

**Vorska** is one of the iconic characters from the **Arcane Mysteries: The Secrets of the Arcanum** supplement. A wizard of the **School of Transformation** within the College of Transmutation, she specializes in spells that alter her own form. The following is a short story about Vorska experimenting with a staple spell of her tradition.

Vorska runs her tongue meditatively over one tusk as she finishes the last of the stitching on the doeskin dress. Holding it up, she inspects the work. The simple dress is fringed at neck and hem, with the fringe woven with claws, feathers, fangs, and spines from a myriad of beasts. Not bad, she's a wizard not a tailor after all, but not bad..

She shrugs out of her robe, tossing it on the bed of her modest room in one of the women's residences near the College of Transmutation at The Arcane College of the Eleven Mysteries. Her normal underthings follow the robe onto the bed. If her theory as to her modifications of the spell she is testing is correct, her garb tonight must be completely animal based for the magic to function as she plans.

The light doeskin contrasts markedly with her dusky green skin as she shimmies into the dress. She decides that she enjoys the comfort of the loose-fitting doeskin and the twirl of the fringe about her knees as she moves. She laces on a matching pair of moccasin boots, then stands, picks up a hand mirror, and angles it up and down to try and examine the overall result. Not bad. So the look kind of plays into the whole savage half-orc cliché, but if everything goes well it's what she'll be wearing when she demonstrates the spell as part of the testing to earn her Associate of Arts in Transformation degree in a few weeks; and 'impressive' is just what she's going for.

She gathers up her leather satchel, slides her bone dagger into its slit sheath at the dress's waist, and heads purposefully off into the night. It is late, but she still gets a few odd looks as she walks east through the fanciful buildings of the College of Transmutation. She crosses the bridge over the river, past the College of Alchemy and the Artisan district, and quickly leaves the buildings of the Arcanum behind.

Beyond the precincts of the college this side of the river is mostly forested. The imposing bulk of the fortress of the Battle Mage Academy can be seen to the south, but here it is all narrow paths winding their way among dark forested hills. Having the advantage of orcish blood, the dark of the moonless night bothers Vorska not at all. She finds comfort in the sounds of the forest and the sharp contrasts of greys picked out by her orcish vision. She doesn't actually have to go anywhere to try the spell, she could have simply given it a go right in her room. But there is something about the night and the forest beyond the college grounds that puts her in the proper frame of mind for this kind of magic.

Just a touch more than an hour sees her arriving at her chosen hilltop. The crest of the hill is bound by stones set in some long-ago time. Within the circle of head sized stones is naught but short grass and wildflowers, always reminding her of a tonsured monk. She shrugs off the satchel and pulls out the watertight bone tube holding the leather scrolls that make up her spell book. Finding the one she needs, she spreads it out, reading it one last time, though she already has the spell prepared in her mind.

*Polymorph Self* is a variant of the archetypal *Polymorph* spell for transforming a creature into a beast. In this case, a less complicated version that affects only the caster's own person. Not only that, the simpler magic of this spell affects only the caster's physical being, nothing worn or carried. That limitation is what her modifications to the spell and her animal-based garb is meant to address. If successful, the purely animal based materials will be transformed along with her physical being, and then transform back when the spell ends. That is the theory at least, and it should make her spell demonstration all the more impressive. (And it doesn't hurt that she won't be left standing sky clad after working the spell for the exam.)

Ok then. Vorska stands up and begins to chant, envisioning the form of a magnificent golden eagle in her mind. She fingers the eagle feather woven into one of her braids and the chant takes on a screeching tone as she raises her arms above her head.

Suddenly a golden eagle flaps awkwardly within the now much too large doeskin dress. Her mind vacillates for a moment between that of Vorska the eagle and Vorska the wizard, until her many hours of disciplined practice wins out, giving her the body of an eagle but retaining the full measure of her own intellect. This momentary struggle gives way to a screech of pique, as she struggles out of the doeskin dress and flaps once to hop over to the scroll. She tilts her head left and right trying to read the magical runes through eagle eyes before stomping her talon in frustration and cancelling the spell.

The night breeze is chill on her now naked half-orc form as she crouches over the leather scrolls. Damn it all to the six hundred and sixty sixth layer of the Abyss! Her modifications should have worked! Her dress and boots should have transformed with her. She chews on a bit of claw woven through the end of a braid as she examines the spell again. Dropping down cross-legged, she pulls additional pages of notes from the satchel. She glances at the doeskin dress but decides that the scratchy grass and chill wind is a fitting punishment for failure.

She mentally crosses off potential sources of interference with the spell in her mind. There was nothing manufactured with her garb. All tanned leather, sinew thread, bone, and feather: Check. No magical enchantments on her person or on her clothing that might have disrupted her modifications to the spell: Check. The eagle feather material component was one she had used before: Check.

Wait a moment. Maybe... Ok, so maybe she was approaching this the wrong way. Maybe her garb could BE enchanted to work with the spell. Magical artifice was not her specialty but should be a pretty simple item to construct. It didn't have to do anything on its own, it simply had to accept the magic of the spell. She needed to do some research. With new resolve she runs over and grabs her dress and boots, stuffs everything back into the satchel, and begins the spell again.

With a screech Vorska the eagle takes off with her satchel in her talons, heading towards the Library.

The **School of Transformation** is one of the new wizard archetypes in the **Arcane Mysteries: The Secrets of the Arcanum** supplement for **Dungeons & Dragons 5th Edition**. The following are two signature spells of the transformation school of magic.

### **POLYMORPH SELF**

*2nd-level Transmutation*

**Casting Time:** 1 Action

**Range:** Self

**Components:** V, S, M (a piece of the type of beast you wish to transform into)

**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 hour

You transform yourself into a new form. The new form can be any beast of size large or smaller whose Challenge rating is 1/8 or less. This increases to 1/4 when you reach 4th level, 1/2 when you reach 8th level and a CR of 1 when you reach 12th level. Your game statistics, including mental Ability Scores, are replaced by the statistics of the chosen beast, though you retain your alignment and personality.

You can attempt a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw when you cast this spell. If successful, you retain your Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores; the benefit of any features from your class, race, or other source; and all of your skill and saving throw proficiencies, in addition to gaining those of the creature.

The transformation lasts for the duration, or until you drop to 0 hit points, die or choose to end the spell as a Bonus Action on your turn. You assume the hit points of the new form. When you revert to your normal form, you return to the number of hit points you had before you transformed. If you revert as a result of Dropping to 0 Hit Points, any excess damage carries over to your normal form. As long as the excess damage doesn't reduce your normal form to 0 hit points, you aren't knocked Unconscious.

The creature is limited in the Actions it can perform by the nature of its new form, and it can't speak, cast Spells, or take any other Action that requires hands or Speech.

Your clothing and equipment falls to the ground in your space when you cast this spell. Non-magical armor or clothing that is not easily removed may be destroyed in the transformation.

**At Higher Levels.** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the duration increases by 1 hour for every slot level above 2nd.

**Arcane Synergy:** If you have the **Wild Shape** druid class feature you automatically succeed at the saving throw to retain your mental abilities.

Classes: Bard, Druid, Sorcerer, Wizard

### **SHIFTING STRIKE**

*transmutation cantrip*

**Casting Time:** 1 Action or 1 Reaction

**Range:** Self

**Components:** M (A portion of a natural weapon from a beast such as Claws, Teeth, or Spines)

**Duration:** Instantaneous

Your form briefly changes, and you grow fangs, claws, or another natural weapon of your choice. As part of the Action used to cast this spell you may make a melee attack using a natural weapon to attack a creature within your reach. The natural weapon formed by this spell inflicts 1d6 points of bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage. You may use Strength, Dexterity, or your Spellcasting Ability for the attack and damage roll of the natural weapon attack using this spell. You may not cast this spell if you are wearing medium or heavy armor made of metal.

In addition, you may cast this spell as a Reaction to attack a creature that provokes an opportunity attack while within your reach.

The damage dice of a natural weapon attack using this spell increases by 1d6 at 5th level (2d6), 11th level (3d6), and 17th level (4d6).

**Arcane Synergy:** This spell may be cast while polymorphed or in beast form if that form possesses a natural weapon attack.

Classes: Druid, Sorcerer, Wizard

