

TRIGGER: TANUKI

AUGUST 2020 REQUEST STORY

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“Ugh... I’m going to die. I’m seriously going to die...” To say Futaba Sakura was meant for physical activity of literally any sort would absolutely, undeniably, one-hundred percent *be a lie*. So why was she stuck running the field at Joker’s school that spring evening? Well, it was complicated.

Okay maybe not that complicated. She had made a bet with Joker that he couldn’t beat her at Super Smash Bros. with the intention of getting him to buy her an upcoming anime set she wanted. Even when he’d bet her to run ten laps around his school’s field in return she hadn’t even batted an eyelash. How could she lose at video games after all?

But she’d lost. *Miserably*. How had he seen through her genius plan of sucking him off the edge with Kirby!? It was the most elite of Smash Bros. strategies! Not only that, he had plans with his girlfriend so after dropping her off at the empty field he’d run off, asking her to record video of the laps with the promise he’d be back to grab her in an hour or so.

Considering Sojiro thought the boy had become Mr. Responsibility, nothing about that plan struck her as particularly responsible. Alas, even the boy that was practically her adopted brother at this point was easily distracted by Vitamin H(*orny*).

So Futaba was still on lap one by the time she was ready to call it quits. Zipping around Palaces and Mementos was conveniently handled by Necronomicon, so even exploring those didn’t yield much physical training. She couldn’t even run half a lap without getting exhausted!

It didn't help that the clothes she was wearing didn't quite fit. They were a size too large and had mysterious origins. Joker had told her she had to wear something loose and breathable, something sporty. The problem? The shut-in owned zero clothes aimed at athleticism. So perhaps it was a spot of good luck that, when looking through her cosplay purchases, she'd found *this*.

A red track jacket, a gray tee, blue shorts with a green trim, and most importantly white running shoes. She couldn't remember purchasing this costume but the character name 'Michiru Kagemori' had been attached to the box. It hadn't rung any bells, but Futaba hadn't been allotted the time to check before they'd left either.

This costume didn't end up in the Sakura home through the will of Futaba. Rather it was something a little more akin to destiny that had put it there; for that was no simple cosplay ensemble.

The girl's posture had gotten sloppy by the time she'd reached the final curve heading into her second lap. Torso slouching forward, loose fitting outfit dangling off of her and inhibiting her movement a little, it looked as if she might fall over at any moment. Her energy reserves were so low... was she going to pass out before she even finished lap one?

“No... I wanna prove I can do it...” Weary as she sounded, Futaba was at least earnest. Joker probably bet her this because he knew she could do it, and she'd already made such big strides on the subject of her rehabilitation. Although this sudden motivational burst wasn't *wholly* of her own desire. A subtle optimism that did not belong in Futaba's soul had slowly begun to invade and lift the depression and self-defeated mentality from her shoulders.

And it would give her the tools to accomplish this goal.

With this new motivation in mind she righted her posture again and started to push her body to the limit. *The very soft and squishy limit.* Yet she found a new burst of energy as a discreet crackling sound emanated from... somewhere. She was too distracted with trying not to pass out to really check, she'd just heard the sound and not only did her legs not feel as tired or sore, she actually found she'd begun to run *faster* somehow.

This was entirely thanks to that crackling noise. Because she hadn't looked down at her legs she hadn't taken notice of it, but a blue light had shone from her spaghetti legs and thighs and that light had provoked change in all of the places that were glowing. Thighs had thickened, the fat that was already there spread more evenly to make them look wider

around her muscles, which actually now made up the bulk of each leg. For all intents and purposes, Futaba's legs had just gotten *swole* (*for a girl her age*). Her rear was likewise blessed with new strength, leg and thigh muscles making them a constant. Buns firmed up and filled the shorts, robbing them of the looseness they'd possessed before.

The glow of blue light shone across her feet next, but since they were tucked gently in her shoes there was no way she could have noticed that. Not much was altered with her tootsies, at least not *yet*. But from a preliminary standpoint they'd come to fit better in a size that was one too big, and the feet themselves seemed better adjusted to running.

“Whoa! Look how fast I'm running!” In that short time she'd almost done half of the second lap. She was practically flying in comparison to how the ginger-haired maiden had been wobbling around during the first lap. Futaba was almost moving a little too fast, like the strength of her legs didn't make much sense for an ordinary human. **“I'm going to clear this in no time!”** Lo and behold, she'd *already* cleared lap two.

While legs had the strength to carry her, it was clear she was confused about what to do with her arms while running. She certainly wasn't a born athlete, and the way her weak arms were flopping around spoke to that.

She eventually clenched her fists tight as her mind adjusted to knowledge it *shouldn't* have had. While she really had zero idea how to run like a proper athlete, suddenly she had a good feeling about bringing her elbows down squarely and raising them as she bolted. The crackling noise called out again, blue light spreading across her arms beneath sleeves of her track jacket and bolstering their strength much like what had happened with her legs. Her limbs were fit, and as the light then ran like a wave across the rest of her torso, the girl's soft tummy tightened so that her abs could, vaguely, be made out were they not obscured by clothing.

Futaba was practically flying now. And honestly? She loved it! The wind in her hair, the runner's high that got her endorphins chugging. Never in her life had she felt like this! She was doing it! She was already on lap five! And with her phone propped up on the pews recording, she'd be able to prove to Joker that she did! A part of her didn't even *want* to stop at ten laps. Why not go for twenty? Thirty? **“Woohoo! Look at me go!”**

Wait. Hadn't her voice sounded a little *funny* there?

It didn't really sound like the voice she knew.

Yet she didn't stop. She *couldn't* stop. There *wasn't a way* for her to muster the will to stop, and this was wholly a part of her transformation. Futaba wouldn't want to stop running until it was all said and done, and while making her a more active teen had been completely a boon so far, changes that were purely cosmetic were now making their way into her form.

Most prominently? It could be observed in her hair. Futaba's mane had always been a rich, natural orange that stood out in a crowd. She liked to wear it long and had never really entertained having it short because short-cut hair had a tendency to remind her of her late mother. Dancing in the wind though, the length slowly regressed towards her scalp as the bright light of the orange locks dimmed, taking on a more dreary and natural black at the shorter tips.

Before long, her hair was cut just above her shoulders, and while the lowest hanging segments were as dark as the night itself, from roots to several inches before these tips it was more of a rich blue. The styling was certainly screaming 'tomboy' to high heaven, and it framed a face that somehow looked... slightly older? Futaba was a girl in her mid-teens, but her mauve eyes had found blue dye and had a glint of maturity to them that didn't quite fit. Her cheeks were rounder, nose a little smaller, and on the whole? She looked closer to the age of eighteen.

Not even Sojiro would recognize her as she appeared now.

“What lap even is this? Nine? Ten?” She was really shmoovin' now. She was actually on lap thirteen. Yet while she no longer looked, sounded, or even acted like Futaba Sakura, her changes weren't completely finished. In fact, the crackling noise became very loud and pronounced as the blue light spread across her *whole body*. This time there was no way it could escape her notice. Yet she could not stop running. **“W-What's going on here!?”** She was shocked, and *all* she could do was *run*.

An itch spread across her body from head to toe as follicles opened up to allow the safe passage of a plethora of hairs -- or in this case fur. It was a light coat of chestnut brown, although it was darker around her hands, feet, and incidentally around her eyes to make it look like she was wearing a mask. Thin and soft, it looked to be born of an animal, and yet Futaba more or less retained her human shape.

More or less.

As the blue light faded around the majority of her body, her hands and feet remained under more intense scrutiny of the light. In the case of

fingers and toes alike, they all became plumper - almost cartoonishly thick when compared to a human's digits - and nails not only collapsed inward but grew outward, darkening into a set of short but sharp nails. Still bunched up as she ran, although with her attention fixated on her hands, she could tell they now resembled... "**PAWS!?**" It was shocking! But... why didn't it feel as shocking as it *should* have?

The girl was temporarily blinded as the glow of the light engulfed her face even more strongly. Fur had already grown, but that wasn't the cause. Rather it felt like a power had just taken hold of Futaba's jaw and had begun to pull it forward. Mouth rested agape a moment as she felt her lower jaw elongate, and eyes quickly went crosseyed at the first sign of her nose stretching outward. A nose that was now small and dark, and maybe even a little wet? Like an animal. A dog? A cat?

A tanuki.

Fut**chiru** had been patting down her new snout when a sudden deafness brought paws to the sides of her head to check her ears. They weren't there? They weren't there! Sound suddenly rushed back though and with much better hearing than she'd ever experienced before, paws instead reaching to the source on top of her head as she continued her marathon. Patting them down she found they were soft and round. "**ANIMAL EARS TOO!?** Well... **I mean it's not really that weird is it? I am half-beastman... Er... Am I? I definitely know what a beastman is don't I? Why does that sound like a weird term?**"

She dropped her hands back down to her sides and continued to run. Lap twenty was coming up, and the power that had been transforming her was about to reach its climax. Sparks of blue shot around her tailbone, and the moment **Fichiru** crossed the finish line for the twentieth time...

FUWA!

A round tanuki's tail burst forth from above the seat of her pants, correcting an imbalance she'd been feeling ever since her feet had changed. When the tail had erupted a burst of energy had exploded, engulfing all of Tokyo without **Michiru**'s notice. Finally, she could stop running. But she was confused. "**Eeeeh!?** **What school is this? Is this in Animacity? I've never been here before?**" Panting from her good run, she rubbed the back of her head as she looked around.

How would she get home?

Incidentally there wouldn't be any problem with Michiru settling in as she was now. That burst of energy that had exploded from her tail? It carried the beast factor, and in the moment of explosion it had seeped into the bodies of every human in Tokyo. Not long after her own transformation, they too had been turned into Animacity residents.

Of course this would cause a unique and challenging chaos for all of them, but so long as she found Shirou and Nazuna, Michiru didn't really seem to mind.