

The Last Light at Bellweather Rooms

A cozy mystery in six letters

Tomorrow, Bellweather Rooms will reopen above the little harbor. The roof is sound, the books are back, and someone has persuaded the old clock to keep time. But tonight the brass swallow has vanished from the locked display that holds the reading room's ceremonial lantern.

Mara, the caretaker, has gathered six letters. There is no danger and nothing has been stolen for profit. Someone has carried out a request and neglected the borrowing slip. Help Mara discover who moved the swallow, where it is now, and why.

Before you open the letters

1. Read the letters in numerical order, together or over several sittings. All necessary information is here. Take notes if you wish; there are no ciphers, outside facts or hidden clues in typography.
2. Every factual statement, time and copied record is accurate. Nobody lies. The letters need not tell everything their writers know, but an omission does not cancel an explicit statement. All times refer to the same evening and the same correctly running clock.
3. Mara Vale, Basil Reed, June Alder and Theo Finch are the only possible movers. Each borrowed the sole display key for exactly one of the four visits described in Letter 2. Only the borrower could open the display during that visit; each returned the key before the next visit. There was no other opening, duplicate key, accomplice or accidental movement.
4. Exactly one borrower moved the swallow during their own visit and put it directly into one of the four storage places in Letter 4. It remains there. The seals in that letter prevent any addition or removal after sealing; none has been broken, replaced or bypassed.
5. The mover was fulfilling exactly one request from Letter 5. They followed its instructions, knew the condition card in Letter 3 and both updates in Letter 6, and would act only when the request's condition was met. Identify that practical purpose; no unstated motive is required.

In this download

FREE SAMPLE: the opening and Letter 1. This sample is not a complete game. The complete case contains six letters, an answer worksheet, optional gift labels, hints and an explained solution.

Read on screen or print at 100% / actual size. Color is optional. Page decoration, typography and page numbers are not clues.

Before the bunting goes up

Mara Vale | Caretaker of Bellweather Rooms

Dear friend, tomorrow I shall hand out cups of tea as if reopening a reading room were the easiest thing in the world. Tonight I have a naked lantern and a knot in my stomach.

The swallow clips onto the lantern's crown. It has always come off for special errands, so an empty crown need not mean a disaster. Unfortunately, the borrowing slip is as empty as the crown.

Four of us needed the display key for separate jobs. I checked the new lamp fitting; Basil measured the clearance above his cake stand; June fitted a paper backing behind the lantern; Theo measured the old dedication plate. We each had one turn. My turn was before June's. I remember because she asked whether my sleeve had caught the new backing, and I said there was no backing yet.

I have checked the building and narrowed the swallow's possible resting places to the four June lists. Ada and Nell have supplied the requests and the day's updates. Please put the evidence together before I thank entirely the wrong person. I have already thanked Basil for repairing the clock. He had only brought it a bun.