

I watched, shifting my viewpoint to the church as Kuro entered it. At this time of the evening on a Friday, there were a scarce few people present. Only Prim and a few others who had awakened their own divinity saw the catfolk girl walking in and sitting on one of the pews.

Kuro looked around nervously, as if unsure of what to do, but the options were in my hands now. I opened the menu of the church, choosing the option that had come with it, the option to establish new gods. I had never tested this option before, because I didn't know how it would trigger. Would I have the chance to back out after selecting the option? Would there be a cost?

The answers soon came to me. As soon as I selected the option, I was given a list of all eligible items, not just within the church but within my entire territory. There was thankfully an option to back out of the selection, but I had no intention to do so, not even after seeing the price associated with the pick.

*Ten thousand points to appoint the first god?* If I had eyes, they'd be wide. Ten thousand points... Was this the cost that it would be for each god I installed? Or would the price increase?

There was no time to test it for now. I selected the item on my list known as the Guiding Ring, paying the points required and watching to see what would unfold.

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Kuro sat on the pew, eyes scanning from side to side. She looked questioningly down at her ring, unsure what to do. Suddenly, a beam of light appeared, attracting the attention of all of the priests inside the church. The pillar was centered atop one of the empty pedestals along the wall.

Under everyone's watchful gaze, a new statue began to form within the shining light. This statue looked to be a scholarly man with sharp features, wearing a loose robe and square glasses. Kuro yipped softly as she saw the figure, her eyes going wide. Teacher really had become a god, just like that?

She quickly looked around again, until a familiar voice spoke in her mind. *Don't worry, Kuro. Even if this doesn't work, it's fine. The next step is to pray.*

Kuro had never prayed before. Well, not *genuinely* prayed. She had made a show of pretending to do so whenever anyone had asked in the past. But how could she genuinely pray? She had never believed in a single god.

Before Teacher found her, she was a street rat. Every day was a struggle to survive, looking for any discarded scraps or rats that she could roast. It was Teacher that opened her eyes and taught her the wonders of learning. It was Teacher that gave her hope, and showed her that she was more than just a filthy stray cat.

Ever since she met Teacher, her world had completely changed. She had gotten a job at a library organizing books, she had gotten clean clothes, and she had even managed to come to this new city full of opportunities. But she had never once known how to pray genuinely. So how could--

Her thoughts were cut off as a dense pillar of golden light erupted around her, threatening to pierce through the roof of the church. Her eyes widened, unshed tears falling away from her face as something shifted within her very soul. A closeness that she had never felt before, despite having always worn the ring on her finger.

"W-What, but I didn't do anything, did I?" Kuro asked, half in panic as she looked around. The brilliant luster vanished, replaced by a faint, golden glow that clung to Kuro's skin.

"You must have unintentionally offered the prayer," Prim's voice spoke up, a gentle smile in her lips as she walked over. "For now, try to draw the energy back into your body. Otherwise, it will be continuously released as an aura that causes awe in others."

To prove her point, she gestured towards the other priests of the church, who had without question dropped to their knees. Kuro flinched back, quickly looking at Prim in a panic, silently crying out for help.

"Just focus on your connection," Prim said in a soothing tone. "Place a veil over it and hide it from sight."

Kuro immediately did as she was told, focusing on the new connection that she felt with Teacher. It felt like a golden pit within her chest, a bottomless pool of radiant energy. After a moment of focus, she imagined a cloth sheet being pulled over the pit, blocking its radiance.

When she opened her eyes again, she found that the golden glow had vanished, causing her to let out a sigh of relief. She looked around, still seeing the expressions of awe in the other priests, and sent a pleading look to Prim. "Did I do it wrong?"

However, Prim quickly corrected the misunderstanding. "No, that's just a natural response after discovering your awakening. Your divinity has been properly concealed at this point, don't worry."

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As expected, Kuro's utter faith and devotion in Gideon was more than enough for her to awaken as a Saintess. However, there was something that I hadn't been accounting for. I looked off to the side, within the vast empty space that I had considered my mental domain. Standing there was the same scholarly figure that had just had a statue erected within the church.

I blinked, and then I realized... I *blinked*. Looking down, I saw hands, fingers! I had hands!

Ever since my arrival in this world, my only point of interaction had been through sensing the outside world. Everything else was just a vast, empty void. Now, there was another presence, and the existence of that presence had provided me with some kind of mental body.

“Cain?” the scholarly figure spoke up, moving closer. “I see, so this must be the divine realm?”

“Your guess is as good as mine,” I muttered mutinously. “Until now, it’s just been an empty void. I thought this was just a representation of my subconscious.”

“Empty..?” Gideon asked in confusion. “This place appears empty to you?”

“...Yes?” I questioned back, looking around at the absolute nothingness that stretched infinitely in every direction.

“Interesting... in my eyes, we are standing within a vast library. I suppose this space takes on different appearances for everyone. You appear to be standing off near one of the entrances, so approaching this region must be symbolic of seeking you out.”

When I heard that, I *felt* my eye twitching. If that was the case, then why did I get so much *nothing*? I let out a sigh, just glad that I could actually see and feel things without going to my avatar. As for taste... well, there was still no way to take care of that yet. Maybe if I could figure out how to add things to this void, I’d be able to make a tavern or something. Until then, I would just continue as is.

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Dean was flummoxed as he watched the scene unfold within the mindscape of his glasses. “A new god was really created, just like that? And she even became a Saintess right away?”

A jolt of a thought came to Dean, and he turned to look at Evelyn. “Then, if we have you enshrined as a goddess, does that mean that I’ll become a Saint, too?” he asked in a hopeful tone, though Evelyn returned a cold smile in return.

“Do you think that you revere me to the same degree as that girl reveres the spirit of her ring?” she asked coolly, and Dean fired back without missing a beat.

“I mean, you haven’t really done all that much to earn it, have you?”

His words caused Evelyn’s brow to twitch, her smile turning colder. “Do you have any idea how hard it is to teach myself a new programming language, one so esoteric that it can interfere with reality? You should be grateful that I’ve even managed to program in the features that you’ve gained access to.”

“Yes, yes, the great Evelyn is wise and merciful,” Dean changed his tone, bowing subserviently towards Evelyn behind her desk. “I am sure that it is only a matter of time before the great Evelyn can create strength-enhancing abilities, or the power to master magic with a glance.”

Evelyn coughed lightly, unable to maintain Dean’s gaze. In truth, physical strengthening was something that she had learned months ago. However, her glasses were very fragile, and she was afraid that a strengthened Dean might break them out of carelessness. “Y-Yes, I’m working on all of that, don’t worry. Just find me more samples for my data.”

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By the time Kuro left the church, her divine aura was completely under control. Despite this, Prim walked alongside her, acting as an escort. “Where are we going now?” the young catfolk girl asked hesitantly.

“It’s only natural that word will soon spread regarding the incident earlier. Even if I were to order their silence, there would inevitably be someone that couldn’t help themselves but share the gossip.” When Prim said this, the image of a particular gluttonous priestess appeared in her mind. “We won’t be able to control how the information spreads within the city. However, if we make contact through the guild, we can ensure that the people in power who can offer their protection will learn of this before those who would seek to harm you.”

Prim’s words caused Kuro to stiffen slightly, and she realized that they were heading in the direction of the Adventurer’s Guild. Prim pushed the door open, and several adventurers stopped what they were doing to look at her, as well as the small girl walking alongside her. One brutish-looking man with a scar down the side of his face walked over with thunderous steps, crouching down to be on the same level as Kuro.

“If it isn’t everyone’s favorite little bookworm,” he said, his face twisting into a surprisingly kind smile. “You’re still too young to enroll, you know? But, if the Saintess herself is bringing you, perhaps there is a special request you’re planning to post?”

Kuro dipped her head at this, her cheeks rosy. She never really visited the guild, but she knew she had a reputation. A nine-year old girl that could compete with old masters of enchanting, someone who could often be seen walking in and out of the Lord’s Manor. There were many times that the elderly men and women stopped her when she was walking down the road and handed her some food. Sometimes, she would even maintain their tools for them to practice her skills.

Because of this, most of the adventurers looked at Prim fondly. Being friends with her meant that they might receive preferential treatment when she was older, getting cheaper enchantments or repairs. And being hostile towards her would earn the wrath of not only the other adventurers, but every major force within the city.

Prim shook her head at the man's question. "We're not here to fill out a request, this time. We need to deliver some important news to the Guild's Master."

The scarred man looked at Prim in surprise. "Sam? She's up in her office," the man said, rising to his feet. Prim nodded her thanks, moving to the stairs. Once she had reached the Guild Master's office, she rapped her knuckles along the door.

"Come in," the familiar voice called out from within, and Prim opened the door. Inside, Sam set aside the papers she was reading, perking a brow and looking at the two standing in her doorway. "Well... this is a rare honor. What brings the Saintess to my door? And with a young friend, too."

Prim cleared her throat, closing the door after entering with Kuro. "The information will surely reach here before the week ends, so I wanted to make sure you were able to respond properly. Young Kuro here was able to awaken as a Saintess as well, to a new deity enshrined in the church."

Sam's expression froze. Any witty retort she had planned for whatever reasoning Prim had to visit died in her throat. She looked at the young catfolk girl, choking out the words. "Another Saintess?"

Kuro looked up at Prim, who gave an approving nod. She slowly released the cover on the golden pit of her divinity, letting her skin release its shimmering glow. Sam's grip on her desk tightened hard enough that the wood creaked, her knuckles turning white.

"I-I see. Have you verified her divine blessing yet?" she forced herself to ask, but Prim shook her head.

"We haven't gotten to that point. However, given the nature of the god she serves, I strongly believe that it will have something to do with education."

When Sam heard that, something seemed to click. She looked over at Kuro, recalling the rumors that she had heard about the girl. "Education, huh? That makes sense for a god you worship."