

Treasures

For a temporary hiding place, I'd placed the Book of Knowledge within Granpa Titus' workshop. I felt pretty sure that none of the rest of the family knew the shop was here and until I build an appropriate vault to hold it, this seemed likely to be the safest place in which to keep it.

Now that I was back from finding the aforementioned book, I learned that I had something of a backlog of work awaiting my return. At the top of that list, Dyle Alchemical needed immediate attention. I spent about a week finding out how matters within the company had truly been progressing. That picture turned out not to be a very close match to the stack of reports that I'd found waiting on my desk.

So, I held another board meeting. I promoted those people who'd been indispensable in seeing that the company had functioned during my absence. A few people who weren't so good at their jobs were demoted or shuffled around. It was also time for another round of hiring and training. The current expansion was progressing well despite some of the problems that had been waiting for me. This time, instead of handling all that myself, I turned it over to those people I'd just promoted. I suspected the results would most enlightening as to how my people were progressing. Or not progressing.

Uncle Marcus had a job for me to perform for the kingdom. Seemed one of the local news sheets had reported about a counter-espionage program he'd set up within Regillus. Two of the agents in the program were now dead as a direct result. The crown prince wanted the traitorous newspaperman dead. The sooner the better. News of the secret program had come out a couple of months ago by the local calendar. Therefore, any accidents that befell the man would not be looked upon quite as suspiciously as they might have had he died right after committing his treason. I personally thought he should have been dragged out into a public square and beheaded. Treason was treason. However, Uncle Marcus and the king disagreed for reasons only beknownst to them.

One week later, while touring the back of his own press, A 600 kilo roll of paper fell and crushed the traitor. Due to the massive damage to the head and spinal column, there was no possibility of resurrecting the fellow. There were definitely limits to restorative magics. Unless one were to call in an angel. And despite the money his family had, that seemed quite unlikely. Summoning angels was almost as dangerous as summoning demons. Of course, if they knew the worlds of the Maze well enough, they might have luck taking his body to certain places therein. But most didn't know the Maze that well.

His body was interred two days later.

So it was, about a month after my return, that I was able to sit down with the book and begin designing my vault. I'd decided that I wasn't going to try for a super fortified enclosure. If word about it leaked out, there would always be people and creatures willing to try to break into it. Instead, I was opting to ensure that no one ever found out about it in the first place.

Returning to Titus' workshop, I decided to use the book to look up some new and inventive means of keeping an entire vault hidden. And I promptly discovered something as surprising as it was unpleasant... the book was closed now... and it wouldn't open.

Strong as I was, prying on it did absolutely no good. I tried some of the words and spells of opening that I'd learned while researching how to get into Great Granpa's shop in the first place. All were useless. At last, when I'd become so bleary-eyed I couldn't see clearly, I reluctantly went to

the little cot Titus Diamond had kept in the corner and took a nap.

When I awoke, the book was sitting open right where I'd left it.

Muttering under my breath, I began looking up means of concealing items of power. As I read, my grumbling died away as the joy of learning returned. There was so much here on this one subject it would take me years to read it all. Hmm. And that was a good point. I didn't have years to put into this. While the lab here was obviously working out alright for the moment, I had no idea how long that would last. I needed a vault in which to conceal this book of power and I needed it as soon as possible. So, I began skimming through the pages on the topic at hand, looking for things that caught my eye. When something did, I made copious notes about what it was and how it functioned. This took up a lot of note pages and almost a month of my time.

At the end of that time, I had a good idea of how I was going to have my vault made. I also realized that I needed some fresh air and sunshine. So, after seeing to it that the first stages of the construction were underway, I mirrored my Aunt Flosia.

"Clarissa! So good to see you again. I was beginning to think you'd forgotten my mirror code."

"Hi, Flosia," I returned with a happy smile. "It's good to see you as well. And the mirror works both ways, you know."

Her laugh sounded like music. "I suppose it does at that sweetie. So what are you up to these days?"

"Well, for starters, I was hoping we could have lunch together. Coffee at the very least. Catch up on what's happening."

"Lunch sounds wonderful. I found this little place in Sustice. Oh, they have the best roasted squab you've ever tried."

"That sounds great, Flosia. When would you care to meet?"

"How about now? We can catch up on what you've been up to for the last few months and make a slow trip of it. If you like, I can have Rosigo prepare the carriage."

"Sounds like a wonderful plan to me. It'll take me ten minutes to change and another five to get to a transport mirror."

"I'm at my north hills house. You remember the transport code?"

"Of course, I'll see you shortly."

"Ta ta."

Some things in the Probability Maze are constant. Aunt Flosia seems to be one of them. She's one of the great beauties of the Maze. So much so, that being with her is one of the few times when I don't have to worry about men drooling over me. I've found it quite flattering that many people seemed to think we look alike. Naturally, we both had Diamond features to our faces. Narrow noses, full lips, and pale eyes with a dark ring around the outside. My own were a pale brown while her's were a light and dark blue. For myself, there is a hint of my Edotoman heritage that shows around my eyes. Despite half my blood being Edotoman, I look more like I'm only a quarter or perhaps less. Daddy says it gives me an air of mystery but he's hopelessly biased on the subject. Still, there is more to beauty than a pretty face and Flosia was beautiful through and through. It was mostly from her that I'd gotten the idea to do charity works. We both did a lot of fund-raising for a number of charities throughout the worlds of the Regillus Trade Consortium.

Within the family, Aunt Flosia is something akin to our ultimate goodwill ambassador. She gets along well with most of the family and with practically every nobleman within the RTC. Due to the dark influences of jealousy and paranoia, she's not quite as popular among the noblewomen, but she's still beloved enough to ease most political tensions when they crop up. And being a goodwill ambassador keeps her traveling and keeps her up on current events.

"Have you heard about Samantha's new lover?" she asked, speaking of my cousin.

"I doubt it," I replied with a wry smile. "It's hard to keep up with them without a tally board."

"It is, isn't it?" she laughed. Looking out the window of our coach, I noticed that four of her pets trotted along with us. They looked rather akin to very large dogs. However, they most certainly were not dogs. Uncle Lloyd had found them deep within one of his forest realms. He'd trained them for her. Flosia typically referred to them as puppies. Despite the name, they were incredibly tough and could literally chew through plate armor. Aunt Flosia spoiled them badly. She also dressed them up on occasion (also literally) and sometimes dyed their fur. She treated them like rather silly children most of the time.

"Well," she continued, "Her latest is prince Elphonse of Podeva."

"You mean she's dating little Elphonse?! Why he's only...."

"Eighteen as of last quarter," she finished for me.

"Oh. They grow up so quickly," I muttered.

"Don't they just," she agreed pleasantly. "So, what about you sweetie? Seeing anyone special?"

"No. Not really. I've got a friend way out in the Maze I visit on occasion. He's a sorcerer. Pretty powerful one at that."

"Well, I'd certainly hate to hear you were seeing a mediocre spell caster," she said with one of her infectious grins. "Is he handsome?"

"Oh goodness no. The leprosy has left him rather badly disfigured. Still, he's quite talented with his magic." She blinked at me a moment but figured it out quickly for herself. When she grinned, I confessed, "Okay, he *is* rather good looking. And the best part is he doesn't age like the normal people."

"Oh, that's wonderful sweetie," she said squeezing my hand. "The short-lived folk are nice, but they're gone so quickly. I'm glad you've found someone who'll be around for a while."

"Well, it's not like we're even seriously dating," I explained. "We just see each other every so often."

She raised her eyebrows suggestively. "Sounds like a... nice... arrangement."

"Quite nice," I replied primly. A moment later we both burst out laughing. Aunt Flosia and I understood each other very well.

Lunch was every bit as good as promised. She hadn't heard about mine and Daddy's little card game. So I filled her in about what all I'd won and showed her the necklace which I wore most of the time. After talking about some of the trials and tribulations I'd had with Dyle Alchemical, I realized that I'd been monopolizing the discussion and apologized for having done so.

"Don't be silly, sweetie," she told me with a smile. "I'm happy that you've found something that catches your interest so. You speak about it with a passion and a fire in your voice. You know

what that means?" She didn't wait for me to answer. "It means you're alive and beyond that, you're living. There's far too many people out in the worlds that are alive but not living."

After dining, we sat on the restaurant's back balcony sipping a nice dessert wine. We had a marvelous view of the valley and enjoyed it as we continued our discussion.

For a few minutes we talked about Max and how her classes were going. Flosia had taken to Maxine almost as quickly as I had. However, after a lull in the conversation, her face turned serious.

"There's news you should be aware of," she told me in a quietly.

Taking her hand, I cast a simple yet powerful spell to prevent anyone else from overhearing our conversation.

"That was nicely done," she smiled. "Is that a new spell?"

"I only picked it up a few months ago."

Her smile slipped away and her eyes turned almost somber. "Tullis Diamond was seen in the Probability Vortex recently. Word has it he's raising an army. At least Victor will be happy." Tullis was Great Granpa Titus' younger brother. According what I'd heard, he felt control of Titus' Machine should have fallen to him when Titus ascended. Granpa Lawrence had once explained to him that would never happen. Explained it violently at that. Still, Tullis plotted and schemed to overthrow the crown and take control of the Machine.

"He's going to get himself killed if he persists in this foolishness," I sighed.

"Probably. But he is a Diamond. He's been at this ever since Grandad ascended. Despite his losses, he's still alive to try again." We were quite a moment before she added, "I've sometimes wondered if our beloved king, Uncle Lawrence, doesn't keep Tullis alive to help keep him sharp. Perhaps use him as a tool to judge what the other great families are thinking."

"That's an interesting theory," I murmured thoughtfully.

"Yes, I thought so."

We sat in a pleasant silence for a while before she frowned. "There's one other piece of news."

Rather than respond aloud, I turned to look at her fully.

"Talia's been seen in Mackina City."

"House Kyber's capital city?" I said, already knowing full well the answer.

"Yes, the very place," she agreed regretfully.

"Any idea what she's up to in one of the highest tech places in the Maze?" I asked.

"None at all. But it won't be good. She insists on blaming Uncle Lawrence for Uncle Numitine's death. She simply won't hear that the king had nothing to do with her father's death. Because of that, she's dedicated herself to avenging herself upon our king. And his entire kingdom by proxy." Yes, I'd heard that before.

"Do you even know how Prince Numitine died?" I asked quietly. I'd wondered about that for some time now but hadn't found an opportunity to ask anyone I thought might know or answer.

"No idea at all. I do know he *is* dead though. Mother and Uncle Lawrence both said so. I just have no idea how. Or even when for that matter." Princess Hecuba was Flosia's mother. She'd married Harkin of the Barrens, the tribal great chief of the Vanetti. Flosia's older brother was Victor. He would become great chief of the Vanetti hoards when his father died. Everyone agreed that he'd received the fighting gene from both sides of his parentage and was considered by many to be the quintessential warrior. Flosia had gotten charm from both sides and was looked upon in that regard much the same as her brother is to the fighting community.

“I hope it’s only coincidence that they’ve both been spotted recently,” I said quietly as I took another sip of the wine and looked out over the valley.

“Yes,” Flosia agreed in a bare whisper. “Let us hope so.”

When the builders were finished with the vault construction, I returned them to the world from which they’d come and began the task of setting spells into the metal walls. Rather than simple spell casting, this undertaking was much more complicated. I was weaving a huge spellnet. The base spells would permeate the metal of the vault and act as anchors for the other spells. I would attach a huge array of protective spells and counter-location spells across the ‘weave’ of the net. As I was finishing, the spells would begin merging together into a single web which would render the vault virtually indestructible, impossible to detect, and with magical protections that couldn’t be dispelled. This would be the greatest spellnet I’d built yet. It would be extremely difficult and more than a little taxing, but I knew I was up to the task.

And I was right. All together, it took me a twenty eight days of near continuous casting and about a billion gold worth of rarified reagents and components.

So, at last I had my vault. Except it was still sitting in the middle of a field in an otherwise empty world fragment. I hadn’t trusted the workers not to tell someone... despite the fact that I truly doubted they would do so. Nor did I trust there not to be agents from another great family close enough to any of my mansions to have detected the casting of the powerful spells that had just gone into enchanting the vault. Hence the vault in the field in the middle of nowhere.

Needing to complete the next steps quickly, I returned to one of my smaller estates via a transport mirror I’d brought with me. There I finished the final preparations for that side of things. While powerful, these spells were of a much quieter variety and were completed in short order. Returning through my estate mirror, I began the final preparations there. This mostly consisted of drawing a magic circle around the vault and setting a number of alignment points. I took my sweet time with this. For this undertaking, getting it right the first time would be essential. It would be horribly, if not impossibly, difficult to move the vault again once it had been placed. If it was off by even a couple of centimeters, that could throw everything off. Thankfully, patience is one of my virtues.

When the greenish star that lit this world came to be directly overhead, I completed the ritual that transported the vault to my estate while simultaneously bringing a storeroom and a large chunk of dirt and rock to this world fragment. As the dirt and rock, no longer supported by the earth and stone that had surrounded it, spread out over my magic circle, I knew it had worked.

So far, so good.

Exiting the world, I walked to the end of one of the two interworld passageways. There, from just inside the interworld corridor, I cast another series of spells. These spells sealed up the corridor entrance. At this end of the corridor anyway. Not that I was quite finished with this passageway yet. Returning to the green sky of the little world fragment, I then cast another series of spells, completely severing the interworld connection. This left me tired and sweating. The great apprentice who’d built these passageways had certainly built to last.

Walking to the only remaining exit, I cast a powerful protective shield over myself. Immediately after completing it, I cast one of my most dangerous destruction spells, centering it upon the circle I’d used to transport the vault. Traces yet remained within that temporary circle. Traces

that a powerful or talented enough worker of magics could use to figure out what had happened here and to track down the location of what had been moved. At least those traces *had* remained. As the blinding blue energies I released burned the air and ate away the dirt and rock across the entire area, I decided I'd done almost all I could to prevent anyone from learning my secret.

Almost.

Leaving the small, burning world fragment, I stopped just inside the lush woods of the world that connected the little, green skied world to the rest of the Maze. After setting down my transport mirror, I began casting yet again. This time, I released a smaller version of the burning spell into the interworld corridor. It would probably take it at least a week to completely sever the connection between worlds. I'd have preferred to have simply severed the connection like I had with the other side. However, I didn't have enough power left to successfully cast that spell. Therefore, I was doing this one the long way which was tiring enough. Stepping back out of the passageway, I then recast the complicated spells required to seal an interworld door. Most people didn't realize that the door and the connection between worlds were two different things. I did and I'd used that knowledge to my advantage on several occasions. Would probably do so again someday.

With that done, I found myself nigh exhausted. This world had a few small trade settlements a hundred or so leagues to the west. I certainly couldn't walk that distance in my current state. Sitting down, I called Max using my personal mirror. She answered after only a short delay.

"Clarissa! Wow, you look done in. Everything alright?" This brought a tired smile to my face.

"Just fine sweetie. I was wondering if you might have some free time coming up?"

"Sure," she replied with a hopeful look, "Right now, in fact. My last class for the day let out an hour ago."

"That's wonderful. This is going to sound weird... then again, after some of the other things you've seen, maybe it won't. Can I get you to travel to Hasselvale for me? There's a branch of the Interworld Bank there. The manager will be holding my signet ring. Take the ring. With the ring and my name, you should be able to buy everything I need bought but am too tired to get myself." Thankfully, I'd sent the ring there ahead of time. Goodness, but spellcasting like that took a lot out of a girl.

"Your signet? Umm, sure. Hasselvale's not too far away. Once I'm off the school grounds, I can teleport to the worldgate and fly on to the capital. That is where your bank is located, right?"

"That's it exactly," I replied with a tired smile.

"So, what is it you need me to get for you?" she asked.

"Got something to write on?" I asked with a little grin.

"Sure, I'll use the mirror." And she proceeded to pull out a small quill. Interesting that. I decided to wait and see what she did before asking about it.

"Okay, I need you to buy the most powerfully magic sword you can find." Her eyes lit up at this. Using the quill, she wrote the item on the side of the mirror. I could see the words glowing in gold there. I'd have to ask her about it later. Right now, I decided I was simply too tired. "After that, there's a few more things...."

Once I'd finished detailing the rest of the list, I added, "Oh, and get something nice for yourself. Anything you want." I truly enjoyed seeing her eyes widen in surprise.

Swallowing, she blinked at me a moment and asked, "After I've gathered it all, what do I do with it? And some of the shops will be closed by the time I get to Hasselvale. I'm probably going to have to get a daypass from the Headmistress."

“Whatever you need to do is fine. Once it’s all accumulated, take it to the Dyle Alchemical factory in Hasselvale. There’s a bulk transport mirror there. When you’re ready, let me know and I’ll contact that mirror and we’ll bring your purchases through.”

“I’d forgotten there was a Dyle factory there. You’d mentioned that the company was yours now, I’ve never even visited the place.”

“Places sweetie,” I corrected. “There are dozens of them on as many worlds. Closer to hundreds now. The ring will give you the run of the place. Look into anything and everything that interests you. Later, if you feel so inclined, you can take your classmates on a tour of the place.” She blinked in surprise.

“Yeah,” she said slowly. “That might be cool. Might be very cool.” She looked at me a moment. “You need to get some sleep, Clarissa. I’ll get everything on your list. Thank you for trusting me.”

“Thank you for being deserving of that trust. It’s worth more to me than you can imagine,” I told her with a tired smile.

Blinking quickly, she quickly said, “I’ll take care of it all, I promise. See you soon.” And she closed the connection before any tears actually formed.

The short rest while I’d talked with Max had done nothing for restoring my strength. With a sigh, I picked up the transport mirror and began walking. I should have brought Juji with me. In hindsight, it seemed to be the only real failure in my planning thus far.

My main intent now was to put distance between my transport mirror and the newly sealed interworld passageway. Few people were likely to have the codes to this mirror. However, there were ways of finding out mirror codes. Scrying adepts could do that and probably more with the right combination of spells. Using the mirror itself, far more varieties of magic could find the code. I didn’t want anyone being drawn to the newly sealed interworld passage until the connection had burned through and was completely severed. So I walked.

About a league away, I realized that I was about to fall down. Punching up the code for my rooms in the Castellum Regillia, I saw the image of them form within the mirror. Barely able to walk, I stepped through into my rooms. With a tired wave, I shut down the mirror connection. I just managed to collapse onto the bed before consciousness abandoned me.

On a distant world, I contacted Max. Using a combination of levitation and telekinesis spells, the two of us moved the crates and boxes for the goods she’d purchased through into the world I’d called in from. We proceeded to move them around a dozen worlds before moving them into my country estate where the vault was now located. We unloaded them all, and then took the empty boxes and crates on another tour of places that had bulk transport mirrors throughout the RTC. On the last of these worlds, we loaded the crates and such into a small ship. Using variety of spells, I sent the ship sailing... after putting a final enchantment on it that would burn and sink it within the next ten hours. As the crew were all illusions, I didn’t feel they’d object to what would certainly be a most fiery and spectacular end.

With Max occasionally monitoring the progress of the ship by way of scrying with her communications mirror, we returned to my estate. We then began the task of moving the contents of those crates and such into the vault. This consisted of numerous, finely crafted display cases. The magic sword she’d bought, which really was quite nice, I sat leaning in a corner. It looked good

there. Into the cases went such things as the levitation wand I'd found in the white spire just prior to getting the book in the first place. I placed the compass, its needle still pointing to a far off world, next to it. This went on for hours until we finally broke for lunch.

A few hours later, Max called for me to stop arranging the case I was working on and motioned me over to her scrying mirror. We took a moment to watch the ship burn. Max really liked the light effects I'd built into it. It burned fast and the bare skeleton of her frame slipped quietly into the sea. Another step taken.

Getting back to it, a few other personal treasures went into other display cases. I also moved in a variety of chests and containers containing gems and jewelry as well as a variety of magical items, weapons, and armor I'd accumulated over the years. I was pleased to note that this removed quite a bit of clutter from my various bedrooms throughout my houses around the worlds.

After taking down the bulk transport mirror at the estate, we ate dinner and then returned to the vault.

"This is amazing," Max whispered as she stared in awe at the vault's contents. Now that all the boxes and packing materials were gone, it did look rather nice. I wished I could show her the real vault and the real treasure the vault had been built to protect. Sadly, that would put her in more danger than I was willing to consider.

"What did you pick out for yourself?" I asked with a smile.

"What? Oh, I got a nice armor ring. See?" she asked putting forth her hand. The heavy gold ring showed a blank shield that had been done in steel.

"Hmm, nice. However, it's a rather standard ring. I've always had a problem with potential enemies knowing what protections I have in place. Especially when all they have to do is look." Looking at the ring, her face fell a bit. "Might I suggest," I began with a quiet smile, "That we change the appearance of the ring?" Her eyes lit back up.

"That would be nice," she agreed, trying not to sound excited about the idea. "You know how to do that?"

"Of course," I replied, smiling brightly. "Let me show you how."

"Oh, yes!"

After a couple of hours worth of discussion about changing the appearance of previously enchanted items without affecting the underlying enchantment, I actually showed her how to change the ring by doing.

"Do you like it?" I asked as she looked at the finished result. "If not, we can change it to anything you want."

"It's beautiful. But it's also your house device," she whispered. "It's almost identical to your signet ring."

"This one's actually a bit more useful than the signet ring, thanks to the underlying armor enchantment. The rose in the middle marks it as my personal device," I told her with a gentle smile. "No one is likely to mistake you as a royal agent."

"They'd think I was your agent," she said, apparently realizing this as she said it.

"They might at that," I agreed.

"Are... are you offering me a job?" she asked quietly.

"Would you like one?"

"I suppose that would depend on the job," she answered slowly, glancing from me back to the ring.

"What would you like to do?" I asked.

“In my almost four years at school, I’ve figured out that I’ve only begun to learn about magic. Or about the worlds that are out there. I suppose as part of my job, I’d like to continue learning.”

“That sounds like a very good choice,” I encouraged. “What else?”

She was quiet a long moment before saying, “I’d like to work with you. You’re the first person I ever met who was from another world. And despite all the interesting people I’ve met since, you’re still far and away the most fascinating person I’ve found. And quite frankly, you’re the best friend I’ve ever had. I’d like to spend more time with you. See what you do when you’re not showing a frightened, young girl the true nature of the worlds we live in.”

It was my turn to be quiet for a while as I looked off into nowhere.

“I won’t lie to you, some of what I do is very dangerous,” I said at last, looking her in the eyes. “Some of the people I meet are just as deadly. And a lot of it is dreadfully boring. But there are also interesting parts that are neither particularly dangerous, nor are they boring.”

“I’m not afraid,” she told me staunchly.

“Not yet anyway,” I said with a gentle smile. “Once you’ve graduated, I’ll take you with me on my journeys for a while. I’ll also take you to company boardrooms and to court functions as well. Maybe even take you on a vacation while we’re at it. And then we’ll dance with madness a while and see if being a part of my life is something you can handle.”

“Deal,” she declared, putting out her hand for me to shake. I did so, unable to hide my smile. “Here’s your signet ring back,” she said, holding my ring out to me. “And I suppose until I actually graduate, we should change this to something else.”

“If you like the look, keep it. I admit, I’m curious to see how you handle the power that symbol conveys over a span of more than three days.”

“People will wonder....” she trailed off, never finishing the thought.

“Let them wonder. Or tell them. Or we can change the ring’s appearance.”

“I... I’d prefer to keep it the way it is,” she said at last.

“I’d like that, too.”

“It’s about time I got back to school. My day pass was over a few hours ago.”

“Do you need me to write you a note or anything?” I asked, suppressing a grin.

“No,” she replied seriously, looking down at the ring she wore. “I don’t think I need anything else.” She hugged me for a long moment. “I’ll see you soon Clarissa. Mirror me when you get a chance.”

“I will Max.”

And with that, the greatest treasure I’d yet found, a true friend, walked out of my vault on her way back to school.

Once Max was gone, I mirror walked back to the Castellum Regillia and rested. Long after night had fallen, I conjured my darksuit and snuck down into the dungeon and from there into Titus’ workshop. The book sat right where I’d left it. Gently closing it, I cast a little spell and floated the extremely large tome across into the summoning circle inscribed into his floor. The circle had been etched into a single, large floor stone. It had the lingering sense of power that marked a well-used circle. Sitting on the book, I powered the circle and then cast a long series of spells, the last of which teleported myself and the book across three worlds and into my vault.

My head ached. Too much powerful magic in too short a time.

With a sigh and a wince, I cast my telekinesis spell again and floated the book to me. I then cast another spell to turn the book insubstantial. That one I'd had to use the book itself to find. I then picked up a vase filled with fire diamonds and sat myself on the small table it had just occupied. Still holding the incorporeal book (a certain aspect of the spell allowed me to carry it while it remained in this state) I cast a tiny little incantation.

It was a very simple spell that triggered a mechanical response. The floor the table sat on, as well as a section of wall behind me, rotated sideways into the wall until it stopped with me upside down in another section of the vault. The secret section of the vault. Above me in the fake vault, there was now an identical table sitting exactly where this one had been. A gravity reversing spell made the orientation of this room seem normal. Clever, if I do say so myself.

Placing the book in the center of the back wall between two wall sconces that cast a bright, flameless light, I removed the spell from the great tome and it became extremely substantial once more.

There, I'd done it. I'd first found and now placed the Book of Knowledge into my great library of one book. And despite there only being one book in this library, it was the greatest library in all the worlds.

Returning to the table, I spoke the spell again that returned me to the fake vault. There wasn't even the slightest sense of disorientation from essentially going from being upside down back to rightside up. When I made an effort, I did damn good work. The fire diamonds I placed back on the table and spoke the spell again. An empty table took its place. Fire diamonds were rare. My hope was that should any thieves actually make it to the vault, they would think the little table was simply hiding the precious diamonds... not an entire room.

Heading upstairs, I decided I'd earned a couple of days of rest and relaxation. Time would tell if I'd done a good enough job of protecting my treasure.