

Project: Underground

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The Goblin King shows up, surprising both Chantal and Stephanie. He has come to ask the girls for help. Why would he ask two powerless girls for help? Is something wrong in the Underground? Part II of the Labyrinth Chronicles

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1 - Help Wanted

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The content of our fanfiction is written with a mature audience in mind. The language is pretty mild.

Comments are welcome, enjoy!!

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Chapter One: Help Wanted

"This day couldn't be any more boring!!" Eighteen year old Stephanie sighed aloud. She was in her room, lying on the carpeted floor, her legs on her bed, a strange yet comfortable position. "The Devil You Know" by Econoline Crush, was blaring out of her headphones.

It was a Friday, the afternoon had just started. It was grey and cold outside. The wind howled, snow flew across her curtainless window. It was during Christmas vacation, all the visitors and the commotion of the holidays were over. Her mother and Gilles, who was like her step-father, were both at work and Jennifer, her sister, was downstairs in the living room watching television; so she was practically home alone.

Stephanie sighed again as the song ended and her cd player, programmed to random, chose the fifth song: "Home".

"If I wasn't here, I wouldn't mind..." she sang softly along with the lead singer. She then got up, stopped her cd player, took off her headphones and walked over to her closet where a shelf held her large collection of cds. She chose one of her Bon Jovi cds, turned around and stopped dead in her tracks.

There, a perfect iridescent crystal hovered at her eye level.

Stephanie's eyes widened, she didn't move or blink.

Her and Chantal's adventure through Jareth's Labyrinth had been several months ago. Memories of the journey flooded her mind again as it did after their return when she was reprimanded several times in

class to pay attention. She was amazed on how easily distracted she was to anything connected to the Labyrinth.

The dog next door barked at a passing car, breaking Stephanie's thoughts. The cd case fell to the floor.

She blinked.

The crystal had vanished.

Stephanie looked around her and hurried to the window, she looked out of it, expecting a white barn owl to be perched in the only tree next door or flying away.

Nothing, no owl, no Goblin King.

"Another hallucination. You're expecting way too much Steph," Stephanie frowned as she straightened her long dark greenish-black waistcoat over her black short sleeved shirt. "I have to..." she started to say as she passed her fingers through her dark shoulder length hair, the front was cut in layers. "get my mind off the Labyrinth," she headed towards the door, but as she reached out for the doorknob, she got a chill.

Stephanie's eyes widened when a familiar shadow had loomed over her and the door.

She gasped, turned around and backed up against the door.

"Jareth!!" she whispered.

The Goblin King stood in the attire of his familiar black knee-high boots, black pants, a strange poet shirt beneath a short dark blue waistcoat, a hint of the sleeves showed at the ledges of his usual black trench like coat. His left arm was leaning against the door, just above her head. His face was just inches from hers.

Seeing Stephanie's reaction, he couldn't resist.

"Did you miss me, Stephanie?" Jareth asked as he tilted his head with wild hair to one side, his sharp vampiric like canines showing, especially at the mention of her name.

"Why-why are you here??" Stephanie demanded, keeping her voice down, low as possible for Jennifer not to hear.

He walked to the centre of the small semi-clean room and bent down to pick up the fallen cd case. He turned it over to look at the cover, his back to her.

"Well??" Stephanie said.

Finally he turned around, a sigh escaped from him.

"I have...a situation," the Goblin King said.

"What kind of situation??" Stephanie asked intrigued as she moved away from the door and towards him. He placed the cd case on her white dresser.

"The Underground," he paused not revealing anymore. He tried to keep calm.

"Ah bloody hell!" Jareth muttered under his breath. Stephanie waited patiently. "I need your help,"

"Help??" she repeated, her eyebrows raised.

"Yes," he said wincing at the word. He sighed again and glanced at the few objects that cluttered the dresser, picking an object up to closer inspect it. He placed it back in its original spot. He then regarded her in silence for a few moments. Stephanie was in thoughts, toying with her pendant that was around her neck: a silver barn owl in mid-flight, holding a crystal in its claws. It was the pendant from her adventure to the Underground. She looked up and caught Jareth regarding her with his intense eyes, she quickly stopped and hid her hands behind her back.

"I'll help you," Stephanie said. "Whatever the situation is." The Goblin King stared at her with his greenish blue eyes, trying to figure out if her answer was sincere.

"Jareth, do you want my help or not??" Stephanie said sternly.

Jareth blinked. "Sorry," he said making a crystal appear in his right hand; it had rolled down the length of his arm, he turned his hand over in a fluent movement and caught it. He glanced into the depths of the crystal, he frowned.

"I'll explain everything once we're in the Underground."

"Wait!!" Stephanie said as she turned around to her closet. She grabbed her black running shoes, quickly put them on and tightened the laces. They passed her ankles, almost like a boot.

"All right, I'm ready." she said as she stood up after grabbing a pack of gum out of her schoolbag and placing it in one of her back pockets. "Don't forget, I have to be back, way before supper." Jareth nodded as he held out his hand. Stephanie looked at his hand, then at him.

"Well?" he asked, his smile returning slowly.

"Chantal is going too, right??"

Jareth took a deep breath. "Yes," he said through clenched teeth.

Stephanie put her hand in his and they disappeared in a bright light that shone against her pendant.

Stephanie blinked as a soft breeze blew some strands of hair around her face, her lips were parted, almost in a smile.

She was back in the Underground.

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Chantal untwisted the cap of the fish food container as she watched her always hungry fish, swim excitedly near the surface.

"You guys are always hungry," she mumbled at them as she reached into the container, pulled out some food and placed it into the aquarium. The twenty year old girl watched as her fish ravened at the food. Chantal giggled as her platies and guppies fought over the food.

"You sure have some pretty fish there," a voice behind her said.

Chantal gasped and turned around quickly nearly knocking over the container of fish food.

There, behind her sitting on her, for once, made bed, was the Goblin King from the Underground. It had been several months since her and Stephanie's adventure to the Labyrinth.

"You?" she said with a groan.

"Yes me!" He replied with a grin.

"Did you miss tormenting me that much?" She asked half angrily. "What are you doing here?"

"What a nice greeting," he said sarcastically as he looked around Chantal's half messy room.

"Well, what do you expect? You startled me," she said staring at him.

"I'm sorry. Old habit," the Goblin King apologized as he leaned back on the bed. Chantal raised an eyebrow, she couldn't believe that The Goblin King had just apologized to her.

"You never answered my question," she told him accepting the apology. "What are you doing here?"

"I have a bit of a dilemma and I would like your assistance in trying to solve it," he told her.

"Oooo! Cryptic of what?" She teased. She looked at Jareth's face, his expression revealed exactly what he was thinking; that he couldn't believe he was asking her for help. This 'dilemma' he was having must be more serious than he was letting on. It was a good thing she had watched the Labyrinth movie with Stephanie after they had gotten back from their adventure. For now she felt more prepared at what to expect in the Underground.

Chantal sighed. "Alright, alright. I'll help. But just what is this 'dilemma'?"

"Just a small problem in the Underground," he told her, still not revealing anything to her.

"What about Stephanie?" Chantal asked, for she sure wasn't going to go to the Underground alone with Jareth.

"She is already there waiting for us," he told her as he stood up.

"Oh? Okay, I guess if Steph has already agreed to go, I will too," Chantal told the Goblin King.

"Good!" he said as he prepared to depart.

"Hold up!" Chantal interrupted. "I can't just leave like that. I know I'm home alone and all, but I want to get a few things first." Chantal picked up her blue small backpack and emptied out most of its contents onto her bed. She then went to her desk and found her two flashlights and extra batteries and placed them inside her pack.

"I'll be right back!" She told the Goblin King as she dashed downstairs before he could say anything.

Five minutes later she returned carrying two water bottles, a pocket knife and a small bag of cookies. She placed all of the items into her pack and zipped it up. She then turned to go back downstairs.

"What else are you getting?" Jareth asked her, crossing his arms over his chest.

"Nothing! I have to turn off MSN and YM, then let my dog, Jaycie, in the house. I just let her out before you showed up, and it's cold out there," she replied as she ran back downstairs.

Not too much later, she returned upstairs with a black, part lab, dog following behind her. The dog was whining, she knew that Chantal was going somewhere and wanted to go too. When Jaycie saw Jareth she approached the Goblin King and jumped up on him, wanting to see his face. Jareth just stood there looking down at the black dog.

"She seems to like you," Chantal commented. Chantal grabbed Jaycie's collar and pushed her out of her room. "Enough Jayce! Go downstairs! GO!"

Jaycie obeyed and went downstairs, still whining a bit.

"Are you ready yet?" Jareth asked almost impatiently.

"Just about," Chantal replied as she crawled over her bed to the window and opened it. "I just need one more thing."

"Serek!" Chantal yelled out of the window.

"Squeeeeeeee!" A high pitched sound came from the large pine tree in the back yard. A small purple creature jumped from the tree and glided over to the window. Once at the window, he scurried inside and climbed Chantal and settled in his perch on Chantal's shoulder and wrapped his tail around her neck.

"Do you know how hard it is to hide this guy?" Chantal asked, without expecting to get a reply. Chantal

grabbed her pack and slid off her bed. "I'm ready to go now!"

"Finally!" Jareth groaned.

"Hey! I'm not that slow!" she said as she poked him in the side of the arm. Jareth winced as they vanished in a flash of light.

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As Jareth was waiting patiently as he could on Chantal, Stephanie by this time had stopped staring at the Labyrinth. Without hesitation she walked down the hill. The sky was still fairly dark, dawn was approaching.

"Is it always dawn whenever someone gets here or is it just coincidence??" she wondered aloud as she reached the outer wall of the Labyrinth. The Labyrinth she had noticed was larger and more complex from the last time she came to the Underground. She saw no entrances. She reached out to touch the wall, to find hidden openings, when a strange feeling went up her spine.

"Woah!! What was that??" Something was wrong, she withdrew her hand and backed away from the wall. Stephanie wrapped her arms around herself, waiting for Jareth to return with Chantal.

"I wonder what this situation is and I wonder why Jareth needs our help," Stephanie asked aloud as she walked along the outer wall of the Labyrinth.

Time passed, she had ventured a bit down the main wall, looking for an entrance and keeping an eye for Jareth's return.

"And why is it taking so long??" she said turning around. "And who am I talking to?? Great!! I'm talking to myself again!!"

"Obviously," someone giggled behind Stephanie. She turned around with a grin.

"Chan!!" The two girls hugged each other, then Serek who felt left out, let out a big: "Squeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!"

"Bob!!" Stephanie giggled as Serek glided over to her, she gave him a big hug.

"I never thought I would see this place again," Chantal said as she gripped her backpack. "But this time I came prepared."

Jareth let out a mumble.

Chantal turned around and stuck out her tongue at him.

"So that's why it was taking so long," Stephanie said smiling.

Chantal nodded at her friend. "Yeah, and that guy wanted me to just get up and go," she said looking over at Jareth.

Stephanie just shook her head and said with a smile. "The nerve of some people."

Chantal laughed.

Stephanie then became serious as she turned to Jareth. "Well, here we are. Now what is this situation Jareth??"

Chantal crossed her arms and looked at the Goblin King.

Jareth placed his hands behind his back and started to pace.

"Well?" Chantal asked impatiently.

"I can't get to the castle," he grumbled.

"What? What is that supposed to mean? You can't get to the castle?" Chantal asked confused.

"I cannot get to the castle," the Goblin King repeated.

"What happened?" Chantal asked.

"I'm not sure," he grumbled. "I left the castle for a walk and upon my return there was some magical force around it that prevented me to enter."

"How can we help you??" Stephanie said shaking her head.

"Help me get into the castle and figure out what is preventing me from getting in there," he told Stephanie, his voice calm.

"But how are we any good to you?" Chantal asked, giving the Goblin King a sideways look.

"You two did a great job of overcoming the Labyrinth's magic the last time, that I thought you two would be a good choice to help me with my dilemma," he explained still looking at Stephanie.

"All right," Stephanie said. "Who do you think it could be??"

"That is if it is a person," Chantal put in.

"Couldn't be the goblins. I'm sorry to say that their brain power is not so high to conduct a plan and I doubt they would defy me," Jareth said as he looked into the distance. The large castle didn't look any different.

"Well," Stephanie said turning around to stare at the castle. "Do we have a certain time limit or something??"

"We have thirteen hours since the throne was taken over to get it back. If I don't, I'll get overthrown."

"Since the throne was taken over? How much time has that been?" Chantal asked getting worried.

"Not sure exactly, no more than an hour."

"That still enough time to get there," Stephanie replied. "No use wasting time. So let's get moving!!" she said grabbing Chantal's arm.

"Woooooaaaaahhhhhh!" Chantal exclaimed as she got partly dragged by Stephanie.

Jareth sighed and followed.

"Where are we going Steph?" Chantal asked her friend.

"I promised Jareth that I would help him get into the castle and I intend to keep my word," Stephanie told her friend.

"Alright! I guess we will figure out what to do when we get there," Chantal replied and Serek squeaked.

"Right," Stephanie said. "We'll start by figuring how to get into the Labyrinth."

The two girls walked down the outer wall, the Goblin King following behind. The great wall of the Labyrinth towered over them as they looked for an entrance.

2 - Vanished Doors

Chapter Two: Vanished Doors

"Where did the doors go? Weren't they here the last time we were here?" Chantal asked as she looked around for the entrance.

"It must have vanished whenever the castle became shielded," Stephanie replied looking around too. She then turned to the Goblin King. "Do you have any ideas??"

Jareth just crossed his arms and raised an eyebrow.

Chantal turned around. "Hey, hold on a sec! Isn't that dwarf supposed to live around here somewhere?"

"Yeah!! I wonder if he is around," Stephanie said looking around. She spotted the small pond, but no little dwarf in sight.

"Damn, maybe if he was around then he could help us inside," Chantal sighed.

Jareth just shook his head. "How would that incompetent little dwarf help us?"

Chantal shrugged. "It was just an idea. You never know where you will get help."

Jareth groaned. "Fine, fine!" He walked up to the wall, a hand on his hip, almost glaring at the wall. "HOGGLE!" he yelled out.

Suddenly a rock in the wall moved and a pair of eyes appeared.

"What do you want?" a voice said from the other side of the wall. The eyes then darted over to the Goblin King. "Oh! It's you."

"Get out here Hoggle!" Jareth snapped.

"You have been kicked out of the castle, I don't have to listen to you anymore," Hoggle replied.

"I am warning you Hoggle! I still have my powers. Do not try my patience," Jareth said dryly.

Hoggle's eyes grew wide, he quickly closed the rock window and opened the door and came out. The little dwarf stood in front of the Goblin King, a frightened look on his face. He looked over and spotted the two girls.

"Who are your friends, Majesty?" he asked.

"My name is Stephanie, and this is my friend Chantal," Stephanie stepped in before Jareth could reply.

"Hello!" he said with a little bow. The objects in his bag of baubles clinked together with a pleasant sound. He seemed a lot friendlier than he was with Sarah at the beginning, Stephanie noted.

"Hello!" Chantal echoed as she smiled. Serek let out a little chirp.

Jareth crossed his arms and stared at Hoggle then at Chantal. "Now that the pleasantries are done, can we get going?"

Chantal grinned and motioned towards the small door. "After you!"

Stephanie sighed and shook her head. "I'll go first!!"

She turned towards the open door, she crouched down and walked through the door. Hoggle followed right behind her with no trouble at all. Chantal turned toward the Goblin King.

"You first," she said motioning for him to go through the door.

Jareth mumbled something under his breath and walked towards the small entrance. He bent down and started to squeeze his way through. All of a sudden, he groaned.

"What was that Jareth? I didn't make that out!" Chantal asked.

"I think I'm stuck!" the Goblin King grumbled, trying to push himself through the doorway.

On the other side of the wall Stephanie tried to hide a giggle. "This sure isn't a good day for you is it??"

"No! Now help me get unstuck!"

"Say 'please'," Stephanie said with a huge smile on her face.

Jareth grumbled and gave a warning glare at the girl.

"What? I can't hear you!!" Chantal said from the other side.

"Please help me," he grumbled, closing his eyes.

"Well I guess that is better than nothing. Hey Chan!! Help me. You push and I'll pull with Hoggle." Stephanie yelled at her friend.

"Aw...do we's have to? Can't we's just leave him there?" Hoggle asked, eyeing the Goblin King.

"We promised to help him, that is why we are here, so that is what we are going to do," Stephanie told the dwarf.

"We pushing yet?" Chantal yelled from the other side.

"Bloody hell!" Jareth cursed.

"Hush or we will leave you there," Chantal told him.

"On three!!" Stephanie yelled.

"You aren't going to do like the last time are you?" Chantal asked recalling the time Stephanie had took a running leap of a platform in the Escher room.

"No, not this time. Ready??"

"Yep!"

Stephanie and Hoggle took hold of the Goblin King. Stephanie grabbed hold of one arm and placed a foot upon the wall next to Jareth as Hoggle grabbed hold of the other. Chantal placed her hands upon his back and got ready to push.

"One!! Two!! Three!!"

Stephanie and Hoggle began to pull and Chantal pushed.

Jareth winced as he felt his back slightly scrape against the small doorway.

"Ack! He's really stuck," Chantal said as she continued to push.

Suddenly Jareth was free and fell inwards. Stephanie and Hoggle had stumbled and backed out of the way, but Chantal had been pushing so hard that she fell forward, right onto the Goblin King.

"Do you mind?" Jareth asked staring at Chantal who was on top of him. Chantal just stared at him and she got to her feet.

"Don't ask for my help next time!" She told him as she petted Serek's little furry head.

"Shall we continue??" Stephanie asked.

Jareth got to his feet and looked at Stephanie. "Sounds like an idea."

Hoggle grumbled and followed as the two girls and the Goblin King started down the passageway.

3 - What About Shortcuts?

Chapter Three: What About Shortcuts?

"Cor, I don't see why's I gotta go along," Hoggle grumbled to himself.

Chantal, who was walking ahead of the dwarf, turned around and looked at him. She sighed and shook her head.

Stephanie turned around and smiled at Chantal.

"Is he always like this?" Chantal whispered to Stephanie.

"Yeah, I guess. He's not one who likes to help people," Stephanie said. Perhaps it was because he gets punished for any show of friendship.

As though to reply to Stephanie's comment, Hoggle grumbled some more.

Chantal stopped and turned to stare at Hoggle. She then looked up at Jareth with a pleading look, asking if he could do anything to shut him up.

Jareth sighed.

"Hoggle, be quiet for a while will you?" Jareth said his hand to his eyes. "You're giving me a headache."

Hoggle, who didn't want to defy the Goblin King at this point since the last threat, shut his mouth and continued down the passageway. Chantal rolled her eyes and followed the dwarf.

The group continued down the corridor, which seemed like forever, with no end or turns in sight. Chantal started to grow impatient.

Chantal stopped in mid-step, Stephanie, who was only a couple steps behind, rammed right into her.

"Ow!!!" Both girls said at the same time.

"Chan, why did you stop??" Stephanie asked rubbing her shoulder.

"I just thought of something." Chantal said as she paused for a moment, thinking. "What about the shortcuts?"

"You mean the hidden passageways??" Stephanie blinked.

"Yeah!" Chantal said. "Couldn't we use those?"

"You know, I almost forgot about those," her friend said. Chantal turned and looked at Jareth.

Jareth raised an eyebrow in reply.

Stephanie walked up to a wall and tried to find an hidden opening. She couldn't find any.

"Maybe they're further up," she said to herself.

Chantal started checking the wall along the other side. "Nothing here either."

Stephanie was far ahead. "Pasta Vazoo!!" she had raised her hands in frustration and dropped them to her sides.

"Now what?" Chantal asked.

Both girls turned toward the Goblin King.

Jareth was silent for a moment. "You can't take anything for granted," he said. "You've been here before so you know what to expect."

Chantal groaned.

"So what do we do now??" Stephanie asked.

Hoggle started to grumble and began looking around. He returned to the girls.

"There is a shortcut over there." The dwarf told them, pointing towards where he had found a hidden passageway.

"What??" Stephanie said disbelieving.

Chantal and Stephanie followed Hoggle to the hidden passageway.

"Why didn't you tell us that you knew where the shortcuts were sooner??"

"I just found this one," Hoggle grumbled. "All of the normal shortcuts are gone."

"Oh," Stephanie replied.

"Well what are we waiting for?" Chantal asked. She walked into the passageway and stopped dead in her tracks. "Ack! What is that?" she exclaimed.

A greyish hand was pointing towards her.

"Those are the pointing hands," Jareth replied simply.

"Do they actually point in the right directions or are they false alarms??" Stephanie said looking at the other sets of hands, each pointing in a different direction.

"I think they just point all over the place to confuse people," Chantal mused.

"Probably," Stephanie said looking at her friend. Hoggle just grumbled something behind them.

Jareth rolled his eyes at Hoggle, annoyed.

Chantal looked at the hands then back at Jareth. "They can't hurt us, can they?"

Hoggle turned. "They like to pull hair!" he grumbled.

Stephanie turned to Hoggle with a half laughing half shocked expression on her face.

"For bloody hell Hoggle!" Jareth said suddenly as he turned and walked towards Hoggle. Hoggle backed away as the Goblin King came closer.

"You could have chosen to leave as you please," Jareth said. "But instead you've decided to stay. I've had enough of your complaining."

Hoggle began to shiver in fear.

"You don't have to be so hard on him, Jareth," Chantal said in a quiet voice behind the Goblin King.

Jareth turned to Chantal, he smiled, revealing his sharp canines. He then lowered himself to Hoggle's level.

Chantal raised an eyebrow and watched the Goblin King. She wasn't sure if she fully trusted him yet.

"I'll give you the choice again. You either continue with us and stop your complaining or," the Goblin King gestured with his hand.

Hoggle lowered his gaze.

"Or you can go on your own way," the Goblin King finished.

Hoggle shuffled his feet in thought.

"Well what are you waiting for?" Jareth asked the dwarf.

Hoggle looked up and grumbled quietly. The Goblin King tilted his head to one side. Hoggle then ran off in another direction, disappearing around an unseen corner.

4 - Lost Friends

Chapter Four: Lost friends

"I didn't think he could run that fast," Stephanie said looking in the direction where Hoggle had run off.

Chantal looked towards all the hands in the passageway. "Shall we continue on our way?"

"Yeah, but which way??" Stephanie agreed looking at the hands that pointed in different directions.

Chantal turned to Jareth. "What do you think?"

The Goblin King looked at the castle and looked at the ways pointed out. He thought for a moment.

"This way," he said suddenly heading toward a passageway.

Chantal followed him, Serek sitting on her shoulder, tail wrapped around her neck as usual.

"Hey, wait up!!" Stephanie said running after her friend and the Goblin King.

"Don't get left behind Steph!" Chantal giggled. Stephanie stuck her tongue out at her friend.

The three of them pushed their way through the pointing hands. They poked the girls and tugged on their clothing, but didn't stop their progress through the passageway.

Once on the other side, Chantal readjusted her shirt. "Touchy little guys aren't they?"

"Yeah, tell me about it," Stephanie said, her hands behind her back, tying up the ribbons of her waistcoat.

Jareth, ahead of the girls, was adjusting his coat.

Chantal looked around. "Now which way?"

Jareth didn't say a thing and continued down a new section of the Labyrinth, one of the directions pointed by a hand.

"I guess this way," Stephanie said, following Jareth.

Chantal shrugged her shoulders and followed her friend and the Goblin King. "Follow where our royal king takes us."

"He seems to know more where to go than we do, maybe it's instincts," Stephanie said quietly to Chantal.

"You are probably right Steph. it just kinda feels like we are playing follow the leader. If we are here to help, why are we following him around all the time?" Chantal asked, she gripped onto her necklace and began playing with it, almost nervously.

"Maybe," Stephanie started but then was lost in thought. "I wonder..." Finally she shrugged. "Perhaps it has something to do with how to get into the castle."

"It could be. Why doesn't Jareth just zap us right to the castle?" Chantal asked Stephanie, but loud enough for the Goblin King to hear.

Jareth stopped suddenly and spun around. His expression on his face held a hint of annoyance. "I can't just 'ZAP' us to the castle because there is a spell or barrier that prevents me from using any kind of magic to get near the castle."

"Tay, 'tay! I didn't know. I guess I should have but I didn't think of it," Chantal rambled trying not to look the Goblin King in the eye. "Shall we continue?"

"Yes, and haven't I said that before?" He said as he turned and looked back down the corridor.

Serek tightened his grip a little bit as Chantal shook her head.

Stephanie was still in thought. She wondered how he sensed where the right path to the castle was. Instincts as she suggested, but even then...

"It's just like how I felt that something was wrong with the Labyrinth," she blurted out her thoughts.

Chantal turned and looked at her friend and nodded. She could also feel that something wasn't right here. It felt different than the first time she had been here.

The Goblin King had stopped for a moment and stared at the two girls. This was the first time that mortals had sensed anything from the Underground; especially ones that are not from his realm.

"Oh?" he asked obviously intrigued.

All Chantal could do was nod, she couldn't explain what she felt.

"Just like when you went to get Chantal. While I was looking for the entrance, I got up to the wall and I placed my hand on it when a chill went up my spine," Stephanie said as she walked closer to Jareth.

Chantal approached the wall and placed her hand on it. Nothing felt strange or unusual to her at the moment.

The Goblin King watched, his eyes narrowed in thought as Chantal approached the wall. He watched her confused expression.

"And you?" he asked.

Chantal shook her head. "Nothing. Though it might just be the outer walls to keep people out," she suggested.

"You might be right," Jareth paused to think about it.

All of a sudden around a hidden corner, came flying this black dog. It ran past the Goblin King and the two girls without stopping for a second look or sniff.

Stephanie looked at the vanishing dog for a moment. "That dog looked familiar," she said.

Just then a voice yelled, "Bebel!" Which was "baby" in French.

A long light brown haired girl came bolting around the corner after the black dog. She was running so fast that she didn't see the group in front of her and rammed right into Jareth.

Chantal's eyes grew wide. Another human in the Labyrinth?

"For bloody hell! No one ever watches where they are going anymore?" Jareth grumbled as he recalled the last time Stephanie had ran right into him making them both fall to the ground. He turned around and stared down at the new girl.

The girl had bounced off Jareth and fell backwards onto the ground, landing on her rump. She was now rubbing her hands and started looking around. The new girl had winter black boots that went to her knees, light blue jeans and a long sleeved red shirt; her thick navy blue winter coat was tied around her waist by the sleeves.

Jareth made no attempt to help the girl up.

Stephanie had pushed Jareth out of the way. "Bianca??"

"You know her, Steph?" Chantal asked her friend then looking down at the girl.

"Yeah. She's one of my friends from school," Stephanie held out her friend's glasses that had fallen off.

"Oh! Hi!" Chantal said smiling.

Bianca took back her glasses and started cleaning them. After she was done, she smiled at Chantal. "Hi." She said, then turned to Stephanie who was holding her hand out to help her.

"Was that your dog that just ran by?" Chantal asked pointing in the direction the dog has run past.

"Ya." the girl said. "She ran off. I figured she was chasing something; a goblin perhaps now that I think of it. I chased after her and ended up here. So anyways, um ya..."

"Looks like you need some help getting her back," Jareth commented.

"Ya," Bianca looked away from the girls and focused her attention to the Goblin King, who she had bumped into. Her eyes widened in fascination.

"Oh hi!" she said extending her hand to Jareth, who only raised an eyebrow.

"Wow, pretty hair..." she murmured, pointing at him.

Chantal's eyes grew wide for a moment. "I have an idea!" Stephanie turned to look at Chantal, Bianca still stared at Jareth.

Chantal giggled. "We use Serek to spot and chase the dog back this way!"

"That's great!!" Stephanie agreed.

"Who's Serek?" Bianca asked.

"Bob is Chantal's dragon purple thingy," Stephanie giggled.

"Bob?" Bianca was was really confused now.

Serek stuck his head out from Chantal's hair and squeaked.

"Oh, he's so cute and fluffy and soft." the young girl said extending her hand and petted Serek carefully on the head.

Jareth mumbled. "Really Stephanie, call the dragon by what Chantal had called it, instead of confusing the poor girl."

"This is Bob slash Serek, " Chantal giggled. "And it's okay Jareth, he knows both names."

"Eh," the Goblin King said as he walked past the girls, as though he didn't care anymore.

"Don't mind him," Stephanie said. "It's not his day right now." Bianca blinked and nodded, a bit confused.

Chantal held out her arm and Serek crawled over to it. "Can you find the black puppy, Serek?"

Serek squeaked and launched from Chantal's arm. Stephanie watched Serek leave, then turned to Bianca.

"This place is so cool, except for the really stinky pond. Oh! It was so gross," Bianca said pinching her nose.

"Glad we haven't passed that way yet," Stephanie agreed.

"It shouldn't take Serek too long to find your pet," Chantal told them. "He's had practice finding Jayce for

me in the bush behind my house."

Stephanie grinned. "So we continue right or should we wait for Bob to come back with Bebe??"

"Wait for Serek to chase Bebe this way. It shouldn't be long now," Chantal said as she stood on the tips of her toes trying to see down the passageway.

Stephanie started toying with her pendant again, Jareth crossed his arms over his chest waiting patiently as he could as Bianca continued to stare at him. Something glinted upon his chest, catching Bianca's eye. It was his pendant, which was an odd sickle shape, a mix between gold and copper in color; with an odd design in the middle.

"Oh I want it! I want it!" she said as she eyed the pendant, which made the Goblin King raise an eyebrow again, glancing oddly at the new girl. Stephanie held in a giggle with the same look on her face.

Chantal shaded her eyes and squinted. She spotted a dark object coming their way, very fast.

"Get ready," Chantal warned. Serek came flying right towards them with Bebe right in front of him.

Stephanie stepped back. Chantal looked back at the Goblin King. He just stood there, arms crossed, waiting patiently. She turned back and watched the approaching pair.

Bebe approached, growling at Stephanie as she passed her and headed towards Jareth.

"Beeeee!" Bianca called as she walked over to her dog. Bebe lowered her head, and came to a stop in front of her owner. Bianca had a hand on her hip and the other was waving in front of her dog's face as she reprimanded her pet in French. She then reached down and grabbed Bebe's collar, clicking on her leash so that she wouldn't get away again.

Serek glided over to Chantal and landed on her extended arm. "Good job Serek!"

"So Bianca," Stephanie said. "how did you get to the Labyrinth??"

"Well like I said, I was taking Bebe for a walk in the deep snow at Gilies Lake. Since there was no one around, I took her off her leash and she must have seen something and ran off. It was weird. Then the next thing I knew, I'm running down a sandy hill instead of trudging through snow." She paused.

"Chased her all over the place too," the girl finally finished.

"I know what that is like," Chantal said rolling her eyes thinking about her own dog.

Stephanie smiled. "Now that all this is over with, maybe we should continue??" she said, hinting towards the Goblin King with her eyes.

"Yes, if you please," Jareth mumbled.

Bianca looked at Stephanie. "Where? What? I'm confused."

"We're going to the castle at the center of the Labyrinth," Stephanie said. Then realized that it sounded more like a quote.

"And if you want to know why, this guy over here kinda got locked out somehow and needs our help," Chantal said rolling her eyes, pointing her thumb at Jareth.

Jareth mumbled something under his breath.

"And don't mind that, " Stephanie said to Bianca. "He's being doing that a lot lately."

Bianca turned to Chantal then glanced at the Goblin King. "Locked out?" Bianca snickered. "What happened?" she asked, trying not to laugh out loud. "After all isn't he supposed to be powerfull and stuff?"

Chantal shrugged. "We aren't positive. But one thing's for sure, Steph promised to help the Goblin King out."

5 - Chilly Down

Chapter Five: Chilly Down

"We have no clue how we are going to get into the castle but we sure are going to try. Right Steph?" Chantal asked, she turned to her friend.

"Yeah," Stephanie agreed.

"Let's get moving." Chantal said to everyone and Serek chirped on her shoulder in agreement.

"About bloody time," Jareth said as he walked past the three girls. They followed him, and Chantal rolled her eyes. The group walked down the corridor until it suddenly came to an end.

"What now??" Stephanie asked looking at the dead end. The brick wall was covered in vines that twisted all over the place.

Chantal narrowed her eyes. "How come a shortcut through creepy, touchy hands would end in a dead end?"

"Ah well, who cares. Let's just turn around," Bianca suggested.

Chantal walked up to the wall and stared at it. She moved some of the vines away and noticed something. "Hey! There is a door under here!"

"Wicked!!" Stephanie said as she neared Chantal.

"Help me move these vines out of the way Steph," Chantal told her friend as she grabbed some of the vines and pushed them aside.

"All right," Stephanie said mimicking her friend's movement.

As the vines were pushed away, a large wooden door is revealed. There was no door handle, only a weird looking doorknocker in the center of the door.

Bianca approached and stared at the doorknocker. "It looks like a face," she pointed out.

"You're right," Chantal replied looking at it more closely.

"Wicked!! Let me see!!" Stephanie exclaimed pushing her way between Chantal and Bianca.

Chantal stumbled out of the way. "Ack! Careful Steph!"

"Sorry," Stephanie giggled. Chantal looked back at Jareth and rolled her eyes.

Stephanie looked at the strange looking doorknocker.

"Maybe you should try using the knocker," Bianca suggested. Stephanie smiled at Bianca and turned back to the door. She reached out for the ring. She knocked three times. The knock echoed throughout the door.

Suddenly the doorknocker let out a huge snore, and Stephanie burst out laughing. Jareth gave her a strange look. Stephanie just grinned at him and turned back to the snoring doorknocker. Stephanie tried knocking on the door again. No avail.

"Hey!!" Stephanie started yelling. "Hey!! Wake up!!" she continued yelling and smiling, amused by all this.

Stephanie turned to Chantal and grinned.

"Doesn't look like that is working," Chantal commented. Stephanie then poked the doorknocker, right on its big round nose.

Chantal raised an eyebrow. 'What were they getting themselves into this time?', she wondered.

Stephanie then sighed, and pinched the doorknocker's nose.

Chantal's eyes grew wide as she watched Stephanie. "Hey Steph, don't kill him or else we might not be able to get through the door."

"I'm only trying to wake him," Stephanie said.

"I know!" Chantal giggled, "Just be careful."

Stephanie let go of the doorknocker's nose and it gasped for breath. Chantal stared at the doorknocker.

"Hello?" She said aloud to it. The doorknocker opened one eye and stared back at Chantal.

"What do you want?"

"We want to go through the door." Chantal replied staring back.

"Well I can't let you pass," it said.

"Why not?" Chantal said glaring at it, starting to grow impatient.

"I was told by the Goblin King, not to let anyone pass," it snorted and started closing its one opened eye.

"Well we are in the company of the Goblin King, and you don't want to get him mad now do you?" Chantal asked as she stepped aside to reveal the Goblin King behind her.

"Oh, um, no," it stammered as Jareth stared at it. A click of a lock was heard and the door slowly swung open.

"Thank you," Chantal smiled as she walked through the door.

Stephanie gave one last look at the doorknocker. "Sorry," she said.

Jareth followed Stephanie and Chantal to the doorway leaving Bianca behind with her dog. As he held the door, he stared at the doorknocker and grinned. 'At least some of the creatures here were still loyal,' he thought.

"Come on Bianca!!" Stephanie called out. Bianca snapped out of a daze and turned towards Stephanie.

"Coming!" she said as she headed towards the open door.

Jareth stood in the doorway, letting Bianca pass before he continuing through the door himself. Once on the other side, the door closed solidly behind the group, locking with a click. There was no doorknocker on this side of the door, therefore no way back, only forward.

Chantal twirled around to take in their new surroundings. She couldn't believe the change in scenery. They were now in a forest, the light was dimmer and the air damp. A well worn path lead through the forest, with tall leafy green trees on either side.

"Wow!!!" Stephanie gasped, then she began to giggle. "This place looks familiar."

"Familiar how?" Chantal asked, still looking around. Serek scrambled on her shoulder and climbed up on her head to get a better view. Before Stephanie could answer, two bright furry red and orange creatures jumped out in front of them. Bianca, who was right behind Chantal and Stephanie, took a step back, holding on tightly to Bebe's leash.

"Fireys!!" Stephanie giggled.

"When the sun goes down, " one of the creatures began to sing.

"When the sun goes down, " the other echoed.

The Fireys began to move around the three girls. Serek climbed back down to Chantal's shoulder and watched the creatures cautiously.

"And the bats are back to bed," said one.

"And the bats are back to bed ," echoed the other.

"The brothers come 'round ."

All of a sudden, two more Fireys jumped out of the bushes, in front of the girls and begin to sing.

"The brothers come 'round," they sung.

They all began dancing around the three girls, grabbing and poking at them as they continued their song.

"I get out of my dirty bed (my dirty bed),

I shake my pretty little head (I shake my pretty little head),

Tap my pretty little feet (tap my pretty little feet),

Feeling brighter than sunlight (oh),

Louder than thunder (oh),

Bouncing like a yo-yo, wooh (oh)."

Chantal pulled away from the Fireys, while Serek hissed at the creatures from her shoulder.

"Don't got no problems (no problems),

Ain't got no suitcase (no suitcase),

Ain't got no clothes to worry about (no clothes to worry about),

Ain't got no real estate or jewelry or gold mines to hang me up."

Bianca held Bebe back as the Fireys danced around. The dog barked and growled at everything that would pass by.

"I just throw in my hand (throw in my hand),

With the chilliest bunch in the land (in the land),

They don't look much (oh),

They sure chilly chilly (oh),

They positively glow glow, huh (oh)."

Stephanie's eyes grew wide in facination as she watched every movement of the Fireys.

"Chilly down with the fire gang,

Think small with the fire gang (It's the only way),

Bad hep with the fire gang (a smile a day keeps the doctor away),

When your thing gets wild,

Chilly down.

Chilly down with the fire gang (Hey, I'm a wild child),

Act tall with the fire gang (whoo, walk tall),

Good times, bad food (yeah),

When your thing gets wild,

Chilly down, chilly down."

All of a sudden the Fireys popped off their heads and started throwing them back and forth amongst each other. Catching, dropping and throwing. Stephanie giggled a little while Chantal rolled her eyes and Bianca held Bebe so she wouldn't start chasing the Fireys. Stephanie caught one of the singing Firey heads and grinned..

"Can you dig our groovy feelin'?"

"AHEM!?" Jareth cleared his throat loudly.

All the Fireys grabbed a head and stuck it on their bodies, one of them roughly grabbed the one Stephanie held, then looked up to where the voice had come from. Jareth stepped out of the shadows and glared at the fox like, red and orange creatures. Their eyes grew wide and suddenly they were gone.

Chantal turned on a dime and looked at Jareth. "Woah, they sure seem to be scared of you," Chantal giggled.

Jareth didn't reply, only grinned.

"You are just jealous that they were singing and not you," Stephanie accused Jareth.

"Am not! They were an annoyance," Jareth said glaring at the eighteen year old.

"Admit it!!" Stephanie said glaring back.

Jareth quickly looked around and spotted Bianca holding back Bebe, who looked very uncomfortable.

"I think your friend might want to go home," Jareth said changing the subject.

"Huh??" Stephanie said and turned to look at Bianca.

Bianca stood there, the expression on her face showed that she was a bit frightened. She kept shifting

her weight from foot to foot looking in Stephanie's direction.

"Bianca, are you all right??" Stephanie asked, worried.

"Um, yeah...I-I'm fine," she replied.

Chantal looked over to Bianca. "You don't look all that well. Maybe we should get you home." Chantal turned to and looked at Jareth. "Can we do that and not lose ground?"

Jareth looked at the frightened girl. "If my magic still works."

"That's right. You said that you had trouble with entering the castle so that means...it's worth a try." Stephanie said trailing off.

Chantal began playing with her necklace as she thought. "I wonder if you use us as a kind of anchor, maybe you can return right to this spot. If that makes any sense to you at all," Chantal suggested, looking up at Jareth.

"We won't know until we try," Jareth replied.

"Well what are you waiting for?" Chantal said, her hands on her hips.

"I can't just go and drop her off anywhere, now can I?" Jareth countered. "Especially not in the middle of a busy street. People might wonder."

Chantal turned to Bianca. "Where were you when Bebe got away from you?" she asked.

"Um, I was at Gilies Lake, it's close to my house. The park is sort of secluded." Bianca said looking at the Goblin King.

Jareth nodded. "Good enough."

Jareth walked over to Bianca extended his hand to her. Bianca eyed him shyly, not sure whether she should take it or not. She extended her hand and Jareth took it. Bianca blushed furiously. Jareth then turned to the girls. "I'll return in a few minutes." Suddenly they were gone.

Chantal looked over to Stephanie. "And now we wait and hope he can make it back."

"Yeah, who knows what is happening in this place." Stephanie said.

"Yeah! And it seems like almost anything can happen in this place," Chantal replied, looking up at the trees. There was no way to see the castle from this place, or any other part of the huge maze.

Serek jumped off of Chantal's shoulder and glided over to where Stephanie was standing, landing on her shoulder. He squeaked in her ear.

"Hmm?? What is it Bob??" Stephanie said, looking at Serek and petting his head. Serek rubbed his

head against Stephanie's hand, trying to get more attention.

Chantal looked down at her watch. "Gods, I keep forgetting time flows differently here." Stephanie laughed. Chantal stuck her tongue out at her friend, laughed, then sighed. "Where is that guy?"

Stephanie shrugged. "I don't know. Do you think he couldn't return??"

"I don't know, but if he uses us as an anchor, or even a beacon, he might be able to get to us. From what I understand, the closer to the castle you get, the stronger the magic force. We aren't that close yet."

"No, we're not close enough," Stephanie sighed. "Well, if he doesn't get here soon, we might have to continue without him."

Suddenly they heard rustling in the bushes behind them. Both girls spun around, but the noise stopped.

"Oh no! Not them again! I don't think I could put up with more head popping songs," Chantal said, rolling her eyes. "Jareth better get here soon."

"Oh, so you missed me, eh?" Jareth said from behind her.

"Ack!" Chantal spun around quickly. "Well maybe not that much."

Stephanie smiled. "It worked!!"

"Indeed it did," Jareth said with a half smile.

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I was certain that I had corrected this. I dont' think I have updated it yet. Must find corrected version. And I think I had an apology that I was borrowing the original cast from the storyline. Sorry once again.

6 - Not Again!!

Chapter Six: Not Again!!

"Do you always have to sneak up on people like that?" Chantal asked the Goblin King.

"Yes. It's a hobby of mine to sneak up on people. Especially you," He replied sarcastically.

Chantal groaned and rolled her eyes. "I'm glad I'm not stuck alone with you. I might go crazy."

"Okay Chantal. Let's go," Stephanie said as she grabbed her friend's arm and pulled her down the trail.

"Ack!" Chantal managed.

Serek crawled over to Stephanie's other shoulder, wrapping his tail around her neck. Stephanie gave the little purple dragon another pat and continued on her way down the trail. Chantal followed not too far behind, and behind her, Jareth.

As the group walked down the path, they could hear faint sounds of the Fireys in the distance. Stephanie giggled and began to hum the Fireys' song.

Jareth stopped dead in his tracks and stared at the back of Stephanie's head. He then let out a loud half sigh, half groan.

Chantal turned her head around and looked at the Goblin King. When she saw who he was looking at, she stopped. "Um...Steph!"

"Hmm??" her friend said stopping and turning around. Chantal pointed back at the Goblin King, but didn't say anything.

Stephanie looked at Jareth. "What??"

"Please do not encourage them. They will only slow us down," he told her.

"Sorry, but it's catchy," she said apologizing.

Jareth nodded. "Let's just keep going."

The group continued on their way through the forest. They could still hear the Fireys in the distance, but none of them came very close to them. Stephanie held back her urge to hum the "Chilly Down" song of the Fireys. As they walked, the forest around them slowly started to disappear, leading them into an open area.

Stephanie continued to walk down the path, when she suddenly felt a hand on her arm, holding her back.

"Careful," Jareth said. Stephanie looked up at him confused.

Jareth bent down to pick up a rock and tossed it in front of her. Instead of landing on the dry ground, it disappeared.

"Oubliettes." Jareth told her.

"Oh, what fun!" Chantal said coming up to them. "One question! How do you propose we get around this?"

"Very, very carefully," Jareth replied.

"That's it? That is your genius plan?" Chantal asked seriously. She pulled off her pack and pulled out a water bottle. She unscrewed the cap and took a drink.

Jareth turned around and walked over to a tree, picking up a dead, arm length branch from the ground.

"Oh I get it!! Poke our way across," Stephanie said.

Jareth walked over to an area where he thought an oubliette would be and tapped the ground. "We can find where it is safe to walk if the tip of the stick doesn't disappear."

Jareth tapped the ground in another spot and saw that it was solid. He took a step forward. The girls followed only a few steps behind him. It was a slow moving process, but they made their way across the field of oubliettes.

Chantal shaded her eyes and looked around Jareth into the distance. She sighed. "We still have a ways to go."

Serek squeaked and unwrapped his tail from Stephanie and climbed up onto her head.

Stephanie looked up at Serek. "Don't mess up my hair too much, Bob."

Jareth continued to lead the way, poking to find solid ground to stand on. As the minutes ticked by, they slowly worked their way to the other side.

"We are almost there," Jareth told them.

"Really???" Stephanie said as she tried to look around Jareth and Chantal. She placed a foot to the side a little to get a better view from the taller people in front of her.

Behind her, Chantal heard Serek squeak. She turned around and saw Serek trying to stay afloat in the air, but no sign of Stephanie.

"Steph? STEPH? She's gone!" Chantal said, starting to panic.

Jareth turned around.

"Bloody hell," he cursed, with the stick he poked the ground behind Chantal.

It was solid.

"The oubliette has closed over. We cannot get her back from here," Jareth said.

"What?" Chantal said as her eyes grew wide. She dropped to the ground and started pounding the ground. "STEPH! Where are you Steph?"

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Stephanie screamed as she slid down the tunnel of the oubliette. Her scream echoed off the dark tunnel's walls. At the end of the tunnel, she hit a bump and tumbled over, landing on her stomach.

"Owww. That hurt," she said, not moving. She laid there for a while, trying to catch her breath.

She slowly lifted her head and looked around. It was just light enough to see where she was. Her eyes grew wide as she recalled what just happened.

"Pasta Vazoo!! Not again!!"

7 - Strange Reflections

Chapter Seven: Strange Reflections

"I doubt that is going to help," Jareth told Chantal as she continued to pound the ground. He waited.

Chantal stopped and looked up. "Ahhh, Steph! You did this on purpose to leave me alone with him," she mumbled and sunk to the ground even more. Serek landed on her shoulder and rubbed his head against her cheek.

"Can't we go down another oubliette and find her?" Chantal asked Jareth.

He shook his head. "The oubliettes aren't connected." He paused. "She made it out of the oubliettes last time. I'm sure she will make it out again and meet up with us."

Chantal nodded.

"We better get going," the Goblin King said as he turned back around and continued poking his way across to the other side. Chantal quietly followed behind.

Stephanie groaned. "Why do these things always happen to me??"

She pushed herself into a sitting position and looked around the oubliette. The first thing she noticed was that the walls were covered in reflective glass.

"Odd. Very odd." she said aloud, her voice echoed in the dim lit room.

Stephanie got up, walked over to one of the mirrors and stared into it. She then poked it, her reflection did the same. She placed her hands on the solid mirror and she looked more closely, there seemed to be an exit reflecting in the mirror behind her. But when she turned around there was no exit. Only a solid rock wall.

"Creepy!! I think it's time to get out of here now," she said, turned to her left and saw a narrow hallway. "Well that looks promising," she said as she took her hands off the mirror. She gave the mirrored exit a last look and walked towards the hallway.

Behind and unknown to her, her reflection still stood there, hands flat upon the mirror. It poked its head out of the mirror and looked in the direction Stephanie had gone. It smiled and retreated back into the mirror and out the exit.

"Finally!" Chantal exclaimed dropping to the ground with a thud. She pulled out her water bottle again

and took a huge gulp of water.

It had taken her and Jareth fifteen more minutes to cross the oubliette field. Jareth stood nearby, still holding the poking stick, he didn't say a word, lost in his thoughts.

Chantal recapped her bottle and replaced it in her pack. She took a quick look back at the field they had just crossed and sighed. She had been separated before from Stephanie in the Labyrinth, but this time was different. She was alone with Jareth, the Goblin King. Even though she had accepted to help him out, she didn't fully trust him. He was, of course, the villain.

Chantal got to her feet and looked at Jareth. "Well, we better get moving before our time runs out."

Jareth nodded. He put down the branch and gestured for Chantal to lead the way.

She took one last look behind her, hoping Stephanie would be standing there, but there was no sign of her friend. With a sigh, Chantal continued down the path, Serek on her shoulder and Jareth not too far behind.

They walked a short way in silence, when they suddenly came up to a small cube sitting on the path. Chantal walked up to it and stared down at it. The cube was no bigger than one of those Rubik cubes, but was solid black. Chantal turned around and looked at Jareth with a puzzled look on her face.

"Don't look at me. I have never seen anything like it," he said, approaching the cube. He bent down to pick it up.

Chantal's eyes grew wide and she reached out and touched Jareth on the arm.

"NO!"

It was too late.

The cube let out a flash of light and suddenly they were surrounded by darkness.

"You stupid fool!" Chantal cursed. "You couldn't tell just by looking at it that it was a trap? Geeze!"

Serek hissed at Jareth in the darkness.

Jareth grumbled, but didn't say anything else.

Chantal sighed. "Well, usually where there is a way in, there is a way out. Right?"

"Well it's possible," Jareth replied simply.

Chantal shook her head in the darkness, then pulled off her backpack and unzipped it. She reached inside, feeling around for something.

"No, that's not it. Where the heck are you?" she said as she felt around.

"What are you doing?" Jareth asked.

"AHA!" Chantal said as she pulled out a flashlight and flicked it on. The light beamed right into Jareth's face, causing him to wince. "Oops! Sorry! Didn't know you were there."

Chantal handed Jareth the flashlight. "Hold this please. Thank you." She looked into her pack to see if she could find the second flashlight.

"A little light over here? Geeze!"

"You said to hold the light, not to point in a certain direction," Jareth nearly snapped.

Chantal rolled her eyes and groaned. "Men! All the same. Please shine the light in my bag so I can find my second flashlight. Thank you."

She pulled out the second light, but when she turned it on, it glowed for a moment then flickered out. "Damn! Light over here for a minute more."

Unzipping the small pocket on the front of the bag, Chantal pulled out two batteries and replaced the dead ones with the new.

"There! Now, let's take a look around here," Chantal said flashing the light around her. Jareth did the same. She noticed four black walls. Most with some kind of text on them, one that had three smooth stones protruding from the wall.

"Looks like some kind of puzzle," Chantal said as she turned back to one of the walls that had writing on it. She shone the light on the wall and saw the words were in English. She started reading them.

Black within,

Trapped within.

"Ya, well that makes sense, considering the situation we are in," Chantal said aloud. She turned to the next wall.

Caress the light,

By solving the puzzle.

"Well that is some hope," Jareth said and Chantal moved to the next and final wall.

A black box, a trap box.

Set by the double.

"Okay. Now what?" Chantal asked looking over to Jareth.

"Hey! Don't look at me," he said glaring at her.

"Why not?" Chantal snapped and glared back. "You got us into this mess."

She spun away from him and began reading the wall to the left next to the wall with the protruding stones.

"It's some kind of clue, but they don't seem to be much of a clue," she said, mostly talking to herself.

Jareth groaned.

"What? Don't mock me for talking to myself. I seem to be able to solve puzzles and problems better if I talk my way through it. Especially programing. So, shush!" Chantal told him. She turned to the wall with the stones.

"Hey, each stone has a number above it. '1', '2' and '3'. All right, now that might be of some use."

Chantal turned back to the other three walls and read the clues carefully over and over again, trying to figure it out.

"Aha!" Chantal said aloud. She stood facing the wall opposite from the wall with the protruding stones. "The walls coincide with the protruding stones. This wall to my left is 'A', The wall in front of me is 'C', and the wall to my right is 'B'. You can tell that this is so because each clue starts with A, B and C. But..."

"But what?" Jareth asked impatiently.

"I know the order, but where do we start? 1, 2 and 3 probably don't correspond to the same walls as they are named alphabetically. But hold on...if I'm facing the wall with the stones, wall 1 could be the wall to my left and wall 3 the wall on my right. Leaving wall 2 the wall behind me, the wall between the two others."

"Well what are you waiting for then?" Jareth snapped.

"Well I didn't say I was positive. I'm just trying to think logically," Chantal said, still staring at the protruding stones. "Well it's worth a shot."

She walked up to the stones and touched the stone with the '3' above it. She paused for a moment, then she touched the stone with the '1' above it, then the stone in the center. All the stones began to glow and the four walls began to shake.

"Oh no! Maybe I was wrong," Chantal squeaked. Serek echoed her.

Suddenly there was a flash of light, blinding them.

Once their eyes returned to normal, they found themselves back on the trail, still at the edge of a forest, no black box in sight.

"Yeah! We are out!" Chantal said as she jumped up and hugged Jareth. Jareth smiled a little.

Realizing who she has just hugged, Chantal pushed away. "Ack! And next time, don't touch anything."

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Stephanie sighed. "Pasta Vazoo!! I'm getting nowhere fast!!" she stumbled around in the dim oubliette. "This is deja vu all over again." She mumbled. She looked around the room but still couldn't find any exits.

"Great!! How am I supposed to get out of here??" she twirled around, looking up. Then she stopped. Very faint sunlight could be seen above her in a round tunnel. Vines could be seen dangling within reach.

"Ha!! It's a piece of cake!!" she blurted out. Her eyes went wide as she slapped a hand over her mouth.

Nothing happened.

She breathed out, relieved. She knew uttering those words could always prove disastrous. Stephanie aligned herself to one group of vines and struggled and jumped, trying to reach the hanging vines. The girl finally grabbed onto some vines and began to climb, her feet at the round wall, helped her ascend more quickly. Her progress was good.

Suddenly her foot slipped on the slimy mildewy wall and she was swung roughly to the other side.

"Ow!!" Stephanie cried out, hanging onto the vines as they twirled her around. She almost lost her grip. She continued to thump against the wall. She held onto the vines, her eyes closed as she slowly stopped spinning. The sound of training of the vines stretching under her weight was heard. She opened her brown eyes and looked up.

"Oh!!" she groaned and looked desperately around for more vines.

"Yes!!" she breathed and tried to reach out. She stretched her arm as far as she could, the vines were far from reach, she'd have to swing herself across. Pushing herself from the wall, after swinging for a minute, her fingers brushed against the pile of vines. The snapping of a few vines was heard.

"Just hold on!!" she told the vines. "Where are those 'Helping Hands' when you need them??" She swung hard and finally managed to grab hold of the new vines. Stephanie sighed, relieved as the vines she'd left, fell down into the darkness of the oubliette.

Stephanie looked up and saw an opening in the wall above her. She climbed until she faced the opening. The girl pushed herself onto the bottom of the opening. The tunnel was small enough for her to pass through on her hands and knees. She started to crawl, hoping that the tunnel would actually lead her somewhere and with an exit.

'Damn there goes my jeans again,' Stephanie thought.

The tunnel started leading slightly upwards, her progress echoed against the walls and ceiling. She coughed as some dust swirled around her. Soon sunlight appeared and lit the tiny tunnel.

Finally!!" Stephanie said squinting in the light. Her hand touched a bar.

"Aw!!" she sighed and saw the barred closure in front of her. All this trouble only to be barred in.

"Damn!!" she swore and started to shake and pull at the bars "Come on!!" she put a foot beside the doorway and pulled some more.

After a moment, she let out a short scream of frustration.

"Pasta Vazoo!! This bites!!" she sat with her legs crossed and folded her arms across her chest, glaring at the doorway. She was pondering the idea of going back to the vines and continue climbing up.

"Why do I always get stuck in these stupid things anyway??" she yelled and leaned sideways against the thick bars.

Click.

The barred door opened and Stephanie fell.

"Right...should've just pushed instead. Idiot." she muttered to herself. "They should have signs that say "push" at least!!" she added as she crawled through the doorway and into the warm sunlight.

8 - Magic Crystal Ride

Chapter Eight: Magic Crystal Ride

Chantal stopped suddenly, causing Jareth to nearly run into her.

"Why did you stop?" he asked, almost angry.

"Shhhh!" she said hushing him. "I heard something."

With those words, rustling noises could be heard coming from a bush just ahead of them. The branches began to move and something emerged. Chantal's eyes grew wide.

"Steph!" She exclaimed. Chantal ran up to her friend to give her a hug. As she approached, Serek began to hiss very loudly. Chantal stopped dead in her tracks. Serek continued to hiss.

"What is the matter with you?" Chantal asked him.

"Chirp!" was all he said in reply. He then tightened the grip of his trail around her neck a bit and glared at Stephanie. Chantal shook her head but didn't say anything more.

"I'm so glad you got out of that oubliette," Chantal said turning back to Stephanie. Jareth approached and stood beside Chantal.

Stephanie smiled.

"Shall we continue on our way?" Jareth asked. Stephanie smiled again and Chantal nodded.

As they started walking Chantal turned to her friend.

"I can't believe you fell into an oubliette again," Chantal said as she patted Serek's head. Serek still glared at the eighteen year old girl.

Stephanie looked over at Chantal and laughed.

Chantal raised an eyebrow. 'Odd,' she thought. "Are you sure you are okay?"

She got another laugh for a reply.

Jareth, who was walking behind the two girls groaned. Stephanie giggled loudly.

Jareth reached out and grabbed Stephanie's arm. "What is wrong with you?" he snapped.

Stephanie only laughed even harder.

Chantal exchanged a look with Jareth. "Something isn't right here," she told him.

"Indeed," Jareth replied.

Chantal regarded Stephanie closely, then she noticed something. The many rings that Stephanie often wore, were on the wrong hands. And her watch was on the wrong wrist. It was like she was looking at a mirror reflection.

"Who are you?" Chantal asked angrily. "And where is Stephanie?"

Suddenly Stephanie started to shift and then a few seconds later, standing in her place was a mirror reflection of Jareth. The reflection smiled, flashing its canine teeth.

"A doppelganger!" Chantal exclaimed. The double then shifted again and there stood a mirror reflection of Chantal.

"Stop this!" Jareth snapped.

The doppelganger just laughed and pulled away from Jareth. Once free, it ran away, back through the bush. Jareth and Chantal stood there in shock, unsure whether to give chase or not.

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Dust and sand swirled around Stephanie as she brushed off her dark blue jeans. She frowned.

"Why always these pants?? Maybe I shouldn't even bother dusting them off, lest they'll just attract more Labyrinth sand and such," Stephanie mumbled to herself. She took a moment to stretch.

"Now," she said looking up and searching around her surroundings. "Where's the castle??" A moment passed before she spotted the castle still pretty much far into the distance.

Stephanie tightened her shoelaces and started going in the direction of the dark shadow of Jareth's castle. She walked around for several minutes, humming a song, once in a while would sing a few lyrics. She was about to break into another song when the sound of footsteps was faintly heard, followed by laughter.

Stephanie spun around.

Behind her stood Chantal, a huge grin on her face. She had her arms crossed over her chest. She was all alone, no sign of Jareth or the little purple and orange dragon.

"Chan!!" Stephanie rushed over to her friend. She stopped. "Where's Jareth??" she asked. "And Bob??"

Chantal only laughed.

"You didn't just leave him did you??" She said, thinking perhaps she had left the Goblin King in an amusing mess to figure out on his own.

Chantal smiled and dropped her arms down to rest at her sides.

"Look, I'm sorry I've left you with him, it wasn't my intention, but we can't just leave him wherever he is." Stephanie shook her head with a sad smile. She was about to say something else, her head in a mid shake when she spotted something unusual.

Stephanie blinked and looked harder. Something wasn't quite right, something was wrong with her friend's shirt. "Huh?? mud?? scitelhtA?? It's backwards. You're not Chantal."

With that Chantal shifted and in her place, stood Jareth. He reached into a pocket and pulled forth a crystal. Extending his hand, the crystal floated over to Stephanie. Before she could turn to run away, the crystal touched her and she found herself trapped within it.

"Hey!!" Stephanie protested. "Let me out of here!!" She yelled at the Jareth look alike, her voice echoing inside the tiny confinement.

Suddenly a slight breeze made the crystal move.

Stephanie sighed. "This is not good."

The wind became more stronger and blew the crystal that was light as a bubble away from the Jareth look alike. The doppelganger laughed as Stephanie was swept away.

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"I wonder if we should have gone after her," Jareth said, still staring in the direction the doppelganger had gone.

Chantal shrugged. "I'm not sure. Maybe it knows where Stephanie is."

"That is a possibility," Jareth told her. before he could say anything else, she disappeared through the bush that the doppelganger had gone through.

"Hold on!" Jareth called after Chantal, then followed her through the bush.

"Hurry up slow poke," Chantal called after Jareth as she walked away. There was no trail here but that didn't stop Chantal from making her way quickly through the bush. She had done lots before, while taking her dog for a walk in the bush espicially in the winter time.

Jareth grumbled behind her as he tried to untangle himself from a branch.

"Cursed tree!"

"Jareth?" Chantal asked from up ahead.

"Hmm?"

"I have a request to make of you!"

"What is it?" Jareth asked trying to untangle himself from some branches.

"If we make it to the castle, promise me that you will create a shorter way to the castle."

Jareth stopped tugging on his clothing and thought about it for a moment. "That I think I can do."

"Then it's a deal!" Chantal said with a smile as she continued on.

A few minutes later Chantal stopped. "Hey Jareth, there is another trail over here. Come on and stop getting tangled in the trees," Chantal called after him and she stepped on the trail she had found.

Jareth grumbled again. He finally got loose from the tree and followed Chantal. He stepped onto the new trail and brushed leaves off of his clothes. Chantal smiled at him and fought back the urge to say 'About time'.

Once Jareth came onto the trail, Chantal began looking around to try and figure out their approximate location. She spotted the castle, north of their position, still quite far away, yet closer than about five minutes ago.

Suddenly something reflecting the sunlight caught her attention in the distance. A glittering object was flying towards them.

"Umm...Jareth?" Chantal said, still staring at the object.

"What?" he asked looking up. He had been trying to untangle a small branch from his long blond hair.

Chantal pointed towards the object. "Any idea what that might be?"

Jareth shaded his eyes with his right hand and squinted. "I'm not positive, but it looks like a crystal to me."

"Whatever it is, it's moving fast," Chantal commented, watching it closely.

A few moments later the object, a small clear crystal, came into view.

'Something doesn't seem right about it,' Chantal thought to herself. She stared at it to try and figure out what. Then she saw it. A small figure inside banging their fists on the crystal walls.

"Stephanie is inside the crystal!" Chantal exclaimed. The crystal flew right up to them.

"Pasta Vazoo!! Get me out of here!!" came a small cry from within.

Jareth laughed, reached out for the crystal before it flew away with the next breeze. But once he had touched the crystal, something happened. Jareth found himself inside the crystal, looking out and Stephanie was now standing in his place, beside Chantal.

"I warned you not to touch anything," Chantal said with a smirk. "Serves you right."

Stephanie looked over at Chantal for an explanation. Before she could ask what had happened, Jareth's curses interrupted her.

"Aren't you going to get me out of here?"

"I'm not sure how," Chantal told him truthfully.

Stephanie shrugged. "Don't look at me. That double put me in there."

Chantal turned to her friend. "You ran into that thing too?"

Stephanie nodded in reply. And Chantal rolled her eyes.

"Excuse me! How about getting me out now?" Jareth said impatiently.

"We are trying to figure that out," Chantal told him. "Hold your horses!"

Chantal turned back to Stephanie.

"Well it seems that whenever something comes in contact with the crystal, they swap places," Stephanie reflected. "That explains how Jareth got in there and me out here."

"All right, so get me out!" Jareth grumbled.

"We don't know how without getting anybody else stuck within the crystal themselves," Chantal told him calmly.

"Just use that scrawny little dragon of yours," the Goblin King said, getting very impatient. His kingdom was at stake and he was stuck in a crystal.

"Scrawny?" Chantal asked angrily, her eyes flashing. "Tell me Jareth, tell me why I should use my 'scrawny' dragon to help your ungrateful sorry @\$?"

Stephanie frowned at Jareth.

The Goblin King remained quiet. He could see that Chantal was pissed off. He wasn't sure if it was because of his comment, his attitude or both.

"Maybe we should leave you in there until we get to the castle. That way you won't get us into so much trouble," Chantal snapped at him. Serek raised his head towards the crystal and hissed at the Goblin King.

Jareth sunk back into a sitting position, leaning against the wall of the crystal, arms crossed and a frown on his face.

Stephanie held back a laugh, for Jareth's frown almost looked like a pout. He knew he had lost this round to Chantal and nothing he would say or do would make the situation any better.

Chantal bent down and picked up a rock. Standing back up straight she chucked it at the crystal. Jareth winced and covered his head with his arms.

The rock just bounced off the crystal's surface.

"Damn," Chantal cursed. "I guess we need a living, breathing thing to get him out."

A laugh was heard from behind them. Jareth sat up on his hunches and stuck his face to the glass to see. Both girls spun around.

Behind them was the doppelganger.

"The double!!" Stephanie cried out. The double still looked like Jareth from when it had trapped Stephanie within the crystal.

Chantal's eyes grew wide. She got an idea, she turned to Stephanie and looked at the crystal then back at the doppelganger. Stephanie nodded, understanding the plan.

Both girls charged the double. Serek launched from Chantal's shoulder and dived for Jareth's double's face. He grabbed hold and didn't let go. Stephanie and Chantal tried pulling the doppelganger towards the crystal, but it fought back. Serek then hissed and bit the double on the nose, giving the girls a chance to get behind the double and push him towards the crystal. Serek launched from the double just as it touched the crystal, then flew over to Stephanie, chirping proudly.

Jareth found himself sitting on the ground below the crystal. Chantal extended her hand to help Jareth up. He looked up at her, a little confused and startled, he took her hand anyway and she helped him to his feet. Chantal smiled and Jareth eyed her, confused.

"What? Don't look at me like that," Chantal told him.

"You're not still mad?" He asked.

"Jareth! I'm not one for staying mad at my friends No matter how much of an @\$@ they are," Chantal told him, crossing her arms over her chest.

Stephanie laughed. "And you sure seem to have been a pain," She said as she petted Serek who was sitting on her shoulder.

"You better believe it Steph. This is the second time he's gotten himself into a mess. He owes me now," Chantal told her friend with a smirk.

"Hey! You got stuck in that cube too," Jareth snapped.

"Indeed I did. But the way I see it, if I hadn't reached out to stop you, I probably wouldn't have ended up in that trap. Plus, who got us out?" She asked glaring at him.

Jareth groaned. "You did," he mumbled.

Stephanie giggled. "It looks like you two had lots of fun without me," She said with a smile.

"Too much," Chantal said sarcastically. She then gave Stephanie a hug. "Don't fall down into anymore oubliettes."

"I'll try not to!!" Stephanie laughed, hugging her friend back.

Jareth groaned at the sight. "Can we get moving yet?"

"All right Jareth, just hold on a second," Stephanie told him. She turned to the crystal. It wasn't there. "Whoa!! The crystal is gone."

"Ack! Well not much we can do about it. Hopefully the doppelganger had enough playing with us and will leave us alone," Chantal said.

"Let us hope so." Jareth said eyeing the castle. "Can we go now?"

"All right Mr. Impatient!!" Stephanie said with a grin. "Just like a child!!"

Chantal laughed.

Stephanie grabbed Chantal and led the way towards the castle. "Now tell me everything that happened."

The two girls exchanged stories as they walked. Jareth groaned occasionally behind them.

9 - How Cute!

Chapter Nine: How Cute!

The group walked in silence. Chantal handing Serek, who was now upon her shoulder, a piece of cookie. Stephanie, not too far off, was looking for secret or hidden passageways. Jareth, walked behind the two girls, his hands behind his head, looking upwards. They had been walking for an hour with nothing much happening. He actually wished for something exciting to happen.

"Anything at all..." he mumbled to himself.

The girls turned around when he spoke. He stopped walking, his hands still behind his head. A confused expression on his face.

"What?"

"Did you say something just now??" Stephanie asked.

"Just said my thoughts aloud." the Goblin King replied.

"Here he was giving me strange looks when I talked to myself, when he himself is doing it too," Chantal said rolling her eyes.

Stephanie smiled, turned and made her way into the beginning of another hedge maze. It was a change of scenery from the stone maze they've been walking in for the past few hours.

Stephanie turned a corner and Chantal followed.

Suddenly something jumped in front of the two girls. Chantal screamed as Stephanie gasped in surprise and took a step back.

The creature was greyish green in color. It was a little taller than a goblin. Strange large thin ears protruded from its round head. Large dark greenish yellow eyes stared at the two girls. The eyes had no pupil. The body was covered in a simple khaki colored cloth. Long arms and fingers dangled at its sides. Small feet left uncovered. A tiny gurgle came from the small mouth.

"Aw. How cute!" Chantal exclaimed.

"How sweet," Stephanie nodded.

Suddenly Chantal and Stephanie were pulled aside and Jareth stood between them and the creature.

"Hey! What's wrong with you?" Chantal demanded angrily of Jareth.

The creature opened its mouth, revealing rows of pointy teeth and let out a horrible scratchy shriek. Several other creatures similar to the one that shrieked, possibly the leader, came down from the trees and from behind bushes.

The 'leader' quickly stepped forward, jumped and took a swipe at Chantal but Jareth was far much quicker than the creature. He stood before the girl and raised his arm to block the attack at shoulder level, but the attack was a still a hit.

The Goblin King quickly turned around.

"Run!" he told the girl, his expression very calm and serious.

As Chantal ran past her friend, Jareth grabbed Stephanie's hand and started running. The hissing creatures in hot pursuit.

Another hideous shriek came behind them, the group of creatures had shrieked all at once. Some creatures had run in front of them and had climbed the hedge walls, swiping at Jareth and the girls as they ran by.

Stephanie ducked her head, she couldn't see where she was going. She ran where Jareth was leading her. The sound of cloth being ripped was heard.

By the time that most of the creatures had gave up on them, Stephanie and Chantal had scratches and claw marks on their arms and faces, none of their clothing was ripped or torn. Jareth had a cut on his face along with scratches. On his upper left sleeve, was a hole where one creature had managed to get close enough to slash him.

Stephanie was sitting down on the ground, her heart pounding in her chest, Chantal sitting on her heels, Jareth was leaning on the hedge wall, his hands on his thighs, all were breathing heavily. Not a creature in sight.

"Here." Chantal said catching her breath. She had reached into her bag and pulled out the two water bottles.

"Great!!" Stephanie said grabbing one of them from her friend's outstretched hands and took a big sip. "Thanks." and held it out to Jareth as Chantal drank from the other bottle.

Jareth raised an eyebrow, looking at the bottle in Stephanie's hand.

"What???" she asked shaking the bottle slightly, the water sloshed around. The Goblin King looked at her. "Oh come on!! It's not like I have freaking cooties or something!!"

"Cooties?" he asked. Stephanie sighed and wiped the tip of the bottle with her waistcoat.

"Never mind. Here. Better???" she asked as he took the bottle. Stephanie gave Chantal a

'can-you-believe-this-guy?' look. Chantal shrugged.

"So, are we getting a least closer to the castle? Since we were sidetracked for a few minutes there." Chantal asked as she placed the water bottles back into her bag.

"As you've said, we have been sidetracked." he replied.

"So we should go back and retrace our steps then?" Chantal said.

"We could but since the Labyrinth does change, we might as well find a new way towards the castle. It shall be better to use that method."

Stephanie looked at Jareth and nodded. "He's right. We might as well figure out how to get to the castle from here instead of going back and losing our way and throughout Jareth will tell us which way will be wrong just by sensing it."

Chantal nodded.

"Good. Let's get moving shall we?" he said gesturing for them to pass him. He winced slightly. Chantal did not noticed but Stephanie had seen.

They walked in silence, minutes have passed. Chantal and Stephanie once in a while, spoke to figure things out on what to do once they've reached the castle.

"He's bleeding." Stephanie said suddenly, her voice low. Chantal turned to look at the Goblin King.

"What?" he asked confused at their stares. 'What have I done now?' he wondered.

"You're bleeding." Chantal pointed out getting concerned at Jareth's slowly blood soaking sleeve.

"And?" he raised an eyebrow.

"Well obviously you're hurt." Chantal concluded.

"It's nothing." he grumbled, obviously not liking girls getting all concerned about a cut. He turned away and continued down the path.

"It doesn't look like nothing." Stephanie said getting a closer look. He was surprised to see her next to him suddenly.

"I've said it's nothing." Jareth said moving his injured arm away as though Stephanie had grabbed onto it.

"At least let us take a look at it." Chantal said as the Goblin King tried to walk by the girls.

"My injury will not slow us down. Can we please continue to the castle? Time is running out."

"Stubborn." Chantal mumbled under her breath.

Stephanie walked in front of Jareth, making him stop short in his tracks. A slight shocked expression was on his face for a brief second.

"Sit down Jareth." Stephanie said her arms crossed.

Jareth raised an eyebrow. He tried side stepping by her but she just blocked his way. Stephanie did an expression: raising her eyebrows and a slight shake of her head, meaning: 'Well??'

"Ah bloody hell!" the Goblin King grumbled as he turned and headed towards a boulder and sat down. Chantal grinned at Stephanie, who was walking up to the Goblin King.

"You don't happen to have a first aid kit in there do you??" she asked her friend.

"Nope. Sorry."

"That's all right," Stephanie replied. "We'll just have to use what we have." After a moment of thought. "Do you have any scissors??" Chantal shook her head. Stephanie frowned.

"What do you have in there??" she asked as Chantal dug into the depths of her bag.

"Wait! I do have something." she pulled out an object and handed it to Stephanie. "I do have this pocket knife though." she smiled.

"Good. Thanks."

Jareth was still grumbling when Stephanie came back to his left side. She turned to Chantal, rolled her eyes and shook her head.

"Hush Jareth." Chantal giggled.

From what Stephanie could see, the cut was slanted on his sleeve. "Well you can help me out by taking off your coat."

With a sigh, he removed his coat.

Stephanie grabbed Jareth's sleeve and looked amongst the blood. "Okay," she said to herself. "I'll have to rip your sleeve in order to make a wrap." Stephanie said as she started pulling at his sleeve. Jareth watched as Stephanie struggled. With a loud rip she finally managed to rip the sleeve at the seam, at the shoulder.

"Oops, too short. Sorry man." she said holding the sleeve in her hand. She turned to her friend. "Here, hold this." Chantal grabbed one end of the sleeve, and with the pocket knife, Stephanie started to cut the sleeves into strips.

"There." Stephanie said and went back to Jareth. "Move over a bit." she said to the Goblin King. "Chan

can you pass me-" a water bottle was in her hand.

"Way ahead of you." her friend smiled.

"Thanks." Stephanie smiled back. She chose one strip of cloth from her lap, twisted the cap and turned the bottle over to wet the cloth. She set the bottle on the ground beside the boulder.

Stephanie grabbed the Goblin King's arm again and wiped most of the blood from his upper arm, trying to locate the wound. The wound was below a strange slanted looking scar; and fairly deep. She switched pieces of cloth and pressed harder to clean the wound.

Suddenly Jareth's arm jerked with a sound in his throat, he winced.

"Sorry." Stephanie apologized. She continued to clean the wound. After a few strips later, she gestured to Jareth's other arm.

"Well I'm out of cloth from this sleeve. Chan, can you cut the other sleeve for me and we'll use the rest of the strips for later."

Jareth pulled at his sleeve and managed to rip it exactly the same as the other. He handed it to Chantal who took a few minutes to cut it into long strips. She handed a few to her friend as she finished cutting.

"Hold this there." Stephanie said to Jareth as she placed an end of the strip on his arm, he held it in place with a finger. Stephanie was concentrating on not wrapping the piece of cloth too tightly or loosely as Jareth watched her. He blinked his greenish blue eyes.

"Done!" Chantal said behind her friend. "I'm putting them in my bag 'tay?"

"Sure. I'm almost done with your water bottle." Stephanie said as she finished wrapping Jareth's upper arm. "Just have to tie this now." she smiled to herself and was tying the ends together into a knot. "Not bad for someone who doesn't even like the sight of their own blood huh??"

"At least you are useful for something." Jareth said chuckling, it was cut short.

"Ow!" he winced, for Stephanie had tightened the knot too roughly.

"I'm sorry." she said in a tone to show that she wasn't really sorry at all. Chantal grinned as Stephanie grabbed the bottle and poured some water onto her hands, washing Jareth's blood off them. She wiped her hands onto the sleeve she previously ripped, left it on the boulder and handed her friend's bottle back.

"There. With that done we could continue." Chantal said zipping up her bag. Stephanie agreed, looking at Jareth who was adjusting the collar of his coat.

"Thank you." he said, his voice low. He was not used to thanking people, apparently.

"You're welcome."

Serek chirped trying to get Stephanie's attention. She laughed. Suddenly his head turned in one direction. A low growl escaped from him.

"Did you hear something??" Stephanie asked Jareth who turned to face her.

"Hmm, yes." he said his eyes searching along the hedged walls.

"Come, let us not linger." Jareth said grabbing Stephanie's wrist and placed a hand at Chantal's back. They slowly continued their way.

"They're still following us, aren't they? Hidden, but you can faintly hear them." Chantal asked.

"I know." his voice calm. "Don't run. They'll know that we sensed them."

"I don't like this!" Chantal said in a hushed whisper. "I don't like this at all!"

"Silently." Jareth warned walking all the more quickly, his grip still firm on Stephanie's wrist.

"If you run now, I can lure them away." he said suddenly.

"Wha-?" Chantal started at the sudden plan.

"Blood is what they are after. I can lure them until you get to safe distance. Go! Now!" he said pushing her ahead and letting go of Stephanie's wrist. "Make sure you stay together! Do not get separated!"

Chantal ran off followed by Stephanie as a shriek rang out from behind them. Chantal turned a corner and kept on running. "Come on Steph!"

"Yeah, I'm going as fast as I can!!" her friend replied behind her. Their surroundings were mere blurs as they ran.

Stephanie turned a corner sharply, bumping into a stone wall and fell to the ground. She quickly picked herself up and ran on. She had run into a stone section of the large maze, making her way through the many corridors. By this time she had lost track of Chantal.

"Damn." she swore. "Now what??"

A shriek made her spin around.

"Why not??" Stephanie said and turned around and ran off. She turned corners and went past hidden passageways. Her side started to hurt, she wanted to stop a minute.

She got her wish, she had run into a dead end.

10 - Fainting Spell

Chapter Ten: Fainting Spell

Stephanie let out a short frustrated scream. "Pasta Vazoo!! It just couldn't get any worse right??" Her hand was grabbed and she was pulled back.

"Wha-!!" she squeaked out as she vanished into a wall.

Stephanie blinked as she stared up at Jareth. He had a finger over his thin lips telling her to be quiet. He looked ahead of him where Stephanie had stood a moment before. Several of the creatures were looking around, they were sure that the girl had been around here.

"They'll see us!!" she whispered. He shook his head.

"Trust me." he whispered back.

They watched through what appeared to be a dusty window; as the creatures walked around the dead end, still looking for Stephanie. One of the creatures came to where they stood.

Stephanie backed away, she felt Jareth's hand on her arm. The creature sniffed the air, snorted and left. The others followed the "leader" and soon all of them were gone.

Stephanie and Jareth let out sighs of relief.

"Where are we??" Stephanie asked the Goblin King.

"We are in a wall structure. It has the same concept as the hidden passages. It's different, for we are walking between walls, we are unseen and sometimes unheard. You've seen that we can see and hear the outside while within the walls. It's good for situations such as this. Not everyone finds these you know, perhaps only by chance."

"Oh. Well I'm glad that this was here." Stephanie replied.

"Where is Chantal?" he suddenly asked the girl.

"Well, I've lost her." she replied.

"After I specifically told you not to get separated." the Goblin King said turning around and walked away, going down the hidden corridor.

"Well it's kind of hard to follow when you're being chased you know." she said following him.

He sighed angrily. "Now, they will be after her." He tried to sense where Chantal was situated within the Labyrinth.

"Look," Stephanie said. He turned around and waited for her to finish. "I'm sure she realized that I'm not there. She can take care of herself."

Jareth did a irritated sound. "Unlike some people."

"What's that supposed to mean??" Stephanie asked.

"You know very well what I meant Stephanie." Jareth said crossing his arms over his chest.

"So I get myself into a bit more messes than Chantal does, big deal. It doesn't mean anything, I still make it in the end. You've seen that yourself. At least the mess I'm in is not as bad as this; losing your throne and not knowing what happened." she shot back.

"I think that's hitting it a little under the belt don't you think?" He said as he came closer.

Stephanie took an involuntary step back. "It's your realm, you should know what's going on."

Jareth snorted, clearly annoyed. "I should've just asked someone else to help me get the castle or better yet, done it myself." he said.

"Well why didn't you??"

"At the time I thought that you could proven to be useful, but I must not have been thinking clearly. Thinking someone like you can traverse my Labyrinth."

"Probably not the first time that you haven't thought clearly either." she snapped.

"I've had enough with your insolence. Do not try my patience Stephanie." he threatened icily, walking towards her, making her back up into a wall. He placed an arm on the wall beside her and stared at her.

"Or what Jareth?? You'll throw me in the Bog of Eternal Stench?? Put me in an oubliette??" she said disliking the intimidation she was feeling. She clenched her hands into fists.

"I'm not one of your servants you can threaten whenever you please," Stephanie narrowed her eyes as she took a step forward, making the Goblin King back up. "I'm not afraid of you." Stephanie said, her brown eyes not blinking.

Jareth's eyes narrowed and became cold. He lowered his face and said in a husky tone in her ear.

"You should be."

Stephanie got a chill. The Goblin King smiled dangerously at her reaction.

"Look, just because you're king doesn't mean you're better than everyone." Stephanie said, getting angry.

"Ooh. Big comeback." he replied sarcastically.

Stephanie let out a frustrated sigh. "Whatever. Let's get your stupid castle back so I can go home."

"I'm surprised you even made it through the Labyrinth in the first place." Jareth said dryly.

Stephanie stopped at the Goblin King's comment. She turned around, amused was not an expression on her face. She stepped closer to him.

And in one quick movement, Stephanie punched Jareth in the jaw.

She was about to say something, instead she turned around and stormed away.

As Stephanie stormed off, Jareth's head was facing the wall to his right. He opened his eyes and licked the corner of his lips to see if there was any blood. Luckily there was none.

"I think I deserved that." he said rubbing his throbbing jaw as he watched the eighteen year old girl walk ahead of him, her waistcoat flowing as she walked angrily. He slowly followed her. He smiled still rubbing his jaw.

"The girl's has a bloody good arm!"

"Stupid jerk," Stephanie said shaking her right hand. It hurt. "I think I should've taken off my rings first." she mumbled to herself. Her knuckles were red, she blew on them to cool them off. She had never actually punched someone before, she hoped her fingers wouldn't swell.

"He deserved it anyhow," she said. "Someone was bound to hit him one of these days." she wished she had one of the water bottles from Chantal's pack to place over her fingers.

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Chantal ran as fast as her legs would let her. She could hear sounds of the creatures behind her. Chantal turned a corner and ran on.

Suddenly she heard something behind her. She took a quick glance and saw that Stephanie wasn't there.

"NO! Steph! Not again!" she cried out as she skidded to a halt. Stephanie had been right behind her and Chantal hadn't seen any forks in the maze, then again she was just running and not paying much attention to her surroundings.

The sound of one of the creatures' howling could be heard not too far away.

"Damn, they are too close for my liking. If Steph can survive two falls into an oubliette, she can survive this. I hope. Jareth isn't too far away either. He will protect her."

She heard the creature howl again, this time even closer.

"Right now, it's me I have to worry about," Chantal said and she started running again.

"This feels like a bad dream. Please let me wake up in one piece!" she begged some unseen force.

Slowing down just a bit, Chantal rounded a corner then picked up speed again. It was amazing how fast you could move when you were this scared for your life. Chantal was breathing heavily now and knew she would have to stop soon.

Serek chirped in her ear, but Chantal ignored him. So he tried a different method.

He bit her ear.

"OW! Serek! What was that for?" she asked the dragon as she came to a stop. He had bitten her ear enough for it to hurt, but not hard enough to pierce the skin.

Then she heard it, some of those viscous creatures were in front of her as well as behind.

"This is not good!"

Serek chirped again.

"Psst! Over here!" she heard a voice from the hedge. "Before they come!"

Chantal looked over to her left and saw three small faeries beckoning her to follow them. They then disappeared through the hedge. Chantal looked over at Serek who chirped reassuringly. She took a deep breath and walked forward and through the hedge like it wasn't even there.

Once on the other side, Chantal's eyes grew wide with wonder and amazement. She had just stepped into a hidden garden, filled with every other color of flowers and large green trees. Everywhere Chantal looked she saw faeries. A small stream flowed through the garden, making the air feel cool and refreshing.

For a moment Chantal wondered if this was a trap, and took a step backwards. In the movie, Hoggle had referred to them as being bad creatures and he would kill them. Chantal eyed Serek who was sitting calmly on her shoulder, tail wrapped around her neck. Seeing how calm he was, she knew that this wasn't a trap.

One of the faeries that had called out to her, approached her. She had long dragonfly like wings and purple hair. She carried a orange colored flower that seemed to be almost too heavy for her. Serek unwrapped his tail and chirped happily at the approaching faery.

"You safe now," the purple haired faery told her. "Those monsters bad. They eat us."

The faery flew over to Chantal and placed the flower in her hair. Its sweet fragrance smelled like peaches.

"Never had monsters like that before here," another faery told her.

"Came from the castle," a third said.

"The castle?" Chantal asked. If those creatures had come from the castle. She wondered what other bigger monsters had been set loose that they might end up running into. She could have just been killed out there if this hidden faery garden hadn't been here.

Chantal couldn't take it any longer, she sunk down to the ground and started to cry. She didn't want to die. All this just to help some Goblin King get back his throne he should have been watching more carefully.

Tears rolled down her cheeks, into the scratches and cuts, causing them to sting. Serek's eyes whirled sadly, as he wrapped his tail around her neck. He almost made a purring sound as he rubbed his furry purple head against her cheek. The faeries looked at her, confused by the tears.

Chantal took off her glasses and wiped away her tears.

"Get it together Chan," she told herself. "Crying won't get you anywhere, Especially not back home."

Chantal took a deep breath and exhaled loudly. "It's a good thing Jareth isn't here. He would probably never let me hear the end of this."

The purple haired faery approached her, a worried expression on her face. "Are you all right?"

Chantal nodded. "I think I needed that. My cuts and scratches hurt now though."

"You got from monsters?" The little faery asked. "Drink from stream."

Chantal put her glasses back on her face then got up and walked over to the spring. Crouching down and cupping her hands she dipped them into the water then brought it up to her mouth to take a sip. Once she had swallowed, she started to feel a tingly sensation all over her skin. Chantal looked down at her arms and saw that all the scratches had disappeared.

"A healing spring!" Chantal exclaimed, smiling. "I wonder if Jareth know about this."

The purple haired faery shook her head. "Secret!"

Chantal laughed, her mood obviously improved. "Can't let Jareth know everything about his kingdom, now can we?"

Serek chirped in reply.

Chantal turned towards the faery. "Do you mind if I take some of this water with me? My friend Stephanie was hurt by those monsters too. I promise not to tell anyone where the garden is."

"Take water, but must not tell," the faery told her.

"I promise!"

Serek jumped to the ground as Chantal pulled off her small bag. She opened it and pulled out the two water bottles. Both bottles were a little less than half full. Uncapping both, she poured the water from one bottle into the other, nearly filling up the bottle.

"Good ol' KL water," She said with a laugh.

She recapped the bottle and put it aside. Taking the now empty bottle, she dunked it into the stream filling it up to the top. Recapping it, she took both bottles and replaced them in her bag; placing the spring water in the front pouch. Once she had re-zipped her bag, she turned to the faery who was still fluttering close by.

"Thank you!"

The faery smiled at her. "Come!"

Chantal picked up Serek and followed the purple haired faery. As she walked through the garden, other faeries began to follow, dancing around in the air around her. After walking several minutes, the faery stopped at what looked like an old rock wall.

"No monsters here," she was told as the faery flew through the wall. It was another hidden entrance, or an exit in this case.

Chantal stepped through the wall and out of the hidden garden, back into a section of the hedge maze. Chantal took a look around and that is when she noticed that she was closer to the castle, Much closer.

Chantal smiled. She had lost track of how many hours she had been here, but she was looking forward to going home.

"Now we find Jareth and Steph," she said aloud.

Serek chirped in agreement.

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Stephanie sighed. She would have to ask Jareth for help on which way they should go. She was getting tired of the noise he made in his throat whenever she picked a "wrong way".

"Well if you think you could do better, why don't you lead??" Stephanie said turning to face the Goblin

King. The left side of his jaw was still red where she had hit him.

"Very well." he said and passed her with long strides and walked quickly ahead of her.

"Jareth can you slow down a bit before-" Stephanie said as she walked into another forest.

"Great!!" Stephanie muttered as soon as she lost sight of Jareth. "He goes off and doesn't wait. Typical." she sighed. "He did this on purpose I suppose." she added with another sigh.

She chose one path and continued to head towards the castle with or without the Goblin King. "Either way I'm going home and he could deal with this realm taking over himself." she walked silently, stepping over fallen branches. Even though she was still mad at him, she wondered if he was doing all right by himself.

After several minutes, she looked at her surroundings, she lost sight of the path and was now walking in uncovered ground. She pushed branches away from in front of her and stepped over a large rock.

Suddenly something grabbed her wrist, she expected that it was Jareth again.

Stephanie was pulled roughly and was now face to face with a strange looking plant. It was attached to a tree, tentacles, just as the same ones around her wrist, was wrapped around the tree. As the plant pulled, it opened its mouth.

Her eyes widened when she saw that the plant had sharp needlepoint teeth. She struggled to free her hand.

"Let go!!" she cried out. She gripped the tentacle, trying to free herself. The creature pulled her roughly.

"Ow!!"

It had bitten her. It stung like a small cut. She glared at the plant and placed a foot on the tree and pulled a few times.

"Stupid plant!!" Stephanie said and yanked her hand free. She tumbled to the ground and half rolled onto a path.

Stephanie looked up when she heard:

"Tsk tsK tsK. Clumsy." Jareth said with a smirk, he tilted his head to one side still looking down at the girl.

Stephanie sat up, expecting him to help her up, instead, he walked away. She let out a frustrated sigh.

She stood up and brushed off her clothes. She winced. She looked at her left hand. At the base of the thumb, were three puncture marks. The skin around the wound was red, the plant had drawn a little bit of blood. She felt fine, considering she was 'afraid' of her own blood; then again it wasn't a great amount.

"That hurt!!" she mumbled, she lightly rubbed her thumb. She sighed and glared at the fading Goblin

King.

"The least you could do is wait for me!!" she said quickening her pace.

"You've gotten yourself lost again." he said after a moment, not bothering turning around.

"Only because you practically went at your own pace and didn't wait for me." she replied.

"Me? Oh no my dear girl. Actually it was you, your pace is extremely slow." he said turning around and stopping. "As I've mentioned before; it was clearly a mistake having you here."

Stephanie let out a frustrated sigh. "Listen you egocentric butt-head, you're the one who asked us for help. And plus you came to me first," then added to herself. "I can't believe I accepted."

He raised an eyebrow.

"Either wait for us or do it yourself. Or the least you can do is 'try' to help us and not make us do it all ourselves because of your damn ego. But no. Now I'm stuck here helping your sorry @\$ and wondering if it's worth it." she fumed.

"A pity I can't bring you back home." he snapped. "It would save me on wasted time."

A short frustrated sigh escaped from her and she then pointed to the Goblin King. "And you know wh-" her eyes rolled up in her head and she started to fall back.

Jareth caught her; an arm around her shoulders, the other had grabbed one of her upper arms. Her skin was ice cold, her lips suddenly started to have a blue tinge to them. It was unusual due to the fact that it was a warm day in the Underground.

Jareth set her down to the ground. Her eyelashes fluttered rapidly.

"Stephanie?" he said.

No response. He looked at the fingers in his hand, her fingernails had a slight purple tinge to them.

Suddenly a soft gasp came from between her lips and a slight twitch of her head made the Goblin King glance back at her face.

On her forehead, under her bangs, a strange neon blue like vein seem to slither under her skin. One line trailed from behind the top of her ear and stopped at her cheek.

He quickly looked at her face, neck and finally her arms. He saw only scratches, the same that he had. Wondering what could be the problem, he was still holding onto her left wrist when something cold passed under his fingertips.

He gasped at the shock of the cold and quickly turned her arm over. He saw three puncture marks below her thumb, in a sort of triangle. Blue vein like lines started from each mark and were connected in a

strange pattern. The lines seemed to glow in time with her pulse. 'It seemed to be stable but for how long?', he wondered.

"Pasta Vazoo!" Jareth cursed, a little of Stephanie's expression rubbing off on him. He started rubbing her hands, trying to warm them and moved to her arms. The girl remained cold. Jareth took off his coat and placed her arms into the sleeves.

'At least she'll have something to warm her and to perhaps slow the process,' he thought. Obviously she was in no state to walk, so he had no choice but to carry her. Even though she was fairly light, he decided not to carry her in his arms. An idea came to mind as he thought of a another way.

Jareth knelt on one knee beside her right side. His right hand grabbed her frigid hand, pulled it over his head and with his left he grabbed her other arm, pulled her closer to his back so that her arms were hanging loosely over his shoulders. He slowly stood up.

Stephanie was now in a piggyback position on the Goblin King, his arms were under her legs, holding her up. His coat on her, hung loosely behind her. Her hands with her now light violet nails hung in front of him. He watched as another line trailed up her wrist.

Stephanie's head was on his right shoulder, her lips slightly parted, a few strands of hair was in her face. Her long dark hair mixed with his light colored strands that flowed down his neck. Jareth shivered at Stephanie's cold face upon his shoulder. He had to find an antidote for the poison coursing through her veins.

The castle would have to wait.

11 - Chantal To The Rescue

Chapter Eleven: Chantal To The Rescue

Not long after Chantal left the faery garden, the path led out of the hedge maze into a partly forested area. The path was quiet, too quiet. She had been walking for a while and had no more run-ins with those vicious monsters, or any creatures for that matter. Chantal didn't even hear any birds or insects.

Chantal sighed, she was a bit bored, but she wasn't tired. She actually had lots of energy.

'Probably because of the water from the healing spring,' she thought.

Serek had fallen asleep on her shoulder, tail always wrapped around her neck. He might seem to be a useless little creature to Jareth, but Chantal thought differently. If it hadn't been for him, she probably would never have found that faery garden and would have been attacked by those creatures.

Chantal smiled. "Poor little guy!"

Serek suddenly perked his head up, listening.

"What is it boy?" Chantal asked. From now on, she told herself she would pay more attention to the little purple dragon.

"Chirp!" he said looking in the distance ahead of them.

Chantal stopped and shaded her eyes.

"Please don't let it be those creatures," she hoped. As she looked closely she saw it. A bird was standing in the middle of the road. Actually it was the same bird that she had run into from her first adventure in the Underground.

Chantal groaned but walked on. "Not this thing again!"

As she approached it, she could hear it talking, but she couldn't understand a word. It seemed to be talking gibberish. Chantal quickened her pace and walked but it.

"Hello and Goodbye, bird." she said. Serek chirped a small greeting as well.

"They're all laughing at you," the bird squawked as it started to follow Chantal.

Chantal spun around and glared at the bird.

"They're all laughing at you. They're all laughing at you," the bird said over and over again.

"Who is laughing?" Chantal asked.

"They're all laughing at you!" the bird repeated.

Chantal stared at the bird. For some reason what the bird was telling her sounded familiar, but she couldn't place where she had seen or heard it before. The more she thought about it the more it puzzled her.

"It will come back to me," she told herself and walked away from the odd creature. The bird followed, though rambling something different.

"A faery flower to cure poison," it now squawked.

"Poison from what?" Chantal asked still walking away. Serek watched the bird as it ran around Chantal and stood in front of her, causing Chantal to stop.

"A faery flower to cure poison."

"Yeah you said that already. Poison from what?"

"The bite of a tentacle tree," it squawked jumping from foot to foot.

"Trees with tentacles? That sounds like a tree from Xanth." Chantal said. She hadn't read any of Peirs Anthony's Xanth books in years, but she clearly remembered the man eating tangle trees. Though the ones in the Underground sounded different, because of the poison factor.

Chantal walked past the bird, expecting it to continue following her. She didn't hear it rambling behind her, so she turned around.

"Aren't you com...?" she trailed off. The bird was no longer there, or anywhere in sight. "Weird!"

She shrugged it off and continued on her way. Serek unwrapped his tail from Chantal's neck and launched from her shoulder.

"Good idea!" she told him. "You be a lookout scout!"

Serek chirped happily and glided off ahead of Chantal.

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His arm ached.

Blood had seeped through the makeshift bandages Stephanie had created out of his shirt sleeves. She wasn't that heavy but he had been carrying her on his back for the past two hours now. He now and then had rested a moment before continuing.

He had been deciphering what poison was coursing through her veins so he could find the antidote. The symptoms was similiar to insect's venom but he had no luck with the antidote; he assumed it was the other toxin.

Only twice did the girl upon his back gasped, and a few times he felt a cool line pass over her skin. He had shivered occasionally. He lifted her up because she was slipping.

Jareth looked up as he sensed a presence close by. A winged shadow appeared a few feet in front of him.

"About bloody time!" he mumbled. He then heard behind the opposite wall, Serek squeak and Chantal's voice.

"What is it Serek? Did you find Steph?" another chirp was the reply. Chantal's running footsteps was heard and soon Chantal appeared around the corner ahead of him, followed by the dragon.

Chantal's grin disappeared when she saw Jareth carrying her friend on his back. She rushed over with a worried expression on her face.

"Steph!" Chantal cried out, running up to them. Jareth stopped and laid Stephanie down gently.

"What happened?"

Chantal turned to Jareth and saw the red mark on his jaw. "And what happened to you?"

"Don't worry about me. It is Stephanie we must attend to."

"Well, tell me what happened."

"She was bitten by a Utahn, a tentacle tree. Its bite is poisonous," he told her worriedly.

Stephanie was even paler and the poison in her veins was spreading faster now. A blue line ran from her neck and up her chin to the corner of her lips.

Chantal turned to Jareth. "Did you say a tree with tentacles?"

Jareth nodded.

"That is what that bird was rambling on about," Chantal said as she pulled the flower from her hair.

"Bird?"

"Yeah! Ran into it last time I was here. Most of the time it seems to just be rambling, but this time I think

it was telling me something," she told him. She looked down at the flower in her hands. It was all wilted. "Damn!"

She handed the flower to Jareth. "Hold this. Carefully!"

She reached into her bag and pulled forth the water bottle with the healing water in it. Uncapping the bottle, she took back the flower from Jareth and placed the stem gently inside.

"What are you doing?" Jareth asked impatiently. 'This girl has gone mad,' he thought.

"Trying something. Watch, it's starting to work."

The flower was starting to return to its natural splendor. The petals returned to their vibrant pale orange color and its sweet fragrance could be smelled.

Jareth's eyes grew wide in amazement. "How did you do that?"

"What? Have you never seen water from a healing spring before?" she said with a smile.

"Healing spring? Where?"

"I can't say. I promised not to tell. That was the deal I made so that I was able to take some of the water with me," she told him. She turned back to the flower, not letting him ask her anymore questions.

Chantal took the flower out of the water and recapped the bottle.

"Aren't you going to use the water on Stephanie?"

Chantal shook her head as she plucked the flower of its petals. Taking one of the petals she placed it into Stephanie's mouth. The unconscious girl closed her mouth and started to suck on the petal.

"Good! Let's hope this works," Chantal said watching her friend carefully.

Slowly the poison started to retreat and fade away. Colour started to return to Stephanie's pale face. Chantal looked up at Jareth and saw a relieved expression appear on his normally calm face.

Stephanie groaned and her eyes fluttered open. She slowly sat up and tried to get to her feet but both Jareth and Chantal pushed her back down.

"Not yet Steph. The poison isn't all gone," Chantal told her, giving her another flower petal. "Put this in your mouth and just suck on it."

Stephanie took the petal and placed it in her mouth.

"Tastes like peaches," Stephanie mumbled as she closed her eyes and leaned back on Jareth, still weak.

Jareth smiled.

Chantal looked at Jareth. "Can you now tell me what happened to you?"

"I punched him," Stephanie told her in a quiet voice.

"Whoa! Steph!" Chantal said shocked, then she began to laugh. "Damn and I missed that." She did a fake pout.

Jareth gave her a look and groaned, causing Chantal to laugh even harder. "This I have to hear!"

Chantal smiled at Jareth, then she looked down at his arm. The wrap was starting to come off and blood was flowing freely. Chantal took her water bottle and handed it to Jareth.

Jareth just looked at it.

"Well take it!" Chantal told him.

"Why?"

"Duh! You are bleeding all over the place for one, and second, it's water from that healing spring."

Jareth grabbed the bottle from Chantal's hand. He opened it and took a big gulp of the water. A moment later his skin began to tingle and the cut on his arm began to fade away.

"Incredible!" he said looking down at his arm. The cut was all gone now. Only sign there had been a wound was the blood and the wrap that was falling off his arm. "You have to tell me where that spring is."

Chantal shook her head. "Can't."

Stephanie tried to get up again. Blue lines still remained on her skin, paler now.

"We should really continue to the castle." she said, she made it to her feet before her legs gave out from under her. Jareth caught her by her waist, a hand on her forehead, which was inches above the ground. Stephanie blinked at the stone ground.

Chantal moved closer to her friend and helped Jareth set her back on the ground. "You are still too weak to get up and walk yet. I would give you some water but I don't think it would help since the poison is still in your system," Chantal told her.

"Well we can't afford to wait for me to heal." Stephanie said getting up again, Jareth did the same. She felt a bit dizzy and was now holding onto Jareth's shirt collar, looking up at her friend.

Chantal and Jareth exchanged a look, but didn't say anything.

"We can't just sit here and wait, if we do, it'll be too late. And who knows what will happen." Stephanie

told them.

"You are right, but like Chantal said, you are too weak to walk," Jareth told her seriously.

Stephanie frowned. Time was getting short, and they needed to get to the castle soon if they were going to help Jareth get his throne back. She didn't want to be the one holding them back.

"Well Jareth can always carry you." Chantal told her friend.

Jareth and Stephanie exchanged looks, then the Goblin King let out a loud groan.

"What? You carried her already," Chantal declared.

"Yes, but that was different. She was unconscious," Jareth said with another groan.

Chantal rolled her eyes. "Stubborn!"

"All right! Fine, I'll carry her," Jareth said giving in, realizing he wasn't going to win.

"Whoo hoo!!" Stephanie exclaimed.

Jareth crouched down, his back facing Stephanie. Chantal then helped Jareth get her friend up onto his back. Stephanie wrapped her arms around the Goblin King's shoulders as Jareth tucked his arms under her knees to keep her from sliding off.

"Are we ready to go now?" Jareth asked as he shifted Stephanie on his back so that her weight was evenly distributed. 'It's a good thing she is a small girl,' Jareth thought to himself.

"I'm ready," Chantal replied.

"Me too!!" Stephanie said with a small, tired giggle.

Serek chirped and wrapped his tail around Chantal's neck.

"We're not too far from your castle Jareth." Stephanie pointed towards the castle, lines faintly remained on her hand. The sleeves of Jareth's coat moved slightly up her arm.

"What are we waiting for?" Chantal asked suddenly. "Let's get going!"

Serek chirped in agreement.

"Right!!" Stephanie said resting her chin on the Goblin King's shoulder. Her skin felt warmer now, not as cold as hours before, when the poison was coursing through her veins. Also his coat helped a bit by keeping her warm.

The group finally together again, continued towards their destination.

12 - Advice for the Birds

Chapter Twelve: Advice for the Birds

The group came across another hedge maze, the sun was slowly setting.

Stephanie was looking at the sun, her eyes narrowed deep in thought.

"I was wondering Jareth," the girl on his back started.

"Hmm?" he said, tilting his head to one side, listening.

"In the Underground, do you only have a thirteen hour day or something?? I ask, because the sun seem to set around twelve,"

Jareth was silent for a moment. "Only when a person traverse the Labyrinth, time arranges to the person, or rather, the ruler arranges time accordingly to the person. The sun sets near the end of the time limit to show emphasis." He paused. "A sort of warning, if you will."

"But wouldn't it confuse the inhabitants of your realm??" Stephanie asked.

"From what I can tell, they do not notice," the Goblin King shrugged.

Stephanie nodded, satisfied with the answer he had given.

Chantal, ahead of them, walked up a couple of stone steps in a half spiral. The extremely short stairway, led to a platform where a large sundial lay embedded in the floor.

"Ah bloody hell!" Jareth cursed as he saw the time. 12:05. They barely had an hour to complete the Labyrinth and settle the throne taking situation.

Jareth sighed and said in a tired voice. "My powers are waning. I do not think we'll get to the castle in time,"

"What?!" Chantal said as Serek squeaked.

"Don't be so pessimistic, Jareth." Stephanie said giving his shoulders a squeeze. "We'll make it, all right??" No response from the Goblin King.

"Which way Jareth??" Persisted the girl on his back.

'She's right. The castle is within reach, we might still have a chance of regaining my throne. There's no

time to rest now, we have to find the quickest way to the castle. Even though my powers are fading, I will still have my instincts of the whole Underground and-'

The sound of snoring broke the Goblin King's thoughts. He glanced from out of the corner of his eye.

Chantal had turned around at the snoring. She could've sworn that the old man wasn't sitting a moment ago, in the stone chair shaped as books. Serek chirped at the newcomer with the dusty strange clothes.

Stephanie grinned at the old man's hat, which was the neck and head of a strange looking bird.

"Steph, isn't that-?" Chantal pointed towards the Wiseman.

"Yep." her friend said as Jareth started looking around. He was looking for the correct path to the castle.

"Do you think he'll be able to help us?" Chantal asked Jareth.

"I doubt it," the Goblin King mumbled as he rolled his eyes.

"You seem to forget that you've asked, on several occasion, our advice m'Lord." a high, stuck up sounding voice said.

Chantal looked up as Jareth turned around.

The bird draped upon the Wiseman's head, blinked its yellow eyes.

"A long time ago," Jareth said with a shake of his head. "Before he fell asleep during his advice."

The bird-hat looked down at the snoring Wiseman. "True," it said. "and when his advice actually made sense."

Jareth smiled at the bird.

"Basically the advice given will be useless to help us," Chantal asked as she approached the stone chair.

"It all depends on how you interpret the advice given." the bird replied.

"What about your advice??" Stephanie said with a slight shake of her head.

"Mine will be the same, though at time I tend to help more,"

Chantal turned to Stephanie and smiled.

"For a price of course," it said innocently looking up and then back at the group from the corner of its eye.

"Should've known." Chantal said rolling her eyes, her hands on her hips. She looked at the Goblin King.

"Do you have anything?" The Wiseman's hand, controlled by the bird, reached out and shook the contribution box. Something clinked inside the wooden structure.

Jareth, a hand out, snapped his fingers. Two odd colored coins, appeared in the air, he grabbed them in a quick gesture, for he was still holding the eighteen-year old girl on his back. He took a step towards the bird and placed the coins neatly in the slot. The coins clinked against each other as one fell onto the other and the box returned upon the lap of the Wiseman.

"Thank you. Now for my part." the bird-hat said and cleared its throat. "The way forward is sometimes the way back."

"But isn't that-" Stephanie started, because that was exactly the advice that the Wiseman had said to Sarah.

The bird was not finished, it stared at the two girls. "So you must remember that you are in a place where everything seems possible and nothing is what it seems."

The group waited patiently for more.

Nothing.

Chantal blinked. "That's it?"

"Yes." the bird said turning to her.

"This advice was already said!! Basically you're repeating the Wiseman's words!! You ripped us off!!" Stephanie glared at the bird.

"I have not! For the situation that you're in, the advice is properly given." it objected.

Jareth sighed and turned around before Stephanie could say any more to the bird.

"Should've asked that dumb rambling bird, it would've given it for free." Chantal mumbled following the Goblin King.

"Thanks for your help!!" Stephanie yelled back over her shoulder.

"You're welcome! And remember: 'Things aren't always what they seem in this place, so you can't take anything for granted.'" it replied, either oblivious or had ignored the sarcasm in her tone.

The Goblin King stopped and thought for a moment, which direction to choose?

A moment later, they were on their way towards the castle.

"I wonder why your powers are slowly fading since we are getting closer to the castle. What I thought, was that your powers would become stronger once we got close enough." Chantal said.

"We're running out of time, that is why my powers are fading."

Chantal nodded and it was silent again.

Precious minutes ticked by.

"Bloody hell! I swear that we're not getting anywhere." he mumbled to himself. Chantal had a hand to her chin in thought. "Things aren't always what they seem to be in this place..."

"Jareth calm down!!" Stephanie said to the still mumbling Goblin King. Amazingly enough, he listened.

"Look, let's handle this logically. There has to be a way to the castle, all right??" she said. Jareth nodded.

"All right. Let's backup to what the bird had said, okay??" there was a pause of silence.

"I have nothing." he shrugged. "You were right, the advice was repeated."

"Hmm...maybe, won't hurt to try," Chantal said, confusing the others, as she pushed on one of the hedge walls. "Okay, that didn't work."

"...the way forward is sometimes the way back..." Stephanie said softly to herself, then suddenly an idea came to her like a bolt of lightning. "Let's go back!!"

"What? Are you mad?" Jareth said. "I am not turning around!"

"Will you just listen to me for once!! 'The way forward is sometimes the way back.' If we go back to where we came from,"

"Chances are it will lead us forward, to the castle." Chantal finished, a grin on her face. "Steph! That's wicked!"

"Hey!! Wicked's my word!!" her friend laughed. "Well, what are we waiting for??"

"I'm still not sure," Jareth said looking back at the girl.

"It's worth a shot." Chantal said.

"Yes, if we had more time." Jareth argued.

Stephanie sighed.

"Well, it's up to you. We're just here to help you out."

"All right, fine." he sighed and turned around.

The fate of his throne in their hands now.

OOOOOOOO

Jareth sighed making Chantal turn around.

"What? What is it now?" she asked him.

"Nothing. Just thinking about how easily the Underground can be taken."

"Don't worry Jareth, we'll get it back." Stephanie said reassuringly.

"Somehow." added Chantal. The Goblin King only nodded with another sigh.

Silence followed as they continued towards the castle. Pebbles, dried leaves and twigs snapped under their feet.

Suddenly Jareth stopped in his tracks and turned around sharply causing the girl to tighten her weak grip around his shoulders.

"Woah!!" When cloth settled and he had stopped turning around, she asked: What is it Jareth??"

"Hmm. Someone is following us." he replied, his eyes searching.

"The Fireys maybe?" Chantal asked. "I sure hope it's not those creatures that chased us."

"No," Jareth said shaking his head. "I only sense one presence, not several."

"I wonder if that's a good thing." Chantal said with an uneasy laugh. "Maybe we should keep going."

"Very well."

"Come out, come out, whomever you are!!" Stephanie yelled suddenly not only startling Chantal but the Goblin King as well.

"Steph! What are you doing?" Chantal said, her hazel eyes wide. Her friend said nothing and seemed to be waiting.

Leaves rustled and a figure emerged from behind a hedge.

"It's only Heggles." Jareth mumbled helping Stephanie onto a broken down pedestal. He had brushed aside loose pieces of what used to be an urn.

"Haggles." Chantal said correcting Jareth.

"HOGGLE!!!" Stephanie and Hoggle said in unison.

"Sor-ry!" Chantal giggled.

"Cor! Maybes I should change me name." the dwarf mumbled angrily.

"Poor guy has an identity crisis." Stephanie said turning to Jareth. "At least get his name right because I know you can."

"Perhaps I do not want to," he chuckled.

"Now that's being ignorant. Stop teasing him." Stephanie said.

"All right, fine!" Jareth grumbled leaning on the pedestal beside her, his arm rested near a jean clad leg covered in dust.

"No matter. Why's are you still here? I thought by now you'd be at the castle." Hoggle said shuffling his feet.

"We had a few minor setbacks." Chantal said smiling at her friend.

"Hey, not my fault!! If his 'highness' here would've waited for me," Stephanie said poking Jareth's arm.

"I? You were slow in the first place my dear girl." Jareth argued.

"Don't you start Jareth. I'm warning you."

"Oh? Are you threatening me?"

Hoggle looked at Chantal who shook her head and rolled her eyes as the two continued to argue.

Chantal cleared her throat. It did nothing to disturb the 'discussion'.

"Um...hello?"

"-and for that matter-"

"-oh really?? In that case-"

"Guys?"

"-indeed. Perhaps I shall-"

"-pasta vazoo!! Do you have to be such an a-"

"GUYS!!!"

"WHAT?!?!" Stephanie and Jareth both looked at the girl, interrupted from their heated 'discussion'. Hoggle had his hands over his ears.

"How about less arguing and more traveling, hmm?" Chantal said, hands on her hips.

"Yes, right." Jareth mumbled. Stephanie sighed and nodded.

"Good." Chantal replied her hands remaining on her hips.

The Goblin King helped Stephanie onto his back again.

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"What about that way??" Stephanie suggested from Jareth's back as he turned left and right. His eyes were closed now, trying to sense his way towards the castle.

He sighed.

"We're running out of time." he sighed again, opening his eyes. "If I ever get my powers back, I'll make sure that there would be no possible way to take over the Underground, or my powers."

"We'll make it Jareth. Just remember what the Wiseman- I mean the bird-hat, had said. Trust me." Stephanie said as he lifted her up because she was slipping again.

"All right." he then thought for a moment. " This way I believe."

Chantal followed the Goblin King.

"Do you want to stop a while?" she asked him suddenly. "I mean, carrying her must be tiresome after a while."

"You're right." Jareth said a grin starting on his features, he gave Chantal a wink. "What do you mortals eat in your realm?"

Whap!

"If you're not careful 'your highness', you might regret it." Stephanie said, she was strong enough to smack him at the back of the head.

"Why? You're not going to hit me again are you?" he asked, looking back at the girl.

"If you're not careful with your words." Stephanie said. "Besides, I'm not that heavy."

Hoggle raised his eyebrows. What had he missed? The Goblin King getting hit by a mere mortal?

Perhaps he should've stayed with them, things would've been more interesting.

"Didn't you deserve it in the first place?" Chantal asked, now knowing the story of what happened. They had told Chantal what happened before Hoggle rejoined the group. Jareth had protested at Stephanie's version. An argument had started.

"Perhaps I did." Jareth said with a shrug. "Obviously someone thought I needed a reminder." the girl on his back said nothing.

"Anyway, let's keep going before we arrive there too late." Chantal suggested. "And before another argument ensues."

Hoggle was ahead of the group, not daring to be too close to the Goblin King, due to past conflicts. Chantal was next and not too far off, Jareth and Stephanie.

"When will you be strong enough to walk?"

"I don't know. Maybe not until this is over." Stephanie joked.

"Hmm. Maybe I should drop you off right here then?"

"Try." Stephanie warned poking him in-between the shoulder blades. Jareth winced.

"I think I'd rather not." he replied. Chantal laughed.

Hoggle turned around and waited for the rest of the group to catch up. Several minutes later after going down winding corridors and through hidden passages, something ahead of the group caught Chantal's eye.

"Hey what's this?" Chantal asked rushing forward passing Hoggle. A wooden lever protruded from a stone wall, cobwebs covered the simple handle.

"That's a lever." Jareth replied smugly.

"Yes, she can see that Jareth. More information please." Another poke from behind made him wince again.

"If I recall this lever stops travelers from entering the Goblin City."

"Yes but no one has ever came that close other than-" Hoggle stopped but added sheepishly: "Sarah."

Jareth glared at the dwarf. "Yes I know that." he shifted his weight to one foot. "These girls have also traversed the Labyrinth and reached the castle. Sarah had sheer luck."

Hoggle had an sorry-I-brought-Sarah-up look on his face.

"So what does the lever do?? I mean, what stops the people who make it this far???" Stephanie asked

before an awkward silence would follow.

"It doesn't work." Everyone turned to Hoggle.

"What do you mean it does not work?" Jareth demanded the dwarf. "Of course it does. I may have lost my powers but not my memory."

"Or your mind." Stephanie added, making Chantal giggle.

"Cor! It's so old, the lever probably won't even move."

"Perhaps it has not been used yet, but I wouldn't be too sure about it Hoggle." the Goblin King said, looking at the lever then at the dwarf.

"Cor! Half the stuff in this dumb Labyrinth is crumbling and in ruins and I'll prove it to you!"

"Hoggle, do not touch that lever." Jareth said taking a step forward. Serek on Chantal's shoulder, squeaked.

"Like I says before, I don't have to listen to you." Hoggle reached up over his head to grab the lever.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you." Jareth warned.

Hoggle shivered but pulled the lever anyhow. The clicks and whirs of gears was heard and everyone held in their breaths.

Silence.

"See?" Hoggle said, a smug smile on his face.

A rumbling sound came from behind the group. Serek squeaked and chirped loudly. His eyes whirring red in fear.

"Why me?" Jareth groaned, his head back asking some unseen force.

"No time for that!" Chantal said pointing behind him.

A giant crystal came rolling down the corridor, blocking any possible means of evading it.

"Pasta Vazoo!!" Stephanie said.

"Run!" Chantal yelled turning left, following Hoggle who had already run off. Jareth ran off following the girl, the crystal, rolling not too far behind them.

Chantal grabbed Hoggle's hand and helped him run faster. They followed the twisting and confusing ways of the Labyrinth. For some strange reason, the crystal followed them, in any directions they were going.

Amidst the rumbling of the crystal and the breaking of objects in its path, Jareth heard someone humming an unknown tune, unevenly and loudly by his ear. Chantal also heard it, but she recognized it.

Stephanie was humming the 'Indiana Jones' theme!

She almost neared the 'finale' of the song.

"Stephanie!" Jareth said in union with Chantal's: "Steph!"

"Sorry!!" Stephanie laughed despite the danger of getting squished. "I just couldn't help it!!"

Chantal shook her head.

"Hey Indy, where's your whip to get us out of this situation??" Stephanie laughed over the rumbling noise of the giant crystal.

"I do not know of this 'Indy' that you speak of, nor do I own a whip," Jareth said as he ran. "but one more comment and I'll-"

"All right, all right!!" Stephanie said. "I'm done!!"

"Good." he said.

"Hurry!! The crystal is almost at our backs!!" Stephanie said looking back.

"I'm hurrying!" the Goblin King yelled back. Chantal jumped over a large dead tree branch. Serek's squeak was barely heard over the rumbling.

"Left! Turn left now!" Jareth yelled to Chantal ahead of him. She turned the corner sharply, almost hitting a wall.

Suddenly the stone maze disappeared as she stepped onto a large path.

"No way!" Stephanie said disbelieving as she wondered where the junkyard was.

"Go! Do not stop now!"

Chantal ran past a large archway, followed by the Goblin King. The crystal rolled loudly and slammed against an entrance of the Goblin City. A few pieces of the archway crumbled to the ground.

13 - In The End

Chapter Thirteen: In the End

All activity within the Goblin City came to a halt as a part of the archway fell to the ground. The citizens stared in awe at the large crystal that was now lodged in the stone archway of their city. Their attention then quickly turned towards the small group who had run into the city only moments before. The small group came to a stop in front of the city fountain.

Chantal bent over, hands on her knees, trying to catch her breath. Stephanie hung onto Jareth, slightly forward, while he leaned against the fountain, breathing hard. Hoggle collapsed to the ground by Chantal's feet.

"I told...you...not to...touch...that leaver," Jareth said in between breaths.

Hoggle remained silent.

Serek let out a small chirp, but Chantal ignored him as she still tried to catch her breath. Serek nibbled on her ear, then Chantal felt something poking her left shoulder blade.

"Not now Serek.." She broke off as she turned to look up and him.

There were a dozen goblin guards surrounding them, their spears pointed towards the group.

"Uh oh!"

Stephanie looked up. "Pasta Vazoo!! We have company." she said as she tapped Jareth's shoulder.

Jareth stood up straight and looked at the group of semi armored goblins and let out a low growl. The goblins took a step back, but didn't back down.

"What do you think you are doing?" Jareth snapped at them.

"You are trespassing into the Goblin City," One of the goblins standing in front of the Goblin King replied.

"I'm the King, you fools."

"Not any longer," the goblin told him, pointing his spear towards Jareth. "Off to the dungeons with you."

Jareth let out another low growl as he took a step forward.

Chantal rested a hand on his arm and shook her head. Stephanie exchanged a look with Chantal, she

had an idea.

"Take us to your 'New King'," Stephanie spoke up. "We would like a word with him."

The goblin exchanged a quick look with another, then he shook his head. "We can't do that. Trespassers have always been taken to the dungeon."

"Are you sure that is what the new king wants??" Stephanie asked.

The goblin thought for a moment, he discussed the situation amongst the group, then nodded.

"Alright, follow me," The leader of the goblins said and led the way across the city as the group followed with the goblin guards in tow.

Jareth let out a low growl. "Just wait until I get my throne back," he murmured under his breath. Only the girl upon his back heard him.

"Don't worry," Stephanie whispered. Though she had no idea what they would do once they got into the castle. Maybe they would be able to convince this 'New King' to give Jareth his throne back. If that didn't work she had no clue what they could do. Jareth was now nearly as powerless as the two girls.

The group was led through the city, passing by rough looking houses and buildings. Hoggle seemed to be right about one thing, everything in the Underground did look like it was falling apart.

They approached a large building connected to the castle that seemed to be built right into a side of a cliff. Two goblins in armor, leaning against the wall of the buildings, stood watch at an entrance.

The lead goblin called out for the doors to be opened.

"Yes Captain!" one of the goblins acknowledged as he jumped up and ran to open the doors. The two large metal doors swung open with relative ease, revealing only darkness within.

The second goblin guard brought over a lit lantern and handed it over to the captain. The captain took the lantern and entered the dark building. The flame of the lantern wasn't very bright but it gave enough light to see where the party was going. Jareth was the first to follow the captain, then Hoggle and Chantal in tow, followed by eleven other armored goblins.

Chantal reached for her pack to pull out a flashlight, but as she did she was poked by a goblin behind her with his spear.

"Oww!" Chantal exclaimed with a wince. She rubbed her arm where she had been poked as she turned to glare at the goblin before she continued to follow Jareth and Hoggle.

They followed the captain down a long dark hallway until they reached a stone stairway leading upwards. Jareth stumbled a few times as he climbed the stairs. Carrying Stephanie all this way was starting to take a toll on him.

"You can put me down Jareth," Stephanie told him. "I'm sure I can walk on my own now."

Jareth nodded as he stopped to let Stephanie off, but as he did the captain turned and yelled at them.

"Keep moving!"

Jareth grumbled as he repositioned Stephanie and continued walking up the stairs.

After a few more minutes of hiking up the stairs, they reached a landing with a doorway, wide enough for one person to pass through at a time. As they passed through the doorway, they found themselves in a long hallway that went both to their right and to their left. The captain turned right and walked down the hall, the others following. A few moments later, they turned left, down another hallway and continued on their way. They did this several more times.

Chantal sighed as she wondered if the captain even knew where they were going, or if he was just leading them around in circles.

The goblin captain then came to a stop in front of a large decorative wooden door.

"The King's Study," Jareth murmured.

A goblin raced around the group from the back and opened the door, as the other goblins completely surrounded the group. The captain entered the room and cleared his throat.

"Trespassers entering the City who wished to see you M'Lord," the captain said as the goblin surrounded group entered the room.

The figure sitting at the desk looked up. Several maps sat on the desk and it was obvious he had been looking them over.

"Umm...alright." he told the captain as he got to his feet and walked around the desk to meet the newcomers; he was dressed in the same fashion of Chantal and Stephanie's realm.

Jareth stood facing the 'New King', with Stephanie still on his back; who blinked at the dark haired figure. Chantal and Hoggle stood behind the Goblin King, out of sight. The New King waited for the goblins from the front to move away from the group before approaching Jareth. Jareth then started to snicker, for the New King was shorter than he; Jareth stood at least two heads taller.

"So you are the 'New King'," Jareth said with a sly smile.

"And you must be Jareth," the New King replied. "The goblins warned me about you."

The sound of the voice hit Chantal like a spark of lightning in the back of her head. Her eyes grew wide in recognition. She pushed past Hoggle then tried to look around Jareth.

"Paul?" She asked as she pushed her way around Jareth and passed the goblins that tried holding her back.

The New King's eyes grew wide. "Chantal?"

Jareth turned and looked at the twenty-year old girl. "Do you know him?"

"Yeah, he's a friend." she told him. Stephanie grinned realizing who it was and Chantal turned to face Paul again. "What are you doing here?"

"I'm not exactly sure where here is, other than it being a castle," he told her. "But I found this clear crystal and when I touched it, I suddenly found myself here."

"Hmm...that sounds familiar," Stephanie said from atop Jareth. "Jareth you can put me down now."

"About bloody time!" the Goblin King said with a grin and he crouched down to let the eighteen-year old slide off. She landed on her feet, her legs felt like Jell-o for a moment, then walked up to Paul.

"So this is Paul," she said with a smile.

"You must be Stephanie," Paul said with a smile as he extended his hand to Stephanie. She took it and they shook hands.

Jareth cleared his throat. "Excuse me?"

"Oh!! Sorry Jareth," Stephanie told Jareth then glanced back at Paul. "Um Paul?? Would you mind helping us by giving Jareth his throne back?? We are kind of running out of time."

"Indeed! The day almost seems to be done and I should be getting back home," Paul told her.

"Actually time flow faster here. Only about an hour has passed at home," Chantal told her friend.

Paul raised an eyebrow. "Interesting. I would be interested in knowing more about this place."

"I'm sure you would. But could it wait? My thirteen hours are nearly up," Jareth said impatiently.

Paul looked over at the Goblin King, a bit confused. "How so?"

"I only have thirteen hours to claim back my throne if someone takes it over. Now, I need to get to the throne room. A little help please?" Jareth asked motioning towards the goblins blocking their way out of the study.

"Oh, of course," Paul said with an understanding smile as he turned towards the goblins. "You may leave now."

The captain took a look at the group, but then turned and directed the rest of the goblins to leave the room. Once they had all left the room and not a sound could be heard from them, Jareth headed towards the door.

"Come on, we don't have much time," he barked at the rest of the group and strode out of the room and down the hall. The rest of the group followed quickly.

"Where are we going?" Chantal asked and Serek chirped from her shoulder.

"To the throne room," Hoggle answered her. "He has to touch the crystal that is embedded in the throne to be recognized as king again."

"That makes sense," Stephanie said just ahead of them. She was walking quickly to try and catch up to Jareth, though she still had the marks on her thumb from the tentacle tree, she was visibly back to normal. A tad weak, but normal.

They approached an archway with double doors that was swung open wide, Jareth quickly entered the throne room and strode up to the large iron chair that sat against the back wall of the room. He sat down, placed his right hand over the crystal that was embedded in the arm of the chair, and closed his eyes.

Nothing happened.

Both Stephanie and Chantal stared at the Goblin King. They had been expecting something like a glowing light or a humming aura to welcome the rightful king back, but there was nothing.

The room stood silent. Were they too late?

"It's not working," Stephanie breathed to Chantal who turned and looked at Paul, he was standing there calmly watching Jareth. He turned and looked back at Chantal and shrugged his shoulders.

Chantal's heart dropped. Had they gone through all that for nothing?

With that thought, Jareth suddenly opened his eyes and stared right past the two girls. Stephanie twirled around and looked at the wall behind them. She touched her friend on the arm and pointed at the clock on the wall.

The hour hand sat pointing straight up, while the minute hand was only moments away from reaching thirteen. Stephanie held her breath as they stared at the clock. The seconds ticked by slowly and the room was silent in anticipation.

Then the minute hand struck thirteen and a low hum began to resinate from the throne. The crystal beneath Jareth's hand began to glow as the hum grew louder.

"I am Jareth, the Goblin King," Jareth said harmonizing with the hum of the crystal. In acknowledgment the crystal glowed a bit brighter, then died.

Jareth looked up and Stephanie and Chantal, smiling, his canines flashing.

Stephanie let out a sigh of relief.

Chantal smiled then she turned to Paul. "I wonder why the goblins accepted you as their new king instead of seeing you as a trespasser."

"Maybe they needed a change and thought that I could implicate that change," Paul replied.

"I highly doubt that. Goblins are not that intelligent," Jareth told him seriously.

"I wouldn't be so sure about that," Paul replied. "They brought me quite a few interesting objects, including maps and magical objects."

"Magical objects??" Stephanie asked.

"I'm not sure what they did, but there was this black cube and this small chest that I couldn't open."

"Black cube?" Chantal asked. "I wonder if it was the same box we ran into."

"That is a possibility because it disappeared off the desk of the study," Paul told her.

"Almost anything is possible in the Underground. And you will never know what you will run into," Jareth told them.

"Yeah, like that bird," Chantal said rolling her eyes, then her eyes lit up on that thought. "'They are all laughing at you' it had said. It was talking about Paul."

"Huh??" Stephanie asked confused.

"My chat name," Paul explained.

Chantal hit the side of her head with the palm of her hand. "That damn bird was telling me exactly who had taken over the castle too."

Stephanie laughed. "Look at all the trouble you would have saved us if you had known that earlier."

"I know. I just couldn't remember where I had seen that before."

"Well it sure sounds like you guys had an adventure," Paul commented.

"Yeah, a whole thirteen hours worth of adventure," Stephanie said with a smile.

Chantal nodded. "That was enough adventure to last me a while. Can we go home yet?"

Jareth laughed and Stephanie smiled. Paul stood there silently.

"I promise to tell you all of what went on here if you tell me what happened to you," Chantal told him.

"Sounds like a deal to me," Paul replied with a grin.

Stephanie pulled off Jareth's tattered jacket from her shoulders. She handed it to Jareth. "I think this belongs to you."

Jareth took the jacket and looked down at it, the sleeves were torn and there were rips all over it. The Goblin King gave a small shrug and tossed it aside.

"I should be getting home too, before Jenn goes upstairs and realizes that I'm not in my room," Stephanie said.

"Easily done!" Jareth said with another smile.

Chantal giggled.

It was odd to see the Goblin King smile, a real smile.

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About ten minutes later, Jareth stood in front of the two girls, he had already sent Paul home and Hoggle had left on his own; actually the dwarf had snuck out of the castle while the four had been talking earlier. He seemed eager to get away while Jareth was still in good spirits.

Jareth smiled as he extended his hand and two crystals appeared. He then handed one to Stephanie and the other to Chantal.

"This will get you home and will allow you back into the Underground if need be." he told them.

Stephanie started at the crystal and smiled. "Is this your way of saying thank you???"

Jareth nodded unable to say anything. He couldn't say anything, it wasn't in his nature to thank people.

"You are welcome," Chantal told him. Serek popped his head up and gave Jareth a little squeak.

"I hate to admit it, but I probably would never have made it here in time without your help."

"Next time you will know to wait for me," Stephanie said with a smile.

"If there is a next time."

"Oh there will be." Stephanie said, she had a feeling that adventures within the Underground were far from over.

"What is that supposed to mean?"

"Oh, you know-"

"Ummm...excuse me?" Chantal interrupted. "How is this thing supposed to work?" she asked holding up the crystal.

"Just mention to the crystal the location that you want, which is home," Jareth told her.

Chantal's eyes grew wide. "Would this thing let me go to other places?"

Jareth shook his head. "Unfortunately, no. Only to and from the Underground. That is the extent I can do for those allowed to return."

"Damn! This would have made a great shortcut to get to other places." Chantal pouted.

Stephanie laughed. She had a few places she wanted to visit as well but of course it could not be that simple.

"Well time to go," the brown haired girl said.

Chantal nodded and held her crystal tight. Serek's eyes began to whirl with excitement.

"Home!!!" both girls said in union. A glow of light started to surround the girls, Stephanie's laughter was heard when she realized just how cheesy they had sounded. Just at the last minute Chantal looked up at Jareth.

"Don't forget your promise!"

"I won't," Jareth replied with a smile as the two girls vanished, returning home.

The End

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I had this all corrected (time passage) and even had a end note. Now I wonder what happened to it when I updated it. I will correct this once I get back to my files. Sorry for the inconvenience.

Sari

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○ ○ Part 3 preview

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Something is amiss in the Underground again. Jareth goes to Chantal for help, but there is another problem, he can't find Stephanie. Where could she be? And what has happened in the Underground that he would need Chantal's help? Part III of the Labyrinth Chronicles series.

