

## From Mangaka to Maid - Part 5

**By TheSpiralledEye**

*The girls at the cafe are doing a photoshoot but Mark cannot get his fox ears and tail to go away in time which leads to unexpected results.*

Mark was beginning to think there were layers to this curse of his. He was a red blooded male, appearance notwithstanding, and so getting turned on easily wasn't exactly strange; but this was just ridiculous. Despite not wanting to he couldn't help but giggle and feel flustered each time the male customers smiled at him. All he needed was a hand on his knee and his tail was threatening to burst forth in front of everyone. He was getting better at holding it back but it was nearly impossible after a while, the pressure just became too much and the moment he relaxed, poof, a bushy red tail was tangling between his legs. He'd managed to escape sight each time by diving into the bathroom or sitting at a table with a long cloth but it was only a matter of time before somebody noticed.

Takuto, as promised, had come to visit many times, sometimes specifically requesting him much to Aya's annoyance. She was the better presented of them, that was obvious, even with him practically taking a crash course in hair and make up, Aya had years on him. The first time Mark thought that maybe there was something strange going on with his mind was when he was walking home from work as a flash of pink caught his eye; hair ribbons. He'd pressed his nose to the glass, already doing the calculations as to how much of his pay cheque he could sacrifice in order to buy them. They were just so cute!

Working at the maid cafe was just a means to an end but to his surprise he was finding it quite enjoyable. Stressful yes, keeping his tail in check was no easy feat but spending his days dressing up cute and being fawned over by his new masters was actually quite fun. His competition with Aya was growing fiercer as their trial period came closer to ending and Mark found himself vying for the position not just because he needed money but because he simply...wanted it. He rationalised; it was just him getting caught up in the competition that was all, he didn't actually like dressing up in ribbons and bows and having men stare at his chest. He certainly didn't spend his evenings rubbing circles round his clit imagining what it would be like to have Takuto or one of the other men move that hand just a little further up his skirt.

He tried to ignore the strange urges, focusing instead on his manga, further refining the art and story as he redrew it. After that night in the rain there were several water stains on his original and nobody was going to accept it like that; even if it was an epic for the ages.

He was just putting the finishing touches on the final fight scene during his break. The girls were to be photographed today for a magazine and Miss Sayaka had decided to make it part of his trail. Men always wanted photographs so knowing how to pose and look good in front of a camera was practically a requirement. He was just about to finish the page when the paper slid out from under him.

He looked up to see Aya standing there with Hiromi, musing over the page.

“So this is the famous manga you’re always talking about.” Aya drawled, “Look’s pretty average.”

“You wouldn’t know good art if it hit you in the face.,” Mark crossed his arms, “The only reason this isn’t being published all over the country is because I’m not Ja- a man.”

“Sure.” Aya rolled her eyes.

“What’s the story about?” Hiromi asked, “Can I see the rest?”

He beamed, he’d never had any friends to read over his work and hiring an editor was obviously out of the question. It might be nice to hear some feedback. It was close to perfect now that he’d added the Kitsune villain but still, he was sure there was a little choice here or there that could stand to be changed.

He waited, full of confidence as the girls sat and read it. He couldn’t help but feel excited, memorising the sight of two cute maid girls with their heads pressed together reading his manga. His confidence began to wane though as they continued to read and...that was it. No gasps of shock at the reveal of the kitsune, no sighs as the romantic lead was introduced; they could have been reading the phone book for all the emotion they showed. Hiromi placed down the last page and gave him a small smile.

“That was a nice beginning.”

Nice? NICE?

“Kinda generic though.” Aya added much more bluntly, “And sort of stereotypical.”

“Wh-what? No, there is nothing like this! It’s a western knight falling into ancient Japan-”

“And he falls in love with a geisha and the main villain is a spurned woman who’s really a trickster kitsune.” Aya shrugged, “It’s the sort of stuff you see written by western otaku all the time. Honestly I am sort of surprised any Japanese person would write something so...stereotyped. I mean, the geisha is even a prostitute!”

...Were geishas not fancy escorts? His face must have portrayed his ignorance because Hiromi raised an eyebrow at him.

“You do know geisha aren’t prostitutes right?”

“Of course! This is set in the feudal era, things were different. It’s not a representation of all geisha, just this one!” His answer came out fast and stammering, obviously a lie.

“It’s not bad or anything! Just...maybe a little basic?” Hiromi added softly, “I am sure you’ll be popular with young boys, that main character is a pretty blank slate, you’ve got wish fulfilment down!”

Young boys, as in the light novel crowd? Mark felt his heart sink; this wasn’t supposed to be some light novel style wish fulfilment fantasy, it was a grand epic. He took back the pages and stared down at the knight, his main character. He had spent forever developing his character and somehow all Hiromi and Aya got was a self insert for the male readers? He looked at the knight, stalwart as he held the swooning geisha and suddenly he had flashbacks to all the cheap romance paperbacks they sold in rest stops back in the USA.

He had been so convinced it was a masterpiece but now that he looked at it all Mark could see were the flaws; the shoddy linework, the stereotypical characters, he’d even modelled the main character after himself. For the first time since he got to Japan he felt that doubt creep in; maybe he hadn’t been rejected because of his race...maybe he was just bad.

“Oh no, don’t cry, fuck.” Aya winced, “Look, I’m sorry that was harsh uh, it’s not bad or anything really!”

Was he crying? Crap, he was, his eyes were burning and there was a lump in his throat. Worst of all though, there was a pressure at the base of his tailbone; the tail was only supposed to appear when he got flustered! Not just emotional in general, this moment was humiliating enough without that happening. He willed the pressure to go away and all that resulted in it was spread. Now there were two points of pressure on his skull as well.

A cold sweat broke out on the back of his neck remembering those pointed furry ears atop the kitsune's head. There was no doubt in his mind what would happen if he let that pressure go.

"Excuse me!" He pushed past Hiromi and Aya, ignoring the former's calls to come back.

He managed to get into the bathroom just in time as, with a groan, he felt his tail push out and two fox ears appeared atop his head. Panting for breath Mark leaned over the sink and winced. It was odd; the pointed, furry ears were coated in that same red fur as his tail, they twitched at the slightest of sounds and he felt his sense of hearing expand greatly. But his human ears were still there where they had always been. It was disorienting actually getting used to the idea of hearing from multiple places.

"Hey, Makiko, open up!" Aya banged on the door, "The photoshoot is starting, so get enough makeup to cover those tears and let's go. Or don't, maybe Miss Sayaka will pick me over you to keep on then."

Crap, the photoshoot. His tail swished underneath his puffy skirt; he couldn't go out there looking like this! Mark took several deep breaths; he could worry about his manga later; he just needed to relax, get through this photoshoot and then he could have an existential crisis.

He closed his eyes and let his heartbeat slow, taking deep breaths in and out. He opened his eyes and...the tail and ears were still there. Uh oh. He was calm though, not flustered, why wouldn't they go away! In vain he tried to bury the ears under his hair and tail beneath his skirt but it was no use, they almost seemed to have a mind of their own.

"Makiko." Miss Sayaka's icy voice appeared on the other side of the door along with the terrifying click of a key being inserted into the lock. "I'm coming in."

There was no time, he barely had a second to turn to face the door before the terrifying head maid was strolling in. Hands on her hips. Mark felt his heart race once more and his face blush as the tail hung low enough to brush the floor. He looked away, waiting for the shrieks, the call of 'freak' but none came, instead he heard Miss Sayaka hum, sounding...thoughtful.

"A creative touch to be sure."

He looked up at her and blinked rapidly in confusion.

“It’s certainly going to make you stand out, and the details on the costume are incredible.”

He couldn't stop his tail from wagging slightly; she *liked* the tail and ears? She made another impressed sound as his tail moved and nodded.

“Very high budget, how did you afford such accessories?”

“I uh, got them as a gift. From a specialist. She’s out of business now.” He lied smoothly, well only slightly, that wasn’t too far from the truth.

“Keep them for the photo shoot. I think they’ll give us some extra flavour.” And then to his great shock Miss Sayaka smiled, “I like it when my girls know how to improvise without crossing the line, well done.”

His heart thundered in his chest. This had gone better than he’d ever hoped! He walked out with confidence, a strut almost, letting his tail lift his skirt ever so slightly as his hips swayed. It felt...good. Especially when he caught sight of Aya’s face, absolutely red with jealousy.

Miss Sayaka led them back into the cafe where several of the other maids were gathered around a serious looking man with a camera. He certainly didn’t look like the sort to be doing fluff pieces on maid cafes.

With a clap of her hands Miss Sayaka had everybody in a row, though Mark could see all their eyes falling to him and his tail; he could not stop smiling, for once he was swelling with pride at sticking out. It was then, as he caught sight of himself in the mirror behind the bar that he realised the red of his fur was the same shade his hair used to be before he was changed. A curious touch.

One by one various maids were called to pose and be photographed by the photographer, sometimes in groups. Even so, he felt the photographer’s eyes always slide to him; in the sea of frills his tail and ears certainly made him stand out. They started with the advanced maids from the rose floor and Mark felt a stab of jealousy looking at their uniforms. They were full of cute flourishes; extra bows and ribbons, even beads in places, all rich red. They looked so much fancier than him and the other daisy floor girls. For a flash there was an image of himself dressed in one of those outfits as all the men surrounded him in awe. Mark had to resist the urge to slap himself for thinking that way; what the hell was wrong with him lately?

“Makiko.”

“Coming, master!”

He ran up to the photographer who was blushing.

“N-No need to call me that. I’m not a customer.”

“But you are being so kind to us, taking our photos.” Mark pouted, the words escaping before he could stop them, “So that makes you my master.”

His cheeks heated at the last part and he demurred; where the fuck had that come from? He felt embarrassed at his own forwardness, especially in front of a camera. His eyes locked on the lens as the photographer lifted it up to peer through and a jolt passed through Mark’s stomach. So many people would see these photos, see the pink hue to his cheeks from his embarrassment. Would they think he was cute? That his humiliation made him more endearing? Would they think he looked sexy? The idea made warmth bloom between his legs and he found himself biting his lip to try and focus.

The sound of a shutter clicking made him jump; twice, then a third time it clicked as the photographer worked. Each time he tried to think of a cute or peppy way to pose but all he could do was stand there looking flustered, trying hard not to think about how hot this was making him.

“Brilliant.” The photographer breathed, “So charming, a flustered fox girl, very sexy and cute; without being so overt. I love it.”

Mark beamed; pleasing his new master made him feel so special and happy; no matter how hard he tried to deny it.

“Perhaps I will have to visit your cafe.” He winked and a giggle escaped his lips.

“I would love that, master.”

Miss Sayaka gave him an approving nod from behind the photographer as he passed over his card.

‘SHOTO KONDO’

“With your bosses permission I would love to book you in for a private session, with those fox ears and tail of course. You would be perfect for a few advertisements I am working on spreads for.”

“Like a model?” Mark gasped, hardly able to contain his joy; those jobs would have to pay well.

“Exactly.”

“We would be happy to loan Makiko out.” Miss Sayaka appeared at his side, “For a fee of course.”

“Of course.” Shoto smiled knowingly, “We can discuss it once we are finished here.

“Very well, Makiko, go stand with the others.”

He gave a little bow and ran back to join Hiromi who was beaming ear to ear. She whispered a quick congratulations but Mark barely heard it, he was too busy grinning smugly at Aya’s thunderous expression. They both know he had guaranteed his position at The Rose Bow.