

Expanding Horizons: Enchanted
Chapter 34

No suggestions taken for this chapter.

“MOVE!! GET OUT OF MY WAY, YE BLASTED THINGS!! I KNOW WHERE I LIVE!! I DON’T NEED YE HELPIN’ ME--GAAHHHHH GET OFF!!!”

Meridith pushed a golem from her path and flung two others off her arms. Dirt and stone crunched when they toppled at her force and rolled helplessly on their back before several others arrived to assist.

Milk dripped from her matted hair. She wrang it out once more and found it still sopping.

Seeing her lowly stone home again was rage-inducing. The dwarf had been so certain she’d never have to return. Now, with her plans foiled, she was forced to return to ruins. Boulders and cracks left her abode in shambles. Her efforts had only been detrimental.

Clank-ding!

The clockwork golems were already busy rebuilding. It would be weeks before she could settle into a place that felt like home once more. Even if she was cursed to stay there.

“Everything smells like milk... IT’S BLASTED EVERYWHERE!!” Meridith roared.

Her clothes were struggling tatters. Most of her beard was lost in the heat. Everything ached from commanding so much magic in her summoning. Seething anger made her hiss with every breath. She stooped among the wreckage of her home and found a stone cup buried in the dust and debris.

“If I ever get my hands on that girl... I’LL WRING THA MILK FROM HER BLASTED TITS!!”

CRASH!!

She turned, heaving a cup at what remained of the front of her house. It shattered with a burst that rang through the underground.

Clank-ding!

Clank-ding!

“My my... So unwelcoming...”

There were people standing in the crumbling doorway. Meridith froze, not having noticed them approach. Golems gathered behind the duo with bright eyes of curiosity.

The woman smelled of soot and smoke. A heavy cloak hugged her shoulders and parted down the front to reveal complete nudity beneath. Behind her stood an older man wearing an annoyed scowl.

Meridith spat in their direction. “What do ye want? I got nothing for ye.”

Marci stepped over a crumbling wall. “I think you do...”

Tink tink DING!

The golems were restless. Meridith could hear their gears spinning with worry. There was danger in the air.

Marci continued her march forward. She would have collided with Meridith, but the dwarf took a cautious step backward.

“You *reek* of milk...” Marci hissed.

She took another step back. “Not a crime.”

Clank-ding!

Clank-ding!

“No... But I’m starting to think it should be.” Marci walked as if she were royalty. Her presence pushed Meridith further and further back. “That smell is only becoming more infuriating recently.”

“I--”

Her back hit the wall. Looking up, Meridith saw the stranger looming with malicious intent. Heat poured from her uncovered body and the dwarf tried not to stare at the intimates hovering at eye level. Marci narrowed her eyes.

“You wouldn’t have happened to see two girls and a fairy come through here, would you?”

“A redhead and a busty Dawn sorceress,” Kalzar added, “can’t miss her.” Marci rolled her eyes.

Clank-ding!

Clank-ding!

Golems shook anxiously as Meridith stood her ground. “*Get out of my house.*”

“House?” Marci laughed and looked around. “I’ve seen outhouses in better condition.”

Clank-ding!

Clank-ding!

Clank-ding!

“I won’t ask again...” The pyromancer put her hand on the wall and leaned down, leveling her eyes with Meridith’s. They burned a bright amber. “*Did you see them, or not?*”

Meridith cleared her throat before firing a glob of yellow flem into Marci’s hanging cleavage. “*If I did, I don’t owe it to ye to tell ye anything abou--NGH!!*”

A hand was around her throat in an instant. Marci lifted the dwarf with ease and slammed her against the wall. Skin hot as smelted iron, Marci leaned her chest against the dwarf to pin her in place. Her fingers tightened around her windpipe.

“*A-Ack!!*”

Clank-ding!

Tink-tink-ding!

Clank-ding!

Several golems tugged at Marci’s cloak. Their efforts almost made Meridith appreciate their presence as they started to swarm and protect.

Clank-ding!

Clank-ding!

“*Grrraahh!!*” Marci turned to Kalzar with a guttural growl. “*Can you shut these incessant things up?! Do you think I brought you along just for conversation and ogling?!*”

Kalzar was already digging into his satchel. A handful of sharp blue crystals came out. He whirled them around, spreading the substance across the floor and golems. His foot stamped a second later, shattering a piece underfoot.

Clank-cla---

KZZPPPPP!!

The area lit up with arching bolts of electricity. Energy jumped from crystal to crystal, forming a web across the area. Every golem froze, their eyes flashing and their bodies convulsing at the electrical surge.

The cracking died away within seconds. The golems' whirring ceased. Eyes dark, their gears stopped and they slumped forward to all fall to the ground in a complete, echoing defeat.

Meridith's eyes bulged in fright. She grabbed the woman's wrist in both hands but her tiny body had no hope of struggling free.

"*Last chance,*" Marci growled. Blood ran from her thumbnail sinking into the dwarf's soft neck.

"Find em on yer own, ye damned--"

Marci's hand burned. Heat poured from her fingers into Meridith's throat. She thrashed for a moment before opening her mouth to scream. A belch of smoke rose from her gullet and it felt like she had coals in her belly.

"AH!! AAAHHHHH!!!"

Nails clawed at Marci's arm. Flames jumped to Meridith's beard and her eyes bulged. Cracks formed across her skin before turning red-hot. Darkness and soot spread like a disease. Gasping for air as overwhelming heat cooked the dwarf from the inside out, she felt her skin char over before flames finally jumped from her mouth. Her eyes boiled before rolling lifelessly and turning dark gray.

Crack!!

Meridith stopped moving. Her form crackled and popped like a dwarf-shaped log pulled from a fire after turning into coal. Marci released her hold and let the form drop to the stone. It shattered, scattering the charred remains around her feet.

"*What did you do that for??*" Kalzar shouted, dodging a skidding foot. "*How are we going to find them now?!*"

Marci brushed past him and exited the smoking structure. "How thick is your skull? We never needed her." Marci pointed down the cave and around a bend. "*We just need to follow the damn milk and we'll get our hands on them soon enough.*"

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