

A SUMMONER'S RESPITE

COMMISSION STORY

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A summoner's pilgrimage would not be easy.

Yuna had known this all along. She had known it since she was just a little girl, and in the thick of things now, she had been more or less assured that this prediction had been true. Solving the mysteries of the temples scattered around Spira, fighting, and allying with powerful Aeons – it was all necessary to vanquish the evil that was Sin, and for the sake of this world Yuna was willing to put herself through whichever trials were necessary to save its people.

Keeping this in mind, her journey had proceeded as one might expect thus far. Short of the appearance of Tidus and the unlikely party member found in Rikku, all was transpiring as had been ordained by the flow of this world. It was all simply a cycle after all, and the summoner herself was merely a gear in the machine of it all. There had been happiness and suffering alike, but through it all Yuna knew she had to wear a smile. Because the hopes of everyone fell on her shoulders, and if she wasn't careful she ran the risk of being crushed by them.

These were the thoughts on her mind as she knelt before a temple altar. It was unusual because it was not a temple she had known about beforehand. Their Al Bhed allies had tipped them off about these unusual place beneath the ocean's waves, an unmarked temple likely used in cycles old that had been forgotten by time. But if there was a chance that it housed an Aeon, it was an adventure worth having.

The space was dimly lit, with a glass ceiling above that allowed you to see the vast ocean above. In fact, the only light source was the sunlight that just barely reached these glass panes. But Yuna was already in

prayer before the pedestal, she wasn't thinking much about her surroundings. She was *supposed* to clear her mind, but something had been nagging at her. Considering everything, Yuna realized her own fallacies. It was hard to be upbeat and smile when everyone was suffering, when everyone was relying on her.

This had been made all the clearer to her with the addition of Rikku to the group. The girl was younger, but she had seen her fair share of tragedy. Even so, she was always bouncing around and beaming, doing her best to make sure that everyone was relaxed even if the situation looked grim. *I wish I could be that kind of light for everyone...* was what she thought, even though she was exceptional at doing so as she was.

But praying before the temple's altar? Her thoughts were not simply for her understanding only. The Aeon that ruled over this realm could hear her as well, and this shrine had been sealed away so long ago because of just how responsive said Aeon was. It would take the whims of any summoner that prayed before it and see them to fruition, which meant plenty of summoners in the past had been led astray by the gifts it had given them.

Unfortunately, Yuna would be no different in the end.

The primary issue was that while thinking this, Yuna was comparing herself to Rikku. Not that the Al Bhed didn't have her own share of worries and the like, but she was absolutely much better at coping with them. Was it because of her age? Her upbringing? Or was it just her general mentality? Yuna didn't know, but on some level she wanted *to* know. And there it was, just the kind of reference the Aeon that oversaw the temple needed to put things into action.

Still kneeling in prayer, fingers laced together, Yuna did notice something of importance. A strange tingling sensation had tickled her skin briefly, but it was highly likely (*in her mind*) that this was just part of whatever trial was necessary to earn the Aeon's good blessings. There hadn't been any puzzles of note to tackle on her way in, nor had there be any battles. It was highly likely that the trial was of a sort she had never experienced before. But until the instructions were clear, she would *not* open her eyes.

Which might have been a mistake in the end, for allowing the tingling to do its work allowed ramifications to take place that would undo the fiber of her very being. Or maybe that statement was a little misleading? Because even if the summoner had realized what was happening, there was absolutely nothing she could have done to stop its effects from taking place now that the Aeon had already chosen to intervene.

The effects, at least at first, were rather subdued when compared to what would come later, however. The initial changes were only for the sake of laying a foundation suggestive what was to come, and they were more or less focused on the woman's physical build. Yuna had, of course, done plenty of training over the course of her life. She had to take her position seriously, and so her body was by no stretch of the imagination *weak*. But even though she had some muscles, there was a softness to her flesh that suggested she had never pushed herself to the ideal fitness level either.

This was *promptly* corrected. Any of the excess fat in the seventeen-year-old's body sizzles away like butter on a frying pan, leaving the muscle beneath it to rise against the container that was her skin. This left her body looking more toned than ever, most noticeably in her arms and tummy, which grew stronger still to suggest proficiency in a combat style that was more hands-on than she was used to as a summoner.

Leaning into that assertion, it was the fingers that were laced together in prayer that supported this theory, for soft fingertips grew calloused, hard skin and its distribution not typical for someone that typically wielded a staff. In fact, those fingers looked nimbler, and Yuna's grip had strengthened without her realizing. Toss in the odd chips to her nails, which instead looked like they had anxiously been nibbled down to the fingertips, and they hardly resembled Yuna's hands at all.

As the tingling persisted, so too did the woman's complexion change. Her skin softened for the most part, but any scars or beauty marks Yuna kept hidden beneath her robes faded only for new ones to take their place elsewhere upon her body. Even its shade of creamy pink was influenced, only seeing a subtle change, but one that cast away its pinker undertone for something a little tanner.

Now, Yuna had yet to question what was happening at all. Never had an Aeon imperiled her in a way such as this, and she knew if she angered it that would cause an entirely different problem – more so as they didn't know a single thing about this temple.

E ruba E's hud eh yho tyhkan. Ur famm!

I hope I'm not in any danger. Oh well!

Yuna was half-Al Bhed to begin with, but at this point in her life she had not learned the language. Certainly not well enough for her to begin passively thinking in it without realizing, though it was a natural change considering what was happening to her. She hadn't realized. She *wouldn't* realize. But she was finding it a little harder to care about the

possibility of anything going awry. Almost like she really was becoming more *carefree*.

The effects of her transition, once subtle, quickly became more obvious from an onlooker's point of view. The coloring of her dark brown hair was being tickled with a lighter tone – a tone of *golden blonde* – and one that was spreading with reckless abandon at that. It began with only a few strands before catching like a wildfire, dancing from one to the next until her entire head was blonde. An awfully familiar blonde. *Rikku's blonde*.

Her hair did not lengthen nor shorten though, but instead it was lifted from the back and pulled into a high ponytail which was held in place by a blue hair tie that apparated in tandem with a matching hairclip that pinned her bangs on the left to the side while those on the right naturally swung in the other direction. Two, tiny braids were weaved of the extra hair stemming from her ponytail, and orange feathers appeared to keep them tied. At the same time, the blue-beaded earring on her right ear disappeared into thin air.

Were Yuna to speak at this juncture, she would undoubtedly find that the pitch of her voice had heightened, and that the mood she communicated overall was a little *peppier*. This wasn't surprising if you looked at her face, which came to distance itself from Yuna's original facial structure more and more with each passing moment.

Though closed, the pupils of her eyes swirled to match what was characteristic of a pure-blooded Al Bhed, and while one of her eyes was already green to represent her half-blooded heritage, the second blue one soon found itself to be similarly shaded. They were the eyes of a pure Al Bhed through and through, the shapes of the eyes themselves a little wider, while her lashes had diminished just a little bit.

Her facial structure overall changed so that her face was now a little longer and leaner, with a nose that hooked more prominently and lips that weren't as well defined as they'd once been. Even so, she looked more youthful, like a girl who was in her early to mid-teens. Having been only seventeen before this wasn't a huge drop, but it was still a noticeable one, nonetheless.

E yldiymmo vaam naymmo kuut ymm uv y cittah!

'I actually feel really good all of a sudden!'

Her thoughts still communicated in the native Al Bhed language, the summoner was finding it more and more difficult to sit still. Why were her eyes closed? Why was she kneeling here? Seemed kind of like a

waste of time, right? But, no! She was here as part of her pilgrimage! Was she on something like that? Hmm...

With her height having passively diminished just a couple of inches, the girl's ornate obi was already sitting upon her frame with a little less comfort than it had before. This discomfort soon flourished, as the body it swathed lessened in size even further around some key areas.

Yuna's hips, for example? They narrowed just a little bit, while her thighs, despite being so fit, lost a little of their width in exchange for the slightest inkling of fat that blessed them with a softer appeal. Her butt followed suit, for it was given no choice with that smaller gait between either hip, but on the other hand? Her cheeks ended up looking fuller as a result, her butt more like a bubble that was resting against her feet behind her as she remained in a kneeling position.

The obi's front began to hang there more loosely, for her shoulders had narrowed, and her breasts diminished some. It was only a single cup size of weight that was lost, but considering the fit of her loosely designed clothes, it definitely looked like a lot more. Still, what they lost in size, they absolutely made up for in both firmness and perkiness. A girl of her age couldn't be expected to be stacked, right?

Fyc E funneat ypuid cusadrehk? Dryd'c hud so edoma!

'Was I worried about something? That's not my style!'

Don't sweat the small stuff, or it'll kill ya! Someone had told her that once. Just in Al Bhed! That was why Rikku always tried to stay positive, and really how she was able to. If she could make someone else's day a little better with a smile, then there was no reason *not* to smile, right? But the girl was now more than confused about why she was kneeling there. She was on the verge of tearing her eyes open and jumping up to her feet!

But before she did, it was fortunate that her costume changed else robes would have gone flying everywhere. At her waist, her obi promptly split into two pieces that became two difference segments of clothing.

Around her hips and pelvis, the dark blue skirt was tickled by a yellow that turned the material green. It all shortened to just above her thighs, becoming a pair of green dolphin shorts above a thigh-mounted pouch on her right leg. Her sandals grew but shrunk at the same time, growing taller into a pair of brown boots with feather decorations, while also shrinking on the inside to accommodate smaller feet.

Up top, where the obi had split, the cloth lifted to reveal Yuna's navel and her very toned belly. The chest wrap darkened to an orange that almost bordered a brown color, while growing in size and thickness to fully cover her chest and flare up at the base of her neck, while a pair of goggles dangled from her neckline.

Her shoulders were left bare, but the detached, white sleeves of the obi became different things depending on the side. On the right it became a silver gauntlet with an orange arm guard, while on the left she was adorned with a large, protective mitt and a green armband. She was now entirely free to jump up and open her eyes, which she did without giving even a second thought.

“Rir!?! Frana ys E!?” In perfect, fluent Al Bhed language, *Rikku* cried out in surprise about her surroundings. Where was she? How had she ended up here? She was certainly no stranger to salvaging things beneath the waves of the sea, but she wasn't wearing her equipment? Well, the fact that she couldn't even remember coming here in the first place was probably a much more pressing concern in the end, right?

YOUR DESIRES HAVE BEEN GRANTED...

Providing more questions, rather than giving her any answers, a disembodied voice boomed in a language that the Al Bhed youth could also speak, considering she was efficiently bilingual. **“Wish? What are you talking about!? I didn't wish for anything!”** That was true, right? Actually, come to think of it? Why did her head feel all *wobbly and stuff*? She wasn't physically off balance, but... what was the best way for her to describe it?



She felt off balance *spiritually*? Like everything made sense, and nothing made sense at the same time. The more she looked at her surroundings at least, the more she could piece together. **“Oh! This is a temple, right? But only Yuna is supposed to come in here... I hope I don't get in trouble! I guess it's a big 'oh well' if I do, though!”** Her old self certainly wouldn't have been so nonchalant about such a grave crime in the eyes of tradition, but as she was now? She couldn't care less about stuffy, old rules or the weight

of the world, or whatever! If she met Sin, she'd kick its ass!

“E kiacc E cruimt saad ib fedr dra udranc. Ed'c cyva eh rana, cu Oihy cruimt pa ugyo.” *‘I guess I should meet up with the others. It's safe in here, so Yuna should be okay’.* Rikku had slid back into her native language as she thought aloud, throwing her hands behind her head, and turning towards the exit. She came in here because Yuna didn't think it was safe? Well, without Yuna's permission! Yuna should have been waiting outside with the others!

Effectively, Yuna and Rikku had switched existences without either of them noticing. At least, once the new Yuna came in, 'her' wish had already been granted, so the Aeon wouldn't simply grant her a new one. But this way? The pilgrimage would not be interrupted, and things would carry on as they were supposed to.

But at least the real Yuna wouldn't be burdened by the weight of expectations any longer. That was the real Rikku's problem now!