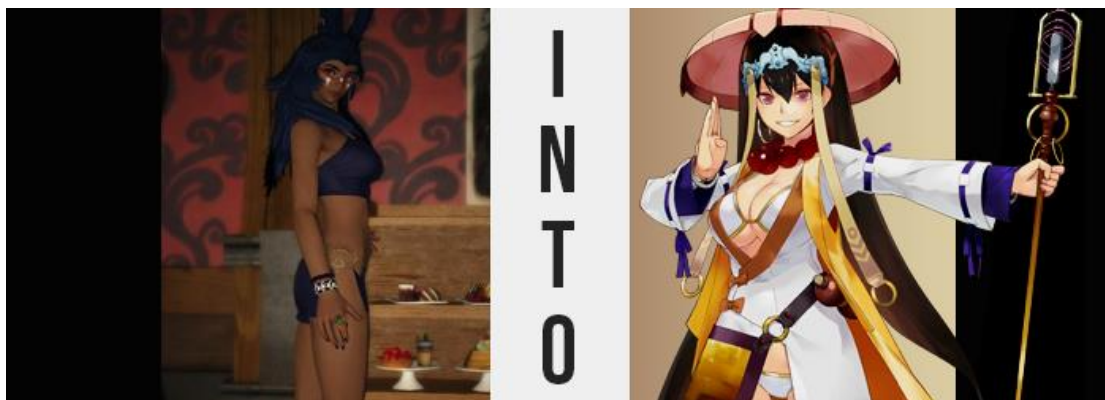


THE ENLIGHTENING

JULY 2021 REQUEST STORY

BY CHALDEACHANGE



“I... would have preferred to be paid in Gil.”

The Viera oddjobber, Iona, let out a sigh as she looked at the big bowl of food that had been placed in front of her, filled to the brim with vegetables and chicken. She had worked all day to help this restaurant carry supplies over from their old building to this new one with the expectation that she'd be paid in Gil, only to have this bowl of food thrown in front of her with the claim that *'they're expenses didn't allow for it today'*.

Iona wasn't the type of woman that needlessly yelled at others, but she had been on the cusp of doing so. A full day's work, down the drain! The only reason she had even begrudgingly accepted this as payment was because the owner was a little, old Lalafell lady. She probably didn't know better, and with the work already done she would have wasted more energy yelling and arguing than simply taking the meal.

Speaking of, she had never seen food arranged in such a manner. The Lalafell had said it used ingredients and presentation from a foreign land, but she hadn't really specified which. As she was currently in Kugane, a port city, it was certainly true that the ingredients could have come from literally anywhere in Eorzea.

“Is it safe to try? It's still so hot...” Even leaning forward just a little bit, the woman's glasses fogged up from the steam – prompting her to take them off and put them on the table beside the bowl. She'd also been given a pair of sticks to eat the meal with. *'Chopsticks'*, they'd been called? It took her almost a minute to even figure out how to grab something with them, and had in fact just pierced a carrot with one of



them as opposed to picking it up properly. **“Well, better than sticking my hands in the broth...”** And so, she popped the carrot into her mouth, chewed, and swallowed.

And immediately she began to feel *strange*. Her whole body felt hot. The carrot had been a little spicy, but nothing that should have been *this* overwhelming. There was also something else... arousal? It was hard to say for sure at this point – more like her body just felt *way* more sensitive.

This is a test I must overcome, given to me by Buddha.

“That was an unusual thing to think. What is a ‘Buddha’ supposed to be?” It was only natural that she might think that way, but something deep down immediately recoiled as she asked the question. Almost as if she had somehow offended herself, strange as that sounded.

Idly, despite both how she felt physically and her confusion, the Viera had ended up stabbing another vegetable. This time it was a piece of broccoli, and she scarfed it down without any misgivings. Once again, it was a little spicy. And, once again, it made her feel very *warm*. **“What did she season this with? I’ve never eaten something with such a mild taste that makes my body react this way before.”** It was simple enough just to play it off as a potential seasoning, even as she downed another carrot.

The more Iona ate, however? The less she appeared like herself. The heat her body was giving off was a direct result of the energy needed to be expended in order to remold someone’s physical form. There had been no indication on her part that she might have taken notice of any such thing, but there were certainly indicators for anyone that might have been observing.

Such as the color and length of the rabbit woman’s hair. For as long as she’d known her own reflection it had been a very dark purple, almost bordering blue in its shade. It was a staple of her very identity, being unique as it was. With that context in mind, you might then understand why it was such a painful sight to see that easily identifiable hair color

slip away into blackness. Each and every strand lost its tone, darkness its ultimate fate.

If that had been all then it might not have been too dramatic of a change, but that hair fell farther and farther behind Iona, past the rest of the chair she was sitting in and stopping only a single inch above the creaky floorboards below. The styling of it all parted into two forks roughly halfway down her back, while atop her head the Viera's hair became silky smooth, with bangs hanging down the center. Any wildness to her style had been utterly tamed, and Iona was none the wiser.

In fact, she was readily stuffing her face.

Shoving vegetables into her mouth was growing all the easier since she was no longer stabbing them with her chopsticks. She was clumsy at it, but she'd *somehow* grasped how to wield them with some finesse after her first few bites. Her body had begun to sweat rather profusely, but she chalked it up to the spiciness of the food. *If Buddha left me this giant bowl of vegetables as a test, then I will readily overcome it!*

Another strange thought had left her to pause. There was that name again: Buddha. This time, though? She felt like she could grasp his identity a little better. He was a god! And one she had to impress, for his way was the way of enlightenment! “**...How do I know that?**”

Iona finally stopped stuffing her face to ask the quiet part aloud, but she didn't really have an answer. Instead of dwelling on it for more than just a moment and perhaps finding an answer, she instead went back to her dish. She just felt so *compelled*. Which was a shame, because her Vieran racial features were the next to dry up.

Her nose, flat at the tip like most Viera noses were, rounded while her nostrils flared. Though not content with this alone, the overall shape of her face became a little more rounded. Magnificently, however, it was the woman's eyes that demonstrated the most dramatic of shifts. Color was no small part of that, irises lightening to a softer, cloudier purple by contrast to her prior tone. But their shapes ended up more striking, narrowed at the sides to give them what would be considered an Asian appeal in our world – *Chinese*, in fact.

“**Buddha is... Buddha is...!**” The woman briefly felt as if she was on the verge of an epiphany, like she had figured out how she knew about this mystery god! She'd expressed it with such excitement, uncharacteristically so to the point that she appeared to be becoming more and more energetic in nature. But she ultimately lost her train of thought and sulkily shoved more vegetables into her mouth, now with trained chopstick precision.

All the while, her rabbit ears had been gradually shortening towards her scalp. Their fur had retained her original hair color all of this time, only for it to be erased as her ears were absorbed by her scalp. Fortunately, a pair of Hyur ears had sprouted up at the sides of her head in tandem, leaving her hearing undisturbed – though lessened in strength.

The bowl was roughly halfway finished now, and Iona was picking up every healthy treat inside with the precision of a woman who had been wielding chopsticks her entire life. The heat had her perspiring quite profusely, that dripping sweat clearly seen against tanned skin with how revealing her outfit typically was.

Yet the strangest phenomenon began to occur. Any sweat-soaked skin soon lightened, the effect most prominent in the most drenched areas. Mind you, it didn't take on a lighter tan. It was stained all of the way to white, and the areas that were driest inevitably fell in line with the rest, leaving the Viera(?) with a very pale complexion.

She reached a white hand up to wipe sweat from her brow, but didn't take any notice. Her mind was elsewhere. **“Why do I feel so tingly as well? It must be another test from Buddha!”** She said 'tingly', but 'aroused' was more like it. Her transformation had moved to affect her figure, and with that came even greater sensitivity around the areas that were blossoming.

Such as her breasts, which wasted *no* time in their ascent. The tight, purple camisole that Iona wore immediately tensed thanks to the breasts beneath flourishing, fatty tissue forcing cloth to tighten to the point that you could make out the shapes of her nipples. **“Nn! This is a rather strange test!”** Thickened lips communicated an unintended moan – certainly *not* a sound Buddha would approve of.

But tits jiggled with another cup size, yanking the underside of the camisole upward so that you could see some of her underboob attempting to break free with all of its might. Fortunately for the woman, the make of her cloth was strong enough to keep everything contained at the cost of a tear halfway down the front of her top, enough to allow her cleavage to bounce happily into view.

Farther down beneath the table her legs had begun to rub together. Not wholly intentional, though her growing arousal did spurn it in some capacity. On the other hand, it was in part because she really had *no* choice in the matter. Pale thighs had been rapidly thickening to the point that the base of her tight shorts was clamping down on them – forcing the peaks of these thighs to lip over them.

A slight rip sounded from behind her, a vertical rip tearing down the back of her booty shorts in response to the cheeks of her ass engorging themselves and lifting herself slightly in her chair. Iona's butt had always been impressive (*considering she was a Viera*), but despite now resembling a Hyur that ass now sported double the paled girth it once had.

“Mm! MM! ALMOST DONE!” With no shortage of pep in her voice, the Chinese woman started poking at the remaining few veggies in the dish. And as she did so? The bowl appeared closer somehow. Because her tall, Viera stature had collapsed dramatically. Once over six feet tall, she now sat at only 5'3". It was a significant enough of a drop that her curves appeared even bigger, while at the same time affording more space in her clothes.

Not that it mattered since tattered purple soon lightened in color. Her camisole loosened in the process, forming a white bikini top with gold trim just as she lifted the bowl to drink the broth; some of the liquid now sloppily splashing against her mostly bare breasts. Meanwhile, her shorts became a matching bikini bottom that groped the cheeks of her butt firmly.

Everything else? Her body was suddenly adorned in clothing and accessories that hadn't existed prior, even though they had no material to draw from. A white kimono-like jacket with purple undersleeves and golden sash decorated her torso, the jacket itself open to reveal her breasts nonetheless, and a hat fanned out over her head with a silver headpiece below it – yellow, ringed extension drooping down from either side. Big, red prayer beads hung from her neck, and hoop earrings dangled from her lobes. Meanwhile, thigh-highed, white boots extended from shrunken feet.

It did not take the woman much longer to polish off the remnants of her bowl now that she had mastered the use of her chopsticks, a few pieces of veggie lingering even after drinking the broth. After downing the last of her tasty dish, she concealed a burp with one hand while rubbing her tummy with the next. With her arousal overcome, she was content both with a full belly and



the knowledge that she had passed yet another test.

“AHHH! That hit the spot!” She casually leaned back in her seat as she cried out, a smile plastered all over her face. *Xuanzang Sanzang* couldn't remember what had brought her to this establishment, but she sure felt *blessed* that they'd provided such a tasty dish that reminded her of her homeland. **“But, hmm... Now, where am I?”**

The Caster was the only one in the restaurant, and so she inevitably peaked outside. **“Huh? The architecture kind of reminds me of Japan, but those people walking around?”** Cat people, lizard people, tiny people with long ears – these weren't humans, even though some appeared to be mixed in.

And so, this story ends as it began. With a *sigh*. **“I guess I'm going to have to find someone who can help explain where I am. Maybe this is another of Buddha's tests after all?”**