

# Wherewithdrawl



We were past the barring magic detectors and into the catacombs, which was lined with electric lights. I was fiddling with the sound-canceler on my horn, thinking of the X of Aero-nautto—the treasure rumored to be hidden in these tunnels. A treasure that would allow the museum to stay open, even though it's original artifacts had been stolen and scattered to the far reaches of our world.

Sharlatan kept looking over a folded paper. “Is that a map?” I asked. He said it wasn't. Every time we came to a locked door or force-field, he produced some kind of implement that would get us past it. Various keys, wands, or powders.

“Where’s that all coming from?” I asked. “There’s no way you’re carrying that all in your bag.”

He explained to me his “Wherewithdrawl”. “It’s a way to carry stuff, or hide stuff.”

“I’ve heard of stuff like that,” I said. We were now reaching deep parts of the catacombs, and some of the electric lights were out. He seemed to reach under his sleeve, and produced a flashlight for me.

“No,” he said. “The Wherewithdrawl is special. There are many methods used to hide or store treasures. They’re all

a bit limited and they all have vulnerabilities.” He said he’d found a way to mix and merge these multitudes of methods, creating something much more powerful. Something unique and impenetrable.

“It hides and stores better than all the other individual means, but the magics weren’t exactly compatible with one another.” He said that vanishing things into the Wherewithdrawl was a bit finicky. All the hiding and disappearing magics contested one another over whether a vanishing thing should ‘poof’ in a cloud of smoke, or sparkle with lights, or simply fade away. Until a day came when this was resolved, the Wherewithdrawl would

be a bit self-conscious about this, refusing vanish something if eyes are on it. “If I want to store something, I have to hide it from sight, like I’m doing a magic trick or something. And other magics amplified this problem. Now things have to be out of sight AND out of mind. That’s why I haven’t vanished this door-opening wand, yet. I can’t do it until your thoughts have stopped lingering on it.”

That wouldn’t be long. We’d turned a corner into a very strange room which had taken all of my attention. “Well,” I said, “It’s not as sophisticated as YOUR warehouse...”

I couldn’t believe the impiety. Deep

in the center of our sacred burial mountain, was a storeroom of pure junk. Shelves and fold-up tables filled the room, laden with decades of old and broken office machines. Copiers, printers, computers, monitors.

“This is awesome!” said an electrified Sharlatan. “I’m taking some of these. Look away! Busy yourself with something!”

I examined the wall at the end of the room. “Sharlatan!” I called. “Come see!”

He stepped over into the relative dimness; the lights were flickering here. “Is that a giant door?” he asked. This

was probably what we were looking for. The stone door behind which was rumored to be the treasure we sought. I pushed, but it was sealed with a spell.

“Use the wand!” I said. Sharlatan looked confused. “The wand! The one you couldn’t disappear because I was thinking about it.”

“I... I must have done so,” he said. “When you were looking at the wall. And now, I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

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