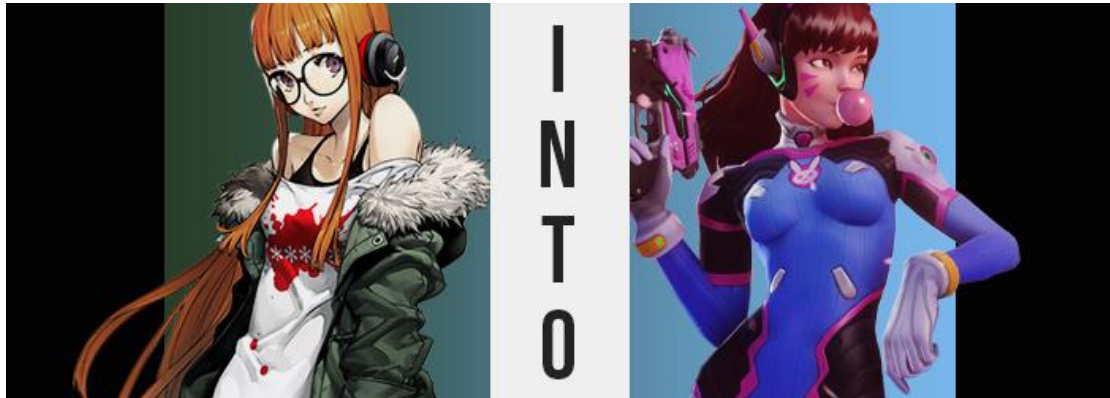


COMPETITIVE GAMING

BIWEEKLY STORY 19

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“Geh! Why did Akira buy me this!?” Futaba Sakura stared blankly at a bottle filled with a transparent liquid sitting on the rim of her bathtub. She’d drawn a hot bath for herself after a long day of Palace exploring with the rest of the Phantom Thieves -- and boy did she deserve it (according to her). Joker said he’d left her a gift in her bathroom before they’d parted that day, but in the end the only thing out of place in the room had been a bottle of ‘Gamer Girl Water’. It had to be a prank of some sort, right? It seemed like the kind of gross desperation product someone would sell on Tw*tch just to prove horny people would buy *anything*. “Gross.”

She merely let out an exasperated sigh as she removed her glasses from the bridge of her nose, the arms of the frames tucked underneath as she rested them on the sink counter. The small room had begun to fill up gently with steam from the hot bath she’d drawn, and it eased her in with a sense of comfort as she moved to pull off layers of clothes that were sweaty from a day outside. She still got anxious when she left the house, which often led to more perspiration than she would have liked. A little gross, yeah, but that was why she took these baths! Well that, and to chill out just a bit.

Vision blurred, she couldn’t really make out the appearance of her naked body in the mirror. That was fine, she didn’t really like looking at herself anyways. Compared to Ann or Makoto she was still pretty lacking in the ‘looking like an adult’ category, but statistically speaking considering her withdrawn lifestyle there was actual science behind why she was so small.

Toes eventually tickled the drawn water to make sure it wasn’t too hot, before she stepped into the tub and lowered herself down into its warm embrace. On the way down, however, tragedy struck when her arm knocked into the bottle of weird fetish

bathwater Akira had gifted her, its loosely spun on cap dropping in along with the contents before the bottle itself spun off and landed on the floor. Futaba just assumed the bottle, full, had fell off the side, completely unaware that the water had ended up mixing with her bath.

"Ahhh..." Instead she merely continued to lower herself into the water, knees raised only slightly as feet pressed against the tub's back since she was so short. She'd pondered how even a little added height might make her baths uncomfortable in the past; decidedly she was better off being a little shorter since she wasn't a big fan of showers. *Standing* under water just wasn't relaxing. It was just effort.

But, uh... wait? Why did it feel like the flats of her feet were pushing against the ceramic tub with more force than usual? She'd retreated to her usual posture and hadn't grown at all in the past year, yet against all odds the same bath she took every night felt very different almost immediately.

What Futaba didn't know was that Akira had purchased her gift at a late night bazaar, a location one of the college girls he was hanging out with had taken him to as a place to hang out a few nights prior. He couldn't have known the location was run by a real witch nor that the *'Gamer Girl Water'* was meant to turn the user into a real, hardcore gamer girl.

What? Witches have a lot of free time these days!

Even *if* Futaba had known the cause it was already far too late. The enchanted waters had mixed with her bath, and even without splashing some on her face and shoulders like she had just before thinking the tub was a little small, her body was already captive to its effects and there *was* no escape.

The sensation that she was growing taller was one early effect of this, the other was one that went unnoticed by the teen at first. Her long, orange hair pooled around her in the water, and yet some strands were becoming inexplicably darker and ultimately shorter against those that remained unchanged, creating a peculiarly layer appearance against the white tub.

Futaba's attention was too drawn to her own knees to pair her hair any mind. She hadn't bent her legs at all, but even so the seemed to point higher and higher in front of her, that which was obscured by the steam otherwise felt in how her muscles bent along with her legs.

Bright pink etched itself upon her cheeks. Four markings did rise, each the product of splashing her face with the water. They were little more than triangles fanning out to the sides of her head, each bright and cartoony, but it was difficult to deny that they held the peculiar visage of a set of painted whiskers. They were gaudy and clearly designed to attract attention, but it was too bad they couldn't attract the attention of the one they were attached to.

More and more of her hair was plagued by the onslaught of dark brown, length collectively regressing to the point where they stopped just below the water's surface even as the the back of the girl's neck was pushed up and off the tub's front; no thanks to the fact that her torso, much like her legs, seemed to be spreading. **"Wh-Wh-What!? I thought I was just dizzy from the steam, but something weird is happening here! 아파!"** Pain was expressed in a language Futaba had no familiarity with as she accidentally kneed herself in the face trying to get comfortable, which was ultimately the final straw that forced her out of the water and in front of the mirror.

About to reach for her glasses with a much shorter distance to cover than she expected, pause was given when she noticed... **"어? I can see without my glasses?"** Not since she was a little girl had that been possible. Her vision was *really bad*. Or had been, but she could make out the shapes in the room with perfect clarity. The only side effect was a dull pain that suggested maybe she'd been staring at a screen for too long -- something Futaba did on her own *anyways*.

What was left before he was her reflection -- if it could even be called that. It was like a still painting depicting two people mushed together into a single individual, though the parts that were *'Futaba Sakura'* were slowly fading. **"Is this even possible? Uh... maybe I should call Akira!"**, she asked herself, lips slightly more swollen than normal and painted a cherry pink. Even her voice was different. There was more pep to it and it was far less nasally.

Reaching for the phone she'd left in the basket with her change of clothes, notably longer nails drew her attention not only because they were longer but because they were done up with incredibly feminine pinks, bringing an almost sexy appeal to her hands with longer fingers that weren't as bony as her usual set. She didn't linger for long, eventually fumbling with the device's touch screen and getting a call out to Akira's number.

Ring... Ring... Ring... Click! Someone finally answered, but the voice wasn't at all familiar to her. A boy was speaking - maybe around her age? -- in a language she didn't understand. **"여보세요? 누구세요?"** came her reply as confusion took root. She was confused because the boy was speaking Japanese... and she spoke Japanese, didn't she? A little, when she came to Japan for tournaments but... **"죄송합니다!"** Futaba sputtered out an apology and hung up, confusion turned to anxiety which led to her dropping the phone. She'd dialed the number but she couldn't remember who she was trying to call. Someone to help her, right?

Eyes shot back to her reflection, and she began taking note of other areas that had changed or were beginning to change further. Hips became wider as bare genitals beneath them grew topped with straight brown hair as opposed to the curly orange she was accustomed to. Her new thigh gap was significant, but it was eased in slight as the fat around her thighs seemed to throb and swell to the point that she couldn't resist poking at one to see her finger displace the fat so that it rose around the digit. Overall her legs felt stronger, supplemented by the several inches of height she'd

gained and the obvious strengthening of muscles in either limb. Arms were blessed with a similar strength, both longer in reach and, when she flexed as a joke, honest to goodness muscle was apparent. But just a little, more than a girl that kept to her room would have at least.

Futaba had never held excessive weight, but considering she largely only ate junk food she'd always had a softer belly. Now? It was tight. She could feel what was left of the weight pulling against rising muscle as her longer torso was on display with a belly that pinched inward at just the right place. She pinched just below her navel a moment, giddy with how firm it was. *'It only makes sense considering how I ride my mech I guess'*, she thought to herself; not noting that she'd never ridden a mecha in her life.

Longer fingers played with her chest a moment, noticing them surge out just the slightest bit as her nipples became evidently wider. Their changes weren't particularly significant, yet against a much leaner and fitter body they had a much different appeal than the lack of appeal they'd had before. Particularly when she wore her skin tight suit, she knew her fans just went nuts. Not that she liked being leered at, but she was fine with it if it meant bolstering her popularity as a gamer or a pilot.

"Wait." Now speaking in perfectly English, thoughts bouncing between it and Korean, the girl was left perplexed by her surroundings. She missed the moment in the mirror that the remaining strands of orange in her hair were lost to brown, as did she miss her face becoming more angular and the slant of her eyes ever so subtly turning upward. She was merely confused about where she was, not that her body had changed. Had it even? That was a silly thought.

"AH!?" It was then that someone crashed through the bathroom door, taking the young woman by surprise. A boy with curly, black hair and spectacle, yelling out the word **'FUTABA'** for some reason. He looked both confused and then flustered as he realized it wasn't who he was looking for in the bath, ultimately closing the door behind him to leave the naked nineteen year old in shock.

"Ooooh! I remember! I'm doing a reunion tour in Tokyo aren't I... And I'm staying at this girl's house? Futaba was it?" Not quite, since she *was* Futaba. Had been. Whatever. It didn't matter anymore. She threw on the clothes that were in the basket and headed out, seemingly not caring that the green hoodie and shorts were so small that they left little to the imagination in the process.

Apparently unsure of what happened, Akira avoided Hana Song as she moved downstairs and out the door for a night of exploring, instead turning his attention to the bathroom. Something had happened to Futaba, right? Her phone had been on the ground in the room after all. But as he examined the washroom he accidentally slipped on a puddle and landed in the drawn bath with a splash.

His hair turning orange...