the two men. “There’s hardly enough to go around.”

The prince smiled. “Don’t kill anyone. I’m sure one or two will slip past you, I’ll deal with them.”

“Trying to be funny?” the leader brandished his sword in Nemo’s face. Nemo grasped the man’s wrist, immobilising it, and began to squeeze. The villain punched Nemo and then shook his hand in pain. He tried a kick with similar results and then stabbed at Nemo with a dagger. The blade struck something solid and stopped. “Get ’im!” He managed before he gasped in pain as his wrist snapped and the sword dropped to the ground.

Several attackers struck Nemo with swords and cudgels, but they might be striking a brick wall for all the effect it had. The air seemed to shimmer about him, and no weapon would penetrate that shimmer. The prince raised a finger, and those near him found their swords or cudgels had become poisonous snakes. They screamed and dropped them, darting back in superstitious terror. Others at the back pushed forward to attack the two men, but with similar results. Most of them fled out of reach.

Nemo was still holding the leader’s broken wrist, having forced the man to his knees. He was almost sobbing in pain and terror. “Perhaps you are ready to listen to me?” Nemo asked him.

“Don’t kill me! Please, don’t kill me!”

“Well, if you behave yourself and do exactly what I ask you, I’ll let you live. Is that clear?”

The man nodded. Nemo continued. “There is a small box containing a finger bone. It has arrived recently in town, and people are searching for it. We want it. Deliver it to the ship with eyes that docked today at St Katherine’s docks and you will be rewarded. Deliver it to anyone else and you will die painfully, eaten alive by worms. Do not fail. Do I make myself clear?”

Again the man nodded. The prince tapped him on the forehead. “Your wrist is healed, but there is a worm sitting in your brain. In three days it will start to eat your brain, you will recognise it by the headaches it causes. Deliver the box with the bone, and I will remove the worm. Deliver the wrong box, or fail to deliver the box, and you will slowly be eaten alive. The same will happen to your friends. Make sure you tell them.”

The man began shivering with terror, his eyes wide open, his mouth working. The prince looked at him for a moment, then ordered “Now pick up your sword and start searching for the box with the bone. Off you go.”

The man grasped his sword and ran to his compatriots, where they began conferring. The prince and Nemo walked on.

“Neat trick that.” Said Nemo. “They all believed you.”

Prince Lukeios chuckled. “They will scurry around for a few days before they find out it is a trick. In the meantime they might actually find the relic. If they do we can pay them some gold. If not, then my sister’s ravens are searching and may find it.”

“They will probably fight each other over any gold.” Nemo observed.

“Well, they are footpads, that is what they do. It would serve them right.”

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“Faugh! Fresh air at last!” Captain Nemo exclaimed as they arrived back on the deck of the Nautilus. “London stinks!”

“Most cities smell bad. Humans never seem to be very clean. Stay here if you prefer, I will go alone to talk with Loxton.”

“Hmm, I think I should talk with him. After that I might stay on the Nautilus unless you need me.”

“Freshen up, we’ll visit him soon.”

“Do you know where he is staying? I mean, we should knock on his door rather than appear in front of him.”

Prince Lukeios gave him an amused, slightly puzzled look. “He is walking in a garden with Drake and someone I believe to be the queen, so right now may not be opportune, but I would choose a distant part of the garden to arrive in and then walk to him. Is that not easy for you?”

“Hmph, I’ve not heard of anyone else who can do that. I can find him no problem, I can see he’s with Drake and a woman in a garden, but I would arrive within about three meters of where he is.”

“Oh, er, I look around the scene, find somewhere secluded, focus on that spot and then walk through shadow to there. Try it.”

The other was silent for several minutes. Finally he spoke “I can see the surroundings but I cannot focus on anything, at least not to the point of walking through shadow to it.”

“Hmm, you probably need practice.”

“Maybe that’s all.” Nemo replied. “But do you know of anyone else who can do this?”

“My sister.” The prince laughed. “Maybe others who can do not admit to it. You know how we like to hide abilities we think others do not possess.”

“Hmph, too many of us play games and try to manipulate everyone around us. That’s why I prefer my ship, I don’t have to play games.”

“That’s why I live among humans, and my sister chooses to live amongst the elves. They cannot manipulate us.”

They freshened up in their cabins, then returned to the dining hall where they ate a light meal and planned their encounter with Loxton.

The prince drank the last of his wine and announced “Loxton has left the garden, now might be a good time to meet with him. I’ll bring us out ahead of him, you talk, I will observe his reactions.”

The two men stood side by side in the dining room. The prince stood quietly for several minutes before announcing, “He’s turned a corner into a smaller street, and there is a suitable laneway ahead of him. Two steps.”

#

They walked forward, their outlines smearing into rainbow light that faded out. On the second step they were in a dingy laneway. They walked to the corner where they almost collided with Loxton.

“I’m terribly sorry.” Loxton apologised as he recognised Nemo and Lukeios.

“No need.” Prince Lukeios countered. “We should have looked before we stepped out. I fear we were becoming lost in London’s maze of streets. How are you Loxton? It is good to see you.”

“Maybe you can tell us where we are in relation to the docks.” Captain Nemo added.

Loxton nodded, smiling. “You’ve walked a goodly way. I think it will be easiest to walk with you to the docks.”

“Oh, we couldn’t impose on you like that.” the prince protested.

“Oh, it is no impost. I was hoping for an excuse to talk with you, and here you are.” Loxton smiled. “I should be very happy to walk and talk with you. It matters not where you are going.”

“And so will we.” the prince acquiesced. “Very well, lead on. We have no need to return to the ship, we were merely sight seeing. But you are welcome to have a drink with us, or a meal. Food is being prepared for our return.”

Loxton and Captain Nemo walked together, talking, while Prince Lukeios walked a pace behind. The captain questioned Loxton about his family, upbringing, education and career. Loxton claimed to be from an old family that were installed in the seat of Wessex by William the Conqueror. He was the only child of an only child, his father had died in early middle age, as had his grandfather.

“That is very interesting.” the prince inserted. “Your mother was an only child who died in childbirth, your father died in service of the Queen. You have no close relatives on either side.”

“True. My grandfather died in service of King Henry. I must find a wife and start a family soon, lest the same unfortunate fate overtake me.”

“May God forbid.” the prince countered. They turned a corner and walked past some children playing in the street. Up ahead there was a cry, and they spied a heavily laden cart rolling towards them. Nemo flattened himself against one side of the street, the prince against the other. Loxton was about to do the same when the prince cried “The Children! They will be crushed!”

Loxton leaped into the path of the cart, placing his hands against the back and scrabbling with his feet for purchase on the slippery, uneven ground. He succeeded in slowing its progress, but it continued to push him backwards. The prince shepherded the children out of its path, but a moment later the cart slammed into the stone wall of a building. Miraculously the load of barrels stayed in place. Loxton gave an explosive grunt of pain.

“Quickly Nemo, help me get the cart off him!” The prince placed his back against the wall and his hands against the cart, while Nemo grasped the shaft, and together they pushed the cart back, freeing Loxton, who sagged to the ground.

Nemo changed his grip on the shaft and began slowly towing the cart back up the hill. His feet seemed to stick to the slippery ground. “I have it, but get him out of the way lest I slip.”

Loxton did not look well. His chest was caved in, his left arm was at an angle suggesting it was broken and blood was trickling from the corner of his mouth. “You’re injured. Let me get you out of there.” The prince scooped Loxton into his arms like a child and proceeded to carry him up the hill after Nemo.

“I’m all right. Winded. Let me get my breath back.” Loxton spoke in short gurgling gasps.

“It’s worse than that, let’s see how are when you get to our ship. We have a physician.” the prince countered.

They waited while Nemo held the cart for the men to chock securely. “You’re lucky his lordship is not injured or there would be hell to pay.” Nemo chastised.

“He’s just winded.” the prince added. Loxton nodded agreement.

As they walked on, Nemo asked “How is he?”

“Healing. There’s broken bones and internal damage, but you know how it works. I aligned his arm and straightened his back. He might be able to walk before we reach the ship.” He walked swiftly, the crowds parting before him, Nemo following in his wake.

“You should put me down.” Loxton wheezed. “I’ll be all right in a few minutes.”

“I know, but not yet.” the prince answered curtly. “I know a lot about healing, and you need another minute or so for your organs to finish healing. Your heart and lungs were ruptured, we couldn’t leave you where you were.”

Loxton gave him a look of surprise. “No, that would be fatal!”

“Not for you, nor others like you. Patience, I will explain soon.”

They continued in silence, punctuated by their rapid footsteps. Abruptly the prince announced “Time for you to stand.” He set Loxton gently on the pavement, steadying him. “Now, inflate your lungs and stand straight. Hold your breath for thirty seconds. It will hurt, but you want your ribs to set properly.”

Loxton did as he was bid, grimacing in pain. The prince added “You should feel your bones knitting. Something to keep in mind when you next break a bone - if you align them properly they will knit and heal within a minute, otherwise they will take their time, and if you don’t align them they will eventually heal crookedly.”

The prince seemed to be studying Loxton closely and eventually said “Your bones are healed. You may have some residual soreness.”

Loxton breathed out, that turned into a wet cough and he spat blood. “You seem to know things about me that I don’t. Are we near the docks? We must have covered three miles in a few minutes!”

“Perhaps we took a short cut? Let’s get you to our ship, we can talk freely there.”

Chapter 5 - Loxton has Dinner with Lukeios and Nemo

Loxton was on his second plate of food, eating hungrily. Nemo was finishing his first plate, while the prince, who had been doing most of the talking, was less than halfway through his plate. He sighed. “Well Loxton, either you are playing some deep game, or you genuinely don’t know what I’m talking about.”

“I assure you sir, I do not know what you are talking about.” Loxton spoke with a mouth full of food.

“Hmm, then there is much that could be said that should wait until later. Let me start a new tack by saying you are one of us. Injuries that would kill a normal human you shrug off, healing within minutes, as you demonstrated earlier. Compared to others you are prodigiously strong. You had no trouble holding that heavy cart at arm’s length. Your reflexes are much faster, and you do not age the way normal humans do. Others have called us immortals, though that is incorrect, because we can die.”

“You have my interest sir.” This time his mouth was empty, fork paused on its way up.

The prince smiled. “Your father and grandfather back through eleven generations did not really die in service of king and country, they merely suffered injuries that would have killed a normal human, and then shaved off their beards to reappear as their only sons. Every one of them is you.”

“What makes you think you are correct?” the arrogance was showing.

“When you know what to look for it becomes obvious. Every one of us has the same problem if we choose to live among humans - we don’t age, they do. We either go somewhere else as someone different, or fake our deaths and return as our sons. What do you remember of your parents?”

“I don’t.” He chewed a mouthful of food, swallowed and washed it down with wine. It was obvious he was thinking how to answer, and the prince allowed him the time. “I woke up on a battle field, surrounded by dead and dying. I had no idea of who I was, but I surmised I had been stripped of my armour. I took a sword from the first soldier who tried to kill me. Then I spoke with some of the dying. One man said he recognised me as the earl of Wessex - he had been one of my bodyguards. I sat with him while he died, he talked of his family and England, and told me he had seen me felled by a monstrous Scots knight who bashed my head in with a morning star and then followed up with a battle axe. He was sure I’d died, but here I was talking with him so we agreed I’d been knocked unconscious. Since then I’ve regained snippets of memory from before that, but very little.”

“A severe head injury could remove your memories. I can see you are telling the truth.”

“Could he regain them if he visited...” Nemo began.

“Possibly. Loxton, there are many realms that are not visible from earth, and difficult to get to even when you know. One, the Faery realm, you have doubtless heard of. Another is that of Order and Chaos. There is a vortex of power there that might restore your memories. But you would need to journey there with Nemo and myself because the journey is arduous, you do not know the way, and you need us to open the way.”

“I might pass on that just now. Maybe later. What else am I capable of?”

“Without training at the Courts of Order and Chaos, you are, I think, aware of all your abilities. I am happy to help you reach the Courts.”

“Why did you come here? Was it to find me?”

Nemo laughed and shook his head. The prince replied more politely “No, we weren’t aware of your existence until we met you earlier today. We are searching for a relic, a finger bone, which, if it fell into the wrong hands, could summon a monstrous demon from another realm. We know it is in London, and we mean to find it before someone else does.”

“How do I know you won’t use it yourselves?”

“How do you know you can trust anyone? You listen to what they say, you watch what they do. You will trust us because you decide we can be trusted. Until then, you may know of someone who is interested in spirits or magic, or old relics.”

Loxton shook his head. “Not that I can think of, but I will keep my eyes open. How do you know I will not tell tales about you to the authorities?”

“I believe you are trust worthy. Besides, you do not want to draw the wrong sort of attention to yourself.”

#

There was a tapping at one of the windows of the stateroom. The prince opened it carefully and a raven hopped onto the sill.

“What news have you?” the prince asked.

The raven gave a “Wark!” and put its head on one side.

“Show me.” said the prince. They stood still for several minutes while Loxton watched the closely. He made to speak but Nemo motioned him to keep quiet.

Finally the prince said “Thank you. Please keep watch and alert me to any further developments.”

The bird gave another “Wark!” and left through the open window.

“You spoke with the raven?” Loxton’s question was almost a statement.

“Of course. There was a time when humans could speak with animals and spirits. It reported that they have spied a man taking a small box from a crypt and delivering it to a house. They believe it contains what we seek.”

“When are we going there?” Loxton asked.

“We? Why would you wish to involve yourself in this?” the prince stayed by the window, studying Loxton.

“Firstly, I can command they open their doors in the queen’s name. Secondly, much of what you told me I can confirm is true, I thought no one would know that about me. The rest I will take on trust for now. Will you have my help?”

“Yes, let us ready ourselves. Nemo, will you join us?”

“I think I should.”

“Then you shall. We will do nothing further tonight, I must first ascertain where the house is, and who dwells there.”

“Are you not afraid that they will summon the demon tonight?”

“No, they must make careful preparations first. That will take them some days.”

Chapter 6 - Friday, 22nd March

Edward Kelley knocked at the door of Dee’s house, just a few miles out of London. It was mid morning, Friday the twenty second, 1583. The butler showed him in. “Doctor, I have the box, just as the angel predicted.”

“That is excellent news.” Dee’s eyes lit up. “We’ll take it to my study.” He led the way, opening doors, and hastily clearing space on his writing table.

“Well, let us see what is in it. Can you open it? Do you have the key?”

“There's no key, but I can open it.” Kelley placed a cloth roll on the desktop, unrolled it to reveal a number of small metal implements, and drew out a slim bladed knife and two fine, needle like implements.

“I put some oil in there last night to ease the mechanism. If this doesn’t work, I’ll have to break it.” After a few minutes work with the picks, the lock clicked and Kelley opened the lid of the box to reveal its contents.

Top was a leather bound volume, traces of mildew on the cover. The pages were vellum, and still in reasonable condition. The title page read, in Latin, ‘The Book of Saint Dunstan’ Dee carefully leafed through the pages. There were diagrams that looked like magical sigils, and writing mostly in an unknown alphabet, but some pages had Latin.

“I do not recognise that alphabet.” Kelley observed.

“Neither do I.” Dee responded. “But at a guess, the language is Latin; therefore it will be cipher problem. These symbols will equate back to the Latin alphabet, and with a big enough body of writing, such as we have here, it should be straight forward, though perhaps tedious, to solve.”

Kelley next removed a white stone about the size and shape of a brick. “This has to be the white alchemical stone, the one that produces silver.”

“Yes, but where is the red one that produces gold?”

“I think it may be in this box.” Kelley removed a smaller wooden box large enough to contain two loaves of bread. It was held closed with a simple latch. Inside was a red powder, a good four or five pounds of it.

Dee touched it with his finger, sniffed it, then rubbed it between finger and thumb. “Hmm. I’ve not seen this before, but it must be the red stone. We need to decipher that text.”

“And, look at this!” Underneath the box were several pieces of metal, wrapped in black silk. They appeared to be gold, but looked as if several metal kitchen utensils had been chopped into pieces, then converted into gold. One piece looked like part of the base of a frying pan, several were small spoons with the handles cut off, part of a knife blade, and half a tankard, minus handle.

“It would appear that the bishop used the red powder to convert ordinary metal into gold.” Dee mused. “And that box of green stone must be the ossuary.”

Dee drew it out. “I believe the hinge and locking mechanism are gold. And look at these characters carved into the stone. I would like to make a copy of these in my notebook.”

Kelley smiled. “I will be careful opening it.” He inserted a tool shaped like a screwdriver between the lock and the latch. The lock really was gold, the soft metal bending as he applied pressure. The latch popped free.

Inside the box was a smaller, gold box, with magical symbols engraved into the sides and lid. “Do you recognise these symbols?” Kelley asked.

“No, but I shall copy them into my notebook.”

The box was locked, but this was a different type of lock, requiring a key with three long prongs to be inserted into a barrel. Kelley tried assorted lock picks to no avail. He was becoming frustrated, but Dee watched calmly. “I am sure we will find a way to unlock it.”

“No need to unlock it. There is another way." Kelley drew out a slim needle and a small hammer. He placed the needle against the lynch pin of one of the hinges, and gently tapped with the hammer until it came free. He repeated this with the other hinge, and the lid opened several inches, held in place only by the latch. Inside the box was lined with red velvet, and contained a bundle wrapped in green cloth, which Kelley removed. He unwrapped it to reveal a greenish bone similar in size and shape to a human finger bone. The two men looked at it with excitement.

“We can try the summoning.” Kelley remarked.

“Yes. But first, we must be sure we know exactly what symbols we need, and exactly what we must do and say. This will not summon an angel.”

Chapter 7 - Summoning Calzirg - Wednesday 27th March

Five days later, Dr Dee was confident he and Kelley understood what was involved in the summoning. They entered Dee’s work room, the same one in which they conversed with the angels. The two men had freshened the circle they used to keep malevolent spirits from interfering with their angelic conversations. Then Kelley chalked a second smaller circle to the north, in which they placed the golden casket with the finger bone. This circle was inscribed with the holy names of God, as revealed by the angels.

They lit candles at the four cardinal points and invoked the angels of the four watchtowers. They lit the censer, placed the bone in a specially marked circle, and then intoned the Enochian key of opening for the aethyr of LIN. After a few moments a breeze moved the candle flames and swirled the smoke from the censer, but nothing else seemed to happen.

“We must have missed some step, or misunderstood an instruction.” Dee told his assistant.

“Perhaps I should consult the angels?” Kelley suggested.

They closed the invocation to the aethyr, and Kelley fetched Dee’s shewstone. They were making preparations to consult it when their came a polite knock at the door.

“Yes?” Dee asked sharply. “We are rather busy just now.”

“I am sorry to disturb you, Dr. Dee,” came the butler’s voice “but Her Majesty has sent a coach to convey you to the palace at your earliest convenience. She wishes to consult you.”

“Yes, yes. I shall be with you momentarily.” He turned to Kelley. “Consult the angels but do nothing more until I return. Now, where are my astrological tables and the Queen’s journal?”

Kelley helped him pack equipment and books into a satchel, walked with him to the coach, and waited patiently until it departed. Then he returned to Dee's workroom and tried the opening of the aethyr again. After an hour, with nothing seeming to happen, he gave up, and consulted the shewstone.

#

Captain Nemo wore his captain’s uniform of white trousers tucked into black boots, a white shirt, blue waist coat, matching blue military style jacket with gold buttons and braid, and a peaked cap. The prince changed into yellow riding breeches, brown cavalry boots, yellow shirt with high collar, brightly coloured brocade waist coat, purple military style jacket with gold buttons and braid, and a black peaked cap similar to Nemo’s. Loxton was fashionably dressed in Elizabethan style, though not so fashionable as to get in the way of a fight.

The three descended the gangway to the docks. Five scruffy individuals were lounging nearby. “What do those ruffians want with us?” Loxton asked.

“I believe they have information for me.” the prince replied. “Stay here, I will talk to them alone.”

“Isn’t that dangerous?” Loxton cautioned.

“Only for them.” the prince laughed, walking over to the group. They spoke for a minute before the prince raised his hand like a priest bestowing a benediction. Then he withdrew a money pouch from a pocket and handed it to the man he had spoken with. The men scarpered, the prince rejoined Nemo and Loxton.

“Does the name Edward Kelley mean anything to you?” he asked Loxton.

“He’s Dr. Dee’s assistant. Dr. Dee is royal astrologer, royal cartographer and mathematician. He’s a very learned man.”

“Kelley is the man the ravens saw. So Dee is an astrologer? How very interesting. Things are beginning to fall into place.”

“Wark!” A solitary raven descended to land on a bale. The prince walked over to it, talked for a few moments. The bird departed.

“We should be on our way to Dee’s abode at Mortlake. The raven reports that Dee has left to visit the Queen, leaving Kelley alone with the relic. They tried a summoning earlier, but it failed. Kelley will doubtless ask his spirits for advice. I don’t know which house is his, and I don’t know Kelley.”

This last was aimed at Nemo, who nodded sagely. “We may have to walk then.”

“It’s a few miles.” Loxton remarked. “I know where Dee lives. I can lead you there. You and Nemo are like myself? You can both run swiftly and tirelessly?”

“We can, lad.” Nemo replied. “We can run like the wind.”

“I am not sure about the wind,” Loxton returned, “but I can run down a galloping horse. Follow me.”

#

Sometimes when the angels spoke to him Kelley heard their soft voices speaking Enochian, though normally they were silent, while a written version of their language appeared in the shewstone. Occasionally an angelic being showed itself in the crystal. This time there was just a white blur, but the angel spoke Latin, one of several languages Kelley was fluent in.

“Place your left hand upon the shewstone and your right upon the relic.”

Kelley did as he was bid. That meant reaching out of his protective circle, and into the smaller circle. There was a feeling of tingling warmth that flowed from the shewstone, up his left arm, across his chest and down his right. After a minute or two the flow shut off.

“Now move back.”

Kelley did as he was bid, looking around with trepidation. A hazy shadow appeared over the relic. It shimmered, flickered with rainbow colours, solidifying into what looked like a statue carved from red and green stone.

The figure was a heavyset man carved from red jasper. He had a spade beard of red curls and matching hair. His eyes were glowing sapphires. He was dressed in sandals, leg greaves, kilt and vest all carved from green jade. The figure swung its head to look at Kelley.

“You are the opener. What is your wish?” The voice was deep enough for Kelley to feel it in his chest.

What did he wish for? Thoughts of wealth, power and fame circled in his mind.

“Wealth, fame and earthly power will come to you, but not today.”

The creature could read his mind! “What are you?”

“You know me as Calzirg, Jasper Headed Prince of Wrath. You summoned me. Do you have any enemies?"

Kelley had enemies aplenty, from those who had reported him for fraud to some of the nobles, including the Lord Chamberlain. He was foremost in Kelley’s mind, since he was the reason for summoning this spirit.

“I can destroy your enemies. Command me. Quickly!”

Kelley drew a breath. “Destroy my enemies.” The creature shimmered and vanished.

#

Kelley stood there in a daze, wondering what he had unleashed. Dee would be furious if he found out. He began considering what to do to conceal the event when he heard footsteps and voices outside and the door burst open. Three men entered. The first was a tall man with yellow eyes. He wore loose yellow pantaloons that came to mid calf, leather boots with gold buckles, a lavender jerkin, a leather belt with a large golden buckle, a yellow military style jacket with purple swatches, gold braid, gold buttons set with amethysts. Around his neck was a heavy golden torc. His face was clean shaven, his black hair short and curly. His nose was sharp and curved, his eyes a brilliant yellow. He was followed by a tall, swarthy, bearded man dressed in a spotless white uniform, polished black leather boots, a blue waistcoat and jacket, a black peaked cap, heavy gold chain about his neck, and a large scimitar with jewelled hilt at his waist. He was followed by a younger man with a curly moustache and fashionably pointed beard, dressed in fashionable Elizabethan clothing. Dee’s butler protested at the rear of the group.

“What has happened here?” the man with the yellow eyes demanded. Kelley had barely begun to consider what to say when the yellow eyes swallowed him. The last ten minutes flashed before his eyes.

“What was your command?”

Kelley blurted out his words, compelled to obey like a falling object obeys the law of gravity.

“Ah.” said the man with the yellow eyes. He turned and Kelley found himself thinking again. The man spoke into the air. “Find him swiftly. Alert me immediately you locate him.” He looked around the room, taking in the chalked circle, glyphs, candles and censer. “Spirits, depart. There is nothing more to see here.” The candles went out, the censer stopped smoking.

“Put the rug back.” the man ordered. Kelley dragged the rug over the diagrams on the floor.

“What is the importance of this creature?” The man with the curly moustache asked. “Are we going to chase him?”

“We will, when the .. er .. angels tell me where he is.” The yellow eyed man turned to Kelley. “Now, I am prince Lukeios of Stygia, this is Captain Nemo, Sea Lord of the Western Ports of Stygia,” he indicated the bearded man, “and this is Sir Matthias Loxton, English gentleman in the Queen’s employ. You are Edward Kelley, Dr. Dee’s assistant. You have done something extremely foolish.”

“I fear you may be right. What was that creature?” Kelley managed to ask. His knees were trembling.

“Firstly, you followed instructions of a spirit you saw in your shewstone. You assumed it was an angel, but they have better things to do than chatter with humans. If an angel wants to talk with you, you won't need your crystal. It will appear before you as real as I am.

“Secondly, you found a relic according to the directions. That relic acted as a key, opening a passage for that being to travel from its own realm. When it arrived here that being required blood and souls to anchor it, and you commanded it to destroy your enemies. It is out there now killing people for its own ends.

“Thirdly, because you opened the way it is nominally under your command, which means it must obey any direct order you give it, and may not intentionally harm you. It will twist any order you give it to its advantage and your hurt, and it will contrive for you to die. When you are dead it will be free of constraints and will lay waste to the earth.

“Do I make myself clear? You have summoned the Jasper Prince of Rage, one of the Powers of Destruction. We must find him and banish him as soon as we can.”

Kelley blanched. This was far worse than he had imagined. “Can we kill him?”

“No, he is immortal, truly immortal. The best we can hope for is to banish him, until another fool find one of his relics and summons him again.”

“Can we achieve that?” Loxton asked.

“That is why I am here. We will banish him, but the cost may be great.” He turned to Kelley. “Do you have any holy water?” When Kelley nodded, the prince ordered “Fetch it now. We will need it.”

Chapter 8 - Chaos at the Palace

Calzirg did not walk through the streets of London, nor did he appear outside the Palace gates. Instead he appeared inside the palace, in the semi formal chamber where Queen Elizabeth was talking with Dr. Dee. The Lord Chamberlain was in attendance. The Queen was about fifty years old, her face long and thin, her hair covered by a reddish wig with a great number of spangles of gold and silver, and hanging down over her forehead some pearls. She wore a dress of green cloth, slashed and lined with scarlet and gold, low at the front revealing her cleavage, and with a necklace of rubies.

There was a small popping sound, and the Jasper Headed Prince of Wrath strode from a rainbow shimmer.

“Who the devil are you?” The queen demanded. “And how did you get in here?”

“I am Calzirg, Jasper Headed Price of Wrath.” The Creature thundered, powerfully enough that Dee felt his chest rumble. A cold shiver ran through him as he realised that Kelley must have managed to summon the creature, or he and Kelley had summoned it, and it had belatedly appeared here where Dee was.

Calzirg cocked his head to one side, then the other. “I walked through the shadows. From the aethyr of Lin, to the Vale of Tears. Which of you is Lord Chamberlain, Thomas Radclyffe?”

“State your business with him!” The Queen ordered.

“Your majesty, please do not anger him.” Dee suggested softly.

“I have a list of humans to kill.” Calzirg managed to sound bored. “He is at the top.”

The Queen drew herself up, inflating her chest. “I forbid it. Now leave us.”

“It is no matter. I will simply kill all of you.”

“Guards! Your queen needs you!”

The room was large, with several doors. Half a dozen guards burst in through three of the doors. All of them were old, but they were all veterans of wars, who knew how to handle their weapons, and would not shirk a fight.

“This creature has threatened us. Capture it, and take it to the tower.”

The guards surrounded Calzirg, who put his hands on his hips and sneered. “Be you warriors? Old gaffers all of you. Do you use your swords as walking sticks?” He moved swiftly, grasping the closest and tearing off his head. Then he lifted the body and drank the hot, spurting blood.

The remaining guards struck at it with halberds and swords, but they might have been striking a stone statue. The queen made a face, Radclyffe’s jaw fell open. “What manner of creature is that?”

“Your Majesty,” Dee suggested urgently, “we should leave. Now, while it is distracted.”

“Yes. Follow me.” She grasped Radclyffe’s arm. “Radclyffe, we are leaving. Come.” With that, she lead the way to the furthest door, and darted through it. Dee closed it, Radclyffe lifted a large ring of keys and after three attempts, found the right key and locked the door.

“I hope this creature is not your doing, Dee.” Radclyffe snarled.

“Certainly not! You should be talking to Walsingham about what his spies know. This will not hold the creature for long.”

They followed the queen down the corridor, and into another room. Behind them Dee could hear sounds of shouting, and then the door splintered. Radclyffe locked the door they had passed through. The queen was already on the way out the other side of the room, into yet another corridor. “I hope she knows where she is going.”

“Hmph.” Radclyffe grunted. “The palace is a warren, but she knows it better than any of us. She is leading us towards the old part, the walls are stone there, and there are weapons and several guard rooms.”

“Swords appear to be useless. I hope we have cannon available.”

Radclyffe shrugged, and then locked the next door as they passed into the new corridor. Ahead of them, the queen was collecting a retinue of guards, courtiers, and a few high ranking nobles. Behind them was sounds of shouting, the clang of steel on stone, and the sound of another door splintering.

They passed down a long, winding corridor that became higher and wider as it went. The walls changed from painted plaster to bare stone. The corridor was lit by high candelabra on the walls, nothing fancy. The queen led the way through another door.

Dee looked at it as he and Radclyffe passed through. “Axe proof. Do you think it will hold against the creature?”

“Radclyffe, are you the last? Bar that door.” The queen ordered. “We will make our stand here. Gentlemen, arm yourselves. Radclyffe, find me a sword and shield.”

Dee looked around. The room was large, with several suits of armour along one wall, flanked by racks of swords, spears, halberds, battle axes, maces and shields. One single rack contained muskets. Dee reflected that none of these would be any use against the creature, but since the queen had commanded them to arm themselves, he would find a sword.

Radclyffe disagreed with the queen. “Your Majesty, you should leave your safety in the hands of your guards and courtiers...”

“By God!” The queen bristled. “I may have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a man! The blood of kings runs through my veins. Never shall it be said that England’s Queen fled a battle, or feared any creature. If I am to die this day, I shall do it fighting with a sword in my hand, surrounded by my warriors, and with God on my side. Now bring me a sword!”

Dee looked around. The guards wore expressions of awe, as did most of the courtiers. They would die protecting her, and think themselves privileged to do so. This was England’s ruler, and this was why she sat on the throne, instead of some man. Dee followed her towards the rack of swords. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury stood holding a mace.

“Canterbury, I am glad to see you are armed.”

“Your Majesty, a man of the cloth should not spill blood, but a mace will perform wondrously.”

The leader of the guards brought the queen a sword. “Your majesty, it should not be too heavy, nor too long. I hope this will be suitable.”

Elizabeth smiled. “It’s Calthorpe, isn’t it? Thank you.” She pulled the sword from its scabbard, took up the en guarde position, then made several feints and attacks with it, proving to all about her that she knew how to handle a sword. “I can use this one.”

Seeing Dee nodding approval, she said to him “I learned to use a word when I was a teen, affeared of the assassin’s blade. My father had wished I was male, and there have been times when I wished so too.”

“God chose you to be our Queen.” Dee offered. “England’s first female ruler. You will be remembered throughout history, you will be more famous than King Arthur.”

The queen laughed, “I am more famous than King Arthur. My place in history is secure.” There came a resounding thump upon the axe proof door. “We pray to God we will survive this day.”

“I should take a sword.” The queen was turning away, dismissing him as she concentrated on defence of the door. Dee turned to the guard. “Good captain, I will take your advice on a suitable sword.”

The axe proof door was about six inches thick, constructed of three layers of oak planking, the outer layers vertical, the inner horizontal. The whole structure was bound with iron. It was not, strictly speaking, axe proof, but it would take someone with an axe quite a while to hack through it. The right calibre cannon would smash straight through the planking.

Calzirg seemed not to be powerful enough to smash through like a cannon ball, but every blow was like a battering ram, rattling the door on its hinges and bars. It took him several minutes before the the door cracked through, split in twain, and fell inwards.

“Radclyffe and Canterbury step forward, or I will kill the lot of you.”

“Both of you stay with me!” The queen ordered. “I rule here, not you.”

Calzirg marched toward the queen. “We will see about that.”

Several of the guards fired muskets, which seemed to at least sting Calzirg. He slapped at his skin, and roared.

“Musketeers, form three lines.” Radclyffe yelled. “Fire by ranks. The rest of you, try to load before it is your turn to fire. Gentlemen, give a hand with reloading.”

Dee had never used a musket, so he went to stand near the queen. “What is that thing?” The Archbishop asked him. “Is it a demon?”

“I always thought demons were incorporeal, like angels. I wonder if it is not some sort of Troll or Ogre.” Dee ventured.

“Can either of you do something about it?” The Queen asked them. “We could use a little divine intervention.”

#

“The guides have located him. We must move swiftly. Take my hand, Kelley.” The prince took hold of Kelley's hand and Loxton’s. Nemo placed his hand on the prince’s shoulder. The prince stepped forwards, pulling the others with him. There was a rainbow scintillation, the scenery seemed to swirl, and they stepped into a stone corridor that was splashed with blood and body parts. The walls looked as if someone had walked through swinging a sledge hammer, smashing gouges randomly. From the doorway ahead came screams, bellows, floor-shaking crashes and the occasional crack of a musket.

“How did we get here?” Kelley asked. “And where are we?”

“I believe this is Whitehall palace. We ran through the streets, remember?” the prince replied. Loxton gave him a quizzical look.

“Yes, I remember now. Everything seemed to swim before my eyes. We must have run five miles!”

“That's the reason you were out of breath. Now, we must act together. You opened the way, he must obey your orders, albeit for about five heartbeats. Then he will be free of your control for a short space of time. Order him to stand still, in God’s name, and do that continually. You will give the rest of us a chance. Do not go near him, he will contrive your death. Can you do that?” He released Kelley's hand, and Kelley seemed to be surrounded by a faint golden glow.

“Yes, I can.”

The prince clapped a hand on the shoulders of Nemo and Loxton. “Gentlemen, you must distract him. Throw things at him, hurl epithets, but do not let him touch you. I have shielded you, but his touch will destroy your shield.” Both of them were now surrounded by faint golden glows.

“We can manage that.” said Nemo.

“What will you be doing?” asked Loxton.

“I have the hardest task. I must constrain him so he cannot flee, and then I must banish him. Let’s go.”

Through the door was a scene of destruction and mayhem. The queen, along with several courtiers and guards, was backed into a corner on the far side of the room, the queen standing tall and defiant while brandishing a sword. Calzirg was tearing a guardsman apart, throwing bits behind him.

“In the name of Almighty God, Yod, He, Vau, He, I order you to stand still!” Kelley shouted, pointing his hand at the creature.

Calzirg froze briefly. “Yours will be the most prolonged and painful death I can contrive!”

“Stand still! Stand still!” Kelley was yelling the command continuously. Then he remembered himself, and repeated his first order again. “In the name of Almighty God... ” The creature froze briefly again.

Loxton picked up a huge chunk of stone from the floor and hurled it at Calzirg. “Your father was a dog and your mother a poxy whore!” The stone bounced off the creature's head with no apparent effect. Then Calzirg threw the stone back so hard it swept Loxton off his feet, carried him across the room and smashed him into the wall.

He picked himself up yelling “Lost your power! That didn’t hurt a bit!” He dusted himself off, looking around for something else to throw.

Captain Nemo was seen holding a mace and whacking Calzirg with it, although that seemed to have little effect. He was careful to be out of reach before the creature could respond.

The prince picked his way across the littered floor, carrying a flute of silver and ebony. He began to play, holding it vertically and blowing across the end, producing a haunting melody that sent shivers down the spines of everyone present. Calzirg stopped his raging, and stood watching the prince approach.

Loxton, Nemo and Kelly backed away, watching the prince and the creature. “Who are you? I will tear you apart!” He lunged for the prince, but his feet remained stuck to the floor. He bellowed in anger.

“You will not succeed.” The prince seemed to be able to talk and play the flute at the same time. “You are the Jasper Prince of Wrath. If you want a physical body, you should get one the usual way, by being born.” The prince’s tone was quiet, reasonable.

“I am one of the non born! I cannot die! You can!” Calzirg swung a fist that should have sent the prince flying, except there was a flare of silver light and the creature howled in pain.

“Kelley, the holy water, now.” The prince ordered. Kelley cast a spray of water at Calzirg, who hissed. The prince’s right hand darted forward, seeming to pass into Calzirg’s body with a flare of silver light. The hand came back with equal speed, green light spilling around his clenched fist.

Calzirg grunted in pain. “Give that back! What are you?” he howled, shaking his head.

The prince stood just out of reach, his face lit by the greenish glow, a smile playing around his lips. “You would lay waste to the earth. That we cannot permit. I am the Herald, the Harbinger of the Sun, the Hawk that circles at dawn, banishing the darkness. You are of the darkness, and now I banish you.” He spoke softly, almost tenderly.

“How are you different from the rest of us?” Calzirg roared. He began clawing at the air around it, as if there were nets or cobwebs entangling him.

“Take a look at what you’ve done since you arrived - the people killed or injured, the property destroyed or damaged. When you understand that you will know something of how we differ.” the prince replied as if talking to a child.

“Insects and sand castles! Humans are vermin infesting this world.”

“You are bound by the song lines. You should not be here, and now I send you home.” The prince held out his hand and opened it. Green light spilled everywhere, pulsating like a heartbeat. In the centre of his palm sat a small greenish bone – the finger-bone relic. He played one pure note on the flute, a note that seemed to make the walls of the palace tremble, and the very air shiver. It was like fingernails scraped on a blackboard of the soul. A silver flame shot up around the relic, consuming the green light, and then consuming the bone itself. Nothing remained, not even ash.

“There was so much I planned to do. I was just getting started.” Calzirg complained sadly. Then the entire body melted into dust, which shimmered and vanished.

The prince turned to the group of people. “Your Majesty, you are safe now, the creature is gone for good. I am Prince Lukeios of Stygia, I was to present my credentials to you tonight.”

“We thank you, England thanks you.” She managed to look as if she had spent time reviewing something boring, and not been in fear of her life. “I apologise for the state of my chamber. Perhaps you will dine with me tonight, along with your companions? We will discuss things in a more convivial environment. Now if you will excuse me, I must see the extent of the damage, and deal with the injured and dead.”

“With your leave, we shall accompany you. We may be able to render some small service.” The queen acquiesced, and the prince and his party fell in with the queen’s entourage.

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There were several dead, and more injured or dying. The prince said words of comfort to the dying, closing their eyes when they died. The queen observed him the first time, then copied him, saying “They gave their lives for England, they should see their queen thank them for that.”

“Death stalks us all.” The prince responded. “It is important to be prepared for death before it taps you on the shoulder and tells you your time is up. Too many have died, and many injured will die soon.”

Among the dying was Radclyffe. He appeared uninjured, but was turning blue, totally unable to move. “Tell me the queen is safe!” He demanded of Lukeios.

Elizabeth gently moved Lukeios aside, placed her hands upon Radclyffe. “I am safe, and unharmed. Radclyffe, faithful to the end. You gave your life for England. My old soldier, you died in battle, with your boots on, and a sword in your hand.”

Radclyffe managed to smile. “Actually, it was a battle axe...” He sighed, twitched, and was still. Elizabeth closed his eyes. She knelt for a minute, then stood to continue her progress.

“What was that creature?” The queen asked.

Canterbury offered his opinion the creature was some kind of demon. “It was completely unnatural. It appeared to have a body of stone. I would like to know how you destroyed it.”

“I thought it might be a Troll.” Dee opined. “Aren’t they supposed to be made from stone?”

“Yes, but how did it arrive here? Whence did it come?” the queen demanded. “Are there any more like that?”

“Trolls are living stone, but they do not have any magical powers.” Prince Lukeios stated. “This was most certainly a demon. Normally demons are incorporeal, and are relegated to whispering temptations into one’s ears. However, there are certain items, buried since the time of Enoch, that can permit such a creature to manifest in a physical body.” The prince was choosing his words carefully. “Most have been destroyed now, but from time to time one surfaces. This one was a piece of green jasper in the form of a finger bone, and stored in an ossuary. If such an item falls into the wrong hands, then those hands can summon the demon, and it will manifest physically.”

“Really? Then we must catch this wretch!” the queen was vehement, her eyes flashing. Kelley blanched, Dee looked worried.

“The wretch has already paid for his crimes.” the prince stated. “There is usually a myth that the item will grant you eternal life, or world domination, or the riches of Croesus, if you but summon the demon. The demon requires a physical body, except the myth conveniently omits this. The demon takes the physical body of the summoner, sends the soul to hell to take the demon’s place, and then refashions the body to its liking. It is practically immortal, but it has two weaknesses. The first is that it can only survive here as long as it keeps the item that summoned it safe about its person. Destroy the item and you destroy the creature. The second is that whoever possesses the container of the item may command the demon for all of five heartbeats.”

“Ah!” said Dr. Dee. “You destroyed the item. But how did you manage that?”

“But Kelley was commanding the demon to stand still.” The queen commented. “Did he have possession of the box the item came in? How did he come by it?”

The prince answered for them. “The angels warned Kelley and Dee of the item, and told Kelley where to find it. They also warned me, which is why I arrived here today. Kelley found the empty box, he was too late to obtain the item. I found Kelley, and then the angels told me to come here with all speed. You were witness to what happened after that.”

“That was most fortunate.” The queen said. “How did you destroy the item?”

“Well your Majesty, with Kelley ordering it to stand still, and Nemo and Loxton distracting it, I managed to grasp the item at its belt.” At this point he withdrew a fine glove made of cloth of silver from his pocket. “I was wearing this. It was one of a pair given to our Lord by the three wise men. This has been in our family for generations, given in sacred trust to hunt down these items and destroy them. When I am old I will hand this on.” He smiled handsomely. “And I would appreciate if no one outside of this small group knows this. There are still items buried somewhere. When they surface, the bearer of this will be notified.”

Chapter 9 - Later the same evening

Later that evening, Prince Lukeios presented his credentials to the queen. Many of the usual attendees had been told not to appear for dinner, and instead only a few powerful nobles were there, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, along with the prince, Captain Nemo, Sir Matthias Loxton, Sir Francis Drake, Sir Francis Walsingham (the Queen’s spymaster), and Dr. Dee. The queen pressed the prince on what he knew about the supernatural.

The prince spoke at some length, discoursing on dragons, trolls, svart alfar or dark elves, goblins, and a host of others that could cause mischief. He seemed to know his subject, and expressed things in Christian terms, which pleased his audience. He stressed the need for a select group of people trained in how to deal with such creatures in order to protect the kingdom from them.

After a time, the queen announced to her advisors “I believe we should set up an order that will be knowledgeable in this, and will be capable to deal with such matters if they arise again. It should be a secret order, known only to myself, you gentlemen here, and the members themselves.”

The gentlemen agreed. “What should we call such an organisation?”

The queen shook her head. “I will take your advice on this.”

“Beowulf.” The prince suggested. “He hunted and killed the monster Grendl. This organisation will be doing something similar.”

“Let it be so.” Announced the queen. “The Secret Order of Beowulf. I shall be the head, and you gentlemen shall be the members. Walsingham, you shall be the second in charge.”

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Back on the ship later the same night, Captain Nemo asked Prince Lukeios “What was that story about your glove for?”

“Ah, Nemo, simply a story acceptable to their Christian world view. I had to explain things in terms they could accept. But it will all work out for the best. Dee and Kelley will burn their notes about the relic, lest someone discover they were responsible for summoning it. We have an order for dealing with unexplained phenomena, especially supernatural, with Loxton a founding member. Loxton is aware of his heritage, and aware that there are others like him. We will return from time to time to mentor him.”

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The Secret Order of Beowulf came into being and is still a secret order to this day. After some years Loxton became the head of the organisation, and this passed down through his family, father to son, over the centuries. Dr Dee and Kelley decided that they should retire from magical life in England, accepting an invitation from Prince Laski of Siradia in Poland, and went to stay in Krakow for several years. Dee later returned to England where he continued his experiments. When Queen Elizabeth died, her successor King James refused to permit Dr Dee to continue anything to do with magic. Dee retired and eventually died at the ripe old age of eighty two. Kelley went to Germany where he was knighted, and then to Bohemia, where he was imprisoned for fraud. He either died in prison, or died trying to escape. He was only forty three. The so-called Enochian language is still used by some magicians today in an effort to invoke the “angelic” beings that spoke to Dee and Kelley. The secret order of Beowulf became secret even from the king, though the head of the secret service is always a member of the organisation.

POV - Dee

POV - Lukeios

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