

Field Report, Whippet Hotel — June 21

Upon his untimely death, the billionaire Walter E. Whippet left his entire fortune to his son, Merganzer. Years later, Merganzer D. Whippet purchased one entire square block, had every building torn down, and spent the next six years building the strangest hotel anyone has ever seen.

From the beginning, deep mystery has shrouded the Whippet. It's a shockingly small hotel on an enormous block in a city known for taking advantage of every square inch of space. There are only nine floors, or so it seems from the outside, and each floor has an unknown number of rooms. The roof houses a pond, for Merganzer D. Whippet is obsessed with ducks. Rumors abound of countless hidden passageways and secret rooms, known only to a few.

The Whippet's design is alarmingly off-kilter — it appears to wobble in the slightest gust of wind. Some say a child could spit on the Whippet and it would fall over, though this seems highly unlikely. And then there are the grounds, vast and useless, a colossal waste of space. Giant bushes carved into the shapes of ducks tower over the winding paths that surround the hotel, which only serve to make the Whippet look even smaller than it

actually is. At the sidewalk's edge runs a tall iron fence with a gate that opens only for deliveries and guests with special yellow or green key cards.

If passersby on the outside of the Whippet think it's strange, they're in for an even bigger surprise should they ever choose to stay there. Not many people do. The Whippet is outlandishly exclusive and gossip flies all over town about the actual cost of a room and what might be found inside. Wanting to stay is one thing; being able to stay has much more to do with how fabulously wealthy a person is. There are those who say Merganzer planned it this way, because he didn't really want anyone to come around. He's busy tinkering, making things, playing with the ducks, and (as you well know by now) disappearing entirely.

It would appear that Merganzer D. Whippet has left the city.

Chances are he's at the South Pole, honking at the moon.

Bernard went back to staring out the window, a glimmer in his eye as he handed the report back to Milton.

"It's time we put our plan into action," Bernard announced. He was a tall man, thin but sturdy, and his sharp nose crinkled with excitement.