

Nothing about Thera's life could be described as "average".

A half-tiefling, Thera started her life not fitting into either category assigned to her. From the tieflings in her community who blamed humans for their eternal bloodline connection to hellfire, she was seen as a part of the problem. From the humans in her community who disregarded tieflings as nothing more than a continuation of a dreadful species, she was a disgrace. In no one's mind did she exist as anything other than a damaged part of her community.

Born to a tiefling mother and a human father twenty years ago, Thera spent most of her childhood alone. Frustrated with a growing awareness of the place her identity put her in with her peers, Thera became ultimately fascinated with the social conventions of tieflings and of humans. Most afternoons of young age were spent pouring over books about communication, emotional vulnerability, and intimacy amongst others, and the other part of the evening was spent observing the way others acted and how she could incorporate their own successful social interactions into her own actions. That being said, her obsession with social conformity began to dwindle away at eleven, when she recognized that, no matter what she did, people continued to make snap shot judgements on her.

Ever the extremist, Thera spent most of her adolescence very involved in researching species abnormalities. Passing most of her interest off as something scientific, she earned some respect from her professors, one of whom took a particular interest in her research. This professor ended up forming a brief working relationship with Thera for a couple of months, simultaneously bolstering her genetic research about species crossovers and slowly converting her notes into her own works so that she could steal the work out from under her. Thera, desperate for a friend, accepted this attention readily, but quickly ducked out when she recognized her professor's true intentions. Reclaiming the work from her and filing for legal recognition of her research, she was soon recognized in Hlioir as an up and coming scientist, and was invited to come to the city to begin studying under a one year program that would provide funding and housing. Eager to escape her small glacier town of Ishinono, Thera happily accepted this offer and moved to Hlioir at age eighteen to pursue genetic engineering and research at Hlioir Academy.

At Hlioir Academy, Thera pushed social interactions and peers out of her mind. Despite Hlioir being more accepting than her town of Ishinono, she feared having her trust betrayed again, and focused solely on her research. Her only social interactions for the entire year she studied within the program were the mandated meetings of report discussions she had with her peers, and her constant meetings with the professors of the genetic engineering department. Thera was working on a project that would allow for potential families to DNA test and recognize the risks their offspring would carry. However, even when her work received wide acclaim within the academy and from queen's advisors alike, Thera felt like her work was never quite enough. She worked herself boneless, and never felt like her knowledge could quite catch up to the invisible gap she drew between her intelligence and the intelligence of her peers. Her imaginary barriers left her breaking down, and one night out, she made a life altering decision.

On the ride home from a nearby archive, Thera shared a carriage with a warlock who claimed to be from the west coast. To a sleep-deprived, manic Thera, he offered something irrefusable: the ability to have the knowledge of the world. She would *never* have to doubt her own intelligence again, for she would far surpass everyone in her field. Her name would never be forgotten. No one could forget even if they wanted to. Thera readily accepted, even at a daunting price: losing her soul.

Part of the way through the warlock's ritual, Thera changed her mind suddenly. She demanded the warlock stop his ritual and return her soul to her. Her mind turned back to her parents and the professors who gave her the time of day. Sure, she'd never have all the intelligence she wanted, but she'd certainly have her soul left. The warlock, unable to operate without striking a deal with his "victim", lept from the carriage window, refusing to return the half of her soul that he stole. Thera returned to her room at Hlioir Academy, lost and frustrated. Was the whole thing just a set up to scare her? Was the man even a warlock at all? To take her mind off of what had happened, Thera returned to her work, a complicated equation that had been stumping her for the past few months. She solved it in an hour.

What Thera did not yet realize is she did still have part of the deal. The warlock made off with half her soul, but she kept half of his knowledge.

Despite Thera's best attempts to keep the secrets of her new abilities hidden, it didn't take very long for her exceptional intelligence to go noticed by professors and students alike. She became the talk of the school, both of awe and of envy. Towards the end of Thera's year at Hlioir, she was offered a full time position as a student under the tutelage of the professor who took her in originally, under one condition: she cannot speak of the work that the two conduct together.

Thera grew to realize just what her intelligence was being used towards and to what ends: it was being used as a manipulative pattern to discern below-average intellectuals and used the data collected about their mannerisms to target fear-mongering messages and messages of hope to certain groups. In essence, the project became a concentrated effort by a group of revolutionaries hoping to overthrow the royal system and the government. For the time she worked with them, Thera found herself in full agreement with what was happening. Despite her better nature, the logistics of the situation began to outweigh the emotional distress that the situation would cause, an example of the first time that her increased intelligence didn't necessarily correlate to good will or intent. Over time, Thera finished her work at the university and left to pursue her own independent studies towards the coast, funded by the department she worked with. She was given a stipend of two years to observe the lifestyle and patterns of the coastal villagers, who were known to be less wealthy and with lower intelligence scores.

A near death incident caused by factors that Thera cannot quite describe was what inevitably drove her away from the village. Her lodgings were overcome with flame, yet the flame was inextricably contained to the singular building. Once everyone had evacuated, the fire was miraculously put out. Thera saw a centaur looming in the windows of the house, but when she pointed it out to emergency responders that someone was still in the house, she was informed she was suffering a heatstroke and they had triple confirmed that all trapped individuals were removed from the scene. In the end, her deep confusion at the situation, muddled with an intense guilt that she felt emotionless towards the villagers who were caring for her drove her away from her studies. Combing over her work later that night, she came closer and closer to the realization that the wool had been pulled over her eyes at just how horrific her actions were, and she was essentially helping to commit low scale genocide. She provided a leave of absence which essentially faked her death, and decided to go further west.

Her new goal became to find the warlock that had taken half of her soul, and to uncover what it meant to live again. She worked to stay attached to this goal and the goals in front of her despite everything so that she could still validate her existence in her mind.