



THE PLOT THICKENS

Wow! We've made it to CHAPTER NINETEEN! It's a good story, isn't it? Well, don't go anywhere just yet because it's almost time for the big, **MASSIVE**, climactic plot twist. All the best stories have one ...

Prince Grogbah was in a foul mood by the time we'd all raced back across the crab-infested beach and got him safely into the hotel.

Ooof dropped him in the middle of the reception hall floor, and everyone stepped away, eyeing him nervously. Grogbah's goblin subjects and the other guests were crowded up the great staircase. They'd been watching at the windows and saw the whole fiasco unravel.

'I HATE YOU!' Grogbah finally screamed.

when he'd clambered back to his feet. 'This is the *worst* HOTEL IN THE WORLD!'

'Oh dear,' said the three old men in crumpled suits, as their features melted back to those of the Molar Sisters. 'What a thulky tho-and-tho.'

Two of the prince's slaves ran forward and helped him get dressed back into his golden robes, and Nancy approached with a glass of frog grog.

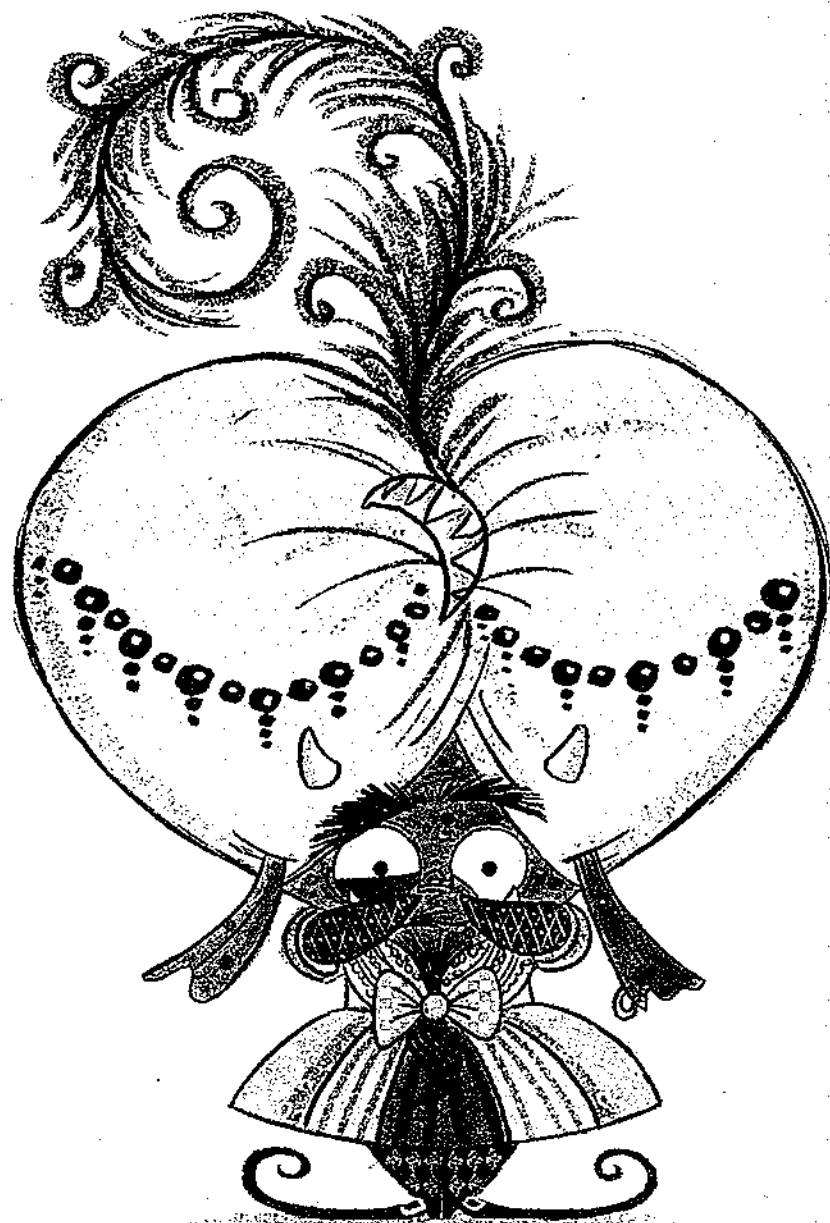
'Maybe a wee tippie will cheer you up?' she said.

Prince Grogbah snatched the glass and hurled it at the wall. 'You think I want to drink anything in this **HONK HOLE?**' he screamed in Nancy's face.

If the prince's face wasn't greyish-green, I'd swear he was turning purple with rage. It was quite something to watch.

*'If I'd known I'd have to deal with **THIS!**'* Grogbah shouted, gesturing around the room. 'Commoners, and peasants, and humans ... **I NEVER WOULD HAVE CHOSEN TO HIDE OUT HERE!**'

Grogbah realised what he had just said and clamped his little hands over his mouth.



'What?' said Mum. 'Did you just say—'

'NOTHING!' The Royal Shouter ran forward and stood between us and Grogbah. 'The prince didn't say anything. We're not hiding out! Who said anything about hiding out?'

'Yes ...erm ...I mean ...we're just having a winksy little holiday,' Grogbah said, laughing nervously. 'We're definitely not on the run and I'm certain that I didn't steal anything from a rival clan of goblins who are now after us.'

Grogbah stared at us all with wide eyes.

'You little criminal!' Dad said, rolling up his sleeves and trying to look tough. 'You come into my family's hotel, then insult us, humiliate us, wreck the place and nearly blow our secret **BECAUSE YOU'VE BROKEN THE LAW?**

'Now can we eat him?' said Madam McCreddie.

'Ooof squish him,' said Ooof, raising a huge foot in the air.

Grogbah's eyes looked like they were about to pop out of his skull. He looked at the Royal Shouter, then at the gaggle of us standing around him, then

back to the Royal Shouter.

'Ummm ...' he said. **'GUARDS! ARREST EVERYONE!'**

And they did ...

There was nothing we could do. Goblin weapons are sharp, you know.

By the time night fell, we'd all been sitting about for hours. The little pouting pumpkin's guards surrounded us with their spears and made every non-goblin sit on the floor in the middle of the room.

Things were looking pretty hopeless, but you'll be glad to know it didn't end there.

I bet you're wondering just who Grogbah had stolen something from, aren't you? I know I was. It's all I could think about.

Well ...you're about to find out.

We were all sitting in silence, except the prince. He was hunched over a little table, noisily scoffing the remains of Nancy's garden feast, when it happened.

I was sitting on the floor, bored, with a numb

bottom, and I had no idea ... not a clue ... not the tiniest inkling that everything was about to go **WHOOMMFF!!**

The *WHOOMMFF*-iest *WHOOMMFF* I'd ever seen or heard!

There was another enormous **WHOOMFF** and a second rusty cannonball shot through the hole in the wall and demolished the cloakroom door.

'Oh, forget it!' the girl's voice shouted. There was the sound of footsteps and a silhouette suddenly appeared in the smoke.

Prince Grogbah obviously recognised the little shape as he started mumbling, 'NO, NO, NO,' under his breath.

The girl emerged into the reception hall and stood, feet wide apart with her hand on her hip. She aimed a tiny musket into the air and fired it.



'My name is Tempestra Plank!' she yelled. 'And I've come to reclaim our treasure.'

'I'm out of 'ere!' yelled one of Grogbah's guards. He dropped his spear and ran out of the room.

'Me too!' blubbed another.

'And me.'

'Ooooooh-ho-ho!' the Molar Sisters cooed together, clapping their hands with excitement. In a moment, most of the prince's guards had abandoned their posts. The remaining few lowered their weapons and watched in horror.

'Ha!' Tempestra laughed. I'd never seen a creature like her in real life. She was obviously a goblin, but a completely different species to Prince Grogbah and his Barrow cronies. I'd read about her kind in some of Grandad Abraham's books. Squall Goblins! Voyagers that sailed the deepest sewers and oceans and who NEVER came ashore. Whatever Grogbah had stolen, it must have been very valuable.

Where the Barrow Goblins were short and round, Tempestra was tall and slim. If she'd stood next to me, she would easily be as high as my

Shouting, "The goblin sea wall was swamped under a
sea monster's tail and was breaking along its back-
bone. We were so close that I had all the way up
my nose!"

"What's your opinion?" she said through a cloud
of steam. "I'm not sure, but I don't believe it."
"I don't believe it either," she said. "I don't believe it."
"I don't believe it either," she said. "I don't believe it."
"I don't believe it either," she said. "I don't believe it."
"I don't believe it either," she said. "I don't believe it."

"The monster's eyes lit up with a wonderful glow
when she saw Goblins in the crowd."

"AWAY TO SEAWATER RAIL!" she shouted, and
swam away to sea. "I'm not lying."

The hull of a goblin pirate ship came **CRASHING**
through the wall. Guests and goblins alike scattered
in all directions as huge chunks of the staircase fell
inwards and shattered on the black and white tiles.

Seawater splashed round our ankles as the
enchanted wave that had carried the ship up the
beach hit its mark.

RAAAAGH!



The ship's pirate crew clambered down the wooden sides or swung to the ground on ropes. They were a terrifying bunch of goblins and goblinettes. Some of them wore eyepatches or had peg legs or hooks for hands, and all of them were brandishing cutlasses.

'Get him!' Tempestra ordered, and her crew rushed at the prince. They grabbed him and dragged the chubby goblin, kicking and flailing, towards the girl.

'I can explain!' Prince Grogbah yelled. 'I only borrowed it!'

'PREPARE TO DIE!' Tempestra hissed in the prince's face, drawing a sword from her belt.

Everyone grimaced and squinted. Everyone except Mum.

'HOLD IT!' she bellowed. The entire hall stopped what they were doing and turned to stare. 'WHAT'S GOING ON? YOU CAN'T JUST BLOW A HOLE IN OUR HOTEL, THEN MURDER A GUEST IN RECEPTION. EVEN IF GROGBAH IS A LOATHSOME

LITTLE TOAD!

Suddenly my brain caught up with everything that was happening and my jaw fell open. I looked at the pirate girl. I looked at the ship. I looked at the crew, and I knew I'd seen them before. My brain started racing. What did Tempestra say her last name was?

I nearly fell over with excitement.

'Plank!' I gasped. I was staring at the daughter of the greatest goblin pirate that ever lived.

'Captain Calamitus Plank!'