

LEARNING DOWN LOW

COMMISSION STORY

BY CHALDEACHANGE



“It seems as if I’m in for yet *another* long day surrounded by books. How *terrible*.”

While it *sounded* like the words that were spoken were intended to voice a complaint, anyone that knew anything about the infamous *Y’shtola Rhul* knew that it was anything but. She was a scholar, a pursuer of knowledge. The Miqo’té woman had a boundless curiosity that would probably *never* be satiated regardless of how much she learned, and so she would continue to fill her mind with knowledge over and over again, until she either died or there was no longer anything left in the world to learn. She assumed that it would be the *former* since she wasn’t due for a particularly long life in the first place.

She had just woken up from a nap while laying in the middle of a pile of books with intriguing designs. After stirring from her sleep, it had taken her a moment of grogginess to piece together where she was and what she was doing. But it made *sense*. She was in the recently discovered Solution Nine in Tural, or maybe it was more accurate to say she was *below* Solution Nine?

After that imposter Sphene had revived Endless Sphene’s legacy, the Warrior of Light and their group had traveled into the city depths to chase them. It was there where they had found Alexandria’s old castle, and within it? A library. Archives that were simultaneously of another world and another time altogether. For someone as curious as Y’shtola, this was the equivalent of winning big in the Manderville Gold Saucer.

Was it her second day in the library? It could have been the third or fourth for all she knew. She didn’t necessarily *care* what day it was,

either. **“If I’m needed, they’ll send someone.”** They had cleared the castle during their little expedition and so there were no monsters to threaten her. Even if there *were*, the sorceress was more than capable of taking care of herself. She *was* a Scion of the Seventh Dawn, after all. Though not officially in the eyes of the public.



“Now, where did I finish the last I read?” The books that were stacked high around the Miqu’te probably *appeared* to be unorganized, but that was actually the farthest thing from the truth. Y’shtola was working with her usual system. A system that only *she* knew the ins and outs of. A system that wasn’t even worth explaining, because our feeble minds wouldn’t be able to comprehend it. **“Ah, of course.”**

The woman had to stand to pick the book of the top of the highest pile and didn’t bother to sit again. She couldn’t. Even a scholar had to stretch and get her steps in, even if those steps

were only made by walking in a tiny circle while reading from a tome. **“Oh? This one goes over the many races in Alexandria and their cultures?”** She quickly skimmed the introductory chapter and moved into the next one.

It was written in a vaguely familiar language like all of the others, but it had only taken her three hours on the first day to learn its ins and outs.

“If I’m not mistaken... This section here is about Lalafells? Or what passed for them in Alexandria, at least.” A short and round people with large ears. The general heights listed matched up along with the rest of their facial features, but the name... Try as she might, she couldn’t read it. There likely wasn’t a proper translation for it short of using what Lalafells were referred to as on Etheirys.

Each section was rather in-depth. There might have been information recorded about Lalafells within those pages that even the scholars of the Source weren’t aware of. That, or there had been *some* minor differences between the Lalafells from Alexandria and the ones she

knew. ...No, that wouldn't explain how Krile was a 1:1 representation of a Lalafell though, considering she actually hailed *from* that kingdom.

At the end of the section on Lalafells, Y'shtola's typically vacant looking eyes lit up – something that only really happened when she found something *extremely* interesting. “**An incantation? What for?**” There was no description, but portions of the pages *had* eroded. It was very possible that text *had* been written there, but it was so old that it had faded.

Unsure of how else to proceed, the woman channeled aether into her fingertips and ran them across the page. She had cast a spell, obviously. One designed to restore ink to paper in cases such as these. Of course, it only really worked if something had been written there in the first place. “**Hm... I suppose not.**” But this magic didn't restore *anything*, indicating there really hadn't been a description in the first place. This didn't mean that she didn't receive *any* leads from doing so, however.

Y'shtola's medically blind eyes narrowed. The incantation that had been written down began to *glow*. Was it magic ink? Some past civilizations *had* been known to use such a method to activate spells in the case that the caster was *mute*, so that was a plausible explanation. Unfortunately, she was instead thrust into a situation where a spell had just activated and she didn't know *what* it did.

And she could feel its power spreading from the page and into her body.

The flow of aether from the pages and into her body was made evident to her through her aethersight vision. “**I'd wager that isn't particularly good?**” In most cases, aether wouldn't flow *into* a body. It might pass through one or bounce off of it, but if a body *absorbed* it when cast from a spell, that usually meant that the spell was designed to *affect* the body that had absorbed it. Illness, poison, paralysis; all of these *were* potential possibilities. But they were also typically fast acting. If any of those outcomes had been attended, she would have noticed signs the moment it had first entered her body.

There was another variety of magic spells that affected someone's body directly, though they were far less common. *Transformation* spells. Magic that could alter someone's body – a taboo if cast without permission, so you usually only heard stories of monsters wielding it against people. Of course, it was also popularized in the Fantasia concoction, though Fantasia could not be used to undo the effects of transformation magic that had been cast.

All things considered, Y'shtola was liable to believe that what she had just accidentally cast upon herself fell into the *latter* category.

Transformation magic could be slow acting at times depending on its enchantment, and based on what she had read of it? It seemed like the type. She had to keep an eye out for potential signs. Ten seconds past. Then twenty. Thirty. All without anything especially sticking out to the sorceress. But only because she hadn't been looking *behind* her.

Her Miqu'te tail had just been flicking back and forth as it usually did, though it *had* gone dead still when it had first occurred to the woman just what she had accidentally cast upon herself. And yet, what she wasn't noticing was that every time it flicked? It seemed to *shorten* a little bit. It wasn't until it had become so short that it couldn't move at all that she finally turned her head to look behind her. "**Ah...**" And that only gave her enough time to see a stub flatten back into the base of her spine.

"Whatever I'm becoming, it clearly doesn't have a tail." The only silver lining was that, while transformation could change one's body? It couldn't change their *mind*. Whether she was transformed into a different race or into a frog, she would still retain her current intelligence and memories. **"Let's hope I'm not being transitioned into some sort of beast, lest communicating my conundrum might prove to be a little too difficult."** She couldn't explain what had happened to her if her mouth didn't allow her to enunciate a human language, after all.

Y'shtola raised a brow as her eyes peered to the side next. It was a futile endeavor because she couldn't *see* what she could *feel*, but she *could* bring her hands up to check. The woman grabbed at where her feline ears *should* have been, only to find herself having to lower their alignment to grab them a short way down her head's sides. ...Where the cartilage she grasped not only *wasn't* covered by the silver fur she expected, but it was stretched and thicker to the touch; not like a Miqu'te's ears at *all*.

"A different race, perhaps? I suppose some monsters have similar ears." A reflective surface would have done *wonders* for her at the time, but the woman didn't have the liberty to see that her ears were round near the base, but pointier near the tips. They were too *short* to be an Elezen's, so she could surely take that possibility off the table. That left one other race, or a potential monster type. She really hoped it was the former, even though that still didn't body well for her.

The woman slowly lowered her gaze to meet her own cleavage. "**Hm...**" Most people wouldn't be able to maintain Y'shtola's calm composure when faced with a similar conundrum. She didn't react very much at all to the sight of her C-cup breasts *compressing*, their weight lessening before her very eyes while that cleavage was practically erased and the

front of her dress was left to hang empty. It wasn't very long at all before there was no weight to her chest whatsoever, left only with the slightest bit of puffiness overall. **"Still leaning towards the possibility of my race changing."**

If she was becoming a monster, wouldn't more *monstrous* signs have appeared by this point? There was still something reassuringly humanoid about everything that was happening to her, even though there was increasingly *less* of her to reference. What had happened with her breasts hadn't *only* happened to her breast. The woman could tell, and even though she couldn't *see* it, she could feel the looseness in her undergarments. Her ass' peach shape had been drained away, leaving her buttocks almost entirely flat, while her thighs had been drained too.

"If my current theory holds up, then perhaps— Ah." Y'shtola had become relatively certain of the fate that awaited her. That spell had been at the end of the *Lalafell* section of the tome, so if her race was being changed and she wasn't becoming a *monster*? It felt most probably that a Lalafell *was* what she was becoming. She knew it with 100% certainty once she realized the stack of books surrounding her had begun to tower higher above her.

Of course, the books hadn't been stacked higher, nor had the books been growing. *She* was the one who was shrinking. Her height was *rapidly* dropping downward, her bones shrinking to match a build that wasn't *only* becoming shorter, but more compact horizontally as well. Her clothing didn't become too big for her, and in fact, it shrunk along *with* her. **"I'm getting smaller..."** There was the *subtlest* shift in her voice. She sounded roughly the same, but it sounded... more *nasally*?

If you examined Y'shtola's face closely as she shrunk, it wouldn't be all *that* surprising. Her nose shrank so much that its existence was hardly even obvious, so the nasally sound was a side effect of her nostrils being tinier to boot. Her face's shape became *far* more circular, almost like a small ball like any Lalafell's face might, with smaller lips and rounder, brighter eyes. A typical Lalafell's face, but with Y'shtola's stern expression, felt all the more intimidating somehow.

"Urp..." The lightest possible burp escaped her smaller lips when she dipped beneath the four foot mark height wise. It was around this point that her weight finally succumbed to suit the race she was becoming; with her stomach stretching to the sides and a bulge building against the inside of her dress. It pushed out about an inch over her pelvis and thighs that were rounder than her head. But considering her arms and legs were so *stubby*, it wasn't really that impressive.

She felt weight gathering in her hands and raised one. Tanned fingers swelled to almost double their original thickness, more comparable to little sausages than anything else. Still, her hands were almost *twice* the size of a pair of feet that had shrunk to such a size that you could hardly make out the gaps between her itty, bitty toes.

“This is certainly *interesting*, but I can only imagine how inconvenient it could be in the long run.” Y’shtola had long since realized that was happening to her, but that didn’t make it any less remarkable – or concerning. Her Miqu’té body had become a compact, *Lalafell* woman’s body due to that book’s influence. The book that she was fortunately still holding open in her tinier hand. **“It’s fortunate that my clothing shrunk with me, else I would have had nothing else to wear...”**



It was a remarkable experience, if anything. Her small body meant that the beating of her heart felt *louder*, and regardless of that size she could tell that her strength was still comparative to how strong she had been as a Miqu’té. If she had *one* complaint at that moment? It was her *stride*. She knew this from watching other Lalafells live their lives, but her walking posture was stuck as more of a *waddle* than anything. It was a little difficult to adjust to.

And so, Y’shtola flopped down onto her flat butt with her legs spread so that she could lay out the book on her lap. **“There would presumably be a method to reverse this within these pages, no?”** If there was a spell to turn someone into a Lalafell at the end of the relevant section, then what if she checked the end of the section that spoke on Alexandria’s Miqu’té equivalent?

Unfortunately, she couldn’t find an answer as quickly as she *wanted* to. Her chubbier fingers made it awkward to flip the pages when she wasn’t accustomed to them. It took her nearly an hour to find the right spot. Or... where there *should* have been a spot. **“Ah... This might prove to be an issue.”** Where there *should* have been a page with the incantation to turn someone into a Miqu’té? A page had been torn out. Not just the Miqu’té page, either. Hyur, Elezen, Hrothgar... All of those pages were missing. Only the Lalafell page had been intact?

“Perhaps I’ll have to make a trip back to Solution Nine sooner than I thought? Though it will certainly be a trick to explain this situation. Especially if Master Matoya hears of it.” She

could already hear her master's mocking voice laughing at her. It was only when she decided to leave that the woman realized another problem, though. She had stacked the books around her *very* high before because she could *reach* them. That wasn't quite the case *now*.

"It... may be a nuisance to clear these out."