In this text, Edward describes a strange incident that happened to him in an old farmhouse owned and inhabited by his Uncle Jack.

Albion's Dream

There were rooms in the old farmhouse which I never saw used and which smelt of a past that held extraordinary fascination for me: little windows where unknown ancestors had sat on autumn evenings; old leather-lined bookcases with books that no one had handled for fifty years; dust that no one had bothered to remove; piles of candle wax in unlikely corners; huge chamber pots and cracked basins, and everywhere a great generosity of space.

Outside there was a big lawn hardly walked on, flowerbeds hardly looked at, a vegetable garden which always produced too much, a vast horse chestnut with enough conkers to satisfy the needs of a whole village of boys, a second lawn that nobody ever sat on, and the poignant smells of animals and harvests of a bygone age.

There also lived with Jack an elderly spinster called Em Sharp who was the true guardian of the place and of the memories of the family. The farmhouse never got any cleaner under her care, but it never got any dirtier either. In fact, she was determined that nothing should change, and nothing did.

There were times, as I grew older, when I went to stay with Jack on my own. I followed him on his work around the farm, or explored the empty rooms of the farmhouse. One day – I was twelve years old – it was raining and Jack had taken the car on business. Left to my own devices, I visited the dogs and young chicks, watched Em Sharp for a while as she prepared lunch, then made my way upstairs into the largest and most remote of the empty rooms, where one of the big bookcases had attracted my curiosity.

I pulled out some of the books, glancing idly at the contents, and then, as I went to return one of them to its place, my eye was caught by something in the dark recesses of the shelf. I reached in and drew it out. It was a large red dice, but like no other dice I had ever seen.

I took it to the window to inspect it. Each face had a symbol: a tower, a sword, a broken circle, something that looked like a pillar of stone. It was obvious that the dice had been fashioned by hand, for I could even make out the tiny blade marks, and none of the faces was precisely even.

As I sat and puzzled over the symbols, it dawned on me that the dice ought to belong to a game of some kind. So I returned to the bookcase to make a thorough search.

I looked behind every book and even used my hand to sweep out the shallow gap under the bottom shelf. There must have been ten years' worth of assorted debris under there. Finally I began to edge the entire bookcase away from the wall. It was extremely heavy and it took me some time to get it out far enough to look behind. There was a thick network of cobwebs and dust. I thought for a moment and plunged my hand in the gap.

There was something there, a flat box. It was covered with grime and falling apart. Opening it, I found a board, counters, cards, and a number of little figures. I wiped away the dirt from the lid and made out the title. *Albion's Dream* it said.

At that moment I heard Em Sharp's voice coming up the stairs.

“Edward. EDWARD!” she called. “What on Earth are you up to in there?”

The door opened.

It took her a few seconds to work out what I was doing; then she leapt towards me.

“Give me that immediately, Edward.” I drew back cautiously. “That box is mine. It’s nothing to do with you. It belongs to me.” She came forward with frightening intensity, her hand reaching out for the box. I hesitated. If it really was hers, I had no right… But a stronger sense of justice broke out in me. I had found it by my own efforts. For the time being, at least, it should be mine.