

When Lav was initially found stumbling through the woods, they had been thrown partway into this strange phenomenon. A group of self-proclaimed scientists had called it upon them to research this once in a lifetime event, and maybe to cure it. They invited the chimera out of pure kindness (and perhaps some slight ulterior motives) into their makeshift laboratory. These ambitions were lofty at best, and turned out to be an issue soon enough when complications emerged one after the other.

Consultations between the team and the research target proceeded smoothly at first - Lav was agreeable towards the laypeople and their clumsy questioning, even if it was a bit distasteful. To the surprise of nobody that led nowhere. While they were able to pin down symptoms and such, they struggled to find a way to slow down the process itself. At first it was not so bad, and it seemed like there was no need to take any action, but when the change in physical attributes became too apparent, they scrambled towards finding a solution. The first differences showed themselves in both the texture of their fur and their height. One could have easily ruled out the increase in their mane's scruffiness with the approach of a colder season, but then they got taller. When this shift in size became noticeable, it caused a bit of panic within the "research" team, who only made more mistakes as a result.

If Lav had been able to make deductions, they would have easily recognized that this strange transformation had been triggered by one of their hobbies. Being in a town that was deathly allergic to nerd culture made it very hard to find like-minded individuals, even with interests that gained a lot of popularity in recent years, like Dungeons and Dragons. The chimera's only choice was to go online, unfortunately. Despite the very apparent dangers of the internet, Lav had been careless. One click of an unchecked website link had caused a weird shift in reality, rewriting the very fiber of the chimera's existence, as if someone slowly uploaded a new blueprint into them. The only way to stop it was behind that crucial discovery, but with the afflicted not mentioning it at all - why would they, anyways - it seemed to be out of the question entirely.

With time more notable changes happened. The usually long and floppy ears receded into shorter, round ears. Their horns disappeared as their new form regarded them as unnecessary and their scruffy fur turned a different color to better suit their new style. Not only that, but with each passing day they seemed to grow stronger, along with some form of strange tattoo manifesting all across their body. Even their eyesight was improving to the point that they no longer needed glasses. An interesting change, but they would definitely get some glasses for fashion purposes again.

There were many differences, more than anyone could reasonably list off the top of one's head, but the team had a good way to handle it. Despite their lack of skill in finding a cure, they were surprisingly adept at documenting changes. Every little

detail was photographed, written down with eerie precision and sorted by date in neat folders, locked away in cabinets. Lav would have been suspicious of that behavior, but as their brain chemistry changed it mattered a little bit less. Surely this was just part of the research, or maybe... admiration?

The hopes of stopping any of this soon died down when the mental ticks started showing up. Originally it only showed itself in slightly more confident mannerisms during examinations, but with each passing day things became more intense. A simple flex turned into trapping ~~the weakest links~~ specific research team members between a wall and their increasingly different body. A view that was close and personal ensured that the ~~lucky victim~~ assigned scientist got a good chance at taking notes about every single change.

One particular day Lav propped themselves against a wall and gave the rather lithe fox researcher no way to escape once again. The poor fox could smell the hint of smoke, ash and fire coming straight from the ~~chimera~~ gnoll themselves. Gladly they would have noted down these changes, especially now that it was in its end stage, but ~~Lav~~ Zen had different plans. The sassiness had taken over completely, a cocky smile on their face as they leaned in very close to the fox' ears, nearly whispering. The fox could feel the heat of the gnoll's breath against the side of their face, but it felt all the more scorching hot when chills were sent through their body.

"You know, if you want to research me so badly, there is one spot that somebody has yet to document the difference on. I reckon you would fit quite well in there, though it might be a little cramped." Zen kept it at that bad flirt, refraining from acting in a more physical way. It was much more fun to watch them squirm through the sheer power of charisma alone, anyways. By now the process was nearly complete, save for some minor changes. The last few weeks had been turbulent, and finally it had been completed. It was very much worth it in the end, as Zen stared at the new form in the mirror, much happier to have awoken to their true form.

Zen was a gnoll reborn.