

FAIRY TALES CAN COME TRUE

by Janet Rivenbark

“Come in,” Catherine called out when she heard the knock on her office door. No one in the office knocked, so it had to be someone who didn’t work for the DA.

She looked up to see Jenny staring at the name on the glass in the door.

“**Catherine Chandler, Deputy District Attorney?**” she read, then looked over at Catherine. “When did this happen, and why didn’t you tell me? I went back to your normal corner, and someone named Rita sent me over here.”

Catherine stood and went around her desk to hug her friend.

“It happened on October 1st, and they’ve kept me so busy since the promotion that I haven’t had the time to tell anyone. Joe has promised that I won’t have to work this weekend, and I was planning to call you.”

“October 1st was almost two weeks ago!” Jenny pointed out in an accusatory tone.

“Then go yell at Joe,” Catherine said with a laugh. “That first week was hell. I worked six twelve-hour days then slept almost all day on Sunday. And it’s been almost as bad this week.”

“But shouldn’t a promotion come with better hours?” Jenny asked, as she sat on the old sofa in what used to be Joe’s office. Catherine sat on the other end.

“Normally it would, but October 1st brought some huge changes in the office. Levinson retired, Joe moved over to Trials, I moved up to running Investigations, Rita moved into my old job. When I haven’t been trying to learn this job from Joe, I’ve been going over cases with Rita and the rest of the Investigations staff. There are a lot of new hires who have to be trained, so it’s been crazy around here.”

“OK, you’re forgiven as long as you promise to come to this.”

Jenny handed her a heavy envelope that looked like an invitation.

“Did I miss something?” Cathy asked, holding up the envelope. “Are you getting married?”

Jenny gave a very unladylike snort. “Are you kidding? You wouldn’t have missed that. My parents would have taken out a full-page ad in the Times. This is an invitation to a party on the Saturday before Halloween.”

“You’re giving a party?” Catherine asked incredulously, thinking of Jenny’s tiny apartment.

“Read the invitation,” Jenny urged. “It will explain all of it.”

Catherine opened the envelope and pulled out the card. She started to smile as she read.

“Your publishing company has started a children’s books division? That’s wonderful!”

“Read on.”

“And they are having a Halloween Costume Gala on the Saturday before Halloween, to launch it and celebrate,” Catherine paraphrased. “The theme is fairy tale or children’s book characters. It sounds like fun.”

“Then you’ll come? I really need the moral support.”

“It sounds like maybe you got a promotion too?”

Jenny grinned. “Kinda, sorta,” she said. “They put little ole me in charge of the Children’s Literature Division.”

“Then we *are* due for a celebration, but it might be a little late to find a decent costume for this,” Catherine hedged. She hadn’t seen a lot of Vincent in the last couple of weeks, and although she was happy for Jenny, Saturday evenings looked to be about the only time she and Vincent would have together for the foreseeable future.

“Please, Cathy,” Jenny all but begged. “I’ll forgive all the missed dinners and lunches from the last few years... Start over? Clean slate?”

Cathy caved and sighed. “All right. I’ll do it... *if* I can find a costume that fits the theme.”

Jenny threw her arms around her friend, and Catherine was surprised at the relief in her voice.

“Thank you! And the invitation says that you can bring someone. Should I RSVP you for one or two?”

Catherine hesitated a moment. “Put me down for two, just in case. Maybe someone from the office would like to go. I might be able to talk Joe or Rita into it.”

Catherine was still shaking her head as she got ready to leave the office several hours later.

The things I let Jenny talk me into, but it should be interesting spending the evening with all those literary types.

She actually left the office on time on Friday that week.

Two weeks in the new job and I’m going home on time and don’t have to go in tomorrow. That is surprising and promising.

She was equally surprised several hours later while she was on her balcony reading on the unusually warm October evening, when Vincent landed next to her.

“I’m surprised to see you here tonight,” she said after she hugged him.

“I could tell that you were home early today, so I thought I’d come and find out how things have been going on the new job,” he told her, as he joined her on the padded bench she’d recently added to the balcony.

“Hectic,” she told him with a grin. “With occasional moments of total and unbridled chaos, but I think I’m getting the hang of telling people what to do and delegating. Not having to do all the leg work myself is taking some getting used to.”

“How many people?” he asked.

“Eight. That’s up from the five that Joe had. All the sections got at least one additional person, and Investigations got three. There are seven of us. Most of the time, all I have to do is assign cases and review files. And that should allow me to start working eight to five with no weekends.”

They had talked for a little while when Vincent picked up the book Catherine had been reading.

“What are you reading?” he asked. He removed the card she’d been using as a bookmark and looked at the page.

“Nothing very edifying, I’m afraid. I needed to rest my brain, so I grabbed a book designed to take me away from real life.”

Vincent looked at the cover of the thick paperback. It depicted two nearly naked people. The man had his back turned, and all you could see was his long blond hair and a well-muscled body. The woman had her head thrown back and her eyes closed as the man buried his face in her cleavage.

Vincent raised one eyebrow and looked up at Catherine.

"I said it wasn't real life," she defended, as she grabbed the book back.

Vincent's attention then wandered to the card in his hand.

"A Halloween costume party?" he asked, handing it back to her.

"Yes. The publisher my friend Jenny works for is introducing a new line of Children's Literature, and they thought a good way to do that would be to have a costume party and have the guests dress as characters from fairy tales and children's books."

"Are you going?" he asked.

"I told her I'd try, but I don't think so. I made some calls around to costume shops, and I wasn't able to find anything to rent, and I don't have anything I can turn into a costume," she told him.

He was quiet for a moment, then he turned and looked at her.

"I think I have an idea," he told her.

"What?"

"A fairy tale that I read the children just the other night. It was in an old book of fairy tales. It's by Madame Leprince de Beaumont..."

"*Beauty and the Beast*," Catherine interrupted. "I had a book like that when I was little, and I found out later that the original story was by Gabrielle-Suzanne de Villeneuve. I guess they didn't go in much for plagiarism laws back then."

"Yes," he said with a smile. "We have both versions too."

"What did the children think of it?"

"The girls loved it, and the boys thought it was silly," he said with a chuckle. "But you'd make a lovely Beauty. There is even a dress Below that Brooke wore in one of our theatrical productions that you could wear."

"But no one would know who I was," she pointed out. "They'd probably think I was Juliet or some other literary character."

"But if you went with a *Beast*?"

When she didn't seem to catch on, he pointed at himself.

"It's a Halloween party. I could go, and no one would know that this wasn't makeup or a mask." He sounded almost eager.

She was stunned that he'd suggested it. After their first Halloween together, she'd suggested they do something similar the following year, but he'd begged off, saying that there was a children's party Below. There had been, and she'd gone with him to that, but him volunteering to go with her to this party was nearly unbelievable.

"You're sure?"

He nodded. "I'd love to go. You talk so much about your friend Jenny, and I'd like to meet her. Something like this would give me a chance to do that, without a lot of explanations."

“But once she does meet you, she’s never going to give me any peace until she knows what you *really look like under the makeup*,” she pointed out.

“So then, once she’s met me and knows me a little, maybe we can tell her,” he said reasonably. “It would be nice for you to have someone Above you can talk to. And she does work for a publisher, and I can’t see Father not agreeing to that. He might even invite her Below and ask her if she’d like to be a Helper.”

“All for the love of books,” Catherine said with a laugh. “Let me look at the costume and see if it will fit,” she said. “Then we’ll decide if your idea is feasible.”



Catherine went Below the next afternoon after lunch. Vincent had the dress laid out and ready.

“Wow!” Catherine gasped. “That is gorgeous!”

The dress was almost identical in style to the illustration from the book that Vincent showed her. The only differences were the colors. There was a light blue satin underskirt with a dark blue velvet dress over it that was decorated with silver trim and a stiff white collar.

“What would you wear?” she asked Vincent.

“I could add a few things to what I wore to Lin and Henry’s wedding, and I think I would pass.”

“Let me try it on to see if it will fit.”

She took the dress and went behind the screen in the corner of Vincent’s chamber.

There wasn’t a mirror in the room, so she stepped out to let Vincent see and pass judgment.

“What do you think?” she asked.

“It fits you as if it was made for you,” he said with a smile.

“I’m going to have to wear flat shoes,” she said. “The ruffle on the bottom doesn’t quite touch the floor, and if I wear heels, it will be too short for the period.” She looked up at him. “Are you sure you want to do this? You know that the ‘beast’ in the original stories looked rather like a wild boar walking upright.”

“I think we can get the point across,” he told her. “And I think I’d rather do this than try for *Puss in Boots*.”

“Well, you are much more handsome than that ‘beast,’” she said quietly, as she went behind the screen to change back into her clothing.

Two weeks later, Catherine stood in front of the full-length mirror on the back of her bathroom door. She had to agree with Vincent; the dress fit her as if it was made for her. She’d had it cleaned, and it looked almost new. She’d found some long gloves in a blue that matched the satin underskirt, but she’d opted to leave her hair down, and she’d used her curling iron to make a lot of soft curls. She had just picked up a fan and a small blue velvet reticule when there was a knock at her door.

She opened it to Vincent. Her jaw dropped, and then she grinned.

“You are the most handsome *beast* I’ve ever seen,” she said as Vincent handed her a long-stemmed red rose. She opened the door wider.

“Mary intervened,” he told her. “She had some fabric left from the dress.” He opened the dark blue velvet coat that hit him at mid-thigh to show her the matching pants and lighter blue satin waistcoat.

“Where did the boots come from?” she asked, eyeing the black leather boots that went to the middle of his calf. They looked new.

“Devin sent them. He’s working in a motorcycle shop that sells clothing too. He sent me a whole set of leathers. I just haven’t had the occasion to wear any of it. The boots are a little modern, but I think they pass.”

“They’re perfect,” she approved. “Let me get my coat, and I’ll be right with you.”

“What did the doorman say?” she asked, as he helped her with her coat.

“I avoided the lobby,” he told her. “I came in through the basement and came up in the elevator. It was quicker.”

He was quieter than usual as they went down in the elevator, and she questioned him.

“Is something wrong?”

“Father is not happy.”

“I was afraid of that. When did you tell him?”

“Not until a few hours ago. He wanted me to play chess with him tonight, and I told him I couldn’t. He accepted that and didn’t ask any questions, but then came to my chamber to retrieve a book I’d borrowed just as I was leaving. I tried to cover my clothes with my cloak, but he saw me before I could. I couldn’t lie to him. But he thinks that your friend Jenny is having a small, intimate party. He assumed that, and I didn’t correct his assumption.”

“Probably better for his peace of mind,” she agreed, as the elevator doors opened and Vincent pulled out black leather gloves and put them on. “Maybe you can fill him in later after you are home and safe.”

“Good evening, Miss Chandler,” the doorman said, as they entered the lobby. He eyed Vincent, obviously wondering how he’d gotten into the building without being seen. “Do you need a cab?”

“Yes, please, Roger.”

Roger held the door for both of them, then stepped to the curb and quickly waved down a cab.

They got in, Catherine gave the driver the address, and they settled back.

“I’ve never done this before,” Vincent commented quietly.

“Ridden in a cab?” she asked.

“Ridden in a motor vehicle,” he told her. “At least not while I was conscious.” She knew he was referring to the time Professor Hughes had captured him.

“Then don’t pay any attention to how he drives,” she whispered, referring to the cabbie. “New York taxi drivers are infamous for their crazy driving, and I think the only place that gives them any competition is London.”

Vincent shifted his attention to the lights passing by outside the car, and before he knew it, they were pulling up in front of a well-known hotel. Catherine passed a bill to the driver.

“Keep the change,” she said, as Vincent climbed out of the back seat.

“I’m sorry, I should have brought some money,” he said, as he took her hand and helped her out of the car.

“Don’t worry about it,” she said, as she stepped out and took his arm.

“Are you ready?” she asked, when they found themselves in the elevator by themselves. “We are early. Jenny asked me to come a little ahead of time so that I can calm her nerves.”

“I think so. Just how many people are supposed to be here,” he asked, when they stepped out into an almost deserted corridor.

“I have no idea. When I talked to Jenny the other night, she said something about the company staff, a lot of their authors, some bookstore owners, some journalists, and other invited guests.”

Catherine left her coat in the coatroom. Vincent held out his arm, she slipped hers through it, and they entered the room.

The only people there were the wait staff and the caterers. Catherine spotted Jenny on the other side of the room near where the band was setting up. She was talking to a man in a tuxedo, who appeared to be a member of the band.

“Who do you suppose she is supposed to be?” Catherine asked, nodding at the woman in a red wig that was braided so that the braids stuck out stiffly on both sides of her head.

“Pippi Longstocking, of course,” Vincent said. “It’s a favorite story series Below.”

“Of course,” Catherine said with a shake of her head. “Leave it to Jenny.”

At that moment, Jenny spotted Catherine and hurried over.

“Oh my God. Am I glad to see you! The band leader just told me that his singer has laryngitis, so the music will be only instrumental. What do you think? Will that be OK?” Jenny looked a little frazzled.

“I think it will be fine, Jenn. We don’t need vocals to dance.” She grabbed Jenny’s hand. “Hey, slow down! Take a deep breath. This is going to be fine. As long as there is an open bar and plenty of liquor, everyone will have a good time.”

Jenny closed her eyes and followed Catherine’s directions. When she opened them again, she was breathing more normally. She looked up at Vincent.

“She’s always been able to get through to me, even when no one else could,” she said, with a much calmer smile.

“I know what you mean,” Vincent said with an echoing smile.

“OK, Cath,” Jenny said without taking her eyes off Vincent. “I know this isn’t Joe; he’s too tall, so please, introduce me.”

“Jenny, this is Vincent,” she put her arm around Jenny. “And Vincent, this is my best friend, Jenny.”

“Jennifer.” Vincent took her offered hand, bent over it, and kissed the back, playing the part of a beast in prince clothing to the hilt.

“Oh my,” was all Jenny could say for a moment.

At that moment, a man dressed as The Cat in the Hat came in, and Jenny held up a hand to Catherine.

“Give me just a minute.”

She hurried across the room, snagging a glass of wine off a tray on a table. She handed the wine to The Cat in the Hat, and they started to talk.

"Is she always that..." Vincent started.

"Scattered?" Catherine finished for him. "Occasionally, but most of the time, she's incredibly organized. She kept both Nancy and me on track when we shared a house in college."

Jenny was back in a few minutes, and The Cat in the Hat had walked out onto the open roof garden.

"Who is that?" Catherine asked.

"My boss, or one of them, anyway. He's in charge of the whole Division. All of us who run the different genre departments answer to him." She looked from Catherine to Vincent, then back at Catherine. "I was going to say Puss in Boots, but I don't think there's a female character. So...." She held up her hand when Catherine started to speak. "No... I've got it. *Beauty and the Beast*. You two are perfect!"

As the evening went on, the room filled up, and Vincent was fascinated by all the people. He would have been content to stand in the corner, and people watch, except that women kept asking him to dance.

He was turning them down, but Catherine urged him to dance.

"If you don't, they will just keep asking," she told him. "And I can't dance every dance with you."

He broke down and led the evil queen from *Snow White* out onto the floor, while Catherine went in search of refreshments.

"Champagne, Mademoiselle?" asked a familiar voice.

"Yes, thank you," she said, as she turned toward the voice. She took a glass then looked at the smiling face of the waiter.

"Kristopher!" she exclaimed.

"In the flesh... well, more or less," he answered with a grin.

"How?" She'd almost accepted that Kristopher Gentian was dead, but now?

"It's almost Halloween. And, Cathy, you know what they say about Halloween?"

"No, what do they say?" she asked.

"The walls between the worlds grow thin! And it's not just on Halloween. That is why the Day of the Dead Celebrations last three days."

"Don't start that again." Catherine's all too logical mind just wouldn't go there. "You're as solid as I am." She reached out and touched him on the shoulder.

"For now, anyway," he answered.

Catherine heard her name called and turned away, and when she turned back to introduce Jenny to Kristopher, he was gone.

"What are you looking for?" asked Jenny.

"Kristopher Gentian. He was just here, and he was serving Champagne." She searched the crowd but didn't see him anywhere.

"I thought he was dead?" Jenny said.

"So, did I, but he keeps showing up."

"A ghost? It is almost Halloween, you know," Jenny said with a grin.

"Oh no! Not you too."

Vincent came up behind her and leaned down.

"It's a waltz, Catherine," he said with a smile. "Would you care to dance?"

Catherine handed her champagne flute to Jenny and danced off with Vincent.

"Are you having a good time?" she asked, as they moved around the dance floor.

"I am. I haven't danced this much since Father decreed that we all learn ballroom dancing. Everyone is speculating on who is under the 'makeup,' and I've been propositioned three times."

The last statement and the look on his face made Catherine laugh. "I don't doubt that," she said when she recovered.

Vincent's raised eyebrow made her chuckle again. "You are perfect in those clothes. The blue velvet makes your eyes look even bluer, and the pants and coat fit perfectly."

"I'm surprised you haven't been asked to dance more," he said.

"I've been asked, but I've turned them down. I'd rather dance with you."

"Flatterer!"

They passed a waiter with a tray as they moved along the perimeter of the dance floor. It looked like Kristopher again.

"Did you see the waiter I was talking to just before you walked up?" she asked.

"I saw a waiter from the back," he told her. "Why?"

"It was Kristopher," she said.

Vincent looked up and out over the crowd. "I thought I saw him earlier, but then decided it was just someone who looked like him."

"No, I spoke to him, and he called me by name."

"It is almost Halloween," Vincent echoed what both Kristopher and Jenny had said.

Catherine sighed and rolled her eyes. "Is there such a thing as Halloween fever?" she muttered.

About an hour later, Catherine and Vincent had taken a plate of hors d'oeuvres and their drinks out onto the roof garden, where tables had been set up. The temperature was comfortable, as long as they stayed close to the building and out of the breeze.

"I'm so glad you came with me tonight," Catherine said, as they relaxed nibbled on their hors d'oeuvres.

"I'm glad you allowed me to be your escort," Vincent told her.

"You really are having a good time, aren't you?" she said. She'd started out thinking that maybe they were taking too much of a risk, but now she was sure it wasn't.

"I am. I don't get to go to parties, at least not Above. This is a real treat."

"Then we will have to find Halloween parties every year," she decreed. "Even if I'm the one who has to throw them."

"My dear, Miss Chandler. Fancy meeting you here."

Again, the voice was familiar, and so was the face when Catherine looked up.

"Mr. Smythe! Will you join us?" she invited.

"Thank you."

Mr. Smythe pulled a chair over from a nearby table and sat.

"How have you been?" he asked her when he was seated. "It's been a while since you and..." His glance slid over to Vincent then back to her. "... the Tit-willow were in the shop. But this isn't the Tit-willow."

"Tit-willow?" echoed Vincent.

Catherine laughed. "That is what Mr. Smythe calls Joe." She turned back to Mr. Smythe. "No, this isn't Joe. This is Vincent. I bought the Tennyson for him. Vincent, this is Mr. Smythe. He owns a bookstore in the Village."

Mr. Smythe turned to Vincent. "So, how are you and Mr. Tennyson getting on?" he asked.

"Just fine. That was a wonderful volume she found in your store, and my father and I have both enjoyed it immensely."

"Mr. Smythe, have you seen Kristopher tonight?" Catherine asked on a whim. She thought it odd that they would both be at the same party.

"Kristopher?" he asked with an innocent look. "We've had this conversation before," he pointed out. "Have *you* seen him tonight?"

"As a matter of fact..." Catherine began when Jenny burst out of the room and interrupted their conversation.

"Cath. Please! Can you help me?"

"Be right there," she said to Jenny, then she turned to Vincent as she rose. "I'll be right back."

The two men watched as Catherine joined her friend, and they went back into the room.

"You know, I've met Kristopher too," Vincent told Mr. Smythe. "And as I told him then, 'Some men ignore the boundaries... *all* the boundaries.'"

"I sometimes think that Kristopher doesn't even know the boundaries exist," Mr. Smythe said musingly. His gaze came back to Vincent. "You should come to the store sometime. There are many more books where Mr. Tennyson came from."

"I might take you up on that invitation," Vincent said. Then he noticed Catherine waving at him from just outside the door. He could feel that she was concerned about something. "Excuse me, Mr. Smythe." Vincent rose. "It looks like Catherine needs my assistance for something. It was nice meeting you."

Vincent hurried across to the door and joined Catherine just inside.

"What is it?" he asked.

“An uninvited guest needs to be convinced to leave,” Catherine said. “Jenny doesn’t have any security here; she didn’t think she’d need it. We were wondering if you could help us?”

“Of course.”

Vincent followed Catherine to a spot in the hall near the elevator, where Jenny was trying to convince a man dressed as Kermit the Frog to leave quietly.

They could tell Kermit was drunk and wasn’t listening to what Jenny was saying. But he looked a little startled when he looked up and saw Vincent standing next to her.

Catherine watched in amusement as Vincent took off his leather gloves and handed them to Jenny. Then he leaned down and appeared to say something to the man. The man looked down at Vincent’s hands, then appeared startled. He put up his hands and started to back away.

“OK, man. You got it. I’m outta here!”

He turned and all but ran to the elevator, where he leaned on the button until the elevator arrived. The three of them watched until the doors closed.

Vincent turned, took his gloves from Jenny, and put them on.

“Thank you!” Jenny said, hugging him. I was having horrible visions of having to call the police.” She looked back into the room and sighed. “Now, duty calls... again.”

She headed back into the crowd, and Catherine leaned close and took Vincent’s arm.

“What did you say to him?” she asked.

“I used the same principle that I use when we need to make sure someone who accidentally stumbles into the tunnels makes their way back out,” he told her.

“What is that?”

“Below, we use lighting, casting my shadow, preferably larger than life, into the area where the person is, and then I... roar. Only this time, I made sure he saw my hands, without gloves, and then I growled.”

Catherine started to giggle; then she suddenly got serious. “You know, Jenny saw your hands too. She might not have questions right away, but she likely will before long.”

“We’ll cross that bridge with we get to it,” he assured her.

Two hours later, after the last guest left, Catherine and Vincent convinced Jenny to leave too.

“You don’t have to hang around,” Catherine told her for the third time. “The caterers and the hotel staff will clean up.”

They collected their coats from the coatroom and joined Vincent near the elevators.

“Why don’t we find a place and have a drink or coffee or something?” Jenny suggested, as they left the hotel. “It’s going to take me a while to unwind.”

“Why don’t we all just get in a cab and go back to my place?” Catherine countered, looking down at the huge shoes Jenny was wearing. “It’s quieter, and you can take your shoes off.”

“Best idea I’ve heard in ages,” Jenny agreed.

There was a line of cabs at the curb, and they all climbed into one. Vincent was in the front, and he gave the driver Catherine's address. When they arrived a few minutes later, Jenny watched with raised eyebrows as Catherine paid the fare.

"Vincent forgot his wallet," she explained briefly, as they crossed the sidewalk to the building.

When they got inside Catherine's apartment, Jenny immediately shed her coat and the shoes that extended about 4 inches beyond her own toes.

"These things are a hazard!" she declared. "I don't know how many times I've stepped on my own toes and almost fallen flat on my face." She turned to Catherine. "Do you mind if I go wash my face? And I need to get this itchy wig off."

"Sure, go ahead," Catherine told her. "Vincent and I will put together some snacks. I noticed that you didn't eat or drink a thing all evening."

"Too nervous," Jenny said as she headed for the bathroom.

Catherine gathered their coats and put them on the bed.

"Do you want to get out of your coat, Vincent?" she asked.

"It is warmer in here than it was at the hotel," he observed, as he removed his coat and unbuttoned his waistcoat, then he followed her to the kitchen, where they made sandwiches and opened a bottle of wine.

He carried the tray out to the living room, just as a once again brunette Jenny joined them from the bedroom. She'd washed the freckles from her face, taken off the wig, brushed out her hair, and pulled it back into a ponytail.

She'd been wearing blue denim overalls with a red and white striped shirt underneath, but she'd swapped them. The overalls were now underneath with the oversized shirt over them.

"Now maybe I'll be able to get home without getting too many weird looks," she said, as she made herself comfortable on the sofa across from Catherine and Vincent.

She took the glass of wine that Catherine offered and took a sip. She sat back with a sigh.

"Thank you again for taking care of the party crasher," she said to Vincent when she opened her eyes again.

"You are welcome," he assured her.

"Other than the one incident, which I don't think anyone noticed, I think it all went very well," Catherine told her. "You always did plan the best parties."

"Well, this was the biggest and most posh one I've ever planned," Jenny said. "Those that we had in college never had more than fifteen or twenty people."

"The hors d'oeuvres were delicious," Vincent observed.

"The caterer is a friend of my mom's," Jenny said, as she took a sandwich off the platter. "Mom still helps them out from time to time."

They chatted and for a while, then finally Jenny asked the burning question, the one Catherine had predicted.

"So, why don't you take off the makeup?"

“Well, it takes a special solvent to dissolve the adhesive,” Catherine said before Vincent could say anything. “And I don’t have any here.”

“Yeah, I’ve heard you can’t just rip that stuff off without ripping off half your face,” Jennifer agreed. “But I would really like to meet the real you some time.”

“We will have to see what we can do about that,” Vincent said with a nod. Then he turned to Catherine. “I really should be going,” he glanced at the clock that showed it was after 1am. “It’s late.”

“Are you sure?” Catherine asked, as they both rose.

He nodded, and Catherine went to get his coat. It was only then that it registered that he’d taken his gloves off too. She wondered why Jenny hadn’t commented.

She helped him put his coat on, handed him his gloves then followed him to the door. She was surprised when he leaned down and planted a kiss on her lips before he spoke.

“You have my permission,” he whispered, before adding in a louder voice, “I’ll see you on Wednesday. The children are having their Halloween party then.”

He turned, unlocked the door, and left. Catherine relocked it behind him and went back to the loveseat.

“Wow!” Jenny commented. “Is he an actor? He has to be an actor with that voice, or maybe he just works in the theater. Makeup. I mean, he covered all the details. He even had his hands made up. And it all looked so real. Everything on his face moved so naturally. Does he live here in New York or somewhere else?”

While Jenny babbled, Catherine made a decision.

“Jenn,” she began. “It’s not makeup.”

Jenny shut up. She looked at Catherine in disbelief that slowly turned to amusement.

“Quit,” she said with a grin. “It may be almost Halloween, but you can’t trick me like that.”

“I’m not trying to trick you. That’s Vincent, and that’s the way he really looks. This is the second time we’ve taken advantage of it being Halloween, and he’s spent time with people he doesn’t know.”

“That’s not possible,” Jenny began.

“I thought the same thing when I first saw him, but it is possible,” Catherine insisted.

“How did you meet him?” Jenny asked.

“He found me after my face was slashed. He and his father, who is a doctor, took care of me until I was well enough to come home.”

“But how is someone like him possible? Where does he live?” Jenny sounded like she was starting to believe.

“It’s all a long, complicated story,” Catherine told her.

Jenny listened with rapt attention for the next hour, as Catherine described the world Below, how people came to be living there, told her Vincent’s story, and then the details of how they’d met.

“I assume this is all a huge secret,” Jenny finally said.

“Yes, it is,” Catherine agreed seriously.

“And you’ve told none of your other friends?”

“None. Nancy knows Vincent’s name, but that’s all.”

“And you’re allowed to tell people?” Jenny asked.

“Not normally, but before he left, Vincent gave me permission. Before we left for the party, we discussed how it would be nice if I had a friend here Above who knew about everything; someone I could talk to.”

“And you and Vincent are in a relationship?”

“That’s complicated too,” Catherine told her with a sigh. “We have an empathic Bond, and he knows my feelings, and sometimes I can sense him. That Bond is stronger than friendship or even love. And although we have never been together in one sense, we will never, ever be apart. It doesn’t matter how far apart we are; he can still feel what I’m feeling.”

For once, Jenny was speechless. She glanced at the clock on the mantle, and it was almost 3am.

“I sure am glad that I can sleep in tomorrow,” she commented, as she rose and went to get her coat.

At the door, Jenny turned to Catherine. “This is a lot to absorb,” she told her. “I’ll call you Monday or Tuesday.”

When she was gone, Catherine cleaned up then went to get ready for bed, wondering the whole time if maybe she’d just made a huge mistake. She hoped not.

Vincent returned on Sunday evening.

“I won’t stay long,” he told her, “but I’ve felt your uneasiness since last night. You told her?”

“Everything,” Catherine said with a shake of her head. “And I’m wondering if it was too much all at once. I tried to tell her just about you and your story, but when I was doing that, I found it hard to tell without Below creeping in. In fact, that was how I wound up telling her. She started asking questions, and I told her that this is the real you and not makeup. When she left in the wee hours, she really did seem to be overwhelmed.”

“Have you talked to her since?”

“No, but she said that she’d call on Monday or Tuesday. If she doesn’t, I’ll call her.”

“Maybe you should invite her Below?”

“Do you think Father would agree to that?”

“There is something that Devin always used to say, that I’m just beginning to appreciate: *‘It’s always easier to ask forgiveness than it is to get permission.’*”

Catherine had to laugh at that.

“That does sound like him. I should cross-stitch it on a sampler and give it to him for Christmas.”

“Bring her when you come down for the children’s Halloween party. I’ll tell Father and will ensure that she’s welcomed.”

Catherine was on the verge of calling Jenny on Tuesday afternoon, when her phone rang, and it was Jenny on the other end of the line.

“I didn’t dream what you told me?” Jenny asked after they exchanged greetings.

“Not a bit of it,” Catherine assured her. “It’s all true.”

“And Vincent is real.” It was a statement, not a question.

“As real as you or I.”

“OK. I’m glad. When I finally went to sleep Sunday morning, my dreams were wild! All that you told me was jumbled up with the party. I remembered it all, and I knew I hadn’t had that much to drink. It was just hard to separate reality from dreams.”

“Well, Vincent anticipated that, and he suggested that I invite you to go with me to the children’s Halloween party tomorrow evening.”

“Really?” Jenny almost squealed. “Will that be OK? That Father character you told me about sounds like a bit of a dictator, albeit a benevolent one.”

“That fits, somewhat,” Catherine agreed with a laugh. “But Vincent promised that it would be all right. Will you go with me?”

“Yes, I wouldn’t miss it for the world... Should I wear a costume?”

“Do you still have your Pippi Longstocking costume?”

“Yes, I own it. I didn’t rent it.”

“Then wear that. Vincent said that the children love the stories. And I’ll wear my costume.”

“How do we get there?”

“Just come here around 6pm, and I’ll get us there.”

Catherine wanted to let Vincent know that Jenny had accepted the invitation and that they would be in costume. She wrote a note, wrapped it in a \$20 bill, and put it in her pocket. She dropped it in Clarence’s saxophone case on her way out of the building that evening.

The next evening, Jenny arrived all decked out as Pippi again, except she was carrying the shoes. Catherine was in her Beauty costume, only this time she’d pulled her hair back and let the curls fall down her back, and instead of her coat she wore a shawl.

“Do you have trick or treaters in your building?” Jenny asked when Catherine let her in.

“Kids from the building,” Catherine told her. “But they’ve already been here and gone. It’s a school night, so they did it early.”

“My building too,” Jenny said. “But there weren’t a lot of kids this year.” She held up a paper bag. “I brought the candy I had left. You said we were going to a children’s party.”

“That’s a good idea.” Catherine picked up the bowl of candy by her door. “I don’t need to eat this.”

Jenny held her bag open, and Catherine poured her candy into it.

“You probably won’t need your coat,” Catherine told her. “It’s cool below, but not as cold as it is outside right now.” She went back into her bedroom and came back with a denim jacket. “This would go with the costume.”

Catherine put the candy in a backpack and put one of the straps over her shoulder. They left the apartment, she locked up, and they went to the elevator.

Jenny watched as Catherine pushed the button for the basement.

“Is this how Vincent got home the other night?” Jenny asked.

“Probably,” Catherine told her. “Most of the time, he comes and goes from my balcony. Since I’m only one floor down from the roof, he can drop down from there and climb back up, then use the fire escape on the back of the building. But since it was so late and he wasn’t sure if I would tell you anything, he used the elevator and might have gone through the basement. But he might have gone out through the lobby and through the park.”

“But how do you get down there from the basement?”

“There is a metal access door that leads down to the subbasement, and from there, it’s a hole in the brick wall of the sub-basement. Some of the tunnels we will take are city utility and subway access tunnels, but once we get a little deeper, it will be natural tunnels or tunnels that were carved out long ago by ancient people.”

Catherine wanted to laugh because Jenny’s eyes looked like they were about to bug out of her head. As Catherine moved the boxes and gave directions about going down the ladder, Jenny’s eyes continued to get wider.

When Catherine joined Jenny on the other side of the hole in the brick wall, a young woman came around the corner. She greeted Catherine with a hug.

“Jenny, this is Jamie, Tunnel Guardian Extraordinaire. Jamie, this is my friend Jenny.”

“Vincent told me that you were bringing someone when he asked me to come guide you. He’s sorry he couldn’t be here, but he’s helping decorate the dining chamber,” Jamie explained, after she greeted Jenny.

“I didn’t know the children’s party was a yearly thing,” Catherine commented as they walked. “I thought they usually went chamber to chamber and did their trick or treating.”

“They used to, but we’ve added so many private chambers in the last few years, and they are so spread out, that Mary suggested that they just do a party this year instead of both. They are still going to Father’s study for stories, and there will be plenty of treats.”

“Speaking of treats,” she patted the backpack. “Can we swing by the dining chamber first so we can drop these off? We have leftover candy, and Vincent asked for something special.”

When they arrived at the dining chamber, they couldn’t get in because there was a ladder right in front of the door, but Catherine recognized Vincent’s legs clad in the blue pants from the previous weekend.

She put the backpack just outside the door.

“Vincent, the things you requested are in the backpack next to the entrance. And Jenny and I both had leftover candy.”

“Thank you, Catherine,” answered a disembodied voice. “Father is telling stories in the study, and I’ll join you there in a few minutes.”

Jamie had disappeared, so Catherine led the way to the study.

Jenny was as mesmerized at the scene in front of them when they entered the chamber as the children were by the story.

“The old country wives, however, who are the best judges of these matters, maintain to this day that Ichabod was spirited away by supernatural means; and it is a favorite story often told about the

neighborhood round the winter evening fire. The bridge became more than ever an object of superstitious awe; and that may be the reason why the road has been altered of late years, so as to approach the church by the border of the millpond. The schoolhouse being deserted soon fell to decay, and was reported to be haunted by the ghost of the unfortunate pedagogue and the plowboy, loitering homeward of a still summer evening, has often fancied his voice at a distance, chanting a melancholy psalm tune among the tranquil solitudes of Sleepy Hollow."

Father looked up at the children, most still recognizable, despite the costumes and masks they wore.

"One more, Father? Please?" begged Samantha.

Father laughed and shook his head.

"It's your turn now," he said, waving his hand to indicate all of them. "One of you needs to read a story or tell one that you know."

Geoffrey's hand shot up.

"We've been reading one in class, and it's real good." He held up a book. "I have it here."

Father left the chair he was sitting in and made his way over to the two women. Geoffrey went up to the chair and sat.

Geoffrey started the story about a huge white worm that lived below ground, and Father led the two women out into the corridor.

"I've read that one," he said with a chuckle. "I'll be surprised if it doesn't inspire a few nightmares."

Jenny listened a moment. "I'm not familiar with it," she commented. "But isn't a little beyond the reading level of a group that age?"

"Jenny, you will soon learn that the children here Below read and comprehend well above their age level. In fact, that is true of a lot of what they learn. I heard Geoffrey and Samantha discussing a book they are reading in their science class. *A Brief History of Time*, by Stephen Hawking."

"Our children are rather advanced," Father agreed. He held his hand out to Jenny and smiled. "I'm Jacob Wells, or Father to almost everyone here."

Jenny smiled and shook hands.

"I'm sorry," Catherine apologized. "Daddy would be disappointed at my manners. Father, this is my friend Jenny Aronson."

There was a round of squeals from the study, just as Vincent came around the corner.

"They sound like they are enjoying themselves," Vincent said.

Catherine elbowed her friend when she noticed her staring at Vincent. Vincent noticed too, but all he did was stifle a small smile.

"What?" Jenny asked, when Catherine's elbow landed in her ribs.

"Mind your manners!"

Jenny looked at Catherine, then back Vincent, and then finally over at Father.

"I'm sorry. I was just making sure that Cath wasn't putting one over on me. She used to love playing practical jokes on Nancy and me when we were in college."

"When did I ever...?" Catherine began.

“One April Fool’s Day, you had an early class, and before you left the house, you greased all the doorknobs with Vaseline, and I couldn’t even get out of my room. And another time, you put salt in the sugar bowl next to the coffee pot. And do you remember that time you duct-taped the air horn to the wall in the front hall? I was in my room napping when Nancy came home from class, and when the doorknob hit the air horn, I swear I levitated a foot off my bed. When I got downstairs, all of Nancy’s books and notebooks were all over the front hall, and she looked ready to do murder. It’s probably a good thing you weren’t home when it happened!”

Catherine was trying to hide her grin, and both Father and Vincent were looking at her strangely.

“You forgot one,” Catherine said with a giggle.

“Oh, yeah. The spider. That was Halloween our senior year.”

“Spider?” asked Vincent.

“I left a paper cup upside down on the kitchen counter one morning. I also left a note that said, ‘*If you move the cup, you’d better kill the spider.*’ It was just a large plastic spider, but no one knew that but me. I had it all carefully arranged. I had a smaller paper cup full of catsup; I set the spider on top of it and then put the paper cup over the whole thing.”

“You got to see that one,” Jenny said with a laugh.

“Yes, and you made me clean up the mess too,” Catherine reminded her.

“When Cathy came home, Nancy and I had teamed up,” Jenny told them. “I was on one side of the counter, and I was going to snatch the cup up, and then Nancy was going to smash the spider with her shoe. It worked like a charm. Cath knew exactly what we would do. I snatched the cup, and the shoe came down, and the catsup strayed out in all directions.”

“Who knew that such a small amount of catsup could go so far and get on so many things,” added Catherine.

“We were finding catsup specks for weeks,” Jenny added.

“Catherine,” Vincent said with a smile. “This gives me a whole new perspective on your personality.”

“And please don’t share that story with the children,” Father put in. “They already get up to enough mischief.”

The story Geoffrey was reading must have ended, because at that moment, a herd of small children, followed by some older ones, rushed out of the study and down the corridor.

One small girl who barely reached mid-thigh on Vincent grabbed his hand and tugged.

“C’mon, Vin. Is time for a party!”

Vincent allowed himself to be led down the passage.

Jenny changed into her Pippi Longstocking shoes and joined the others who were following at a more sedate pace.

That evening was all about the children. Games had been set up around the dining chamber, each manned by an adult in costume. Even Pascal put in a brief appearance.

Vincent’s special treat was s’mores. He was using a brazier set up in the corner of the dining chamber and was introducing everyone to the joys of the sweet treat.

Catherine was drafted to man the fishing booth. It was her job to sit behind the curtain and put a treat or small toy on every hook that dropped down.

Devin and Charles arrived in time for Devin, dressed as a pirate, to go to the corner where they had chests of “pirates’ booty” for the children to choose from. Devin appeared to be enjoying it as much as the children. Charles spotted the s’mores and readily volunteered to help Vincent.

Even Jenny pitched in and was helping Olivia serve punch.

Several hours later, after the younger children had been put to bed and the older ones had helped clear the remains of the party out of the dining chamber, the adults gathered in Father’s study for snacks and tea.

“That was fun!” Jenny stated.

“It was,” agreed Catherine. “It reminded me of the Halloween Bazaars my elementary school used to do when I was little.”

“I think that is where the idea came from,” Mary put in, as she warmed up everyone’s tea. “I think it was Sarah who originally came up with the idea.”

“If you have any more children, we will have to move it to the Great Hall,” Devin observed.

“Great Hall?” asked Jenny.

“You need the full tour,” Devin told her. “The Great Hall is on one of the deeper levels, and it’s used for much larger parties.”

The group thinned out until it was only Catherine, Vincent, and Jenny in the study.

“All this, just below our feet,” Jenny mused. “It’s hard to believe.” She looked at Catherine, then Vincent. “And thank you both for sharing it all with me. I talked to several people this evening who referred to themselves as Helpers, and I’d like to help too. Dr. Wells was asking me about the kind of books my company publishes, and I promised to send him a catalog.” She looked around the study. “But it doesn’t really look like he needs any more books.”

“I think we would be more interested in children’s books and textbooks that are a little more up to date,” Vincent clarified. “And enough so that our students don’t have to share. Catherine has been helping, but she can’t do it all.”

“We occasionally have book overruns and books that have skewed pages and don’t pass our quality control,” Jenny told them. “Those usually go to the recycler, but occasionally the company allows an employee to donate them to someone or some organization. Tell Dr. Wells that I’ll keep my eyes open and let him know whenever there is an opportunity.”

“When you get something, let me know, and I’ll pass the message on,” Catherine told her. “Now, as much as I hate to say it, it is getting late, and we both have to work tomorrow.”

“I’ll walk you out,” Vincent told them.

When Catherine and Jenny were in the elevator heading up to the lobby, Jenny turned to Catherine with a frown.

“You didn’t tell me he has a brother!” she said accusingly.

“Who? Devin?” Catherine laughed. “Devin is Father’s biological son, so he and Vincent aren’t actually related.”

“Maybe not, but he’s still cute,” Jenny said, as the elevator doors opened.

“*Cute*? Are we in high school?” Catherine said with another laugh. “Devin would be appalled to hear that you called him *cute*.”

“Who cares.” Jenny put her hand up to hold the elevator doors open as she leveled a stare at Catherine. “You still didn’t tell me, and I think I’d like to get to know him better.”

“Jenny!” Catherine said with mock shock.

“You know what I mean!” Jenny said with a laugh.

“OK, I’ll see what I can do.” Catherine winked as Jenny let go of the elevator doors, and they started to close. “Good night!”

It was almost noon on Monday of the following week when Jenny showed up at Catherine’s office armed with paper bags full of food.

“I figured that you are still working through your lunches, so I brought it to you,” she announced as she deposited the bags in the middle of Catherine’s desk.

“And...?” Catherine queried, knowing that there was more.

“And, believe it or not, I have a box of 30 science textbooks, grade nine, sitting in my office right now. They are all missing the title page, and I managed to snag them before they were sent off to be recycled,” Jenny told her with a grin. “You know of anyone who can use them?”

“Wow! That was quick. How did you manage that?”

“I decided the best thing to do would be to let the receiving clerk know what I wanted. And when I called down there this morning, he told me what he had, and I told him to have someone deliver it to my office.”

Jenny started to unpack the food from the bags as Catherine made a phone call.

“Hello, Sy. It’s Catherine. Would you have the time to pick up a box of books and see that it gets delivered to our friends?”

She listened for a moment. Then spoke to Jenny.

“How about tomorrow morning about ten?” she asked.

Jenny nodded. Catherine gave Sy the address, thanked him, and hung up.

“That was easy,” Jenny commented.

“Once some of the Helpers know you, you’ll be able to make the calls and cut out the middleman,” Catherine told her. “Sy has been a Helper for years. He was one of the first. He has a moving company and warehouse near the docks and has an elevator that goes down into his sub-basement that connects with some of the upper tunnels. Larger items and things that need to be picked up go through his warehouse.”

The next afternoon, Catherine was in her office going over a file when her phone rang.

“Chandler,” she said absently, as she shoved the file aside and reached for a pad and pencil.

“Catherine?” asked a voice she’d never heard on the phone before.

“Vincent?” she asked. “Is something wrong?” she felt a momentary panic. She knew Vincent had one of her cards and knew her work and home numbers, but he’d said he wanted them for emergencies.

“No, nothing is wrong,” he rushed to assure her. “Sy just delivered the books. Father is ecstatic! They are the first up-to-date science books we’ve ever had, and there are enough for all the students.”

She put her hand on her chest to calm her heart and sat back in her chair with a laugh.

“OK, so I think that you need to call me at work more often,” she said. “Where are you calling from?”

“Peter’s basement. Father wanted me to ask you to let Jennifer know that she is invited to dinner on Sunday, so he can thank her properly. Don’t tell her, but he has called a special meeting of the council to ask that she be officially invited to be a Helper.”

“She’s going to love that!” Catherine told him. “I didn’t tell her about Winterfest yet. Will she be invited?”

“I wouldn’t be surprised if Father didn’t give her a candle at dinner on Sunday.”

“Can you do a favor for me?” she asked.

“Of course. What is it?”

“Can you invite Devin to dinner on Sunday too? Jenny thinks he’s *cute* and would like to get to know him better,” she said, trying to keep the laughter out of her voice.

“*Cute?*” Vincent asked. Then he laughed out loud. “Wait till I tell him... he’ll never...”

“No, please don’t,” Catherine said with a grin. “Don’t embarrass him. And don’t tell him that he’s being invited because of Jenny. I don’t want to embarrass her.”

“Devin has a standing invitation to dinners on Sunday, and he and Charles are usually there. I’ll talk to him to make sure he’s planning to come this Sunday, and we will make sure that he gets seated next to Jennifer.”

Dinner on Sunday was a huge success, and William made pot roast in honor of the occasion of inviting a new Helper to their family.

Devin was seated at the end of the long trestle table with Jenny on his left and Charles on his right. There was a continuous, animated conversation punctuated with a lot of laughter. Vincent, who was at the other end of the table with Catherine on his right, kept looking over at Catherine and smiling.

“I’m not surprised,” she said, as dessert was being passed around.

“It’s just that I never thought of my brother as the type to settle down, but he said that he was glad that Jennifer was going to be here today because he wanted to get to know her better. It seems the attraction is mutual.”

“Do you think he’s serious, or is this just a flirtation?” Catherine looked down the table at her friend, who was laughing at something that Devin had said.

“I don’t think that he’d intentionally hurt her, if that is what you are asking. Devin many have made his way in the world as a con man but, he never did it to hurt anyone. In fact, if all his stories are true, it seems he may have done some good.”

“He was raised by the same man who raised you,” Catherine pointed out. “And no matter how I met him, I think he’s one of the *good guys*.”

Their conversation was interrupted when Father, who was sitting in the center of the table with the rest of the council, rose and called for everyone's attention.

"I hope everyone enjoyed dinner," he said with a smile. "As usual, William worked culinary magic. I just wanted to let everyone know that our middle-grade students now have new science textbooks, and it's all thanks to our new friend, Jennifer." Everyone looked down the table at Jenny, who was blushing! "And since she has obviously already helped us immensely, the council would like to invite her to become one of our helpers officially." Everyone looked at Jenny, who was nodding vigorously.

"Yes! Thank you," she managed, continuing to blush.

Then everyone watched as Geoffrey rose from his chair. He had a Winterfest candle in his hand, and he walked down and presented it to Jenny with great ceremony, even bowing slightly as she took it.

She looked around in confusion. "This this part of being a Helper?" she asked Devin as Geoffrey went back to his seat.

"Yeah, in a way," he said with a grin.

Everyone was starting to get up and leave; dinner was obviously over.

"Come on," said Devin, taking Jenny's hand and tugging her to her feet. "I'll tell you about Winterfest."

Catherine and Vincent watched as Jenny and Devin left the dining chamber.

"Is there a threshold anywhere near Jenny's apartment?" Catherine asked in a bemused way.

"I don't know, but we can go look at Father's maps and find out."

It was much later when Jenny and Catherine reached Catherine's apartment.

"Wow, that sounds like quite the party they throw every year," Jenny was saying, as she kicked off her shoes and dropped to the couch.

"From what I hear, it's grown over the years. It's their way of paying back the people who have helped them through the year."

"That's what Devin was saying. He said he hasn't been to one in over 20 years."

"He's been gone for a long time," Catherine agreed, as she sat next to Jenny. "This is the first time he's been back to New York and stayed for any length of time."

"He said he came back because Charles needs better medical care than he could get anywhere else. He said that you got him into a research program for neurofibromatosis."

"It was Peter who found the program; I just convinced them that Charles would be a good candidate."

"A large donation?" Jenny asked.

"A very large one," Catherine said with a grin. "But what good is it having money if you can't use it to help someone, and it has helped him a lot. He's had a couple of surgeries that removed tumors obstructing his airway when he laid down. He can sleep in a bed again. And they are working on a drug treatment. So it's worth it. As Charles says, anything he has to go through is worth it if it will keep other people, especially children, from having to go through what he's gone through."

"But enough of that... Do you have a date with Devin?"

Jenny grinned. "We are going out to dinner then to see *Fiddler on the Roof*."

“The movie?” Catherine asked, puzzled.

“No, silly, the play. It opened this weekend.”

“That sounds like fun!”

“And he’s invited me Below with him for Thanksgiving.”

“Don’t you usually do Thanksgiving with your folks?”

“They are going to Aunt Leah’s in Florida for the holiday this year. I couldn’t get enough time off to go with them.”

“Too bad,” Catherine said with a giggle, knowing just how much Jenny wasn’t going to miss her Aunt Leah that year. Leah was obsessed with Jenny’s unmarried state.

“You know, Devin didn’t have time to tell me much, but he’s lived a very interesting life; I just might have to talk him into writing a book.”

When Jenny left a little while later, there was tapping on the door from the balcony as Catherine closed the door behind Jenny.

Catherine walked out onto the chilly balcony and into Vincent’s arms.

“She wants him to write a book?” he asked, looking down at her.

“You have to admit, it would be an interesting read,” she said.

“I imagine it would, and it just might get him arrested,” Vincent pointed out.

“He’d have to use a pseudonym. If he lets her talk him into it, make sure you tell him.”

“It might read a lot like a modern fairy tale.”

“Maybe, but he’s going to have to leave the tunnels out... But, then again, if he wrote it as fiction... you know, fairy tales can come true.”

END

