



Teen Zine

Fall 2017



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Chapter 5

Saturday brought with it an increase in Amorie's morale, and now she refuses to lay in bed all day no matter how tired and confused she is. Daisy sent Andrew a rough draft of the article that was going to go in the paper, Andrew approved of it, and altogether things started to look up.

Sunday, however, starts off with another phone call from Andrew at six a.m. I answer it sleepily.

"What's wrong now?" I grumble into the phone. Gigi glares at me from her bed and turns around to face the wall.

"It's not in the paper. Daisy said he would put it in. *Goddammit*, I knew it. I knew that I couldn't count on him."

"Wait..." Since I just woke up due to my phone ringing, I'm having trouble processing what he's saying. "What's going on?"

"The article. I told Daisy to put it in the Sunday paper, and he said he would, and it's *not there!*" Andrew sounds more pissed than when he was talking about being a failure yesterday. I'm a bit annoyed, too, but surely there's a good reason for this. I know Daisy, and he never backs out on his word.

"Why don't you call him and ask him to explain himself? He wouldn't do this on purpose. You know he wouldn't," I say, but Andrew just grunts.

"I don't even know anymore, Alexis. I'm going to go visit him at the Journal and confront him there, since I find it's a lot easier to get answers out of people in person. Do you want to come with me?"

I can't tell if he's asking or not, so I agree mostly out of fear.

In an hour we're already parked in front of the Journal, with my brother still gripping the steering wheel tightly even though the car is stopped. I asked him if I could take us there since I know driving when you're angry really isn't safe, but Andrew insisted on picking me up at the school and figured it'd be easiest if he just stayed in the driver's seat. Honestly, though, I think he just wanted to drive out his fury.

I nudge his shoulder in an effort to let him know we're here, and the second he snaps out of the fantasy world he's in, he flies out of the car and holds the door open for me.

The Journal is set up pretty much how one would expect: there's a perky receptionist sitting proudly at her desk in the front, and just behind her are rows and rows of more desks, each with a computer a phone, and a pile of papers on it. There are doors in the back that lead to the offices of managers and the CEO, but before we take a step anywhere we have to speak with the bubbly receptionist who has blonde hair so bright it's blinding.

"Hello, welcome to the Belheart Journal. What can I do for you two today?" she asks, her voice squeaky and annoying. I pipe up before Andrew says anything out of place.

"We need to speak with Andrew Skille immediately. It's an emergency," I inform her, putting emphasis on the *emergency* part. Most rules don't seem to apply if you act like the situation is dire enough.

"Are you part of his family?" she questions, as if emergencies are things that can only occur within families. In order to prevent any further delays, I decide to go along with it and nod.

"Oh, well then, let me call Mr. Earnhald and see if it's alright that you all speak together briefly in one of the conference rooms," she replies, rapidly dialing a number on her phone. She holds it between her shoulder and one ear, flipping through some files with her hands. "Mr. Earnhald, pardon the interruption. Andrew Skille's brother and sister are here, and there seems to be some sort of family emergency hey must discuss. Might it be alright if they borrow one of the conference rooms?"

I glance at my brother as the receptionist continues her conversation with Mr. Earnhald, whom I assume is their boss. Andrew still looks pissed off, but it seems like a calmer sort of pissed, so I trust that he won't screw things up immensely before we're in the privacy of a conference room.

After another minute of talking, Mrs. Sunshine hangs up the phone and nods at us.

"You have fifteen minutes." She points to a hallway on our left and says, "Take the second door on the right. Andrew will meet you there." Then she proceeds to dial more numbers into her phone.

Shrugging, the two of us make our way to the designated area where we're supposed to meet with Daisy. The room is not very large, and all that's in it is a round table that takes up most of the room with five chairs around it. Andrew and I take a seat next to each other and wait in complete silence until Daisy shows up.

And goodness, the second he walks in he barely has time to shut the door before Andrew jumps out of his seat and starts yelling at him.

"Daisy, I gave you *one freaking job* and that was to get this in the paper today! Now the person who kidnapped Amorie and stole her powers from her is just running about scot-free. Nobody knows what even happened. Doesn't that make you sick? That someone ripped away a piece of my wife's identity and nobody knows? You better get this in the next edition or I swear to *God*!"

"Hey. Hey, buddy, calm down. I'm not the enemy here," Daisy reasons, throwing both his hands up in the air in a surrendering gesture. "First of all, we don't know if someone stole her powers for a fact, and second of all I *tried* to get it in the paper! My boss won't print it for some reason. I was just as shocked as you to find out it wasn't in there."

"What?" Andrew asks, clearly taken aback. He had gotten so worked up on the trip here that I guess he wasn't prepared to find out that his best friend really wasn't the one who screwed up.

"Yeah, I finally looked at the paper when I got here this morning and saw it wasn't in there, so I went to talk to Mr. Earnhald. He said when he read it over last night before the printing started he decided there was some content in there that wasn't suitable for publication," Daisy explains.

"Not suitable for publication?" I parrot. "It's a *newspaper*, isn't the point of it so that citizens have a way to get information about serious events, like a possible kidnapping?"

"See that's the thing: he said that since it was a *possible* kidnapping and that someone *possibly* stole her powers, that it is not accurate, and we can't publish it."

"Since when is the newspaper accurate?!" Andrew exclaims, his voice rising. At first I was a little surprised at how upset he was getting, but then I remembered that he's always been like this – he gets his heart set on something, he gets disappointed, and becomes furious. Ever since I've been at college, however, I've been missing a lot more of these instances, which I am thankful for.

"You make a fair point," Daisy admits, trying to maintain his calm for Andrew's sake. "But all Mr. Earnhald told me was that if wasn't suitable to be printed. I'm really sorry. If you want, you can try to talk to him now, since he's in his office."

"Oh, I'm definitely going to have a word with him," Andrew says bitterly. I place my hand on his shoulder and shake my head so he knows being too harsh is a bad idea.

"Please, Andrew, I want this in the paper as much as you. You know that Amorie is one of my closest friends, and I would do anything to bring her justice. But I would like to keep my job, if you don't mind," Daisy comments turning for the door.

Andrew laughs, but his voice drips with resentment. "Oh, don't worry, the conversation will be quite pleasant."

"I'll make sure he doesn't say anything out of line," I reassure, and with a nod, Daisy accepts this.

"Uh-huh."

And he's out the door.

Mr. Earnhald's office is filled with all different kinds of woods – an oak desk, mahogany bookshelf, to the redwood door – and that sets it apart from pretty much the rest of the modern building, not to mention it doesn't match very well.

The wood brings with it a musty, rustic sort of smell; the kind of thing you might smell in an antique shop or your grandparents' house. And in this case, a non-traditional office of a tall man seated comfortably in a large, black, leather chair. I'm slightly surprised it's not wood, but I suppose some sacrifices must be made in order to establish your power. After all, nothing screams CEO like a rolling chair with a back that's twice your size.

"Mr. Fowell, Miss Fowell, please sit down," he instructs, gesturing to the two chairs situated in front of his desk. They are, of course, maple wood. "I understand you two have an urgent complaint about my newspaper?"

"Yes," I answer, before Andrew gets a chance to. I love my brother, but he can be quite hasty.

"Alright, get on with it. I haven't all the time in the world," Mr. Earnhald says, leaning back in his impossibly large chair. If it weren't for the intensity of his stare or his dark, sharp features, I wouldn't be able to take him seriously.

"Mr. Earnhald, with all due respect, we were wondering if you were going to print the article about Amorie Fowell's disappearance. We were told it was supposed to be in the newspaper today, and while we completely understand if it needs to be postponed for some reason or another, we were hoping you might tell us exactly why it wasn't published today," I respond politely. While I don't particularly care for this odd, middle-aged man whose hair is graying more rapidly than Andrew's patience is dwindling, I at least know that if I don't show I have respect for him this will be a lot more difficult than necessary.

"Well," Mr. Earnhald leans forward now, folding his hands on his desk, "certainly the Journal isn't obligated to publish all articles that people suggest, correct? We have our own topics to cover, and while we are very thankful you two requested Mr. Skille, the article just wasn't fit for publication in its current state."

Andrew opens his mouth, closes it. He turns to me and whispers, "I can't sit here and listen to this man without saying something that is going to get either us or Daisy in trouble. I have to go in order for me not to jeopardize this completely."

"Um," I state dumbly, raising my voice so that Mr. Earnhald can hear, "he has to go."

"I apologize, sir. Alexis will take care of things for me," Andrew says, then ducks out before either of us can say anything else.

Mr. Earnhald looks almost as confused as I am about what just happened, but he shakes it off relatively quickly.

"Alright then, Alexis. Is there anything else you would like to say to me?" he asks.

"Why wasn't the article fit for publishing? My brother checked it over, and it seemed perfectly serviceable. It had correct grammar, appropriate tone, accuracy, and—"

"That!" Mr. Earnhald points towards nothing in particular, I figure as an attempt to emphasize his point.

"Accuracy. Do you know for a fact that Mrs. Fowell was kidnapped as the article makes it appear?"

"What other explanations are there? Her mega dialoid is gone. Do you even know what that is? It's not like a regular dialoid; you can't just use it and have it replenish. It controls all of the other dialoids, and has to be taken out—"

"Miss Fowell," Mr. Earnhald interrupts sternly, "if you do not know it for a fact, please just say so."

"Fine," I spit back. "I do not know that she was kidnapped for a fact."

"That's just the issue. The Belheart Journal strives for the most accurate reporting, and we cannot falsely accuse someone of kidnapping your sister. I'm sorry," he apologizes, but there is nothing sympathetic in his tone. In fact, it almost sounds mocking.

"Sure, then we can edit some parts out. Dais-er, Andrew can fix it. We can completely rework it, taking out sections that even hint at a kidnapping. But we have to get this story out there, Mr. Earnhald. I don't mean to sound disrespectful in the slightest, but I see no reason to scrap this entire article. This is a *real* story. This is *important*. Isn't it your job to cover real, important stories?" I question, trying to force him into agreeing. It's kind of amazing how easily peoples' opinions will change if the authenticity of their jobs are questioned.

But Mr. Earnhald doesn't flinch.

"Miss Fowell, this is a matter that is best left alone. It's easiest, and I'm sure that Amorie wouldn't want her own personal tragedy printed for everyone to read, anyhow."

I can practically feel the steam blowing out of my ears. It's this snob's *actual job* to post peoples' tragedies anywhere possible to get the biggest bang for his buck. Why is he suddenly acting like he's so kind-hearted for refusing to publish an article we specifically asked him to?

I'm so glad Andrew left. I'm much better at keeping my composure than him, and I'm already losing it, so I can only imagine what he would have done.

"I cannot leave it alone, Mr. Earnhald, because this is my sister we are talking about. She can't remember anything at all from the past few days, she no longer has her magic, and you want me to leave it alone?" I exclaim in disbelief.

"Miss Fowell," I implore you—"

"And why do you not want to publish it so badly? I understand that there are parts we need to edit, but it's definitely not unsalvageable! Unless..."

I trail off as a terrifying thought occurs to me. Why would someone fight this hard to keep Amorie's disappearance a secret, unless they had something to do with it?

"Unless what?" Mr. Earnhald demands, his voice commanding and, dare I say, a little bit playful, like he's egging me on, *daring* me to say it.

"...Unless you're the one who kidnapped Amorie"

Chapter 6

If the way Mr. Earnhald flies out of his chair is any indication, it's safe to say that an accusation is not what he was expecting to come out of our conversation. I bet he thought he could quickly shut me down and move on to the other thousands of tasks that he's probably got to attend to. But honor is an issue that always comes first, and the second I insult him, this automatically becomes a priority. Which is just what I wanted.

"Miss Fowell, surely you do not mean to imply that I abducted and robbed your sister of her powers?" he asks, though it's really not a question.

"Well, you certainly seem adamant about keeping her story out of the paper for some mysterious reason, and I wouldn't put it past a power-hungry man like you to crave magic, especially given the fact that you can easily cover the issue up using your connections with the media," I state, my mind racing. It makes so much sense that I almost feel dumb for not realizing it the second I walked in.

"Please, let us calm down and discuss this as adults. You're being rather rash," Mr. Earnhald replies, but I ignore him.

"My only question is, why? Did you not know that Amorie is a tier ten Enchanted, and only has forty dialoids of magic? Did you not realize that all she can do is light up lightbulbs? Or do you not even care?"

"Miss Fowell, I implore you, please--"

"I have to go to the authorities," I blurt suddenly, finally realizing that this is him, this is the man that committed disgusting crimes against my unsuspecting sister. And she *will* get her magic back. There's no way this bastard is keeping her mega dialoid after everything.

I whip around to make a grab at the door, but Mr. Earnhald flies out of his seat and exclaims, "I did *not* kidnap your sister! But I can tell you who did!"

I stop in my tracks. I don't really buy this, but it's worth hearing out, so I face him and raise a skeptical eyebrow.

"Oh yeah? So, who is it?"

"If I tell you this, you must not mention me to the police."

"And the article will not get published."

I weigh my options. Try to get a man arrested for having a slight suspicion that he kidnapped Amorie even though he could bribe the judge into favoring him anyways, or receive information about the potential real kidnapper of Amorie while letting him off scot-free? Andrew's going to hate me.

"Deal."

I stick out my hand for him to shake, and he does so quite stiffly. I can't entirely imagine what prompted him to yell out that he knows the real culprit just as I was about to leave, seeing as there's no doubt Mr. Earnhald has enough money to win any case he wants, but I suppose a lot of stupid things get shouted when people say they are going to call the police. Fear often overrules logic, and the way Mr. Earnhald is about to rat out this person most likely means they're not really working as partners.

"Alright." Mr. Earnhald takes a seat, and I follow suit. "His name is Clovis Witt. He came in here the other day and practically begged me not to let any articles about Amorie get published."

"Begged with money?"

There's no way a businessman would pass up an opportunity for a juicy article just because some random kid doesn't want it to be published. That's not how the newspaper works; that's not how anything really works.

Mr. Earnhald chuckles slightly, and the fact that he chose scraps of paper over my sister reignites my flame of hatred towards him. I try to douse the flame before it consumes me.

"Naturally, money had something to do with it. A whopping one-hundred thousand dollars just to keep mum about one article. When I questioned Mr. Witt as to why he didn't want this in the paper, he refused to answer, though it is not entirely difficult to figure that part out on your own," Mr. Earnhald explains, sounding not the least bit ashamed at having accepted Clovis's bribe.

"Do you happen to know where he lives?" I ask, but Mr. Earnhald shakes his head.

"No, he refused to give out any other information besides his name, but I can't imagine it would be terribly difficult to find him. He's young, in his mid-twenties, so I'm certain he didn't bother to change his name when he spoke to me. You could probably look him up in the phonebook if you so desire."

"Alright," I answer with a nod. "Thank you, Mr. Earnhald."

Thanking this man feels like poison on my tongue.

"You're welcome."

* * *

For having Witt as a last name, this guy surely isn't the smartest. Mr. Earnhald was right – the second after I left his office and explained to Andrew what was going on, I looked up Clovis's name and his address was right there. I have to say, I know his neighborhood and it certainly isn't the type of place you would expect to house a guy who is willing to throw around one-hundred thousand dollars like it's nothing. In fact, it's just a safe little neighborhood meant to house smaller, lower middle-class families.

I park a couple houses away from Clovis's so as not to arouse suspicion immediately. My brother and I decided before I came here that it would be best if I had a discussion with Clovis as early as possible so he wouldn't have a chance to leave town or hurt anyone else before we got to him. Of course, it's not like I imagine our conversation will go smoothly – it's not like if I calmly ask him for Amorie's magic he'll just hand it back over without a fight. I feel like our discussion will have a lot more arresting being involved.

I quickly exit my car and make the short walk to Clovis's small wooden porch. His one-story house has strange light blue siding, and as I ring the doorbell it occurs to me that he could still be living with his parents, which could make this a lot more awkward.

To my surprise, the person who answers the door is neither an overworked mother whose only wish is that her son will move out nor some scruffy-looking drug addict who gets unspeakable joy from stealing peoples' magic. In fact, the man standing in front of me has features so soft and eyes so brown I start to wonder whether or not I have the right house.

The confusion he must be feeling at seeing an unknown girl standing on his doorstep takes the form of a slightly raised eyebrow and a goofy grin.

"Um..." I feel my mouth go dry. His blonde hair looks soft. "Does Clovis Witt live here?"

"He sure does. Do you need something from him?" he asks, his voice clear and warm, almost playful. I'm certainly not one to fall for strangers, but there's no denying this man is attractive. Not to mention the fact that it sounds like he and Clovis are housemates, so hopefully I won't have to sock this guy in the face.

"I have to speak with him," I reply, which causes his grin to grow larger.

"Consider yourself lucky then," he laughs. "You already are."

I can't say I'm surprised-after all, beautiful features often hide a devilish personality. Still, it's a shame his alluring charm had to transform into cocky narcissism in my eyes so quickly.

"Well, please, I urgently need to speak with you," I request, still trying to remain polite. I try to take a step inside, but Clovis halts me.

"No, not without your name first, Hasty," he says, which I suppose is completely reasonable but it still sounds annoying coming from him.

I sigh. "I'm Alexis."

"That's cute," he comments offhandedly, then holds open the door. "Come in, Alexis."

His house is nothing special; when I walk in, we're in a living room with an office branch off on the left. I glance past the living room and see there's a kitchen and another hallway, but Clovis points to a brown couch for me to sit on and I oblige.

"Do you want anything to drink?" he asks politely, but I refuse. Shrugging, he takes a seat in a white lounge chair beside the couch and faces me. "So, what exactly is so urgent that you need to speak to me in person even though I'm ninety-nine percent sure I've never seen you before in my life?"

"Well," I start, searching for the right words. After all, I don't want to get kicked out a second after being let in. "Actually, I came to ask you a few questions about the disappearance of Amorie Fowell. You see, I work for the newspaper-"

"No you don't."

I'm taken by surprise. I spent the whole car ride here plotting my curious-lady-who-works-for-the-newspaper façade, since it'd make sense if I pretended to be the author of the article and got curious as to why it wasn't being published. If Clovis were to discover I'm related to Amorie, he would know I'm out to put him in jail instead of just wanting to find out why it can't be printed. I suppose it was kind of a thin veil to begin with, but now that plan is completely out the window.

"And what makes you so sure?" I finally muster to say, but my long hesitation in doing so is more than enough to confirm Clovis's statement. He smiles.

"Mr. Earnhald. If he was your boss, he wouldn't have to tell you anything since your job would be on the line," Clovis points out. "Plus, he told me to expect you."

Of *course* he did. How could I be so stupid?

"Oh," I swallow my growing fear. "Why did you even let me inside then?"

"Who's to say I don't have anything to say to you? There's actually a lot we need to discuss. First of all, I'm asking the questions here," he states sternly. I feel anger flare up inside of me.

"No!" I stand up to emphasize my point, but Clovis just rolls his eyes and stands up too. "You're not dictating how this is going to go. You're going to give my sister her magic back, and then we're never going to see each other again."

"Awww, you sound angry. Maybe you could ask me a little nicer, then we could have ourselves a deal....?"

"If you don't give Amorie back her magic, I'm going to the police," I threaten, but my voice sounds weak. Only now am I realizing how pathetic my argument is – the police? I have no proof of anything, and if this guy has a family-sized home to himself there's no doubt he's got a decent amount of money.

"That's nice," he replies, completely unfazed. Before I have a chance to respond, his phone rings, and instead of ignoring it he picks up and says nonchalantly, "Oh, hello Dynah. How nice to hear from you. How are you?"

My blood boils. I'm confronting this guy, and he's such an *asshole* that he's talking to some girl instead of hearing me out? I almost rip the phone from his hands, but that would alert whoever he's talking to that something is wrong, and I don't want to get into hot water.

"Oh, I'm well," he answers into the phone, smirking at me. "Except that this annoying saleswoman won't leave me alone. She came into my home demanding I buy some insurance from her. Quite rude, actually. I was just about to kick her out."

Kick me out?

He suddenly grabs me by the waist and starts leading me away from the couch. Once I realize I'm headed to the door, I shove him away.

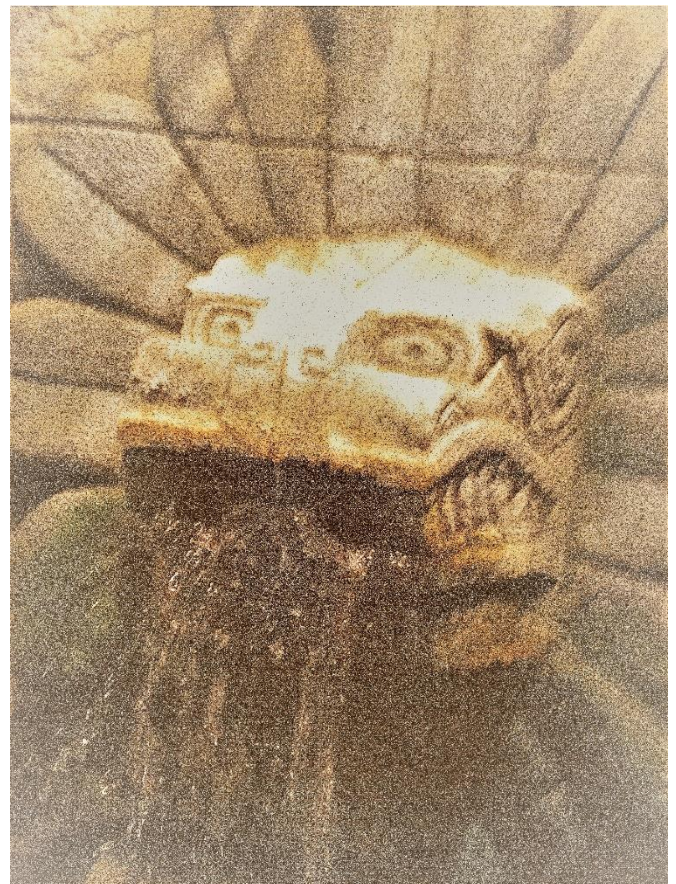
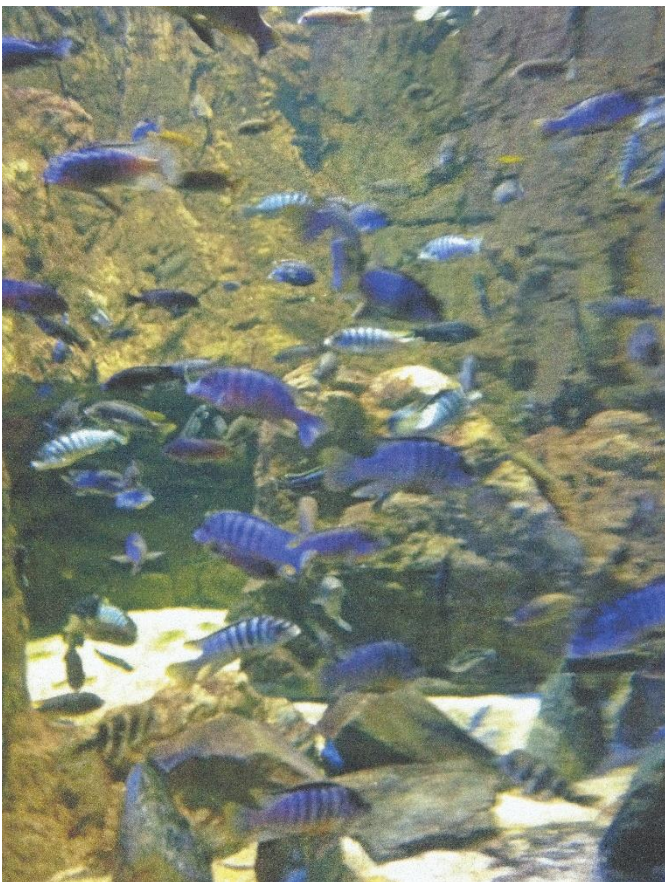
"No, I'm not leaving until you admit it to me-did you kidnap Amorie?" I question, my voice sharp.

"Sorry, Miss Heron, this lady is being a little rowdy. I'll call you later, okay?" With that, he slips his phone into pocket and grabs my wrist with one hand, throwing the door open with the other. "Women, am I right? Always calling at the worst times."

"Clovis, I don't give a *shit* about your girlfriend right now! Tell me: did you kidnap my sister?!" I repeat, trying to fight his grip, but he's too strong.

"Sure, whatever, if it helps you sleep at night," he responds, shoving me out the door. "Have a nice night, now." Just as I whip around to yell at him, the door slams in my face....(To be continued.)

Photos by Rachel Miller



Peter and the Lost Girl, Part 2 – by Rachel Miller

Chapter 6: Bread Robbed

"Alright, coast is clear, Jess, go!" Jasper ran across the street and towards *Swift's Bakery*. When he came to the store, he stopped. Jess stood there, right in front of the bakery's window. The one showing plum loaves of bread, sweet cakes, and just about every form of lovely food that they could not afford.

Jasper kept standing there, staring at all of those goodies. It's tough to look at food, good food at that, when you haven't eaten all day.

It had been five days since the boys had argued about having to share the food with John. They had lasted longer than Tommy had expected. Every time they ate, they all gave a little portion of their food to John, some of them not liking it very much. Every day they came closer and closer to having no more food, and every day they came closer and closer to suggesting that they, maybe, just maybe, go back to the dreaded orphanage.

No one had gotten up the courage, though. So, on the day that they ran out of food, Tommy suggested a plan to get more. He loved his plan. He was determined to make it work, and very excited to go back to his days before his family's death. He had explained his plan to all of them with loads of excitement mixed in. The other boys were all weary of it, though. They had never done anything like this before, and they weren't eager to get caught.

The boys all waited. They watched Jess stand there for three minutes, then six, until a tall man came up to the store. He went to the door, his hand resting on the knob. He looked over at Jess with a concerned and confused look, then went into the store. Jasper looked back at them, hiding in the alleyway across the street. Tommy gave him a stern look and motioned for him to keep staring at the sweets in the store's window.

Jess turned back, and they all held their breaths as they waited to see if Tommy's plan was going to work or not.

After a couple of minutes in the bakery, the tall man came out holding a small bag. He once again stopped to look at Jasper, this time giving him a colder look, one of disgust. He then walked closer to the street and called a carriage.

When he was gone, Jasper looked back again at Tommy, dismayed. Once again Tom gestured for him to turn back.

The moment Jess's head was back on the cakes, the bakery's door burst open. A short, stubby man thumped out with a ferocious glare on his face. Tom smiled, but the rest of the boys could not bring themselves to do so. The man started to yell and scream at Jasper. The poor five-year-old was so scared Peter feared he might abandon the plan.

As Jess stood his ground, the rest of the group snuck across the street and, carefully and quietly, into *Swift's Bakery*.

While the other boys were stuffing their clothes and faces with breads, cakes, and sweets straight from their wildest dreams, Jasper stood stunned, outside. He seemed too scared to move, perhaps afraid that the baker would strike him. John, also, was not stuffing two handfuls of cookies into his mouth like Marcus. He was standing at the door watching that horrid old man tell Jess off for scaring his customers away. He was the watchdog.

"He's sending Jasper off!" Everyone knew the drill. They stuffed a few crumbs into their mouths and ran to the back where Tommy had told them to go. Tom knew this town; he had grown up there. One of the perks of living a life of thievery was that he knew which stores had one door, and which had two.

Peter was the first there. He stumbled out and ran back to the front. He peeked around the corner. The man was going back into the store now. Jasper was standing across the street from where the other boys had watched him before.

Peter dashed across, hoping that he wouldn't be spotted by the Baker. When he got to Jess he looked back across the street. The Baker was standing there, not moving, right inside. Peter motioned for the other

boys to run over to them. By the time the man recovered from his amazement at seeing his trashed and robbed business, every one of the boys were hiding in the cover of darkness the alley provided them.

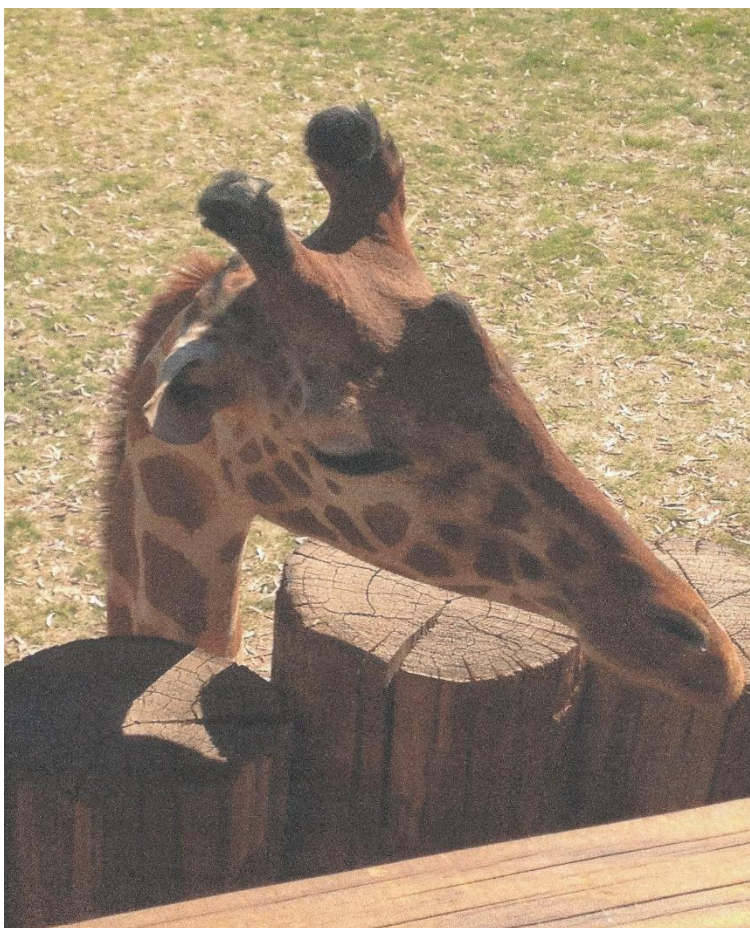
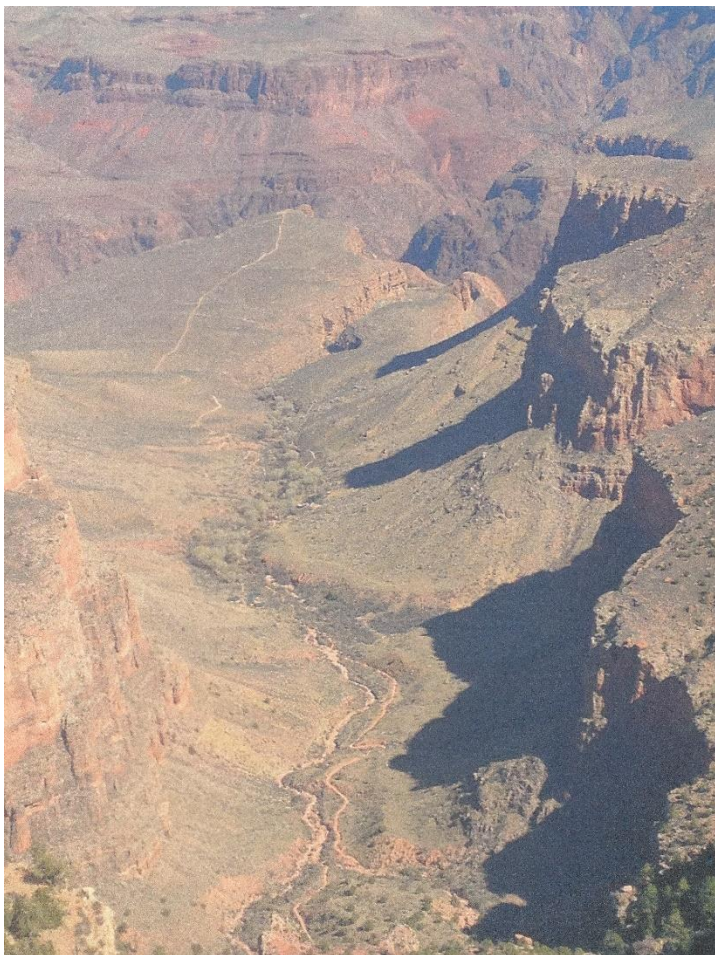
They waited, watching. The short man roared out of his store. "Robbed! I have been robbed! Someone fetch the police!"

The boys smiled. So far they had not been spotted. "Come on," Tom whispered to the others. "Let's go while we're not being chased." The rest of the boys nodded and whispered their agreements. They left with nothing but that short, stubby man's store to show they were there...

(To be continued.)

Drawing by Hannah Bradley





Photos by Rachel Miller

Differences Aside (a Labyrinth Fanfiction), Part 4 – by Taylor Bradley

Of course he has, Sarah thought. What a stupid question! This is what's supposed to make me believe him? He lied last time when...when...uhh...oh my God, he hasn't? He's never? Really?!

Sarah had been staring at Jareth the entire time, as she thought back to every encounter she had had with him. Nothing came to her mind. Not a single lie.

Jareth smirked, as if he was reading her mind. "Why would I start now?"

Sarah racked her brain, trying to come up with *something*. *It has to be Jareth*, she told herself. *He has to be up to something this time*. She wanted it to be him, someone she had dealt with before, had *beaten*. Not someone *new*. If there was someone else causing trouble, that meant she was back at square one. It meant she was as clueless as she had been when she'd first entered the Labyrinth four months ago.

Alright, Sarah faced the facts, *so it's not him. This isn't a rematch. It's a whole new game. And I'm clueless on how to play...but I'm looking at someone who may be able to give me a few hints.*

"Fine," she sighed, "I believe you."

"Finally."

"But," she continued, "I want some answers."

He snickered. "I don't have to tell you anything. Why would I?"

"Because you need our help."

"Ha! That's a laughable concept."

"I don't see why. You said it yourself, you're powerless, and whoever this person is has gotten stronger than you. Therefore, you can't take care of this on your own."

"She's got you there," Hoggle agreed.

"Are you seriously suggesting," Jareth began with a touch of venom, "that we work together? Team up?!"

Sarah smirked. "Don't let this go to your head. I'm not going it for *you*. I came here because my friends needed me, and until they don't, I haven't done my job. This person sounds dangerous, even more so than you, your *Majesty*. I'm just putting it out there that it would make things easier on all of us if we were on the same side."

"Six hands are better than two," Hoggle added.

"That's ten hands, Hogbrain. There's five of us. Though, I doubt the baby is going to be much help."

"So, you're in?" Sarah asked, half of her hoping he said 'yes,' a quarter of her hoping for 'no,' and the other quarter hating the half that wanted 'yes.'

"I don't have much of a choice, now do I?"

"Nuh uh," Ludo told him, shaking his head.

But Sarah wasn't done. "And you won't run out on us? No matter what?"

"No. I won't 'run out on you,' as you put it."

"Swear."

"Damn you."

"That's not what I meant, and you know it!"

"Alright, alright...I *swear* I will not abandon you."

"Or?"

"Or may I rot in the Bog of Stench with my eyes gouged out and stuffed into my ears for the rest of my days. Is that good enough for you?"

Sarah was trying her best to keep that image out of her mind. "Now, cross your heart."

"I can't."

"Don't be so hard on yourself. Just because your heart's so small you need a microscope to see it, and is as shriveled as a raisin doesn't mean it's not there."

"Hilarious. I can't move my arms. Your bodyguard is holding me too tightly."

Ludo moved a little. Sarah watched as Jareth took his left hand and made an X over his chest. She watched his other hand as well, making sure that he didn't try to cross his fingers behind his back. He didn't attempt it, and for a moment Sarah was a bit surprised. Then she thought better. *He's smarter than childish little promises. I'll have to keep a very close eye on him. Just because I believe his story doesn't mean I trust him.* "You can put him down now, Ludo."

Ludo looked down at his prisoner, and dropped him. "Ludo..." Sarah smiled. She looked at Jareth and offered him a hand up. *I hate him to the core, but we're fighting for the same thing. He wants his castle back, and I want to make sure whoever is making these Gargoyles is gone. The least I can do is try to be civil.*

Jareth ignored her gesture and got up on his own. "Don't think this changes a thing. I still hate you, and when this is all over, I want you to stay out of my kingdom."

"The feeling is mutual. And for the record, stop calling Toby 'Jareth.'"

"You never told me his name."

"Well, now I have, so kindly use it."

"Has he been sleeping through this entire thing? Even the Gargoyle attack?" Hoggle asked.

"He's sort of been on and off. He's awake now, sort of, but he's a heavy sleeper when he wants to be." Sarah turned her attention back to the Goblin King, who was once again brushing himself off. "So, are you going to tell me what's going on?"

"I already did. My castle has been invaded, I've lost my power, and Gargoyles are running amuck through the kingdom. And you brought up the goblins. Which reminds me, I haven't looked to see what happened to them." His hand went to his pocket, and when he remembered it was empty, he held it out to Sarah. Reluctantly, she gave him back his crystal ball. He lifted it up to eye level and commanded, "Show me the goblins."

The crystal began to swirl inside, and the image changed from Jareth's reflection to a few chained up goblins. They were as disgusting and small as Sarah remembered. "Figures she put them in the dungeons," the Goblin King said, pocketing the magical item.

"Who is *she*?" Sarah asked, having had enough of this little guessing game. "If you want my help, you have to tell me what I'm up against."

"Very well," he retorted, sourly. "*She* is a very powerful magical woman named Rivina. She possesses the power of voodoo, which means tarot cards she can play at will, and creatures she can summon when she wants. I banished her decades ago for trying to steal my throne. On several occasions.

"Now she's returned, more powerful than ever, with cards she's never dealt before, and creatures no one knew existed. So, that's all there is to tell, therefore, I suggest we start moving."

"Nice try," Hoggle snapped. "I knew you weren't going to tell her everything."

"What do you mean?" Sarah asked. She was surprised Jareth had said as much as he did.

"Rivina doesn't *only* have the power of voodoo. She's also the Fairy Princess."

"Correction. She *was* the Fairy Princess," Jareth growled.

"Well, the little buggers don't seem to mind her absence. Remember how you noticed there weren't any fairies at the entrance?" Sarah nodded. "They've gone back to serving her."

"It's not like they're dangerous," she said. "All they do is bite. They don't even draw blood."

"Only because the one you saw didn't bite you that hard," Hoggle explained. "One fairy won't do much harm, but a *swarm* of 'em, now that could get nasty."

"Alright...so she has voodoo, Gargoyles, and she can control the fairies?"

"Right."

"That doesn't sound so bad," Sarah mumbled to herself, hoping to give herself some confidence. Unfortunately, someone overheard.

"Oh, it *doesn't*?" Jareth snapped, half-laughing, half-screaming. "That's only because you don't know who you're up against!" He walked over to her slowly. "Rivina is *psychotic*!"

"How psychotic are we talking?"

"Well," Hoggle interjected, "take Jareth's level of crazy..."

"Alright."

"...Now, multiply that by the biggest number you can think of."

That's a lot of crazy, Sarah realized.

"Zip it, Hogwart!" Jareth shouted. Sarah was about to defend her friend and correct his name again, but saw it would be a giant mistake when Jareth looked at her. His eyes were on fire and his face was turning red. He'd gone from zero to one hundred in a matter of seconds. Sarah had never seen him this angry, and she was his *enemy*! She began to wonder what about Rivina made him so furious. He'd said she'd tried to take his throne, but she couldn't help but feel like there was more to it than that. "You don't know Rivina," Jareth growled. "*I* do. And if you're going to go into this thinking she's going to be easy to deal with, then I assure you, there is no way you can win!" He began to pace and count on his fingers as he rattled off a list. Sarah was starting to get concerned. And she didn't even like the guy! "She's deceitful, she's a liar, she's a cheat, she doesn't care about anyone but herself, she's greedy, she's vain, she's spoiled, she's heartless, and she *never listens to me*!"

Sarah looked at him curiously. "What do you mean never listens to you? Isn't she like, the enemy of the kingdom? Why would she?"

Jareth stopped pacing and whacked himself in the head. "Me and my big mouth..."

"Looks like you said a bit too much," Hoggle grinned.

"What?" Sarah asked. "I don't get it. Who is she? A foreign enemy? A power-hungry tyrant? What?"

The Goblin King looked up at the sky, placed his hands on his hips, and let out an exhausted sigh. "Rivina's not an enemy of the kingdom," he explained, not looking at Sarah. "...she's my baby sister."

* * *

"Sarah? Sarah, are you okay? Oh, nice one, your *Majesty*, you broke Sarah."

"Well, she wanted to know. If it scars her for life, that's not my fault!"

Sister? Jareth has a sister?! Sarah was stunned. She'd never really thought about where the people in the Labyrinth came from, or their families. She'd always assumed that they had just sort of...appeared. Now she was curious. Where are Hoggle's parents? Where did Ludo come from? How long is Jareth's royal bloodline? And what happened between him and his sister?!

"Sarah," Jareth started sternly, "we need to get moving. The castle is over a few days from here, and-"

Sarah snapped out of her thoughts. "A few *days*?! Last time it took me less than one!"

"Well, in case you haven't noticed, this isn't like the last time. We're deeper into the Labyrinth, basically the farthest point from the castle, facing new obstacles, and my crazy sister. So, unless you feel the need to grill me on my personal life further, we should start moving."

"But Karen and my dad will be worried when they see Toby and I aren't there!"

Jareth spun on his heels. "You call your own mother by her first name?"

Again, forbidden memories came to Sarah's mind. "Karen's not my mom. She's Toby's mom, my stepmother." *He'd better not ask anything else about it, she thought. He's got sister issues. I have mommy issues. End of story. Close the book and set it on fire.*

Jareth looked her over for a minute, as if thinking about what she'd said, before repeating, "We should start moving. Just because she can't rely on her Gargoyles during the day doesn't mean she doesn't have more tricks up her sleeves."

"Don't worry, Sarah," Hoggle soothed, "time works differently here, remember?"

Sarah sighed with relief. *Alright, so maybe I can still make it home before them. As long as they get stuck in traffic, or something. And at least the Goblin King knows when to stop talking* And just like that, the two enemies had established limits. No talking about Rivina or Jareth's personal life unless totally necessary, and no bringing up Sarah's birth mother.

They started to walk along the paths again, Jareth in the lead, Sarah on his heels with an excited Toby strapped to her front, and Hoggle and Ludo close behind. For a while, all was silent, apart from a few baby sounds. But Sarah was still in the dark about this entire adventure. She felt clueless. She wanted to know what to expect from this new enemy. And there was only one way to learn. She quickened her pace a bit in order to keep up with Jareth's long legs, and cleared her throat. "So, you said she has the power of voodoo. That's kind of vague. What exactly can voodoo...do? Other than make rock monsters."

"First of all, the correct term is Gargoyles. If they were rock monsters, sunlight wouldn't affect them. And as for Rivina's powers, last time I saw her, she could manipulate time like I can, though I can only speed things up, she can make disguises, uses as spies...oh, yes. There is the matter of her dolls."

"Dolls?"

"Voodoo dolls, of course. They come to life, and she uses them to attack. Sort of like a very small, plush army."

Sarah found that a bit concerning. "Well, now that she's stronger, what can she do?"

"Besides make Gargoyles and steal magic powers, I don't know. She barged into the castle, stole my magic, put it in one of her cards, then threw me into my own Labyrinth. Didn't seem like she was really in the mood for talking."

"What does she want your throne for anyway?"

"Probably the same reason anyone would want it: power, revenge, control, to tick me off..."

Sarah was going to leave it at that, thinking she'd gotten enough information, and figuring she probably shouldn't push the Goblin King, when she thought of one last thing. "What about shapeshifting? Can't she turn into an animal, like you can turn into an owl?"

The King was quiet for a moment before replying quietly, "No, only the men in the family can turn into birds." Another minute of quiet before he turned to her and snapped, "Do I pry into your personal life? No, I do not, so stay out of mine." He walked a bit faster to get away from Sarah before she could ask what she said. Hoggle walked over to her.

"What's his problem?" she asked him.

"Well, I don't know the whole story, since I try to avoid Jareth when I can, and even if I did, I don't think it's my place to tell, but let's just say that I think having Rivina back in town stirs up some things in his mind that he hasn't had to think about in a few thousand years."

This piqued her curiosity. Again, she wondered just what had happened between the two of them. But that question was off-limits. Still, it didn't mean she didn't want to know. "So what does she look like?" Sarah asked.

"Sort of like the female version of Jareth, I guess." Sarah tried to unsee that. "But she's a little shorter, unless she's wearing heels, and her hair is curled."

The Goblin King turned and walked backwards. Apparently he had overheard. "That's the second time you've used me to talk about her. What's your basis of comparison?"

"Well," Sarah smirked, "you were wondering what mine was last time. Aren't you glad I picked you?"

He gave her an eye roll, and turned his back to them again. *This is going to be a long trip*, Sarah thought.

She did manage to pass some time by catching up with Hoggle and Ludo, though. She told them about Karen and her father, and how she was trying to get Toby to start talking. "He still can't say anything, though. Not even easy stuff that babies pick up on, like 'mama' or...I don't know, 'milk,' maybe."

"You don't think he's got one of those learning disabilities, do you?" Hoggle asked.

Sarah had never considered that before. *What if he does have a disability, or he's just slow? What if this is only the start of things Toby can't do? What if he can't read, or run, or feed himself?!*

The Goblin King's voice snapped her out of her panic. "Just because he hasn't started speaking doesn't automatically mean there's some kind of chemical imbalance," he said over his shoulder. "He could just be taking his time. Can he do other things babies his age do?"

"Well, yeah, I guess. I mean, he's a really fast crawler, and he's walking a little more every so often."

"Well, there you go, then," he shrugged.

He may be an owl, but he's got ears like a hawk. Since when is he a baby expert? Sarah wondered. *Then again, he is a big brother....huh. Having Jareth as an older brother. That had to be fun for Rivina. Having him always bossing her around, probably barging into her room at the worst times.* For a moment, she felt a bit bad for the woman, having to grow up with Jareth all her life. She'd only dealt with him once, and that'd been quite enough for Sarah. Then a thought bubbled into her mind, and since it looked like Jareth had calmed down a bit, she felt it was safe to ask. "Are you and Rivina immortal?"

"...In a manner of speaking."

What the heck is that supposed to mean? Sarah wondered. To her it seemed like a 'yes' or 'no' question. How are you kind of immortal?

Luckily for her, Jareth went on, "Age doesn't affect the people of the Labyrinth the way it does the ones in your world. We cannot die of old age. But that doesn't mean we can't die at all. Everything else still affects us the same way. We can still die from monsters, starvation, blood loss, or...sickness." And again, he was quiet.

"So, wait, how old are you?"

"How old do I look?"

She chose her words carefully, "I don't know...late 30s, maybe?" She noticed that Hoggle was trying his best not to laugh. *Crap, too high.*

"Sarah, if I didn't know better, I'd think you were trying to suck up to me," Jareth smirked.

"Too low," Hoggle murmured. "Way too low."

"Really?" Sarah asked, shocked. "Well, you can't be more than forty-five or so. I can't be *that* far off."

"Oh, but you are," the King said. "Here, I'll give you the hint you so desperately need." Sarah knew he was enjoying this, the fact that she didn't know something. "I'm older than Hoggle."

She stopped dead in her tracks. *What?! But how can that be? Hoggle has white hair, Jareth's is blonde! Hoggle's face is wrinkled, Jareth's isn't! How is the Goblin King the older one?!* "Well...Hoggle is probably only in his 50s or so, so even then, you're not that old."

"Oh, Sarah, you really don't know much about the Labyrinth," Hoggle smiled. "I'm over one hundred."

"What?!"

"I ain't telling you the exact number, but yeah, over a couple centuries. I was around when Mr. Already-Hit-Five-Hundred was a teenager."

For a second she tried to picture the Goblin King at that age, *her* age. She couldn't see him any other way than he was when she looked at him. Then Hoggle's words finally hit her. "*You're five hundred?!?*"

"Few years older, actually," Hoggle added. "It's not that old, really. I'm nearing it myself."

"Five hundred..." Sarah repeated.

"You say it like that's old," Jareth mused. "In this world, being a few hundred years old is like being under forty where you come from."

"How long do people here usually live?" she asked, still in shock. Jareth looked darn good for his age!

"Well, if I'm doing my math right, the Wise Man that carries that bird on his head is over one million, if that answers your question," Jareth explained.

Sarah was in awe. Age *really* didn't affect them like it did the people in her world. They could probably live to a billion if they really tried. Thinking about that made Sarah happy. It meant that she would have her friends around for a very long time, they might even become her children's friends!

"Oh, what in the world is that *smell?!?*" Hoggle said suddenly, snapping Sarah out of her thoughts. "We ain't even above the Bog of Stench!"

"Smell bad," Ludo complained, covering his nose.

A horrible stench filled Sarah's nose. She knew it too well. "Oh, Toby, not *now*. Aw, thank *God* I brought diapers!"

"What in the world do you *feed* him?" Jareth asked in an odd voice. He was also holding his nose.

She got down, and started to get Toby out of the carrier. "Oh, it's not like you've never smelled a dirty diaper before, your *Highness*. How many years apart are you and your sister?"

"Five. Now quit badgering me, and change the baby!"

Sarah grabbed the backpack and Toby and ran around the corner to change him. *I really hope I brought the baby powder.*

* * *

"Keep up," the Goblin King snapped.

"I'm *trying*," Sarah defended. "We've been walking all day. My feet are tired."

"You didn't seem to have this issue last time."

"I thought this wasn't like last time," she scoffed. Jareth glanced at her menacingly, but said nothing more.

Toby wiggled on Sarah's shoulder. The carrier had been tearing at her for the past hour or so, so she had resorted to just carrying him manually. "I know, I know," she whispered. "Just go back to sleep."

"Little tyke sure sleeps a lot," Hoggle observed.

"He didn't get much sleep last night, thanks to the Gargoyle attack, so now he's kind of catching up. Besides, he's easier to handle when he's tired."

"Less talking, more walking," Jareth snarled. "The sun will begin to set soon, and the second that happens, the Gargoyles will spring back into action."

Sarah stuck her tongue out at him once he turned around, then was struck with an idea. "The oubliettes."

"Wuh?" Ludo asked.

"We can use the oubliettes to hide in overnight," she explained.

"Bad idea," the King told her, walking in reverse once again to face her.

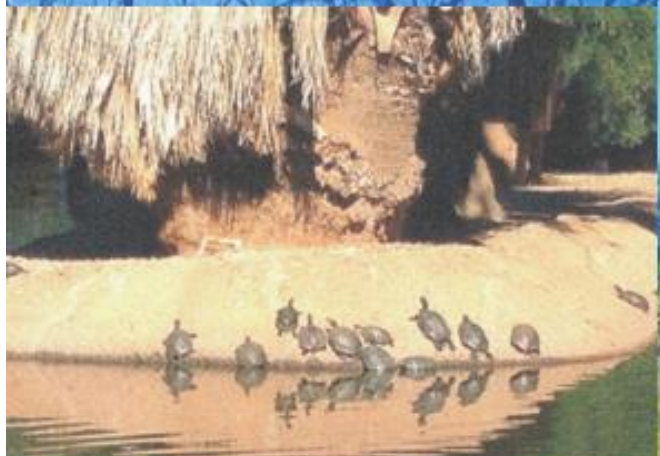
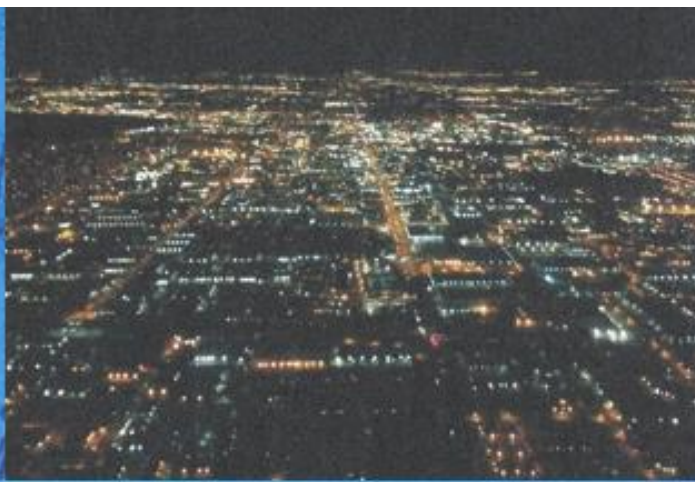
Why does it seem that whenever I have an idea, it's bad? Sarah seethed.

Jareth continued, only adding to her anger, "Just because there is someone in an oubliette doesn't mean it's closed off. It's not secure enough. If a Gargoyle fell into the trap along with us," he paused to draw a finger across his throat. "Get the picture?"

Sarah's anger was about to boil over. She switched Toby to her other shoulder, and quickened her pace a bit. "What are the chances of *that* happening?"

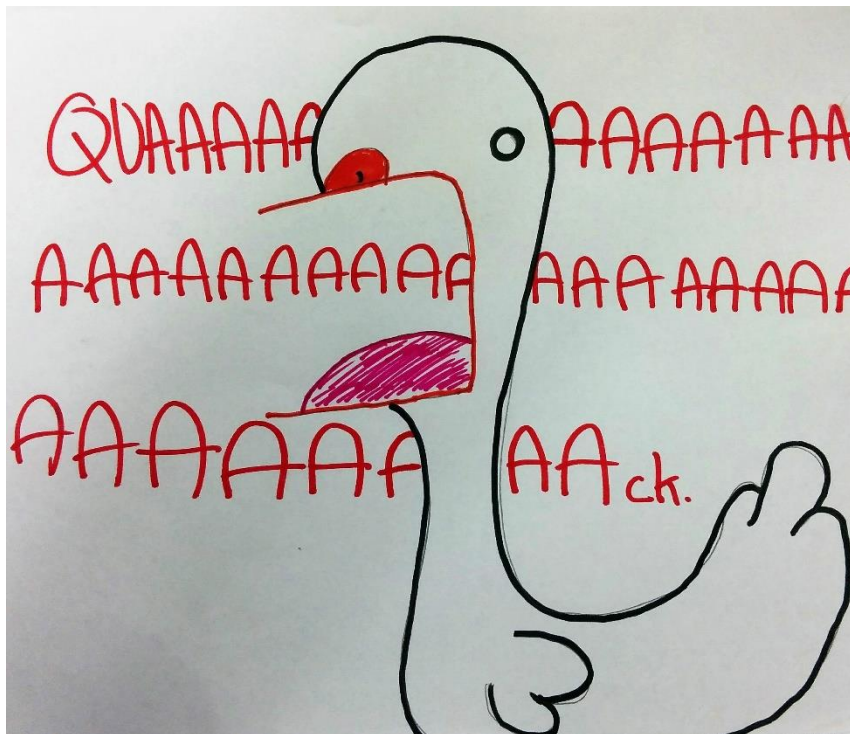
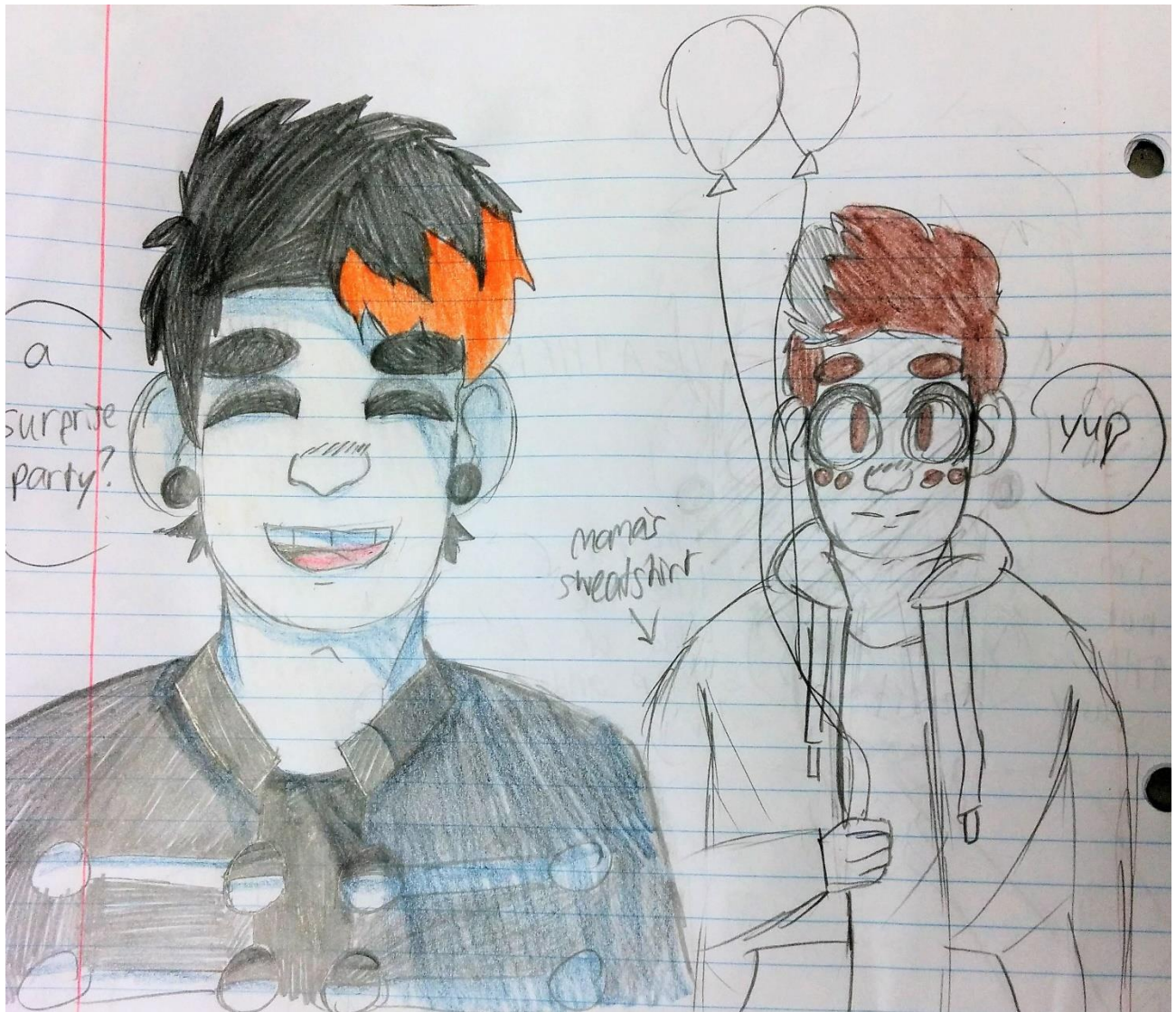
"Slim, but there is still a chance. One I'm not too keen on taking."

Photos by Rachel Miller

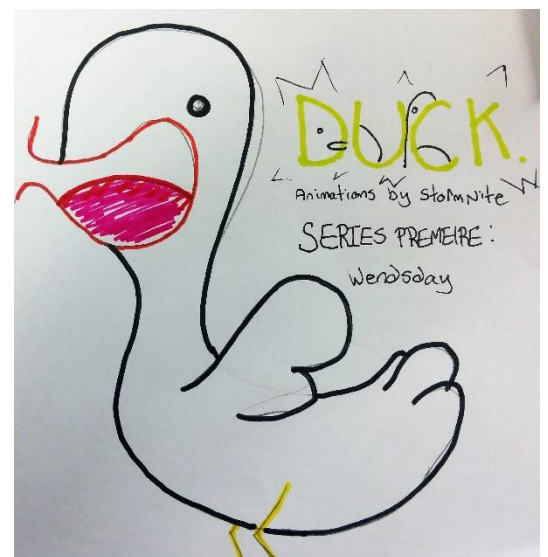




**Drawing by
Genevieve Poirier**



Drawings by Genevieve Poirier ↑
& Hannah Bradley ↓



Star Wars Fanfiction – by Olivia Schlossmann

Lyla stood in the dense forests in Endor facing a small but sturdy oak house. The girl nervously wrung the key in her hand as she approached the door. The noise in the woods didn't help either, the chirping of the birds and the rustle of the wind in the green canopy.

When Lyla reached the door, she entered the plain bronze key into the keyhole and turned the small instrument. The oak door made a clicking sound and swung open to reveal a big room.

In the room a fireplace, complete with fire, took up the left wall, and in front of it were two overstuffed armchairs. On the other side stood a large rosewood bookshelf and a small wooden table with two chairs.

In front of Lyla was a man with his back facing toward her. He turned around and Lyla gasped. The man was Anakin Skywalker, the second best Jedi Master of all time, next to Yoda.

PART ONE

"What is it?" Anakin asked the girl.

"I was told that a Jedi Master was here who would help train me, but I didn't know it would be one of *the* Jedi Masters."

"So you want to be trained in the ways of the Force, then?"

"Yes, Master."

"You look a bit too old to start. How old are you?" he inquired.

"Twelve years, Master," she answered immediately.

"I will train you, but only if you work hard enough to become a Knight with the others in your age group."

"I will try my hardest, Master."

"Then I will teach you."

"Thank you, Master."

"Now, come and eat. You will have a long day ahead of you."

PART TWO

"Are you ready, Lyla?" asked Anakin

"Yes, Master!" Lyla replied.

"Come here."

"Yes, Master."

"Are you sure you can drive a light freighter?"

"Yes, Master. I've been trained to drive one."

"Good."

It has been many years since Anakin took Lyla in to train her, and it is the first time Lyla has had to go to the Jedi Temple to train with her own age group and see how good she is.

When they land, the Jedi Council members swarm the ship.

"I see you're glad I'm back," said Anakin. "But I have to get this Padawan to her final test to become a Knight!"

"Everyone move aside!" boomed Mace Windu. "Let the Master and Padawan through!"

Everyone moved to make a path for the two Jedi.

PART THREE

"Ya-hoo, Anakin, missa see yousa back!" Jar Jar Binks said when he spotted Anakin waiting for the Jedi Knight test to be completed.

"Hello, Jar Jar! How's it been?"

"Missa been very, very busy with missa, missa health has not been right."

The doors opened and a thin stream of Jedi came out.

"Well, it's been nice to see yousa! Yousa should stop by more!"

"Bye, Jar Jar," Anakin called over the heads of the young Jedi Knights.

"Master?" asked Lyla.

"Yes?"

"I'm a Jedi Knight!"

PART FOUR

Mace Windu allowed the two Jedi from Endor to sleep in his apartment that night so they could rest for the flight home.

That night while Anakin was sleeping, someone crept into the room and killed him. The only thing left behind was a small ovalish tooth.

PART FIVE

Lyla woke up to Yoda's pondering voice, who was in the other room. "Why kill Anakin, did they, hmm? Who did it, hmm? Hmmmmm."

"We must be able to track the death to the person or living creature who did it," said Eeth Koth.

"Enough information we have not. Almost everyone thinks right now that it's either young Lyla or Mace because the only people here they were."

"I would never do such a thing and you know that!" Windu told the two other council members.

"We know, but you and the young Knight were the only people here last night," replied Koth.

At that point in time, an earth shattering boom echoed through the galaxy. More and more of them started – each one louder than the one before it. At each sound a bright colorful burst of light erupted in the sky, and in the middle of it was a madly laughing Jar Jar Binks, complete with a missing tooth. Jar Jar pushed another button on the remote he was holding and the planet crumbled and broke apart.

Everyone died.

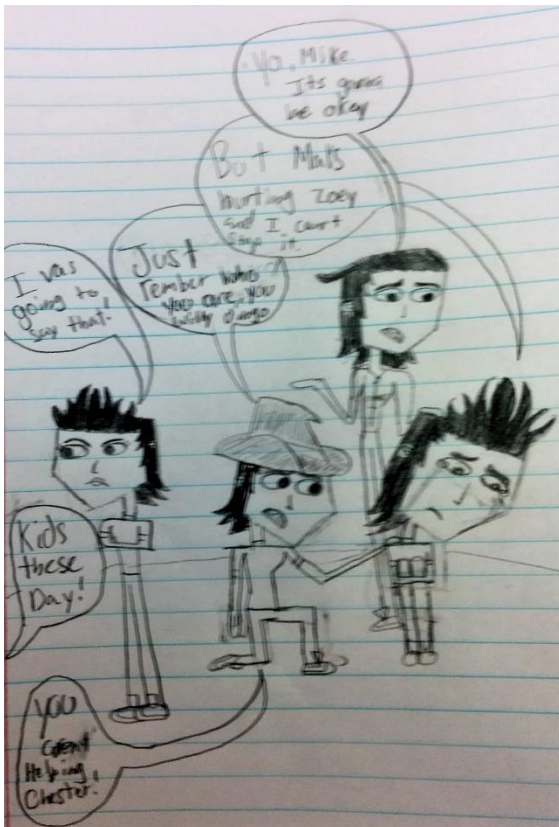
PART SIX

Lyla woke up in a cold sweat, the bedsheets sticking to her bare arms. She gasped for air and tried to slow her breathing.

It's okay, she thought, that didn't happen.

Anakin poked his head into Lyla's bedroom. "Are you okay? Well-rested? It's a big, big, big day! It's Knight test day!

THE END



Drawings by Olivia Schlossmann



Drawing by Veronica Finnerty



Baby Carrots – by members of Teen Zine



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Veronica Finnerty, Erin Lynch, Rachel Miller, Genevieve Poirier,
and Olivia Schlossmann

Please join us at our next meeting!

teen zine is a publication of the Huntley Area Public Library's teen writers' club and includes members' work as well as submissions from area teens in grades 6 – 12. If you would like to submit your writing or artwork for review and possible inclusion in a future issue of the zine, please fill out a submission form (available at the library's Information Desk), or use our online submission form

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