

Could Jareth be a Faery?

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Ok I was on a Labyrinth kick and my friend and I had this conversation. XP

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Chapter 1 - Could Jareth be a Faery?

2

1 - Could Jareth be a Faery?

“But I thought Faeries did nice things!”

could Jareth be a Faery?

Well my friends and I were talking about Labyrinth and one of my friends (Star) asked why Jareth didn't look anything like any of the goblins and my other friend (Annie) said that she thought Jareth may be a faery, cause if you remember near the beginning when Sarah first enters the Labyrinth there are fairies flying around that Hoggle is spraying and she thinks that they looked a lot like Jareth,

I have a book that tells me everything I need to know about Faeries and such; I can verify her strong hunch that Jareth is a Faery. The handy list below

shows the striking similarities. All references are from A Dictionary of Fairies: Hobgoblins, Brownies, Bogies and Other Supernatural Creatures, by Katherine Briggs, Penguin Books, London, 1976.

1. Faeries possess glamour. They use this type of magic to manipulate a mortal's senses so that he or she perceives surroundings as more glamorous than they really are.

In other words, Faeries are masters of illusion.

Jareth transforms a crystal ball into a snake that turns into a scarf, then a goblin. Any of Jareth's tricks or distortions involving mirrors, notably the whole ballroom in a bubble scene, also are illusions.

2. Faeries can shapeshift, “a magical accomplishment, common to greater or lesser degree to Faeries, wizards and witches”.

Jareth's transmogrification in and out of the form of an owl at the beginning and end is a prime example. Also, arguably, his constant clothes changing are another form of metamorphosis!

3. Faeries love to dance. It is the “festive exercise most widely attributed to the faeries, large or small. Beautiful or hideous Faeries are alike adept at it”.

As for Jareth two words: “Magic Dance.” Need I say more?

4. Faeries enjoy music. In the entry on “Sports of the Faeries,” Briggs describes how a Faery may reveal its Faery nature by singing and dancing to itself. Faery music is described as entrancing, Faery voices beautiful in tone.

Any of the tracks from the soundtrack prove Jareth's musical inclinations.

5. For all their seeming gaiety, Faeries seem to have some suppressed melancholy or darkness to their characters. "Faeryland is again and again described as a place of endless delight and sparkling beauty, but there are dark whispers that suggest that this is the delusion of glamour and that under the gaiety there is a restless, unsatisfied yearning". Jareth is clearly bored and quite possibly lonely, if not depressed. Even if you don't believe that he's in love with Sarah, you've got to admit that the tones with which he delivers "Within You" express some sadness.

6. Faeries steal kids. "The eagerness of Faeries to possess themselves of human children is one of the oldest parts of the Faery beliefs and is a specific form of Faery theft." They are stolen either to pay a tithe to Hell, to interbreed with Faeries or to delight the Faeries with their beauty. Mothers must go on quests to retrieve their children. Jareth steals Toby. Why he does so is not quite clear. He may want to turn Toby into a goblin ("You have thirteen hours in which to solve the Labyrinth before your baby brother becomes one of us forever," he says to Sarah). But he also seems to admire Toby's looks and potential as an heir when he says, "He's a lively little chap. I think I'll call him Jareth. He's got my eyes." And of course Sarah has to go on a quest to prevent Jareth's success.

7. Faeries can also be romantically attracted to younger mortals. "The capture of beautiful young women to be brides to Faery kings or princes is almost as common as that of nursing mothers..." If we believe Sarah's tale, Jareth loves her. Sarah tells Toby explicitly, "The King of the Goblins had fallen in love with the girl [Sarah herself], and he had given her certain powers...."

8. Faeries exist in different time zones than those on Earth. For example, Briggs summarizes the tale of Bran son of Febal, lured away to the Faery isle of Emhain. He returns after what he thinks is a year, only to find that many generations have passed in the real world. Jareth "reorders time and turns the world upside-down." The Labyrinth runs on what appears to be a twenty-six-hour day ($13 \times 2 = 26$). Also note that thirteen hours in the Labyrinth equal much less time in Sarah's world. (When Sarah arrives home to baby-sit, it is after 7:00 PM. When she kicks Jareth out, the clock rings midnight, and her parents come home.)

9. Eating faery food traps one in the faery realm. There are many examples in Briggs' compendium of human visitors to Faeryland warned not to eat or drink any Faery food. If they do, they will be trapped forever in Faeryland. She even refers to a young woman, who, "worn out with hunger and thirst, plucks a beautiful gold plum and begins to eat it." She falls into a faint and wakes up surrounded by jeering Faeries, in a manner very reminiscent of Sarah's enchantment by Jareth's peach. "It is certain," Briggs observes, "that all the food served in Faeryland

was spiced and transformed by glamour [see above]”. Sarah, who woke up in the junkyard and discovered that there was a worm in her snack, would certainly agree. Sarah's ingestion of the magical peach almost traps her in the dream bubble. Since Jareth procures this magical fruit, we can assume that it is Faery food.

Jareth, as a Faery, exhibits many standard characteristics of his kind, but he sustains our interest because he is anything but stereotypical. Sure, he loves to sing, but it's booty-shaking rock-'n'-roll that he grooves on, not some fey melody. Sure, he steals the kid, but it's the kid's sister he's really after. And sure, he's handsome and seductive, but his vanity and fashion sense put him in a class by himself. His creators have made him as an age-old Faery, but a rather cool one, with unique twists that make him much more memorable than that girl. You know, the one who ate the peach and forgot everything. What's her name?