

CONSOLATION PRIZE

NOVEMBER 2020 REQUEST STORY

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A menacing fog swirled around Inaba, undoubtedly Izanami's doing. After defeating Tohru Adachi the Investigation Team had thought their battle done, but their victory quickly turned sour once Narukami came into contact with the gas station attendant and learned of their true nature, and from there the fog that ran rampant in the Midnight Channel had made its way into the real world. This was Izanami's final test it seemed, and Yu had to prepare for the final battle.

After speaking with the rest of the Investigation Team, the leader returned home for a quick moment of respite. If they had to go back into the television - hopefully for a final time - then everyone needed a moment to steel themselves. It was also important to observe what kind of effect the fog had on the real world. They didn't have long... it had to be dealt with before the people of Inaba were all turned into Shadows.

“Am I strong enough? Is this world worth saving?” It seemed a little uncharacteristic for him to have thoughts like these, but as he sat on his bed with his palm outstretched, he couldn't help but think about everything they'd been through. The things Adachi had done, the things he had said... If he had realized what was going on sooner than those people wouldn't have died, and Nanako wouldn't have ended up kidnapped.

Did he deserve to be sitting here now when so many had been lost?

“I want to protect my friends, but is this the right way? I wish there was a way that could guarantee their safety...” Keeping the others out of harm's way was his greatest priority. What if he wasn't strong enough to protect them?

Suddenly and without invitation a light began to collect above his glowing palm. It was a familiar power, similar to when he summoned a Persona or leveled up a Social Link, but it was different too. Far too intense. He could tell -- it was an amalgamation of all of the Social Links he'd forged over the duration of this adventure. The light eventually turned rainbow and began to solidify, and within a matter of moments an Arcana card he didn't recognize had formed.

**IT WAS FOOLISH TO MANIFEST YOUR HAND
AND DESIRES SO SOON, MORTAL.**

"Izanami!?" He stood up, the Arcana still floating above his hand. Of course she was observing his actions! But 'manifest his hand'? Was she referring to this card? But before the goddess replied, the room around Yu began to contort. It was like reality was peeling away, the only thing lighting the space the Arcana card in his hand. **"I thought you wanted me to come to you!?"**

**YOUR DOUBTS HAVE SHOWN ME ALL I NEED
TO, AND BESIDES DON'T YOU WANT THAT
WISH GRANTED? ALLOW ME TO DO SO, WITH
THE POWER OF *THE WORLD* ARCANA YOU
HAVE MANIFESTED.**

The deity spoke seemingly in riddles, but from the shadows a long and monstrous arm, almost decrepit by design, reached out and grabbed the card from Narukami's hand. This hand smothered the rainbow glow the card emitted until it was snuffed out entirely, and the world around the boy once again contorted. **"Hey!"**

**YOU WANT THEIR SAFETY GUARANTEED?
THEN ENJOY A NEW LIFE IN A NEW WORLD.
THIS NATURALLY BENEFITS ME AS WELL.**

Yu awoke with a start. **"Izanami!?"**, he shouted as beads of sweat rolled down his face, but he was greeted by an unfamiliar wall at the foot of an unfamiliar bed. **"Where the hell am I?"** He could recall the goddess' final words. A new life in a new world? That wasn't the kind of outcome he'd been searching for! He didn't want to abandon the world he'd come from, he had merely wanted to avoid putting the others in harm's way!

As a result now he was in a position where he couldn't save anyone!

He threw the covers off of himself and stood up, but upon doing so he realized he wasn't wearing anything from his own wardrobe. Wrapped around his body was a worn night gown, one that looked best fit for a woman and absolutely didn't fit his body in any capacity. The fact that it hadn't torn as it clung to his shoulders and the skirt just barely hung past his junk was nothing short of an honest to goodness miracle. **“What are these clothes? Why am I dressed like a girl? Actually, what year is this, even...?”**

Looking around the room he was in looked like it belonged in the 1800s, but there was running electricity and modern looking light bulbs. Was the house just very old? From the sunlight bleeding in from the nearby window he could tell it was likely early morning, but he also didn't know what rested beyond that window.

Nothing good. I hate this place.

He had no memory of where he was and yet a voice in the back of his mind beckoned to the contrary. Hardly could he consider this a thought that wasn't his own - he had definitely thought it himself, but he wasn't sure where it came from. **“Side effects... Were there side effects to what Izanami did?”** She had specifically called this a *'new life'*. From the nightgown to the uncanny feeling that something was amiss, he could only reason that something terrible was about to happen. *And it did.*

The flesh upon Narukami's face began to wriggle, almost like worms had rooted themselves within. It was incredibly uncomfortable, but also came with some baggage he didn't realize he had - or perhaps it was brand new baggage related to what was happening. **“No... Not my face! I don't want... that face...”** Fingers ran up to rub his cheeks, ignorant to the context of the things we was saying. The anxiety that poured in was unyielding and, as of that moment, unfounded.

Although context became applied physically, his changing mindscape wouldn't catch up. *Not quite yet* at any rate. As it stood, the squirming sensation was completely erasing any physical trace of 'Yu Narukami' from the boy's facial features, and in its place...

To call it androgyny might have been a disservice. It certainly appeared that way, but there was something about how his features were arranged that tilted more towards the feminine. How his nose was delicately reduced in size so it momentarily looked out of place against his once broader features, to how lips were narrowing and yet bore a natural and girlish pout.

Yet it was Narukami's eyes that became more telling. Their shapes were a part of the equation. A softer jawline with narrowed cheekbones had been early indicators of this, but inevitably it was laid plain through the look of his gaze. Yu bore the appearance of someone of European descent, with larger eyes that carried eyes of a bright and almost supernatural **turquoise**. They glimmered with an innocence that could not be understated, but something jaded their glow simultaneously.

“No... It happened... That face... Her face...” Yu continued to touch his own head, rambling on with fear about its design even if he couldn't really see it. There was no mirror in the room to grant him that grace, and so it was merely intuition that guided this paranoia. How could his face have caused him so much grief? What was this weight he felt pressing down on his chest? *Expectation?* **“I'm not... her. I'll never be... her.”**

Why was he denying being a girl? What was the name of that girl in the first place? It felt like it came closer and closer to coming to mind, yet that final push was never made. Not yet, anyways. Work still had to be done to better assimilate him into this new life of his.

Yu stumbled as he attempted to walk towards the window, bare feet tripping over a floorboard that wasn't properly nailed down. **“Wah!?”** His voice bore a girlish squeak, but then again something had been unusually feminine about his voice ever since his face had changed. His sudden trip wasn't entirely the fault of the floorboard however. He'd definitely accounted for it when moving forward, but somehow he had misjudged the distance?

No, he didn't misjudge it. The reach of his leg had completely changed. **“Wait... When did I? Am I getting smaller?”** It had been hardly noticeable at first, but now that he was thinking about it his point of view had lowered. The nightgown that had rested just below his crotch now covered half of his thighs.

All in all that gown fit much better, because he hadn't merely become smaller height wise. Shoulders had narrowed in tandem with his waistline, while all of the muscles that had once rippled through his form had all but seceded their strength for the time being. Arms and legs were scrawny, his chest and stomach were scrawny, and it ultimately gave the impression that the boy was a little bit younger.

Or that he might not even be a boy much longer.

As if to supplement this theory, more of his form contorted. Like the loss of height it was a painless endeavor, but as opposed to shrinking beyond

the threshold of the nightgown he was now filling it in very particular ways. For example: the skirt *had* hung loose around his thighs, but now the thin white material of this skirt was being pushed out again by the very same thighs that had been so lackluster prior. It wasn't a significant growth, but as flesh rounded into view it was clear his legs weren't those of a young man anymore. Even in his feet, toes appeared daintier and better rounded.

While the sides of the gown were filled out by Yu's thighs, the rear was filled out by his butt. Cheeks initially tightened, only to slowly release and swell gradually like a pair of stress balls that had just been squeezed and released. In the end, the completely outline of his rear including the indentation of his crack could be seen against the thin material.

“**Ow!?**” It had been an inevitability perhaps, but before long his little Yu and the Balling Boys did their exit act, prompting an unsubstantiated cry of pain from *her* mouth. There hadn't been any *actual* pain, but it had been so shocking of a feeling that she'd cried out in confusion anyways. “**No... I'm not... a girl...?**”, she continued to stutter, but by this point she was becoming confused about her own confusion.

Had she not always been a girl?

Being a girl wasn't the problem, was it?

No it was something else... She didn't want to be someone else. Being a girl had nothing to do with it! And taking that as a confirmation of acceptance, her breasts jiggled to attention in tandem, pushing the front of the gown's chest out a little. They certainly weren't large or even really *notable*, but they were still breasts, plain as day. The way the nipples poked up against the fabric more or less confirmed that she wasn't wearing a bra. But then again she wasn't wearing panties either.

She finally reached the window just as her hair fell to her shoulders, long and straight. There was a village outside, one that reminded her of haunting memories she hadn't possessed before. Of being told she was the second coming of King Arthur, of being manufactured to act as her vessel... all to the point where she could not understand or recognize herself. The fact that she couldn't recall her name at the time? It didn't even feel that strange. Though upon trying hard enough it did finally come to her.

Gray.

Yu had been reborn as this girl named Gray, who struggled with her own identity and crumbled under the weight of the expectations of others. In a way she was like her old self, but fate had dealt her a very different

hand of cards: one she resented more than anything. Even though her life would improve in the future, this was before she would meet and be taken in my Lord El-Melloi II. She was still trapped in her cult-like village, fearing the worst.

And so another day of anxiety began.

She had no recollection of her past life, nor that the friends of that life had been doled out new lives in this world much as she had. Chie, for example, would take up the name Reines while Yosuke had become a sentient ball of mercury of all things. And this was merely a small sample.

But at least they were all safe!