

SLOUGH

a solo LARP by Luke Jordan (gamesfromthewildwood)

slough (*verb*): shed or remove (a layer of dead skin); get rid of (something undesirable or no longer required)

You are a wizard regretting where life has brought you and preparing to leave your past behind. When the spell is cast, you will shed this life and shape and transform into something else.

Materials:

- a small candle (like a tealight or a birthday candle), match, and a safe place to light it
- a book that describes a variety of animals, plants, magical creatures, or similar (ideally, one with pictures)
- an index card, and a pen that feels good to write with

Your tower is cold, tonight. Cold, dark, and lonely.

The floor chills your bare feet; the biting air steals your breath in wisps of short-lived mist; winter aches in your bones and numbs your clever fingers. The sun set hours ago, and your eyes ache as you squint through the gloom.

[Go to the candle. Close your eyes, and invoke whatever powers you see fit. If you are a conjuror who trafficks with spirits, bid them come; if you invoke the power of patron gods, ask their blessing now; if you draw on forces of nature, call their names aloud. Light the candle.]

Your body is cold, and the night is dark, and your tower is lonely, but it does not matter.

Tonight is the night you leave this life behind.

[Decide: what has brought you to this point? What pain are you seeking to let go, what memories are you seeking to bury? Your answers may be distant and wholly imagined, or intimate and honest. Answer as you wish.]

Where will you go? Who will you seek out? What new form will you take? With which eyes will you watch your first sunrise?

[Go to your desk. Open your book. Flip through it, as fast or slow as you like, and choose what you will become. Think about your virtues, about your flaws. Take your time, and re-discover the true shape of your soul.]

This is not a grand spell. It does not call for graven circles or enchanted wands; for booming invocations, words of power torn from the cosmos, or the seven secret names of God; for ritual gestures, blood willingly spilled, or the sacrifice of priceless jewels. It is nothing like the magic you have worked before.

All it takes is a whisper, a candle, and a price.

The whisper must be heartfelt, and honest, and true. It starts with your name, and ends with what you will become.

[Write your spell on the card. Choose its form: poetry or prose, short or long, chanted spell or plain-spoken wish.]

The price is yours to choose. Only you can decide, after all, what you wish to carry forward and what you wish to leave cradled in your old skin. What you will leave behind and be free of by escaping this life.

[Write what you will lose on the back of the card. These may be memories, habits, scars, griefs, relationships, etc.]

You are ready. The time has come. Take a last moment to say goodbye to this life, then begin the spell. Good luck.

[Read your incantation aloud to the candle flame. If it is safe to do so, light the paper and watch it burn; if not, tear it into as tiny pieces as you can.]

The spell is done. Now you need only wait.

[Close your eyes. **Believe.**]