

JINGLED BELLS

COMMISSION STORY

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Gacha games are a cruel and unusual mistress, and there is no one that knows that better than *you*. Maybe you have been playing them for years, or maybe you are a new player that has picked them up at some point over the past few days, weeks, or months. Regardless of when you had started though, you had undoubtedly experienced it. *Bad luck*. The worst of luck at times, really.

Playing these games is *gambling*. You know this, your mom knows this, *everyone* knows this. Except you don't have a chance of getting your money back if you win. Your reward is a character, a graphic, a digital asset – even if you *do* get what you want, and cases of *that* happening as few and far between because, well, the games were *designed* that way. How could they make money without preying upon your need for a PNG?

...In plenty of safer, kinder ways actually. Some game at least had systems to guarantee characters after certain amounts of currency were spent. But it wasn't all of them, and the fact that it was not all of them meant that it was not enough for games designed this way to be healthy at all. During the best of times, spending everything on them was ill-advised.

But during the worst of times? Like, say, during the holiday season? You were just asking for trouble then, weren't you? Such was the issue when the holiday gacha for Princess Connect Re:Dive came out and you were keen on rolling the Christmas Chika that had been announced. You *wanted* her. You *needed* her. A feeling that surely any gacha player can relate to. Sometimes there are just new units that call out to you more than others and you are willing to throw everything you have at them.

In-game savings are one thing though, and your *actual*, real life savings are another. And you had unfortunately been forced to tap into the latter after unsuccessful roll after unsuccessful roll. You almost felt as if you were on the verge of emotional, if not financial, collapse, and your day had been utterly ruined. As much as you *wanted* to whip your device at the wall, you wouldn't of course.

That was when *it* appeared.

A message on your game's screen. You were playing on the Japanese servers, and it was not a language you actually *knew* how to read outside of a few key phrases, so you didn't really know what it said. As the passage of time revealed though, you didn't really *need* to. It didn't matter. Because the screen simply began to glow white, and when that light cleared? You could see your breath.

It was cold. *You* were cold. You had just been dressed in pajamas in your room after a long day, but now you were standing bare-footed upon stone steps in the depths of winter. Snow coated the ground past the stairs before you, and behind you? A strangely familiar building. Small as it was, it looked cozy... and not exactly modern. Nothing around you did, though. It looked like you were in a village of some sort, but architecture had long since evolved past what was on display here.

Without thinking much of it, you duck into the door of the tiny cottage behind you. It's too cold for you to remain outside, so what other option do you have? Besides, you didn't really seem to have any reservations about it for *some* reason, even though this was essentially the home of a stranger. Why *did* you feel so comfortable with it?

The inside was about what you expected from the exterior. Quaint and warm, it was decorated with a plethora of holiday decorations. But why was the ceiling so low? It almost seemed like, at least the hallway, hadn't been fashioned for anyone adult-sized whatsoever. Well, it wouldn't be an issue for you all that much longer.

Because just being a normal person as you were, you didn't really take notice of the strange aura that was bearing down on you, and had very much been doing so since you had appeared out in the cold. The familiarity you had of this place wasn't baseless, either. Because you were *inside of* the game you had just been playing. If you couldn't roll your precious Chika, something had determined, it would at least allow you to become closer to her through *other* means.

“What am I supposed to do now? Is there anyone here!?” You didn't exactly have a lot of options with how to proceed. Since you didn't

know where you were, it went without saying that information was more invaluable than ever. Which meant *talking* to someone, more or less. You had not seen anyone outside, and so you were banking on the possibility of someone within giving you some context to where you were and *why* you were there, if anyone existed that could provide such a thing.

Honestly, it was far easier to believe this was all some kind of strange dream.

Things were transpiring that would have made that dream theory even more compelling – at least if you had noticed them. But unfortunately for you, there were forces at work that were *absolutely* intent on making sure you didn't realize what was happening *before it was too late*. Your hair, for example? Even though change had affixed itself to its length, color, and quality, you remained oblivious while calling out again to see if anyone else was present in this building.

Just because you didn't notice though, that did not change that it was happening. The color of your locks were reddening some; not explicitly becoming *crimson*, but instead inheriting a brownish auburn that was quite a stretch from what your natural color *should* have been.

As previously mentioned, it was not the color alone that had shifted though. Length crept so that it curled around the shape of your head, ultimately dangling no deeper than your chin at the sides and the peak of your neck in the back. It was also a lot smoother and softer, with the scent of berries wafting off of it even if you had yet to quite notice as much. There was something about it all that gave off a much more youthful look, but there was hardly anything else to corroborate this yes.

“I guess no one is here after all?” You had called a few times, and with each shout your voice had grown a little more strained. It almost sounded a shade higher, but it was easy enough to blame the strain rather than anything *supernatural* just yet. Even if you *had* been teleported suddenly into another location – which totally wasn't something normal whatsoever. **“Should I explore?”**

I-I shouldn't look around without permission! I shouldn't have even entered!

You found yourself struck by your own hesitation. You had wandered in without a second thought before, and on some level you still could not help but feel nostalgic while standing in this hallway. So why were you suddenly having reservations? Why were you suddenly so *nervous*?

The eyes that reflected these reservations appeared to quiver, and as they did their colors changed. A deep, ocean blue surfaced where their previous coloring had been, and those eyes of years almost appeared to be a little larger and more *animated*. No sooner than they had did the color of your surroundings seem to *pop* a little more, almost appeared two-dimensional. But it didn't strike you enough to really realize with the suffocating presence that subdued your ability to rationalize the changes befalling you.

While larger, the shapes of your eyes narrowed some in the process. Whether or not you had been so before, you certainly appeared much more *Japanese* after they had changed. The rest of your facial features followed their cue, from a shrinking nose, to softening cheeks, to rounded lips. Not only did you look Japanese, but more like a *woman* at that.

What should have been beyond your notice the ceiling grew farther and farther away from your point of view. The cause was clear enough for you to notice even *with* your mind being affected by the curse that had befallen you. “**U-Um... Am I getting smaller!?**” You threw your hands out to the side, because you could feel your shirt sliding off as your stature succumbed to loss.

You really were! But how!? *Why!*? Was it related to why you had begun to second guess literally everything you said or did? Yes, but it wasn't something you could so easily put together on your own. You were much too perplexed by the hallway practically growing gargantuan compared to what it had seemed like just moments before. It felt as if your pants were going to fall clean off, and yet by the mercy of a sound they remained rooted in place.

The jingling of bells.

“**E-Eh!?**” Your voice now much cuter and more feminine, you looked down in disbelief at the source of the sound. A pair of large, golden bells with hearts engraved in their fronts were now hanging from a red belt around your waist. That belt, heart-shaped buckle and all, appeared to have an effect on the rest of your clothes, which soon collapsed to better suit your shrinking state.

Your shrinking did ultimately peak at a meager four-foot-eleven, and it hadn't exactly been a consistent loss by any means. Your arms and legs were much daintier, having had any muscle mass built upon them stolen – or excess fat for that matter. Your tummy was left trim, with your waistline dipping in some to present you with a much more feminine gait. Albeit one that didn't seem all that well developed yet.

Such was the trend you would soon have to acknowledge. After all, your already feminized face now exhibited ample signs of youth. Not the sort of youth one would reminisce upon while speaking of their teenaged years, either. Everything about you better suited the visage of a child around the age of twelve, and that was just as true of your mind. **“U-Um... How could...? This is weird! This must be imp... impossipple? Impossible!”** Twelve wasn’t even *that* young, but slightly large words had begun to give you trouble. Then again, you hadn’t even realized that you were speaking Japanese either.

You patted down your clothes, watching them change before your very eyes into something girlish and... surprisingly *festive*. Your pants had tightened to hug your hips and flourished out into several layers of brown over white over green, while their bottoms became knee-high socks over Christmas-y boots. Meanwhile your shirt hugged your new frame well, taking on green and red plaid with a pink base and trim that almost looked like mistletoe. A hooded cape found its way across your shoulders, fashioned in red with fluffy, white trim, and white gloves graced your fingertips. Bringing the entire ensemble together was a tiny crown positioned upon a green ribbon atop your head.

“A-Am I... a girl?” From a look from the exterior, you certainly *looked* like one. Whether or not that was already true though, it was something that would be corrected not long after. Your body already bore all of the structural changes necessary, and so it was just a matter of building upon what was already there. Whether it was a tender fatty weight that made your rump and thighs just a little more pronounced, or the bloating beneath your chest that gave rise to a pair of offerings that would one day evolve into something that would make the heads of any suitors turn.

But the most important thing was that what existed between your legs would change, and it really didn’t take all that much effort to do so. After all, it had already shrunk and mostly balded when you shrank into the body and soul of a twelve year old. All that was necessary was a slight tug to take what protruded and neatly package it into a gap between your thighs – a gap obscured by pink panties, and a gap that ultimately transformed into a girl’s genitals. You could *feel* that it happened. **“I... I guess so.”**

It was really bugging you, though. *Hadn’t you always been a girl?*

“D-Did that really just happen?” The most you could must was a sheepish squeak of surprise after all was said and done. The hut, which had once seemed so tiny to you, now felt so much more open. It wasn’t all *that* surprising considering your current state, though. But this place was...? It was Sarendia, wasn’t it? A guild and orphanage, and you

were... one of the children that had grown up there? *Kurumi* was your name.

But it wasn't! Your name used to be something else! It was... Uh... **"I-I can't... um... remember..."** That alone made the corners of your teal eyes turn moist. You hadn't been some child that was so easily moved to tears, but overwhelmed with confusion? You couldn't suppress the building feeling within, and your eyes began to leak like faucets. **"Waaah!"**

Crying only served to make your mind groggier though. The tears dripped down onto your festive clothing, clothing that you were gripping like a child might as you balled your eyes out. **"Kurumi? Are you okay!?"** The house had felt so *vacant* throughout your transformation, but no sooner than you had started crying did the door to the kitchen swing open, and through it a young woman in equally festive attire rushed – bells upon her costume jingling.



It was Chika! She wasn't a member of their guild, but she always came by to give everyone presents and sometimes even performances! She was quick to take you into your warm embrace, and over the ten seconds that followed you were able to slowly dry your tears. **"Big sis Chika?"** You certainly felt comforted. **"I-I'm okay... I'm not sure why I was...?"** Why *had* you been moved to tears again?

Chika was very important to you! You had wanted to roll her so badly, that... That... What... did *that* mean? *Roll* her? *Like into a snowman*? No, big sis Chika was like a big sister figure to you! You loved her in that way! You had never wanted to roll her up into a snowman! After returning Chika's embrace a moment, you pull away and rub at your eyes with your cute, little white gloves and find your smile again.

"Is that so then? Why not join everyone else in the kitchen then? I've brought gifts and snacks for everyone!" Chika's smile was infectious, and you couldn't help but smile back. Well, the promise of food and presents certainly helped to enhance your mood? There weren't many twelve-year-olds out there that *wouldn't* feel happier to hear words like those. And so you took a hand that was offered to you so that you might be led into the dining room.

“Okay! S-Sure thing! Merry Christmas!”