Chapter 2

Mannon

 Well this was irritating. It had been nearly 2 months since Mannon had woken up, or maybe since she was created. It was a bit hard to say. If she was honest to herself she didn’t exactly know much about herself, or even the world in general. However, there were 3 things she was absolutely certain: One, she was made of a strange metal, two despite all appearances she was very much alive, and three she would bludgeon an orphan to death with their own adoption papers for something to eat.

“An orphan?”, Mannon pondered, “I am sure that is a perfectly common expression… somewhere.”

When she had awoken in the middle of the desert she had no recollection of her past. All she remembered were flashes of fragmented carnage like a flash of people being beaten, the sounds of thousands screaming for their lives, and a strange gurgling sound that made her want to vomit.

“Wait, can I vomit?” she questioned the air once again. “I mean I know I am hungry but I haven’t figured out how to eat, but it has only been like a month people must go way longer than that without food. I’m sure it's fine,” she proclaimed confidently knowing that the nearby rocks would never question her again.

Mannon had not a single thing to her name. She had just woken up nearly waist deep in a sand dune. The dull gray metal that comprised her body didn’t seem to mind the heat or the sun of the desert, so she didn’t really feel the need for clothing. Though it could be interesting to try it even if she didn’t see the point, or how she knew what they were. Amnesia is a mixed bag. The only distinguishing feature she had found was an engraving on the upper left side of her chest simply reading *MA-0.* That was her name of course. What else would it be? So she started calling herself Mannon. It was a good name, stronger than most she was sure. She had a name and herself so honestly what more does a woman need, so she picked a direction and started walking.

The journey across the desert was not exactly hard, but tedious. Nothing ever really changed. She had examined everything she could along the way and all she had really managed to discover is one long dead tree, a mummified lizard, and the fact that the “sand” was closer to tiny shards of glass than the usual quartz based naturally occurring sand.
 “How in the infinite Hells do I know what ‘normal sand’ looks like,” she mused. “Oh well, questions for later.”

After a few weeks the endless desert had slowly turned into a strange grassland. It had nearly been as boring as the dessert, but at least she had seen a badger. It was cute. She wanted one. Fun fact badgers run oddly fast and live in dens that you can neither reach into or crawl inside. They are also not very friendly. Other than that the trip had been completely and mind numbingly boring. So much so she would have given half of the nothing she owned just to meet a person.

As the one month mark passed and the grasslands had turned into rocky foothills and Mannons game of “count the slightly more round rocks” was starting to get onto even her nerves she finally reached the crest of a ridge and saw the wonder of what was beyond… even more grassland.

“Damn, the world is dull,” she said sullenly.

She looked across the never ending yellow and green grass for any distinguishing feature. Upon closer examination she saw and oddly straight brown line that seemed to run nearly exactly North to South. It was a road!

“People build roads,” she exclaimed!

Now the question became which way does she go to North or to the South? This was a very important decision she had to make and there were many factors she had to consider before starting off on the next leg of her adventure. If only she could think of one of them. Monnon made her way down to the base of the hill, and decided to take a moment to rest. She really had been walking a long time and hills do a number on the knee joints after a couple of days. As she rested she pondered what people would be like. What do they even look like? Something inside of her said that most people were not made of metal. They were typically made out of this disgusting squishy substance that made Mannon’s stomach turn if she thought about it for too long. The squishy was usually covered with a thin membrane of pink or brown that kept in the ick. At least she wouldn’t have to look at it because she didn’t think she could –

There was movement out in the distance! ‘Is that a people?’ she thought. She could barely contain her excitement at the prospect of meeting another person. It was coming into view. It had black fur on its head and its flesh membrane was oddly… green. Its face looked symmetrical, and Mannon knew that people like symmetry. Its eyes were a light shade of purple. Mannon guessed it was a pleasant color. It had two strange mounds where its name engraving should be, which were covered by a rather plain white linen shirt. That is strange, I would have liked to know its name. Suddenly it stopped and turned. It was looking right at Mannon!

“Praise all the gods, social activity,” she whispered.

As the strange fleshy creature approached her she struggled to think of what to say. How do you start conversations? What do you say to people you just met? Do I have to try and impress it? Will it like me? No, that was stupid of course it will like me look at me. But what if it was violent? Mannon didn’t want to have to kill it. She was sure she could hold her own against something like that, it wasn’t a badger after all, but she really didn’t want to get the ick on her. It began to get even closer. Mannon began to stand up – it walked right past her. ‘That bitch!’, she thought. ‘What could be more important than introducing yourself to me.’

The rather rude little green person walked up to the cliff face and just kind of shoved her arm in. Mannon knew from experience that was a great way to get your hand bitten, but it deserved it after it ignored her like that. She decided she would just wait and see how this played out. It seemed to get frustrated after a while and took out some long metal tools and used them to extract a small blue crystal that seemed to shine with a striking blue light. It lifted up to its eyes and examined for an annoyingly long time.

“Well this trip is already turning out to be fruitful. I guess we will have to keep an eye out for more priceless artifacts,” the green person said in an oddly lyrical voice.

“Priceless you say,” Mannon exclaimed!

It turns out this is exactly what you should not say when trying to introduce yourself to the first person you meet randomly on the side of a road. The green person, who was definitely female, lept into action immediately. She reached into a strange spherical pouch on her belt and pulled out a vial full of strange white powder. She flung it into the air and exclaimed “Eldur!”. Whatever that meant. Mannon didn’t have much time to contemplate the strange word as the powder seemed to spontaneously burst into flames. Mannon screeched in an oddly high pitched voice and jumped back just quick enough to only get slightly singed.

“Wait listen I don’t want to fight you I just wanted to know why the rock was priceless,” Mannon exclaimed in what was in all likelihood the swiftest words she had ever uttered.

The green woman, whose face had gone from surprised to determined to confused in less that two seconds, stared at Mannon.

“Who are you,” she asked with genuine confusion in her voice. “And I really don’t mean to be rude, but what exactly are you? I have never heard of a golem that can speak.”

“Um, well high, I am Mannon. I am a…well I am a me.” Mannon replied knowing fully well that she cleared that up fully.

“Uh huh, well my name is Xanthie, Xanthie Tearfonte.” the green lady explained. “Where did you come from?”

“Oh, you know about a month's journey that way.” Mannon pointed behind her in a matter of fact manner.

“A month? That would mean you came all the way from the Nameless Lands,” Xanthie said, shock clear in her voice.

“Nameless Lands, why are they called Nameless Lands? How hard is it to just give a place a name?” Mannon scoffed.

“Well there is nothing there, and nobody knows what is beyond it or if there even *is* anything beyond it. They call it the Nameless Lands because no one can lay claim to naming it.” Xanthie explained in what seemed to be a well practiced forced patient tone.

“Oh, well in that case I call dibs. It is now named Walter. That was going to be my pet badger’s name,” Mannon stated, feeling as though the matter was well and truly closed.

“That is not exactly how that works, but whatever makes you feel better,” Xanthie stated with just the slightest hint of a smile at the edge of her lips. “So where are you going now that you have walked all this way from the gods know where?”

“I wanted to find people. You were right, there is nothing in Walter, so I came this way looking for people, and you are the first one I found.”

“Okay, so now that you have found a person what are you wanting to do,” Xanthie asked with curiosity beginning to build in her voice.

“Well, I don’t exactly know,” Mannon mused. “I don’t really know where I came from, who I am, or where I have been going. I just thought it would be nice to talk to people.”

“Okay, well I am heading north to Artax. You are welcome to join me on the trip. It is going to be a long walk alone.” There was something in Xanthie’s eyes that made Mannon want to trust her. More than that it made Mannon want to sit down and tell her all her deepest darkest secrets. ‘Note to self get deep dark secrets’.

“Okay, I will go to Aardvark with you and maybe I can see if I can figure out how to eat”