

I SUPPOSE

COMMISSION STORY

BY CHALDEACHANGE



It certainly wasn't often that Merlin explored Chaldea's library. A construct forged by the competent Murasaki Shikibu, he did not avoid it because of any distrust or disinterest towards the librarian. In fact, he was quite pleased that the woman had managed to bring in some additional education tools to the organization. It was nice to see those Servants that were behind in their studies finally having a means to learn and grow.

No, he just simply did not visit the library often because there was truly little that he didn't already know. Was this believe one born of arrogance? Not quite. Having spent so much time in his tower, still technically remaining in that tower, he had access to all of the information he could possibly dream of. A book could not tell him something he was already aware of, so why bother visiting a library?

In this case, his visit wasn't one justified by literature. He knew he wasn't the only one to sense it, but a strange flow of mana had been sensed from the library's back room. The library itself was constructed via Murasaki Shikibu's Territory Creation so to sense mana wasn't, in itself, unusual. What was strange was that the mana felt foreign. It was unlike any mana he'd ever felt before, be it from the modern era or even the Age of Gods.

“Hm, now this room is rather strange. I can't imagine this was constructed via Miss Shikibu's Territory Creation.” Stepping into the room the mana was originating from was like walking into a completely different ambiance. That ambiance certainly wasn't unpleasant, but it was far less dreary than the rest of the library was in both feel and appearance.

The lighting was certainly much brighter, and there appeared to be several floors with books on the outskirts of the walls. It was different, but not jarringly so. Rather than having the appearance of Japanese library, there was certainly something much more Western about it all. But there was also something else floating about. An aura? A spirit? A *presence*. **“And who are you?”**

Had Merlin possessed an audience, it might have appeared like he was talking to the void. The half-incubus was the only obvious presence in the room after all, and everything within the space was completely still. There was certainly something, however, a presence that didn't belong. Or maybe, instead, *he* was the one that didn't belong? That was an outcome that was all the more likely.

I AM YOU, I SUPPOSE.

It was a voice only Merlin could hear. The echo of an existence that bellowed in the back of his head, and yet he knew her words could not be true in the slightest. After all, that voice? The fact that it had undoubtedly belonged to a girl aside, she had to have been a child. Merlin? He was neither of those things. **“And why have you manifested here? This isn't your world, I'm sure you know that.”** At the very least it had allowed him to ascertain the nature of what he was dealing with. A wandered presence from another world. How she had gotten here? Merlin hadn't the foggiest idea.

**I HAD NO CHOICE, IN FACT. SO I
APOLOGIZE FOR WHAT YOU ARE
ABOUT TO DEAL WITH, I SUPPOSE.**

Was she challenging him? It certainly came across that way with how she had called herself 'him' in the beginning. Existences like hers were unstable. They required a host to mount themselves where they didn't belong. Evidently, she had chosen the Magus of Flowers not knowing that he would be no easy individual to occupy. She was underestimating him if that were the cas—

**YOU'RE THE ONE UNDERESTIMATING
BETTY.**

So she was reading his thoughts? That wouldn't change the fact that he was the stronger of the... two... *Wait*. Merlin could feel it, a growing

presence that was gradually dwarfing his own. For all he had said about this outsider being too weak to make him a part of her, to use him as a vessel, it seemed he truly had underestimated her. But there was a more concerning quality were her influence to succeed in taking root in his vessel – it wasn't a matter of the girl manifesting in this world, that just *wasn't* possible. Instead, he would become something akin to a copy of her, carrying on her will in this realm while maintaining a life link with the original.

“You got past my natural resistance, *I suppose!*?” There were already signs that her influence was taking root, and there was none more obvious than the phrasing being peppered throughout Merlin's speech. Even hearing the maiden's voice in his head, it had been apparent. *'I suppose', 'in fact'*, she littered her verbiage with these phrases constantly – and he'd just gone and added one of them to the end of his latest sentence without even thinking about it.

Speech aside, there was likewise the small matter of Merlin's *attire*. Its form had not changed in shape or fit, at the very least not *yet*, but there was something to be said about its *color*. Or, rather, how that color was changing at a very steady pace, a splotchiness besetting its whites and blues with a *bright pink*. In the beginning this phenomenon manifested as little more than an oddly distributed speckle, the color still starkly contrasting what was considered normal without being overpowering, but with a bit of time these speckles grew and merged, and as such became far more prevalent against the grand scheme of Merlin's garb.

Strangely enough, while much of the color changed, the overall design of his costume was not immediately different. A cape remained thrown over his shoulders, his sleeves remained big and puffy – if anything it felt as if the bright pink overpowered everything else and ultimately stripped it of its more complicated features during this preparatory stage, for there would be further changes, just not quite yet.

Merlin tapped his own chin. **“I still don't see why you would want to root here, *I suppose.*”** The voice's speech quirks, evidently, had been entirely imprinted into Caster's own habits. They were blurted out without intent, and there seemed to be little he could do about it short of question the one who was influencing him. But this one doing it, the one that called herself 'Betty', did *not* respond. Perhaps she saw no need, and if that were the case then Merlin was in for a miserable hostile takeover.

In the meantime, new accessories had begun to appear atop his head. A tiny crown with rotating, vertical stripes of red and gold was beset to the left of his head's center, while frilly, pink ribbons appeared on the sides of his head. Were these girlish decorations not enough to sell that, yes,

his body was being transformed to suit the needs of the one imprinting on him, from beneath the ribbons a physical change began to occur. Thin strands of golden blonde hair began to snake out, spilling over the sides as they curled around and around in a cutesy, drill-like design that betrayed the fluffy white of his typical mane.

But even *that* became infected. The same blonde spread into his scalp, quickly robbing his hair of its coveted, characteristic fluffiness as much of it was pulled tightly into the twin-tail drills and flattened atop his head. This hair was much thinner while retaining a girlish softness that bore a rather youthful glow – *eternally youthful*, in fact. Merlin’s bangs ended up framing his face, but they dangled extremely far around the sides while leaving his head completely bare; *and did it seem exceptionally shiny all of a sudden?* Merlin’s own floral hair decorations seemed to poof away into nothing, too, merely adding to his woes.

“Hm, this isn’t good, *in fact.*” Holding some of the hair that hung around his face between his fingers, there was no denying the spirit had managed to thoroughly bypass his defenses. Why, even as he stared at this hair, the tips of the fingers that were holding it demonstrated a shift that would suggest he was becoming a member of the fairer sex. His nails sprung out an inch or two, bypassing the tips of his fingers while a pink to match his attire soon painted them. His sleeves, somehow, were looking larger as well, with white frills spilling out from beneath the bright pink. **“But it should be expected at this point, *I suppose.*”**

Much of Merlin’s body was gaining a feminine tilt, if not straight out coming to properly resemble a woman’s form. For example, her waistline pinched in with the sides of her robes following suit, and narrowed shoulders were met with a similar fabric crunch. It seemed his outfit was keeping pace with his body so that nothing would be indecently exposed – something that would be necessary once the changes kicked into high gear.

“Oh! I have no problem with growing these, *I suppose.*” Merlin sounded overly enthusiastic as a pair of breasts, meager in size, sprouted from his chest. They filled out the front of his robes, which was looking increasingly like a pink dress as time wore on, with the girth of roughly a pair of B-cups. They were suited for a man – woman? – of his age, as was the plumpness that bulged in his rear and thighs. Oddly enough, however, as those thighs grew out, the material around them tightened into stockings with a horizontal, purple and pink pattern. **“And there it goes, *in fact.*”** On the other hand, she seemed to take her genitalia being repurposed in a stride that sounded out of character, as Merlin’s rising pitch became more and more monotonous the more she spoke.

For all intents and purposes, Merlin now looked like she had been spliced with this ‘Betty’ – no, her name was *Beatrice*, that much seemed to be clear now. Betty was just a name she used when speaking in the first person, something that would become more common for the Caster going forward. She presented all of Beatrice’s key physical features for the most part, with only her facial reconstruction pending.

But as her pupils exploded into **bright pink flowers**? That reconstruction began in earnest. Merlin had always possessed an androgynous face, for despite the fact that he was a man he had likewise earned some renown for his beauty. Her irises ended up shining a sky blue that reflected something akin to feigned innocence, while everything around them in their wider forms? It simply softened. Round cheeks, swollen lips, a somehow even shinier forehead? All possible, and all becoming a reality. There was little left to suggest that she might have ever been a man, but even then, there was still something left to be stolen from her.

“Her memories are blending with my own, I suppose. Betty isn’t sure about her height though, is she not supposed to be shorter?” Incidentally, Merlin’s memories would never completely be lost, but they would end up mixed with Beatrice’s, which would in turn take precedence. Even now she had given up trying to maintain her old demeanor and was speaking exactly how these new memories told her she should, any intention of resisting what was already in motion basically moot at this point.

The remnants of her robes began to curl out into the tails of a dress, all while her body shrunk to match the new composition of her memories. Not only could she recall being smaller, but it also wasn’t merely a matter of height – everything about Beatrice’s form was that of a child of the age of roughly ten or eleven, and so as her height was diminished? So too was she robbed of any features that spoke to an adult’s maturity. She sighed while padding her chest, noting the feel of fingers and breasts alike shrinking in turn. **“It was nice to have something there briefly, I suppose.”** But it just wasn’t destined to be. Not that she would have any use for them while maintaining this library space, something she *knew* she would be stuck doing for the remnants of eternity.

As the girl fell and fell towards her height of 4’7”, the dress she was wearing continued to tighten around her so that nothing would end up exposed. Clothing malfunction was not a plausible outcome, for Beatrice would *never* allow anyone to see a part of her body that *wasn’t* her face nor hands. There was naught but a child left standing in Merlin’s place by the time her regression had completed, and that younger age of hers truly shone in her new baby face. The new Beatrice sighed once more, grumpy as could be. **“Betty needs to tidy this place up now, I**

suppose. Before anyone comes to visit and asks me why I'm here, in fact." Why was she here? It was not something she could explain well to others. At the end of a death loop in the world the true Beatrice hailed from, she had scattered shards of her spirit across time and space. Once they found suitable hosts, she would bestow upon them her knowledge at the cost of their identity, creating a network of Beatrices that spanned the vast multiverse.

Her goal? There was someone she wanted to save. Beatrice was averse to mushiness, but Natsuki Subaru required her aid if he were to succeed in some form. Against both the Witches and the World. She had already failed him once, and so she could only reach out to other universes in hopes that one rooted fragment of herself might find an answer to the riddles that could save him.

Merlin had been collateral and had been the perfect host for one of these fragments. His knowledge became Beatrice's, and Beatrice's knowledge became his. The cost was that he now had to spend an eternity bound to this little girl's body, cursed to remain within the confines of this library. At least, she realized, it was possible for her to change the library's location. This way she could increase the probability of meeting who she wanted to and learning what she wanted to. But first? **"Betty needs to have an awkward conversation with Murasaki Shikibu."** Essentially, as they would be indefinitely sharing the concept of the library, and so Beatrice knew she would have to explain herself in detail to that woman. All of her Chaldea memories remained, so she wouldn't be at a loss when it came to speaking with the Servants here.

Elsewhere, back in the tower the true Merlin occupied? Things had fared no better. That tower had essentially become an extended library branch, and even the magus' true form had turned into another Beatrice. At the very least, this Beako had greater access to all of Merlin's discovery tools. So she would definitely do it.

She would definitely save him.