

Memories of Steam

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Welcome to a world of Steam and Fantasy.

Chapter 2

The Fog

The sun shone bright and clear over the village as I packed the last items in the basket for the weekly supply run to the foreigners base. I brushed my long blonde hair aside and smiled as I thought of them. They arrived a week ago in their glorious airship and they descended like angels from the heaven. Of course I had heard of airships and the great steam machines of the empire, I wasn't a backwater or something, but actually seeing one! As it turned out the foreigners were a science party from the University of Edinburgh who came to explore the mystery of this tempered island amidst the cold sea of ice and they were a dull bunch indeed. Except John. John the youngest of them, the one who wasn't an old geezer. The one i would see again in just a short while...

Father called from behind the counter of the Inn for me to be careful and back before sunset but i just waved him off and shouldered the backpack and went on my way. It's a mild day as I head with the foreigners scheduled supplies out towards the village exit where the road leads to the islands centre and the black basalt obelisks that ring our village loom up before me. I touch one of them for good luck as I always do and then laugh at the superstition. As if stones could bring luck. John with his scientific wisdom would probably scold me for being so foolish and guiltily I place my hand on the tiny piece of black stone hanging from my neck. "I would not be too quick to discard the old ways, young One" rasps a voice behind me. Startled i turn around to see the villages hag giving me an amused smile. "I.. I..." I stammer as my cheeks redden. She chuckles and continues "These men who think they have all the answers... There is more in heaven and earth than they can explain, more than they bargained for. These stones were here before them and they will protect us after they are long gone. But i guess at your age you are probably more interested in that young fellow" she chuckles again and waves me off. "Well go on then it's about time you sought yourself a man." Embarrassed by her I turned away with reddened cheeks and stormed along the path along the green meadows and boulders that were strewn among them.

"Stupid old hag." I curse as soon as I am a safe distance from the village, what does she know of love and continue along the path and soon enough I leave the grass plains behind me and start to climb into the hills. Up here the winds are swifter and bite harder and I start to shiver. It's not far now, the scientists have their base camp at the foot of 'old Firespitter' the old volcano that dominates this part of the island and I thank the spirits that old Spitter

isn't in a foul mood and that the air only slightly smells like rotten eggs.

I arrive at the base camp only to find it deserted. I stomp my foot on the ground. "So much for hoping to find a galant gentlemen here waiting for me to shower me with compliments" I grumble as I put the backpack on the ground and start to look around for someone. "Hello? John? Professor?..." I call out as I wander around the deserted camp but there does not seem to be anyone around. The only thing I find is a small path that leads towards old Firespitter and seems to vanish in his flank. I advance cautiously and find a cave.

The End