

OF THE KIRIJO GROUP

COMMISSION STORY

BY CHALDEACHANGE



It had just up and appeared one day.

Realistically this sounded like a *fantastical* thing to say, like the sort of event that might occur once in several lifetimes. But on the planet of Etheirys it was a far more common occurrence than you might think. The sudden appearance of dungeons and structures appeared almost just as commonly as the changing phases of the moons at times, and that had been especially true leading up until the supposed Final Days. Final Days that *hadn't* come thanks to the efforts of the Warrior of Light, thankfully.

But while the emergence of potentially dangerous yet treasure filled locales had seemingly slowed in the wake of the defeat of the end, it still happened *sometimes*. That didn't mean that this new discovery wasn't bizarre in its *own* way though. This was the first time that an entire *tower* had been erected in the middle of Ul'Dah's deserts. It was a very *tall* tower, one that was perhaps over 250 floors based on the best guesses of some local scholars.

It was also structurally unusual. The outer walls were jagged and mismatched, almost making it seem like multiple buildings had been slammed together – or, perhaps, one large building that had been chopped up and merged together. Regardless, its existence was difficult to ignore and it was only natural that adventurers from far and wide would not only gather there, but would be commissioned to explore its interior.

“And then there were the reports of that Astrologian...” Drea had been recounting the information that she and her party had at their

disposal in the main lobby of the tower. A lobby that was somewhat *bizarre* in appearance. Why was it so *shiny*? Why was there a giant clock that rested behind the stairs? What was the strange machine in the far right corner? All valid questions, but not ones anyone had answers to just yet. Just like the Astrologian that had apparently been sighted on the scene. A woman who had appeared almost like a ghost, disappearing just as quickly as she appeared.

Well, that was an issue Dreah would deal with if it came to it.



“Did she go this way? But it’s just another dead end. Hm...” In the end the disappearing Astrologian *had* become an issue for Dreah’s party. She had appeared before them only a few floors up before running away, prompting the party to split up to try and find her – or at least any *trace* of her. This sounded like a dangerous idea on its head but they had already cleared the space out of its weird, blobby and glove-shaped foes. It wasn’t until the final monster had been defeated that she had appeared.

Only to disappear just as quickly. **“There’s a high reward for anyone who can bring her in... Maybe one of the others grabbed her?”** While a little meek of personality, the blonde Raen Au Ra was a competent adventurer at this point. The less experienced would just leave things as was, but her? She was carefully examining the dead end and its surroundings. **“Any switches? Hidden objects?”** It was possible a path could be hidden.

But she didn’t find anything like that ultimately. **“Guess not. I hope someone else had better luck...”** The Dragoon was prepared to head back to the center room of the floor where they had all agreed to meet up again after following their paths, but before she could leave something caught Dreah’s eye. **“Was... that there before?”** She had definitely checked out every corner of the dead end just moments ago, and yet now there was an object on the floor.

A flat, rectangular object. Describing it that way was just beating around the bush though. It was a card. **“A tarot card? It must belong to her.”** Seeing as they had been chasing an Astrologian and they were a job class that wielded cards in combat, that had to be the case, right? **“Something’s odd about it though. This isn’t a card I’ve ever seen in an astromancy deck though...”**

She had *naturally* crouched down to pick it up, only examining it more closely when she stood up again. Not only was the back of the card unfamiliar but the symbol on the front was too. The number 'III' was at the bottom, but the design almost looked like a vase... wearing a crown? That wasn't *actually* what it was, but it was the way that Dreah could best describe it. **"Is she not a traditional Astrologian? Or were we wrong about what she even was in the first place?"** If she recalled, no one had ever seen her fight. Just that she was a woman dressed in blue and she carried a deck of tarot cards. These were facts that they had confirmed with their own eyes too.

"H-Huh!? Wait a second! I need that!" A moment of calm analysis quickly turned into panic as, before the young woman's very eyes, the card she had been holding *disintegrated*. This panic took an odd turn rather quickly though. She began to feel a little dizzy and, perhaps this was an odd thing to 'feel', but she also felt *out of place* as well. **"What's... wrong with me?"**

Dreah couldn't really place *what* was causing it. Well, in a sense she recognized that the card must have been at the root of it, she just couldn't put together *why*. Was there some manner of spell at work? Had a status effect been attached? If that was the case then she had to warn the others, didn't she? Meek as she could be at times, it could only be someone with a selfless heart who would think about warning other people when she herself was afflicted with some sort of *condition*.

It really felt *odd* though. She was having a hard time hearing properly and her horns had begun to feel oddly *full* despite being hollow constructs... or at least they were *supposed* to be hollow. **"H-Huh?"** Seeing as they were fixed on the sides of the Dragoon's head it wasn't like she could *see* if something was wrong. But she *could* feel them with her hands, and so she reached up to grab her horns tightly. She knew how firm they were, they wouldn't break from being grasped. And yet? With the slightest bit of downward pressure applied to them?

They popped right off, exposing a pair of fleshy ears that had grown in underneath.

"AAAAAAA!?" The shrill squeak of alarm that Dreah made in that moment might have shattered glass, overcoming the fatigue she felt for bit a brief moment to do a hop of surprise. She was fixated on her horns and so the weight of her *tail* dropping with that jump didn't quite register. Nor did the sight of that tail thinning into the form of a *rapier* that would be picked up later on. **"What's going on here!? My horns! My... Huh?"** *Horns? But I'm not even holding anything.*

Which turned out to in fact be *correct*. The weight of those horns in her grasp had disappeared entirely, fingers now empty and the backs of those hands bare. Any traces of the scales that were found on all Au Ra had faded, leaving her with only soft skin, a tailless ass, and round ears on the side of her head. Like a *human*. But wasn't the term for that race something else? She couldn't seem to recall.

This *human* seemed incapable of grasping that things were changing. Not only herself but the world around her, for while the interior of the tower remained the same? The realm outside of it had already become an entirely different one. One where Au Ra didn't exist in anything other than fantasy and wouldn't even be invented as a concept until some years later. Rather, she was fixated more on the *status effect* that she perceived she had been inflicted with.

"I should probably seek medical attention soon." An oddly authoritative tone had developed in Dreah's voice which simultaneously sounded to have deepened. *If only I was a healer like Takeba-san...* Like *who*? The name sounded unfamiliar somehow, but the more she thought about it the less she could fathom it being incorrect. All the while? A certain color had begun to become quite pronounced in her appearance.

Crimson. It permeated throughout locks of hair that were meant to be blonde, painting every hair on her body in its color including her pubes and brows. While this color change *already* came across as strikingly different on its own, the chin length of its style saw fit to differentiate itself as well. Not only did her locks of hair lengthen *significantly* in the back until they reached her ass, but there was a subtle curliness to its thicker quality. Oddly, not even lengthened bangs being brushed across her left eye seemed to draw her attention to these changes.

But then again? In the first place her eyes hadn't been spared from the crimson's advent. The same dark red was embedded within her eyes, though it was a tossup about whether they were truly red or brown with a red undertone depending on the lighting. Thus began a rather substantial shift in her facial features. One that saw those eyes expand in size with no shortage of significant and one that saw her face's shape both lengthen and thin. Her nose elongated to better suit this shape while her small but pronounced lips nearly *doubled* in size – red once again appearing, this time as a paint that spread across those lips.

While she appeared pointedly like another woman though? She no longer looked like a woman in her twenties. She was a *girl* now. One in her late teens, perhaps in the seventeen to eighteen range. And her mind had shifted to compensate. ***"I suppose I'll need to put my student council duties on hold tomorrow if there are any lingering***

effects...” Student... council? Drea had murmured these things as if they were the most natural things in the world to say, but something about them felt *unusual*.

Was it as unusual as the sight of her body’s height beginning to elongate? Likely not, but as had been the trend this five inch height enhancement, bringing her up to 5’5” from being just over the 5’ mark. It raised her skirt higher and made her armor, especially around the arms, feel *far* too tight. **“Hm.”** It was fortunately an issue that *would* be resolved, but not before her figure’s shift had completed entirely.

And that shift hadn’t *only* been isolated to her height.

Key areas of the ex-Au Ra’s body had begun to swell. Not in an extremely significant way (especially when she was only a teenager now), but added padding *was* provided so that she had a fuller figure when compared to her taller height. Her breasts certainly benefited from this, pressing up against her armor’s underside with all of the newfound vigor of an additional cup size. But her ass and thighs found similar gains, stretching skin around them and burgeoning in plain sight since most of her thighs had been exposed with her skirt raised. Undergarments digging into a swelling, plumper rump had certainly contributed more to her discomfort.

Perhaps the worst part was that the girl could recall wearing *worse* things in this ‘dungeon’. **“Leader’s taste in clothing can sometimes be... a lot.”** While she spoke this thought aloud? The armor she was wearing thinned and changed shape and color. Before long it had completely shifted into a ruffled, button-up white uniform top, a high, black skirt, knee-length black boots, and a red bow around her neck. It looked like a school uniform. And in fact she *knew* it was one. **“Perhaps we were fortunate we could wear our usual uniforms today.”**

Drea’s body had changed entirely now and her mind along with it. Not thinking much about *why* she had dropped it, she bent down to pick up the rapier on the floor behind her, slotting it at her hip. **“I still don’t understand what applied that status effect? But I suppose the effects are beginning to wear off now.”** And she had somewhere to go, didn’t she?

“Right... I need to return to this floor’s center, don’t I?” Still holding her head, the red-haired teenager gave it a shake to try and knock away any lingering disorientation. *Mitsuru Kirijo* felt uncertain about any number of things. Had a Shadow inflicted her with a status effect? That might explain why she felt so out of it. If there was an effect that could cause a Persona user to lose their short term memories then

that was something that had to be communicated. Even though it was only a few minutes that she couldn't recall.

The clacking of her heels against the stone floor became more consistent as she slowly recovered from the aftereffects of a transformation that she could not recall experiencing. The rapier at her hip jiggled around a bit as she walked. Was some of her usual equipment missing? No... It was in for repair, wasn't it? **"It's strange. I can't remember why I even separated myself from the others in the first place."** Had she gone to scout ahead? But then why did she end up at a dead end?



In the end she managed to get to the center room of the floor where she found not only Aigis and Yukari, but *Fuuka* as well? **"Yamagishi? Why are you up here?"** The questions that Mitsuru had *were* all answered in kind. All four of them had found themselves in similar circumstances. They couldn't remember a small gap in their memories and had suddenly found themselves on this early Tartarus floor. None of them aware that they had all been members of Dreah's exploration party.

Aigis had been the Viera Dancer, and *Fuuka* had been Miquote Ninja. Yukari though... Either way, according to their shared memories there was another fact that none of them could recognize as 'flawed'. They were no longer in Eorzea and, in fact, none of them would have even heard of it had the name been mentioned. It was a name that wouldn't be known much until the *game* it was in came out the September of the following year.

Their Leader was missing, but all three of the others insisted that Mitsuru herself had taken charge of this operation. Had he just been off studying? It *was* close to exam season she supposed. **"Alright, well... Let's call it a night, shall we? We shouldn't explore Tartarus when we're feeling this way."** The temporary leader felt like *this* was the right call. She didn't want to put anyone in harm's way unnecessarily, and she still wasn't feeling great herself. They probably just needed to return to their dorms and rest.

"Let's go out for ramen on the way home once the Dark Hour has ended. My treat."

Now *that* increased morale!