

My Oni Love

Chapter 6

Written by Princess Kay

My head didn't hurt. Which wouldn't normally be worth stating, but considering the last thing I remembered was getting absolutely wasted on a gourd of way too strong sake... Unless oni didn't get hangovers?

God, that would be great...

Though, on the other hand, a headache would have been a great excuse not to think about the *other* stuff that I remembered. Like, y'know, the whole identity crisis thing? About me being a girl? About me being... I don't know.... trans I guess?

I really wasn't up to thinking about it. And maybe I didn't have to? I mean, I had the body I wanted, right? Sure, it was an oni body that required me to eat people, but as long as eating girls worked out I was set!

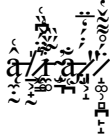
Though, speaking of girls, I probably *did* have to deal with Akari. She was totally going to be upset with me... All that talk about my tolerance, and then I got super drunk, started laughing about how I was a girl, and passed out. I didn't even want to think about what *she* was thinking!

Maybe I could just lay down and pretend to be dead for a while? Except that was sort of... boring. And also left me alone with my thoughts. Thoughts about what an idiot I was for not realizing my identity sooner. About all the signs I'd missed. About how sweet that alcohol had tasted. Things I really didn't want to be thinking about, right after waking up.

So I got up! And... stared? Because I wasn't laying by the pond, like I'd expected. Or on a forest floor. I was laying on something gray, and dusty. A wasteland? An isolated wasteland, with nothing and nobody around me, no matter where I looked. Only stars in the- wait. Stars in the sky? How long had I been asleep? And where was Akari?

I opened my mouth to call for her, only to shut it in a hurry when I felt slender arms wrapping around my neck. I had just enough time to think it was weird for Akari to be able to *reach* my neck, before a voice - a soft, harmonious, *unfamiliar* voice, whispered in my ear.

"Welcome home,



My eyes snapped open, as my head shot up. The sky above me was painted red and orange, the sun having just begun to set. The sky had yet to reveal its blanket of stars. And my head hurt.

A dream...? I wondered, looking up at the sky. The slightly orange tinted, early evening sky, without a star in the sky.

“She’s awake!” called a high pitched, slightly irritating, definitively familiar voice. “I think... She hasn’t made any noise yet. Should I poke her with a stick, to be sure?”

“You’re making enough noise for the both of us,” I replied, rubbing my head. At least the headache was fading... and fast. Huh. “How long was I out...?”

“A few hours, Mistress Joana-sama,” Akari informed me. Her smile was calm, but I wasn’t fooled! I got passed out drunk after she explicitly warned me - there’s no way she wasn’t mad! And I was willing to bet the use of Mistress *and* sama was in the same vein as “I’m using your middle name because I’m pissed”!

“That alcohol was stronger than I thought it would be...”

“We did warn you, Mistress Joana-sama.”

“On the bright side,” Haruka chimed in, her five tails wagging, “I told my parents we were coming!”

“So they know you’re bringing an oni to the village?” I asked, happy for the distraction.

“...I told them we’re coming!” Haruka repeated, freezing in place.

“...You left out the fact that I’m an oni, didn’t you?” I accused, narrowing my eyes at her.

Akari didn’t say anything, aloud. She just turned that placid smile of hers over to Haruka. Who, of course, immediately began to tremble.

“I did tell them about the illusion, at least!” Haruka promised, backing up a step. “I just... maybe sort of implied that it was about aesthetics, rather than species... It’s not like they’ll be able to see through it, though!”

Akari’s smile broke apart, as a sigh escaped her lips. “I suppose that’s for the best. They’d probably just think Haruka was being tricked into letting a man-eating oni into the village, otherwise...”

“Is it really that unbelievable for there to be a nice oni?” I asked, wincing.

“Of course it’s unbelievable!” Haruka replied, pointing a finger at me. “Oni are meant to be terrifying monsters that eat people! Honestly, the only reason I’m not accusing you of plotting something is the fact that you don’t seem smart en... I mean. Because Akari trusts you?”

“Five out of ten,” Akari intoned, shaking her head. “Your worst save today. Is it truly so troublesome to pay respect to your mistress?”

“I mean, have you seen her?” Haruka asked, pointing at me. “She’s not exactly prime mistress material.”

“Joana-sama. About your decision to take Chiba-san on as a harem member-”

“Gah! Stop! Stop! Enough with that joke! I get it! I’ll treat her with the respect she definitely deserves! I’ll even call her Joana-sama!”

“I’m starting to feel vaguely insulted,” I grumbled, crossing my arms over my chest. And squishing my boobs a little in the process.

...Boobs which I had. As a girl. Not that all girls had boobs? But I did. And I was a girl.

Did I mention that I was a girl?

“I know I just said I’m going to respect Joana-san and all, but I can still point out that she’s wearing a really creepy grin, right? Because she’s totally going to scare away everyone in the village if she keeps making expressions like that, illusion or no.”

“It would look better without the pointy teeth,” Akari pointed out.

“...Probably.”

“Right! Speaking of illusions, there’s something that’s been bugging me...”
Other than the gender euphoria that came packaged with a mild identity crisis, both of which I maybe needed to unpack at some distant point in the future! “If your parents can tell I’m under an illusion, doesn’t that mean we’ll stand out wherever we go?”

Akari and Haruka glanced at one another, a silent exchange passing before my eyes as one shrugged, and the other rolled her eyes. I don’t know who won or lost said exchange (or if it was even something someone could win or lose) but in the end, it was Akari who spoke.

“Joana-sama, while I know Haruka-san comes across as highly undependable, looks incredibly sloppy, and was recently kicked out of her parents place for being a lazy trickster who couldn’t be bothered to contribute to the village in any meaningful manner, you still shouldn’t underestimate her power as a five-tailed kitsune. She’s actually rather talented, you know? Otherwise the way she lives her life wouldn’t be seen as such a waste.”

“That’s right!” Haruka declared, practically glowing from Akari’s compliments(?) “Even my parents can’t see through my illusions, you know? And they’re some of the strongest kitsune around! Most people won’t even notice you’re under one!”

“Besides which,” Akari continued, “cities on the outskirts tend to have a wide variety of people. While oni are, of course, not generally included in the list of residents, there are plenty of races that make use of illusions - many of whom sell their services. The few people capable of detecting her handiwork will likely assume your illusion is for vanity purposes.”

“So... they’ll think I’m just ugly, or something?”

“More or less,” Akari confirmed, nodding slowly.

“Or hiding a disfiguring scar or three!” Haruka confirmed. “But hey, that’s a small price to pay for open access to alcohol!”

...She did have a point. N-not that alcohol was my main goal or anything! A soft bed and a roof over my head would also be great! But if we could manage to find a place with a bar nearby, I certainly wouldn't complain.

"Still... I can't believe this is going to be my life from here on... I mean, I'm actually in a body that I feel *good in*, and I've got to hide it!"

"A body you feel good in?" Haruka parroted, tilting her head to the side. "What's that supposed to mean?"

Crap.

"About that," Akari said, looking me up and down. "I have been wondering, myself, how you managed to live your life up until this point. You mentioned being raised by humans, did you not? How did they manage that without hiding your identity?"

"Wait, what do you mean raised?" Haruka asked. "I thought you were just a newly manifested weirdo or something... Err. Mistress?"

Akari, who'd just turned her silent glare towards Haruka, let out a sigh. Unfortunately for me, rather than reprimanding the fox girl for her "disrespect," she quickly shifted her attention back to me.

"Uh..." What did I say? That I was transplanted from another world post-death? Because that might get into some uncomfortable territory about the

whole “comfortable in my body” thing, on top of being kinda totally and completely unbelievable!

Maybe I could go halvesies on the truth? Tell them that I was changed to look like this form? Though that wouldn’t explain my complete and utter lack of knowledge about anything and everything local...

“I uh....” Fuck it. “Look....” What did I say? “I.... Does anyone else hear screaming?”

No. Seriously! Screaming! Suspiciously well timed screaming! You’d think the heavens hadn’t abandoned me or something! “I’m going to go check that out!”

Running away from my problems? Me? No way! I was just running towards someone else’s!