ETIQUETTE CLASS... WHAT’LL THEY GIVE US NEXT? SHEESH.

WHAT DID YOU PUT DOWN FOR “HOW TO FORMALLY GREET LANDED GENTRY”?

GROVEL IF THEY LOOK MAD... I HOPE THAT CHANGES WHEN YOU’RE A HERO THOUGH.

AT MY OLD ACADEMY WE HAD THIS THING I GUESS YOU’VE CALLED ETIQUETTE CLASS. BUT IT WAS LIKE, ALL THE TIME.

IT WAS EXACTLY NOTHING LIKE THIS.

OH?

SO MUCH YELLING. LINE UP! SHINE YOUR HOOVES! NO, SALUTE EXACTLY LIKE THIS WHEN YOU SEE A SUPERIOR! TCH, IT WAS PRETTY DUMB.

UHHM... WHAT KIND OF SCHOOL WAS THAT...?

OH. H-HI, NETTLE... I HAVE A QUESTION FOR YOU, JARED.

UM, CAN WE GO SOMEWHERE PRIVATE?

UM, NO? THIS SEEMS PRIVATE ENOUGH...?
I dunno what you expect me to ask, you weirdo...

I was just wondering about your ears and tail. Everybody says they’re meant to be a curse from the God of Lies, but yours are obviously real, even though you’re—nettles!

Ohhh I get it.

It’s obvious, but seems right. It’s a gift not a curse, huh? Then when you tell people it’s a curse, they think you’re not a trickster and—nettles!!

That—I—I... Bluff didn’t know I’m a trickster!

And that ear thing is supposed to be secret! It’s a secret none of us can talk about it oh god revealing that secret has deadly consequences....

Huh.

Jared—jinx, sorry. Calm down. It’s fine. I’m not scared of your god. If he wants to kill me I’m pretty sure my goddess will have something to say about it.
I GUESS, BUT I MEANT... THIS IS A REAL, REAL BIG SECRET. IF IT WERE TO GET OUT, IT WOULD MEAN A GRUESOME DEATH FOR ME CARE OF THE TRICKSTER GOD TO "PROVE" I'M AN ENEMY OF LORD TRICKY AND THIS IS ACTUALLY A CURSE, SO...

WHAT?

WHY WOULD YOU FOLLOW A GOD WHO'D KILL YOU?

ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE TRADE-OFF IS "ALSO A BUNCH OF OTHER PEOPLE WILL WANT TO KILL YOU". THAT'S DUMB, JINX.
I don't think you understand...

Tricksters are an underground society, it's very important to keep secrets, otherwise many more people could get outed and killed.

So why join in the first place?

Yeah really. Your God's a jerk, man.

Just because we saved you doesn't mean being a trickster is good. Don't become one, you could make so many better choices. I forbid it, Jared.

He said that? Ha, Leo... it's not his choice to make. It's your decision, Jared. Good or bad.
Nettle... how did you become a nature power, and why?

Goddess servants are very unusual, there's only 12 of each nature and chaos, isn't there?

Still... it must be very lonely, being one of so few.

How did you become one? Did you get chosen? Kidnapped? What were you like before that?

Where did everybody go? Why did they leave me behind? They'll be back... won't they?

You'll be safe enough here. Seems a nice village, sure we'll be able to find somebody to take you in. Unless... you'd rather come with me?
I didn’t have a home before Master Saffron picked me up, so I went with him and I guess... yeah.

I was on the streets before Uncle Leo picked me up so I went with him and his mob and just kind of... yeah.

He was so kind, I wanted to be just like him, so... hahaha.

Huh. I didn’t know.

Well, I guess we’re more alike than I thought.

Was I the only one here who had a relatively normal upbringing? Is that so alien to you guys?
By the by... how sick is Snatch? I haven't seen him at all lately.

I'm a bit worried. If he's that sick we should probably get Miss Ryushin to fetch a healer, or-

Oh, he's not sick.

What?

He ran off after Claw to help save the princess or whatever it was.

Oh.

Then... you'll want a better excuse than that. The teachers will start to ask questions.

Heh, I submit to your expertise as a follower of the God of Lies.

Ha. Tell you what. Let's get Dannin in on this, she's good at this stuff. We can probably make up some story about Snatch visiting with the Griffis out back for a while.

You think?

Well, nobody's going to check!
SO IF JAKE GIVES ANIMAL EARS AND TAIL OUT AS A FAKE CURSE, WHAT ABOUT IF HE TARGETS A HALFIE?

WELL, HE'D MAKE SURE THE EARS AND TAIL LOOK DIFFERENT. HE LIKES THAT.

MAYBE LIKE THIS?

OR THIS!

OR... UMM...

WELL ANYWAY YOU GET THE IDEA. HE JUST LIKES TO DO SOMETHING OBVIOUS.

SINCE HE GIVES ANIMAL EARS TO HUMANS, HE SHOULD GIVE HUMAN EARS TO HALFIES.

WHAT A HORRIFYING THOUGHT.

WHAT A GREAT THOUGHT!