

Reggie and the New Brew

By: IndigoRho

Business was booming at the Twin Fox Brewing Company. The brewery itself was bustling with customers, locals eager to get a taste of the various ales, ciders, sodas, and juices produced on-site. Unfortunately the high demand meant the company was just barely managing to handle orders, and the co-owners were actively trying to find ways to replace their low stock, even if through questionable means. Nathan and Noah had practically founded the brewery on a dare, but the twin arctic foxes took pride in both their inventiveness and popularity. They weren't about to let their own success be their undoing.

Nathan shook his head as he looked at a scribble-heavy print-out of their stock. "Ugh, if we had just *one* more flavor on tap it'd ease the demand for the rest, I'm sure of it!"

"Maybe, but that's not a guarantee," Noah said. "Besides, we'd have to come up with something really attention-grabbing, not to mention finding a solid source for it."

"Well, duh bro. We've pulled it off before, though, we just gotta believe we'll stumble upon some inspiration!"

Noah rolled his eyes. "Dude, the solution doesn't always just...waddle on by..."

Nathan gave his twin an odd look until he realized his gaze was locked onto something behind him. He turned around, his attention immediately settling on the same thing, or rather, person. A very rotund red fox had just entered the brewery, his sizeable belly contained within a form-fitting orange jumpsuit that left little to the imagination. The twins themselves were rather hefty—just over three hundred pounds each—but the newcomer had to have been at least a bit larger. As both of them watched the fox nervously settle in at a table they couldn't help but think the same: he looked like an orange.

Inspiration struck both Nathan and Noah simultaneously, and an exchange of devious grins was all the confirmation they needed to know they were on the same page. Without saying a word they hurried over to greet their new customer.

"Welcome!" The twins cheerfully said in unison, startling the fox and causing his belly to jiggle.

"T-thank you?" was all the fox could think to say, not noticing their eyes constantly drifting to get a thorough look at his hefty form.

Noah took the lead. "How's your day been Mr.—"

"Uh, Reggie," the fox answered. "Good, I guess. Just wanted to enjoy a nice drink after work."

"Well Reggie it's your lucky day! You've been randomly chosen to get a VIP tour of the brewery and taste-test our newest brew before anyone else!" Noah leaned in and grinned.

Reggie wasn't any less confused. "I have?"

"You have indeed!" Nathan continued. "There'll be some other free goodies as well, but that'll be a surprise for later. Now follow us and we'll begin the tour!"

Caught up in the odd moment, Reggie simply decided to go with the flow and stood, following the twins as they headed towards a set of double doors labeled "Employees Only". He couldn't shake the strange feeling he was being escorted rather than guided, the arctic foxes flanking him closely front and back. After a short waddle through a corridor the trio arrived in the spacious brewing and bottling plant. Reggie looked around in awe, having never seen such machinery up close or in action before, his unease about the tour gradually fading.

While Noah kept the guest of honor occupied—rambling on about random statistics and failed flavors—Nathan slipped away from the group momentarily to put their plan into motion. He went into side-room and skimmed through a collection of bottles filled with brightly-colored liquids, each distinguished with just a simple label depicting a kind of fruit. Eventually he pulled out one with an orange, grabbing both it and a nearby clipboard before returning. Thankfully Noah was still chatting away.

"Now before we can let you participate in the exclusive taste-test, you'll have to sign a little non-disclosure agreement," Nathan said, passing the clipboard to Reggie. "Nothing major, just the usual legal mumbo-jumbo our lawyers force us to give out."

Reggie *wanted* to read the pile of papers he'd been handed, but the looming presence of the twins pressured him into simply scribbling his signature without looking over even a single sentence. He doubted there was anything out-of-the-ordinary buried within it, though. As soon as he lifted the pen it and the clipboard were whisked from his paws and replaced by the rather generic-looking bottle. The fox had expected something a bit more...complete, but Reggie guessed they just went with a simplistic look for their test runs.

"What's the flavor?" Reggie asked, watching the orange liquid within the bottle bubble from carbonation.

"Why orange of course!" Noah beamed. "It's one of the few popular flavors we hadn't had a chance to work with yet, but now that we've stumbled upon a suitable provider we're ready to give our spin on it."

With more nervousness than he intended, Reggie took a sip of the new drink. Sure enough it reminded him of other orange sodas he'd drunk in the past, yet aside from that nothing really stood out about the drink. He didn't have the heart to tell the twins the truth, though, instead merely nodding his head in approval and continuing to take long swigs. "Uh, it's delicious! Great job!"

Despite the definite lack of enthusiasm in Reggie's voice, the twins appeared elated, resuming the tour and leading their guest deeper into the brewery. As they walked Reggie's belly began to gurgle and wobble faintly, a bubbling noise drowned out by the machinery and chatter. Ever-so-slowly his middle swelled. Nathan was the first to notice the change, his gaze almost exclusively directed at the fox's belly while Noah distracted Reggie. He got the group to stop under the guise of pointing out bottled product traveling down a conveyor belt, but in reality he was trying to prolong Reggie's obliviousness to his own inflation.

Unfortunately for Reggie, the twins excelled at being the center of attention. His head was constantly bobbing between Nathan, Noah, and whatever important sight they wanted him to see, ensuring he wasn't looking down at his gradually expanding gut. To make matters worse, the jumpsuit he was wearing was made of extremely stretchy expandex, so there wasn't any tightness to warn him of what was happening. Meanwhile the twins did their best to not snicker and ogle their fellow ballooning fox.

Eventually it was a sneeze that ended the charade. As Reggie covered his mouth with an arm he felt something heavy splashing within his middle, the fox reluctantly looking down. He jumped slightly upon seeing his bloated belly, again feeling the sloshing of liquid. The confused fox frantically prodded his taut gut to no avail. Reggie could tell he was still growing, but had yet to figure out exactly why, not suspecting his scheming guides.

"W-what's happening to me, I'm filling up with something!" Reggie cried, looking to the foxes for help.

Nathan patted Reggie's round sides, snickering. "Well remember when I mentioned a few more surprises? This is one of them!"

"Yep! Soon you'll be filled to the brim with orange juice, jumbo, the perfect source for our newest brew!" Noah added, poking the fox as well.

Reggie stumbled a bit as he widened further. The fur on his face and paws was slowly turning a bright shade of orange, a change that'd been occurring for quite a while but hidden by his jumpsuit. "B-b-but I don't want to become an orange!"

"Well the volunteer form you signed earlier clearly says otherwise." Nathan waved the clipboard and smiled. "Thanks to this you've legally agreed to become an independent contractor working with the Twin Fox Brewing Company for a period of...well I don't want to bore you with the finer details."

“But that was just a...was supposed to...you, you tricked me!” Reggie said in frustration. He wanted to believe they were lying, but the fox doubted he'd be so lucky.

By then Reggie was starting to swell with juice all over. His limbs were bloating and growing more rigid, his sides and back rounding as well. Waddling away would have been impossible, let alone running, so the fox simply did his best to remain standing so he didn't roll away into anything sharp and pointy. Reggie's cheeks were swollen spheres, a strong taste of orange juice lingering on his tongue. Every bit of red, white, and black fur on the fox had turned a brilliant orange to match his jumpsuit, Reggie well on his way to resembling a giant orange.

There was something else happening deep inside the sloshy fox, though. Amidst the splashing gallons of juice was pulp, loose at first but quickly binding together into thick strands. They expanded and merged to form a rigid frame within Reggie, making him sturdier. His overstretched hide was thickening somewhat, too, losing what little give it'd had left. Reggie was transforming into an actual, living orange. Unfortunately the internal changes to his body were overlooked as he worried about the external ones.

Reggie was now mostly spherical, puffy paws jutting out from his immense form. He was still clad in his jumpsuit—the single positive of the whole ordeal—not suffering a single rip or tear across its surface. The twins circled him, obviously pleased with how their newest hire had turned out, offering praise and compliments that did little to improve the round fox's mood. Despite his precarious position, Reggie hoped he could still talk his way out of being used as a juice tank.

“Let's be reasonable guys! Why don't you just drain me for a batch and let me be on my way, no harm no foul?” Reggie asked, his bloated body making it hard for him to talk.

Noah laughed and shook his head. “Jumbo, even if we *were* somehow feeling that charitable it'd be a bit too late for that!”

“Yep, by now you've likely finished transforming into an orange, so even pumping out every last drop of juice won't make you any less rotund!” Nathan gave Reggie's middle a solid slap, allowing the fox to feel just how rigid he'd actually become.

“Wait, that kind of transformation can end up permanent, I don't want to be an orange forever!” Reggie whimpered, wobbling about futilely.

“Yeah sometimes, but a true fruit produces much higher quality juice than a mock one, and we've got a reputation to maintain,” Noah said. “I'm sure you'll be fine. Though if the worst happens, you'll at least still have a stable job here!”

The twins laughed, delighted to have solved their problem so swiftly. Together they gently tipped the fox orange onto his side and began rolling him towards his new “office” for the foreseeable future. Reggie protested and pleaded the entire time, paws wiggling wildly, though he was met only with more teasing and the constant reminders that he made a wonderful orange. He didn't think he was going to enjoy his abrupt career change all that much...