Chelastis

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A short story I wrote a while ago but never posted. I love writing about other worlds or dimensions! Thanks, and enjoy!!! XD

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The leaves of the tree fluttered, and the sound of jingling bells was carried over the wind. The foliage shuffled once more, and the silhouette of a small creature hopped into the lair, and then bowed to another larger creature lying in the shadows. An airy, hoarse voice disturbed the still silence resting over the midnight landscape.

â I am hungry...â it whispered to the little creature, who was still bowing. The large creature's voice sounded as if a numerous amount of creatures speaking, yet it was also as soft as the wind in the trees. The small creature trembled. â Y-yes, Master Chelastis!The package will be sent and will arrive before the next m-moonrise!â
â Good...â the large creature, Chelastis, whispered. â Now leave!â The small creature scuttled quickly out of the cave.

â Before the next moonrise...â Chelastis whispered again. â Excellent!â The creature's grin was hidden by the moving shadows, and his laugh was concealed by the whispering wind.
. . .

â Yuck,â muttered Shannon as she trudged through the mud. â I hate it when it rains.â Nearby, Christine was making her way along the road by splashing in every puddle she encountered.
â Well, I love every part of it, except maybe getting wet.â she replied, stopping to take a breath.

â Yeah, but sadly, we're soaked,â Shannon complained.
The rains had started suddenly, so no one had been prepared for it. Now, they were soaking wet, and they weren't even halfway home. Unless they took the shortcut. She squinted at the paved road that they were on, blinking water from her eyelashes, then at the small overgrown dirt path that led from the road, meandered through the hills, then stopped behind Christine's garden, which was next door to Shannon's house.

Moments later, the two of them were plodding their ways through the mud and into the rain-splattered prairie grass that had sprouted on both the hills and the path. Christine and Shannon had only taken the shortcut once before, but they had turned back before they had reached half of it, not wanting to go near the old war ruins along the way. Right now, however, they were nowhere near the ruins.
â It's raining harder.â commented Christine. â Maybe we should find somewhere to shelter from the rain.â They looked around. All they could see was the grass on the hills, the pounding rain, and the thickening fog.

â Let's go a bit farther. There might be a tree or something along the road.â said Shannon. On they went. Soon, they spotted the crumbled remains of the first ruin in the far distance.
â That's the only place we can hide from the rain. We'll have to find one that's still pretty much intact.â Shannon told Christine doubtfully. â We would have been home by now if the mud hasn't been sucking our shoes down.â Christine didn't answer. She was staring at the war ruins scattered here and there along the road, most of them roofless and with pieces of their rocky walls broken or missing.

â Have you ever heard of the tale of Chelastis?â Christine whispered to Shannon.

â Is it a fairy tale or something like that?â Shannon asked.

â Kind of, I guess. Well, it's not exactly a story, just a rumor going around that there is a beautiful place called Chelastis, and it is so enchanting that once you go there, you never want to leave. And the rumor says that the way to get into Chelastis is right here, in these war ruins. They say that once a group of people went in to colonize Chelastis, and they were never seen again.â
â I wonder how beautiful a place could be that someone would go there and never want to come out?â said Shannon dreamily.

â Yeah, assuming that they can't get stuck in there.â replied Christine. They walked in thoughtful silence for a while, still looking around for a place to hide from the rain. They had been so caught up by the story of Chelastis that they had almost forgotten that the rain was falling even harder.
â Oh, look! There's one we could stay in!â Shannon pointed to a ruin with only a few pieces of the wall missing. She and Christine started running, mud splattering on their legs, water getting inside their raincoats and boots. Shannon made it inside first. Christine was a few seconds after her. She laughed.

â Finally, no more rain, no more mud!â She waited for Shannon to answer, but nothing happened. Christine peered inside the hut. No one was in sight.
â Stop playing tricks, Shannon. Come out!â she started trembling. â Sh-shannon?â she stepped inside. Suddenly, the ground started shaking. Was it an earthquake? She screamed. What was happening? It felt like she was floating on air. She started shivering. Why was it so cold? Moments later, it felt as if she was getting burned alive. So she was relieved when she felt the sand of the war ruin floor under her back. Did she just have a seizure? She wasn't sure.

â Are you okay, Christine?â
â Shannon!â she jumped up.

â It's okay. I felt really bad at first, too.â What?! She looked around. Her mouth dropped open. They weren't in the war ruin. Instead, they were on the bank of a winding, rushing river. Bordering the river were huge fronds of fern, the greenest plants Christine had ever seen. Behind the fern, she could see a huge jungle of exotic plants and animals, painted with all the shades of green possible, but only green. At some places, where the jungle thinned out, you could see the broken parts of big white rocks with golden flecks on them. In the distance, towards where the river was flowing, a huge range of utterly black mountains towered above them. The sky above was the clearest blue and without a cloud. It was amazing.
â I believe,â said Shannon, clearing her throat, â that we have reached the world of Chelastis.â

They spent a few hours thinking about how this could have happened and exploring, never straying too far from the river or each other. After a while, they worked out that the war ruin that they had gone in had somehow been an entrance to Chelastis. They didn't know how they could get out of Chelastis, already checking the place on the beach they had landed. They were talking about this when Shannon looked up at the jungle behind Christine.
â I thought I just saw something bright red in those bushes. Nothing here is bright red.â Christine turned around.

â I don't know. Nothing's there.â Suddenly, a strange looking animal jumped out from behind a tree and started singing.
â Come with me, to go sightsee! I'm the guide of Chelastis!â

The little animal stopped hopping around and bowed. Now the girls could get a better look at him. He had a bright red trickster hat with bells on the top, which was the red that Shannon had seen in the bushes. The rest of him was white, and he had two beady black eyes and rosy red cheeks. His shirt was yellow with colorful

dots.
â So you're the guide of Chelastis?â asked Shannon.

â Yes, yes of course! I'll guide you around and show you all you can see!â he sang.
â Well, we could use some help right now...â said Christine, glancing at Shannon.

Soon after, they were following Jinx, the guide, through the jungle.
â Here is the circle of trees!â trilled Jinx, gesturing towards a grove of plants circling a large meadow.
â And here is the stream that is believed to cure all diseases.â Jinx led them around for the next few hours, showing them around. They had gone far from the river and into the heart of the jungle. It was already growing dark.

â We should probably find somewhere to stay for the night, since it's so dark already!â Jinx harmonized.
â Here, I know a cave where we can stay! Stay out here, and I'll go check if there's anything unusual!â He disappeared into the trees.
â You don't think he abandoned us, do you?â said Shannon, for the first time starting to notice the eerie silence and the flickering shadows.

â I really, really hope not.â Christine whispered back. Suddenly, they heard a rustle in the bushes behind them.
â Yes, the package has arrived, and before moonrise, too.â a soft voice came from where they had heard the bush shake. Christine and Shannon clutched on to each other.

â This will be a good meal. A full meal. Almost as good as the group that foolishly wandered here before.â the voice chuckled. Slowly, Christine and Shannon turned around to face whatever had been talking to them. The last thing they saw was a yellow eye, a lolling tongue, and a flash of sharp, white teeth.

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