

GENSHIN IMPACT: CULTURAL EXCHANGE

CH1: LIKE A ZOMBIE

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“Hm... To avoid Celestia’s prying eyes, I wonder...”

Venti, the ‘human’ identity of the Anemo Archon whose true identity was ‘Barbatos’, paced back and forth with a tome in hand. The boy was not someone who was well versed in magic nor curses despite the mystical nature of his background, but simultaneously he was exploring a number of *less than savory* methods to accomplish a goal that was not just his alone, but shared by a number of his fellow Archons.

Whether presently serving in their posts, retired, or simply those that worked closely with them – there were those tied to the title of ‘Archon’ that wished to break free of the oversight of Celestia, the one who gave the Archons, gods in name and power, much of their rights. But was Celestia an ally to the Archons that served it? Some had decided that *no*, that wasn’t the case. This hadn’t been any clearer to Venti than when he had caught wind of what had recently happened in Fontaine.

Celestia would have seen an entire civilization *drown* because of the arguable ‘sins’ of a prior Archon than allow the people of Fontaine to live in peace. It had been subverted thanks to the efforts of Focalors, but news of the event certainly reached the ears of the other nations with time. “**Mr. Zhongli asked me to investigate this but... I’m really not good at *this kind of thing*.**” He hadn’t even really known *what* he was looking amidst the tomes of Stormterror’s Domain, but had managed to find the book in his hands through luck alone.

But there *was* an issue with merely handling the book. One that Venti wasn't aware of and *couldn't* have been aware of as he didn't have the necessary experience. Archon or not, he could not sense a curse – nor one *activating* within his grasp, one that resonated with his own desires to 'make it so that the Archons and their allies could act without being scrutinized by Celestia so harshly'. A sentiment that broad. Broad enough to be willfully misinterpreted.

BANG!

A bolt of lightning struck the boy through the ceiling above and the book he was holding fell to the floor. But Venti? He was nowhere to be seen in the unusual lightning strike's wake.



But it wasn't like Venti had *died*. His location had simply changed. "...***Eh?***" He blinked with a foolish expression apparent upon his features once he found his surroundings had *changed*. "**Did I just get hit by something? Actually putting this aside... This is the pharmacy in Liyue, isn't it?**" He had gone to the Bubu Pharmacy once in order to procure a hangover remedy and this was *definitely* that pharmacy. But it was the dead of night

outside and he was behind the counter. "**Is no one working? I guess it doesn't really matter.**"

He shrugged to himself. It wasn't really his problem, right? And he had to figure out how the heck he'd even ended up there. Was it the book? A security measure in the ruins he hadn't known about? But it was hard to imagine anything that could teleport someone across Teyvat like that so suddenly... barring the Traveler's means of getting around that was. Stranger still? "**Why... can't I move myself away from this counter? Ehe!**"

Was that really an '*Ehe!*' moment!?

Evidently *not*, because the Archon began to feel *weak*. Venti always kept his full power close to his chest, but he could feel all of his strength as the Archon of Anemo draining away in real time. “**H-Huh!?**” Until finally? “**I’m powerless!?**” He couldn’t muster any of his strength as an Archon *at all*. It was like he was just a regular, powerless human. But was that really *entirely* correct? He had a very *sobering* realization – which certainly wasn’t something he had all too often.

Humans weren’t usually this cold, were they?

The question that he posed to himself wasn’t even an overdramatization. He had begun to feel all of the warmth drain from his body until only the slightest bit of it radiated from within. Almost like he was closer to a *corpse* than a living person, and a subtle blue tinting applied itself to his skin to help get that point across. That said, in terms of a changing color there were areas where it was *far* starker than the subtler shift of his skin tone.

“**Why does *Venti* feel s-s-so cold?**” The youthful looking boy crossed his arms to try and give himself warmth, the decision to refer to himself in third person evidently going right over his head. A head that, oddly, shone with a new color. Dark locks with green highlights all illuminated to the very same color from his roots to his tips; a soft purple that *almost* resembled blue cotton candy. This hair fluffed up in volume and crept out in length behind him too, hair in the back spilling well down to his ass while weaving into one long braid in the process. Oddly, this growth didn’t even dishevel his hat one bit. Because he’d still *require* a hat when everything else was done.

Venti’s teeth *were* chattering, but the cold was slowly becoming less bothersome even though it appeared to be having *unseen* effects. It was growing difficult to think at a speed that could be seen as ‘normal’, each idea that crossed his mind taking too long to cross his mind. “**Is something... wrong with... *Venqi*?**” Was it? With green eyes aglow with pink now, it was *very* clear that it was. But the bard couldn’t keep up mentally with what was happening. No... Even if he *could* keep up with it, there were protections in place to make certain that he did not realize.

That *she* did not realize. Else a changed sex would have immediately provoked her into crying out. But it *did* happen without much fanfare, largely because it didn’t really provoke *that* much change in the first place. It went without saying that if a man became a woman that she would surely acquire a woman’s anatomy and that *was* technically true for Venti. It *was* factual that her body began to conform more towards the feminine.

But was it a dramatic shift? Therein lied the rub. *No.*

Even considering the girl's face this was true. Venti's appearance had always been fairly *androgynous* and leaned a little into the feminine already. Everything *did* become a touch rounder and softer, but what *actually* stood out as her face shifted wasn't a change in her sex. It was a change in her *race*. Round, Caucasian eyes narrowed and thinned at the edges until they resembled the eyes of an Asian individual instead. Chinese in the real world, but within Teyvat? They were clearly the eyes of a *Liyue native*.

“Vinqi was... was...” The continued shift in how she referred to herself was now accentuated by a soft and feminine shift in her tone of voice. She couldn't really remember *what* she was doing and, in fact, she couldn't really remember much of *anything*. But perhaps it was for the best as her figure became increasingly girlish. Small mounds pushing up from her chest, for example, or a little pudginess that saw her thighs and rump swell in size. Subtly at least. It was clear that the weight she was given? It was not the weight that you would expect an adult or even a *teenager* to have.

And it then all made *sense* as her stature *fell*. It was very quick but succinct. Venti had stood just only *barely* above the five foot mark before, she dropped all of the way down to *4'4"* so that her bard clothing practically buried her. She had the appearance of a *child*, surely no older than eight or nine, wearing a blank expression befitting of how hard it was to think, unbothered by her state of dress.

Did she *have* to be bothered by it? Not for long it had seemed. The cloth of her old outfit soon tightened against her, binding her in a new form: a traditional Liyue dress fashioned with blues and purples overtop a sky blue pair of shorts and leggings. Shoes became tiny, black heels and a curious talisman fastened itself to her forehead... beneath a hat that was now just as traditional as everything else she was now adorned with.

“Hmm? What was Qiqi doing?” The girl raised an index finger to her lips *very* slowly while trying her best to peer over the desk of Bubu Pharmacy,



where she was *employed*. Even if there was a speck of Venti remaining deep down somewhere, there was no way that the child would be able to process that aspect of herself at a speed that would allow her to grasp the truth. But there *weren't* any traces and the jiangshi girl had memory problems even on her best of days.

Needless to say: there was no chance she would recall the grandiose position she had held before. Not that most people even knew Venti had been an Archon in the first place. “**Oh, right. Qiqi had to stock the shelves... right?**” She shuffled to turn her back, examining the shelf behind her in a way that appeared a little bit *sleepy*. “**Mmm...**” And she slowly started counting with her fingers. *One, two, three, four...*

“**Okay. Four...**” She made a cute little nod to herself and clumsily slid into the back room to fetch what she needed as if it was the most natural thing in the world. But such was the nature of *Qiqi's* life. It was rather mundane for a being of her exceptional existence, but realistically? It was all she could manage as she now was.

And that was okay.