

MASS UPDATE

BIWEEKLY STORY #36

BY CHALDEACHANGE



EMERGENCY IN THE CAFETERIA

The announcement over Chaldea’s intercoms couldn’t have been much clearer, and the two sibling Masters that worked with the organization were quick to travel to the dining area in question. There weren’t exactly expecting the greatest of tragedies, not when the last time they’d heard this announcement was when Elizabeth Bathory had tragically done the cooking that evening without anyone knowing, but there was always the chance that something extremely dangerous could be unfolding.

Both met in front of the cafeteria’s automatic door before wordlessly nodding at one another and stepping to prompt the mechanism. But what greeted them on the other side... was definitely an emergency of *some sort*.

“WAAAAAA!”

“YAAAAAAY!”

The deafening cries of excited children were unmistakable. There wasn’t really a problem with kids having a good time, either. But there weren’t a lot of child Servants in Chaldea. It felt like there were more and more as time had passed, but certainly not enough to justify how noisy the dining space was. Going off of sound alone it would have been confusing, but the sight was all the more perplexing.

Jack the Ripper was running around in what looked like the top of Nero’s dress. Then another with Mordred’s chest strap seemingly hanging from her shoulder, the rest of her body bare. Then another Jack

fumbling around in Ereshkigal's oversized dress. And another. And another. And another. **"WHAT!?"** The two siblings shouted in unison. There had to be like twenty Jack the Rippers in the cafeteria, all dressed in the oversized clothing of other Servants!

To cry out like they had however? Folly at its finest. Every single one of the Jacks in the room had heard them and had gone silent, staring at the two Masters for a second before shouting **"MOTHER!"** in unison and bounding forward. Thankfully Gudao and Gudako had possessed the good sense to run back through the door, but not before one of Jacks had torn at the back of Gudako's jacket and dug her fingers in to give her a light scratch, another having given Gudao a playful nibble on the finger on their way out.

The girl was quick to swipe her key card against the locking mechanism beside the cafeteria door, her first thought to contain whatever was happening before things got out of hand -- but if whatever had happened in there was a disease, the two siblings were ignoring that they had already been *infected*. **"You okay?"**

"Yeah, but I think one of them bit me." Gudao's hand had been drawn before his blue eyes, looking at the small bite mark on his index finger. **"What about you?"**

"Scratched me on the back." Looking over her shoulder she could see small incisions in her skin, if only because Jack's strength had been so much that it had ripped both the bottom half of her jacket and shirt straight off. When Assassin had first come to Chaldea she'd liked to rough house a little too much when playing, and their wounds were almost nostalgic of those days in a way. But they'd broken these habits a while ago. So what caused them to resurface? Or... she supposed a bigger issue was why so many.

But the brother seemed to have a theory as he kept his back to the door. **"Do you think... those were the other Servants? They were wearing their clothes. I know they looked like Jack, but there were too many, and if you add it all up..."** It wasn't the first time something weird like this had happened in Chaldea. Too much magic housed under one roof.

"I mean you could be wrong, but we aren't sure..." Gudako knew her brother made sense with this theory, but--

"We?"

"Pardon?"

“Just now, when you referred to yourself you used ‘we’. Like Jack does. Are we sure we’re safe? After all, we feel-- Ah!” The boy was right. Because Jack the Ripper was composed of all of the souls of the children that died in the streets of London, she referred to herself in the plurality. Now both siblings seemed to have done the same in what they hoped to be a slip of the tongue. **“Even us? We can’t control it!”**

“Neither can we!” exclaimed Gudako, once again try to refer to herself in a singular fashion to no avail. Not only had it affected their speech, but even thinking in the first person was a luxury they’d come to miss. More than that, the whisperings of voices that weren’t their own had begun to cloud the thoughts of the siblings.

LET US OUT!

WE WANT TO PLAY

WE’RE HUNGRY!

WE’RE BORED!

Each thought was simple and childish, the voice reminiscent of Jack’s own. They run with an eerie tone however, and both Gudao and Gudako alike were overcome with a paranoia born from uncertainty as bodies shivered and eyes darted suspiciously from side to side. **“We think it’s probably--”**

“--too late, yeah!” It was like they were a pair of twins on the same wavelength, and that wasn’t really incorrect. Their minds had connected through the same phenomenon. Not only that, it became clear that the Jacks on the other side of the door were also connected to this strange whisper of hive mind voices.

LET US OUT!

WE WANT TO SEE MOTHER!

Slowly, guided by these wants calling from the other side of the door directly into their own minds, the two turned to face the door they’d exited through and began to claw at it slowly, almost like undead. It was like knowledge of the key cards they possessed to lock and unlock Chaldea’s facilities had been set aside, or more like the voices in their heads were a lot louder than their own thoughts. Which was something of a major problem considering their forms had begun to reap physical change as well, and the window to prevent the worst case scenario was rapidly closing.

Fixated on the door thanks to the yearning of the Jacks on the other side, the initial moment where the siblings could have noticed the, quite literally, blinding change in one another's hair pigmentation had begun to fade as if bleached. Gudao's hair was usually black and spiked, with his younger sister's ginger and styled into a single, side-swept ponytail. Both colors were vibrant. Under normal circumstance, but Gudao's black had swung to grays as length became shaggy, while Gudako's almost turned completely white immediately and did the opposite: it shortened to a bob cut. In fact, the two shared the exact same hair style now.

Fingers slid down the front of the door not because arms were pulling them there, but because the arms they were attached to could no longer reach as high as they should have. "**We want to see Mo-- Wait! Aren't we mother?**" Gudako quickly snapped out of her trance from this realization, her own voice a little louder in her head while she grabbed her brother's arm to give it a shake for his attention.

He did eventually turn, but the sister's mouth hung with a gasp once she got a look at his face. White hair was one thing, but his facial features had shifted towards more androgynous, less Asian counterparts. His eyes were both round and green, roundness mirroring how soft and squishy his cheeks had become. There was a clean European tilt to Gudao's face, and she could see a pair of scars etching themselves across the increasingly adorable face. One scar across his left eye, the other stitched across his right cheek.

And she could tell her own face was probably the mirror image. After all, the feeling of her own skin indenting in the very same places wasn't exactly a sensation one could ignore. "**Brother your face is all squishy like ours!**" A sharp jump in her vocal pitch left Gudako more anxious, that feel amplified by how her sleeves flopped around over her hands now. How much had they shrunk? They were probably half the size they normally were, but Jack was even smaller...

"**No! Your face is squishy like ours!**" A childish argument had erupted as the infantile voices in the backs of their heads corroded any level of maturity the two might have had about the situation. Gudao's hands shot out of his own sleeves, pants falling to his ankles in the process, grubby little fingers squishing the girl's cheeks and allowing her to get a good look at how dirty they'd become. From what she could remember it was hard to get Jack to bathe, and she kind of understood why. She was gonna be caught dead before she was shoved in a tub! It didn't matter how stinky she got!

Gudako puffed up her cheeks and pulled the one hand that was barely holding up her skirt away, allowing it to fall to her own ankles to reveal the workings of a rather shapely set of thighs and rump for how much younger she looked, though they once again mirrored her brother's own. It was a sacrifice she was willing to make to squeeze Gudao's own cheeks. **"Hey! You need to stop acting like Jack... er... um... like us! We have to change us back, right!? We're mother!"** However, her brother dearest just puffed up his own cheeks. He'd gone to pinch her, but he tripped over the pants at his feet and fell not only into Gudako, but on top of her. Both noggins collided and left the children dazed cutely but comically for a second.

The boy's bare butt was skybound, eyes fluttering as he did his best to recompose himself and push his body off his twin sister's. Twin... No? They weren't twins? But they were sisters, right? Both sisters from the streets, two manifestations of the same Servant, sharing one voice and one mind-- **"Wah!? You're right! We're getting... we're getting..."** As he wriggled off of Gudako's body, there was a gaping absence between her legs once she sat herself down on the cold floor. **"We're supposed to be a boy! But we..."**

YOU'RE A GIRL!

WE'RE ALL GIRLS!

The chattering and giggling at the back of Gudao's mind was overpowering and before long she couldn't even imagine why she'd thought of herself as a boy. It didn't really matter anyways right? 'Cause some of the souls she was composed of were boys at one time. But now? Didn't matter! Gudao giggled. **"We're a girl! Nursery is always telling us to act more girly, but that's a pain..."**

Tattoos seared themselves upon the shoulders of either child, though hidden thanks to their oversized jackets. Maroon circles with black outlines. *Markings synonymous with the young Ripper.*

"Isn't it? Skirts are hard to wear, and we don't wanna sit still!" Gudako chimed in reply, looking at the skirt that had once fit. Any recognition of that being her own clothing item was more or less gone, instead... **"Why are we wearing Mother's clothes? They smell nice... giggle... they're warm!"** The child brought the sleeves to her face and rubbed them against her cheek, but the twin wearing the boys version of the uniform jumped her again.

"No fair, we wanna wear Mother's warm clothes!" Because the ultimate goal of the two of them, the ultimate goal of every Jack, was to

return to the comfort of their mother's womb. It was a safety unlike any other. So even catching the scent of Mother was!

“WE WANNA PLAY TOO!”

“LET US SMELL MOTHER!”

These voices hadn't just been in the heads of the twin Jacks. Somehow the cafeteria door had come unlocked, and the twenty-some other Jacks spilled out into a pile to wrestle over the scraps of Gudako and Gudao's clothing. Before long the two children were left stark naked with tears in their eyes, and by the time the night had past it was no longer possible to identify which Jack had been which person or Servant beforehand.

The remnants of Chaldea were found roughly ten years later by the Church after being told to abandon the facility due to an unknown accident. Some said all of the Chaldea faculty died in an accident, but more recent research revealed that people were living inside. Children. Over one hundred of them, all identical.

No one could say for sure what the cause was. Were they the faculty and Servants that had served there? Were they invaders?

But one story spoke of a little doll-like girl that just wanted a lot of friends, and to those ends had incorrectly cast a very potent spell.