

MEME DEMONS III.

COMMISSION STORY

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“Cagliostro is pretty sure we took a wrong turn~!”

“Did we!? It all looks the same in here!”

The dynamic between the two alchemists that traveled as members of the Grandcypher’s crew was quite the unique one. To begin with, there was Cagliostro. Holding the body of a young girl, she was actually an age-old alchemist who had given herself a new body and modified that body innumerable times over the course of her life. She liked to be seen as adorable as humanly possible at all times despite the wealth of knowledge at her disposal (*or the cruder, ruder personality traits she kept hidden*). Few could tolerate her for an extended period of time, but if there was anyone...

It was Clarisse. Even though she looked like the older of the two, and the older *sister* at that, the reality was that she was only a paltry seventeen-years-old when compared to the hundreds Cagliostro had flourished during. Cagliostro was actually Clarisse’s distant ancestor, making their relationship all the more baffling. For a time they had been enemies, but now they were united under the Grandcypher’s banner, exploring the unusual tower that was Pandemonium as one of the expedition teams.

But, as Cagliostro kept pointing out, they kept getting lost. It wasn’t the fault of one party over the other, but the very same-y architecture of the tower itself. In terms of distinguishable features? There was absolutely nothing from one hallway to the next. Even when things branched outside, swirling clouds obscured so much of their view that they couldn’t make heads nor tails of where they were relative to where they’d begun.

Even more unsettling? As if the tower were *alive*, any markings they'd made on its floors or walls seemed to heal within a matter of moments. Anything they left dropped on the ground seemed to disappear as well, as if to remove any chance of them being able to track their process.

“Is it possible that the tower is ever changing in the first place? I wonder if the others are having as many problems as we are...” Clarisse wondered aloud, allowing Cagliostro to wander a short way ahead. Compared to everyone else, they had been charged with exploring some of the lower floors. Understanding what made the tower tick was a job best saved for this scholarly duo, but so far? They had yet to discover anything concrete enough to confirm any theories.

“Hm~ I wonder, I wonder~! Do we have any additional evidence to confirm that?” Clarisse simply sighed as Cagliostro brushed aside her theory, but she knew her senior had a point. If they made an assumption and went with it without enough proof to back it, they might as well have been misleading themselves into making a mistake. Important as their work was, that could have led to a tragedy of some kind. **“Instead, you should try focusing on—*WEH!?*”**

Cagliostro's attempt at providing her junior with advice had been interrupted suddenly by a rumbling that had evidently torn down from higher up in the tower. Had one of the other parties done something, or was it an act of the demons that occupied this place? The rumbling grew more and more intense, so much that both girls had to use the walls to stabilize themselves but, as floor and wall alike began to crumble, it was only inevitable that one of them might draw the short straw.

“AHHHHHHH!?”

The one who'd drawn that straw was Clarisse, and moment before the rumbling stopped, the floor gave way beneath her. She was slurped up by the dark void, never to be seen again.

Well, *not as Clarisse*, anyways.

Not even Clarisse herself knew what luck had spared her from accumulating any injury. She'd fallen quite far, but the floor? It had been unusually soft upon impact, so much that there hadn't even been any shock to the landing much less cause for injury. She couldn't really make out the reason though – the space wasn't as well lit as the hallways they'd been navigating. **“A secret room?”** It was a curious thought.

They hadn't exactly been looking for rooms like these, but now that she knew they were here...

Well, it didn't help much if she couldn't get out. This place was humid and warm – while outside had been cool and dry. Almost like she was inside something that was breathing. Had her hypothesis about the tower being alive been on the nose? It felt gross, but it was also strangely... *comforting*. Somewhere warm and safe, where you were protected by the harshness of the outside world.

Couldn't that only be called a '*womb*'?

It was something akin to one, and that space? There was a strange reaction between it and Clarisse's body, which had the talents of an alchemist flowing through it. In a way it was like her own flesh had begun to absorb the energy of this demonic, breathing space. And in return? She was changing to better adapt to the harsh realities that lingered outside. Even if that meant becoming a *monster* herself. The help certainly hadn't been asked for, but it was being forced upon her, nonetheless.

"Huh!?" For how limited her vision had been since the fall, Clarisse was certainly surprised to find herself of able sight within seconds, as if the room had simply lit up before her. That hadn't quite been the case in the end though because the room hadn't gotten brighter – her eyes had simply adjusted... beyond the realm of what was humanly possible, anyways.

Were there an audience present, as the girl's vision improved they would have noticed something on her body begin to produce a light. Her eyes were glowing, and certainly not their usual, beautiful blue colors. Instead it was a menacing red that likewise saw her pupils stretch vertically until they appeared as narrow lines that added to the impression that '*what she was wasn't human*'. It wasn't strange for a demon to be able to see in the dark, much less a *last boss type monster*.

Since Clarisse could see, however, she was surprised to find that the room looked more or less like the hallways despite how it felt. In part, its influence was actually waning as her body absorbed it unknowingly but based on how squishy the floor had been and how damp the air was, she had almost expected the surroundings to look more like a monster's innards. Just to make sure though, she wanted to be able to look at everything in more detail. The alchemist simply hadn't imagined that want would manifest in the way it ultimately did.

The girl absolutely knew what it was like to see out of two eyes, but what about *twelve* all at once? Of course, no human could ever fathom such a

thing, which is why she was brought to reel once this absurdity had become a reality. At six points across her frame, her flesh had bulged and gurgled, golden orbs erupting painlessly while slitted pupils not unlike those in her regular eyes appeared in their dead centers. Three down her torso, one on the back of each hand, one on the side of either leg beneath the knee, a pair just beneath either shoulder, and one in the center of her forehead. Each of these additionally eyes were incredibly menacing, particularly where they had ripped through her costume so that they could peer at her surroundings.

“Wh-What the!?! This is so strange, and... Well, I can’t deny I’m a little interested, but how many eyes do I have!?” Were she not an alchemist, she likely would have panicked far more than she had. But, raising one of the eyes on the back of her hand so that she could look at it with the red eyes on her face, she was more curious than anything. It was super uncanny seeing yourself stare back at you from two different points at once.

But it was through this that she was able to notice that her original eyes, too, had changed. Red... But that wasn’t the worst of it! Using her free hand, she reached up to touch the area around the big, golden eye in the center of her forehead (*something that was incredibly easy since she could watch it with a hand eye*). She could both feel and see them. **“Horns!”** They weren’t exceptionally long, probably jutting out only a few inches about Clarisse’s forehead – but they were there, and they were a dark red in color.

“I’m looking more and more like a monster as time goes on...” It was certainly a problem, but at the same time? Was it? **“If I want to look like a last boss, this is the first step...”**, she whispered under her breath, the pitch and overall sound of her voice now *completely* different.

A purple had begun to permeate throughout her hair, and in the process the long ponytail she always sported came unwound because of the fact that this hair was shortening. They style regressed as far as her shoulders, each strand completely straight and unable to be styled while bangs hung between her horns and the third eye on her face. Her ears were stretched out too, almost tripling in length as they became pointed at the tips. Yet another pair of eyes ended up dangling from her ears, almost resembling earrings this time.

Purple simply appeared to be becoming a staple at this point, for it was ripping through her clothing as well. But... was it clothing she was wearing? That had been the case at first, but the texture was beginning to feel more like hard flesh or armor, the seems merging with her skin to

ultimately become a layer produced by her body that merely *resembled* attire at the most basic level.

From the thighs down to the tips of her feet, her legs were completely covered in this dark purple armor, while what was draped across her torso appeared to be a dress made of the same – still preserving the sizing of her breasts despite covering them entirely. Where it was the uncanniest was around her arms, covering them like gauntlets. But her hands?

They weren't protected by any fleshy armor, they simply grew. The skin across Clarisse's fingers hardened as a crimson red became a constant color across these hands, seeing the fingers themselves stretch into sharp claws as their overall length became a bit lankier than they likely should have been. The perfect claws for killing, *an ideal last boss trait!*

Clarisse, though, was struggling with something she hadn't been required to grapple with thus far. Her intellect had remained largely intact, even as thoughts of becoming a final boss had begun to run rampant within. But now? She was struggling. **"Huh...? Why can't I...? Alchemy...? What's... that? Is it important? I wonder if big sis knows..."** She couldn't even remember alchemy's fundamentals, and her mannerisms were becoming increasingly childish.

Which was probably fine on a technical level because the final step had finally been eased into. The young woman's body was plummeting, height shaved from her person as she fell to a staggeringly short eighty-eight centimeters in height. It wasn't merely a shrinking phenomenon however, and the girl became notably younger alongside it. Seen in her face with how chubby her cheeks were, or in her chest where her bosom had essentially disintegrated into nothing, she had completely collapsed in body and in mind into the form of a young, monster child.

"Huh!? Where is Desco!?" Energy was quick to coarse through her veins, and the moment it did she had forgotten all about her wonderings about this 'alchemy' thing. Even worse, what had her old name been again? All she could remember was 'Desco', so it had to be 'Desco', right? **"Hm... Maybe big sis would know!"** Whoever that was. But first, she had to break out of this room. All of its energy had flowed completely into her body, so any signs of life the space had possessed? They were gone now. That meant that breaking the wall? **"HYA!"**

CRASH!

All it took was a single swipe of her claws to knock it down. That's just how strong she was! Dust and debris scattered everywhere, but when it

cleared Desco could see someone standing on the other side, walking in by hopping over any rubble that had been scattered about. **“Oopsies! You almost crushed cute, little me! What would you do if that happened!?”** Somehow this person seemed familiar to Desco, but she couldn't quite grasp it at first.

On the other hand? Cagliostro knew exactly who this was. She looked different, but she'd alchemically planted a tracking device in Clarisse's body once upon a time. Had this tiny monster eaten her, it would have likely been destroyed. So in all probability? This monster *was* Clarisse. Cags had readied her book to attack, only to be shocked when the tiny monster jumped into her arms affectionately. **“BIG SIS! There you are! Desco was worried about you!”**

The young-looking alchemist had been taken off-guard for several reasons. The first was the fact that she had just been called 'big sis' for one (*though she couldn't deny that had a nice ring to it*), but... this 'Desco'. She had moved so fast that Cagliostro hadn't been able to track her. She'd dismissed her as just some sort of low-level monster now based on appearance alone, but in practice it seemed that assumption couldn't be any further from the truth. She couldn't pry her off, either! **“Hey, you! Let go of me!”** But any thrashing around just seemed to make the child cling *more* intensely.

Perhaps the vibrations that had run through the tower had finally begun to work on Cagliostro's body, or perhaps some of the energy that had changed Desco had been rubbing off on her, but all of a sudden? The incredibly short alchemist began to *grow*. She had meticulously crafted her form to be this small and cute, any inch greater than that offset her balance, and yet... she was powerless to stop it. **“YOU BRAT! You're doing something to me! Stop it!”** Thrash as she might, Desco just would not budge. She could feel her tummy growing bare as her shirt was hoisted higher due to taller shoulders, and the monster was tickling her there by rubbing up against her as she was!

“I need to change you back, so just let go! Using my al... my all... all my...?” *CRAP!* What was she going to use to save her again? It had just been on the tip of her tongue! It had been something extremely important to her! An ability of some kind? Did it have something to do with the Prinnies? *What the hell was a Prinny!?*

She had worked herself up into a tizzy, and her eyes were practically spinning as she continued to try and push Desco off of her with longer fingers. The long, golden hair she had coveted for so long was gradually darkening to a very plain, chocolate brown, before the violets of her eyes followed suit. It was clear enough looking at her face: the girl was

growing older. Not too old, likely into the fourteen or fifteen age; but it was still a higher age than what her body had once been.

If there was another trend emerging, it was that while Cagliostro had crafted her body to be incredibly beautiful, her features were settling into a state that could only best be described as *‘plain’*. There was nothing exceptional about her body anymore, much less her face. Perhaps, aside from the color of her eyes changing, the only thing of real note was the almond shapes those eyes took on. ‘Cagliostro’ wasn’t the sort of name you’d typically attach to a girl with a face like this, but *‘Fuka’*, a Japanese name? It likely would have been right at home.

In fact, she had become so unremarkable that even though she’d grown older and taller, peaking at 155cm, nothing about her figure had evolved past what it had been when she was ‘child’-bodied. Her chest remained as flat as could be, and the fat in her thighs had merely evened out with the length. She was just a scrawny looking Japanese girl in her early teens, without anything at all exceptional about her appearance.

Cagliostro couldn’t even fall back on her treasured intellect, for while she could still remember Desco had once been Clarisse, and she had once been... Drat! She couldn’t even remember her old name, now! **“Desco! Let go of meeee! I need to remember something important!”** Her voice had grown much shriller, and despite her protest she had actually reached down to hold the monster girl in return.

“No! Desco doesn’t want to! Desco wants to hug big sis a little longer!” She wasn’t conscious of the fact, but there was a reason. Desco had felt compelled to hold on until Fuka was completely Fuka, which meant...

Fortunately, she didn’t need to wait long. The crown upon Cagliostro’s head suddenly inflated, taking on the shape of a Prinny-themed hat while her elaborately constructed alchemist’s ensemble was reduced to little more than a white and blue middle school uniform and Prinny jacket. Her blue, pleated skirt was incredibly short, and her black thigh highs reached past her knees, but even then the slight gap between the two was the most skin her new outfit showed off.

Were Cagliostro’s old personality still conscious, it would have had a fit. Not only was her current appearance plain as all hell, but this outfit was more or less atrocious. But, her work finally completed, at least Desco finally let go so she could stare up at her ‘big sis’ gleefully. **“What was that you were saying big sis? What did you mean by ‘change me back’?”** She was pretty sure Fuka had said something like that before, hadn’t she?

“**Uh...**” Even Fuka seemed dumbfounded. “**Did I say something like that?**” She wasn’t certain. She felt like maybe that was true, sort of? But the reason she’d said it had completely slipped out of her head. It would come back though. Often. Now and again Fuka would remember who Desco had used to be, but she’d be powerless to change anything. She couldn’t even remember she’d once been Cagliostro anymore after all.

Plus, *Fuka* was such an idiot that she’d just forget moments later again anyways.