

OLD DEMONICS

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Ashamed as I was to admit it, I had been on something of a horror game binge as of late. It was strange, because I hadn't been into them all that much when I was younger, but now that I was an adult? I loved the feeling of being creeped out or scared. It had granted me a desire to play through all of the old classics that I had missed growing up – you know? The Resident Evils and Silent Hills of the world. And I had really stopped since I had begun.

But before long that well began to dry. I was beginning to run out of notorious horror games that might have been worth checking out, past *or* present. It wasn't really a bad thing if I was to think more deeply about it. Without anything I wanted to play obsessively, I could open up more free time to doing other things. But I was really craving a good *scare*.

And so, I did something I wasn't proud of. I did a deep dive into the depths of Steam's game catalogue. There was no shortage of garbage on Steam if you were to look hard enough because the quality control systems that were in place were so loose. That didn't mean that you would never find a diamond in the rough, but the chances of actually doing so were pretty low. That went *doubly* true for the horror category.

“Be A Demon? Is this like a knock-off of Left 4 Dead's competitive mode or something?” It hadn't taken all that long for a title to stand out to me. There wasn't anything to it other than a title card, and it had somehow been passed into the catalogue with a few sprite screenshots that didn't even seem to represent the game that was described on the store page. But for ninety-nine cents, and with Steam's

generous refund policy, I didn't exactly have much to lose by downloading it out of curiosity.

It definitely didn't take long for me to realize I had been duped. **"The hell? Isn't this just the Demon Slayer opening video? Is that all this is?"** How had this passed quality control at *all*? I was familiar enough with the serious in question. A story about a boy in the early 1900s Japan who sought to save his little sister that had been turned into a demon.

But *actually*? On that note, with the video replaying, I realized the opening had been edited. Or at least it *must* have been edited, right? Everything else in the video was correct, but the scenes with Nezuko, the little demon sister, had been edited so that she wasn't there at all. Was it even *possible* to do an editing job *that* good? Pushing the thought aside, I instead went to just go and close out the window. I had a refund to request and a report to make. But the second I clicked that big X in the corner?

I don't know. It was hard to describe, but it felt like I had just *clipped through my floor*. **"What the—!?"** I screamed. Falling, falling – everything went dark. And before I knew what was happening? I landed on something soft. **"Huh!?"**

I was now in a dimly lit room. One that was lit only by an oil lamp nearby. The architecture of this bedroom was *old-fashioned* and didn't even look Western. In fact, it looked more like something I might have seen in that anime opening I had just been exposed to. As did a big box in the corner of the room. It was strangely *familiar*. But the soft surface I'd landed on? A Japanese futon? I'd never seen that before.

"Where... am I?" Because this certain *wasn't* my home.

Naturally, the first thought I had was that I was probably *dreaming*. It only made sense that this would be my first kneejerk reaction, because you didn't just suddenly find yourself in unfamiliar places. Specifically unfamiliar ones that were *this* different from what you were used to, anyways. I didn't fit in at all! ...Or so I believed, but a strange force had different plans.

In fact, I had already begun to *look* different in a very dramatic way. No matter how I sliced it, this venue appeared to be reminiscent of a small, Japanese room from a distant era. On at least one of those points, I had already begun to fit in. Looking at my hair, for example? It had begun to darken, from my natural color to what was *mostly* a pitch black. I say mostly because the tips were much lighter, almost an orangey brown for some strange reason.

My hair was only one part of it, really. Looking at my eyes, and perhaps my facial structure as a whole, it certainly became much more obvious as to *what* was transpiring. For example? The corners of my eyes appeared to tighten, given my gaze overall a look that was shaped much more like an almond than anything. With a smaller nose and more pronounced lips, if you were to assess my appearance I would not have looked Caucasian any longer, but instead *Japanese*. This was something that was represented elsewhere as well, such as my nipples browning and...

Even in my *head*. Passively, I had begun to think in fluent Japanese. And I would speak in fluent Japanese, too. It was just something so subtle to me mentally that I wouldn't exactly catch on until it was too late. But that didn't mean that I wouldn't catch onto the fact that I was transforming whatsoever. Quite the opposite, in fact.

“Huh? Wait a sec!?! What the hell is-!?” The wave of change that came next gave me *plenty* to notice, after all. Being a rather tall man by design, how could I *not* notice my body suddenly beginning to unravel? My mass and height alike diminishing in a way that was *extremely* dramatic?

I flailed about, given no choice seeing as my clothing had begun to grow incredibly large against a body that was increasingly less so. My limbs were shortening naturally, and from them any excess weight was ultimately shaved. I didn't fashion myself to be a particularly fit nor thin individual, and so along with my height it seemed the signs of my poorer lifestyle were being shaved off along with it. A good indicator of this was my tummy, which while it usually bulged within my hoodie, the front of my top was quickly flattening and sagging as the contents within thinned to the point that I was left perfectly trim.

“*Why am I getting smaller!?!?*” Was it simply my size? Listening to my own voice now, it certainly sounded quite effeminate – even though I was completely missing that I was speaking in Japanese. It was a voice that appeared to better match my stature once I bottomed out at around five feet; which was almost an entire foot loss in the end. I had always wondered what it might be like to be shorter, but like this!?

Thus far I was assuming I had just become a shorter, thinner version of myself. But that was only a fantasy compared to what had happened. To elaborate, I wasn't exactly thinking in the same way you might expect a mature, intelligent adult to. Not that I'm tooting my own horn or anything. I just mean that my way of thinking had become more immature and adding onto that I was having difficulty grasping modern concepts. *What had I been doing before I had ended up here again? Been using some sort of painting that moved?* That sort of thing.

At least when it came to the immaturity, the reason was plenty apparent looking at my face. I hadn't just shrunk but had become exceptionally youthful in the process. I now looked the part of a Japanese youth that was likely around the age of twelve, and one that looked quite androgynous to boot. This was because my lashes had grown longer, and my lips just a little more upturned. "**I'm not supposed to be here, I'm... RRGH!?**"

I had growled. At first I couldn't process why such a bestial sound had gurgled up from the back of my throat, but no sooner than it had, my body entered the next wave of reprocessing thanks to a monstrous corruption that had taken place in my bloodstream. It quickly turned my eyes, now bigger and brighter than even thanks to my youthfulness, into a bright pink as the pupils within began to dilate. "**...Rrgh!?**"

In all truthfulness, I was trying to *talk*. To speak the human language. But for some reason all I could force out were these animal-like noises all of a sudden. Which was unfortunate, because I was beginning to react to a series of changes that were *quite* uncomfortable, for they dealt with my internal organs and, well, my *sex*.

A tugging in my groin forced a more panicked growl from my lips, for my dick had quickly been replaced with a maiden's counterpart – and in turn the area around it became more feminine. Thighs plumper, my rear a little perkier, but never so much that it spoke to much more than a promise of what might grow in in the future, seeing as I was still physically around the age of twelve or so. This went doubly for my chest, which found enough weight to show that a bosom might one day flourish, but for now it had only just barely entered the development phase. This promise could also be seen in a slightly pinched in waistline, and hips that had pulled a little apart.

But then again, this was difficult to see, seeing as it was all buried beneath my oversized hoodie.

It felt like my blood was burning, and my body was gradually more twisted towards something more *demonic*. Looking at my tinier hands, the bones appeared to be hardening and my nails were pulled into what appeared to be sharp claws. While meanwhile, beneath my pouty lips? Teeth sharpened into razor sharp fangs. These changes came with an unnerving impulse. To hunt. To consume. **But I couldn't!** A strong desire to resist that wasn't even my own kept them at bay.

Wriggling from my scalp, my hair fell down to my hips in segmented chunks that creaked and curved into an unruly style, while bangs were swept away to reveal my entire, cute forehead. "**RRRRGH— MMPH!?**"

MMMMPH!?” My fangs on display beyond my control, I let out one final roar before my noises were muffled – because my teeth had suddenly clamped down on some sort of gag. A piece of bamboo? Where had I...? But it wasn’t just the gag that had appeared. My entire outfit had been replaced with a pink kimono, a brown jacket, and complimentary traveling footwear. The pink bow in my hair added a bit of flair to it, but the sudden change of fashion left me disoriented and lashing about. This wasn’t who I was!

“**Nezuko!**” Because I had been so loud, the sliding door nearby swung open and a familiar boy ran through, quickly embracing me in a way that prompted my emotions to calm down rather quickly. Wasn’t that Tanjiro from Demon Slayer? Him calling me *Nezuko* checked out, but that wasn’t who I was! *My brother* was wrong!

“**MMPH! MMMMPH! MMMMMPH!**” With the bamboo gag around my mouth, I couldn’t say a word regardless of how hard I tried to. Which was a shame, because the boy who had come in, Tanjiro, definitely would have heard me out if he could understand me. I just needed to explain that I wasn’t Nezuko – **BUT I WAS!** – and that I came from a different world – **BUT I DIDN’T!** But the more time wore on, the more my demon’s blood burned and coaxed me into accepting my new role.

Thoughts became simpler, and my mannerisms more subdued now that Tanjiro was patting me on the head. It was so warm and comforting, and not only my face but my body language softened given a minute or so of the gesture. *This was... onii-chan... Nice...* It was difficult to recall what I had wanted to tell him, or how it had pained me that I couldn’t. “**There, there, Nezuko. Do you feel better?**” I really *did* feel better, and so with my pink eyes sparkling I nodded and grunted some more. “**Good girl. Now let’s go back to sleep, shall we?**”

I obediently crawled on all fours back into the futon, where I flopped down onto my back with my clawed hands at my sides. Not a lot of things made sense, and my mind was a jumbled mess of demonic impulses being drowned out by a desire not to listen to them, but I also just sort of *accepted* that. It was normal, wasn’t it? I just had to endure it for now.



Because my big brother was going to fix me someday!