

The glass table shuddered from the hefty *slam* courtesy of Frye throwing her hands down on the surface. Spotlights shook above her as the gray studio backdrop stretched on forever, all the better for Frye at the other members of Deep Cut to wage war against one another. In spite of her obvious lack of stature with her usually shrinking in her seat, she now loomed over her co-host Shiver and scowled at Big Man lurking right beside her fellow starling. Usually, the three of them would be arguing together over any sort of topic, but Shiver herself groaned the louder Frye's voice grew. The smallest smack she gave by punching her open hand was enough to have the bubbles in Shiver's gut boil to the top while Big Man simply kept his arms folded. Why Shiver couldn't be him, she wished she knew.

“Ay! (Look here! Look, listen, look),” Big Man gestured briefly to Frye as his flat manta ray wings grazed Shiver's pointed ears, spurring another groan from her. Not that he even felt her hair, that is. As long as she wasn't the annoying runt jumping in her seat, Shiver didn't exist to him. “Ay! (An Aerospray fires way faster and spreads farther than any rinky dink gun you got. What's it really gonna do compared to something so crappy?)”

Frye threw up her arms and rolled her eyes with a groan. Then before Big Man could open his mouth again, she snapped her fingers and pointed to him, sticking her arm pit mere inches away from Shiver's reddening cheeks.

“You don't know crap, Big Man!” Frye snapped her fingers at him and bared her fangs, unaware of her fellow co-star slumping into her seat with the jellyfish crew members anxiously turning to one another. “You always listen to everyone else's opinions without forming your own. Just the other day, you said you weren't a big fan of any JRPGs, but I see you clocking in at a hundred hours with that one monster catching game!”

“Ay?! (Ah!? That's really rude, ya know!),” Big Man sank back in his seat with his puny legs crossed together. “Ay! (You can't just turn the conversation around to something else to attack me. Do you think people who use ad hominem strikes never get far ahead? And besides, you're just blowing smoke up my butt because you got inked in the inking zone last time we played off,)”

“Well, maybe if you weren't invisible, I would have been prepared!”

“Ay! (Sounds like a skill issue to me, little lady. Maybe you could take it up with someone who knows a thing or two about being stealthy and covering their fields well, like, oh, I don't know? Marina?)”

Frye slammed her fist again and Shiver brought her hands over her head; chest heaving frantically, legs crossed together. All of that yelling, all of that panic, it didn't do her aching belly any favors. She needed to let loose now or Frye would come for her after Big Man was done.

The wrath of the bubble guts were burning away at Shiver's intestines until fire licked her inner jaw. She swallowed hard before covering her mouth as a hearty belch quietly escaped her lips. It was a matter of arching her ass out behind her chair and clenching her teeth, forcing the bubbles popping inside her to slip free one-by-one without a single sound escaping her.

*Ppppfffff... pppfffff... pppfffffsssss...*

A sharp exhale could be heard beneath the faint whispers that Shiver gave. It helped that Marina gave her some pointers on how to camouflage her farts, much like how an inkling might hide themselves amongst their technicolor puddles, but Shiver nonetheless shivered from the unmistakable rush escaping her. She kept the smell of curry flowing while she breathed in the clear air, all the while Frye graduated to standing on top of the table with Big Man continuing to lean back in his seat.

She stomped over to where he stood as the jellyfish surrounding the crew were huddled together, swaying the boom mics side-to-side. One of the smaller soldiers stumbled where they stood and clutched their stick right when it hovered over Shiver's back, where a wispy hush filled the room. It squeaked through the speakers, but Frye and Big Man kept yelling at each other, all the while the jellyfish couldn't help but cough at the foul air that filled their lungs on the spot.

At first, the lead cameraman covered his mouth with his tentacles and puffed his cheeks without breathing in the smell of spoiled milk while sweat beaded from his forehead. But as he slowly stumbled backwards, leaving the lens focused on Shiver arching her shapely bubble butt to him, the jellyfish's fellow comrades were retching up the rotten residue that raged ahead. Shiver herself didn't so much as relax as she did whimper through the mic which continued to hover over her head until the jellyfish holding onto it let it fall to the ground. By the time it slammed against the linoleum, Big Man had arisen from his seat, still yelling at Frye.

“Ay! (Listen lil' lady,)” he said, “Ay' (I don't have a problem with using guns, I just don't like anything that can't shoot it's shot where it matters, you know?)”

Frye grabbed the sides of her head and dragged her fingers down to her cheeks. “Ughhh, my gosh! What in the world do you even use when you fight then?!”

“Ay! (Not something so sloppy, that's for sure! If I'm going to buy a weapon from someone, they have to be a respectable merchant who knows what they're doing. That's why I exclusively shop

at the best retailers like Spyke and Murch, the real mom and pop shops who are hurting the most in this dying economy.)”

It was then when Frye’s jaw went slack as Big Man leapt out of his chair, pointing his flipper straight at Frye. He jabbed the air and smacked his lips as the taste of curry splashed across his tongue, but never once did Frye leave his sight. Just in time for Shiver to lift her leg and lick her lips, relieved to be relieved after so long. The jellyfish behind her scrambled for the door as she dropped the next bomb begging to be released.

*Pppppssssttt...*

“Ay! (And *you*, my friend, have no respect for supporting an honest and true retailer!)”

Frye’s body sagged to the side, her arms drooping by her hips; eyes blinking rapidly, processing whatever the hell Big Man said. Her core burned as she stalled in place ready to scream that he and his co-hosts were all too rich to care about where they buy their equipment, but before Frye could even scream, her throat got caught on a rancid flavor that clogged the back of her throat. The moment she raised her hands in the air, Frye wheezed up a mouthful of the methane-ridden air and staggered where she stood. She slipped off the edge of the table and fell on her puny butt when Shiver gave a whimpering moan that had Frye’s eyes widening at the sound.

A faint hiss filled the air that quickly brought her scampering across all fours, still retching from the smell. Shiver reached behind her back and spread her cheeks apart through her leggings before heaving when a quiet roar dusted everything behind her, including Frye herself. Tears sprinkled down her cheeks while she stalled in place, unable to comprehend what was happening. It smelled as if someone set fire to a bowl of curry but decided it didn’t have enough burning curdled milk thrown in for good measure. Another second later and Frye’s vision blurred as tripped and stumbled on the floor before finally getting on her feet. Then Big Man sprinted right past her with his face shielded behind his enormous wings.

He shoulder-checked the door back out to the lobby while Frye shielded her face between her arms, her hair stringing out from the riding humidity. By the time she reached the front door, Frye shut it behind her before loudly gasping for any semblance of good air outside. The deafening *slam* that echoed through the now empty studio did little to spur an extra squeak from Shiver. She wetted her lips with her tongue before her brow perked as neither of her co-hosts were to be found. She sat alone with the spotlights on her and not another fart to spare.

“Think it’s time we cut to commercial...” she whispered under her breath.