

Dustin Simmons
2221 lakeshore Dr.
Jacksonville TX 75766
0afwes0@gmail.com

The Paladins Blade

By Dustin Simmons

Erebus Lux was in a dark room looking through his scrying mirror and trying to ignore the group of goblin carolers singing behind him. *Of course*, he needed a special one of a kind magic item that is protected from magical scrying. *Of course*, the location of said item has only been written down once in a book of which there is only one copy. *Of course*, the goblins choose the exact moment he started concentrating on getting past a magical shield to start pestering him with their annoying songs. “SHUT UP!” he screamed, turning to them while magic raised his long black hair and rippled through his silky dark robes. His eyes glowed as did the red jewel over his heart. Despite his intimidating appearance the goblins laughed as they ran away. The magic subsided and he let out a sigh of aggravation. Just then, he heard a chime coming from the mirror. He turned around to see the object he had been searching for. A book by the name of “The Chronicles and Theories of Gerix Fray”.

“YES! Finally, now let’s just see where it is.”

With a wave of his hand he got a bird’s eye view of Elasin Castle and the surrounding city. A look of shock flashed across his face but was soon replaced by a look of contemplation. Erebus made a small flourish with his hand and a blue light began emanating from his palm.

“CRESZ, meet me in the model room.”

“Right away master.” Said a voice coming from the light.

Erebus put out the light and stormed through the darkened halls with a swiftness and grace unnatural. He made his way to the model room and slipped inside. Within this room he saw various scaled down models of castles and cities that lay atop tables and shelves. A magical white light shined overhead making this the most well-lit room in the tower. He looked through the models until he found the one he was looking for. The scale

Authors note: Erebus has the same voice as the lead singer from the band “Set It Off.”

model of the Artorian capital city Balyn. He quickly brought the model over to the center table and began contemplating the model when a well-dressed goblin walked into the room.

“You called master?” the goblin said.

“Yes Cresz, I found out that the object we’re looking for, *or rather the object that will help us find the object we’re looking for*, is inside Elasin Castle and as you **soooo very well know**, the Artorian government and I have hit a little bit of a rough patch in our relationship. If we can get inside and get out with the book, that it will lead us straight to the Seal of Velo. The only thing is, how do we get in?” Erebus said gesturing wildly.

“Uh...Oh! What about the Yuletide ball. We could sneak in with all the nobles.”

Erebus looked at Cresz while he considered the idea.

“Hmm...let’s see. All the noble families in one place protected by an elite force stationed inside a large castle. Muwahaha...Sounds like fun. Cresz, get your boys ready! We’ve got a party to go to.”

#

Young Princess Duana Elasin was standing in the grand hall of Elasin Castle where her father and brother were talking with a visiting king and his son. She wasn’t actually part of the conversation but she was expected to stand there anyway. She was bored out of her mind but, she had to pretend to care or she would get in trouble. She was there for formality, standing like a statue in an uncomfortable dress so that the visiting king couldn’t say that her dad didn’t respect his importance. Richard Elasin and the Lorvan king were discussing the formation of official trade routes and how to best deal with the troll problem to the west but she didn’t care enough to actually listen. After a time, Ester thanked the Lorvan king for his time and wished him a merry Yule. He then turned to the prince and princess and addressed them.

“Now you two, go get ready. The Yuletide ball is tonight and I want everything to be perfect. Is that understood?”

“Yes sir” They said in unison.

They both turned and began walking back to their respective rooms. *Things **always** have to be perfect.*
Duana thought as she walked away.

The bright yellow halls of the castle were adorned with paintings of past kings and queens and purple drapes framing each picture. Red, green, and white yuletide mage lights hung in the air, their light shimmering across the dark blue floor. As she walked she saw Ibis, her tutor, coming the opposite direction. The old elf was reading a book as he walked. She gave him a sour look but hoped he wouldn’t notice.

“It’s not polite to stare” he said without looking up from his book.

Startled, she quickly responded “Yes sir. Sorry sir.”

He stopped walking and looked up from his book.

“Have you read though those chapters yet?”

“I’m half way done Sir.”

“I’ll be testing you on it next Friday so don’t waste time, and remember, if I see any harm come to that book, then we’re going to have a little lecture about taking care of other people’s things.”

“Yes Sir.”

“Oh, and one more thing. Go tell your brother that he’s not to miss any more of our sessions.”

“Yes Sir.”

#

Cresz had just spent the last couple of hours sneaking all over town and putting enchanted ornaments on every pine tree in the city and was now waiting to ambush a noble carriage. The carriage of Lord and Lady Keslar had just turned the corner when Cresz dropped the mist bomb. The mist immediately sent the humans to

sleep and the goblins went in. The Lord, Lady, and driver where all stripped of their clothes and thrown into the mud. Each set of clothes took two goblins to fill but there were seven goblins and only three sets of clothes. Thinking quickly, Cresz tore one of the drapes off the carriage and disguised the final goblin as a baby. With their disguises ready, they whipped the horse's reins and rode hastily to the castle.

They rode up the path along the wall and up to the gate house. Once through the gate, they parked the carriage and made their way across the bailey to the inner wall. Keeping their hats pulled down low enough to cover their faces, the disguises were able to get them past the guards. Once inside, they were confronted by a horrifying sight. A long steep narrow stairway led three stories straight up. The goblins who were acting as the human's lower half heaved and strained as they slowly labored their way up the stairs with their comrades on their backs. Upon reaching the top of the hellish path they found themselves in front of a beautiful palace. The palace was about three stories high and looked like a cross between a palace and a cathedral. Gold and white decorations littered the walls and, in several places, the Elasin trademark pale blue lion could be seen. The outskirts of the palace were decorated with a beautiful garden full of exotic plants, and in front of the main entrance stood a statue of the legendary hero, Leo Elasin, wielding his magic sword. In the center of the palace was the ballroom tower, illuminated with magical light that made it look like a lighthouse over the city.

The goblin band made their way through the golden throne room and past the art gallery to the guest bedrooms. As soon as they got into the room that had been reserved for the Keslar family, the goblins operating the legs collapsed, breaking the disguises. Cresz walked over to the wardrobe and pulled a small green sphere out of his vest. He pushed the sphere against the wardrobe and it sunk into the wood. A green light emanated from the wardrobe and it transformed into a portal leading to their tower where Erebus was waiting. Then all the other goblins stepped through the portal and filled the room. Erebus crouched as he stepped out of the wardrobe. He was dressed in an elaborate dark suit. He smiled as he looked over his goblin minions. He spread out his arms and addressed Cresz.

“Well, how do I look?”

#

Duana walked into her room and closed the door behind her. Her room was large and luminous, adorned with everything a girl could have ever wanted though little of it was ever asked for. In the center was a large circular bed with red covers and hanging from the ceiling were red curtains that could be wrapped around the bed to turn it into a pseudo-fort. Red curtains hung from the bright yellow walls concealing the shelves that were built into them. On the far wall was a pointed arc widow with golden bars that overlooked the south side of the castle. Hanging from the ornate dresser on the left wall was the dress that her father had picked for her to wear to the ball. It was an ornate red and white dress with fake white holly leaves sewn into the back and sides of the neck like a shirt collar. A small squeaking sound came from behind one of the curtains on the wall. Duana went over to the curtain and pulled it back. Behind the curtain was a cage containing a tiny mouse.

“Hi Vicky, sorry I’m late. Here, I’ve got something for you.”

Duana pulled out a piece of fruit that she had taken from the kitchen when no one was looking and held it above the cage.

“Shhh...this is our little secret.”

She dropped the fruit into the cage and watched as Vicky nibbled at the fruit. Almost a year ago Duana had saved the little mouse from a trap that the cook had set. Since then, Vicky had been the one she could talk to when she couldn’t talk to anyone else. She picked up Vicky’s cage and brought it over to the bed. She then turned to the Yuletide dress and began changing. When she was done she looked at herself in the mirror. As she looked, she started to feel that there was something missing. After some thought, she opened a drawer and pulled out a white carnation hair pin with green leaves surrounding the flower. She placed the pin on the left side of her head and looked at the mirror again. Pleased with herself she turned to Vicky.

“What do you think Vicky?”

Vicky squeaked in response. After she finished getting ready, Duana left her room and made her way down the hall to her brother's room. She knocked on the door.

"Come in." came her brothers voice.

Duana gently opened the door. Her brothers room was decorated with swords and shields hanging from the blue walls. White and gold flags carried the emblem of the paladins, a hammer surrounded by a halo. At the far wall her brother was using a magic mirror to talk to a man in heavy ornate armor.

"Unfortunately, my duties as prince require that I be absent tonight. Have Jared take over while I'm gone." Her bother told the man.

"As you wish, your highness."

Both the men raised their hands and they started to glow with golden light. They then performed the paladins salute. "May the light watch over you." They said in unison. The image in the mirror shimmered and was gone. He turned to face Duana.

"Alright, what do you want?"

"Ibis said that you're not allowed to skip his lectures anymore."

"Sigh...figures he would send someone else to scold me instead of doing it himself. Too busy with his head in those books to actually talk to someone in person or even listen to the people around him. I think after seven hundred years the old elf's grown tired of hearing people talk. You tell the old fool that if he wants me to listen to his summons then he has to summon me personally, but not right now. Father is going to want us in the reliquary. I'm sure he's got his annual speech prepared and will be sending for us any minute."

Just then a knock came at the door and a woman's voice could be heard.

"Prince Terrell, your father wants you..."

"In the reliquary I know. Come on."

With that Duana and Terrell made their way to the reliquary. The door to the reliquary was a beautiful ornate silver door with a depiction of various myths and gods. Around the door were four orbs of light that were imbedded in the wall. The door opened to reveal a wall of light blocking the doorway. Duana and Terrell stepped through the wall of light and into the room. All around the room were various stands and shrines that each featured a central object. Each object gave off some kind of magical energy, and each one had its history written beside it, but of all the relics in the chamber one stood above the rest. In the center of it all stood a sword that glowed brighter than a torch. The sword was half way imbedded in the top of a trapezoidal pyramid with lines of light coming from the base and moving across the floor illuminating the room and granting power to the barrier at the door. In front of the sword was King Richard Elasin who was staring at the glowing blade. Without turning around, he began to speak.

“Over two thousand years ago, this land was terrorized by the by the Obsidean Dragon Mordrizon. Mordrizon brought darkness and despair to every corner until Leo Elasin came with a shining sword. He used its power to bring the people together and those who fought with him shared in the blades power, becoming the first paladins of the blade. Leo and his army slew Mordrizon and he became the first king of Artoria. Since that day our house has been tasked with upholding the legacy of the King of Light. That’s why nothing can go wrong. Everything must be perfect.” He turned around and looked at them with a stern expression. “**You must be perfect.** You must appear to the people, peasant and noble alike, like you are celestial beings. Like a fairytale come true. There is **no** room for error.”

Richard paused for a moment as if noticing something.

“That pin. Was that a part of the dress I had made for you?”

Duana moved her hand up to the pin.

“No, but I thought it looked nice.”

“I had a long talk with the royal tailor about what would look perfect for the ball tonight and neither of us thought a hairpin was needed.”

Duana was silent. Richard walked over to Duana and gently plucked the carnation from her hair. He held up the carnation which looked yellow in the sword's golden glow.

“Now, go up to the ballroom tower. I will follow shortly.”

#

Erebus rode the dwarf-crafted elevator to the top of the ballroom tower. When he got to the top, he walked through the doors in front of him and up a short stairway to the ballroom floor. The stair rose up though the floor on the south side of the circular ballroom. Bright yellow walls rose up two and a half stories high and converged at the top forming a pointed ribbed dome. All along the wall were large, pointed, arch-shaped openings that allowed the nobles to view the city far below. Magical lights filled the room and Erebus could sense an enchantment had been put in place to keep out the wind and cold. There were two curved staircases on the left and right that both lead up to the indoor balcony that stretched along the edges of the room providing a bird's eye view of the ballroom below. All around the room the nobles talked and danced, their motion making a moving maze of flowing suits and gowns. At the northern end, the King stood on the balcony smiling and surveying the dance below. Erebus could hear the sound of music coming from the balcony directly above him.

Never one to miss out on the fun, Erebus soon joined the dancing crowd. He moved with inhuman grace as he twisted through the ball, but his feet were not the only things moving swiftly. Nearly every noble he came close to became an unsuspecting victim as he cast silent spells whose effects were greatly delayed. By the time he made it around the room, nearly sixty percent of the nobles in the room were cursed to awake the next morning either turned into a werebeast or in another person's body. Erebus chuckled at the thought of the confusion that the morrow would bring.

When he was done, Erebus moved up the stairs to get a better view of the room. From atop the western balcony, Erebus could make out about seven paladins standing around the room. The King continued to smile while standing beside the prince and princess, the latter of which was wearing an obviously plastic smile. The prince was the best paladin in the castle but at the moment he was wearing neither weapon nor armor. All the paladins, including the prince, could pose a threat and then there were the guards that would surely pour in from the floors below. Taking all of this in, he prepared himself for what would come next.

#

Duana was standing on the balcony smiling at the nobles below her and caring for not a single one. She looked out the southern window at a city that was all but alien to her. She had been to the city of course but only in passing or on parade. She was never **really** there. Her contemplation was interrupted when her father subtly nudged her.

“Follow me” said the King.

The King and princess smiled and waved as they made their way down to the doors at the southern end of the ball. As soon as they went through the doors both their smiles vanished. When they were alone, Richard turned to Duana with a serious look on his face.

“I went down to your room to return that pin. I found something. Apparently, a rat had found a home in your bedroom, but luckily it had fallen into a cage and was easy to catch.”

A look of terror came across Duana’s face.

“What did you do to Vicky?!” she asked.

“A rat is **not** a proper pet for a princess. Now come back to the ball.”

She looked at him with a look of sorrow and disgust as he walked back towards the doors. He beckoned her to follow but she turned around and ran to the elevator. “Duana?” he said as she pulled the lever. Before he could react, she was out of sight. She began to cry as she descended to the palace below.

#

The King returned to the ballroom hiding his embarrassment at Duana’s choice to leave the party. Richard smiled and gave a friendly face to all the nobles he passed as he made his way back to the balcony. Upon returning to the balcony the King picked up his cup and spoon and began to ring the glass like a bell. The entire room went quiet as the king spoke.

“I would like to thank you all for coming to this year’s Yuletide ball. It is an honor to have you all here with me on this glorious night. Every year on this, the darkest night, we reflect on the things that have led to this moment and commemorate the passing of another year. I am proud to say that this year has been one of the most productive years our kingdom has had in over fifty years. We have won many victories and saw an explosion in agricultural production. We also improved our relationship with Loravey and made plans for trade to start in the spring. Let us pray that this coming year will be as good as the last.”

There was a roar of applause but it was cut short by a rumbling sound coming from the distance. Out in the distance, the partygoers could make out something moving. King Richard walked over to the window and peered out. Beyond the lightly falling snow several large figures were moving about. Upon closer inspection, he realized that they were giant pine treants. The walking trees were smashing everything in their wake. The sounds of panic and destruction could be heard from the castle.

“By the Gods! How did treants get into the city?! GUARDS! Gather the army and destroy those wretched twigs.”

The paladins started to move but before they could make it through the door, their path was blocked by the band falling off the balcony onto the floor in front of the exit. Everyone looked up to see a man wearing a dark robe with dark hair and a grin on his face.

“Season’s Greetings to you all. I hope you’re all having as wonderful a time as I am. What with the food, and the dancing, and killer yule trees destroying everything. It truly is a magical time.” Erebus said to the shocked crowd below.

“So, YOU’RE the one behind this. GUARDS! SEIZE HIM!”

The paladins pulled their swords out of their sheaths only to discover the blades of their swords hanging from their hilts like giant noodles.

“Oh yeah, I also took it upon myself to make a few improvements to your swords while you weren’t looking.”

They all dropped the useless weapons and summoned shields of light. The frightened crowd slowly backed away from the crazed man.

“I’ve got to congratulate you Richard. This was a wonderful party. The food, the music, the dancing, but I just thought it needed one little thing. A little...”

Just then, Erebus saw a spear of light moving straight for his head. Thinking quickly, he dodged to the left. The spear of light burst through the wall behind him. Erebus looked up to see the prince on the opposite balcony.

“Pandemonium.”

Erebus raised his hand and the wind and cold broke through the enchantment on the room. The floating magical lights got caught in the wind but couldn’t leave the room causing them to swirl around as if caught in a tornado. With a flick of his wrist, two large hands of shadow burst forth and attacked anyone directly in front of

him. Three of the paladins were knocked away before those remaining could dispel the hands with conjured light. Nobles screamed as they tried to get out of the crossfire. Erebus leapt from the balcony and rode a wave of darkness to the center of the room. As he landed he fired two black and purple lightning bolts from his hands at two nearby guards. The paladins conjured up several ethereal weapons, some of which they held and some of which acted on their own accord. Erebus stretched out his hands and several wells of darkness appeared with creatures of shadow spilling out. Spell after spell the battle raged, causing great damage to the surrounding area. Erebus grinned as he shot a bolt of purple fire at one of the spectral weapons.

“Now this is fun.”

#

Duana was sitting on her bed crying into Vicky’s cage. She sat in the dark with the lights off and the curtains closed feeling lonelier than usual. Suddenly, she felt a rumble move through the earth. This rumbling broke her out of her spell and she listened, trying to determine what was going on. Moments later she could hear chatter that didn’t sound human coming from the hallway. The chatter was soon accompanied by the sounds of clanking metal and breaking glass. Thinking quickly, Duana ran over to her desk and picked up the large book that Ibis had lent her. The book read “The Chronicles and Theories of Gerix Fray”. As she got back behind the curtain, the door to her room burst open. She could hear as the invaders tore open drawers and threw things about. Suddenly, a goblin tore open the curtains. Before the goblin could react, Duana beamed him in the head with the book and bolted for the door. As she ran, one of the goblins pointed at her and yelled.

“There it is! Get her!”

Soon all the goblins were chasing her. She ducked and weaved her way through the hostile crowd, smacking any goblin that got too close. Everywhere she went, goblins were tearing apart the castle and taking anything that wasn’t nailed down. Armored Goblins distracted the guards while the unarmored ones focus on looting. She was running through the dining hall when she saw Ibis. He raised his hands and a magical wall appeared behind her. A mass of goblins pushed against the magical barrier putting strain on the wizard.

“Quickly, go get the Paladins Blade from the reliquary and get it to the ballroom tower. We need to quell this invasion before it gets out of hand.”

She ran to the reliquary as fast as she could. When she got there, she saw a bunch of goblins trying to break through the wall of light with no success. One of the goblins turned around and shouted.

“She’s got the book!”

All the goblins turned around to look at her. Realizing the book was important to them, she threw the book as far as she could away from the wall of light and leapt through while they were scrambling to get it. Knowing that no one but her family could enter the room, she took a moment to rest and breath. She looked up at the Paladins Blade glowing in the center of the room. She walked over to it and gently wrapped her fingers around the hilt. With one swift motion she pulled the blade from the pedestal. The blade was impossibly light and seemed to know exactly where she wanted it to go. As soon as she pulled out the sword, the lights in the room started to fade. Realizing that this place wouldn’t be safe for much longer, she sprinted for the door. When the goblins saw her holding the sword of light they immediately became terrified. None were brave enough to approach the weapon even considering the youth of its wielder. She swung the sword in front of her as she ran for the elevator.

#

Erebus was using his magic to keep the knights at bay. Several more guards had joined the fight and were helping the paladins to fight off the shadow monsters that now filled the room. Then he sensed a shift in the magic of the room. He dodged just in time to avoid being hit by a blue fireball that definitely did not come from one of the paladins. He looked over to see an old elf whose magical radiance made the paladins look like candles standing beside a bon fire.

“Ah, come to join the fun?” Erebus said to the elf.

“Just playing my part.”

The elf fired first, throwing spell after spell and keeping Erebus on his toes. Erebus traded shots with the elf but as the fight wore on, Erebus began to suspect that something wasn't right. The wizard was giving him too many opportunities to dodge. Turning his attention to the paladins, he saw that they had backed off a little and were now only harassing him to keep him distracted. *They've turned this fight into a play and they're waiting for someone else to come on stage.* He thought to himself.

#

Duana opened the ballroom doors and quickly made her way up the short staircase. As soon as she made it up to the ballroom floor, she stopped. The entire room was in chaos with magic flying every which way. The paladins and several of the guards from below battled against dozens of shadow monsters. In the center of the room she could see Ibis having a magical duel with a man in dark robes. She looked up to see that the dome ceiling had caved in in many places and the crumbling pillars and walls made the ballroom look like a birdcage that had been smashed with a mace. She stared at the scene for a while before being broken out of her trance by the voice of her father.

“Duana, I'm glad you're here. This vermin thought he could challenge us, but what he doesn't realize is he has given us a gift. For centuries we've been riding on the legacy of the defeat of Mordrazon but once we strike him down, this will be **our** legacy, **our legend.**”

Richard held out his hand.

“Give me the sword and I'll end this.”

Duana stared at him, her thoughts racing. She clenched her teeth and tightened her grip. Getting impatient, he went to take the sword from her. There was a blur of motion. King Richard was too stunned to scream as his hand fell off. The king fell to his knees staring at Duana. She turned away from the King and looked at paladins fighting. She raised the sword and stabbed downward.

#

Erebus had been struggling to get the upper hand but they had gathered enough strength to keep him on the defensive and when he saw the fabled sword of light he knew it was over. Then the unexpected happened, the king lost his hand. He watched as the princess raised the sword above her head and a high-pitched scream escaped his throat as he realized what would come next. No longer concerned with the other fighters, he focused all his power into forming a shield around himself. As soon as the sword hit the floor there was an explosion of light. Sweat formed on his head as colorful waves of power crashed against his shield. When the light subsided, the entire room was decimated. Everyone was knocked off their feet and most had third degree burns. The balcony and ceiling were gone and only a few pillars remained. Ibis had been forced to his knees and the only ones left standing were Erebus and Duana. In her hands, Duana held an ebony sword with the blade broken in half. Despite his burns, Prince Terrell tried to cast a spell but nothing happened. The power of the sword was lost. Terrell looked at Duana with a morbid expression and Erebus immediately knew what he was about to say. Wanting to prevent such a stupid cliché question, Erebus morphed the shadows into the shape of a frying pan. Terrell only managed to get the “What h...” out before he was knocked unconscious. The sudden appearance of the frying pan surprised Duana and she couldn’t help but laugh.

“That...Was...Crazy! I still can’t believe you broke The Paladins Blade. Sooo, what are you going to do now?”

Duana stared at him with an expression that told him she didn’t have a clue what she was doing. Worry made its way across her face as she thought of all the things that would likely happen to her now.

Ibis slowly stood and was about to cast a spell to try and subdue the two when the ground started to shake. He weaved his magic around the tower to hold it together while he worked on a spell to teleport everyone out. Realizing what was about to happen, Erebus pulled a green sphere out of his robe and threw it at what was left of a wall. The sphere transformed into a set of doors upon impact.

“Well, it’s been fun but I think it’s time to for me to go home. Have a nice night.” Erebus said to Ibis.

While Erebus was talking, Duana ran for the portal doors and went inside before he could see her go in. Erebus turned around and followed quickly after. As soon as he was back in his tower he shut the doors and opened them again. When he did, Erebus could see a goblin through the wardrobe.

“We’re leaving now!”

The goblin startled at his master’s sudden appearance.

“Right away sir!” he said as he pulled a horn from his belt.

He ran over to the door and blew the horn into the hallway. Several more goblins throughout the castle blew their horns and soon all of them were rushing toward the wardrobe while holding on to any treasure they had managed to find. When Erebus was certain that no more goblins were coming, he shut the door and opened it again. This time they revealed a wall with a disk and two half sphere indentations. He pressed the palm of his hand on the disk and two green orbs appeared in the indentations. He plucked them out and put them back in his robe. Erebus turned around and saw Crez running up to him.

“Ah, Crez. What’s the word? Did we get the book?”

“Yes sir, and we even managed to get away with a fortune on the side but...”

“Excellent, that seal is as good as ours.” Erebus said as he started to walk away.

“Yes, but there’s something else you need to know. The princess is here.”

Erebus stopped and turned to look at Crez who had a concerned expression on his face.

“Oh? Is that so?”

“Yes sir, we found her in the dining room. Sir, should we be worried about her? What if the royal family tries to get her back?”

“The royal family won’t want her back and I’ll handle the girl. Come on.”

Erebus turned and was gone before Crez could respond.

#

Duana was trapped. Wherever she looked a crowd of goblins stood with weapons drawn. She held on to her broken black blade and threatened the goblins around her but she knew the only reason they hadn't overpowered her was because they didn't know what to do with her. Suddenly, a voice called out.

"That's enough, I'll take it from here."

The goblins lowered their weapons and Erebus came into the room.

"Well well princess, you have proven yourself to be the most interesting thing about today. You dismembered your father, you broke the source of your army's power, you blow up your ballroom...tell me. Why?"

"I...I couldn't take being a princess anymore. I had to escape." Duana said, stress evident in her voice.

Erebus thought about this for a moment. A smile crept across his face. "Well then, I'd say you did a spectacular job. After today, you will never be called princess or be trapped in a castle ever again because aren't a princess anymore. You're a criminal, a fugitive, a villain. In other words, your one of us now and we are as free as a person can get. So, what do you say."

Erebus held out his hand and waited for her reply. Duana looked at the extended hand with apprehension but soon her fear gave way to excitement. A new life of adventure was laying before her and she figured she had already crossed a line when she blew up the ball. She grabbed Erebus hand and the goblins cheered for the new addition to the gang.