

ALCHEMINI

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BY CHALDEACHANGE



Regardless of her appearance, one wouldn't exactly say that Iona was the literary sort. She was a Viera woman that liked to keep herself busy, and sometimes in order to do that she *did* have to pick up a book to fill the void, but she wasn't necessarily someone who fancied herself to be in pursuit of knowledge. She was no scholar, not an academic, just an oddjobber that did what was asked of her in order to make a quick dime. These jobs ultimately took her all over Hydaelyn of course, but there was still locales she could travel to where she might seem out of place.

The Great Gubal Library was one of those locations where that seemed to be the case. For despite her decision to always wear those red-rimmed glasses of hers, the woman was not normally the sort to find herself in such a prestigious locale of a studious nature. There were few that were permitted to enter Gubal, its background steeped in the efforts of Sharlayan scholars of the past.

Nonetheless, that day she had been taken into Gubal as part of a recovery team. Her most recent client was looking for a particular book, and so she joined an escort party that was entering the library's depths to seek out that specific text. Coming with a party had been necessary thanks to the monsters and traps that lurked within, but once the area had been secured? She had been free to go off on her own.

Before long Iona found herself in the tiny atelier-like room that had been marked on the map she had been given. Apparently the book that she was looking for didn't have a specific title, but it would be notable due to the design on its spine. "**Woah!?**" Before she could find the book in question, however? Upon stepping on a tile, it sank in – and the Viera

suddenly tripped into a secret door that had her come out in another room.



“Where?” After recovering, she looked at the map she had been given. This room didn’t appear to be noted anywhere, so she wasn’t sure where she was. Making matters worse, the door she had fallen through slammed shut before her – leaving her trapped in what she could only assume was a secret room. **“Wait, how do I get out?”** If there had been a secret door that had let her in, there must have been one to get her out too, right?

Before she started dancing around on the tiles, however? A voice called out from thin air. The voice of what sounded like a young girl, and yet she spoke in a manner more mature than the pitch implied.

**I SEE YOU’VE COME SEEKING
ETERNAL CUTENESS. PLEASE
STEP INTO THE CENTER OF
THE ROOM.**

“Um... Hello? Is there a way out of this room? I’m not really seeking eternal... *anything.*” If someone was speaking to her, then surely they could reply, right? But in the end she received no answer, prompting the Viera to move towards the room’s center. Her thinking was that maybe the mysterious, disembodied voice would reply to her if she did as she was told? And she really couldn’t imagine what harm would come from following the instructions up until that point.

Nothing really seemed strange about the room anyways. It looked identical to the room she’d fallen in from, though the orientation of everything inside was backwards and there was no door on the far side. It was unsuspecting enough for her to believe that nothing would go awry if she did something as simple as reach the room’s center.

...And yet she had been wrong, seemingly. Because no sooner than she had reached the center of the room did a series of lights begin to stretch across the floor. **“Um...?”** Tiny, blue, glowing lines that interwove with each other, crisscrossing to create the drawing of a circle on the floor, one that almost looked like a magic circle. It was a little different though, and the power that poured out of it was *not* magic.

It was *alchemy*.

Iona's good sense implored her to jump off of the circle with her strong legs before it was too late, but much to her dismay? They were firmly rooted on the floor, and she just couldn't seem to raise them regardless of how hard she tried. The energy from the circle had begun to pour into her body with her feet as the conduits, and it was beginning to take its toll both on her body *and* her mind.

And if there was a point where those two areas intersected, it would naturally be her head, right? Or at least the hair upon it? Because whether it being a point of intersection was the reason or not, this was the first place where visible change could be seen applied to the woman's visage. Her dark bluish-purple hair had always been a staple of Iona's appearance, and yet that seemed to be at risk of succumbing to a new encroaching shade.

One that was much more vibrant, for it was of a shimmering, golden blonde. It swept through all of her hair, from the roots all of the way to the tips. And yet strangely? Her large, fluffy, Viera ears remained unaffected by this change in color. It certainly seemed bizarre that their fur would keep this bluish shade while her hair, restyled to by somewhat thicker than it had been previously, was so keenly dyed. Yet there appeared to be something of a good reason for not bothering to change the color of that fur.

“What!? I can't hear!?” Overwhelmed by a sudden silence, the Viera couldn't even hear herself cry out in surprise, directly responding to how the entire world around her had gone silent. Not that there was much in this hidden room that was in the business of making noise in the first place, but you could always tell if your ears felt 'clogged'. Fortunately for her it was only a brief phenomenon, although one that came with some significant ramifications.

The woman had gone momentarily deaf because her proud bunny ears? Well, they had ceased to exist, quickly unraveling and disappearing into her head where blonde locks would eventually mask the points where they had protruded from in the first place. Her ability to hear had only returned because, born of bald, fleshy cartilage, a pair of rounded ears that were much more akin to those of a Hyur had emerged from her head's sides.

Naturally, Iona had taken notice of this. The moment her hearing had gone, she had reached up to check on her ears and had felt them slipping through her fingertips, before hands ultimately fell down to her new ears – as well as unintentionally pushing some of the golden locks into her eyes at the same time. **“What the...? Something's**

happening? I'm getting so... so... *adorable!* Wait, was that a good thing? Why had she said it like it was a good thing? She'd never really had much of a desire to be seen as cute or anything adjacent to cute, and yet the idea that she might be *becoming* cute? It seemingly awakened something within her, even though her Viera ears had been compromised.

That said, this wasn't the only aspect of her racial background that suffered this fate. Looking at her face, for example? It was subtle, but the tip of her flat nose protruded and rounded, before it collapsed in size into a button shape. That was another of her bun features gone, although the rest of her facial structure changed along with it. Cheeks rounder, eyes not only wider but inheriting a silver color, she somehow looked more youthful. This was likewise heightened by a decrease in size on the part of her lips, which were now as thin as a child's. Then again? Her face's overall visage did give off the impression of a much younger individual.

Not that her stature supported this. Initially. **"Woah!? What is...!? I'm getting smaller *and cuter!*?"** Once again she had blurted out some unintended enthusiasm towards the idea that she would be becoming cuter, but this time? It involved a change that was *much* more dramatic. Her entire body was shortening, and so her height plummeted in a manner that was not only drastic but uncomfortable.

She stumbled with pained grunts, the process led not by a natural shortening of bones that would smoothly transition her change in size, but through a number of fragmented cracks that saw these bones break before the excess faded away. Before long she was on the floor on her hands and knees, the process much too uncomfortable to keep herself standing, much less upright.

"Ugh! This is so... Ugh! *But some sacrifices are necessary for cuteness!*" Regardless of how uncomfortable she was, she grit through it thanks to her newfound desire to be *adorable*. It was actually becoming more difficult for her to think as well, because her mind was filling up with knowledge and memories that she didn't originally possess. It distracted her from the continued discomfort of her body shrinking, knowledge specific to the art of alchemy flooding in to the point that she now understood she had fallen victim to an alchemic circle.

Of course, as her body shrank, there was no denying that the fit of her clothing would become poorer and poorer. While she didn't wear much, it was designed to be worn by a tall, full-figured Viera woman. Both areas of which were rapidly diminishing. Her height had already been touched upon, of course, but her figure? Well, her full-sized bosom had

been flattening along with her vertical shrinkage. That meant that her mounds had practically disappeared entirely by the time her height had bottomed out, at least short of a soft incline that indicated where something may one day grow.

And when it came to her lower half? With her tummy becoming smaller vertically, yet just a little softer as youthfulness took hold, beneath it her hips narrowed. This meant that there wasn't the space necessary to keep her thick thighs and perky buttocks consistent. And so they shrunk, their plumpness lessening until there was still a thickness to be seen, but one that was much more relative to her newfound height. It wasn't attractive, but it was *cute*. And that was becoming more and more important to Iona.

Back to her clothing a moment, though. She'd been on her hands and knees, and so it had just dangled down and off of her. But fortunately for her, the alchemic circle that changed her saw fit to adjust her costume as well. Made of synthetic materials as they were, they changed so quickly that it almost seemed like, in the blink of an eye, her top and shorts had been replaced by an elaborate, crimson dress. Along with some cute boots, black thigh highs, and a golden tiara with three crown-like prongs.

“It's almost done... It's almost done...” Having shrunk down to a meager 4'3”, the girl grit her teeth and forced herself back up onto her feet. It was evident that another will had mixed with Iona's own and had drowned it out, and it was that will that all of this alchemic knowledge came from. There was actual a visual indicator of just how dominant this will was becoming, mind you. Because the less Iona felt like herself, the more the color of her skin lightened from its typical dark brown to a light pink. From the tips of now tiny fingers to the rosy cheeks of her more childish face, this color saw all of her skin painted in its color.

And just like that she no longer resembled, acted like, thought like, nor dressed like Iona.

So much information had poured into the girl's tiny cranium over the course of her transformation that it had taken her a little bit of time after the fact to sort it all away. Memories of a life that betrayed the perceived age of her body, but also of a life that extended back far longer than any life had any right to live. She understood why, of course. Her body was something that could be created again and again. Cuteness born from the flesh of another, with a soul that was ultimately compiled again and again with the identities of those it was created from.

That was the nature of Hydaelyn's own *Cagliostro*. While Iona was a part of her now, the truth of the matter was that she was just a small part of the alchemist's overall identity. The Viera had very little sway with Cagliostro's overall intentions, and yet that wasn't to say that she had absolutely no sway at all. **"Eugh. I went to all of this trouble to look my absolute cuteness, so what's this desire to get taller!?"**



Through her many, many bodies, Cagliostro had learned that being tiny was instrumental when it came to leaving a cute impression. Yet now the part of her mind that was Iona? Who was accustomed to being a Viera and enjoyed being tall? That lingering attachment to her prior appearance left the alchemist in a similar position. Well, it was more like she was torn between the two, very different mentalities.

"What do I do about this? Do I adjust my height? But then I wouldn't look as adorable!" The (*self-proclaimed*) adorable alchemist seemed to be on the verge of tearing her own beautiful hair out as she went over this dilemma. Would this longing for height eventually fade? She couldn't deny that it would certainly been easier to grab things on the upper shelves were she taller. Carrying around a ladder at her size was inconvenient as well, even though the Lalafell of this world were far more cursed in that regard than she was.

Was another solution available? **"What if I just give myself really long rabbit ears?"** Were rabbits *in*? People found rabbits adorable, right? And Viera were one of the most sought after races on this whole planet. Surely there were some appeal points to be found in giving herself the perfect pair of ears? Then she could market her cuteness to an even more abundant market! Did this really satisfy Iona's attachment to height? No, not whatsoever. But at the very least it was enough to bring the feeling down to a simmer.

And so, Cagliostro got down to putting her diabolical plan into action. First she had to design the most adorable pair of ears. There was also the matter of the softness and color of the fur, as well as contrasting it with her cute, little outfit. There was so much to consider, and maybe she was more enthusiastic about it than she'd first thought herself to be. But another thought eventually crossed her mind as well.

“Oh! What if I add a tail as well?”