

LEARNING MECHANICS

FIRST PERSON STORY

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Was the job market *ever* going to get better?

I really had to wonder at this point. The economy *definitely* wasn't the greatest with everything that was going on in the world, and at the rate things were going I wasn't expecting much of an improvement anytime soon, either. Forget finding a decent office job, it was difficult to even find retail positions what with everyone applying, too. Not that it was particularly easy before, but it must have been *easier*, right!?

Thump. My forehead bounced off the edge of my desk, which ultimately led to be letter out a pained groan. I'd been surfing job sites for hours a day for over a month! Was I really not going to have any luck? How much longer was this going to go on? **"Maybe I *should* have just learned a trade after graduating high school. I probably wouldn't be in this mess in that case..."**

I could have studied to be a plumber, an electrician, or hell, even a *mechanic*. But I hadn't wanted to learn skills like that, and now it was probably too late. Well, that probably *wasn't* true. I could likely study to learn these skills at this point if I wanted to, but I didn't exactly have the money or the time to dedicate to them. At this point, I was going to need to work just to pay my bills. It definitely wouldn't be feasible for me to go to classes at the same time.

When my head had hit my desk, though? My mouse and keyboard had jumped. The page on my browser changed, and it didn't even occur to me until I finally lifted my head up to look. **"Huh? What's this posting for?"** Evidently, the left button on my mouse must have

clicked when I'd hit the desk, because I was on a job listing that I definitely hadn't clicked on.

“A posting for a mechanic position? ...Will train on the job?” It was one of those listings that felt a little *too* good to be true. Like if I applied for it, my data would just be sold to scammers, or they'd phish me themselves. I knew well enough that apprenticeships *were* a thing, but I was pretty sure that legally you needed to have some sort of formal training at a school to receive them.

So, naturally? I was *not* going to submit an appli— **CLICK!**

It took even *me* a moment to realize what I had just done. **“...Eh?”** I'd submitted my application even *as* I reassured myself that I wouldn't? Well, if it *was* some sort of scam, if they for some reason chose me then I'd have to diligently *ignore their phone calls!* Though, a loud **DING** immediately turned my attention to the phone beside my keyboard. It was probably just an email confirming that I'd sent the application, but...

“That was fast!? It is *definitely* a scam!” I'd *already* received an email from the auto shop confirming that they'd selected me!? All I had to do was open an attachment at the bottom of the message? That was *shady*. Very shady. *But...* Maybe I was a little *too* desperate? Because after making sure the file didn't contain any viruses, I gave it the old double click. **“UWAH!?”** Something that I immediately regretted, as I was blasted by a flash of bright light.

I wasn't very good with surprises, so I ended up hopping straight out of my chair while I tossed my phone gentle onto my desk – or what I *hoped* was my desk considering how bright it had been. **“I can't see!?”** That was *normal* for getting flashed in the eyes with a bright light, but what wasn't normal was how long that feeling lingered. My vision remained blank for perhaps a little *too* long, though I couldn't have imagined *why* that was.

There was actual visual indicators nearly instantaneously that I hadn't just been flashed by a regular blast of list. The very moment the flash had struck my gaze? The bright colors of my irises had dimmed to a light brown instead. *But...* the flash hadn't *just* affected the color of my *eyes*. My short hair lightened to a pale blonde, and *all* of my very pale skin darkened until I had a dark tan – including the skin hidden by my clothes.

“Come on! Come *back*, vision!” Voices cracked sometimes, so I didn't really bat an eyelash at the sound of my voice at that time. *Had* I 'batted an eyelash', though? I might have noticed that their weight felt a

little heavier. My eyelashes had *lengthened*, part of a set of sweeping changes that rounded my eyes yet pinched them in at the corners as the eyelids became hooded. They looked more like the eyes of a *Japanese* individual, and not one that seemed particularly masculine. This was gradually shared with the rest of my face, as my jaw rounded, nose shrank, and my lips puffed out into a pout. A beauty mark soon surfaced just beneath my lips on the left side as well.

There was still no change on the vision front, but what was happening was beginning to get more aggressive. I was getting more and more anxious the longer I couldn't see, and— **“URP!?”** I *heaved*. I was typically pretty good at not getting sick like *that*. I couldn't even remember the last time I had vomited, much less gotten queasy enough to get close. But I ended up lurching from the overpowering level of *upset* my stomach became. **“Is this because of the light!?”**

On this occasion, even *I* raised an eyebrow at the sound of my own voice. Why did it sound so *light*. No, was I even *speaking English*? **“Watashi...? Eh!?”** No, that was *definitely* Japanese – and I couldn't stop. **“Iya... musto...”** Trying to speak English lead to me struggling with the sounds, not helped by the fact that my tongue was a little smaller inside of a mouth that no had perfectly repaired teeth to boot. At least it distracted me from how nauseous I still felt?

That nausea *was* being stimulated by anxiety, but it almost looked like it was having a tangible effect on my body. I was a much bigger man than most my age in terms of weight, but the churning of my stomach was in part a biproduct of all of that weight *draining away*. Whether it was my tummy flattening and the stretchmarks fading, or my arms and legs becoming leaner, before long I wasn't just *thin*, but I had clearly defined abs and muscle on my limbs. With my face thinner as well?

I couldn't have looked much older than *eighteen*.

“H-Hey!?” Still speaking in perfect Japanese, I cried out as my pants fell from my waist – a waist that had slipped inward several inches so that my thighs could cleanly expand an equivalent amount. My should slimmed too, and if I had been standing there naked? My silhouette would have appeared closer to the shape of an hourglass than not. That is to say that it was more *feminine*. **“Why'd my pants fall off? And why is my shirt so— URP!?”**

There was another flash of nausea as I realized *why* my clothes were so big. I still *couldn't* see, but I could touch my hand against my stomach and notice that not only was my shirt *way* too big, but the gut I was used to lifting it up was *much* closer to my chest. *Clearly* unwell, I swayed back and forth unstably, though my short, blonde hair gradually

lengthened until it reached my butt as I did so. It was long, voluminous, and smelled faintly not of strawberries, but of *motor oil*.

I had hardly even grappled with my weight difference before I was subjected to a change in *height* too. My shirt gradually approached my knees, and my lengthened hair did the same – all as my tanned body slipped from nearly six feet all the way down to 5'4" instead. It would have been much clearer to me if I could *see*, but at best I could feel my clothes slipping and my muscles contracting a little to adjust to the new length of my bones.

My vision *finally* returned, courtesy of a second flash. “**Ah!?**” That said, it wasn’t a flash of *light*. It was a flash of confusing warmth from between my legs akin to a strong tug, and one that pushed my knees to buckle from just how uncanny it felt. A hand explored downward before my eyes readjusted to the light being fed by them. “**I-I’m a girl!?**” I didn’t even need to touch where I expected a girl’s genitalia to be to assume as much, not when there was absolutely *no* bulge on the front of my pelvis. Considering the sound of my voice and the feel of my hair, though, I wasn’t as surprised as I might have been if I’d been completely devoid of my senses.

“**I... can’t believe this...**” I was so concerned about my body that I had yet to notice that my *surroundings* had also been changing as I’d remained in the dark. I looked down at small, tanned fingers that seemed to be far more calloused than normal at first but eventually noticed that the front of my shirt was... pushing forward. “**O-Oh...**” Between the nausea and the acceptance of what was happening, I didn’t really *have* the energy to react to the growth of tanned mounds upon my chest, lifting my shirt slightly as my new *C-cup* tits swelled. “**I don’t even know how to put on a bra...**”

Wait, I *did*?

Why could I not only vividly recall getting dressed in this body every day, but needed a sick bag for my anxious vomiting and... cars? Why did I have *cars* on the mind!? It amply distracted me from my lower body swelling too. My flat ass eventually bubbled out into a perky peach shape, and my thighs doubled in girth to make good use of my wider hips. I was getting more and more anxious, and so I felt even *sicker*.

That *would* eventually reach a boiling point, but not before what I was wearing was ‘dealt with’. While my lost pants and boxers disappeared, my oversized t-shirt ended up tightening, splitting, and wrapping around my body until it became a black, short sleeved crop top and big, puffy white pants that belonged to a tracksuit – that’s upper half was tied around my waist. Toss in black socks, white shoes, fingerless gloves,

and a black cap with red text on it... and my tastes in fashion seemed to be *completely* different. At least my blonde hair had been pulled off my shoulders by a black ribbon that tied it into a ponytail?

“Eh? Eh? Eh? URP!? I’m gonna puke!?”

The stress of everything that had been happening to my body had gotten a little *too* much for my stomach to bear. Sensing that I wouldn’t be able to keep it down *this* time, but I immediately grabbed the nearby waste bucket in the *auto shop* and ejected whatever was left in my shrunk stomach. Wait. *Where* was I? **“EHHHHHH!?”** I’d just been in my room a minute ago, hadn’t I!?

So, I was a *girl*. A Japanese teenager, in fact. My memories were a mush of overlapping lives. I could remember who I used to be as a concept, but I couldn’t remember my name? Every time I tried, a different one altogether came to mine. *Tsubasa Kawana*. That must have been *who* I now was. But beyond it being *my* name? It sounded a little familiar.

With my puke freshly puked, I wiped the sweat from my face and slowly looked around the auto shop. It reeked of oil, and while the *old* me would have *hated* that? The new me felt oddly at *ease* because of the smell. Looking at the one car lifted in the middle of the shop, I instantly understood all of the exposed pieces and how to fix them. Even though I hadn’t known the *first thing* about cars before. **“This is... definitely weird! Hahaha... But...”**

But maybe it was because of my new memories – memories of being raised by the owner of this shop, of having a home to belong to, of not having to worry about the eventually woes of being an adult just yet – I didn’t feel so upset anymore. It felt nice. It felt *right*. For the first time in a long time, I felt like I was passionate about *something*. Unfortunately, I didn’t remember *where* I had heard my name before.

So, I couldn’t prepare myself for the day those monsters would attack.

