

JUST ONE MORE PAGE

She hears their voices first, before she catches a glimpse of their faces.

At first, all she hears is the low hum of their voices, as their pickaxes hit against the diamonds.

The closer and closer she creeps into the heart of the diamond mine, the louder she hears their off-tune, jubilant singing.

She is Snow White, dwarf hunter.

Employed by the queen of the land, who is also her step-mother, Snow White has one mission, one purpose: hunt down and take out Grumpy the dwarf.

Queen Matilda possesses a special mirror. With magical powers and unmistakable truth, the hand-held, gold gilded mirror reassures the queen that *she* is the grumpiest of them all. But, that all changes when one day the mirror decides that Queen Matilda is no longer the grumpiest. Instead, it is a dwarf by the name of Grumpy.

The queen hates this dwarf. Everything about him is grumpy. From the expression on his pudgy face to the bleak, woven clothes he wears, Grumpy is simply, well, grumpier than the queen. Even his *name* is grumpy. In a fit of rage, Queen Matilda orders Snow White to kill him, so the queen could once again, be the grumpiest in the land.

Since Snow White has dedicated her life to only serving the queen, she abandons her old habit of torturing the nearby forest animals with her nasally sung songs, to scheming and hunting down that insulting dwarf. And here is Snow White, finally ready to take down Grumpy.

Snow White peers into the diamond mine's room, where the entire dwarf family—all seven of them—is working.

“Perfect,” she crackles as she slips out of the diamond mine and creeps to the dwarf's home, which she had already discovered, and waits patiently for the dwarfs to return home.

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That evening, the dwarfs are singing “Heigh, Ho,” as they travel down the lane to their little cottage. When in the view of their doorstep, the dwarfs see a figure sprawled on the ground. They race to the house and discover a *girl*, who is fast asleep.

These dwarfs look at each other, not sure of what to do, when the girl suddenly sits up, yawning.

“Oh,” she squeaks and suddenly stands up.

“I’m so very sorry. You see, the queen, Queen Matilda, she tried to kill me. I just escaped this morning, and I wasn’t sure where to go,” Snow White’s voice shakes as she wrings her hands together.

“I’m just so terribly frightened and tired,” She sobs and sinks to the ground.

“There, there. Don’t you worry, little one. We’ll take care of you.” Doc, the wisest dwarf, pats her shoulder.

The other dwarfs agree, shaking their white-haired heads.

“You will? Oh, thank you! I can cook, clean, wash dishes. I promise I won’t be any trouble,” Snow White’s eyes shine with tears.

“Of course you will, dear, now come on in.” Doc and the others trail into the house.

Snow White turns towards the edge of the forest and wickedly smiles.

“*That was too easy,*” She thinks and saunters through the cottage

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Snow White is true to her word, and for the next few days she cleans the cottage, cooks the meals, washes the dishes, and prepares the lunches for the dwarfs to eat while mining. As the days pass by, the dwarfs grow to trust and love her more and more. That is, except for Grumpy. The other dwarfs tell her not to be offended; that Grumpy is always skeptical of new comers, and he is, of course, always grumpy.

“But, how else will I be able to take him down, if he doesn’t trust me?” Snow White wonders.

She tries baking a pear cinnamon pie just for him and washes and mends his clothes for him. Snow White even sings him some songs!

“This is so FRUSTRATING! Queen Matilda, how can I kill this dwarf?” Snow White stomps her feet and throws a spatula at the wall.

While the dwarfs are out in the mines all day, and after the chores and meal are complete, Snow White plots crafty plans on how to finish off Grumpy. But, the dwarf hunter is growing *very* angry with how unsuccessful all her planning is going. So, imagine her surprise when Queen Matilda suddenly appears at the wall, which Snow White had thrown a spatula at angrily.

“You, fool, why have you not slain the dwarf, yet? I give you one, simple task, and you cannot complete it. I should have just completed the affair myself,” Queen Matilda paces around the room.

“But, Queen Matilda, I promise you I am worthy of this task. I just need a little more time,” Snow White, with her snowy white skin turning red, pleads with the queen.

“More time,” scoffs the queen, “I’ve give you plenty of time. Now is the time to take down Grumpy. I shall create a poisoned, red apple for you to present to the dwarf this evening. One bite and he’ll be dead. Oh, yes, yes, this will work.”

After bellowing out with a startlingly high-pitched laugh, Queen Matilda manipulates her magical powers to create the perfectly poisoned apple.

“Now, my child, I expect for the dwarf to be dead by sundown. And then, I, and only I, will be the grumpiest in the land,” states the queen. And with a flourish of her hand, she disappears as quickly as she had emerged earlier. The sparkling ruby-red apple is all that is left of the queen.

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“Good evening, Snow White,” the dwarfs chorus as they all pile into the cottage, sweaty and tired.

“Is dinner ready, yet?” inquires Sleepy as he yawns.

“Oh, not yet. I’m so terribly sorry. But, won’t you have an apple for now?” Snow White says, holding a woven basket of apples.

The dwarfs stand in line for Snow White to hand them an apple. Snow White passes the fruit, one by one, keeping the poisoned apple last for Grumpy.

“Thanks,” grunts Grumpy.

Snow White, with big eyes, anxiously watches Grumpy, as he eats one, big, juicy...

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“The library will be closing in ten minutes. Please wrap up your visit. The library will be closing in ten minutes. Thank you,” says the voice over the loudspeaker.

Emma jumps at the noise, causing her book, *Snow White, Dwarf Hunter*, to fall to the carpet.

“*What time is it?*” She wonders, rubbing at her eyes.

Glancing at her iPhone, Emma sees that it is 5:50. She had been reading for two hours.

Immediately, she thinks of all that she could have been accomplishing. Tonight’s homework, piano practice, writing assignment. That reflection stresses Emma; there is always so much to do. But, at least she is able to relax for a little while. And it is such a great book.

Emma glances at *Snow White, Dwarf Hunter*. She is dying to know what happened next.

How much longer will the library be open? An other ten minutes? Well,” Emma grins, “*I guess I could read just one more page,*” And with that, she opens up her book, eagerly escaping back into the world of the dwarf hunter.

THE END