

At last, the day had come. After countless hours of research, long travels to forgotten corners of the globe, and huge sums of money spent—after months of waiting for the stars to be in alignment—after all that, Rabina was finally ready to summon So'Chatle, forgotten god of ancient Wasschia.

The fox woman stood in her underground chamber, where no light shone save that of the braziers on the walls. With great care and severity, she began the process of drawing a summoning circle on the ground, beginning with the circumference, then inscribing into it those runes and sigils that she had found in her studies.

The circle finished, she stood before it with a dagger in hand, traced an esoteric figure in the air, a bright blue line materializing where the tip of the dagger had passed. As she finished the first figure, she uttered an appropriate incantation and the figure disappeared, its energy flowing into the circle on the ground. This she repeated again and again with a series of figures, the smoothness of her strokes telling of long hours spent practicing every last figure until she could draw them perfectly.

By the time the last figures had dissipated, the summoning circle was now emitting a light so brilliant it made the fires on the wall seem dark. With mounting excitement, Rabina began reciting the third verse of the Canticle of Cerebus, her voice growing louder and louder as she went on. A breeze began to blow inside the chamber, becoming stronger as the ceremony approached its finish. By the time the calling of the spirit was being made, the braziers were flickering and solid objects being tossed around by the wind. A lesser mage might have been frightened off, but Rabina was not about to be dissuaded by a little wind. And so, yelling so that her voice might be heard above the roaring wind, she finalized the ritual and everything came to a stop.

The fire from the braziers went out, as did the light from the circle, and the chamber was submerged in total darkness. The wind had stopped altogether, although the clatter of chairs and other objects could still be heard here and there before they rolled to a stop.

Rabina held her breath as light began to appear in the room—a light that had no source and illuminated every surface equally, giving everything an uncanny look. By the strange light, the vulpine witch could begin to make out a person standing in the center of the circle.

Standing seven feet tall, So'Chatle's head very nearly scraped the chamber's ceiling. Together with his muscles, his height made him quite the imposing figure, having at least three times the body mass Rabina possessed. In terms of clothes, the jaguar god sported little more than a loincloth and some jewelry, all of it shining gold. Sternly he stood and looked down upon her, arms crossed over his voluminous chest, his tail flicking about

behind him. Huge white fangs glistened behind his black lips as he opened his mouth to speak. "You summoned me," he said, then fell silent.

"I did," Rabina replied, the fox doing her best to present herself as an equal, standing up as straight as she could and refusing to break his gaze. She waited for him to respond to her answer, but he simply remained silent, those piercing eyes of his looking into her own. At last she decided to continue. "I, Rabina Ferrebon, being without a doubt the first mage in millennia to have summoned you, have called you here, So'Chatle, to lay my demands before you."

The jaguar god's lips curled up in a slight smile. "What demands might those be, and why should I grant them?"

"They are demands for the knowledge, and you will meet them because you are bound to my will by the circle in which you stand."

"Is that so? Well then, let me grant you one bit of knowledge," So'Chatle said, pointing down to the ground. "These circles of yours cannot bind a god."

Rabina sneered at the big cat. "Don't lie to me; you're not the first god I've summoned, you know. Aggissa, Reksos, Hoktos, and Sureti have all stood where you now stand, and all of them I have made to do as I willed."

"Oh I'm sure that they did what you asked of them, and I'm sure that they abided by the 'rules' of the summoning circle. Where you're mistaken is in thinking that they were forced to do so. Whatever they did, they did of their own volition, and had they not wanted to grant your requests, nothing you might have done could have made them comply. Had you summoned a lesser spirit you might have done so, but not to a god."

"I will hear no more of this, this, this nonsense," Rabina said, almost choking on her rage. "I command you, spirit, to cease your lies and give to me what I called you here for; the lost knowledge of Wasschia."

"It seems you require proof of my words," So'Chatle said. The jaguar god took two strides forward and casually stepped out of the summoning circle, giving no indication that he had encountered any resistance in doing so. Startled, Rabina took a step back, away from the looming being before her.

"We gods have been watching you for a while now. You are a witch of much skill and promise, but you suffer from many personal flaws. You have also now reached a point

where your powers pose a serious threat to yourself and to others if handled without the necessary wisdom. As such, we simply cannot allow you to keep going on like this. Either submit to us and accept our guidance to become a better person, or you resist us, in which case we must remove you as a threat for the well-being of others.”

“That is enough!” Rabina yelled, tracing a banishing sigil in the air between them. She must have made some mistake in drawing and charging the circle; it was the only explanation. That meant she had to get rid of this being. “You are dismissed.” As the sigil dissipated, however, So’Chatle still remained standing where he was.

“Child, I suggest you quit playing around like this and get serious. Your resistance *will* have consequences.” As he spoke, the god seemed to stretch higher into the air, his whole body expanding before Rabina.

“I said you’re dismissed!” the vulpine witch repeated as she traced the same figure in the air again. Nothing changed, except now she saw that So’Chatle was definitely getting bigger.

But no, it wasn’t that he was growing bigger. Had it been just that, his head would have already bumped up against the ceiling. Looking around, Rabina saw that it was actually her who was getting smaller. “What are you doing!?” she demanded in tones just short of hysteria.

“I’m simply making you shrink,” So’Chatle answered with a smirk. “Your head has simply grown much too big for a mortal; I’m reducing it to a more appropriate size.”

“Stop this at once!” Rabina yelled, tracing a different sigil in the air now, one intended to dispel whatever curse the insubordinate god had placed upon her. Still she kept on shrinking; if anything, casting the sigil had made her shrinking accelerate. Her head now barely reached up to the deity’s waist, and she was quickly dwindling further.

“If you want me to grow you back to normal, you just have to do one thing for me first.” The big cat raised a foot up to Rabina’s face, his rough, black pads floating right in front of her eyes. “Kiss my feet.”

In a rage, the witch slapped down the offending leg. “Forget it! I’ll fix this myself.” Filled with resolve, she traced sigil after sigil before her, going over a list of every last one that could be used to break curses, each one only making her shrink even faster.

The jaguar god watched impassively as she dwindled down past his waist, then past his knees, and finally down to his ankles before she finally stopped tracing sigils. “My offer still

stands, you know," he said crouching down over the shrinking witch, his voice a deep rumble whose vibrations Rabina could fill throughout her body. Looking at his paws, she saw that she had almost reached the size of his toes. She was completely out of options, having exhausted every last sigil she knew that might have a chance of breaking whatever curse had been placed upon her. However much it rankled her, she would have to either kiss his feet or allow herself to shrink away to a speck of dust on the floor.

Rabina made her way to the jaguar's right foot, walking with as much dignity as she could muster. Even if she was be no bigger than its toes by the time she reached it, she wouldn't allow herself to hurry. She just had to do this one demeaning act and then she would be back to normal. And so the little witch, standing no higher than half an inch, kneeled down before the jaguar god's toes, and with a grimace, planted a single kiss upon its black pad. But though she waited she waited a good five seconds, she simply wasn't growing back. "Hey! What gives!" she called up to the massive figure whose toe she had just kissed, who towered over her like a mountain. "Why am I not growing back?"

"I said I would grow you back once you'd kissed my *feet*—that's plural. You still have one more foot to kiss."

Rabina snapped then, her fury boiling over, and began hurling all sorts of insults at the massive god, recalling all the worst profanities she had heard over the years to spew them at the being who had reduced her to a bug crawling on the floor. So fired up was she that she didn't even notice that every insult she uttered cut her already minute size in half. By the time she had realized her mistake it was too late.

So'Chatle's toe was now taller than the jaguar had been after her kiss, and So'Chatle himself was now unimaginably huge, many times bigger than any earthly mountain, even simply crouching down over her. Rabina fell to her knees. She was nothing before him—barely even the size of a grain of sand. When he spoke, his voice rippled through the landscape that was the floor of the chamber like a massive explosion. "Are you quite done now? You've gotten yourself so small I'd almost think you wanted to be this size. Anyways, if you still want to get back to normal, you'd better get moving; you've just made the trek to it much, much longer than you should have."

Rabina perked up at his words. She still had a chance to grow back to normal! She just had to walk all the way to his other foot. A mere eight inches away in absolute terms, for the little fox that distance was more like two miles long, and she set out on the journey determined to get there without doing anything else that might get her size reduced any further.

After almost an hour of walking, the mite-sized mage finally passed under the god's toe. Small as she was, though, she still had a couple hundred feet to walk under its curvature before she reached a point where she could reach its pad.

Then, with the place where the toe met the ground finally in sight, Rabina cast aside any thought of making herself dignified and eagerly ran towards it, standing up on her tiptoes just to be able to plant a kiss on the nearest spot she could reach. The kiss given, relief flowed through her and she expected herself to be growing back any second now. As the seconds ticked by and she remained the same size, however, a terrible feeling began to creep up on her. Had So'Chatle lied to her? Had he had no intention of ever letting her regain her size? Would she be doomed to this existence forever? "So'Chatle!" She cried out, hoping that he could still hear her at this size. "Please, tell me: have I done something wrong?"

"No, nothing at all," the god replied, not even deigning to move his foot so he could look at her as he addressed her. "But, you see, I said I would grow you back once you had kissed my feet, and so far you have only kissed two very, very tiny spots on each of my feet. For me to grow you back, you'll have to kiss every last inch of them.

"Every... every... every..." Poor Rabina couldn't even finish the phrase. She was absolutely broken now, barely even reacting when her body started floating up, landing on the titan jaguar's toe as if it had its own gravitational pull.

"Don't worry, though; I'll make sure you stay on my feet until you're done with that. Now there's no chance of you accidentally falling off and getting lost on the floor. So get cozy down there! This is where you'll be living for the next few months, after all."

"M-m-months?" Rabina squeaked in a voice that was almost too soft even for her to hear it.

"Yes; months. I estimate it will take you at least three to finish this task at your size, and that's assuming you spend all your time working nonstop, without sleeping or eating or taking any breaks.

"Th-three months," the tiny fox muttered, the full severity of her situation finally dawning on her. She would spend the next several months living as a dust mite on So'Chatle's feet.

"That's right, so you'd better get to work unless you want to be stuck down there forever. Good luck, little one."

Rabina began crawling upon So'Chatle's skin, planting a kiss after kiss on it. "Oh great god!" She cried out between kisses. "Your power is beyond measure! Your divine form beyond compare! Before you I am filth! I am a worm! I am an ant! I am a flea! I am nothing! I am less than nothing! I am unworthy! I am unworthy! I am unworthy!"

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So'Chatle looked down on this scene with wry amusement. It was such a shame to have to break the girl like this. She had such great promise. Still, if she could manage to pull her mind back together in the months it took her to complete her task, she would make for a fine apprentice. And if she couldn't, well... she would make for a fine pet.