

When Chaos Met Chaos

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(Inktober 2019 Prompt, Day 7: Enchanted)

Content warning: Chaos.

Within the dining area of the restaurant, the kobold waitstaff carried dishes and orders to and from the kitchen by keeping to the sides with their backs against the walls. Kobold diners had strategically located to the tables near the walls, too, mostly eating in fearful quiet only interrupted by anxious whispers in hushed tones. For a two-or-three table radius from the centermost table, the restaurant appeared almost entirely deserted, and the nearest tables to the center had been scooted away to protect them from the obvious threats. It was almost as if the larger (in physical size) threat had fallen and created a desolate crater where she landed.

The two sitting at the center table could not look more different. First, sitting on a large metal crate someone had drug out to prevent her from crushing a chair with her ass, was a towering and rounded grey-skinned elephant girl, a klutzy laborer known not only for her huge size but also her awkward footfalls. Sam Cassidy's owner regularly despaired to his colleagues that owning her contract was the worst fortune any kobold could have; simply walking into an establishment's normal-sized door and forgetting to duck regularly added to her contract's debt. Any establishment she regularly visited often would make a small space outside to minimize the damage, although a single trip from the elephant could end up with medical costs and architectural repair bills.

The other at the table was even more feared, however. A small fox, a full three feet shorter—even if you included his tall ears—and three feet thinner, Daniel Warrens was renowned for his ability to complicate even the simplest of tasks. His contract had been hurriedly traded so many times that only a lonely old kobold lady bothered to keep him on board for a frankly pathetic daily pay. If Danny'd not been thrust towards a free furfolk alchemist to actually get formal training, the entire under-mountain city of Lark was confident he'd have caused twice the explosions he'd already caused.

Could kobolds sweat, every restaurant employee and patron would have been. Even more unnerving was how little two two in the middle spoke. Sam fidgeted and poked nervously at her own calloused hands, looking at Danny with dopey, doting eyes. Danny, in a rare moment, was sufficiently taken by awkwardness that he was finding it difficult to speak. His eyes darted around, anyone familiar with the half-fennec clearly recognizing that his rapid-fire thoughts hadn't slowed down. The two simply sat and looked, their uneven heights causing their gazes to be blocked by the flickering candlelight.

When the rookie kobold waiter slipped forward, bullied to be the unfortunate one to bring the two their ordered dishes, he skittered forward with a preemptive duck, hands clutching the large bowl of mushroom salad and entree plate of assorted appetizers that Sam and Danny had respectively ordered. Neither furfolk noticed him slipping the dishes onto their places—to his relief—until he'd already fled back into the kitchens.

Immediately, Danny set to work, mixing the neatly partitioned different items together into various yet particular messes. Deviled eggs smeared into the cocktail sauce, cave squid rings were mixed with artichoke dip, chicken wings found themselves sinking in a mire of blue cheese, and the thin chips were crushed and stuffed into small openings in the meat pies. Then the meat pies eventually found the artichoke dip, the squid rings were dropped atop the deviled eggs, and the chicken wings were fished out only to be sent to the cocktail sauce once more.

Sam watched as she slowly chewed through some of her mushrooms and greens, marveling at the seemingly random transfer of one separate dish or condiment to another. "Have you done this before?" she meekly inquired.

Looking up, the energetic fox blinked, hands still mixing the various pieces together. "Yes. If I don't, how will I ever know what'll be good for mixing? It is *science*."

"No, I mean, mixing these ...like this specifically."

"Oh. No. This is *science*." Suddenly, from one messy section of mingled mush, the fox scooped a selection with a spoon and stuffed it directly into his mouth.

Sam watched Danny as he chewed, the color slightly draining from his face even as his expression remained unchanged. He gave three or four solid chews, swallowed, and looked back down to his plate. Hesitantly, she offered a smile. "Was it...good science?"

"Very! I know how these mix."

The elephant watched Danny take another bite from a completely different section, the fox's ears slightly flattening now at the second test. "...are they good for mixing?"

The half-fennec swallowed. "No," he answered, "They taste heckin' awful." It didn't stop him from taking another bite, coaxing an awkward giggle from the elephant as he continued to eat his foul concoction.

Both furs managed to clean their plates, even if Sam was distinctly happier about it than Danny was. Danny even took a vial out, testingly pouring it in the glass of milk he'd gotten with his meal and sampling it, though Sam could tell the energetic and cute alchemist wasn't altogether too happy with the results. "Should we leave our coin and go?"

“...is that what you do on dates?” the fox asked hesitantly.

“I don’t know, this is my first date,” the elephant admitted. “I just...asked you out because I wanted to get to know you more. I thought you...”

“Yes. No, yes. I have been on...all the dates,” Danny asserted, the tone in his voice about as confident as a rookie guard bluffing in a thieves’ guild meeting. “This is good, yes. We can leave our coin and go.”

There was a collective sigh from the room as the elephant and fox put their gold pieces down on the table and began making their way to the door. The rookie kobold waiter returned in a half-sprint to grab the coin along with a few dishes and run back into the kitchen.

Sam didn’t notice her tail whipping behind her, the strong yet thin limb sending the candle toppling over and lighting the tablecloth on fire. A couple of ambitious kobolds lunged for the table as the two left, frantically beating as the flames grew higher and broader. Occupied as they were with the growing blaze, they didn’t hear the head waiter’s shocked exclamation in the table.

“Wh-...you brought back that fox’s glass with stuff still in it?! **YOU IDIO-**”

KRAK-BOOOM!

Neither Danny nor Sam seemed to notice, walking down the street as smoke billowed out from the restaurant behind them. Between the screaming and fleeing kobolds was the occasional older and more composed kobold that just sighed and shook their heads. While none of them could guarantee what the two slaves of chaos would do, they were quite certain that it wouldn’t take long for that restaurant to decide to bar the big elephant and small fox from entry in the future.

Sam kept the conversation focused on Danny’s interests and experiments during most of their walk down the merchant stall street. She had, after all, been the one to take initiative. He was a small guy, but he seemed utterly unbothered by her large size. None of her accidental bumps or stumbles ever seemed to affect him, either. And, while warned about him being a danger, she’d not once been the victim of a catastrophic explosion or a concoction gone wrong. Besides, she didn’t think much of her own manual labor work or interest in clothes and accessories.

Danny, to his credit, simply had been caught off-guard. The spunky and rebellious house slave hadn’t spent much time thinking of dating anyone, and, despite his bluffs, he was woefully unprepared. So he gladly talked of experiments, of his frustrations with the man and the system,

of trying to figure out new inventions, and of the weird letter he'd gotten from the Organization for Wayward Otherkin. Sam was somewhat familiar with the OWO, at least, and nodded, even as she leaned against a crate and accidentally jarred a cart loose to crash into an unfortunate produce stand.

While the kobold pitifully cried for his cabbages that now scattered and bounded down the street, Danny watched Sam gently looking at purses and wistfully wishing they made fancier ones for people her size. "It's all meant to put us down," he mumbled. "Heckin' system." Still, he did his best to be patient, even if he had to start fiddling with a vial of potion or two as she got distracted by yet another booth of straw hats.

With her constant questions and desire for feedback, his eyes flicked between his hands and her hopeful face. Experimental potions sloshed together between vials, small droplets casting to either side and onto nearby goods. Still, eventually, with the realization both had used much of their small allowances on dinner and couldn't afford anything, they continued their walk as the kobolds gasped and tried to wrestle a chair down to the ground. "Not again!" the carpenter cried as the animated furniture began skittering down the street.

The pair's awkward silences and exchanges disguised a growing scene of ruin. Canopies collapsing, bricks knocked free, and glassware sent crashing down to the pavement below by Sam's bulk... acids chewing new holes into the ground, sudden plant growth cracking foundations and entangling kobolds, and heatless fire littering the path from Danny's idle mind and hands...the two's first date went on, oblivious to the destruction that swallowed the city left in their tracks.

Eventually, much to Danny's relief, the two furfolk reached the division between Lark's further districts and their respective homes. "I had a good time today," Sam hummed bashfully, looking to one side. "Thank you."

"I also had a good time," the half-fennec said deliberately, providing a bright smile as he thought she might have expected. "Perhaps we can go...on another. Sometime."

Sam's face brightened a little. "Really? I'll save up my allowance for next time. Maybe..."

"NO! No gods, please no!"

Elephant and fox looked down to their sides. Two kobolds clung to each other in a fearful embrace. The male kobold had gasped in terror at their statements, and the female now seemed to be tearfully leaning her head into the shoulder of her companion.

"Um...hello. What are you two doing here?" Sam curiously inquired.

“We were on our date when you two started coming through,” the male despaired, eyes cast up into the cave’s ceiling. “The only safe place is directly next to you both! You’re both immune, somehow!”

“Immune from...what?” Sam pondered aloud.

The two kobolds pointed behind them. As the elephant and fox looked up, each’s face fell into differing degrees of guilt and horror. Kobolds were strewn out, unconscious on the ground with others desperately dragging the wounded to safety. Too many merchants wailed over broken merchandise as if an unthinkable war had ravaged their city and livelihood. The rare kobold mage ran around, desperately casting rays of frost as makeshift fire extinguishers at the scorched earth and still volatile chemicals. Tiny kobold nurses skittered about, attempting to set up an emergency first aid tent while surveyors moved over rubble and attempted to assess the most crucial repair needs.

In silence, for the first time in their whole date, Sam and Danny shared a look that was on the same wavelength. They turned and hurriedly began speed-walking towards their respective homes, ears perked and stances tight.

The kobold couple that followed them realized too late the ramifications. As the two accident-prone furfolk slaves hurried back to their owners’ places, the female kobold watched Sam nudge ever so slightly a stack of heavy crates while the male caught a glimpse of a vial slipping from Danny’s hands.

“I’ll always love you,” the kobold whispered to her man.

“I know,” the kobold sighed, hugging her tightly.

Ten minutes later, the nurses sighed in relief as they fished out of the smoldering pile of crates two twitching, deliriously mumbling kobold lovers: the last victims of a date between two uncontrollable forces of nature. Thankfully, the two would likely be too awkward and too poor to ever have a second date, sparing the city from a second storm of chaos.