

A Tale worth telling

It's amazing how quickly your life can change from a single decision. Searching for a Job, and coming across a listing for a Library you hadn't heard of. Following the directions, arriving at the oaken doors, and stepping inside to find an entirely new world inside, the Library's interior barely matching its exterior, with large towering shelves, seeming to spiral on forever, no ceiling in sight to stop them, floating lights and crystals illuminating every inch and corner. And so many creatures you never thought could really exist.

A Kobold running up to you while you're standing there, recognizing you as the person who responded to the listing, and asking for you to come with them. Meeting the purveyor and owner of the Library, a large, towering dragon with scales that seemed to shift hues with every subtle movement of their frame. And yet despite their size, their gaze is friendly and gentle, and their voice is soft.

Being provided with the contract that grants you an apprenticeship within the library, with a warning that your form might not remain the same during the duration of your stay, but signing regardless, knowing that, somehow, this is the right choice, the dragon taking the piece of paper, before sliding over a nametag with a carved gem emblazoned in its centre, your name already etched into its surface. Being allowed to start your duties whenever you were ready.

Being escorted and guided around the library by your new coworker, being shown where each category was, the ordering system, how to use the computers to look up books or information. Learning little details on the inner workings of the library, where the Cafe was located if you ever wanted a hot drink, or the different environmental lounges for more peaceful reading experiences. Slowly building up the knowledge to navigate the library on your own without the use of a map, to check books in or out, to look up their current location in the library. Soon, being able to start your new job officially.

The changes starting out slow, having your body slowly shrink down, soft maroon colored scales sprouting along your back and chest. Nails becoming longer, more pointed. Tiny nubs appearing on the back of your head, nestled within your slightly more vibrant hair.

A few days later, while stacking the bookshelves you notice the scales have started appearing on the backs of your hands, and your nails have started to darken, their tips looking more and more clawlike, while your shoes feel a bit uncomfortable, tight in some areas, and way too loose in others. Your horns have grown as well, starting to poke their way out of your hair, which you have noticed has become a lot thicker, its fringes gaining a golden yellow hue.

A couple days after that, you find yourself having to use a step stool to reach the top shelves. Your hands are now fully covered in scales, almost like your own colourful gloves. The scales on your chest meanwhile has started to thicken into softer plates, the start of an underbelly. Your shoes have become a lot more uncomfortable, you should look into getting some new footwear, before it starts seriously impacting your work.

Of course, there's more to running a library than stacking shelves. The next day, the dragon assigns you to desk duty, managing book requests, checking books in and out, as well as helping those who need help finding a particular book amongst the numerous corridors. Something that doesn't require you to walk around a lot, while they go sort out your footwear problem. You notice you have to raise up the seat quite a bit to properly see over the desk and access the screen. Your butt also doesn't feel entirely comfortable against the back of the chair, so you end up sitting forwards, feet dangling over the edge of the cushion.

During your lunch break, you notice your incisors have started to lengthen, a bit pointier, a bit sharper, and your nose has started to flare out, scales wrapping around from the back of your head towards your cheeks. A look in the mirror reveals your horns have grown in quite nicely, curving past the sunset hues of your hair. Or was it a mane now?

When you show up to work the next day, you can't help but notice how baggy your clothes have become. Thankfully, your dragon is waiting for you with a surprise. Your own librarian attire. You soon find yourself dressed in a Sapphire Robe and silk pants, lines of gold embroidered across their edges, and a hole for your growing tail. You were lastly given a stole, marking your graduation from apprentice, to junior librarian. But more important to you in that moment was the pair of open toed sandals, allowing you to finally have some footwear that didn't squish your talons or fall off your feet. They also came with a raised heel, which you didn't notice was a lot more comfortable than a simple flat sole, as you found your stance had gravitated towards balancing on your toes, shifting to a more digitigrade method of standing while you had been distracted with your old shoes. All in all, the gesture put a smile on your growing muzzle, as you cheerfully went off to conduct your duties.

So happy were you that you barely even noticed how much more nimble you had become, your taloned feet now unbound from ill-fitting shoes carrying you through the corridors, weaving past the guests and piles of books to get where you needed to be, clawed hands clutching the stack of books tightly, while your steadily lengthening tail kept you balanced, even as you scaled the ladders you now had to use to reach the top shelves. You found yourself slipping into an enjoyable rhythm as you dashed back and forth, clearing out the returns deposit in record time, and soon moving onto the discarded books lying around. Sure, it wasn't your job for today, but you had all this free time, and you were just really in the groove. Why stop now when you could keep helping out? You knew your dragon would certainly appreciate the gesture, a fanged grin plastered on your short snout as you recalled their proud expression seeing you in your new outfit, so focused you didn't even notice the closing chimes ring out until one of your colleagues taps you on your shoulder and snaps you out of your daydreaming, making you realise you were almost the same height as them now.

You spend the next week helping out your Dragon like this, soon discovering you'd picked up an interest in the literature you were porting around, starting with you just opening up one of them to pass your now much more bountiful free time between jobs, and slowly becoming enamoured with the stories contained within their leather bound pages, as soon it became a daily occurrence for you to find a stool someplace out of the way and plop yourself down to read today's find, your swaying tail easily giving away your emotions towards every sudden reveal, heroic moment, or major plot reveal. You could practically feel yourself living out these tales in all their glory. If you'd known being a librarian would be this enjoyable, you would've started a lot sooner.

But once more, there eventually came a time when you noticed a diversion from your day to day in the library, as you took a seat only to notice you were struggling to read the words on the pages. And it wasn't because of your rounded snout taking up a portion of your vision, oh no, instead, it was your eyes that had begun to change, the creeping shift of your sclera into a vibrant cyan, and the stretching of your pupils into a reptilian slit clearly being more than just a visual change. Of course, it hadn't yet developed to a point where your duties were affected, but you still went ahead and informed your master of your concerns, the ever so kind dragon nodding along and assuring you they would once again take care of it for you, petting your scaly head before letting you return to your duties.

It didn't feel like long at all until they returned to meet you at the start of yet another day of work, taking you aside as they unveiled a tiny pair of glasses. Well, tiny in relation to them. For you, they were the perfect size, even more apparent as they let you try them on, their thin frame slipping comfortably over your snout as you noticed just how much more... vibrant and detailed the world was through them. You hadn't even realised just how much you had been missing out on due to the changes in your vision until now.

Or perhaps you had always not been seeing the full picture during your stay in the library, never noticing the streams of light flitting through the corridors, the glow of mana illuminating every inch of its shelves, its infinite halls painted with colours you would never have been able to see with the eyes of a human. Because you weren't human anymore. Perhaps you'd never admitted it out loud, but you had come to accept it ever since you stared at your growing horns and glimmering scales in the mirror. So you weren't surprised when, after the tests and checkup was done to ensure your new glasses were working perfectly, that the Dragon, your Dragon, posed the offer. The library was not bound to just a singular location. It was an existence free to all who sought knowledge. But that came with a caveat. There was no guarantee that the next time those doors opened, that they would lead back to your world. So, you had a choice, to make your employment permanent, and start anew as an official Librarian, or be turned back, given a chance to apply somewhere else, to continue your old life as a human, and let it all fade into a warm memory. You didn't even need to wait for them to finish to give your answer.

Sure, your old life had never been bad, but you knew now, that it wasn't until you had stepped through those oaken doors that you had truly begun to live. You embraced the final changes as your Dragon's breath washed over your body, it's light soft and gentle, filling you with warmth that seeped into your very soul, altering your very existence into something new, yet something that had become so familiar to you over the weeks. When you opened your eyes, nothing had changed, but you knew, you could feel it. This form, it was you now. Your old life was over, and now... now you had an entirely new one to explore. A new name, a new identity, new things to learn and discover at your own pace. And you wouldn't have had it any other way.