

In the depths of night, silence drifted down the well-furnished corridor and silence paused at the heavy wooden door.

Mal paused. She decided she didn't like referring to herself in the third person and Silence wasn't a good name anyway.

Shaking her head gently she drew out her small oil can and carefully oiled the doors' hinges – she doubted it'd make any noise but couldn't risk it. She slipped into room and carefully closed the door behind her.

The room was large and filled with impressive furniture, but the centrepiece was a large table filled with an immense amount of food, laid out immaculately, as you'd expect from such a high-class home as this.

She padded closer, carefully staying on the wooden floors' supporting planks rather than risk creaking floorboards.

She approached the table and stood on tip-toe to see better. From here was a wide array of options – a full cheese board, bowls of fruit and, she gasped, a genuine looking Havlin Mixed Pottage.

She swallowed carefully and sighed. She had a job to do but was certainly tempted – if a load of food went missing questions would be asked and she was looking to leave no trace.

Stepping back her eyes scanned the room – the target had to be in here, amongst all this clutter.

She frowned as her eyes skimmed the walls. There was the usual pictures on the walls of vistas and fancy buildings. Yet centre on the opposite wall was a portrait of a man in a brown coat, looking direct at the viewer yet pointing off toward a different picture.

Mals' eyes narrowed – such a portrait wasn't usually found in dining rooms.

Carefully dragging a chair over to the portrait she clambered up and ran her fingers around the edge of the frame, as far as she could reach. Nodding to herself she struggled and lifted the picture down, revealing a heavy-duty metal safe front, complete with keyhole and a dial. She reached into her bag and drew out a velvet roll – opening it revealing her lock picks like a pin fanciers' prize collection.

Selecting two, she began working on the safe. Within minutes she had moved both picks to one hand and had a third in the lock with her other hand.

Moments later she placed a brass rod in between her teeth, feeding it in alongside and continued working with both hands.

With an audible click she moved all three picks to her left hand and grasped the dial with her right. She wished she had bought some hearing aids with her but instead relied on feel – carefully rotating the dial until she was able to move the picks slightly.

Spinning the dial the other way she continued until the picks moved again.

After the fourth spin the picks turned enough to unlock the safe door.

Carefully packing up her tool she grasped the heavy handle and swung the safe open revealing.. .a plate with a single chocolate doughnut on it.

She picked up the plate and was climbing down when a steady clap resounded behind her.

Turning she was greeted by Viscount Belloq – towering over the halfling and looking splendid in his tailored suit.

“well done Miss Lightfinger.” he stopped his applause “a very neat job” waving away the plate Mal offered him. Mal smiled and took a bite out of the doughnut as he continued

“You are the first Havlin who has resisted the feast. Several of our human hires also failed at this”

He reached toward a bowl of grapes and the illusion failed, an angry burning rune appearing in it's place.

"Would you kindly come along to the study?" he turned and began to walk away as Mal carefully placed the plate onto the now empty table.

"We have several schemes in amongst plans, however certainly have a use for someone disciplined and skilled as yourself." the Viscount continued as he led the pair of them throughout the corridors "There are some objects we require that aren't available through... traditional means..."