Odontomancer:

I was recently assigned to the case of Dr. Harvey Kringleston Eggbottom on the notion that something damningly peculiar had cut the wake of societal function. Therefore, in the late shadows of a cool November night I found myself picking the lock to Eggbottom Dentistry.

Inside, moonlight cast slivering glances at several emerald reclining chairs where the patient was meant to be sat. Metal tools hovered around the edges of the room, stacked on metal trays and clumped in metal cabinets. To my displeasement I found small blood stained tiles dotted around some of the back chairs. This must have been where his nocturnal dentistry took place.

I made my way to the back and scanned the area. Besides the blood, nothing seemed especially obtuse. However, as I examined some of the tools nearby, I couldn’t manage to pinpoint a direct use for any of them. They seemed like they could be found at a dental practice, but, at least from my experience, I had never before seen anything like them. I picked a particularly vile one for evidence and stuffed it in my pocket. I continued to search.

I opened cabinets that revealed medications and more incongruent tools. I searched the top shelves and the bottom shelves and eventually ran into the door of the back closet. After fiddling with the doorknob I found that it was locked. My fear incessantly began to stockpile as I wondered naively at why the door would be locked. I direly wished to turn around and leave, but my investigative oath stolidly remained in my head. I mustn’t leave any stone unturned.

I whacked the knob with the tool I had grabbed and the door creaked askew. Cautiously, I entered. For a while I was bumbling through the darkness until I was let out into a smaller room. It was drafty and I smoothed my hand along the wall until I felt a switch. The dingy lights revealed to me the unexpected contents of the room.

Along the back wall was a shelf with a line of assorted skulls and jawbones. Many of them were missing teeth and the shelf below it told me why. Along the shelf were innumerable jars of teeth floating in a curious green, bubbling liquid. I wondered as to where this liquid was from, and the opposite wall told me that answer. There were two mammoth stilted cauldrons filled with the same green, bubbling liquid as the jars.

“You like it?” I spun around and met eyes with Dr. Eggbottom. His face had strange black markings and he wore a necklace of teeth around his neck.

I tried to back up, but the room was so small there was nowhere to go. “What are you doing? What is this?”

Dr. Eggbottom spread his hands wide. “My ancestors knew things about life that no one else did. They discovered, through a very brutal trial and error, that everybody contains certain very special teeth. Those teeth, if correctly found and possessed, would be able to extend the life of its possessor. They found that this liquid,” he motioned towards the cauldrons, “corroded the teeth of men and reduced them to how much time they were worth. The more tooth, the more time.” Based on the simple explanation, it seemed that Dr. Eggbottom was harvesting his patients’ teeth, putting them in an acidic solution, and wearing the ones that hadn’t corroded. It was a selfish form of odontomancy unlike any I had ever seen. Now, he started to come towards me as I crept back towards the stilted cauldrons. They were big enough that I could separate from him.

“Don’t worry. I have no interest in your life. I only need your teeth.” A rictus formed on his face and I could see that half his teeth were missing. Surely he wasn’t experimenting on his own teeth to extend his life?

I squatted behind a cauldron and gripped the tool from earlier. I continued to look at his tooth necklace as I covertly messed with the stilts on the front of the cauldron. If I could knock it down, maybe I could delay enough to run out.

“You know, my ancestors didn’t come to the conclusion of teeth right away. They tried many body parts before. People didn’t like that so they shunned them. Cast them away with the label of murderers even though they had found the answer. Did what no one else was willing to…” But the stilts gave way and caused the cauldrons to spill over, pouring the green, bubbling liquid into the legs of the odontomancer. In mere seconds his feet evaporated into the acid. Then, with nothing to stand on, his legs fell into the liquid. They too scalded away and led the knees towards the liquid. It continued like this until the very last of his scalp burned away in the hellish acid. Dr. Eggbottom had evaporated; the only thing that remained was his teeth.