

## OPENING

There is a way in you know ,it is on the left as you go down the lane ,I am aware that some of these openings are not what you could strictly call real,I know it looks impenetrable , but at one point the grassy bank goes in further than anywhere else ,and its there.

I found it quite by chance you know ,the entrance to the thicket ,you wouldn't believe that's what it is, but its true virtually all the way down on the left until the wood begins on both sides ,its all bramble thicket, I know that there are trees poking there spires out of the top, but beneath it is different,beneath it is two places at once .

I know I said I found it quite by chance ,well that isn't entirely true , you see one day I was walking along there, gazing into the lush green bank with its multitude of flora,watching the insects and feeling jealous of them and their privileged access to the tiny holes that seemed the only way into this green fortress ,and as I was watching and walking I saw a figure coming towards me up the drive ,the drive is public so I ought to have thought no more of it ,but I did . As it drew closer it transpired that it was an elderly lady ,exactly how elderly I could not say,her age is however irrelevant to the anecdote ,as I am sure no matter how old she was she would still have struck into my heart the same inexorable terror that that I felt ,I admit this is not a reasonable thing to think ,and yet at the time all I could think of was the sinister demeanour of this lady,she walked slowly without any kind of impediment that I could discern,and her features were nothing that would compel men to run in fear ,as much as I can recall the sinister air came from her clothes,for they were all of the most hideous sickly green I have ever borne witness to,her suit comprised of a knee length skirt ,a green chemise of some description, a jacket or shawl I forget which ,and finally a hat ,all these items were of different tints of ~~the~~ the same green ,I would describe them as differing shades but I fear that would inspire too large a

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contrast in a readers mind.

Anyway, the ladys relevance to the tale being that, as she was walking towards me, I saw here pause,I myself had paused now as I was filled with repulsion by her appearance and radiation of something that does not go under the heading of evil, it is merely sinister by its nature ,she had paused at the place where the grassy bank goes in furthest and was looking with considerable interest in to what I now know is thicket,I could not hear her, but I would swear that she was whispering into the greenery,and by her expression I judged she received some reply,suddenly realising I had been staring for a while now at what could easily be construed as a perfectly reasonable spectacle, I decided that I should put my preposterous inhibition behind me and proceed on my way ,there was no point turning back as unless she was of very poor vision she had certainly already seen the direction in which I was walking before I had paused.I must confess my brave front did me no good what so ever, as the closer I got, the worse the sensation became ,she had started walking again herself by the time I reached her ,and as we passed she turned to me and said ;  
"In deep ... in deep ,peekaboo says they.."

In no state to talk as I was I did not reply ,I was merely glad to walk past this green clad woman and get to her out of my head,as soon as I was clearly past her I quickened my pace considerably until I deemed she must be well away from me ,there, where the wood starts up on the right side of the drive I paused for a while allowing the strange message to sink in 'In deep ...in deep ,peekaboo says they..' she had said had I not been so fearful of her in the first place I would no doubt have paid no heed whatsoever to her ,but the fact that I had been, aroused my interest in the matter to such a level that it would seem a shame not to explore the matter further with the only clues I had ,one of course was the message she had delivered to me ,and the second was the pause she had made to speak with the thick wall of green,so as the vocal input at this stage made little or no sense I endeavoured to find the



spot at which she had stopped, I walked back up the drive and attempted to gauge where whereabouts she must have stopped, by standing in the place where I myself had paused gobsmacked minutes ago, looking down from this position I ascertained that she must have been standing approximately adjacent to the place (as previously mentioned), where the thick grass goes further into the undergrowth than anywhere else on that side (One must remember for the sake of the anecdote that before this day I had no cause to remark upon that particular spot).

Upon investigation of the place I found that the grass and other weeds went some three or four feet further in than at any other point along the bank. I walked in to see if there was any trace of anyone hiding in the bushes, further inspection revealed nothing of that nature, but what did become apparent was that the indent was triangular shaped, that is to say it was wide at the drive side, but upon a closer look went into the undergrowth deeper than was obvious from the drive, ending as I say in what seemed the point of the triangle, I pushed my way right to this point which then had me pressed right up against a thick wall of high bushes of a thorny nature, which seemed, like the rest of it, impenetrable, when to my astonishment I found I could see quite vividly through to a dark clearing only feet away, I pushed the intervening bushes aside and was in, as I did so I jumped suddenly, as I had crashed through my arrival had disturbed a vast quantity of large insects, which until my arrival seemed to have been sat on a very rotten tree stump, stunned I feared for a second that they might be hornets as I was well aware of their presence in these woods, but as they obviously were not and dispersed fairly quickly doing me no harm, I decided to take stock of my surroundings, unfortunately my efforts to regain my nerve were shot again by what appeared to be a rookery above me, I could see nothing but that cawing of theirs was deafening, but pleasantly short lived, I took a deep breath and looked around me, save for the clearing it was fairly thick bramble in all directions, but the feeling was nothing short of incredible, I

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was within the briar ,or at least soon would be for though all ways seemed blocked by the thick brown and black surrounds of thorned branches, the sequence of events seemed too extraordinary for it not to have a further chapter , indeed it would be a poor and disappointing kind of tale if events fell like that ,all I had to do now was discover the next sentence, I did not have long to wait as a closer viewing of the wall of this chamber revealed that the fortress was not entirely comprised within of that ancient bramble ,for some of this dark forbidden wood was made up of drowned bushes overtaken years ago by the thickets rapid growth, unable to compete with this they had given up there lives and were now dry dead wood that could be pushed aside, cracked underfoot and provide me with a pathway further in.

Seeking out these patches I made slow progress through, occasionally there would be hole in the briar large enough to fit through ,the two methods combined, the thorned cavern was penetrable but not what one could actually describe as explorable , as I was never in control of where I was going ,my direction was predetermined at every turn but I was determined to see how far I could go or if I was able to find any boundaries to this superterranean network of tunnels ,I feel I must take a moment to emphasize the incredible feeling of being in this privileged place , no children played in here, none knew of a way in, and yet I had by chance or possibly by the thicket, or the old lady been guided into here ,a miniature world of its own that radiated such magic from its lilliputian tunnels ,filled with cool fresh air that one could tell never became to warm when the sun was hot and strong wind or rain would have a hard task to gain entry to the extent of altering the atmosphere within.

I pursued my my method of moving around the thicket for some time , more than once going round in circles, though I must say I never actually lost interest in it, the whole adventure was a thrill, and yet in many ways what seemed to a contained thrill , a simple pleasure ,like a walk in the woods but somehow more



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intense.

To keep true to the form of the day, just as I was beginning to half entertain thoughts that perhaps I ought to be getting back or that in fact the thicket was far larger than I had assumed and there was some kind of genuine risk of estrangement from my sense of excitement and fun, that is that it might turn to bewilderment and worry at any moment, still I needn't of entertained any of these notions ,a quite by chance I then came across the first real ( Whether or not I should use that word I am not entirely sure.)path I had seen since the excursion began.Once more the word lillipution sprang to my mind , that is not to say the path was not big enough for me to walk upon, there was just something peculiar about it, that thing being it was almost as if the path had been laid with small pieces of limestone and sandstone on purpose ,I do not pretend that they were cut to any kind of shape nor that they were held in place by anything, nevertheless though, they were there,virtually covering this path that noone could have come near for years ,at least not on a regular basis,for had this been the case it they would surely have either kicked the stones aside or driven them deeper into the earth, as it was neither had transpired, I checked the woodland floor either side of this unique path to make sure the whole area was not covered in these stones beneath a layer of leaf litter, but unless they were buried very deep this most certainly was not so.

This odd yellow path ran to either my left or my right (and yes I must cofess that the Wizard of Oz did spring to mind especially when I considered how clean looking these earth hewn stones were), I plumped for right purely out of personal preference, as I had nothing else to base my decision on, and I did not regret it ,not that I ever found out what lay to the left but it pleased me sufficiently at the time when the pursuit of the right path showed a quite rapid thinning back of the bramble , making progress through the wood a far less arduous task, light too began to make a more impressive impact upon the periphery as normal trees asserted their position as

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the dominant force in the wood no matter what the bramble had somehow achieved in that place, here was the wood again though it was an area that I did not recognise, this however did not surprise me terribly considering where I had just been through, and I presumed it to be a pocket of woodland separated from the rest of the wood by that insidious bramble.

The small stoney path persisted to weave its way through the trees providing a most interesting walk , as occaisionally it would veer close again to that thorny place so that one could view it without actually rerturning into it , it was at that point that the area displayed its initial detectable unpleasantness, for staring into it from what felt like the safe side of a boundary brought back suddenly the exact same sense of fear that the old lady in the green clothes had lavished upon me, I felt repulsed that I had taken such pleasure in traversing through this haven of rank and dead, and worse things, or so it seemed now at any rate, I fancied I could see myself blundering through that wooden cave of talons yet whatever eyes I could see myself through they certainly were not my own.

"Peekaboo says they.." The old ladys' voice creaked through my head like stiff wooden door that moves when one least expects it to, it is a reminder .

"Don't forget .." Says the door , and of course who would dare?  
"Peekaboo says they .."

The one consoling fact now was that they had in fact not said Peekaboo , whoever they were. Having absorbed quite enough of this imagery , I ceased my gazing and continued my walk, which now certainly and suddenly had become a search for a exit of some description , and as I mentioned earlier that tiny stone path did prove to be Dame Fortunes' contribution to the adventure as rounding the next bend revealed a hedge upon the other side of which was a farmers field , the final hurdle now was to locate the gap in this hedge by which one might pass through, this also proved to be a quickly realised task, and within moments I was free to view the late afternoon sky

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without so much as a single bough to interfere with my vision, I do believe I have never been so pleased to not be staring into woodland , the ploughed , human touched field was a blessing and I thanked humankind for existing so that I might return to it , for all its rabble ,idiocy and banality it was a comforting thought that soon I should be back amongst it , then at least I could forget the past few hours or however long it had been. From where I was stood now I quickly gained my bearings ,chiefly from noting the location of the stream which then lead me to the road that passes straight through the village and from there my house was easy to find .