Trapped

by glorifield

Summary

An adult Sarah finds herself wished away to the Underground. A delighted Jareth takes her prisoner.
“Oof!” Sarah made an undignified sound as she fell hard on her bottom. “Stupid chair.” She mumbled, pushing her hands against the ground to push herself back up. Ground? She thought. What happened to the classroom?

It had been a particularly rough day with her 3rd period class. This was only her second year of teaching, but she knew that the week before spring break would always be like this—didn’t mean she was just going to take it.

“Shane….Shane. Why are you out of your seat?” She asked sternly.

“Well, ya’see Ms. Williams, I had lent Talik a dollar yesterday, and he needs to pay it back now, and…”

“Nevermind, you can figure that out after class. Let’s continue…”

“WOAH!” Katelyn (who sat close to the window) shouted. “Look at Morgan! She’s walking with another boy!”

Two thirds of the class leapt from their seats and crowded around the window. Sarah tightly gripped her expo marker and sighed.

“All right! That’s enough! To your seats, everyone!”

The teenagers grumbled as they shuffled back to their desks. Sarah heard one whisper, “She’s in a bad mood today.” She sighed again. She really wasn’t in a bad mood; she just wanted to get their attention.

More quietly she said, “I understand that everyone is jittery. Spring break is just around the corner and we all have plans. For the remaining 15 minutes of class, let’s just read silently.”

“That’s not fair!” Talik called from across the room. “We didn’t have a chance to go to the library this week.”

Sarah repressed a smile. “Fair? Compared to what? You are all welcome to grab a book from the shelf in the back. I have some good ones in there.”

And finally, a refreshing silence washed over the classroom. Sarah walked between the desks, checking for cell phones that often found themselves tucked close to the binding of the books. When she had come full circle, she opened the window closest to her desk. The warm breeze brushed against her skin and rustled the stack of ungraded essays waiting in her return box. Three more days until spring break! Three more days until I can see him. A smile finally made it to her face as she went to sit down. A noise made her look up just as she was about to lean back.

Then, poof, she was not there. Several students who had been daydreaming out the window took notice. One in particular held a small book over his guilty face.

And that’s when she fell…onto dirt ground.

This makes no sense. She was still sitting, too surprised to stand up yet. She looked around at a large stone wall, accompanied by an arching doorway.
“No.” She said aloud. “not again.”

Footsteps behind her caused her to scramble to her feet.

“Spittle!” She heard a familiar voice command, “who would wish away a grown woman?”

A goblin voice responded, “Who knows, sire? She’s yours now.”

“Yes, I suppose so. Well, come along now,” his voice was now directed at her, “turn so I can have a look at you.”

His deep voice sent a chill through her spine. She slowly turned toward him, careful to keep her head down so that her hair veiled her face. She could see his tall boots move closer to her. Despite her fear, she couldn’t help but internally scoff at them. God, does he have the same ones as before?

“Woman, look at me.”

Sarah did not follow his order until she felt his riding crop slide under her chin. He pushed it forcefully up. She finally allowed her brown defiant eyes to meet his blue, mismatched ones. She watched as they widened with surprise and then crease with the grin that emerged.

“Oh my. What have we here?”

Jareth was surprised that he had not recognized her at first. She had haunted his dreams for years since she had run the labyrinth. Running through his mind, taunting him. So, when he had seen a brunette standing before him, he should have immediately hoped to see her.

It was her eyes. That’s what finally awoke the realization. That defiant stare that she had worn the entire time she had been in the Underground. “Piece of cake!” He could hear a distant memory echo.

But she was so much older! He often forgot that humans aged and died much faster than the fae. Her face had lost the last remnants of baby fat, showing strong jaws and cheekbones. Her hips had a presence, even in that frumpy skirt she wore. Her walk was steadier and calm, even as he marched her to the oubliette.

All of her finally belonged to him now.

It was a full minute before Sarah’s trademark defiance returned to her. She was too stunned at first to speak. Jareth had grabbed her arm and stared walking her through the Labyrinth. She stared at him, opened mouthed. He was not as tall as she remembered but was still an intimidating figure. He was wearing a black and sparkly outfit with a high collar. His leggings were brown and tight. So tight.

Her mouth closed and she averted her gaze back to his face. He was avoiding eye contact with her, only facing forward. His styled hair moved up and down with every forceful step. She was sure a vein in his throat throbbed for a few seconds.

That’s when she realized it: he was nervous.

She was an adult now, not the spoiled child she had once been, and it made him unsure how to act around her.

Sarah planted her feet and jerked her arm out of his hand. The Goblin King allowed her to do so, watching her curiously.

“And what,” he said, “do you think you’re doing?”
Sarah stood tall and smiled triumphantly. “You have no power over me!”

He stared at her blankly at first. Then he smiled he brushed her cheek with his riding crop. Her jaw tensed in response. “Oh dear Sarah, that won’t work this time.”

It was Sarah’s turn to stare blankly.

“You see, you were wished to me, given to me. In 12 hours and 56 minutes, you’ll be mine.”

“But that’s not fair!” She stepped towards him, finger in the air to halt the response she knew would come. “No really, it’s unfair. It’s not even the way it is. You have no one to run for me!”

In response, Jareth pulled out a crystal ball. He twirled it several times around his arms (Show off, Sarah thought) and then held it in front of her.

The labyrinth had been noisy with the sounds of goblins arguing and the other inhabitants up to their usual antics, but when Sarah looked into the crystal the sounds changed to the buzz of conversation. She saw her classroom. The bell rang and students, already crowded by the door, were pouring into the hallway. All except one.

Shane sat at his desk, making a show of putting away his books and pens. When he placed his silent reading book back on the shelf, Sarah saw the title. When he saw that he was alone, he walked slowly over to the teacher’s desk. It was cluttered with papers, books, and a small statue of a dragon. All of these things were Ms. Williams and it was taboo to be over by her things while she wasn’t there.

He moved to the other side of the desk, bending to peer under it slowly. “Ms. Williams?” He said quietly. “If this is a joke, it’s not funny.”

As he looked up there was a rustle at the window. “Ah!” He jumped back, shaking slightly as a large barn owl flew in. The owl gracefully perched on the dragon statue. Shane placed his hand on his chest and took a deep breath. He laughed at his jumpiness.

“Hey you,” he called to the owl, “Nevermore, am I right?” But before he could be satisfied with his joke, there was a cloud of glitter and smoke. When it cleared, the owl was gone. Standing in front of the desk was none other than the Goblin King.

Jareth did not have the satisfied look he had carried when Sarah had summoned him. In fact, he looked bored. No twirling crystals, no hands on hips, no snakes that became scarves. He simply gave a abridged version of his speech.

“I have taken that whom you’ve wished away.”

Shane closed his gaping mouth and looked quizzical. “Is this one of her learning experiences? That book wasn’t even that good.”

Jareth didn’t correct him. “I have done as you wished. Do you want to claim her back?”

The teen ran his hand across the back of his head. “No?”

Jareth nodded and turned back into an owl. Shane had already started a brisk pace out of the classroom.

The view of the crystal faded just as Shane said, “Go back to Comic Con, weirdo.”
As the bugs, fairies, and trickling water returned to Sarah’s ears she rolled her eyes. She wasn’t angry at her student. He had no way of knowing what he had done, just as she didn’t understand the consequences of wishing her brother away when she was his age. She was angry at herself.

“How could I have thrown in Labyrinth with the other books?”

“How indeed,” Jareth responded. After pinching his fingers together to dissipate the crystal, he grabbed her arm, intending to move her farther into the Labyrinth. He had to get her to the oubliette before she got any ideas. She didn’t move.

“Hold on a minute,” She said. “I still have time. I am not yours yet.”

The Goblin King turned towards the woman and, in one swift move, stood toe to toe with her, looking down. His mouth flattened into a line. She clutched her fists tight, trying to ignore the sweat that was collecting on her palms. Filling her chest with air, she met his gaze. She would not be intimidated. “I still have over 12 hours before time is up.”

Jareth stared at her, straightened his collar, and sniffed. “I’ll find you in 12 hours and 51 minutes. I will not return you to the Aboveground, though.” With that, he smashed a crystal on the ground and disappeared.

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Reclining into his throne, the Goblin King fumed. At first he had been uncomfortable, nervous even, at Sarah’s silence. Had she changed so much? Yet, after she regained her confidence he knew it was the same girl who had defeated him once before.

She was clever and strong-willed. It’s what he admired about her and at the same time it irked him to his core. He often had wondered what would have happened if she had taken his deal.

“Fear me, love me, do as I say, and I will be your slave.” He had meant it. Watching her use every resource, from lipstick to friendship, in order to save her brother had stirred a desire in Jareth that he had never felt before or since.

If she had taken his deal, would he still hold that desire and respect? For years he had convinced himself that he would, but Sarah, his Sarah, would not be the same girl no, woman if she willingly became a fearful slave.

No, this was much better. His spitfire was now his in all of her glory. He would have her in chains, safe in his oubliette. He would break her like she had broken him. Only then could she be truly his.

Through these thoughts he realized that he would enjoy watching her try to break free of him in her remaining hours, but he knew he must stay vigilant. Clever, strong-willed Sarah always came up with a plan.
Sarah heard her feet slap against the cobblestone as she ran. She knew her time was limited. Scouring the wall and crevices, she couldn’t seem to find any creature. *Damn it!*

The labyrinth hadn’t changed. Well, that wasn’t entirely true; it was always changing; it was alive in that way. But the pathways seemed like home to Sarah, the moss and chickens were a welcome sight. It was like she was visiting a childhood home. If only the creepy uncle didn’t still live next door.

She was running so frantically that she almost ran into the old man with a bird head. “Oh, hello.”

“Yes….hmmm? Oh, yes, hello.” He mumbled.

“Pretty girl! Pretty woah-mannn!” The bird squawked. “Don’t we know you?”

Sarah gripped her knees and said between heavy breaths, “Yes, yes! I’m Sarah. I asked you for advice years ago. I gave you a ring, remember?”

“Hmmm… maybe,” the old man responded, shifting his large eyebrows, “but sometimes the people we know are the ones who don’t know us at all.”

“Oh shut up! Yes, lady, we remember you. How can we be of service this time?”

“Have you seen my friends? Hoggle, Ludo, or Sir Didymus?”

“Who are are friends really?”

“Oh, shut up!” The bird then turned to Sarah, “We have. They were by those obnoxious knockers last time we walked by. But at the rate this one moves, that may have been hours.”

Sarah turned to leave, “thank you!”

“Wait!”

She turned back around, leaving one foot facing away. She was eager to find her friends.

The old man shook his donation box. She sighed but realized that he *had actually* been helpful this time. Her skirt had no pockets, so no hope there. She felt at her ears to see if she had bothered putting earrings on that morning. No luck. She looked forlornly at her hands. There was one ring on her left one, but that was special. The round-cut diamond caught the sunlight as she stared.

“Oooh! We’ll gladly take that one!” The bird was leaning almost past the nose of his ride.

“No.” She responded quickly, tucking her hand into the folds of her skirt. “I need this one. How about….oh!” She grabbed a beaded chain around her neck that held her reading glasses. Pulling the glasses off, she hooked them onto her shirt collar. She then held the chain up to the duo for approval.

The bird looked disappointed but then nodded.
Jareth was so focused on the crystal that he did not notice the usual ruckus around him. A goblin swinging from the ceiling only caught his attention when he swung into the back of Jareth’s head.

“You fool!” He grabbed the offender by the neck, holding him so that his feet dangled in midair. “Can’t you see I’m busy?” With that he flung the goblin away from him, smashing him into the stone wall of the throne room.

The goblin recovered quickly, stood up and scurried to the other end of the room.

The king returned to his spying. “Oh Sarah, what are you up to?”

“Hoggle!” Sarah shouted flinging her arms around the unsuspecting dwarf.

Hoggle leaned back to see her. “Sarah? Sarah, is ‘at really you?” He smiled and gave her a solid pat on the back. “So it is! How’d ya get back down here?”

Sarah only hugged him tighter. “Oh Hoggle, I’m so glad you didn’t forget me!”

The dwarf pushed her off. “All right, now that’s enough. Whaday mean, remember you? We talked only last week.”

Sarah replied only with a smile. I felt so good to see her dear friend, she had to force herself to remember that she needed him.

“Alright then, be all mysterious. Come along to my hut. Sir Didymus and Ludo are over for tea. I jus’ stepped outside to get away from their noisy chatter.”

Sarah could not stop her joy from escaping into her movements. She practically skipped to Hoggle’s house, and she ended every sentence with a childish giggle.

When they arrived at the hut, Ludo and Didymus jumped from their chairs to hug her. Ludo nearly knocked her over in his excitement.

“Lady Sarah, it is wonderful to see you! What news do you have from your life in the Aboveground?” Sir Didymus inquired.

“Well,” Sarah said failing to conceal a smile, “I’m engaged.” She beamed, showing splaying her fingers so that the ring was visible for all.

Jareth clutched the crystal in his fist, making the tips of his fingers turn white with pressure. “WHAT?” He roared.

The crystal shattered into several fragments which he dropped to the floor.
When the shouts of “Ludo happy for friend!” and “Congratulations!” had died down and tea had been served, Sarah finally told them how she had come to the Underground. They all listened attentively until the very end.

“So now I have,” She glanced at her watch, “three more hours? That can’t be right.” Jareth, you cheater.

“How can we help, m’lady?” Sir Didymus asked.

Hoggle stood up with a huff, “Yeah. Just tell us what t’do.”

Sarah made sure to speak each word carefully. “You can help by not forgetting me. I have an idea where Jareth may take me, but I’m afraid you all may forget me.”

“Ludo no forget friend!”

“Lady, how dare you think such a thing?”

Sarah made eye contact with Hoggle. He nodded so she knew he understood.

For the remaining three hours, the old gang made small talk about the fairy population, the breeze from The Bog, and each other’s lives. Sarah shared stories about her teaching and told them how Toby was now becoming very talented with his guitar; Sir Didymus shared his heroic tales; and Hoggle complained about the number of rocks that had been appearing in his garden.

And then it was time.

Jareth appeared in a cloud of glitter and smoke. Despite being hunched over in the small hut, his presence filled the room. His eyebrows were furrowed and his glare made Sarah feel cold despite the warm fireplace.

He did not say a word. The Goblin King simply took a long step forward and grabbed onto Sarah’s shirt collar.

Before Hoggle could blink, both his friend and his king were gone.

“Okay guys, here’s the plan.”

The oubliette was dark and dirty and yet, like everything else in the labyrinth, had glitter infused in the walls. The contrast would have made Sarah laugh if she weren’t being held prisoner. She paced three feet to the left and then three feet to the right. It was as far as her chain would allow her to roam. She took in a lungful of air and then released it loudly. She had already kicked stones around, looked for the cleaners, and cursing the Goblin King with very colorful language (she was a high school teacher, after all).
It had been hours since Jareth had locked her up, and she wasn’t angry anymore. Just bored. Mind-numbingly bored. She hoped her friends would find her soon.

Tugging slightly at her chain, Sarah thought back to Jareth’s exact words. Maybe there was some way she would be able to free herself. There had to be…

He and Sarah had appeared above the trap door to the oubliette. He enjoyed watching her try to keep her composure as she fell. He landed gracefully as she, yet again, landed hard on her bottom. *I am going to have a bruise on my ass for a week.*

“Stand over by that wall.” Jareth said sternly. When Sarah did not move fast enough, he flicked his wrist.

To Sarah it felt as if a strong wind was pushing her to the grimy wall. She tried to step forward and resist, but the force was stronger than her.

“Look there.” Sarah looked down at an assortment of chains and shackles attached to the wall and floor. “Those are forever locks. Once they are placed on someone, they cannot be opened unless the person who placed them allows it. And that person,” He motioned towards the shackles, “is me.”

One of them opened like a mouth and began to move towards Sarah. It moved in a winding, snake-like motion, making scraping and rattling sounds. I closed shut with a clack around her ankle. As soon as it did, the push Sarah felt released her. Unbalanced by the counter pressure, she began to fall. Jareth instinctively caught her.

For a brief moment she saw that his eyes had softened and his eyebrows had knitted. Had he been worried about her?

Just as soon as he caught her, he dropped her as if she burned him. She fell onto her hands and knees hard, but not as hard as she would have if he hadn’t held her for that second.

The Goblin King brushed his hands off on his jacket, regaining his composure.

“Sarah, Sarah, Sarah,” Jareth tsked. “Look at you now. The champion of the labyrinth finally belongs to me.”

Where he had been tense and commanding before, he was now triumphant, even gleeful. He came close to her and knelt down so that their noses almost touched. Once again, he held his riding crop under her chin so that she had to meet his eyes.

“I have waited a long time for this.”

“So you understand?” Hoggle looked at Sir Didymus and Ludo.

Ludo nodded his head. “No.”

Sir Didymus jumped up, brandishing his spear, “Yes! We must save the fair Lady Sarah in a heroic act of treason!”
“Yeah yeah,” Hoggle hissed quietly, “but keep your voice down. She will be in one of the oubliettes…at least I’s think that’s what she was tellin’ us. The labyrinth is full of ‘em. We’ll cover more ground if we split up.”

“An excellent strategy, Sir Hoggle!”

“Shh!” Ludo put a harry claw to his mouth.

“Ah, yes,” Sir Didymus now whispered, “let’s be off, then.”

All goblins in the castle were celebrating. Pints of beer were passed, stolen, and spilled. Shouts were heard down every hallway. Even a very drunk and very large goblin was singing badly, “You remind me of the babe!”

Their king was happy, and when he was happy they received more food, beer, and could move freely without the fear of his wrath.

Jareth flew open the doors to the throne room, finishing a lyric that fat goblin had started, “I saw my baby cry as hard as babe could cry! What could I do?”

Goblins laughed and cackled as their king danced and twirled around. He was in a pale purple outfit with white leggings and a long white cape that almost dusted the floor as he moved. He was holding a silver cane topped with a crystal. Every so often he would toss it from his left to right hand then back again.

A small wrinkly goblin was so at easy that he leapt onto the throne. “So, sir, are you going to turn her into a goblin?”

Everything stopped.

The music, the singing, and the drinking.

Jareth spun on his heal, causing his cape to swirl around him dramatically. He glared at the goblin for a minute before picking him up by his leather vest. Everyone watched.

And then their king threw his head back and laughed a hearty laugh. It was a long and full laugh, one they hadn’t heard from him since that girl had defeated him. The goblin in his hands began to giggle, and soon every goblin was laughing too.

He raised his head again tapping the goblin with his cane in a good-natured way. “No, my little subject. No. I have grander plans for that one.”

“Helllooo? Hellooo? Are ya down there m’dear?” A elderly female voice broke the silence on the dungeon.

Sarah jerked awake. She was unsure of when (or how) she had nodded off.

“Helloo…oh!”
Sarah was a sight to see. Her hair was disheveled, her clothing was covered in dirt and dust, and the small trail of drool that had formed while she slept had also collected some dust. Yet, when she saw the old, wrinkled goblin she smiled.

“Well…there you are m’dear. Would you like your din-din?” She held a covered tray towards the prisoner.

“Why yes, thank you.” Sarah took the tray eagerly. She took the lid off and offered it back to the goblin. A wave of smells hit her nose at once and she realized how hungry she was. Before her was a full meal: roasted chicken, herb potatoes, a small salad with bright pink berries in it, and something that looked like a pastry crossed with a lollipop. The goblin took the tray and left a goblet of something red on the ground next to Sarah.

With a mouth full of food she thanked the goblin again. “Oh, and what’s your name?”

“Helennetria, m’dear, but everyone just says Helen, so you can too. Helen.”

“Helen, it is a pleasure to meet you.” Sarah carefully wiped her hand on the napkin that had been provided and then offered it to her new friend. They shook hands, both smiling.

“I know you have already been so kind, Helen, but do you think I could have a book to read? I am just so bored down here.”

“Oh, of course, of course, m’dear. King Jareth has said to give you whatever you desire.”

Sarah, who had been listening while chewing on a potato, stopped eating. “He did?”

“Oh yes. Is there anything else I can bring you?”

Sarah thought for a second. “Perhaps a pillow and blanket? I am not comfortable on the ground.”

“Yes! I’ll be right back with those. I’ll take your tray and cup when I return.” Helen had a waddle to her walk, but she moved at a surprising pace. At her last word, she was already on her way through the tunnel to an unseen ladder.

She left Sarah alone again, wondering about her captor and his odd behavior.
Jareth had not visited Sarah since he had locked her away three days ago. He would tell himself he was going to, even start walking towards it, but always found some excuse to avoid the task. That’s not to say he didn’t watch her. In fact, he was rarely away from his crystal.

He watched as she tried to puzzle out why she was allowed to have comforts. And then watched as she very politely become bolder in her requests. She went from simple comforts (books, a lamp, blankets, and food) to things slightly more luxurious (a cot, a small mirror, a box, something to write with/on, a visit from her friends). Jareth had forbidden the last one, but any material thing she wanted was hers. He watched as she attempted to have Helen stay longer. She would ask the goblin about life at the castle, whether she was married, if she had children—Jareth was disappointed that she never asked about him. Helen was under orders to stay no longer than necessary and so she often left Sarah staring down the tunnel after her.

She was lonely; this was good.

Today, though, today he would pay a visit to her and cure her loneliness. He was prepping himself for the day. His mirror framed with ivory and iron was being held by a small goblin who was shaking under the weight.

“Hold it still now; I’m almost finished.” He said in a calm but commanding voice. He pulled up his high collar then tipped his chin back with a sneer. Everything was in place. A king must always look like a king.

The mirror fell to the ground with a clatter and a muffled squeak could be heard from under it. Jareth turned to leave, motioning to several observing goblins. Instead of immediately helping their smashed friend, they pointed and cackled before eventually heaving the thing off of him.

Sarah had been reading on her cot when she heard his decent through the trapdoor followed by his footsteps. She had only seen and heard Helen for the last few days (and three times a day), and those were not her shuffling footsteps.

She quickly stood up and straightened her skirt. Look confident. Look unbroken. “Hello, Jareth. Is life in the castle so boring that you had to come into a hole.”

Jareth stopped walking so that he was still in the dark. He saw Sarah standing tall. For a second, he was proud of her. His Sarah; his strong-willed and caring Sarah.

“Sarah, Sarah.” He emerged from the shadows slowly, letting his face and form press into the lantern light. “You have been busy.”

Sarah looked around at the items she had collected; she hadn’t kept it very tidy. Her cot was unmade, her book lay open next to it, and the small basin of water she had used to clean her face was still full and cloudy. Several paper airplanes had been scattered around the tunnels to complete the look of chaos. Still, she stood tall.

“I’ve made it homey.”
“Indeed you have. With my generosity of course.”

“Oh yes, the generosity you’ve shown by locking me down here.”

A vein in Jareth’s forehead protruded as he said. “Well, we can’t have the champion of the Labyrinth running out in the open, can we?”

The champion sat crossed-legged on the ground, looking up at Jareth as if he were telling her a bedtime story.

“And why is that?” She asked as innocently as she could muster.

“Don’t play me, girl.” He snarled.

They were both silent for a while. Sarah shifted on the hard ground, regretting her choice of mockery. Jareth internally scolded himself. This was not how his had planned for this visit to go.

In a much kinder tone he asked, “Are you comfortable?”

At the exact same time, Sarah asked, “Shouldn’t Helen be here soon?”

Sarah gave a small laugh and the corner of Jareth’s lips turned upward. This was followed by another heavy silence while the other waited for a response.

The Goblin King went first. “No. She, and all my subjects, have been instructed to stay out of the oubliette when I am here.”

Sarah became serious. “Will you ever let me go?”

“That is yet to be seen.” Jareth responded. He quickly shut his mouth.

She pretended that this information was not new to her. She patted the ground next to her. He glanced at the dirty ground but made as if to sit. Sarah was surprised when he sat next to her, but noticed that he was floating an inch off the ground. What a pansy.

“To answer your earlier question,” Sarah said to quickly fill a silent moment, “I am as comfortable as I can be in this hole.”

“I am glad to hear it. I have been nothing if not accommodating.”

Sarah glanced at her cot. “Do Goblin Kings need sleep like humans do?”

“Why Sarah,” he smiled, “are you asking me to nap with you?”

The woman blushed all the way to her shoulders. “No no no! I was just curious.”

He threw his head back in a hearty laugh. “Yes, yes we do. Not as much as humans. A few hours a night is plenty.”

They talked like that for an hour, Sarah sitting on the ground and Jareth reclining on air. Each one giving a question, the other answering and volleying back another. The conversation was in no way deep, but it did have a flow to it. Sarah found herself enjoying the company, much to her own surprise. That is, until Jareth saw something that enraged him.

The odd couple had been discussing the different foods in the Aboveground and the Underground when the Goblin King caught sight of a Sarah’s hand. He lunged at her, grabbing it. When she tried
to pull away, he stood up, dragging her into a standing position as well.

“Sarah, Sarah,” he said slowly and purposefully, “… what. have. we. here?” He twisted her hand towards so that she was staring at the ring.

She had pleasantly describing the wonders of bacon just a second ago. Her bravado slipped for a second. “N-nothing.”

“Nothing? NOTHING?”

In her head she could help but finish, tra la la? She smiled at her mental mockery.

“And now you defy me by smiling?!” He tossed her hand away from him. “How dare you? I offered you everything, anything you wished! And you chose the brat over me? Now. Now you choose…” He stopped, placing his hand over his eyes. Using his free hand, he dropped a crystal to the ground, disappearing in the rising smoke.

Sarah stared at the space where Jareth had just been. She rubbed her hand, now red from the manhandling. Then she allowed a smile to play across her face. She had almost all the information she needed.

Sir Didymus had been the one to find the trapdoor. He was about to leap (heroically, of course) through it, when he saw a small piece of paper in the shape of an airplane stuck to the bottom of the lid. Pulling it open, he gasped and rushed to find his companions.

“Sirs Ludo and Hoggle! I have news from Lady Sarah!” He shouted. He was running frantically through the labyrinth, shouting as loudly as his small lungs would allow.

A hand violently covered Sir Didymus’ mouth. He flailed and bit his attacker.

“You stupid little squirrel!” Hoggle backed away from his friend, shaking his wounded hand. “Why’d you go and do that?”

“My deepest apologies, Sir Hoggle.” Didymus gave a low bow. “I did not know it was you.”

“Had to do somethin’, didn’t I? You running around here, shoutin’ our names. You’s gonna get us all in trouble with King Jareth.” Hoggle scolded him.

“Again, my apologies.” He held the now crumpled paper in front of Hoggle’s nose. “But look! I have a note from Lady Sarah.”

“What’s it say? I can’t read.”

Sir Didymus cleared his throat and held the paper in front of him, “It says: I have a plan. Find me at midnight a day from now.”

Hoggle nodded. “If that’s what she says, that’s what we do.”
Jareth was furious… and embarrassed, which made him more furious. He had hurt Sarah. He had physically hurt her. He would have never done that before. Even when she ran the labyrinth, she was never in any real danger with him watching over her. He had proudly viewed himself as her loving protector “through dangers untold.” But today he had turned into the danger.

Clenching his teeth, the Goblin King marched into the throne room. He knew that this wasn’t like him. He knew he was taking after his...

“Father.” Jareth said slowly. He gave a small bow to the fey sitting straight-backed in his throne.

“My son.” He responded without warmth. “Come, hug me.”

As he stood up, his features were revealed. The family resemblance was strong, but it was as if someone had stretched out Jareth. His father was taller, thinner, and more angled. Instead of a poofed up styled hair, he pulled his straw-colored locks into a single low ponytail. His leggings, cloak, and jacket were of a similar cut to his son’s but all black and grey- no glitter in sight. Well, almost none. With a flick, he brushed an offending piece off of his arm where he had rested it against the throne. His face looked permanently contorted into an expression of both disgust and superiority- mouth flat and sharp, nose upturned and slightly crinkled.

Their hug was quick and formal. Jareth immediately pulled back.

“What brings you to the Goblin Kingdom, Father?” He asked in a low voice.

“As much as I despise rumors…and goblins… I come here because of both. A rumor has been flying around through the mouths of your subjects that a woman was wished into the labyrinth. Is this true?”

Jareth glared at a nearby goblin who scurried out from under his gaze. “Yes, it is.”

His father’s expression remained the same. “Is it safe to assume she has been turned into a goblin?”

“Yes, it is.”

Their eyes locked.

“No more incidents like before?”

“No.”

“Well then,” he brought his hands together, “you should have no trouble introducing me to the newest addition to your kingdom.”

Jareth’s eyes took quick inventory of the room. “Of course not. Holly, come here.”

Helen tottered over to the two kings. If she had any fear of them, she didn’t show it. Lazy eyes looked up. “Yeah?”

“Were you not a human just last week?”

Not grasping the double negative, as most goblins wouldn’t, she responded with a deep nod, “of course, of course. Nothing like the human…”
Jareth cut her off, “You see? There is nothing of interest here.”

His father looked down his nose at the old goblin. He made a humming noise through his nose. “Fine.”

Jareth gave an internal sigh of relief. Thank the stars that Father cannot tell the difference between two goblins.

“Take care of your kingdom, Jareth.” He said, brushing more glitter off of his coat. “It’s a mess.”

With that he disappeared.

Jareth nearly collapsed into the throne. He brought a trembling hand over his face and rubbed his temples. One deep breath, release, two deep breaths, release. A cold sweat had been collecting at the back of his neck and it now began to evaporate. A chill ran through him, causing a short wave of nausea. He’s gone now. He’s gone and Sarah’s safe.

“Sarah!” He shouted out loud. He stood as if to descend to the oubliette but thought better of it. His father may be watching. I’ll wait until tonight.

“Helen!” He said, getting the name right by pure accident, “Isn’t it about time you check on our prisoner?”

Jareth was commanding again. He stood tall and proud.

“Yep. Yes, sir.”

“So…,” he waited.

Helen was nodding and smiling.

“So?” He repeated. “Shouldn’t you be going there?”

“Oh yes, of course of course!” Helen began to shuffle towards the kitchen to grab Sarah’s meal.

Jareth sighed deeply. These goblins would be the death of him.

Sarah had been having a good day. She sang a bit as she tidied up her area. Every few beats she would shake her leg to rattle the chain. “Don’t have no problems” shake, shake, “ain’t got no suitcase.” shake, shake.

My students would be shocked at that horrible grammar I’m using. She laughed to herself.

She wasn’t angry with Jareth. He was spoiled, jealous, and commanding, but she knew all of that before. She was surprised at the intensity of his outburst, but she had learned that he would never actually hurt her. All threats those years ago had been empty. He hadn’t even put Hoggle in the bog. He was a softy…an angry softy with too much power. That didn’t give her any right to keep her here, though.

He seemed more shocked with himself. She thought, recalling his widened eyes before he had left. Maybe he thinks he hurt my hand.
But what really had put Sarah in this cheerful mood was the missing paper airplane that had been wedged in the trapdoor. She was beyond satisfied with herself and her planning capabilities.

Helen and come to visit hours ago, bring and wonderful dish of fruit salad and honeyed bread. The sugars still lingered in her mouth, and she sucked at her cheek as she fluffed the last pillow.

As if on cue, the trapdoor creaked quietly. Sarah stood waiting for what she hoped to be her friends.

“Ow! Ya big oaf! You stepped on my toe!”

“Hoggle? Ludo?”

“And don’t forget me, fair lady.”

“Of course, Sir Didymus! How could I dare?”

The 13 hour clock ticked impatiently and Jareth watched it with eager eyes. He was slouched over on his bed, resting his chin in his long hands.

“Oh fuck it; it’s late enough.” He stood and checked in the mirror. Perfect, as usual.

Time to check on my love.

“Won’t that trap you both?” Sir Didymus inquired.

“Yes, but I’ve got it from there.”

Ludo nodded, trusting his friend.

“And remember, guys, once it’s done you all need to run. Jareth doesn’t need to know you were involved, okay?”

A click could be heard from the trapdoor. Sarah frantically motioned at her friends and they scurried to their hiding places: Hoggle behind the stacked pillows, Sir Didymus behind a pile of books, and Ludo (poor Ludo) made himself as small as he could behind a boulder. Seeing her friends hidden, Sarah slipped the engagement ring from her finger and placed it in her pocket. No need to anger him again.

“Sarah, Sarah.” Jareth’s lilting voice echoed beautifully down the passageway. He stood in front of her, giving a smile that spoke to his dominance.

Guess all guilt is gone, thought Sarah.

“Dear Sarah, I want to see how you are doing tonight. Are you satisfied with…”

“Jareth,” Sarah cut him off. “I…” I can do this, I can do this.
The Goblin King looked curiously at her. *Is she... blushing?* He gave a full smile, letting the candle light gleam on his crooked teeth.

“I realized you are right. I ignored your gifts all those years ago. I rejected your favors and you. I don’t want to make that mistake again.” She took a step towards him, never breaking away from his mismatched eyes. “Can I say sorry now?”

He stepped closer to her as well. Everything he had hoped for was happening. She reached a hand out and they both took the final step so that their feet touched. Sarah leaned forward and stood on her toes, Jareth bent down as she carefully put a hand behind his head, leading his face to hers.

“Can we...mmmm”

Sarah could not finish her speech because Jareth was already kissing her. He wrapped his arms snuggly around her shoulders and his eager, hungry mouth found hers. He pushed, nibbled, and sucked at her lips and tongue, exploring her in the way he had wanted to for years. He let their foreheads touch for a second, letting them both gasp for breath before diving back in. She was surprised by how much she participated in the kiss; how much she enjoyed it. She took a second to revel in how passionate a lover he could be.

But the second was gone. She pulled back and yelled, “NOW!”

At once Ludo began to call out. The rock walls of the oubliette began to crumble above the couple’s heads.

Jareth pulled away, looking wide-eyed and sadly at the woman he loved. Sarah felt a twinge of guilt at his almost innocent face. He barely had time to register the betrayal before a large rock hit the back of his head, knock him unconscious.

She managed to catch him as he sprawled forward. Sir Didymus and Hoggle scrambled from their hiding spaces and brought a heavy manacle over to her. Hoggle was about to close it around his king’s ankle.

“Wait! I have to do it.” Sarah stopped him. She awkwardly dragged Jareth to the cot, laying him down as gently as she could. Hoggle handed her the manacle and she placed it on his booted ankle with a satisfying click.
Warning: This chapter touches on torture and PTSD. Nothing too descriptive, but if that bothers you I would not continue.

When she was little, Sarah’s mother had bought her a hamster. Looking back, she supposed it was an apology for rarely visiting, but at the time it was an exciting gift. She stared at it for hours, watching it nibble on wood chips and run on its wire-frame wheel.

As far as hamsters go, it was relatively friendly. It did not enjoy being held, but would tolerate it without biting. Sarah would often bring a toy for it or attach plastic tubes to the cage. She never wanted it to be bored in there. She named him Pepper.

One day Sarah’s father decided that the family should go on vacation. They were gone for two weeks. A neighbor agreed to feed Pepper once a day, but she was an elderly lady who did not like rodents. She would drop the food in or fill up his water bottle and then leave.

When Sarah returned, Pepper was no longer a friendly hamster. He had chewed a hole in the side of the cage and had almost made his way out. He pressed himself so forcefully into that hole that a piece of his ear had torn off.

When Sarah tried to pick him up he would bite at her fingers, and when she would place a toy in the cage or attach the tubing, he would stare at it fearfully and angrily.

The poor thing lived the rest of its short life in this manner. Sarah’s father suggested giving it away. Her stepmother suggested putting a little rat poisoning in his food. Sarah tried her best to love it, but being neglected and trapped for so long had made Pepper into a fierce animal.

Seeing the Goblin King chained to a tether made Sarah think of Pepper.

As Sarah watched the steady up and down of Jareth’s chest, her pride morphed into worry. She knew he would be awake soon, and she knew he would be unhappy. The question was, on a range from miffed to furious, how unhappy would he be? Sure, he couldn’t take off the cuff, but that didn’t mean he couldn’t use his magic to make her miserable.

She looked at where each of their chains attached to the wall. Her’s was about a foot to the left of his. Staying along the stone wall, she walked as far as her chain would allow. At least this way, he couldn’t grab her physically. Still, that magic…

A rustling of the sheets let her know he was coming to. Jareth groaned, bringing a hand to the back of his head. Sarah immediately regretted not checking it for bleeding. *He’s a fey, right? Do they get concussions?*

He sat up slowly, opening his left eye and then his right. His shimmery eyebrows knitted together as he took in his surroundings. “What the…?”

Sarah cringed, waiting for the anger.

But it didn’t come. His reaction was something she could not have predicted.

His eyes widened cartoonish wide, and Jareth scrambled to his feet to his feet. “No no no nonono!” His voice held no anger, only a panic. “Nonono!”
He ran away from the wall, but the chain pulled his foot out from under him, causing him to fall on his stomach. He tuned and stared at the shackle around his ankle, and began to scream.

Sarah had never heard such a pitiful scream, full of fear and panic. Jareth began to tremble, clutching at the cuffed ankle.

“I’m sorry, Father! I’m sorry! I didn’t mean to hide her! I’m sorry! Don’t do this to me again!” Jareth clawed at the shackle with spastic fingers.

Sarah very cautiously walked towards him, moving slowly and quietly. Her shoes against the dirt and stone were drowned out by Jareth’s pleas to his non-present father. He didn’t notice she was there.

“Jareth,” she said in a soft voice. “Jareth, you are going to hurt yourself.” She stepped closer. “Jareth, I want you to come back to the cot.”

Whether it was due to her coaxing or not, he began to crawl to the cot. When he had made it to the edge, Sarah ventured to sit next to him.

“It’s okay.” She didn’t know what else to say. “It’s going to be okay.”

Jareth allowed her presence (or possibly was unaware of it) as he lowered himself, face down, on the cot. His screams had turned into sobs that shook his shoulders, made his hair sway and his high collar flop in an unkingly way. His arm was wrapped over his head, blocking his face, but Sarah could see the edge of his cheek and his ear. The usually pale skin was blotchy red.

The whole scene reminded Sarah of when Toby would wake up with nightmares as an infant. Perhaps that is why she walked on her knees over to him and began to rub his back in small circles.

“Shhh. It’s okay. Shhhhhhh.” She repeated, just as she had done to calm Toby. “Shhh. It’s okay, I’m here.”

His sobs began to quiet. His breath began to even. It wasn’t until he began to snore softly that Sarah realized he was asleep. She continued to rub his back, making sure his face was turned so that he could breath. Finally her hand paused and then slowly lifted from his back.

Sarah sighed with relief, allowing her own body to relax. There was so much more to Jareth than she knew starting with some serious daddy issues. She had always assumed he had been spoiled rotten, but had never given much thought to any upbringing beyond that.

As she sat down her legs buckled underneath her. Blinking a few times, she realized how tired she was. What time is it? At least 1am in the Aboveground. I’ll sleep and then figure out what to do in the morning.

She looked around for a pillow and a shimmer caught her eye. Bending down to investigate she found that one of Jareth’s crystal orbs must have rolled out from his pocket. Pocket? Where?

Her hand snatched it before she could stop herself. She remembered his words from that night years ago. “It’s a crystal. Nothing more. But if you turn it this way and look into it, it will show you your dreams. But this is not a gift for an ordinary girl who takes care of a screaming baby.”

Well, she had proved that she was no ordinary girl, right? Would its magic even listen to her? She looked into the empty crystal, doubting her power. It couldn’t hurt to try, though.

“Okay,” she whispered, glancing at slender figure sleeping on her cot, “show me what happened to
Just as she was thinking that she should have been more specific, the oubliette began to fade around her.

The soft snores of Jareth gave way to a voice both familiar and foreign to Sarah.

“You have no power over me!” a young girl said in sudden realization. Older Sarah gasped at Younger Sarah. She was claiming her victory and her brother all over again.

The first time, Sarah had not paid much attention to Jareth’s expression. This time she focused on him, noting how his mouth drew at the corners and his eyes became sad. Not only that, but his entire body seemed to reflect defeat, hanging limply from itself until bones fused and robes billowed into an owl.

Sarah thought that they would appear in her childhood home, but instead she followed the owl back to the castle. Once at the steps of the castle, the owls stretched back into a man who stepped purposefully up the steps.

With each loud thwap on the stone, Sarah cringed. She knew she was the reason for his anger. He threw open the castle doors, allowing the thick wood to bang against the walls. Goblins and chickens moved away from his path. Eyes forward, he walked through a maze of corridors and archways, eventually leading up a set of winding stairs.

This must be a tower, Sarah thought as she followed his rapid ascent.

He barely paused when he reached a tall door, flinging it open with a wave of his hand and slamming it closed behind him with the same motion. Sarah found herself on the outside of it.

If this is a memory, can I open the door?

Her question was answered as she reached her hand to do so. Her hand passed right through the ornate brass handle.

Oh, she shrugged, that works, and walked right through it.

She was greeted by a pathetic sight. The Goblin King was not in a rage. He was not breaking things or yelling. The spoiled aggression Sarah had grown used to was absent. In its place sat a defeated man. She found him seated at the end of a large, fur-covered bed. His head was bent, shrouded in his hair, and held in his splayed hands. He didn’t weep, but his breaths were long and carried the hint of a sigh.

Sarah almost reached out to stroke his hair. She had caused him this pain? She honestly thought that he had only wished to win, to conquer. She was a prize, not the goal. Had he been serious all those years ago?

The words played in her head, “Just fear me, love me, do as I say, and I will be your slave.” She had assumed it was a desperate attempt to win at the end. Although, even now, she was unsure how “do as I say” fit in with “I will be your slave.” Does he even understand how love works?

Her thoughts were interrupted by a cloud of smoke (sans glitter) and the appearance of another fey. Sarah did not have to guess who this person was. They look so much alike!

If she had any doubts, they were quelled immediately.
"Father," Jareth said, rising to his feet.

"Son," his father responded coldly. "I have heard some disturbing news."

"The city has been ransacked, it’s true." Jareth formally, all the confidence and swagger he showed to Sarah had left his voice. "But the goblins are repairing as we speak."

His father wrinkled his nose at the word ‘goblin.’

"That is not what I meant." He said his voice grew louder. "Am I to understand that someone… a human someone, ran your labyrinth and defeated it?"

Jareth’s jaw clenched, but he remained silent.

The older fey stuck out his chin. "So it is true. That is not the most disturbing rumor. I have also been informed that you offered her your services, your…" he paused, unwilling to speak the word, "your love, if she would stay."

At this, Jareth finally allowed his emotions to show. "I offered her everything! Everything! I gave her fruit of the fey and she still rejected me! For what? A child? A crying, worthless…"

"Enough!"

Jareth’s mouth snapped shut. His father leaned forward slightly, holding a hand out in emphasis.

"This is an embarrassment! It’s bad enough that you were defeated, but for you to stoop so low is beyond pathetic. This is not the son I raised. This is your mother’s doing." He huffed in an undignified manner and then regained his composure. "Of course, you know what must be done."

"It’s over, father. She won; there is nothing to be done."

"She ate your fruit, did she not? You have a little time left. Turn it to poison within her stomach. Our shame needn’t flaunt itself in the Aboveground."

Sarah was shocked. He said it as if he were suggesting that Jareth swat at a fly.

Jareth’s eyes widened. "No!"

"No?"

"This girl is strong, and one day I will break her, make her my devoted slave, but what you suggest…" he paused and then his voice grew stronger with conviction, "is against the rules of the labyrinth. She won and she has made her choice."

If the older fey noticed his son’s confidence, he did not react to it. "We are kings; rules do not apply to us."

"I will not kill her." Jareth crossed his arms, making him look like a defiant child.

"Fine." Jareth’s father brought out a clouded crystal and threw it into the air.

Sarah watched it rise and fall, only realizing when it fell to the uncarpeted ground that they were no longer in Jareth’s bedroom, but in a dungeon. It was darker than the oubliette where Sarah was placed, and a liquid dripped from a crack on the ceiling into a molding puddle on the floor.

The older fey had a fire in his eyes as he beckoned with two fingers. Jareth, who was standing
several feet away began to walk forward, thinking the motion was for him. He was stopped as to shackles, open like hungry mouth grabbed his left wrist and ankle.

Sarah was able to catch and glance at them before they found their target. Lining the inside were sharp metal spikes. She shuddered as the Goblin King let out a pained shriek.

“Father! No! Ahhh!” He yelled again as the chains, held up by magic before, were dropped by gravity. A stream of blood began to flow down his arms, staining his white sleeve. A smaller pool of blood was collecting by his foot. Sarah realized that most of it must be caught in his boot.

“You can’t do this to me,” his usually proud face was twisted into one of pain. He sucked on his teeth to control his trembling.

“Jareth,” his father tutted, “You need to accept the consequences of your actions.”

Jareth carefully fell to his knees, wincing as he did so. His lean figure was bent is strained way. Sarah hated to see him dirty and bloody. His defeat held no satisfaction for her.

His father threw another clouded crystal in the air and disappeared.

With that Sarah was back in the oubliette with a goblin king sleeping nearby.

What the fuck? Who parents like that?

Throwing caution to the wind, she picked up Jareth’s limp hand. Carefully, she pulled back on the glove so that his wrist was exposed. What she saw made her chest hurt. A line of evenly spaced scars circled his wrist. They were still swollen and angry. She gently rolled the soft leather back into place. So it’s really true. She had no doubt that if she were to remove his boot a set of similar marks would be found around his ankle.

Her view of Jareth changed dramatically, just as she realized she would have to cushion the blow of her actions. She thought for a moment of releasing him, but quickly dismissed it. Regardless of what happened to him, I still need to have him free me. There is no excuse for locking me up like this. Jareth may think he loves me, but he has no clue how to show it.

No longer tired, she sat next to the sleeping form of the Goblin King. I’ll just have to distract him until he realizes where he is.

Jareth awoke slowly. Before opening his eyes, he was aware that he was not on his comfortable bed. Thinking hard, he recalled the events that lead him here.

Sarah came at me (good kisser), some rocks fell, oh must have passed out, there was that horrible dream…

His eye lids flew open only to be greeted by a welcome sight. Sarah was leaning over him on her hands and knees, the swell of her breasts visible where her blouse was pulled by gravity.

“Such a pity.” he said, grinning wickedly, “You shouldn’t hide your magnificent body behind that drab fabric.”

Sarah grabbed her shirt close to her chest and immediately sat back on her feet. “You’re a pig!” And to think I almost let him go.
“You should know that I…” But he was already standing up and stretching. The clink of the chain alerted him that something wasn’t right.

If Sarah hadn’t been looking for it, she may not have noticed the hitch in his breath or the passing fear in his eyes. He recovered quickly though. Knowing where he was must have made the difference. Sarah silently congratulated herself.

“Ever the clever girl, aren’t you?” He laughed.

Sarah stood up too. She squared her shoulders and met his gaze. “Well, Goblin King, it seems you did not win this one. Now if you would let me go…”

At this Jareth was silent, but only for a moment. His grin grew into a smile and he began to chortle. “Oh Sarah, it is good to have you around again.” He laughed a moment longer and then looked at her expectantly. “Well,” he waited for her to move. When she didn’t oblige he said, almost annoyed, “release me.”

The way he said it made it sound as if it were the obvious course of action. *Oh lord,* Sarah thought, *this is going to be miserable.*
Chapter 5

Hour 1

Sarah avoided looking at Jareth as he paced back and forth as far as his chain would allow. She could not look at his expression, for anytime his chain would catch on a rock, the pressure on the cuff would cause Jareth to flinch. *Probably not from pain,* she thought, *just bad memories.* She didn’t know which one was worse.

It was a reminder that the dynamic has shifted. Only Sarah was aware of it, but Jareth could tell something was different. Up until now, Sarah had the high ground of moral superiority. Of course she was in the right. She had been wished away, taken prisoner, and had managed to keep her wits about her.

But now…

Now Jareth had technically saved her life at great cost to him. All witty retorts to his demands fell flat on her tongue. Perhaps logic was the best plan.

“Goblin King,” she said as politely as she could. He stopped his pacing and looked at her curiously, “it’s a simple answer, really. If you just let me go, I’ll let you go. We’re the only two who can unlock these things. You told your subjects not to bother us while you were here. That means no more food.”

“Oh, but Sarah, I finally have you. I can’t just let you go.” He waved his hand towards the trap door. “Besides, you’ll become hungry long before I do.”

With that, he held a crystal in front of him, twirling it between his fingers. Sarah watched as it became a ripe, fuzzy peach. He made sure to look directly in her eyes as he took a slow and sloppy bite.

She rewarded him with an exaggerated eye roll. “Pig.” She said for the second time that day.

Hour 5

“Fuck you, you baby-stealing bigot! Fuck your labyrinth! Fuck this fucking oubliette!”

“Well, that’s just the friend-making, mild-mannered Sarah I knew!”

“Mild mannered?! I recall yelling at you quite a bit!”

Sarah was red in the face and Jareth’s hair was a mess from how dramatically he was shaking his head. Both were standing face to face yelling at top volume.

“Oh, big bad Sarah now? You think I’m at your beck and call? Get out of my realm!”

“Then let me go!”

“Never!”

Hour 6

Both the Goblin King and the woman were slumped in undignified positions. Sarah was sprawled,
belly first, on the ground with her head nestled in her arms. Jareth was reclined in the air propped his chin up with his hands. Both were silent save for the occasional sigh or yawn.

Sarah was the first to break the silence.

“Does it feel cooler in here to you?”

“Maybe it does now that your screeching has ceased.”

Sarah clenched her hands, but let the comment slide. She had no desire to restart the battle from earlier.

“Jareth?” She said calmly.

He looked directly at her, sitting up.

“You’ve never told me about your family.”

He looked away. “Why would you ask such a thing, dear Sarah?”

“Well, everyone else I’ve seen here is a goblin or… something else. I just wondered…”

Jareth’s voice took the tone of a history teacher. “I see. I came from a line of royal fey. My father, my father’s father, and so on have all ruled kingdoms in the Underground. As the next in line, I rule the Goblin Kingdom until my father dies and I inherit the Fairy Kingdom.”

Sarah chewed her lip for a second, wondering how far she could push him.

“What about your mother?”

“I believe it’s my turn.” A smile twitched at the corners of the Goblin King’s mouth.

“Huh?”

“Eloquent as always, Sarah.”

“What do you mean it’s your turn?”

“Well, as I understand it.” Jareth stood up, and stepped forward. “Human small talk is contrived of a back and forth. You asked me a question; I answered. It is now my turn.” He made to take another step, but the chain rattled and he stopped. Yet again, Sarah may have missed the flinch if she hadn’t been looking for it.

“Oh, we’re playing fair now?” No, don’t bait him! Sarah sucked in her breath and quickly added. “Fine, go ahead.”

“How is Toby?”

Sarah smiled. I knew he grew fond of the little guy.

“He’s doing well. He is really into music now. Such a clever kid; he taught himself guitar….

Hour 10

The odd couple had no clue they had been talking for almost two hours. They had discussed
everything except themselves (and, of course Jareth’s father). Jareth had forgotten his starvation
tactic and conjured a loaf of bread and wine for Sarah. She munched on it, taking small sips of the
wine. *Must not lose any control,* she thought. But the full belly and alcohol was making her yawn
and blink. Listening to Jareth’s deep voice tell her the way each brick in the labyrinth walls had a
personality was so soothing that she actually nodded off.

Jareth didn’t notice until she rolled onto her side. He looked down at her and sighed.

“Asleep on the ground, Sarah?” He said quietly. He waved is hand and she floated, still sleeping, to
the bed. “Have more class.”

*Should I…yes, I should.*

He then nudged her over to one side and curled around her. He fell asleep easily with her scent
surrounding him.

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**Hour 19**

Sarah was the first to awaken. She was so calm and comfortable, that she rustled the covers with her
feet before opening her eyes. As she did so she felt two things: her chain move, and another foot tap
against hers. Her eyes sprang open and she sat up so quickly it made her dizzy.

“You slept next to me?!”

The Goblin King’s eyes opened slowly. He allowed them to adjust before focusing on Sarah. With
no hint of grogginess in his voice he responded, “Did you expect me to sleep on the ground?” One
eyebrow was cocked, eagerly awaiting her response. If this was the morning’s game, he was finally
going to win something.

“I expected to you at least ask.”

“Should I have asked before I moved you to the bed? You would have awoken with a mighty pain.”

“I….yes.” She couldn’t meet his gaze, though.

Jareth tilted his head back and smiled. *Victory.*

Sarah sighed, *I don’t have time for this.* She began combing her hair through her fingers. *Wait, I have
all the time in the world.* She sighed again.

“You’re very dramatic this morning.”

“Well, you…”

Sarah paused and tilted her head. “Do you hear that?... Helen?”

Good old Helen was shuffling down the tunnel at a rapid pace. Her wizened face, usually smiling,
was folded into a look of concern.

“You there!” Jareth once again became the Goblin king. “How dare you defy my orders? I told you
explicitly…”

“Of course, of course your highness. You told me not to disturb you when you were with Sarah unless your father arrived.”

Jareth paled but remained composed. “And has that happened?”

“Has what happened?”

“Has my father arrived, you fool?!” He hissed.

Sarah watched the exchange as her chest tightened. She would normally have jumped to Helen’s defense, but she understood why Jareth would snap at the goblin, given the situation.

Helen, unflappable as always, nodded slowly. “Yes, yes, he’s in your castle looking for you now.”

“Well go!” Jareth used his whole arm to point to the trap door. “Stall him! Tell him I’m visiting the fey to the west.”

Helen nodded. “Of course.” She turned to Sarah and her face crinkled into a smile. “How are you dear?”

“GO!” Jareth’s voice echoed through the oubliette.

Helen once again nodded and shuffled back in the direction she had come from. Sarah watched her go, but did not really register what she was seeing. Her mind raced through the possibilities. *Should I let Jareth go to take care of it? Will he let me go if I do that? Probably not. Will his father believe that he is away? Maybe it will sort itself out. Yes, maybe he will go away and I can finally convince him to let me go. Maybe…*

Her thoughts were interrupted by a click followed by a touch on her ankle. She looked down to see Jareth kneeling by her feet, her opened shackle in his hands.

“You must go.” Was all he said. There was no mischief in his eyes this time. In fact, he looked sad and frightened. The expression made him look younger in its uncertainty.

He stood up, his face so close to hers that she could feel his breath. With a wrist flick, he brought his pointer finger to her forehead.

The world around her began to melt away. It started at the corners of her vision, the colors of the oubliette blurred together. The blurriness swirled and ate further into her line of sight until it began to affect Jareth’s face. The last things she saw before darkness took over were the Goblin King’s mismatched eyes.

Sarah woke with a start. It felt like she had been sleeping for hours. The large spot of drool on her desk confirmed this. *Desk?*
Sure enough, she was still in her classroom. The light was fully flowing through her window, the sun already facing the school building. It has to be at least 4! What was I thinking? Mark is going to wonder where I have been.

She unceremoniously tossed her laptop and ungraded assignments into her bag. Looking at her phone, she ran out the door. Sure enough, Mark had left several texts asking when she would be home.

She tapped out a, “sorry, on my way,” before walking out of the building.

Even though she had napped at school, Sarah wondered at her exhaustion as she unlocked her apartment door. I just want to watch Netflix and eat something microwavable, she thought, pushing past the door. She smiled and allowed her body to relax. Looks like someone beat me to it.

Sitting on the couch was her fiancé. His feet were propped on the coffee table and a laptop rested on his legs. The Scrubs theme song emitted from the speakers.

“Hey babe! Ice cream?” He held up a carton and spoon.

“That sounds great.” She allowed herself to fall onto the couch, and was surprised by how comfortable it was. She gripped the arm for a second, wondering if it would go away.

As she was settling in, Mark rested his hand on top of hers. It lingered there for a second when he suddenly turned to her.

“Babe? Where is your ring?”

Without stopping to think she blurted out, “It’s under the pillow on the cot.”

She froze. He froze. While he was trying to figure out if she was confessing to cheating on him, she was starting to pull memories into place. At first it was as if she were collecting pieces of a dream from her childhood, but soon the fragments solidified into actual memories. The times line laid itself before her, ending the Jareth still trapped in the oubliette.

“Fuck!”
Chapter 6

She took a deep breath and said quietly. “I wish the Goblin King would take me away right now.”

She braced herself for the falling sensation or a cloud of glitter and smoke.

And then…nothing. *Not a good sign.*

Without another word, Sarah leapt from the couch and ran up the stairs. Mark sat and knitted his eyebrows for a few seconds, and then pursued her.

“What is going on? Why is your ring under some pillow? Sarah, are you listening?”

She wasn’t listening, her head was in her bedroom closest at this point. Clothing and shoes flew out of the sliding doors as she cursed and muttered. “Where is it, where is it?! ” She moved a heavily winter coat and then shouted, “There!”

Mark entered the room, just as Sarah pulled a large vanity mirror out of the closet. She was bent backwards slightly from the weight. Her eyes were wide and she was breathing heavily.

He put a hand gingerly on her shoulder. “Babe? Please talk to me.” He attempted to help her with the mirror but she pulled it away with a jerk.

Sarah turned and saw the hurt look on her fiancé’s face. Her own panicked expression softened. “I’m sorry, Mark. I don’t have time to explain. You’re going to see something weird in a second, I don’t want you to panic, okay? Everything is going to be okay.”

“What?”

Sarah grasped the edges of the mirror and said clearly, “Hoggle, I need you.”

Mark found himself staring into the mirror as well. He blinked a few times, trying to clear his vision. He blinked again. Was the mirror itself clouding? The fog began to clear as the ugliest little man appeared in the glass. He startled and looked towards Sarah, who was far too calm for the situation.

“Sarah!” The ugly man exclaimed. “You did it! You escaped!”

“Yes, Hoggle, but I need to get back to the Labyrinth.”

“Back? Why you want to go and do a thing like that?”

“Please Hoggle, it’s important.”

Hoggle stared at her pleading eyes. He could never say no to his friend when she did that.

“Ohs, alright. You know, yous just have to step on through.”

Sarah bit her lip as she placed propped the mirror against the wall. “Through the mirror?”

“Yeah, you got it.”

Taking a deep breath, she started with her left foot, dipping it into the glass as if she were testing the water before a swim. To nobody’s surprise but Mark’s, her foot slid through the glass easily.
Ducking and gripping the wooden frame with one hand, down she placed her head and shoulders through as well. Her body followed and the mirror slipped from the wall, clattering on the floor.

Mark grabbed it and propped it back up. “Sarah?!” He poked at the reflective glass. Just a mirror. He looked over every inch for the ugly little man. All he saw was his own face, eyes wide with shock. Turning it over, he brushed his hand along the plywood. No wires, no buttons, no other world.

He sat back and wondered if calling 911 would be the right thing to do. What would he even tell them?

“I’m so sorry, Hoggle!” Sarah had walked through the mirror at a tilt and had lost her balance when she emerged. She rolled off of him and offered her hand.

Hoggle took it with an “umph!” and then dusted himself off.

“Hoggle.” Sarah said seriously.

He did not meet her eyes.

“Have I always be able to enter the Labyrinth through my mirror?”

“Well…”

“Hoggle.”

“Yes, Sarah. I just didn’t think it woulda been safe for ya, you know. With Jareth mad at you an’ all. I wanted to tell ya, I really did. Woulda been nice to have you visit.” He scuffed his shoes in the dirt. “Actually, you can enter in any place that has been worn thin.”

Sarah began making a quick pace towards the oubliette (or where she believed it should be). Hoggle did his best to keep up. “Worn thin?”

“You know, been traveled through. So when Jareth would watch ya through your mirror or….”

Sarah stopped and spun around. “He did what?!”

“Before he took the babe, he would watch you through your mirror or turn into an owl and…”

Sarah started moving again. “Never mind. Ignorance is bliss. If I walk in all mad at Jareth, I won’t even bother to save his sorry ass.”

“Save ’em?”

“I’ll tell you the whole story, but you gotta keep up.”

The King of the Underground sat daintily on Jareth’s throne. He had instructed the goblins to clean and polish it first. And, surprisingly, they had done so quickly and efficiently. In fact, the entire throne room was in order and quiet.
A small goblin with ears larger than his face approached the throne. “Beggin’ your pardon, but when do we sing?”

The fey looked down at the hopeful being. “Excuse me?”

“Well,” he confidence was growing and his voice became louder. “You is winnin’ and that’s normally when we sing.”

Using his lengthy middle finger and thumb to massage his temples, the fey sighed deeply. His son has run the goblin kingdom in a ridiculous manner. No wonder the place was a mess.

“Never.”

There was a collective gasp from every goblin within earshot.

“N-never?” a few responded.

“Did you NOT HEAR ME?!” the King’s voice magically boomed throughout the castle. When the last echo reverberated through the halls, the room again fell silent.

“Watch your step,” Hoggle warned as Sarah was about to step on the trap door.

“Thanks.”

She tapped her foot cautiously against the wood. With her initial bravado, she could have thrown the door open and come to his rescue, but now she wondered what she would see down there. It was entirely possible that the goblin king was in no danger. That his father hadn’t found him. She imagined him greeting her, lounging on one of those fancy half couches, biting into a peach. The Jareth in her head lazily looked toward her and asked, “what took you so long?”

“What’s takin’ ya so long?” The real Hoggle asked.

Taking a deep breath, she pried the door back and jumped down.

For once she landed on her feet. She took a second to congratulate herself as her eyes adjusted to the darkened tunnel. She placed one hand against the dirty walls, and walked forward.

“Jareth?” She called quietly, and then again a bit louder.

No response.

_Maybe he had escaped? Maybe he had lied about the magic shackles? That pig. Or maybe he’s dead._

That last thought sent Sarah into a jog. “Jareth!” She was shouting now, chasing her own echoes down the oubliette. “Answer me, you stupid fey!”

In her haste, she didn’t see her old cot on the ground. She hit her foot against it and nearly fell over. Steadying herself, she looked down. The sight made her mouth fall open.
Sprawled on the cot, as if he had collapsed there, was the Goblin King. His clothing had long gashes in them, framed with brown stains. *Was he whipped?* Sarah’s chest tightened as she wondered if he had been beaten to death. She fell to her knees to look closer. As she leaned in, she could see bruises around his defined cheekbones and thin lips. His hair, usually perfect in its chaos, was matted and going in different directions. Despite all of this, she was fairly sure she saw the shallow rise and fall of his chest.

Not trusting her own eyes, she placed her hand over his chest. She didn’t mean to press down, but her nerves were making her limbs tremble. The moment her hand touched his skin, Jareth jerked awake with a yell.

Sarah jumped back as Jareth scrambled around on the cot and ground. He quickly but shakily got to his feet. His eyes darted back and forth and his head followed, his hair always half a second behind. Composing himself, The Goblin King stopped and bowed his head.

Seeing him at full height, Sarah noticed several things she had missed before. His usually high coat collar was smashed and crumpled. He looked thinner (if that was possible). Sarah found herself wondering how long it had been in the underground. Time never made sense when jumping between the worlds. The last thing that caught her eye was a simple chain bracelet that hung from his wrist.

It didn’t even occur to Sarah why Jareth didn’t recognize her. Why he didn’t demand to be released.

“Jareth?”

He looked in her direction, but not directly at her. “Sarah?” His body drooped from exhaustion and relief. “Sarah, you did return.”

It was only now that Sarah realized what had happened. Jareth was blind. Moved by a wave of pity, she rushed forward and gave him his first genuine hug. He sucked in his breath from the pain, but soon allowed himself to lean into her embrace. She was everything the oubliette wasn’t: soft, warm, and welcoming. He remembered why he loved her: her spirit, her cleverness, and her kindness. Old habits dying hard, he began to caress the small of her back and sniffed her hair. Sarah backed away but remained close in case he fell. He did look weak on his feet. “You pig,” she said without emotion behind it.

For a second, she was glad he was blind. He couldn’t see the tears in her eyes. The fact that he was still down here meant that he hadn’t betrayed her. And, despite his many flaws, that was beyond noble. She was touched and felt extremely guilty at the same time, honestly wondering if she would have done the same for Mark.

Wiping away her tears, she said, “let’s get you out of here.” She knelt down next to him and gently removed the shackle. It clanged as it hit the floor.

Jareth chuckled. “My hero.” He said it as if he were talking to himself. Sarah looked up and saw the Goblin King’s body swaying. Jumping to her feet, she tucked herself under his arm to steady him.

“Yes, and this hero is going to get you out of here.” She began to walk him towards the trapdoor. It was slow and, although he tried to hide it, it was obvious that that moving was painful.

“Jareth, I hate to ask, but could you ‘poof’ us out of here?”

“Hmm?” Jareth was concentrating on standing, his voice, once glorious and booming, was so quiet it made Sarah bite her lip in worry. “Poof? He took it, my dear.”
“Took it?”

Jareth held his arm forward, and gave it a shake before letting it fall limp again. The chain bracelet made a small rattle. “No magic. No dance.”

Sarah’s mind was going a mile a minute. *How cruel, how low of a person would you have to be to torture your own son? What a monster.* Her mind started to think of all the horrible things she would do to the older fey if she had the opportunity. *No, can’t think of that now. We must get out of here. There is no way we will make it up the ladder like this. No magic. There is magic!*

“There is magic!” she said aloud. “Jareth, I’m going to lower you to the ground. I need to get something.”

As she placed him into a sitting position, she caught his expression. She had seen that before on her brother’s face when her step mom had forgotten to pick him up from daycare. Sarah had driven up to the building to find the abandoned Toby waiting on the steps, his face a mirror image of Jareth’s now.

“I promise I’ll be back. I’m not leaving you again.” He managed a nod.

She groped her way along the halls until she returned to the cot. Ripping through the covers and pillows, her eyes strained through the dim light. A reflection of light caught her eye and she dove for it. Her hand touched something small and hard. As she felt it she knew it was her engagement ring. Slipping it on to her finger she kept searching. *Come on, come on!*

“Oh la!” She said in complete relief. She silently thanked any god that would listen and she pulled a crystal ball from the mess. She had left it there after it gave her the vision of the past. Never had she been so relieved to be forgetful. It had listened to her before, hopefully it would listen to her again.

Running back to Jareth, she found him passed out, still slightly propped into a sitting position. She sat next to him and pulled his arm back over her shoulder. He felt warmer than the room, but not warm enough. It worried her.

She looked directly into the crystal and said, as commanding as she could muster, “take us to my home in the Aboveground.” For a few seconds she could see her bedroom and a worried Mark pacing around with a cellphone in his ear, but the vision disappeared again

“Take us to my home in the Aboveground!” She said more desperately, for she thought she heard the creak of the trapdoor.

“heh.” The small laugh from Jareth made her jump. “Smash it, clever girl. You aren’t as clever as you think you are.” He barely moved as he spoke, but at least he was alive.

Sarah clenched her jaw and concentrated on the crystal. Gripping it, she raised the bauble above her head. “Take us to my home in the Aboveground!” She swung her arm as forcefully as she could and released her grip.

A cloud of light blue smoke wisped around them. Not a sparkle in sight. The swirls started slowly but became faster and more frantic. Sarah felt the need to hold her breath and grip Jareth shirt tightly as the smoke engulfed them. The swirls became too much and she shut her eyes as well.

She only opened them when the sounds surrounding her changed. Instead of the steady drip and echo of the oubliette she heard the hum of AC and a voice shouting her name.

“Sarah? Babe?! Sarah?! What the hell just happened? Who is this…man?”
As she looked around, she saw the pale blue wall of her bedroom, her bed scattered with ungraded papers, and Mark’s panicked face. She was so relieved, she released Jareth from her grasp. He immediately toppled over onto the carpet.
“Mark, help me get him up to the bed.”

Mark, hearing the worry in her voice, pushed back any questions and held back the sense of shock that would have frozen him in place. He stood behind this bloody man and tucked looped his own arm under the man’s arms. Sarah grabbed at the knees and they lifted him in unison. He was surprisingly light, but moving him to the bed was awkward, as his long arms dangled and would knock into things.

When they had safely placed him in the bed, Sarah asked Mark to grab the first aid kit. Still on auto pilot, he went to the kitchen to get it.

While Sarah waited, she tried her best to make Jareth comfortable. She removed his boots, looking away from the deep bruise where the shackle had been. She then made sure the pillow was securely under his head.

She then began to inspect him. Under the artificial light in her room, he looked worse than before. He had three large gashes on his torso and several smaller ones along his arms and legs. Each ripped through his pale skin, but luckily, each looked as if there was no infection. His left wrist, where the chain bracelet touched his skin past his gloves, looked burned. His face had raised, dark bruises. She had used to despise that face. It had meant the loss of her brother, the symbol of her childish stupidity. But she could never have said that it wasn’t beautiful. Now, seeing it marred, it only made her heart hurt.

She wanted to help him. She could never repay what he had done for her, but without his magic, he would need modern medicine and that was something she could provide. That is, if Mark ever returned to with it.

She stuck her head out of the bedroom door. “Mark!” She called in a loud whisper, “Did you find it?”

“Did you put it away last?” He yelled back, “I don’t see it.”

“In the cabinet about the fridge!”

Shuffling was heard from the kitchen.

“Oh, okay. I see it.”

She returned to the room to find that Jareth was still out. She stepped close to make sure he was still breathing. Then, out of care or some dormant maternal instinct, she placed a hand on his forehead and allowed it to stroke through his hair. “I’m going to take care of you, Jareth.” She said quietly, leaning down as if he could hear her.

Two things happened simultaneously. Jareth stirred and Mark opened the door. Sarah, fearing the traumatized Jareth’s reaction to her fiancé, leapt in front of the door.

“Thanks, Babe,” she whispered, taking the kit.

“I brought wash cloths and Motrin, just in case.”

“You rock, and you’ve been great,” she started to close the door, “and I promise I will explain
everything to you soon. For now, know that I owe this man my life and I need to take care of him.”

Mark held her arm, keeping the door open. “Sarah, I am choosing to trust you and to…accept the weird things today. But we need to talk about it. No later than tonight. Okay?”

His expression was a mix of worry and confusion. Sarah wanted to comfort him, tell him that there was magic in the world and that a fey was laying in her bed. She wanted to cry out the guilt that she was feeling for what was going on with both men, but right now she needed to act.

“Okay.” With a nod, she took her arm back and closed the door.

Jareth’s stirring turned to tossing around on the bed. His face scrunched into a pained expression and sweat broke on his forehead. He must be dreaming, Sarah wondered if she should wake him up. She decided to take care of his wounds and, if that woke him, so be it.

Jareth was having a nightmare. The image of his father, looming over him, disgusted that a mere human had brought him so low. The frequent visits to the oubliette. The whip, the cane, the iron bracelet.

He began to fade in and out of consciousness. He felt the soft comforter and pillow supporting him. This was a nice dream. This was the dream where Sarah came back and rescued him. The dream where she had promised to take care of him.

He kept his eyes shut, not wanting to wake from this one and knowing that the darkness would remain even if he did open them.

Mark remained by the door, occasionally walking in a circle and occasionally reaching for the doorknob. It wasn’t that he didn’t trust Sarah. She had never given him a reason not to. No, it was that man. He made him question everything. Made today’s events seem normal.

There was a wisp of a memory, just tugging at the corners of Mark’s mind and he couldn’t catch it. He knew if he could just see that man, he might be able to inspect it and, hopefully, push it aside as nonsense.

Sarah had never cared for anything greater than Toby’s childhood scrapes and bruises. Where should I even start? She looked through the first aid kit and then back at Jareth. She decided to clean a section and then bandage it. She wet the washcloth with warm water from her bathroom and then returned to the unconscious fey.

She gently lifted his left wrist, the body part closest to her. Pulling off his glove, she found that his long hand was undamaged. That’s a start. She wiped it with the cloth anyway, and then moved up to his wrist.

That chain must be his father’s doing? Is that what is holding back his magic? Regardless, it has damaged his skin. She wiped under the bracelet, holding it away from his skin with her pinky. She placed the cloth on the edge of the bed and grabbed a small tube that read “burn gel” from the first aid kit. When it had been evenly coated, she wrapped and secured a bandage around the wrist so that the chain could no longer rub against him.

Okay, look at me go. I’m a regular doctor. She congratulated herself, moving up his arm. Clean, disinfect, cover. For the rest of his arm, she used large, square band aids, as the cuts were not too big
nor close together.

She cared for his shoulder, collar, and down the other arm. Up until this point, she was able to access his body but pulling his loose sleeves up. She was purposefully avoiding his torso, as she knew she would have to remove his shirt. Looking at his face, she knew the bruises would have to heal on their own. She did clean it though, slowly circling around his eyes and cheekbones. Much of his makeup came off on the cloth and he looked so exposed without it. She dabbed a small cut on the corner of lip with Neosporin for good measure.

Sighing, she grabbed the scissors. “Sorry, Jareth, but this shirt was a lost cause anyway.” She tugged at his shirt so that it was untucked from his pants completely. Being sure to hold the scissors and shirt away from him, she began to cut. Four snips and it was opened. Although she knew she would be caring for it soon, she found herself looking away from his exposed skin.

She went back to the bathroom to clean dirt and makeup off the wash cloth (and maybe to stall). Returning, she was forced to look upon his wounded body. The red/brown of the blood was stark against his pale body. She wiped around the wounds and oh-so-carefully dabbed at the gashes themselves.

Deciding that these wounds would need some serious disinfecting if they were to heal well, she pulled out the bottle of rubbing alcohol. She grabbed a dry cloth and held it to the opening of the bottle. Holding her breath, she dabbed the now moist cloth against the lowest wound, just above his navel. She paused and looked at his face. No movement, good.

She continued. Dab, dab, get more, dab, dab.

“AH!” Jareth jerked awake with a sharp intake of air. He reached out, smacking Sarah in the ear as he sat up.

“Jareth! Jareth, it’s okay. You’re safe.”

He paused, looking like a wild man. He was breathing heavily, his hair a mess, and his eyes unfocused. The cut open shirt only added to the look.

“Jareth? You are in my bed. We’re in the Aboveground. You are safe.” She reached out and placed her hand into his.

His features all softened and he squeezed her hand.

He took her offering, that gentle hand that had often been so cruel to him, and brought it to his face. He needed this to all be real. He was free, he was safe. Pressing his cheek against her lovely fingers, he let out one sob.

Sarah wanted to say something, but words refused to form in her mind. Nothing would be appropriate for the situation, so she allowed her hand to speak for her.

Jareth then purposefully brought her hand back to the bed. He turned in her direction, and revealed a sinister smile. It was reminiscent of the one he gave her the first time he had burst through her window.

You’re the Goblin King, aren’t you? She thought, remembering that night well.

“Oh Sarah,” he said, his voice slightly raspy, “Is this really what it takes to get in your bed?”
At that moment, she was tempted to throw him back in that oubliette.
Chapter 8

Cleaning and bandaging the Goblin King was both easier and not with him awake. On one hand, it was nice to have him hold himself up. She was able to get to his back and have him take off his own pants.

On the other hand, he could talk.

“Sarah, that is quite painful!”

“Ouch! Watch it! Have you ever cared for someone? Our poor future children.”

“Yes, my dear. You can look. Isn’t it glorious?”

Sarah sighed so many times she thought her lungs would give out. He saved your life, he saved your life, he saved your life. She internally chanted, resisting the urge to slap him upside the head. She almost had at one point. She raised her hand and, despite his bravado, Jareth cringed and drew back into the pillow. He must have heard the sound and felt the air of a raised hand many times. She felt so guilty, she made an excuse to rinse out the washcloth.

When the task was complete, Jareth was quite the sight. Bandages and band aids abound. Sarah pulled one of Mark’s oversized shirts over his head, carefully guiding his arms into the sleeves. Not wanting to attempt pants, she pulled the covers up to his waist.

Sarah decided it was time.

“Jareth, I want you to meet someone.”

“Bring me something to eat. Roasted chicken would be nice, not too much garlic” He said at the same time. “And some wine.”

Mark was still outside the door when he heard raised voices. Sarah and the man were talking over each other, each’s voice trying to outshout the next.

He reached towards the doorknob and hesitated. His fingers brushed against the cool metal, but he didn’t grip it. Sarah seemed very keen on keeping him away from that man.

Beyond that, though, he was afraid. His life was dull, and he was okay with that. He worked for a company that sold textbooks, he could cook all of five meals, he had a wonderful fiancée, and he filled his spare time with video games. The routine was nice, it was simple, and meeting this stranger was going to change everything. Every bone in his body knew it.

The choice was made for him as the noises from Sarah’s bedroom crescendoed into screams. His hand automatically grabbed the doorknob and he swung it open.

The scene before him looked like something out of a sitcom.

Sarah was yelling at a decimal he had never heard from her. “YOU ARE THE GOBLIN KING? DO I LOOK LIKE A GOBLIN TO YOU?” She was bent forward, finger pointing accusingly at The man was sitting up in Sarah’s bed, propped from behind with pillows. Although he was weak and bandaged, he sat as if he ruled the house, one arm leaning against his makeshift backrest, the
other gesturing at Sarah with a flick of his free hand.

“Well, you certainly have the manners of one!”

“You cannot demand for me to get you things! This is MY apartment and you are MY guest. I will happily get you food because you are hungry, but I do not HAVE any chicken and you will have to make due!”

“I do not think it is too much to ask! Just go out and slaughter one!”

“Oh my gosh! You don’t listen! Don’t you remember that I just saved your sorry ass!”

Jareth did not retort. He grew silent and solemn. Sarah put a hand to her mouth, realizing her mistake.

Finally he said in a quiet but deep voice. “Everything I’ve done, I’ve done for you. Everything.” He half fell, half reclined back into a laying position.

Sarah pressed her lips together, opened her mouth, and then closed it again. She turned and started, realizing that Mark was standing in the room.

“Jareth, to your right my…. Mark is here to meet you.”

Jareth turned to his right and Mark met his eyes. Despite the lack of focus, the mismatched eyes struck Mark to the core. This man, Jareth, deserved respect, Jareth’s orders were law. Jareth could be cruel but fair.

“Oh, your Mark? Is he your servant? Good. Mark, fetch me chicken and wine. I am famished.”

Sarah wondered if Jareth knew exactly who Mark was and was being dismissive on purpose. There was also a good chance that he was simply hungry. She had no clue how much, if any, food his father had provided him.

“Mark, I’m sorry to ask, but…”

Mark looked up as if he was snapping out of a trance. “Yes, of course. I’ll go down to the corner store. Anything else we need?”

Sarah was surprised with how well Mark was responding to everything. She ran two fingers through the back of her hair. “Umm…. Some milk, more fruit, toilet paper, and….” She looked around the room. Her eyes fell on the chain around Jareth’s wrist. “bolt cutters.” She added firmly.

Having already decided to accept the oddities as they came, Mark nodded and added the items to his phone. “Got it. I’ll be back soon.”

With that he walked out of the room, closing the door behind him.

An awkward silence fell throughout the small bedroom. Sarah shuffled her feet against the carpet and Jareth folded his arms, sinking farther into the pillows.

Sarah eventually walked over and sat on the corner of the bed, gathering the courage to apologize. Apologize? That sounded so wrong. For the longest time, Jareth was the villain. He was the villain in a story long since over. It was still true that he was devious and predatory. Certainly he had no sense of boundaries, but his actions recently spoke of a hero. Even Sir Didymus would be proud of his king.
Sarah found herself reliving the moment Jareth had held her hand to his check. Blushing, she pushed the thought from her mind. She immediately felt a wave of guilt, recalling that her fiancé had just left the room.

“Jareth,” she said softly. He moved only his head towards her voice. “I know what you did.” She rose, grabbing the cup from her nightstand and walking towards the bathroom. She had to be doing something, this would be difficult conversation. “What you did for me,” she clarified as she filled the cup. “And I want to thank you for it.”

Walking over to the edge of the bed, she pushed the cup into his hand. “It water.” He raised the cup to his lips and took several dainty sips before abandoning politeness and gulping it down. Sarah held both his hand and the cup for a second before taking it and making her way back to the bathroom to refill it.

Making her way back to the bed, she continued talking. Jareth’s expression remained unchanged, but he was obviously listening. “When I first…trapped you down in the oubliette with me, you panicked before passing out. And, well, I found one of your crystals. It listened to me; I didn’t think that it would. It showed me how you protected me from your father all those years ago…”

She paused, placing the cup down on her side table. She gently scooped Jareth’s hand and lead it until it touched the glass. “There is more water here if you need it.”

Jareth nodded. His gaze was straight ahead and he looked as if he were worried. She watched as his breath made his shoulders rise and fall. Realizing that he couldn’t see her staring, she took him all in. The tension in those shoulders, the tiredness in his eyes, the straight mouth that usual wore such a wicket grin.

He squeezed her hand and she released him.

“And I wanted to thank you.” She finished.

It wasn’t enough. It would never be enough. She felt the hot tears in the corners of her eyes. She let them flow freely, knowing he could not see them. She did not expect one to fall upon his arm.

The Goblin King reached out and clumsily found Sarah’s face. He cupped the side of it and uses his thumb to wipe away the tears. Sarah knew she should pull away, but she didn’t move. Instead, her cries broke into sobs. Jareth managed to sit up and reach his other hand to the back of her head. Weaving his long fingers into her dark hair, he pulled her towards his chest. She allowed herself to be lead as she continued her crying.

Her sobs eventually calmed and quieted as she focused on the warm and pressure all around her. The way her head went up and down with his chest. The scratch of the bandages on her under his loose shirt. Taking a deep breath herself, she began to pull away. He held on for a second more and then let her go.

Sarah used her sleeve to clean her face. She sniffed a few times and then said, “You shouldn’t be comforting me. Jareth, I owe you my life. I owe you it twice over.”

Jareth’s face broke into a predatory grin. “Oh, Sarah.”

Realizing what he may take from that, Sarah bit her lip. I can’t even thank him without screwing things up. What is wrong with me? And why am I happy to see him smile again when he looks like he’ll devour me?

“Jareth I didn’t mean…”
“What’s said is said.” He moved himself comfortably in the bed. “I will remember this.” He swung his legs around so that his feet hit the floor. With a small grunt, he sat completely up. “But for now, I require you to lead me to an outhouse.”

If he noticed that the blankets fell and exposed his lower half, he did not act upon it. Sarah wondered if the fey had any concept of modesty or shame.

“No, I’m right here.” She allowed herself to be used as a crutch and a guide dog. She noticed that he heavily relied on his right leg. I really hope isn’t not broken. We’ll have to go to the hospital. Jareth would not do well there. Plus, I don’t know what fey anatomy consists of.

“Okay, we’re in the bathroom now. I’m going to turn you around.” She extended her arms and guided him in a half circle. “Now sit down.” He carefully lowered himself onto the toilet.

Once he was seated, Sarah gave him a reassuring pat on the shoulder, careful to avoid any wounds. “I’ll be outside the door. If you need any help. Let me know.” She turned to leave, saying “Toilet paper is to your right…and I’m leaving sweatpants on the bed. Please put them on.”

Behind the closed door she heard him mutter, “Well, I see no point in that.”

The car revved as Mark pushed the pedal a bit too hard. He had gathered all the items are Sarah’s list plus more pain killers (for himself; he had a terrible headache). Driving home was proving to be a challenge. It was almost as if he had forgotten how to drive.

The something that had been tugging at his mind was fiercely at work. Everything felt wrong. The car was foreign to him; the streets he had driven down for years did not feel right. They were too smooth, oddly straight. He thought of Sarah. She felt right. And, oddly enough, King Jareth felt right too.

Pulling into the driveway, he tried desperately to shake off these thoughts. He grabbed the bags and went inside the house.

When Jareth had returned to the bed, Sarah had demanded to look at his right leg. Jareth, without protest, had lifted it towards her. She looked over the purple and blue skin. It was certainly bruised. She felt up and down the bones by lightly pressing with her fingers. Jareth shifted uncomfortably, but managed to keep his leg still. She didn’t know what she was looking for, but she didn’t find it. It felt like a normal ankle and foot.

“It may just be sprained. I think you would have had a lot more trouble walking if it was broken. I will be right back; I’m going to get you some ice.”

Jareth sighed. “This would be so much simpler with magic. I honestly do not know how you live with all of this nonsense of fetching things.”

“If you had your magic, you could just heal yourself. Like I said, I’m leaving now.”
Sarah had always been obsessed with the worlds of magic as a child. Although the concept was tarnished by her visit to the labyrinth, she did remember quite a bit of her “studies.” If her suspicions were correct, that bracelet on Jareth’s wrist was made of iron. Iron was a dangerous metal for any magical creature, but especially for the fey. It was probably the reason Jareth had no magic.

_He’s right, everything would be much simpler if he had his magic back._ Still she was unsure of herself. _Do I trust him? Would he do something to Mark? To me?

Her thoughts were interrupted by Mark. He looked just as confused as before, poor man.

“Hey, babe,” she greeted him sympathetically. “Let me grab those bags. Thank you so much for going out.”

“No problem.” He said, handing her the bags.

She shuffled through the bags, pulling out a bottle of wine and some ready-made chicken. “Good thinking,” she said as she held it up. “I’ll put this on a plate. Could you grab some ice?”

He went to the freezer and began pulled out the soft ice pack. “Sarah, I know you said you would explain everything, but I think it’s important for me to know right now. I think… I am pretty sure I’ve met Jareth before.”

Sarah had already placed the chicken on a plate and was searching for a cork screw. Upon hearing this, the wine bottle slipped from her fingers. It cracked in half on the title floor, spilling red everywhere. “What?”

“I… I don’t know for sure. It’s not that I recognized his face or anything when he came here. It’s just that I just know I’ve met him. I feel it.”

Sarah’s mind went to a dark place. Had Jareth been stalking her fiancé? Had he done anything to him? She was leaning strongly on the side of not removing the chain until she got a few answers.

Mark had his head tilted. “Do you hear that?”

She had heard it soon after the wine bottle broke, but had assumed that someone in a nearby apartment was making the sound. Now paying attention, she realized it was Jareth yelling.

The couple dashed to the bedroom. They came across Jareth thrashing around. He looked as if he was attempting to push himself into the headboard of the bed. He was yelling and screaming, bringing his arms in front of his face, his long legs kicked wildly, pushing against the sheets to shove him farther towards the headboard. “No! No no! NO! Stay back! I won’t tell you, just leave, please leave me be!” He grabbed his hair with both hands and curled in on himself. “It’s too dark. Too dark.”

Sarah approached the bed. “Jareth,” she said quietly. “That sound was just me. I dropped something. You’re in the Aboveground. Your father can’t get you.”

Jareth had stopped moving with the exception of ragged breaths. Sarah noticed that he had reopened a wound on his torso and the blood was starting to spot against his shirt.

She made a decision in the moment. “Mark, please bring up the bolt cutters.”

Mark ran from the room and returned soon after holding a pair of sturdy looking bolt cutters.

“Jareth, I’m going to touch you.” She let her hand trail along his so that he knew where she was
going, but at the moment she touched the chain, he jerked his hand back. Thinking fast, she grabbed it, and pulled the chain away from his wrist. “Mark, quick!”

Mark slipped the blade between Jareth’s wrist and the chain. He squeezed the handles together hard. The chain was surprisingly tough. Adjusting his grip, he squeezed them again. Snap!

The chain cascaded from Jareth’s wrist, to the edge of the bed, to the carpet. Jareth stopped struggling. Sarah watched as he blinked several times and then finally looked around him. His gaze fell on the mess of blankets in front of him, then on the window, then on the framed photo of a teenage Toby that was placed on her side table.

He could see!

Looking down at himself, he twisted his face into one of disgust. “Ugh!” He scoffed, “unacceptable!” He produced a crystal, and crushed it above his head. It produced a cloud of glitter that fell around him. When it had dissipated, he was dressed in a white poet’s shirt. A brown vest clung tightly to him, followed by matching brown leggings and darker brown boots with matching gloves.

Looked over at Sarah, taking in her frumpy work clothing. “Even more unacceptable.” He stated.

He motioned with a bored hand toward her closet. The door flew open, revealing several dresses. All elaborate in their stitching and design, but all very different in color and style. “Choose whichever you like, my love.”

Jareth placed his feet on the floor and began to stand. He cringed as he stood, but it was obvious that the magic had already gone to work in healing his body. He reached down and tapped his ankle a couple of times. It glowed with a green light for a second and then returned to normal.

Typical, Sarah thought, he changes clothing and then heals his sprained ankle.

Jareth immediately walked to the bathroom. Sarah followed. He was using her brush from the sink to tame his hair. After teasing it into its usual high style, he looked at himself in the mirror. He turned his head left and then right. Smiling, he gave a satisfied nod. “Much better.”

Sarah’s mouth fell open as he opened her drawers and began rummage through them. “Excuse me!”

He pulled out her make up bag and poked a gloved finger into it. “Is this really the best makeup you have, Sarah? For shame.” He dumped it onto the sink. “I will have to make due.”

She could only watch in mental whip lash as Jareth expertly applied her make up while leaning close to the mirror. He finished the corner of his eye with a flourish and tilted his chin up. He was obviously satisfied with his reflection.

With only a slight limp, he strutted out of the bathroom and fully took in his surroundings. “It will do,” he proclaimed, looking around. His gaze finally fell on Mark who had been staring slack-jawed at the whole ordeal.

Jareth’s (now lined) eyebrows drew close together. He drew a huff of a breath. “Marcus! Where the hell have you been?”
Chapter 9

Marcus

That word, that name that wasn’t his, made Mark’s throat tighten. He looked towards Sarah, hoping that she had some answer, but she was staring angrily at Jareth.

“My,” he started, “my name is Mark, not Marcus.” But was it?

The Goblin King tilted his head back and gave a hearty laugh. “Have you forgotten so quickly, you rotten little thing?”

Jareth flippantly waved his hand, dismissing the man in front of him. He turned his attention to Sarah. “Honestly, I thought you detested goblins. Why are you hanging around with one?”

Sarah’s lips tightened and her jaw flexed. “Jareth,” she said sternly, “This is Mark. He is my fiancé. We will be married this summer.”

Laughter bubbled in Jareth’s gut and rolled out of his mouth freely. “My dear Sarah, this is a goblin. He was my eyes in the Aboveground for many a year until he disappeared on me.” At that, Jareth gave a nasty glance towards Mark. “It appears he has convinced himself he is human, but I assure you his place is in the Underground.”

“Mark, is this true?”

Mark or Marcus was frozen in place. He stared into the corner of the room without focusing on anything. Images of mossy brick wall, chickens, and small creatures were tearing through his mind.

“He was always quite a lazy one, so naturally he fit right in. Shall I remove the glamour?” Jareth’s tone was a gleeful one. He was obviously enjoying shattering Sarah’s world.

“Jareth, this is not funny.” Sarah said sternly.

He laughed again. “Is that your teacher voice, my dear? Am I in trouble?”

Mark turned towards Sarah, his eyebrows pushed up into a look of concern. He ran his hand through the front of his hair, catching the gleam of sweat. In a small, but serious voice, he said, “He’s right.”

“Well, of course I am. I know the reaches of my kingdom, and I certainly know a goblin when I see one.” With that, Jareth extended his pointer finger. He gave Marcus a tap on the head. The man began to shrink. His skin faded to a pale grey. His teeth sharpened into tiny pointed things. His ears grew large and floppy (they also had little tufts of fur at the ends).

When the transformation was complete, a goblin with the eyes of Mark looked up at Sarah from a pile of discarded clothing. “Babe, can we talk about this?” He said in a squeaky voice.

Sarah stared at him, mouth hanging open.

“Yes,” cooed Jareth, “you two should really have a talk. I’ll be giving myself a tour of your small house.” He turned dramatically, a cocky smile on his face. He was so pleased with his victory, that he put too much weight on his still-healing ankle. His exit was diminished by a sharp intake of breath and a slight limp.
Once the door had closed, Sarah looked down again at her goblin fiancé.

They stood in silence. A million thoughts rushed through Sarah’s head. She had known Mark for three years. The first year they had been friends, the second they had dated, and the third they had gotten engaged. Yes, it had been quick, but she felt comfortable with him. He felt familiar. Maybe this was why. How long had it been before he had lost his memory? Was he lying the whole time and this was an act? …Did he still love her? Could she love him? How long would it before she was with the little guy out of pity? No, Sarah! Don’t think like that. You were going to marry him. He’s still the same inside, right?

“No, Sarah!” Marcus interrupted her thoughts. “I wanna be honest with you.”

“Oh gosh, even his speech has changed.”

“I don’t want to be with a human.”

The sheer surprise at what he said made Sarah dizzy. She felt as if she were watching this weird relationship fall apart in a movie. Her own body didn’t belong to her.

“It’s not that I haven’t grown fond of you, you know? But I think I’ve been livin’ a lie. You was very right for me. Maybe it’s the magic in you. And I…please don’t cry, okay?”

Sarah wasn’t crying. She was in shock. How was this so easy for him? How could he walk away from three years? Then again, how could he have forgotten most of his life before?

“If an you’re gonna go and cry, you might as well hear the truth. I am very sorry. You see, the thing is, I have a misses back home. Lovely little goblin lady, biggest nose you’ve ever seen and… well, you don’t want to hear about her, but I thought you should know.”

He stood still then, waiting for her to respond.

Sarah knelt down so that she could look him in the eye. “Mark, I don’t think I can talk about this right now. Any of this!”

Marcus nodded empathetically. “Imagine how I feel. Two lives. Misses is going to be furious. We have kids!”

She couldn’t think of a way to end the conversation naturally, so she said. “If you walk towards that mirror, it’ll take you back Underground.”

Marcus looked at her for a long second. Then he reached around and hugged her as best as his short arms could manage. For a second, he felt like Mark again. “Take care, babe. I’m going to miss you.”

At this, Sarah broke. Tears welled up in her eyes and spilled over. She began sobbing as she held what remained of her lover in her arms.

Marcus was the first to pull away. He sounded fully like his goblin self as he said, “Alrighty, you take care of my king.” He gave a small bow and then hopped through the mirror.

Sarah watched as her reflection was the only thing left to see.
The couch was scratchy and hard, but that was not the reason Sarah couldn’t remain asleep.

After Mark had left, Sarah had been unable to move. She collapsed on the floor in front of the mirror and cried. Cried to her red-faced reflection until she was couldn’t stand to look at herself any more. She turned away and continued her crying. Eventually the tears wouldn’t come and she was just gasping and sputtering.

Completely exhausted, she dragged herself into the bathroom. She was forced to see her reflection yet again. Her eyes were puffy and red splotches covered her face. The shine of mucus covered her lips and chin. Sarah Williams was an ugly crier.

Once she had cleaned herself up, she found Jareth downstairs. He was sitting at the kitchen table, a plate of chicken bones in front of him.

“Sarah, my dear!” he greeted her with a wide smile.

“I’m going to bed,” she said flatly. “You can take my room. I’ll take the couch.”

Whether he was tired or whether he actually respected her wishes, Jareth nodded and started up towards the bedroom.

Not even turning around he said, “I’ll have to thank Marcus for the wonderful chicken. Maybe he’ll work in the kitchens at my castle.”

“DON’T YOU DARE SPEAK OF HIM TO ME!” Sarah screamed. Jareth put his head down like a scolded puppy.

He said in a whisper, “I’m sorry,” before retreating to the bedroom.

Now here she was, finally alone with her thoughts. She would drift in and out of sleep. She was glad Jareth had her bed; it would have felt empty and cold without Mark in it. She wanted to mourn him, but how could you mourn someone who never truly existed.

When she finally did fall asleep, she dreamed that Mark had died. At his funeral, she stood up to give the eulogy. The podium was bigger than her, so she had to scramble up the side in order to speak to the sea of black suits and dresses. When she had pulled herself over the lip of the podium, she looked out at all of the sad faces. One pair of faces stared back at her angrily. It was Mark’s parents.

“This is your fault,” she saw his mother mouth.

Sarah woke up crying.

That morning, she couldn’t shake the dream. It bothered her. It caused a mental itch that she knew needed to be scratched. She was so distracted, she over-poured the milk in her cereal. While cleaning it up she zoned out again. Why would Mark’s parents blame her? She had no control over the fact that Mark was really Marcus. Why would his mother…
Sarah cartoonishly smacked her own forehead. If Mark had parents here in the Aboveground, there was no way that he was a goblin. Now that started on this line of logic, she realized how stupid she had been. She had met several of Mark’s friends who gleefully shared stories of his college days. She had seen photos on his Facebook account from his high school days. His mother had posted baby photos on his last birthday!

She was not sure how he had done it, but Jareth managed to trick her. “FUCK YOU! JARETH THE GOBLIN KING, GET YOUR ASS DOWN HERE!”

As soon as she shouted, she regretted it. He will never tell me. He’ll wrap it all in lies and smiles. I’ll have to find out the information in other ways.

A groggy Jareth stuck his head out from behind the bedroom door. He was not the gleeful fey from yesterday evening. Despite his victory he looked nervous and, just maybe, a bit guilty.

“Just letting you know that I’m making breakfast. Do you want anything?”

At that, his smile returned. “You have a very crude way of announcing that. Of course. Make me some eggs and a slab of ham. I will be there shortly.” He disappeared behind the door.

Sarah clenched her fists so tightly that her fingernails made indents in her palms. That would take some incredible acting skills. Jareth may have saved her life, but he was once again a villain in it.

His words from years ago echoed in her head. How are you enjoying my labyrinth?

Jareth paced the room. He had been awake for hours before Sarah had awoken. The events of yesterday had made him as confused as a drunk fairy.

The relief and joy of being rescued by his love.

The shame of being cared for and lead about like an infant.

The ecstasy of his magic returning.

The glee of seeing his failsafe kick into gear.

The guilt of seeing Sarah so miserable.

To be honest, he didn’t not understand her pain. She needed someone who was fit for the clever and rambunctious woman that she is. That Mark fellow did not have an extraordinary bone in his frail body. Yet, his heart had sunk at every sob from Sarah’s bedroom. He had given a small gasp when her face, streaked and pink, despite her best efforts to hide it, had revealed itself. He thought back to the moment she had rejected him.

At least she could know that Mark never rejected her.

Jareth had actually had a goblin who scouted the Aboveground, and that goblin had, in fact, been missing for the last year or so, but in no way was that Goblin Mark. In fact, that goblin was the reason for all of this.

“Now, repeat what I just told you.”
A rather large, lumbering goblin with one sharp tooth protruding from his lower lip nodded.

Jareth waited, “Well?”

“Uh yeah. Go to the up world.”

Jareth made a circular motion with his hand.

“And, uh… find the male humans that Sarah talks to.”

“Yes…and?”

“And put one of deez seeds in them ears when dey sleeps.”

“Yes, good.”

“Iz got a question.”

“Yes?”

“How do yas know which is the male and which is da female?”

“The woman have curves and bumps; the men do not.”

“Okay, I wa try ma best.”

Jareth had whispered lies into those seeds that would not take root unless he was near. He had been unsure if Mark was one of the men whom his scout had “seeded,” but he had taken the gamble and won. Actually giving the touch of goblin glamour at the end was a nice touch, if he could say so himself.

Why Sarah couldn’t see the favor he had done her, he did not understand. If that small seed was enough to convince him that a woman as perfect as his Sarah was not worth everything, then his love was not true.

Jareth’s loved burned within him. It devoured everything. That is what she deserved.

“Hmm,” Jareth thought out loud, “The effects will probably wear off soon.”

He put the entire ordeal out of his head as he went to retrieve his breakfast.

Marcus had actually jumped into the Underground with the sole purpose of finding his wife and kids. He knew exactly where they would be.

“Enter the labyrinth, keep on straight through the wall, make a left at the purple striped vines, and then a right at the bird statue.”

His heart leapt as he saw the giant doors. “Home at last!” He thought fondly of his beautiful wife, his little boy—perhaps not so little anymore, and his humble cottage. Or, he tried to, at least.

The more he walked, the less he could remember the curve of his wife’s hairy feet or what color his house was. What did they name his son?

He distracted himself by waving his hand to open the gates.
And waving it again.
And then prying at the thin space between the doors. It didn’t move.

“And just what do ya think you’re doing?”

“I have to get in there.”

“Why?”

“The goblin city is in there, and I’m a goblin.”

“No you ain’t.”

Mark tore his gaze away from the stone doors. He looked over at a short wrinkly man standing by the hedges. He looked so familiar. “What do you mean?”

“Well for one, you don’t talk like a goblin.”

Mark thought for a second. He had been talking quite like a human for this particular conversation.

“And for two, well, you come ov’r here.”

Mark walked over to where the ugly man was pointing at a small pond. He peered over, only to see his own reflection. But instead of long, furry ears, he saw small, curved (very human) ones. His face, his hair… he paused for a second to try to remember his wife and children. Nope. Everything was back to normal.

Well, with the exception of his clothing. He was completely naked.

As he cupped his hands over his privates, he realized that the dwarf had been talking the whole time.

“…it was a good try, changed up my routine a bit, but really all you gotta do is ask. Whatever it was that you wished away will be in there and I can open the…”

“I need to find the Goblin King!” Mark interrupted angrily.

“Of course you do, that’s how it’s done. Not sure if he’s in, to be honest. But now that you’ve been all rude, I don’t know if I’m in the mood to let you in.”

Mark’s tone softened. “I’m sorry; I’m not angry with you. I just… I was tricked and I’m frustrated and I need to find Jareth and make him fix it.”

Hoggle nodded. “I don’t know if and he’ll do that, but it has happened once before.”

With that, Hoggle threw open the stone doors. “Good luck. You’ll need it.”

So it happened that a naked man stepped into the labyrinth. He gazed up and down the pathway that appeared to go on forever. He gasped. Not at the hopelessness of the situation, but at the papers that were pinned and scatted everywhere.

From every single one of them, the sketched face of Jareth mocked him. Peering closer to the one be his feet, he saw large scrawled letters reading, “WANTED FOR TREASON” across the top. Underneath the drawing, it read, “Any information about the whereabouts of the former Goblin King will be rewarded with one wish. All information should be told only to the King of the Underground in the castle beyond the goblin city.”
Mark grabbed the paper and read it again to be sure. He crumpled it in his hand and dropped it back on the ground. It appeared he had found a way to get back home.
“We are going back!” Saran declared.

Jareth turned paler. “Consider, dear Sarah,” his words were confident but his voice was not, “the life debt you owe me.”

“Are you saying not going would repay it?”

“Oh no,” he managed a genuine smile. “What’s said is said. I am simply informing you that such words would hold more power in the Underground. You may find yourself unable to leave.”

“Stop lying.” She busied her self with her backpack, “You are just afraid of your father.”

Jareth’s eyes glowed as he thrust his face in front of Sarah. “Have the decency to look at me when you say such things!” His face was twisted into a scowl and non-existent wind moved his hair around. “Yes, I fear my father and so should you. This lazy life you have created, Sarah, had made you forget if the dangers untold. The only reason you did not stumble across anything deadly in MY labyrinth is because I did not allow it.”

Sarah looked him straight in the eye. “I never know when to believe you.” She didn't realized she had put a hand on his shoulder until she saw his body relax. She didn't know of she was trying to comfort or convince him “But Jareth, if what you say is true, and you will keep me in the Underground for saving Mark, so be it. I am willing to pay that price, but know that I will despise every minute of it. I will never stop trying to leave.”

The Goblin King’s eyes widened before he broke his gaze away. “After all I have done for you, how could you say such things.” He brushed her hand away from his shoulder.

Sarah didn't know what to do with these mood swings. It was exhausting. He had been like this ever since she had sabotaged him with mountains of proof against him.

Breakfast has been peaceful, pleasant even. Jareth had been the perfect guest, thanking Sarah for her generosity and hospitality. He had even given her a deep bow as he left the table.

After, Sarah had reclaimed her room, saying she needed to shower. As soon as the door was locked, she went to work. She texted every family member and friend of Mark's. She asked for photos, first
memories, and any concrete way he had made an impact on the world. She had claimed it was for a scrapbook she was making him (and once he was home safe, she swore to herself she would make it).

So as not to make Jareth suspicious, she did eventually take a shower.

She returned to the kitchen to find that Harry I had done all of the dishes (poorly) and was belting out a song as he put them away.

“Let’s dance! Put in your red shoes and dance the blues.
Let’s dance! To the song they're playing on the radio!”

Seeing Sarah, he grabbed her hand and twirled her towards him.

“Let’s sway! While colors light up your face.
Let's sway! Sway through the crowd to an empty space.”

He twirled her away again. She had never seen him smile so widely. His cheeks were creased and she could see most of his slightly crooked teeth. It was charming. She didn't even question where the background music as coming from.

“And if you say run, I'll run to you.”

He grabbed both hands now and brought her in close. She followed willingly.

“And if you say hide, I’ll hi-i-ide.”

He tucked a hand behind the small of her back and took a long step forward, causing her to dip.

“Because my love for you would break my heart in two.”

He stepped back again, and she pulled herself straight using his steady.
“If you should call into my arm,

He spun her so that she faced away from him, crossing his arms across her front and pulling her against his body.

“And tremble like a flower!”

He finished grandly, still holding her. She hoped he didn't notice that she was slightly trembling. She felt like a child again being drawn in by his power.

At that moment she felt her phone vibrate in her pocket. People were starting to respond to her request. Just like she had broken through the bubble those years ago, she pushed through Jareth’s embrace.

“You can't do things like that.”

“Oh?” He said, still smiling down at her, “and why is that?”

“Because I am still in mourning.”

“Yes, I noticed that you still wear his ring. But time will fix that, and I have time on my side.”

Her phone buzzed again. *If only he knew.*

*If only she knew*, Jareth felt with a pang of guilt. He had won, yes, but he wished she was not so forlorn. In the bright side, he thoroughly enjoyed dancing with the adult Sarah. Gone were the awkward and timid steps she had once used. In their place were graceful and confident ones. She was a woman comfortable with her body, just as he had encouraged her to be.

The day up I until lunch was uneventful. Sarah stalled for time by taking Jareth with her on a walk and by washing her bedsheets.
It was 1pm. Jareth and Sarah were seated at the kitchen table. To be more accurate, Sarah was seated, Jareth had his feet propped on the table. They were both eating sandwich (which Jareth had made very clear were human food, not royal get food). Sarah finally felt she had enough evidence to make her argument.

The argument had been brutal, but Sarah had eventually dragged every bit of truth from Jareth.

“It is not as if I planned for this to happen now.”

“You can’t just meddle with my life like that!”

It has ended with Sarah ripping open the closet door and grabbing a backpack. She started to fill it was food and other supplies to take with her when she, yet again, returned to the labyrinth.

Sarah sighed deeply. “You know I am grateful, Jareth, but surely you understand that I need to save the one I love.”

It felt like the baby all over again. Just like before, Sarah was going to choose another brat instead of him. He did not think he could take it a second time. Luckily, she did owe him her life.

He was so lost in his thoughts, he didn’t notice that she had gone to her room to pack.

The girl who had eaten the peach and still remembered felt very unheroic as she through clothing into her bag. Luckily, Jareth hadn’t changed the clothes in her dresser, so she had some practical options.

She began to zip up her bag when something caught her eye. There on the floor was the broken iron chain. She picked it up and played with it between her fingers.

She began to put it on her night side table, but then bit her lip and stuffed it in her bag. Her feelings about Jareth were beyond complicated, but she knew better than to trust him.

“I am leaving!” she shouted to him. “If you plan on joining me, you’d better hurry up.”
Disclaimer: “Let's Dance” belongs to the late, great David Bowie.
They had been wandering the labyrinth for hours. The brick walls began to look the same to Sarah, and old frustrations were gathering in her throat.

“This is YOUR labyrinth! How can you not find someone in it?”

Jareth, on the other hand, seemed cheerful. “I, for one, am enjoying seeing this part of my kingdom. I do not wander it often. Besides, just because it’s mine, doesn’t mean I automatically know where to find something in it. Haven’t you lost things in that pig sty of a room?”

“Yes, but I don’t have magical crystals! What’s the use of you having your magic if you won’t use it?”

“Oh, I use it quite often.” Jareth produced a crystal and, twirling his long fingers around it, turned it into a bird. He stroked the bird’s head with a gloved finger before letting it fly away. Sarah watched as the beautiful thing was about to fly out of sight. Jareth snapped his fingers. The bird turned back into a crystal and returned to Jareth’s hand. He wore a self-satisfied smile.

“You are intolerable.”

“And yet, you tolerate me.” He began to hum the song he had sung in the kitchen.

Sarah felt her face become hot. Whether it was embarrassment or anger, she did not wish to speculate.

“Jareth! I need to find Mark, and I need you to help me, and I need you to stop being a smartass. All you are accomplishing is making me despise you more.”

She didn’t mean it. She was frustrated, and she wanted a rise out of Jareth so that he would actually help. She couldn’t truly despise him after what he went through for her.

Jareth grew quiet. He turned towards a brick wall and raised a hand to it. It split open before him, causing dust and glitter to emerge in puffs near the ground. He walked through the gap he had created.

Sarah made a quick decision and followed him. When she made it to the next walkway, she gasped. The entire ground and walls were covered in papers. The wind blew them around and made those that were tacked up shudder. Each paper had her Goblin King’s face on it.

Jareth ripped one from the wall and thrust it towards her. “Here! Here is where your beloved Mark is doing.”

Sarah stared at the words, forcing them to make sense in her head. “No. Mark wouldn’t do this. He is a gentle person. He couldn’t possibly…and if he did, it’s because he doesn’t know how horrible your father…”

“Well, I have not seen him in the labyrinth, have you?” Jareth said sternly.

“Let’s keep looking,” Sarah said. She did not look at the Goblin King’s eyes.

They wandered until nightfall. By the time the sun began to set, Sarah had convinced herself that
Jareth was tricking her yet again. *This is not the first time. I simply cannot trust him. He probably conjured those flyers in hopes that I would give up. I simply cannot trust him.*

The last thought made her sad. She sighed heavily as she unrolled her sleeping bag. *The only way we’ll find Mark is if Jareth cannot use his magic to trick me.* She glanced around wondering if Mark could be right next to her but invisible. Does Jareth even have that kind of power? She dipped her hand into her bag and entwined the iron chain between her fingers. It felt cold despite the warm night.

She swallowed hard as a lump of guilt formed in her throat.

That night Jareth had a nightmare. It was completely dark but he instinctually knew that he was back in the oubliette. He could feel the shackle heavy on his ankle. Blinking, he realized that the darkness was again his blindness.

His dreaming brain was convinced he had never left. That Sarah’s rescue was the true dream. Shaking his wrist, he felt the iron burn fresh pain into his flesh.

He was slouched against the dirt wall, but quickly composed himself when he heard two sets of feet walking towards him.

“He has been no trouble at all, I assure you,” his father’s voice echoed through the halls. “Sure, there was a learning curve, but now he’s a docile as a puppy.”

“I don’t know; I’ve had a puppy before. They are almost more trouble than they’re worth.” A female voice responded. Jareth knew that voice. Hope rose in his chest. *Sarah has come for me.*

“Oh, not if you train them right.” With that, Jareth felt a sharp pain on the back of his neck and then across his thighs. He knew the sensation by now—the riding crop. “Stand up straight, you filth, you have company.”

Ignoring the pain in his body, he straightened to full height.

Sarah’s lighter footsteps circled him. She let out a small hum here and there and she walked around. He felt her warm breath on his exposed shoulder as she leaned in close.

“If he’s as good as you say, I’ll take him. He looks fit enough.”

“I assure you, you’ll get what you pay for.”

Jareth began to sweat. Why would Sarah be dealing with his father. He tried to keep his breaths steady. She was a clever girl; surely this was part of a plan.

“But I do have one condition.”

“And that is?”

“I have dealt with this one in the past. I know he can’t be trusted; he cheats. I need him collared.”

“Of course.”

“Iron chain.”

Jareth swallowed hard. Why would she request that? Was it to convince the king that she could be
trusted? Doubt crept in as Jareth realized that Sarah may not be on his side.

“What else is there?” Jareth’s father gave a rare chuckle. “You’ll understand if I don’t touch it myself.”

The shuffled footsteps of Helen could be heard as well as the scrape of something heavy against dirt.

“Of course, I will have the pleasure myself.” Sarah’s glee sounded genuine.

Jareth felt a cold sensation around his neck. It warmed against his skin as it tightened and clicked into place. A sudden weight pulled him down as a thick chain fell against his chest.

He couldn’t help but scream as it fell against his chest. He quickly leaned forward to move the chain away from him, only to be met with the riding crop on the small of his back.

The chain moved forward as someone held onto it.

“Thank you. I’m glad we could do business. Your son will make a fine slave.”

Just fear me, love me, do as I say, and I will be your slave. Oh, Sarah, you don’t need to do it this way.

“He is not my son any longer. He is no better than a human.”

Sarah gave a breathy laugh as Jareth felt a tug on his neck. “Come along, little puppy.”

Jareth awoke drenched in cold sweat. The dirt was sticking to his palms and face, as he had rolled off of his sleeping bag. He looked up at the moon, never so relieved that he could see it. Sarah was only a few feet away from him and sleeping quietly. Her breath made small noises as she exhaled, moving the strands of hair that had fallen on her face.

Normally, he would have been tempted to brush that hair with his fingers and lie next to her, but that temptation did not strike him now. He could still hear her voice from his dream, “Come along, little puppy.”

He climbed back to his cot, and eventually drifted off into a more quiet sleep.

Not noticing that he had a bandage wrapped around his wrist and a small iron chain overlapping that.
Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the short chapter. I'm finally picking this back up and wanted to get something out there before you lovely folks forgot I exist.

Sarah was started awake by the sound of yelling.

“YOU! You vile temptress! You wicked woman! How dare you!”

She cringed, wondering if pretending to still be asleep was a good plan. Maybe he would cool down? That plan was destroyed as he grabbed her by the arm and hoisted her to her feet.

“Sarah, look at me!”

Sarah was shocked. She had seen the Goblin King victorious, beaten, terrified, and smug, but she had never seen him cry. To be fair, he wasn’t actually crying now, but it was obvious that he had been. His eyes were red-rimmed and his face was shiny from the tears. “How could my Sarah do this to me?” His voice softened.

“I-I promise I’ll take it off when we find Mark,” Sarah stammered. She was already regretting her rash decision from the night before. She had been kind about it, making sure to wrap the bandage around his wrist first. She had the best of intentions, but perhaps it was still too cruel. “Please understand, Jareth, I need to find him and you’ve been lying and…”

Jareth turned away from her. At first she thought he couldn’t bare the sight of her, but she soon realized that he was looking at something. Sarah and Jareth had been so concentrated on each other that they had not noticed the figure watching their argument with amusement.

A young man stood awkwardly, shifting his weight from foot to foot. He looked as if he had been trying to speak up for a while. Sarah ignored this behavior, rushing towards him in pure excitement.

“Mark!” She almost knocked him over with her embrace.

“Oh, Sarah,” Mark said while hugging her in turn. He allowed himself a moment to stroke her hair before pulling away. “I was worried I’d never see you again.”

Sarah smiled widely, “You should know I’ll always find you.” All of her worry and frustration had melted away. She was practically giddy and it made the whole world seem more pleasant. “Isn’t this place magical? Did you run into anyone who knew me? I bet they helped you out. I think you’d really like Ludo. I… what’s that?”

Sarah paused her rambling as she saw Mark reached for something in the folds of his cloak. For the first time, Sarah realized that her fiancé was not wearing the clothing he had left with (which was nothing) but an impressive gold and dark blue waistcoat, grey leggings, and a matching dark blue cloak. From behind it, he revealed a clouded crystal.

Jareth, who had been silent up until this point, immediately recognized it. He leapt forward, hand extended. “Don’t!”
But Mark had already released it, allowing it to shatter on the cobblestone. “I’m sorry, Sarah. I did this for you.”

A grey smoke began to issue from the broken crystal. It started as a stream but soon billowed upward. Sarah darted over to Jareth, grabbing his arm. He jerked away from her, a look panic in his eyes. Sarah’s heart sank at that expression, but she didn’t allow it to stop her task. “Let me take it off,” she hissed.

Finally understanding her intention, Jareth held out his wrist to her. She frantically prised her finger between the loose link in his iron bracelet. She pushed so hard that the open edge slipped under her nail. She pulled away, making a small grunt of pain. Jareth was looking down at her work, emotions swirling in his head.

Maybe this is still my sweet Sarah. She could turn and run with her human, leaving me like before, but she’s trying to give me a chance. Still, it was her treachery that had caused this in the first place. He watched with an almost detached amusement as sweat sprung to her brow in worry for his wellbeing.

While the scene played out, the smoke was forming into a head, shoulders, torso, and legs. As it formed, it solidified, taking on details and colors, until a hand reached out and grabbed at Sarah wrist, firmly pulling it away from Jareth’s chain.

Sarah turned around, meeting the face of her attacker. She recognized Jareth’s father. She had seen him in memory, but never had his wrath been set towards her. His eyes were grey and chilling. Despite his fey beauty, everything about his form and stance was cold. His thin lips drew back to reveal a triumphant, feline grin. Sarah viewed it all, with her chin defiantly in the air. She refused to show this man fear.

Jareth saw his love’s brave stance, and although he knew it would bring his father’s wrath, drew strength from it. Forcing his legs to stop their tremble.

“Well, it looks like my little dog lead me right to you.” He gracefully, but with great strength, pulled Sarah away from Jareth. “And it looks like you are still as pathetic as ever, my son.”

“Um, excuse me,” Mark chimed in. He swallowed hard, embarrassed by his mousy demeanor. These magical men scared him, but he shouldn’t let them push his fiancé around. “Excuse me,” he repeated confidently. “I did as you asked, and you owe me my wish.” He took a breath and recited the words he had so carefully chosen as he had wandered the labyrinth. “I wish for Sarah and me to be returned safely to our own home.”

The King of the Underground looked at the human with a bored expression. “Fine, but not yet. I have use for both of you still.”

His attention returned to the woman in his grasp. He tightened his grip on Sarah’s wrist making her give a small squeak in pain. She quickly composed herself and glared back at him. But it was too late; she saw her eyes widen for that second. Tilting his head back, he gave a short, hard laugh. Mark attempted to rush forward, but was held back by an unseen force. Jareth didn’t move.

“This,” he spat, “is the creature you chose? This is the thing that brought embarrassment to my name? What a pity.”

Jareth’s head dropped so that his hair hid his face. His uncharacteristic lack of retort frightened Sarah more than anything else, but a burning anger also began to rise in her stomach.
Seeing the power he still held over his son, the fey continued his ridicule. “Why, you have been collared by the woman. That is not the wrist on which I placed your chain. I can only assume…”

Sarah took advantage of the sadistic tirade to pull her arm down hard, right at the place where her captors’ fingertips and thumb touched. As she hoped, he was not ready for her rebellion (he probably wasn’t used to being disobeyed ever) and she broke free of his grasp. Harnessing all of her anger, she swiftly punched him where she knew it would hurt the most- his unprotected bulge.

Two things happened in that second. Her fist and the air around it gave off a pale green glow, and as her anger met its intended target, he was completely thrown off balance, stumbling backwards while clutching his injured member.
The older fey was stunned, but not for long.

Jareth, breaking free, sprang into action. Grabbing Sarah’s wrist, he pulled her towards the wall. The labyrinth protected its king, swallowing them in the bricks.

Mark saw the unfolding events and dashed towards the rapidly closing gap. Sarah’s hand shot out and grabbed his shirt. The labyrinth begrudgingly accepted this man and took him into the wall as well. As soon as he was through, the gap closed, they were surrounded by darkness.

It was a unique sensation, being engulfed in bricks. As they moved forward, the rough material would move around them and simultaneous close behind them. They moved silently through the pocket of space created for them.

“Thank you,” Sarah whispered into the darkness.

“You’re welcome,” Jareth’s deep voice answered. She had meant for the appreciation to be directed towards the labyrinth itself, but she didn’t have the heart to correct Jareth. A fresh wave of guilt washed over her.

“You’re thanking him?” Mark stood still, stopping Sarah (who still held tightly to his shirt) and Jareth (who still held tightly to Sarah’s wrist). “He’s the reason we’re all stuck here!” Mark’s indignation rose into his throat, causing him to swallow and fight back angry tears. “You turned me into a goblin, you bastard! You are a dangerous man; you deserve to go back to the king.”

Sarah felt Jareth stiffen. She imagined that he was straightening his back to deliver his speech, but nothing came. Sarah felt a tug at her wrist encouraging her to keep moving. She reached back for Mark’s hand, but there was no tenderness in the grip.

They walked in silence; the only sound was the rough shuffling of the bricks. Finally, a stream of light met the group. As bricks shifted and turned, more of the labyrinth became visible. A view of twisted bushes and a cobblestone clearing appeared before them. One by one, they exited the wall and dropped hands.

Jareth turned towards Sarah, but looked at a spot above her head. He extended his wrist, presenting her with the iron bracelet. “Remove it.” He commanded calmly.
Sarah did not question. In her non-panicked state, she was easily able to pry at the loose link and bend it upward. The bracelet fell like a dead snake into her hand. She stared down at it, placing her guilt and blame on the small object. *I should never have brought you,* she thought, *you just tempt me.* Still, she placed it in her pocket and looked up at Jareth.

She found that he had turned his back to her. His gaze was directed ahead, where they could barely see the gates of the goblin city past the winding walls. He pulled half heartedly at the bandage on his wrist, but his mind was elsewhere. Sarah could only guess at his thoughts. That great castle, this whole labyrinth, all of it was his and now his father had taken it from him. All because he put his loyalty with a human, and that same human didn’t trust him enough to let him be.

*Wait a minute,* Sarah’s inner voice protested, *you know that bastard, as noble as him sees himself, is not a trustworthy person. You had good reason to make the playing field equal.*

Even so, the knowledge that Jareth would never understand that bit into her. No amount of explaining would take away the pain and fear she had just caused him. And, to an extend, she knew why. He had been willing to suffer under the hand of his father for her. He had been willing to face losing his kingdom, his dignity, and even his life. She, on the other hand, could not risk waiting to find Mark.

Mark was watching the tense moment unfold. He had no clue what to think about the whole thing. His anger towards Jareth was bubbling inside of him, but he kept it at bay. He needed to get himself and Sarah back home. Life could just go back to normal.

“Sarah,” he said gently. She didn’t hear him the first time, she was so lost in her thoughts. “Sarah?” She turned and gave him a sad smile. “Let’s go back home, okay? I’ll make us dinner tonight- or whatever meal time it is, and we can rent a movie.” He walked towards her and put his arm around her shoulder.

She leaned into him. “That’s sounds amazing, babe, you don’t even know, but we need to take care of things here first.”

“What?!” He stepped away in shock, causing her to almost fall. Jareth turned around and stared at her with one eyebrow raised.

“Yes. Well, you don’t have to stay if you don’t want to, but part of this is because Jareth saved my life, and…” She hesitated, wondering if telling Mark about her life dept was smart right now. “I owe
“You mean you love him.” Mark heard the words fly from his mouth before he could stop them.

Sarah’s mouth fell open as she stared at Mark.

“Don’t look at me like that; you two have some sort of past that I can’t even touch. You defend his ridiculous actions. You brought him to our house, babe! What am I supposed to make of all that?”

“Childhood infatuation is nothing compared to…”

“Childhood?! You’ve been part of this, this thing,” he gestured vague around him, “since childhood and you never thought to tell me? We’ve been engaged for a year now. We have wedding plans this summer, did you think…”

“Would you have believed me?”

“Maybe not right away, but you had proof in that mirror!”

“Really? Really? You would want me to scare the shit out of you in the name for something that probably wouldn’t make a difference? The moment you were here you turned us in to the most evil person here. What? Should I have introduced you personally to the King of the Goblins when we first met?” Sarah waved a hand towards where Jareth had been, only to find he wasn’t there. “Jareth?”

Both Sarah and Mark turned to look all around the clearing. He was nowhere to be seen.

“Now our guide has gone and abandoned us.” Marks words were softer, but still accusing.

Sarah was tired of feeling guilty. She was exhausted from it, more so than from the journey itself. Jareth had probably decided to be done with her, and Mark was dealing with a lot right now. She sighed deeply.
“Babe, let’s wait for a while and see if he returns. If he doesn’t by the end of the day, we can go home. For now,” she sat on a large rock, “sit with me. I’ll tell you everything.”

The King of the Underground had managed to return to the castle. He walked with a limp, legs spread wide to avoid any contact with his manhood. This was no ordinary injury.

“That woman has magic,” he growled at the goblins who surrounded him to help. “This changes everything.”
By the time Sarah had gotten to the part of her story where she returned home, Mark’s brow was unusually furrowed.

“You mean to tell me that this guy kidnapped Toby, put you in danger, and sent an army after you as a teenager and you want to help him now?”

“Hmm, dangers untold,” Sarah stated almost fondly. “Just listen; I’m not done.”

Sarah told him about Jareth’s father and the events that unfolded because of Jareth’s loyalty. As she got to the part about the shackle, Mark looked skeptical.

“I’m sure he told you that was what went down, but you don’t know. You weren’t there.”

“Just listen!”

She continued through the most recent events: the wish, the oubliette, the crystal, her escape, and her rescue. She carefully guaged Mark’s reaction, knowing that she had asked a lot of him lately. She knew he wanted to make Jareth into the ultimate villain of this story, but life is not that simple. It’s often not fair. Mark did not interrupt this time, patiently taking in each part of the story. His expression, however, only changed when he heard the part about Jareth sleeping in the bed with Sarah. After the shock, he remained unmoved.

Encouraged by his attention and lack of judgement, Sarah continued to when Mark had left. She told him about her mourning, her realization, and her and Jareth’s search through the Labyrinth. She still left out the life depts and the cost of this trip. A knot formed in her stomach any time she tried to come up with the right words.

Jareth was walking through his labyrinth with purpose in his step. It was truely his labyrinth despite who sat on the throne. He had created it with magics directly from his soul. Each turn and twist within it was a path to his heart. A form of self sacrifice, a protection for his kingdom, and a test of worthiness for any who traveled it.
He thought back to Sarah as a girl— the girl. Every step closer to the heart of the labyrinth brought her into his heart and affection. He had watched with a sense of fear and amazement as her kindness and cleverness has brought her farther than any before her and any since. His devotion to her was not only seated it his admiration but in a deep magic that few could comprehend. He did in every way love her.

That is why, despite her betrayal, he had already forgiven her. He was beginning to understand, however, why Sarah placed so much value in whether or not she could trust him. Betrayal hurt.

He had a solution to that, though. An plant that grew to the west in his labyrinth. It was called verdade- the truth. If one were to eat it raw, they would be shouting every thought that entered their head, unfiltered and honest. However, if- as Jareth planned to do- it were diluted in a tea, the drinker would only speak truth to the person he or she saw next and in a more civil manner. They would not be forced to talk, but when they did they could not speak a lie. The effects were temporary, but Jareth was willing to brew tea for the next one thousand breakfasts if it meant keeping his Sarah.

Jareth’s father was also on the move but only in a circle. He paced around the throne room, sporadically conjuring a crystal glancing into it and then smashing it on the floor. The goblins cowered in the corners or behind archways, shuddering when the crystals met the stone floor.

“What to do with this...anomaly. It vexes me so,” he growled.

One brave (or stupid) goblin spoke up, “but you were so pleased when you learned she had the magics.”

“Yes,” he hissed, turned rapidly towards the one who had spoken. Every goblin held their breath in anticipation of violence, “but that’s when I wrongfully assumed she was some hidden fey.”

When he went back to pacing, everyone let out a sigh of relief.

“I’ve checked every avenue. I’ve dug through her history, from birth to now. Nothing!” He smashed a crystal holding the image of Sarah’s mother leaving the house. “Absolutely human! Still a stain and a shame on the entire family for my ponce of a son to be intertwined” his face twisted in disgust, “with her.”

He stopped, “and yet, she does have magic, and that is a mystery and a problem.” He conjured a
crystal and sought out Sarah. “Ah, it seems as if she has been abandoned.”

Sarah was reaching the end. She told Mark about how they found the wanted posters and had just reached her decision to put the bracelet on Jareth, when she heard a familiar groan.

“You can figure out the rest,” she stood up with a smile, “follow me!”

Mark obediently followed her, still reeling from the mental journey he had just taken.

“Ludo!” Sarah called, “are you there?”

The groaning sound ceased and a slow but joyful, “Sawah!” could be heard from around a corner. Sarah ran ahead and out of sight from Mark.

He could still hear them, though.

“Oh, Ludo, it’s so great to see you!”

“Sawah, friend!”

“Woah, careful there.”

Mark caught up to them and took a hesitant step back. He had just heard the entire story and he knew that this beast was friendly, but he was not prepared to see a giant shag rug practically engulfing his fiance in a hug. She was bent back in an attempt to keep from falling over.

“Ludo,” Sarah said, pulling out of the hug, “want you to meet someone.”

“Friend?” Ludo said. Mark was still a bit uncertain about that giant mouth.

“Yes, a good friend. Ludo, this is Mark.” She gestured towards her fiance. “Mark, Ludo.”
Mark swallowed and stepped forward, extending his hand to shake. He gave a small gasp as Ludo embraced him tightly. His furry arms like a thick blanket that probably needed to be washed. Mark returned the hug with arms only, pulling his core at a safe distance.

“Um...nice to meet you, Ludo. I’ve heard so much about you.”

“Mark! Friend!”

“Exactly, Ludo!” Sarah chimed in. Mark saw the smile on her face: pure delight. He could not remember a time when she had been this happy. His shoulders sagged.

“Shouldn’t we go back to the clearing, babe? In case Jareth returns.”

He was answered by the angry yells of Ludo. Thinking he had done something to enrage the beast, he took several steps back only to bump into a tall figure.

Jareth bent down and carefully collected the leaves of verdade. He picked them one by one and then stacked them and placed them gingerly in his waistcoat pocket. He gave a satisfied smile, allowing crooked teeth to show between his lips.

Conjuring a crystal, he checked on Sarah. He almost dropped it. The image that met his eyes was that of a battle. One of Sarah’s companions was controlling small boulders that rained towards his father. The fey was easily swatting them away with a magical flick of his fingers. They were nothing more than flies to him, annoying yet harmless. Sarah was staring at her hands and biting her lip. *She must be trying to recreate what had happened before,* Jareth realized. Mark, to his credit, had found a large stick and had it brandished before him. None of them stood a chance.

Jareth made the decision to appear at the castle where they would inevitably be taken.
Chapter 15

TW: Minor violence/abuse. If you’ve been with me this far, I’m sure you’ll be fine.

Once the initial fear of being captured wears off, being a prisoner is very boring. Sarah felt as though she was the expert at this point.

Once again, Sarah found herself shackled by her ankles to a wall.

Once again, she cursed all fey.

Once again, her mind raced through a million different strategies, but this time, she kept drawing a blank.

Instead of being in the oubliette, she was stuck in the throne room. Unlike before, she had no access to her friends or even a bit of privacy. Also, her capturer was not infatuated with her, making her previous plan moot. She resigned herself to finding out as much as she could about her new situation.

Ludo and Mark had been taken to her previous spot in the oubliette. She only knew this because she would catch the fey keeping and eye them with a crystal. It was rare, as he didn’t seem to care as much about them as he did his current prize—her.

Looking at her shackles carefully, Sarah noticed that these had a key holes. *So maybe they aren’t enchanted. Just locked.*

Sarah wondered what Jareth would think when he returned to find them gone. She wondered how Mark and Ludo were holding up in captivity. Ludo was like a big toddler, honestly, prone to getting upset. Mark… well, Sarah could only feel guilt for how she had dragged him into this mess. She didn’t want to linger on that feeling because, at this moment, it would not help her escape.

Jareth’s father hadn’t spoke a word to her since they got there. That said, he often did speak, but it was either orders to the goblins or questions to himself. It was as if he didn’t know what to do with her now that he had her.
She took his distraction to get a good look at the room. It was much cleaner than she had thought it would be. Given Jareth’s usual motif, she expected chickens and goblins running around a hodgepodge of dark and glittery finery. Yet, despite being made of the same stone as the labyrinth, it looked scrubbed and polished with only a few flecks of glitter in sight.

*Guess big ol’ king fey couldn’t get rid of ALL of it.* Sarah found herself smirking despite her situation.

“And what is so amusing?”

Sarah jumped. It was the first words Jareth’s father had directed at her since her capture and she was not ready for the surprise. Composing herself, she made the choice to be defiant.

“I think it’s funny that you probably had goblins clean the place, but there are still remains of glitter.”

The King of the Underground did not find this funny at all.

“Girl,” he sneered, leaning towards her, “you are only alive as bait for my horrid son. I have no issue harming you. In fact, I’d enjoy it.”

Spurred on by anger, Sarah spat back, “I’m sure you wouldn’t, sadistic freak.”

At that, he backhanded her across her face. Sarah’s head pulled back from instinct as well as force; she tasted blood. His ringed hand scraped her jaw and lips. She turned back to him immediately, anger and defiance smoldering in her posture. She felt the sting of her wounds but let the blood drip freely. The fey was telling her to address him properly, but his voice was muffled by the roar in her ears. Her eyes flashed green and the air around her pulsated, pushing her hair and clothing away from her body.

In a voice that echoed throughout the throne room and down the halls, she said, “You have no power over me, you monster!”

The tension that had been building around her released in one, powerful wave that pushed out from every part of her body. Anything not bolted down was propelled away from her: a small table, several goblins, and the King himself.
As if her power knew its target, the fey got the worst of it. While the goblins were simply toppled, he was shot up and back, smacking his head hard against the stone ceiling before crashing down and hitting it again on the floor. He lay motionless for several minutes before Sarah had the courage to approach.

She walked as close as her chains would allow, standing only two feet away from the unconscious fey. She could see a small trickle of blood coming from his head, but she also noticed the steady rise and fall of his chest. He was alive.

*Of course, it couldn’t be that easy.*

She was suddenly exhausted. It was as if the magic that she released had been holding up her body and strength. Now that it was expelled, she wanted to just curl up on the cold floor and sleep. Forcing her eyes to stay open and her mind to think, she turned to the goblins around her.

“Is there any way any of you could get me out of here?”

They peered at her from behind the pillars and crevices in the wall, their eyes darting from their ruler’s crumpled body to The Girl Who Ran The Labyrinth.

“Please,” she pleaded, “I don’t have much, but I will repay you in any way I can.”

Remembering Hoggle’s love of shiny things, she felt in her pocket for any spare earrings or rings. Her fingers brushed against metal, and she said a quick prayer before pulling it out. Her prayers were answered but not in the way she expected.

Jareth appeared in the oubliettes, scouring the tunnels where he was certain his father would Sarah. His father may hate the girl, but he wouldn’t kill her as long as knew of her magic. He may pull her apart to find its origin, but he would keep her alive.

Where Sarah purposefully ignored the abilities that had emerged, Jareth simply accepted them. Sarah was an extraordinary woman who had traveled freely in the Underground. It only made sense to him that she would have absorbed some of its magic.
Twisting down further into the oubliette, Jareth broke into a sprint. His boots hit the impacted ground with rapid thuds that echoed. He thought for sure he would have found her by now.

“Sarah!” He called into the dark, “Answer me!”

A low, guttural groan rumbled through the tunnels. Jareth groaned in return; he recognized that sound. However, his pace quicked moreso. Sarah would most likely be with the rest of the group.

Sarah, iron bracelet between her teeth, was crawling on all fours towards the unconscious fey. She stretched her body long across the floor, feeling the cold stones through her shirt. Completely lying down, she could now easily reach his wrist. She managed to drape it around with minimal touching of his actual skin. She pushed the lose link into place and released a breath she didn’t realize she had been holding.

She tugged on the chain once to make sure it was secure and then crawled back into a sitting position.

Quite satisfied, she sat back cross legged and called back to the goblins. “That’s iron that’s on him. He has no power now. Can someone please get me out of here?”

The goblins, who had been watching wide-eyed during the collaring, began to cheer and dance around.

A large goblin with boar-like teeth sticking out of his lower jaw shuffled over to the powerless fey. Without hesitation, he clumsy grasped under the top of his shirt, until he pulled out a key on a chain. He yanked at it, and it broke like a wet spaghetti noodle. He then shuffled towards Sarah, presenting the key to her while beaming.

“Thank you,” she said as she plucked it from his hand. As she went to work on the shackles, another goblin approached her.

“You bring back better king?”
“Yes,” she responded confidently. Realizing she had no plan and no idea how strong “bad king” was, she then asked, “are there any weapons around here?”

The goblins began jumping and pointing to the wall behind her. Two sabres were mounted on the wall. *Cliche, but it’ll do.*

She unceremoniously pulled one off the wall.

Jareth, Ludo, and Mark had similar ideas once they were free. After Mark found a large branch, Ludo a boulder, and Jareth twirled three crystals in his hand, the group went straight for the castle.

They walked through the goblin city, its surprising silence pressing around them. Mark broke the silence.

“Just so you know, once we save Sarah, she and I are out of here.”

Jareth tilted his head back slightly and gave something between a sneer and a smile. “I make no promises.”

“The choice is not up to you.”

“You are correct.”

The remainder of the journey was quiet save for the sound of Ludo’s feet.

They approached the large castle doors, each man/beast/fey exchanging a glance. “Save Sawah?” Ludo asked.

Mark nodded, “Yes.”

Jareth gripped the handle of one door while Mark held its partner. They swung them open
simultaneously.

They ran in, weapons high. Jareth shouted, “Unhand her, you… oh fuck it.”

Ludo, Jareth, and Mark stopped short, greeted by the sight of Sarah, sword in hand, standing over Jareth’s father.

She looked up as they arrived and lowered her sword. “I’m so glad you all made it back safely.”

Jareth and Mark both couldn’t help but smile with pride.
“Treasonous imbeciles!”

Sarah was almost relieved that Jareth’s father had awoken. The silence of the room was pressing down upon her. Not long after Mark’s departure, Jareth had had the gall to propose to Sarah. Still under the influence of the truth tea, Sarah told Jareth exactly what she thought of his timing and heartlessness.

He had retreated to his throne, throwing himself down and staring at the ceiling. Sarah sat herself on the carved stump and pretended not to notice his sulking.

The immaturity had lasted almost an hour when the unconscious fey began to stir. Jareth had immediately leapt from the throne to get out of range. The king of the Underground was, understandably, unhappy.

“How dare you attack me, girl?” He hissed. “And you,” he looked toward his son, “know the consequences of such actions.” He motioned towards his shackles and then charged towards Sarah and Jareth.

Jareth flinched and raised and arm in front of his face, but Sarah managed a smirk. Without his magic, the chains had remained locked. The king ran to the end of the line, only to have his upper body move farther than his feet could reach. He fell flat with an undignified “umph.”

Jareth could not help but take a step back. Although his father was harmless at this moment, he had only learned to expect the worse. A moment like this should be satisfying, but only brought him fear.

Sarah was beyond satisfied with the humiliation of the king, but her victory was dampened by Jareth’s obvious discomfort. She stepped between father and son in an attempt to shield one from the other.

Jareth’s father was forced to scoot himself back until the chain gave him slack. He then stood up and brushed the dust from his legging with two quick swipes. He raised his head to meet Sarah’s gaze.

“I see you have collared me.”
“I have.” She spoke seriously.

“The council will not stand for this; it is an insult to the fey folk: a human treating me in such a way.” He turned up his nose. Sarah gave him credit for acting so proud in such a situation. And then she began to worry.

If he is so confident, maybe there is a reason. Maybe the trial isn’t a good idea, but I don’t think I can change Jareth’s mind now. This could end very poorly for him. Maybe…

“I think you should know we could have killed you, but your son argued for your life,” Sarah said.

He barely reacted. “Of course he did. He knows our laws.”

Jareth felt his face flush. He was the goblin king and yet he was hiding behind a mortal while she attempted to defend him. It was shameful. He straightened his back and stepped around Sarah.

“Father, I am summoning the high council to take you away for trial.”

“Do so. I have tried to hide your indiscretions long enough. I would rather suffer the shame of a bad son than suffer the son and his hedge-born puterell any longer.”

Jareth face fell as he procured a crystal. He blew on it softly until it had a soft glow about it. “I wish for the council.”

The orb filled with light, starting as a white spark in the center and growing out until it lit the entire room. When the light dimmed back to normal, the crystal was gone, but a group of five people stood next to Jareth.

Perhaps people was not the right word. One looked more like a tree than anything else, another appeared to be made of shadow and fog. The rest were tall, thin fey. Two of the fey were female, as far as Sarah could tell. The elemental creatures were more difficult to distinguish.

One of the females spoke, “What have you summoned us, Kind of the Goblins?” Her voice was both
powerful and layered high and low, as if two people were speaking in harmony.

Jareth gave her a low bow. “Lady, excuse the intrusion. I summoned you to bring my father, Lord Dygon, to trial.”

“Of what do you accuse him?”

“Capture of a human with no verbal contract, torture and capture of a fellow fey, and interference with the Goblin Kingdom.” Jareth’s voice was steady, but Sarah noticed his quick breath between words. She wondered if the council noticed too.

There was a pause where the council members simply stared forward. After several seconds, they nodded and the woman spoke again.

“We cannot grant you interference as Dygon currently overrules your authority of the Goblin Kingdom, but we will take into consideration the remaining offences.”

Jareth nodded once and then kept his head down in the nod. He squared his shoulders and waited. His father did the same.

One of the male fey approached Jareth and placed a hand on the crown of his head; the shadow creature place what must have been his hand on Dygon’s head. There was a brief second when nothing happened before both men’s bodies spasmed and their faces held pained expressions. Sarah watched as Jareth closed his eyes tightly and clenched his teeth, wanting to run and comfort him. Her younger self would have done so, but she was aware that there was a purpose to this and Jareth had agreed to it willingly.

It was only after the fey removed his hand from Jareth’s head that Sarah went to him. Good thing, too, as Jareth began to sway and would have fallen if Sarah had not been there to steady him. Dygon had a similar reaction but was able to grab onto the throne. Sarah bitterly thought, *I wish he had fallen.* And was surprised by her reaction.

The shadow and the fey glided back to the group. Again, they were silent and staring. Sarah wondered if they were sharing information or if the decision was fully up to the two who had scanned the kings.
They silently turned in unison, staring directly at Sarah. The female spoke again, “We have viewed your history with these two and find it troubling.”

Sarah’s heart leapt to her throat; she had not expected the council to turn against her. In fact, she had been sure they would take Jareth’s side.

“You have been mistreated by both of the kings of our worlds, and you have our deepest apologies. While the fey folk have a history of trickery, you followed the rules upon your first visit and should not have been held a second time. You most surely should not have been imprisoned by either ruler. If you so wish, you may accuse them by our laws.”

Sarah avoided looking to Jareth, which was unfortunate because Jareth’s jaw dropped. He had anticipated one of two outcomes: his father being ruled guilty or his father being ruled innocent. It had never crossed his mind that the council would allow a human to press charges on anyone in the Underground.

Whereas Jareth’s reaction was shock, his father’s was rage. “How you could even consider allowing a mere human to have any say in our ways?! My son’s only crime is his obsession with this mortal. An embarrassment for sure, but…”

The female cut him off by raising her finger. “The council has made its decision,” she turned to Sarah once more, “what is yours?”

Sarah pressed her tongue to the roof of her mouth and looked towards the ceiling. She did not wish to see any of the faces looking toward her. She imagined them, though. The council waiting expressionless, Jareth’s father furious, and Jareth...pleading.

“What will happen to him if I do press charges?”

The voice rang out with certainty and power, “He will be sentenced to death.”

It’s was Sarah’s turn to drop her jaw. “You people take rule breaking seriously.”

“It is how we have survived as a people for centuries.”
How interesting that Jareth takes pleasure in breaking and bending rules. He really is a child sometimes.

Sarah then had a brilliant idea. She smiled at Jareth, who by now was biting at his lip with his slightly crooked teeth. She would certainly never send him to his death, but shouldn’t pass up this opportunity.

“I do not wish to press any charges against the Goblin King. With that, good king,” she gave a slight bow, “my life debt is repaid.”

Jareth let out a breath of air, looking both relieved and a bit sad. The sadness confused her. Did he really take her pause as a wish for his death? Surely not.

“I do however wish to press charges against the Dyron.”

The woman nodded. “King Jareth, do you still wish to press charges against him as well?”

“Yes, high ones.”

“So be it.”

The council nodded in unison and they disappeared from the room. The shackles clanked against the stone floor as Jareth’s father disappeared with them.

Jareth and Sarah were left alone in silence.
Despite being full of drunk, celebrating Goblins, the throne room felt empty. Well, empty except for an exhausted young woman and a sulking goblin king.

Sarah had taken to sitting in the corner of the room, using the wall to support her back. She watched as the goblins danced and sang about the victory of their king and the girl who ate the peach. She wasn’t sure how she felt about that title, but it had stuck. She would occasionally look up at Jareth, but then quickly look away before he could notice. She hated that she was doing it- like a schoolgirl who couldn’t approach her crush.

Jareth was on his throne, watching with disinterest at the ongoings. His elbow was propped against the arm of the throne, which in turn propped up his chin. He would occasionally switch arms, giving him an excuse to look towards Sarah. Once he caught her smiling at Ludo (who was wearing an empty beer barrel on his head. Otherwise, she seemed solemn, brushing dirt from her clothing or sighing heavily. Nothing held her here now, and Jareth knew she would leave soon.

He went through the options in his mind: He could force her to stay, but she would hate him for it. Plus, she was clever; she would soon escape. He could plead with her, guilt her, and remind her of everything he had done. That would also be a miserable existence after, as she would grow to hate him. He briefly considered bribing her, offering the world to her, her every dream. But he knew that had failed in the past.

Shaking himself from his thoughts he looked for her, finding that Sarah was no longer at the party.

Sarah walked down the stone hallways, the sounds of inebriated goblins echoed but softened as she distanced herself from the throne room. She needed a few minutes to herself; she needed to escape Jareth’s gaze as she figured something out.

She peered into open doorways as she walked, hoping to find an empty space. One was obviously the kitchen. An odd mix of smells wafted from it along with the voice of a large, woman goblin.

“Get it! Get the roast out before it burns, you nummits! The king’ll have you ‘eads!” Three other goblins scrambled around grabbing food, goblets, and barrels of mead.

Another room appeared to be a space completely devoted to Jareth’s outfits. Sarah rolled her eyes, wondering if he had closets as well. The room was well organized, but completely crowded. Not a good space for her.

She finally came upon a moderately sized bedroom (for a castle). The majority of the room was taken up by a large bed, covered in a dark purple comforter. An arched window provided some light with the setting sun, creating long rays of orange through the room. Perfect.

Jareth didn’t know what to do. Should he find her? If so, what would he even say? She he just let her go? That may be less painful. Maybe she would run into the Fountain of Forgetfulness. He mused for a minute about how he could rescue her and tell her the tales of his heroism. Remembering his promise to be truthful, he reluctantly chased the thought away.

Making a decision, he stood up. The goblins paused their festivities to see what their king had to say.
“Did any of you see which way the girl went?”

Several goblins echoed, “The girl who ate the peach?” or some variation of that.

Jareth pinched the bridge of his nose and closed his eyes. Through clenched teeth he hissed, “Yes. That one.”

Almost every goblin pointed down the east hall. A few confused ones, who simply wanted to be part of something, pointed in other directions. One small goblin with large ears was pointing at the ceiling.

Jareth managed a, “thank you,” as he started towards the hall.

His journey down the hall was much the same as Sarah’s- checking into each room as he went along. Oddly enough, the kitchen goblins grabbed at their necks as he walked by. He would have to ask about that later.

Noticing that the door to one of the guest chambers was closed, he approached it quietly. Opening the heavy wooden door revealed to him a sight that made eyes widen and his heart quicken.

There on the bed was Sarah, sleeping peacefully. She had draped herself over the comforter, with one elbow angled out, as if she had propped herself up on it and let it slide as she dozed off. Her face was angelic, every line of concern and worry from the last few days was smoothed. Her hair had fallen around that face in a way that framed it perfectly. He was afraid to wake it, knowing that she may assume the worse if he was in the room with her. That face would not remain angelic for long.

He began to close the door slowly when the hinges creaked. Sarah sat up immediately, looking around for what had awoken her.

“My apologies, dear Sarah. Go back to sleep.”

Visibly relaxing again, she shook her head. “No need to be sorry.” She busied herself by smoothing out her clothing and the bed. Then, sitting up with her legs hanging over the side, she patted the spot next to her. “Can we talk?”

Jareth sat, causing the bed to droop slightly. Sarah did not resist the way it pulled her closer to the Goblin King.

“Jareth, I…”

“I know, Sarah,” Jareth head hung, making his hair fall over his face. “Your life debt has been paid. I can return you to the Aboveground when you’re ready.”

Sarah gave a pitying smile towards the man who had so much frustration. He had changed so much in the short time. In a burst of confidence and concern, she reached her hand out to his cheek.

At her touch, he looked at her and straightened. “Dear Sarah, don’t be cruel. It’s unbecoming.”

She removed her hand. “You don’t understand. I wish to stay here.”

Jareth nearly fell off the bed. “You wish?”

“Yes.”
“And your life in the Aboveground?”

“Can be left behind. My fiance...is no longer my fiance. I enjoy my job, but I can do it here. My dearest friends live here and you…”

“Yes, Sarah?”

“You and I have a lot to figure out.”

Jareth pulled Sarah into a tight embrace. Sarah allowed herself to fall into him, feeling the vibration of his words. “Well, it’s only forever. We’ll figure it out.”

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