

BOUNDARY: SHRINE MAIDEN

JUNE 2021 REQUEST STORY

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“ACHOO!?”

*Yukari Yakumo had come down with a cold. A strange occurrence to be sure, for the Gap Youkai of Gensokyo was beyond incredibly powerful. But despite what some might say, youkai were not *entirely* impervious to illness. They were far more resilient to be sure, but now and again even the most powerful monster in the world might fall to a case of the sniffles under the right circumstances.*

Perhaps it wasn't all that unlikely at the time. Reimu Hakurei had been calling for her a lot as of late, and Gensokyo was enduring its harshest winter in decades. Had she had it her way, Yukari would have spent all her time under a warm kotatsu, but Reimu seemingly had something on her mind recently. It wasn't like that girl to think, so she'd been taking every opportunity she could to try and investigate, yet— **“ACHOO!?”**

Around the same time, the shrine maiden in question had been relaxing in her shrine with her legs under a kotatsu of her own. It was a very convenient thing that the kappa had made for her, Reimu had to admit! Well, they didn't really *make* it for her so much as she took it from a poor kappa who lost to her in a danmaku competition, but *details!*

“I just want to sleep all day...” Yukari's assessment that something had been eating at Reimu wasn't wrong. She'd been much less

motivated and even lazier than normal, largely because she was grappling with the woes of mortality. She was already twenty, so was the rest of her life just going to be *this*? Solving everyone else's problems? It wasn't *all* bad, but if that was her future, she wanted to make sure she decided it on her own.

She was lost in thoughts about this dilemma when, out of nowhere?

“ACHOO!?”

Reimu practically jumped at the sound of what was quite clearly a sneeze, but there was no one around? It sounded a little familiar, though... Who was it? It was on the tip of her tongue— **“AHHH!?”** The shrine maiden let loose a scream, for a gap portal had suddenly opened up in the floor beneath her and she plummeted through, only to... land back in her room? **“Huh?”**

That had been Yukari's ability, hadn't it? By why manipulate the boundary to scoot her several feet away? Was she just being mischievous? **“Au au... I wish she wouldn't mess with me without some kind of warning.”**

“.....”

“Did I just say ‘au au’?”

“Ow!?” Reimu was *certain* that she'd just said something very weird, but it wasn't in the cards for her to question it for long; not before a sharp pain attacked her from two different points on either side of her head out of the blue. It was accompanied by a pressure that threatened to give her a migraine were it to go on for too long, but on the bright side? It was only going to last a moment. Less fortunately...

The pain was only short-lived because the pressure culminated in a release that felt like it was shooting something *out* of her skull. Her hands immediately shot up to touch the points in question, thinking whatever had been fired off had fallen onto the ground somewhere – but she'd come to discover that the opposite had taken place. After all, her fingers ended up grabbing something before even reaching her scalp. They laced around a pair of rock hard growths, and then traced from their based to two points that curved down and forward. The right one, suspiciously, seemed to have a chip halfway down its length.

“I HAVE HORNS!?”

Mirrors weren't easy to acquire in Gensokyo, and so she didn't have one in her shrine to look into to make certain that her assumption was correct, but based on how they felt, and how they were rooted to her skull no matter how hard she pulled, having horns now was the only reasonable explanation. **"Yukari... Did she do something!?"** That youkai's powers could do all sorts of things considering how vague they were conceptually. It wouldn't surprise her to hear that it was true. Rather, considering the available information she didn't have a choice *but* to believe it was true.

The horns were only the peak of the iceberg, though. Reimu, ignorant not by choice, was unaware that her abilities were being twisted within the depths of her very soul. No longer could she fire off danmaku, but in exchange she would *technically* be capable of *much* more under the right circumstances. Reflective of this, her brown eyes had begun to glow a vibrant *purple*, this glow eventually phasing out the brown altogether.

It was indicative of how her very existence had been altered so that she was much more paranormal by nature, and that spread to show in her hair as well. The exact same purple, in fact. It teased Reimu's bangs at first, stealing away their mundanity before working its way in towards her scalp. But anything dyed purple thickened and lengthened as well, giving the woman's mane a fuller, longer look that fell past her shoulders.

...Only to fall even farther past said shoulders not because her hair had continued to grow, but because Reimu herself was falling. **"Whoa!? Wh-What the...!?"** A newly gifted sheepishness was presented in her voice while reacting to what was happening – a prompt reduction of height, the woman's stature plummeting at an alarming rate. Her shrine maiden outfit, which typically showed off her midriff, grew so loose that her belly ended up entirely covered, while her skirt found itself supported by Reimu's will alone.

Her own powers were keeping it pinned in place, even if she didn't realize it.

For a brief moment she believed her size loss to have halted, but it was only a trick of her mind. She'd ended up levitating passively, and while Reimu had possessed such a power even before her abilities were altered, she was typically more aware of its use. Rather, her clothes only continued to look bigger on her body as her height dipped into the realm of around 4'8". **"Is this r-really happening!? I'm getting so small!"** The woman's voice had reached an impeccable high peak, but her words were also conveyed so *softly*.

Even then, referring to her as a *girl* now would have been more fitting. Her breasts, while not particularly big or perky considering her age, were robbed of even that heft. Her bosom flattened from what could best be considered a shallow B-cup by modern sizing conventions all of the way down to a paltry A... even though they looked rather big considering her collapsed frame. Her hips were forced to swing in as well, and the fat around her thighs and butt dwindled to permit only the bare minimum softness. A weight that was more of a promise of a figure to come, for her body looked like she was now eleven or twelve at best.

“Au au!? What’s going oooooon!?” Once again, that ‘au au’ noise had jumped from her lips. On this occasion though, Reimu didn’t question it. It just felt like a *natural* noise to make, all things considered. Her new childishness rounded out her face next, presenting her with bigger eyes and underdeveloped lips. More shocking though was how her jawline and cheekbones shifted to present her face with a look that was completely unrecognizable from the Reimu Hakurei she was meant to be.

Her body now complete in its current form, her oversized costume promptly clung against her body to disguise her feminine features and swath them in a much more comfortable fit. There was an inverse in colors as her red top turned white, and her detached, white sleeves turned red, and dangling to her ankles her skirt grew longer and took on a much more standard design. But other than that?

She still looked like a shrine maiden through and through.

But the powers lurking within with very much *not* the standard for a girl of her position.

Without the stimulation of a changing body, the shrine maiden was now left to sort out her thoughts. **“I really became a kid!? A-And what’s with the horns? I feel so... so...”** *Shy*. She didn’t feel much like talking, and her tiny fingers were clutched to her chest to demonstrate her anxiousness through her body language. She’d stopped floating, sandals that cloaked miniaturized digits clacking as she touched down. She wasn’t acting like herself, she didn’t feel like herself, and she certainly didn’t look like herself, but... She knew who she was!

Triumphantly, she announced it to the world like a child might.

“Regardless of how I look, my name is still Hanyuu— HUH!?”

Fundamentally, at her core, Reimu was still Reimu. She could remember her name, her background, and how she had used to behave. But acting on those things? **“My name isn’t Hanyuu, it’s Hanyuu!”** Even though she’d spoken her name with the intention of saying ‘Reimu’, she could stop herself from saying this new name – one that lined up with a second set of memories, brief as they were. Was it because she was younger in this body?



No, was she *really* younger? She looked that way, but something felt...

“Au au aaaaa... What am I supposed to do now? I’m too scared to go fix it!” Huh? Since when had she been afraid of *Yukari*? But *Yukari* was so strong, and she didn’t really have the confidence to... **“It would be rude to just barge in there and ask her to do it, too...”** No, it *wouldn’t*! Why couldn’t she motivate herself to get this done? She’d practically kicked *Yukari* around in the past for all of her shenanigans!

But unfortunately, by the time she’d work up the courage to do something about it, after wandering around for a while, there would be plenty more victims than just *Reimu*.

Er, *Hanyuu*.