



**“Greetings, Sister.”**

An excerpt from *DOTTY AND THE CALENDAR HOUSE KEY*, Chapter 9: ‘Porguss and Poachling.’

The rumbling increased, the chimney breast emitting an awkward crunching grinding sound, slow and heavy, like huge blocks of stone creaking and moving with great force. Dotty watched, breathless and unmoving. The chimney breast bulged as if it were straining with the effort of expelling its cargo onto the hearth. Something big was coming; and that something had feet – four feet to be precise! Dotty stood transfixed as the fireplace spewed out its contents.

Slowly Dotty’s eyes began to make sense of the huge globular form as it settled on her bedroom hearth. Dotty now realised that what she was witnessing was the appearance of not one person, but

two. It was like watching a pair of giant slugs oozing from the fireplace. So large and amorphous was their shape that it was at first difficult to tell one from the other, or to separate their features. But she knew at once that this pair needed no introduction. There was no doubt in her mind that the bulging mass now occupying her fireside rug was the twin forms of the dreaded rogue sweeps themselves: Porguss and Poachling.

Presently, one of the pair spoke. “Greetings, Sister,” she simpered, her smile showing two rows of sharp, jagged little teeth, their pointed edges surprising within such a round exterior. “We see that you know us already,” she oozed, “so perhaps a formal introduction is unnecessary. But in any case I am Mistress Porguss and my companion here is Master Poachling.”

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