



## THE HALL OF LORCANA

Venturo was stumped. Understanding software was easy, and circuits were even easier. But a coin that was so lucky it could alter the very laws of probability?

In the spacious Hall of Lorcana, a shiny silver coin that read “10 CENTS” hung suspended within a bluish sphere. It was lit somewhere from above, but it also seemed to glow from within. That was part of the puzzle. Venturo was convinced that the coin was a piece of technology so advanced, it only appeared to be magic. And he was determined to figure out how it worked.

“If you think that’s a logical conundrum, my good fellow, try making sense of this.”

The Illumineer turned, and across the hall he saw a glimmer of Basil, the Great Mouse Detective, examining an item through a large magnifying glass.

“A Sumerian talisman,” Basil continued. “Yet another artifact to investigate. One, if my intuition serves me, which should be kept far from the more nefarious sort.”

Venturo nodded and scribbled a quick note. But his writing was even more illegible than usual—he couldn’t even read it himself. He shook the pen, then lifted the notebook to eye level. It was trembling. Everything was.

“Um, Basil . . .,” Venturo said.

“The talisman is not electrical, if that’s what you’re wondering. Perhaps its facets intensify the natural—”

At that moment, a wave of ink—mixed ink—came crashing through an archway at the opposite end of the Hall of Lorcana and barreled toward the detective.

“Basil!” Venturo shouted.

As the wave of ink washed over the mouse, there was a bright swirl of light. Basil’s brown jacket became a stunning blue, and suddenly there was a contraption with gears and a propellor behind him. He was strapped to it, his hands resting on some kind of lever system.

Basil’s eyes narrowed, and he tried the controls. “Ha ha!” he shouted as he lifted into the air. “How extraordinary.” And with that, he was off.







Shouts and giggles erupted throughout the Hall of Lorcana. Venturo saw a nearby Cinderella glimmer gasp as the ink began to change her, but the flood swelled suddenly and knocked him off his feet before he could see what happened.

The river of ink swept him—along with much of the lore that had been on display in the Hall of Lorcana—out of the hall and down a spacious hallway. Venturo looked all around for something to grab onto but saw nothing. With a jolt, he realized that where the outer wall of the Illuminary should be there was only a jagged hole gaping over the Inklands far, far below.

Venturo's time in Lorcana flashed before his eyes—ink-casting his first glimmer, discovering fantastic gadgets, and rubbing shoulders with heroes and villains alike. If only he could have said goodbye to Shanzay and . . .

“Martin!” he exclaimed.

His friend was leaning from a doorway just ahead, reaching toward the flood for something Venturo couldn't see.

“Martin!” Venturo shouted, louder this time.

Martin saw Venturo and his eyes widened. “Hold on!” Martin called over the roar of rushing ink. He leaned farther out, grabbed Venturo's shirt, and with a loud grunt hauled Venturo up out of the flood. The two stumbled backward until they bumped against the railing of a nearby balcony.

The two stared down at the steady streams of ink and lore pouring from the Great Illuminary down to the Inklands. Venturo heard the telltale squeal of Shanzay's boots as his other friend rounded the corner and joined them at the balcony. None of them said a word.

Venturo didn't know what had happened or how long the flood would last. But one thing was clear: the artifacts were down there, somewhere. He was going to find as many as possible before something happened to them. Besides, he still had to figure out how in the world that coin worked.