

A BURIAL AT SEA

COMMISSION STORY

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Thunder roared outside of a window that was pattered by rolling rain, the winds outside making the nearby walls of the old building shake.

It wasn't the preferred form of shelter for the Avalanche members that had escaped Midgar sometime back, but it was all they had to use in the spur of the moment. In fact, they were lucky to find anything at *all* to use as shelter on the shores of the Gongaga region considering the circumstances. The group had been traveling towards their next destination while accompanied by good weather, but the sky had suddenly turned black with clouds and the poor weather rolled in.

At first they had been keen on ignoring it and were planning on pushing onwards, but the wind, rain, and even hail became far too much to guarantee that their travels would be safe. As luck turned out, there had been a rather sizable cabin tucked within the trees just off of the beach. Well, maybe a 'cabin' was underselling it. It was more like a beachside *manor*, and its size had led to everyone theorizing who had built it – and why abandon it?

Curious about the building's rooms as they waited for the storm to pass, those that hadn't remained in the living room split up to explore the manor's depths with the intention of reporting if they found anything interesting. And, at first? Tifa Lockhart hadn't really come across anything of note. There had been some furniture in the living room but only the bare minimum, and as she headed toward the back of the building? It felt like it was even emptier.

"I wonder... did they build the foundation and then leave it abandoned? Maybe there was some sort of problem that didn't surface until

construction was nearly completed. She *could* think of one, considering the location. **“Oh! Maybe the—”** She winced as thunder sounded suddenly once more but resumed her sentence as she pushed open the door at the farthest possible point back in the building that she could find. **“—tide? Maybe the tide came in farther than they thought? Or maybe it did in the past, at least?”**



Tifa soon realized she'd have to put her theorycrafting aside for the time being, because after peaking in through the door she had just opened? **“Oh!”** She found that it was the most promising room yet by far. She stepped in and closed the door behind her. **“There are a lot of interesting things in here.”** There was an oak desk in the middle of the room, one littered with papers that had worn with the years, and a number of shelves with unique trinkets lining all of the walls. There was a dim light radiating from a stone on the ceiling.

But there was one wall that was completely naked. **“Is something supposed to go here? I wonder.”** Well, there *as* an indentation in it, almost like a doorway, but this wall was made entirely of grey bricks, which contrasted the fact that the rest of the building was made with wood. Wondering if she was missing something, like perhaps a secret door, the brawler passed by one of the shelves – a shelf that had a snow globe on it that portrayed what looked like a futuristic, underwater metropolis.

“Hm...” The woman poked her head into the indentation and even pressed down against the many bricks. But there was no reaction, no noise, no secret room. It *would* have been a good find, but she gave up on the idea for the time being. There were plenty of *other* things to look at in the room, so she turned to look at the desk. But the very moment she did? A low buzzing or vibrating noise, followed by a pale light? **“What—?”**

Tifa turned to look, but it was already too late. She was swallowed by a silver *rift* that disappeared only seconds after.

“Huh!? Where *am* I?” It had been a very jarring experience from Tifa's perspective. It was like she had been pulled through a void of a sort, and yet her feet had been placed firmly on the floor. Scenery that was wholly unfamiliar flashed by her. Of a city created underwater,

where people wielded unusual powers through their hands. They were but fleeting glimpses, and in other shards she saw worlds completely unlike her own.

But soon? She found herself on proper footing once more in... a bar? **“...Now where am I? Was I pulled into some sort of portal?”** All things considered, that probably made the most sense even though it didn't make any *actual* sense. Was there Materia capable of such a feat? Not that she'd ever heard of, but she couldn't discount that there were Materia out there that she hadn't heard of. If Yuffie had been there, she might have known better.

She put those thoughts aside for a moment to consider where she was again. She was *definitely* in a bar lounge, but it was entirely empty. Was it after hours? She thought to look out the window to check the time of day, but what she saw was... alarming. **“Wh-What? Is this place... underwater?”** There were fish swimming by, but city buildings towering across the way. An entire civilization built underwater? It was jarringly unbelievable, and yet...

The woman would come to see it as home before long.

Even though, as a bar, it should have been a place of cheer – and there were signs that this was normally the case, what with a whole wing of the room filled with what looked like slot machines – the dim lighting and the fact that the room was still and vacant gave the space an almost *eerie* and *unsettling* feel. **“Should I... go look for someone?”** Tifa didn't have any information about where she was, and she naturally wanted to return to Gongaga and her friends.

At the very least, she was able to learn a *name* thanks to a brochure on the table beside her. It looked like the kind of brochure you'd use for a tourist trap, with a single word printed on the front. **“Rapture... That must be the name of this place?”** It was a name that might have given her pause if the religions of her world were the same as this one. But Christianity wasn't exactly taught in Midgar or Nibelheim. It didn't exist at all. So, to Tifa it was little more than *just* a name. **“Why does that name feel... familiar?”**

It absolutely *shouldn't* have for the reasons listed above, but there was something strangely *nostalgic* about it that made her eyes widen as if she'd had a realization, even though she technically hadn't realized anything at all. But if anything? Her eyes being so wide allowed a *glimpse* at the first sign that something was amiss. Because the reddish brown of her irises? Speckles of an icy blue had begun to glimmer within them, expanding until the previous color no longer lingered at all.

This new blue was almost *piercing*, an impression not helped by lashes that ended up seeming fuller thanks to an abundance of mascara that thickened upon them. It was unclear at first if it was because of the mascara (it wasn't), but the shapes of her eyelids appeared to narrow a touch to leave her resting gaze just as piercing as their colors. The issue was that they didn't look like the eyes of *Tifa Lockhart*. They looked like the eyes of an entirely unrelated individual.

And that impression was quick to spread throughout the rest of her facial features. The bridge of her nose ended up creeping longer, for example, while the tip of her nose flattened and her nostrils narrowed. It ended up taking up more of her face, but so did her *lips* as they found themselves bloated not by filler, but a new natural lip size that was further enhanced by a dark red lipstick that made them stickier. Tifa herself could feel it. **"I— Whath!?"**

Because her lips had stuck together the next time she'd tried to speak. Their heft and stickiness hadn't even been *the* thing that had made her question things, however. It was her voice. It was... smokier? And the pitch was a little off. It didn't carry its usual softness, not even to her own ear, while in the meantime a dark blush was applied to the sides of her cheeks. That *wasn't* Tifa's face, nor was it her voice. And the same phenomenon ended up spreading into her *hair*.

"Something's very wrong here!" That much was *obvious*, but the woman herself sounded almost *unsure* about it. Was something wrong? *What* was wrong? Was she in the wrong place? **"No, the meeting is supposed to be...? Meeting?"** Meeting with *who*? She didn't even recognize the city! ...Or did she know it like the back of her own hand? Neither answer held any influence over what was happening to her head of hair, which was shortening until it hung just above her shoulder with frizzy tips, and her bangs swept back so that her forehead was bare. It was an almost *old-fashioned* hairstyle, even by the standards of her homeland.

While you could say a changed face alone was more than enough to make someone entirely unrecognizable, that didn't change that the rest of her body had begun to differentiate itself as well. Her exposed midriff demonstrated this plainly, because the exposed and hardened abs that she had honed through all of her training actually *softened*. The woman remained *fit*, but she wasn't capable of the same physical feats she had been. It affected *all* of the muscles in her body, ensuring that she was weaker, but still able to hold her own against most normal people if need be.

Even the scar beneath her chest from when Sephiroth impaled her had been healed over.

That said, while her belly was technically ‘softer’, the waist that surrounded it narrowed. Her shoulders followed suit, albeit slightly, while her hips did the *opposite* and were broadened by two or three inches so that her skirt rested awkwardly upon her silhouette. It sat even *more* awkwardly before long, because her weakened legs eventually became *thicker*. Flesh burgeoned; natural mass added to her figure as several inches were applied to her thighs so that they rubbed against each other sensually beneath her pelvis.

“What is going on with my clothes?” Tifa was not one to *snap* like that. She was almost always calm and understanding, but she had felt so annoyed by the fact that the spats under her skirt had been feeling increasingly tight that she couldn’t help herself. This issue had been brought on in part by her ass, which had taken a note from her thighs and had swollen from its peach shape to a full-on heart that threatened to peek over the hem of her skirt.

And her woes in this regard were only enhanced farther courtesy of the black sports bra beneath her crop top felt vaguely... tighter? Tifa had always been bustier than average and definitely the bustiest one in their party, but her nipples ended up digging into a bra that was now a few inches too small for her. She crudely picked at it, once again with a look of agitation upon her features that betrayed her usual calm. **“I should just go back to my room and change at this point.”**

Did Tifa even hear herself? Well, the issue was that there wasn’t really much ‘Tifa’ *left* in her any longer. That had been made obvious the moment she had begun to question her clothing rather than her own body, and when her attitude had begun to sour thanks to memories that didn’t belong. Memories that filled her soul with an anger that was difficult to stifle. At the very least? She would soon find the relief she was searching for *without* the need to return to a room she supposedly had in this once unfamiliar city.

The moment she removed her hands from herself, the fit and fabric of what she was wearing changed. Her sports bra remained black but ended up shrinking into a black lace bra as her crop top lengthened into a long-sleeved, button up top with a fanciful, black collar and red ribbon beneath a broach in its center. Her shorts and undergarments fused into a black thong underneath her skirt, which stretched down past her knees as gold crept across its hem and a thin, red belt held it in place. Not even her boots were spared as they lightened into delicate heels overtop thigh highs that stretched into black, fishnet tights.

She smoothed the skirt over with freshly manicured fingers, now long and painted red, with her gloves merged into her sleeves to become cuffs.

The woman had been in something of a trance but finally snapped out of it once one of the slot machines in the corner of the room rang loudly. Someone must have gotten a jackpot. “*Ugh.*” Much to *her* annoyance. *Elizabeth* wasn’t a fan of this particular bar, but the underwater city of *Rapture* was short on meeting places where she could operate without being watched by those in power. The table she was standing beside was just out of the view of any cameras, meaning that she could do and say anything she liked there so long as she was careful of eavesdroppers.



She had come to Rapture in search of revenge, but if she wanted to *accomplish* this revenge then information was key. She had to keep what she knew to herself, while gathering whatever information she could from her contacts. “*They’re late.*” She was at the bar to *meet* one of those contacts, but they were tardy. She sat down at the table alone and tapped on it to summon one of the servers to order while she waited.

It wasn’t the first time this had happened. Either her contact would show, or he wouldn’t. The people of Rapture were just *like* that. Usually subservient to the systems of power that kept their freedoms in check, all in the service of maintaining the image of a perfect utopia. Of course, things wouldn’t remain that way forever. It was a civilization doomed to collapse. But that didn’t matter to Elizabeth, not so long as she could get closer to *that* man and have her revenge.

But she couldn’t deny that she wasn’t feeling so hot herself. “**Sleepless nights will do that to you.**” She mumbled for only herself to hear as she waited for her drink to arrive. There were plenty of people that found the undersea atmosphere to be *relaxing*. *Sure, if you can get over the fact that a single fault in the city could lead to you drowning to death.* But there were those that found it equally as terrifying; almost paralyzing. None of this was related to how *off* the woman felt, however.

Because passing through a tear and having your body and mind transformed into someone else’s *would* do that to you.