

# PLUCK OF THE BOW

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**“Just *why* isn’t it clicking?”**

Mitsu Kaisuri was frustrated, and understandably so. Having pushed her talents as a Paladin to what she considered to be her very limit, she had been hoping to pick up a new discipline – and follow some recommendations from a friend? She had decided to pursue archery. The hope was that it would help her round out her combat ability, making up for the shortcomings she had when it came to range.

And so after being recommended to the Archer’s Guild in Gridania she had begun to put all of the effort into learning the job that she had in her climb up until the level 90 Paladin she had become over the course of her journey. So, her frustration? There was only really one avenue where it could have come from. *Things weren’t proceeding as well as she’d hoped.*

The Au Ra had been very optimistic going into her training that she would be able to pick it up quickly. How much more difficult could it be from learning the blade? But try as she might, *aim* had become her greatest weakness. She was always missing her marks on the initial shot, which could be the difference between life and death for most archers.

It weighed upon the young woman heavily, so much so that she was lamenting her shortcomings beneath a sea of shining stars. Spending a night out camping midst the forests of Gridania, she had thought, might help her find the clarity that she so desperately sought. Sitting on a log beneath an open spot in the forest’s canopy, Mitsu could appreciate just how bright the stars were so far from the city.



**“I wish I could just overcome my demons and become good at archery. That’s all I really want.”** She wasn’t so foolish as to think that there was anyone out there capable of granting her wishes, and in fact she wasn’t *legitimately* making a wish. But because it had perturbed her so much, she had simply mumbled this aspiration to herself to fill a silence that was plugged only by the chirping of crickets.

But something *was* listening. A deity from beyond the far reaches of time and space, not even of this world or any of the fragments that had stemmed from it. And because this deity had heard the young woman’s most earnest of wishes, it was decided that this wish would be granted. Unfortunately there was only *one* way for it *to* be granted, and that would involve transferring some of the deity’s essence.

Even then there was no certainty that it would work, but the deity decided to attempt it nonetheless – sending that essence across the starry sky. **“Is that shooting star... *green*?”** Mitsu was quick to see it streaking across the sky, unaware that it had come to see her prayers to fruition. It didn’t even waste much time in coming to fruition, as observations could already be seen in the Raen’s visage – although they certainly weren’t traditional for tales such of these.

It began not with a change in color (*although that would soon come later*), but with the emergence of *paint* atop her usual skin color. It was only a singular pair of streaks that ran across her right eye – one vertical and the other horizontal, almost resembling a pair of scars. That said, scars weren’t usually *green* and so they could only be artificial markings. From them, though, more mundane altercations began to take place.

Was it a trick of the moonlight that made the skin around these marks appear a little greener? Like they had a tint more akin to the leaves of the trees around her? It certainly stood out while surrounded by her natural coloring, but with time it was the fleshy pink that would look strange, becoming the odd color out as the green soon spread. Already had it cupped her facial features and seemed intent on coating her body in its entirety, succeeding after a short period of time.

But it brought with it a little more than *color*. Quality was just as affected, and its natural smoothness turned just a touch rougher. It almost seemed rugged in a sense, or at least more befitting of a woman that spent most if not all of her time in the outdoors. The greenish color

*did* highlight the white of her scales, at least for a time. And yet? They were not longed to remain, each hardened piece turning to dust and being stolen by the breeze so that greened skin beneath could be revealed. Even the darker portions of Mitsu's skin, those being her nipples and pussy, inherited a darker shade of forest than her skin had.

And mind you, this had all occurred over but a meager *thirty seconds*.

**“Hm... Did it become cooler out?”** No, in fact, but it was understandable that she might see it that way. Her scales had offered her *some* protection from the cold, and now they were gone. Well, on all but her tail, but that appendage would soon find itself steeped in a different issue.

It had grown quite *stiff*. Normally it whipped about just a little bit, but behind her, drooped slightly over the log she was sitting on, it had begun to stretch out without an iota of mobility whatsoever. Until suddenly? It just *fell* from her body, landing quietly in the leaves behind her as what briefly looked like a severed tail. *Briefly*, anyways. The severed tail soon lengthened, curving at the ends as the scales greened and blended together. Before long it even looked to be made out of the finest of woods. As a wooden *bow*, that is.

The last bastion of Mitsu's claim to being an Au Ra had come under fire as well, for unbeknownst to her a pair of fleshy, Hyur ears had been forged beneath the white horns that typically functioned as her means of perceiving sound. But those horns? Much like her tail... *they fell off*. And it certainly hadn't been a loss that went unnoticed, what with how the fell against her shoulders and rolled onto the soil before her. **“What!?”**

For but a moment she had believed something had fallen from the trees above, yet when she learned forward? **“Are... Are those my horns?”** Sitting there, pointed upright, was most certainly what she recognized to be something that *should* have been apart of her. **“What... What is that?”** Beyond shocked, hands reaching up to touch fleshy ears upon her skull, she was surprised to find that her horns had begun to look... different.

By the time her eyes had settled on them they had already been bound to what looked like a headdress of some sort, with moon decals framing it with an upside down one between either horn. But now her white horns were straightening upwards and darkening, until they indisputably looked like two-pronged antlers. **“That's... impossible!”** Just as impossible as suddenly speaking with an accent? Perhaps!

Mitsu was in so much shock, and yet a part of her *wasn't*, almost like she was being reassured about this change. Was this what she had

wanted? In *what* way? She hadn't even picked up the horned headdress, but it had soon found itself mounted atop her head – teleported by a mysterious force.

Hands, fingers now thicker yet less calloused than they should have been, reached up to take it off – only to stop short. But if she *had*, then maybe she would have prevented a grassy green from sweeping up her brown locks. Not only were they all dyed green in a matter of moments, but they grew longer and longer into a thick, braided ponytail that was fastened by the appearance of a tanned tie at its end.

**“I’m becoming... a goddess?”** Her accent still thicker, the woman was unsure of how she knew this. It was as if the motives of whatever was changing her had seeped into her memory, bringing with it both reassurance and some degree of acceptance. When it came to archery she certainly doubted herself much less now, for the skills to master the craft had been uploaded into her brain... at the cost of forgetting how to wield a blade and shield.

Otherwise, much of Mitsu's assimilation had already been completed. She *did* become broader in build, her muscle much more apparent and her legs relatively thicker. Her chest might have even grown a size, but it wasn't enough that *any* of her changes had ultimately disturbed her outfit much beyond feeling a little tight. Her *face's* design might have showed more substantiated change, what with a nose that was bigger, wider, and wedged between thick lips and shrunken eyes of dark.

Nay, it wasn't until her outfit was repurposed that a final change made itself known. In but a flash her outfit was dismissed, and the surprise provoked her into standing upright with a start. A green tunic was the bulk of it, bandages, furs, and armguards clothing limbs that were otherwise bare while a pair of fleetfooted boots encompassed broadened tootsies. Otherwise, the smell of pelts tickled her nose thanks to the green cap clasped to her neck by what seemed to be a raccoon-fur collar.

What was revealed was a silver gem that was etched *into* the flesh of her chest's peak. The tunic had a low-hanging neckline that showed the peaks of her breasts, and there a partial moon of gemstone, matching the one in her headdress' center, found itself embedded *inside* of her. And to be honest more of her chest was still exposed than she might have liked.

For the goddess' shrewd personality had fully overtaken her.

**“Well, I certainly feel much more confident now.”**

The green-haired huntress wore a look of confidence, but her heart was in turmoil as well. She still knew of herself as Mitsu, and yet the identity of another had crept into her soul along with the expertise needed to expertly wield the bow.

*Artemis*. She would go by Artemis now,

for it was the name that spoke to her very essence, transformed as it was. **“But how did this happen? Did she send me her powers from afar? A goddess...”**



Despite not once hearing her voice, the woman understood everything about herself. Both her new self *and* her old. The intentions of the *real* Artemis were known to her, and while she could not help but feel thankful, she carried some regret as well. Learning archery was not worth shedding her old self. How would she explain this to her friends? Could she even wield a blade any longer? Come to think of it, she couldn't rustle up much interest from within for wielding such a crude weapon. That reminded her, she had to fetch her bow from behind the log!

**“Now what am I to do? I cannot imagine I can return this gift of mine...”**

She most certainly *could not*.