

FUNDOSHI MATSURI

by **KitsuneJey** | | PG-13 (Sexual Themes)

Inspired on an Artwork by **AtomicboyX**

*“To love someone unconditionally is not
to care who they are or what they do.
Unconditional love, on the surface,
looks the same as indifference.”*

— **Richard Bach**

“**SIR, EXCUSE ME**, is this dried fish?”

“*Hai, Kitsune-san*”, the vendor told me kindly. “Have it with *amazake*”.

I extended the little cup that I had taken with my left hand, and the vendor poured there a generous white stream of sweet sake from the greenish bottle. The gray owl extended his hand later, being followed lastly by the hand of the golden badger, receiving each of them their share of white stream in their respective cups.

“Isn’t that *haram* for you, Adam?” the badger asked to the owl.

The owl brought the cup to his beak, sniffing it carefully. “Nope. We got lucky, Blaze... This recipe is non-alcoholic”, Adam smiled to us. “Jey, foxy-buddy, is this *amazake* okay for you?”

“Of course it is, man! This won’t go straight to my head”, I celebrated cheerfully, taking with my right hand some dried fish from its wooden tray. “I know, we are gonna need some room for our feast after the *Matsuri*... But having so little for breakfast wasn’t enough for this voracious fox of yours, don’t you think?” I joked to them.

“Even with how little your *Mister Venezuela* food portions usually are, dude?” Adam giggled, being followed by a belly laugh from Blaze.

Laughing as warmly as my travel companions, and raising an eyebrow, I was about to reply that comment with: ‘Hey, guys, these portions are not *that* little!’

However, the owl, the badger and I got interrupted by three noisy and lively Japanese

passersby, who wore plastic goggles with fake noses attached to them, each of the three noses shaped like a penis...

Yeap... Each of the three noses shaped like a penis.

My spoken and written Japanese was anything but fluent. I was having a bit of a hard time understanding what these random passersby were saying, merrily and vehemently, to the three of us while they were encircling our shoulders with their arms. Thankfully, despite language barriers, all our smiles were far from being awkward.

There was a second when one of these men pointed at my cup of *amazake* and my piece of dried fish, the three of them laughing as loud as the badger and the owl, right before patting our shoulders and leaving us behind. Catching my breath, and scratching my head, I asked my travel companions what these Japanese men were saying.

“They were asking us for a tissue”, Blaze answered, winking an eye. “These men were about to sneeze”.

“Hah-Hah!! Yeah, I can tell, but... What did they say to me?” I asked Blaze again, looking at him puzzled.

“They said you need a tissue because you sneezed first”, Adam chuckled.

I snorted a laugh after the badger and the owl did the same, smiling with mischief and biting the tip of my tongue with my fangs. Simultaneously, we took to our mouths our pieces of dried fish and drank our white streams of *amazake*. I chewed delighted, feeling its texture creamy and salty, just as I like it. “That’s the taste of good fortune!” I stated enthusiastically.

“Come on, kids”, Blaze told to the owl and I, after the vendor got our empty cups back to his hands. “It’s time to introduce you to Elizabeth”.

* * *

The willful Spring breezes were carrying whispers and percussions. Copper and zinc knocks from a high-pitched *chan chiki* supported the rounds of tame bumps against the skins of *sumo-daikos* and *shime-daikos*. The tiny gong and the gathering of drums built the spirited melody alongside with the whistles of a bamboo flute, expanding their assembled vibes through the winds that were blowing over the grounds of *Kanayama* Shrine, a small temple in the

Japanese city of *Kawasaki*, located at roughly twenty kilometers from the south of *Tokyo*.

The skies were crystal clear that first Sunday of April. Blossoming cherry trees at that *Shinto* shrine fortified groups of colorful stalls watched over by polite vendors. The mood of every customer was humorous and lighthearted, while they were checking with their hands the candles and the toys, the pens and the key chains, the chocolates and the lollipops, all of these items shaped like a penis. Exactly, just like the penis/noses attached to the plastic goggles that Blaze, Adam and I just saw some minutes ago. The atmosphere was energetic at its best, but customers and passersby alike were very far from being the massive crowd that all of us were expecting, given that the main procession of the *Kanamara Matsuri* (“Festival of the Steel Phallus”) was set to begin at midday, in about two hours.

“These are the three *mikoshi* that the worshipers are going to carry in the procession”, Blaze told to Adam and I, while the three of us got closer to the three portable shrines, placed at a centric position from the stalls. “The little one that seems like a temple, this is the *Big Kanamara Mikoshi*”.

“That one carries the phallus made of wood, which traditionally goes third in the procession”, I seconded the badger, delighted, and taking a couple of snaps of the aforementioned *mikoshi* with my smartphone. “I’d really like to witness the *Shinto* ceremony when the spirits from the *Kanayama Shrine* get ‘transferred’ to the *mikoshi*, being the *mikoshi* purified and blessed by the head priest of the temple, before hitting the streets”.

“Buddy, I assure you’re gonna love this one, the *Kanamara Fune Mikoshi*”, Adam said to me, pointing with his smartphone at the portable shrine that was shaped like a ship with a roof. “It goes first in the procession, and impersonates the steel phallus from the legend”.

“A nicely endowed phallus, it must be said”, I commented, gazing at the dark and oversized member. “The one from the ‘Vagina Dentata’ legend, you mean?”

“Have you already heard the legend, foxy-buddy?” Blaze intervened.

“Just some details, man. My research was a little bit rushed while I was packing my backpack”, I laughed heartily, closing my eyes and rubbing my nape with my left hand.

“At the *Edo* period, let’s say around 1600s, a sharp toothed demon possessed the vagina of a girl who didn’t return his affection for her, ruining two consecutive marriages after castrating her husbands at each of their wedding nights”, the badger recited, taking pictures

of the *Kanamara Fune Mikoshi* with his smartphone. “A local blacksmith forged a ‘steel phallus’ that broke the demon’s teeth and shooed him away from her vagina. Of course, after the demon was defeated, the blacksmith and the girl got married”.

“That ‘Vagina Dentata’ legend is likely to be a metaphor for syphilis, very common at the *Edo* period”, the owl continued the story, taking snaps with his smartphone alongside with the badger and me. “Indeed, local sex workers of that time came to this temple often to pray for protection against sexual-transmitted diseases. *Kawasaki* was already known as a frequent stop for travelers”.

“Travelers like most of the folks here this morning”, I reflected. “And nowadays, crowds from Japan and all over the world come to the *Kanamara Matsuri*, praying for fertility, happy marriages, business prosperity and healthy delivers”, I concluded, taking one last photograph of the *Kanamara Fune Mikoshi*. “Not a bad Epilogue for a legend about a penis-eating demon”, I couldn’t help to joke.

“Okay, kids, this is the moment we’ve been waiting for...” The owl and I followed the steps of the badger. “I introduce you to Elizabeth!”

Elizabeth was irradiating an intense glow of pink, a glow that could be spotted easily from anywhere in the *Kanayama Shrine*, mostly because Elizabeth was notoriously tall, 15 feet of height to be precise, and with a weight of 600 pounds, according to my rushed research. *Elizabeth Mikoshi*, as people loved to call her, was expected to be the second at the midday procession. That particular year, the robust pink phallus was enclosed by a modest but well crafted portable shrine of wooden beams, the shrine decorated by lines of flesh-colored paper lanterns that were hanging on the framework. A lovely view, if any of you asks me.

“I hope your ‘introduction’ isn’t an euphemism, Blaze”, I told the badger, smiling and looking at Elizabeth. “That’s a heck of a gigantic dildo!”

“Hah! Yes! And a great representative of the LGBT community!” the owl told me, laughing alongside with the badger. “The drag queen club *Elizabeth Kaikan* donated this *mikoshi* for the *Kanamara Matsuri*. It’s said the club had a good friendship with a monk from this Shrine”.

“If you allow me to give a comment from a non-initiated, guys, this *mikoshi* is a work of art”, I dared to tell them, taking with the owl and the badger some more smartphone photos of Elizabeth. “At least to me, this is as delightfully eccentric as the *Spoonbridge and Cherry* in

Minneapolis Sculpture Garden, and the *Pastor de Nubes* in the University City of Caracas”.

“You got curious ideas for open-air museums, buddy”, Adam kidded.

“I’m already happy with my *Instagram* portfolio, in the meantime”, I said.

* * *

Men of our kind were beginning to reunite around *Elizabeth Mikoshi*. Just like me and my two travel companions, each of them was dressed with a blue *yukata* and a pair of white *tabi* socks. I hardly knew any of these guys, but I managed to recognize at least a couple of faces from that crowd; the dragon of tanned muscles with spiky brown hair was easy to identify, for example, despite he had never seen a fox like me in his life. The owl and the badger had a better time recognizing all of them, greeting each of these guys like if they were longtime friends.

A silent sigh escaped from my lips... I couldn't help to feel a little bit jealous. But it wasn't precisely for not knowing most of these guys...

“I feel too old”, I said to myself. “Always arriving late, silly fox?”

Immediately, I gave a strong shake to my head and released a jaded pant. Not the time and place to feel melancholic, I thought.

I was standing a good bunch of meters from *Elizabeth Mikoshi*, gazing at the scene of greetings between my travel companions and the guys of our kind, and my back against a steel pole of one of the stalls that was offering penis-lollipops. I took my own penis-lollipop to my mouth, and I sucked it a little, but I didn't want to do it in a sexual way. I wasn't in the mood for outing myself like that and, despite the backstory of the *Kanamara Matsuri*, those holidays were far from being sexualized by any of the attendees, thankfully for the Japanese modesty...

“Young man, excuse me, may you help me to take some photos?”

I turned my head to my right side. “Oh, hi there!” I replied to the black bear, shy in his manners, but whose great belly and strong musculature was sculpting pleasant curves under the *yukata* he was wearing. “Uh...”, I whispered, trying to keep my breath steady. “Sure thing! Do you have a camera?”

What a silly question! An old professional reflex camera, like the ones of my times at college, was hanging from a strap the black bear had around his neck. “There you have it. But I only got about ten photos left”.

“It’s alright, I can work with that... Your name?”

“Dael”, the black bear smiled, shaking my hand. “Nice to meet you, young man. You must be KitsuneJey”.

“That’s my pen name. Just call me Jey”, I smiled back.

Thanks goodness for the first minutes of new friendships. My mood had improved notably, while Dael and I were walking and chatting right to the couple of long and thick wooden penises, at the request of the black bear. Those wooden penises were large enough for allowing each of the attendees to ride them like a horse (I’m sorry, no euphemisms here), and aligned just like pirate cannons. The crowds were beginning to gather around the couple of penis-cannons, some attendees jumping on them and allowing their companions to take pictures of their funny faces and their respective mounts.

Dael, after handing me his camera, spoke in Japanese to a young lady who smiled and nodded at him politely. The black bear began immediately to untie his *obi* belt, right before disrobing from his *yukata*, giving both garments to the lady. “*Domo arigato*”, Dael said kindly, bowing to her.

The pleasant curves under his *yukata* were nothing but a faint hint. Dael wore only a tight *fundoshi*, its white fabric bringing an astonishing contrast against the black fur of his musculature, his belly and his buttocks. And I can’t forget to mention those new pleasant curves sculpted by the manhood underneath. “Get the camera ready, Jey!” the black bear instructed me, jumping on one of the wooden penis-cannons.

Right after putting my penis-lollipop in my mouth, I removed the lens cap and checked the speed dial. ‘One Hundred Twenty Five’. A bit slow, but the shutter speed was good enough to me. I operated the focus ring after taking the tiny camera’s viewfinder to my right eye. Dael had his left hand on the ‘head’ of the penis-cannon, rising his muscled trunk proudly and flexing his right arm for making his bicep noticeable to the shots.

“A couple of panoramas, please?!” I shot twice, but I didn’t need to operate any wind

lever since that camera was automatic. “Another panoramic, but come a little closer!” I walked closer to the black bear, and I shot twice again. “What about some portraits?! Try it out, but keep my ‘mount’ inside the frame!” I turned the camera to a vertical position and shot twice for a third time. “Do you want to ride it a bit? I promise to take some snaps of you with your smartphone, after we’re done with my camera. Get that *yukata* off”.

“Eh?!” I exclaimed, the penis-lollipop falling to the ground. “Sorry, I can’t!”

“Of course you can! Why not?”

“Well... Do I have to explain?!”

“Is something wrong?” Dael asked, suddenly concerned.

Blushing a bit under my fur and forgetting my lollipop completely, I got closer to the bear’s left ear, and whispered. “A tent?... Oh!... Jey, I’m flattered”. Dael shared a shy smile with me, while he dismounted from the penis-cannon. “Relax and breath a little... Try to focus on the wind”. I did what he said after closing my eyes, concentrating on the Spring breezes, the whispers and the percussions, and the gentle breath from Dael. “Better?” I opened my eyes, and nodded before the black bear. “Gentleman... Disrobe!”

Dael received the reflex camera, my *obi* belt and my *yukata*, taking special care of my garments, after I told him that my smartphone was inside of one of my pockets. I was clothed only with a white *fundoshi*, quite similar to Dael’s. Without thinking it twice, I jumped on the penis cannon and rested my left hand on the wood, my remaining hand reposing on the right side of my waist.

Dael gave my clothes to the young lady. Just when the black bear was operating the focus ring, I heard a playful compliment from my two travel companions, given in the name of photobombing my modeling session:

“Nice butt, foxy!”

“OW, SHUT UP!!” I yelled to them, shaking my fist to these two laughing guys beside *Elizabeth Mikoshi* and folding my ears against my head, resting later my body on the penis-cannon in a fit of frustration, my vulpine face completely red under my fur. “*Baka*”, I mumbled.

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“Adam and Blaze told me your Birthday was yesterday”, Dael said, giving me the new penis-lollipop he just had bought for me. “How old are you now?”

“Thirty four”, I smiled. “The guys and I were making jokes of that number, after I blew the candles of my cake in our hostel room. An awesome evening”.

“You seem to be in your twenties”. The black bear had a radish in his hands, and was beginning to sculpt it with a pocket knife. “Are you really thirty four, Jey?”

“It’s my ‘Dorian Gray complex’. I assure you I’ve lived that long!” I kidded. “Okay, I still have to gather memories... But the ones I already got count a lot”.

“You don’t seem to sound satisfied about that, foxy”, Dael observed.

“No, no, it’s just... Well... I’m afraid I got the bad habit of coming late”.

I was holding the penis-lollipop with my right hand, but I hadn’t removed its cellophane wrapper. The black bear was still sculpting the tip of the radish with his knife. Once again, both of our bodies were robed with our respective *yukatas*...

“How so, young man?” Dael asked me, still sculpting.

Young man... If gorgeous bears like him keep calling me like that..., I smiled to myself, fighting for not getting another erection...

“These two guys...” I pointed to my travel companions with a little lift of my muzzle. “We’ve been friends since long ago online”. The badger and the owl were still chatting with the guys of our kind. Dael took a good look of them, but he kept sculpting. “We wanted to meet each other, the three of us, at the same time... But I still was preparing the release of my first novel, so I had to delay our first encounter for around a year..., when I finally could become real to them”.

“You are lucky”, Dael said. “Most of the guys of our kind pursue the same... But not everyone got the means for making it possible”.

“Yeah, I’m very lucky, but I wish I could had gathered the same memories they already

got; these two happened to meet first”, I accounted. “I’m glad we finally made it... But I’ll always feel like the guy who couldn’t help to come later”.

“It’s not your fault, Jey. You got responsibilities back home”.

“Yeah, but I’d love to keep friends and family as maximum priorities”. I looked back at the black bear, who was still carving the radish, its tip getting the rendition of a bulbous structure. “These two guys, both online and in the flesh, enriched my life like no one has done before”. The black bear looked a second at me, and smiled warmly. “They even have done their best efforts for integrating me... to this remarkable group of writers and artists, guys of our kind”. I pointed again to the crowd. “Awesome ways of mixing work and fun, don’t you think?”

“Granted. You truly feel you belong to our community, the way you speak about it, young man”, Dael told me pleased.

“This is where I belong!” I stated enthusiastically, but with a little hint of melancholy. “However, due to my workaholic attitudes that I had in my twenties..., I was *this* close of missing this wonderful train, and it’s a bit hard not to notice the years that had gathered in my eyes... At times I doubt if I made it on time”, I whispered softly. “I wish I could had been here long before”.

“With our community?” the black bear asked me. “Or with your travel companions?”

I kept looking at the eyes of the bear for some seconds, staring at my own reflections, before retiring my face from Dael’s and looking to the ground... I left a deep, very well known sigh to escape from my lips...

“If I was in my twenties, or even in my early thirties...”, I began, but I interrupted myself immediately. “Nevermind... Your priorities change when you grow older..., at least in my case”.

“Your travel companions, then”, Dael answered.

“This won’t be like that all the time, but I’m fortunate these two guys have come with me in my first trip to Japan, as part of my training as a backpacker”. I was looking again at my reflections on the eyes of the bear. “Like I said, they have enriched my life, and the thing that I’d love the most is to keep returning them the favor, but not only integrating myself to

the guys of our kind... I also would love to walk beside them both as much as I can, and as much as they allow me to do so”.

“Giving them your company is a nice way of returning a favor”, Dael said.

“Perhaps, but I’d also love to count on them both and their company just for the sake of it, without any excuse of mine”, I affirmed. “I have my own family and circle of geek dudes back in my homeland... However, the times I had been blessed with their company in my travels..., I’ve felt both of them, two of my best friends, as part of my own family, the way I see it... If only I wasn’t that clumsy returning favors to them, by the way”, I joked, pulling my tongue out a little bit.

“Clumsy, you said?” Dael tilted his head, stopping his sculpting work with the radish, the glans already formed.

“I found a restaurant online, and invited both of them to eat there when we were in Minneapolis last November... Predictively for the more experienced in these matters, my plan backfired because the food awful, but at least the sweet french fries wasn’t a total waste”, I laughed.

“Oh, what a shame! I hope that shortcoming hadn’t brought you down”.

“I was so pissed off the rest of the day!” The black bear and I couldn’t help to laugh together. “But shortcomings like these were compensated the next day... We stopped by *Millennium Park*, in Chicago, one of the best places I’ve visited in my times Stateside”.

“Hell, yeah! I’ve heard about *Millennium Park*!” Dael was thrilled. I haven’t seen that coming. “The *Jay Pritzker Pavilion*! And the *Cloud Gate*!”

“The *Cloud Gate*, of course! That was one of our favorites!” I celebrated the memory. “People from all over the world come to see the gigantic stainless-steel bean... That was trippy, man. It’s a lovely collection of reflections!”

“The lovely collection of reflections is you, foxy”. Dael winked me an eye.

“Thank you, man”, I smiled. “That’s sweet from you”. I blushed a bit under my fur again and rubbed my nape with my free hand. “But most of folks would get bored to death with my pseudo-existentialist monologues, I assure you that”.

“That doesn’t happen often with unconditional people, and you should stop to be that hard on yourself”, the black bear advised kindly, craving the shaft of the radish with his knife.

“Yeah...”, I remembered. “That’s an advice I’ve heard pretty often from everyone..., including my travel companions”.

“But you keep doing it”. Dael was beginning to work on the finishing touches of his radish sculpture.

“My problem is that I can’t help to feel behind of them, at least when I try to reward everything they have done for me..., despite they have insisted that we walk on equal footing”, I admitted. “I wish I could be as inspirational as they have been to me... After all, like I’ve said before, I see them both as part of my family”.

“You sound like you’re gonna miss them a lot when you all go back home”.

“And chances are they’ll get exhausted of the many times I’ll say I miss them”, I giggled. “And how much I keep thinking of the good times we shared”.

“At least you’ll keep in touch with them online”, the black bear asserted.

“That’s the plan”. I left another sight to escape, and looked again to the guys of our kind gathered around *Elizabeth Mikoshi*. “But no matter where I belong and who I want to be with... Those virtual escapes the three of us have shared don’t have comparison with the real thing”.

“Here”. Dael extended his hand to me. His radish sculpture of a penis, another tradition of the *Kanamara Matsuri*, was finished. “This is for you. Keep it as a memory of our time together”, the black bear offered with another of his smiles.

“Oh, thanks a lot again!” I received the radish sculpture from the black bear, the white-ish penis as thick as my fist. “This will look lovely at my *Instagram* portfolio!” I joked pleased. “Dael, do you think it’s possible you can hang out with us a bit, after the procession of the *Kanamara Matsuri* has finished? The guys and I are planning a tour through the streets of *Kawasaki*. You’re invited”.

“Of course! We’ll have time enough to hang out together”, Dael thanked me. “But first things first... We got a job to do here for the *Kanamara Matsuri*”, the bear winked to me again.

“We?” I said, puzzled.

* * *

“Ladies and gentlemen, your attention, please”. A middle-aged and gracious Japanese drag queen, dressed with a pink *happi* coat, black short pants and white tennis shoes, was speaking to the whole attendance through the removable mic of a megaphone, beside *Elizabeth Mikoshi* and the guys of our kind. “In the name of *Elizabeth Kaikan*, we give our warmest welcome to the people from all over the world, who favor us with their presence here for the *Kanamara Matsuri*... And now, with the permission of everybody, I’ll give you a special announcement!”

“Why is she speaking in English?” The black bear and I were approaching to *Elizabeth Mikoshi*. Dael had again in his hands the radish-penis he had sculpted for me. I was beginning to eat my penis-lollipop, and expecting a reply that never came back from the smiling bear.

“Following our yearly tradition, members from *Elizabeth Kaikan* have the honor of carrying *Elizabeth Mikoshi*, alongside with the worshipers who carry *Big Kanamara Mikoshi* and *Kanamara Fune Mikoshi*, in the main procession of *Kanamara Matsuri* that is celebrated at midday”. I halted my steps at the same time Dael stopped his march. “However, this very year, we got a big surprise courtesy of the members from the *International Association for the Promotion of Zoomorphic Arts and Literature*! An applause for all of them, who are right behind me!”

“I... think the gracious lady forgot to mention us”, I joked, joining with Dael to the massive wave of applauses. “Do you happen to be part of the *Association*, just like me?”

“Yeap”, the black bear answered. “Listen”.

“This year... Listen everybody, this very year...”, a breaded brown bear, with a spike of black hair stained of purple tint, approached to the speaking drag queen, “members of this *Association*, who happen to fight as well for the rights of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transsexuals... (Of course, that also includes *yours truly*)”, the flamboyant pause unleashed

loud belly laughs from the whole attendance, “are politely going to take the place of the members of *Elizabeth Kaikan* and be the worshipers who are going to carry our *mikoshi* at midday!”

“Alright”, I smiled, the audience applauding effusively.

“Also, since *Kanamara Matsuri* helps to collect funds for fighting against sexual-transmitted diseases, our Guest of Honor... (What’s your name again?)”

“Narvasa”, the brown bear spoke to the mic.

“Oh, yeah! Mr. Narvasa”. Everybody laughed with the drag queen and the artist. “Our Guest of Honor has been preparing a special photo session for this day, and he also will use this session as a reference for new artworks that will commemorate this year’s *Kanamara Matsuri* and be auctioned in the name of our fight... We can begin as soon as you want, Mr. Narvasa!” the drag queen announced. “Oh, ladies and gentlemen, be prepared for some eye candy”.

“Gentlemen...” The brown bear was speaking to the guys of our kind gathered around *Elizabeth Mikoshi*, having this Guest of Honor his professional camera at hand. “Disrobe!”

At the orders of Mr. Narvasa, the members of the *International Association for the Promotion of Zoomorphic Arts and Literature* untied their *obi* belts and striped from their respective *yukatas*, these pieces of garment being received by the army of drag queens that approached to them immediately. Each of these gorgeous men was wearing a white *fundoshi*, just like mine and Dael’s...

“I thought *Hadaka Matsuri* was in February”, I told the black bear, raising a hand to my black nose.

“This year’s *Kanamara Matsuri* will have its ‘*Fundoshi*’ take”, Dael commented cheerfully. “Uh?!... What’s that hand for, Jey?”

“For preventing nosebleeds”, I groaned.

“Oh, *Domo arigato!*” Suddenly, the black bear got in his free hand a couple of wooden staffs, both carried by the young lady we had encountered before. “Take one of these, Jey, please. I got the radish in my other hand”.

“And this?” I got from Dael my own wooden staff with my free hand. It was crowned with a zigzag-shaped paper streamer, a *Shinto* symbol for purification named as *Shide*. “What’s for?” I inquired.

“Nobody told you?” The black bear looked at me with badly disguised surprise. “You and me will be leading the procession”.

“No shit!” I replied, frightened. “Who told you so?!”

“A little bird told me so”, Dael giggled.

“Oh!... A little bird...” Between somewhat annoyed and greatly thankful, I stared at my travel companions who were in the middle of the photo session. “So that’s why the guys insisted me to wear a *fundoshi* this morning”, I smiled.

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“*Hana-Mara!!*” (“*DEKA-MARA!!*”) “*Hana-Mara!!*” (“*DEKA-MARA!!*”)

The Spring breezes were blowing hard, spreading the vigorous chants from the black bear and the fierce responses from the worshipers who were carrying *Elizabeth Mikoshi*. The pink phallus and its portable shrine rocked swiftly on the shoulders of the guys of our kind, dressed with nothing but their white *fundoshis* and their pairs of *tabi* socks, and applauded by the army of drag queens that were walking by their side. Each step on the road was small and confident, moving forward in the long procession through the streets of *Kawasaki*.

“*Hana-Mara!!*” (“*DEKA-MARA!!*”) “*Hana-Mara!!*” (“*DEKA-MARA!!*”)

I remained silent beside the voice of Dael, stepping slowly at his same rhythm, and both of us wielding our wooden staffs crowned with *Shinto* purification symbols. I took a deep breath and smiled nervously, pleased with my *fundoshi* that let the midday sun to bathe my golden fur, and marveled because of the massive hell for introverts that was before my eyes...

Tides after tides of crowds filled the city streets, crowds of people dressed casually or with colorful *happi* coats and short pants, and raising their smartphones for documenting the *Big Kanamara Mikoshi*, the *Elizabeth Mikoshi* and the *Kanamara Fune Mikoshi*. Residents and

foreigners alike, driven by wonder and curiosity, came outside at a great rate from restaurants and coffee shops, from department stores and convenience shops, and from open doors at the balconies of small apartment blocks that surrounded the waves of attendees, the people who made way like opening seas for the confluence of worshipers and their portable shrines...

“Chant with me!!” the black bear yelled.

“What?!!” I replied, my adrenaline rushing.

“*Hana-Mara!!*” (“*DEKA-MARA!!*”) “*Hana-Mara!!*” (“*DEKA-MARA!!*”)

I remained silent and a bit confused. “Chant with me!!” Deal repeated.

With no more hesitance, I opened my mouth and followed his voice:

“*Hana-Mara!!*” (“*DEKA-MARA!!*”) “*Hana-Mara!!*” (“*DEKA-MARA!!*”)

“Now by your own!!” the black bear encouraged.

“*Hana-Mara!!*” (“*DEKA-MARA!!*”) “*Hana-Mara!!*” (“*DEKA-MARA!!*”)

The drag queens clapped stronger, and the worshipers rocked harder under the wooden beams that supported the pink phallus. My smile grew wider, and the warmth in my chest became more intense, while I was fighting to prevent another erection under my *fundoshi*. Our chants were raised higher. I was loving to be part of the chorus.

“Together!!” Dael commanded.

“*Hana-Mara!!*” (“*DEKA-MARA!!*”) “*Hana-Mara!!*” (“*DEKA-MARA!!*”)

“Almost!!” the black bear cheered. I got confused again, but I didn’t care.

“*Hana-Mara!!*” (“*DEKA-MARA!!*”) “*Hana-Mara!!*” (“*DEKA-MARA!!*”)

“REACHING IT NOW, GENTLEMEN!!” Dael proclaimed.

“*Hana-Mara!!*” (“*DEKA-MARA!!*”) “*Hana-Mara!!*” (“*DEKA-MARA!!*”)

“RELEASE!!” the black bear cried, full of bliss. I looked at him astonished.

“*Hana-Mara!!*” (“*DEKA-MARA!!*”) “*Hana-Mara!!*” (“*DEKA-MARA!!*”)

The crowds that surrounded *Elizabeth Mikoshi* laughed out loud and applauded powerfully. Long streams of white serpentine were being ejected from the head of the pink phallus, after loads of thunderous fireworks exploded inside the beloved sculpture. Jets after jets of paper reached ten meters high, before falling and coating every worshiper of our kind, including the black bear and me. The procession kept going, our laughs accompanying the cheers from the audience. “A gift from our *Association!!*” Dael explained me. “I think it blew their minds!!”

I was beginning to feel dizzy, worn out and entranced. I paid attention to nothing more than my chants and the voices of the worshipers, alongside with the climaxes that erupted from *Elizabeth Mikoshi* five other times, during a procession of an hour and a half accompanied by applause from the attendance in the streets of *Kawasaki* and in our way back to *Kanayama Shrine*. The next thing I noticed was the three *mikoshi* resting again on the grounds of the temple, the crowds gathered around the festival officials that were singing the closing chants...

All the members of the *International Association for the Promotion of Zoomorphic Arts and Literature* were robed with their *yukatas*. The black bear was at my left. The gray owl and the golden badger were at my right side. Everyone was listening humbly at the closing chants. And then my travel companions, this fox of yours and the rest of the attendance gave one-two-three, four-five-six, seven-eight-nine, ten claps, repeating that rapid strike of hands another two times. The final applause came lastly. The *Kanamara Matsuri* had concluded until the following year.

“And now another special announcement!!” the drag queen intervened suddenly. “Happy Birthday, *Kitsune-san!!*”

“*Kitsune-san?*” There wasn’t any kind of preamble. Vivacious trumpets and cadenced percussions burst from loudspeakers hidden from my sight, followed by another applause from the guys of our kind, who were emulated by the rest of the attendance, despite most of them didn’t know about the relevance of that foreign tune. “You gotta be kidding me”, I smiled shocked.

I knew the song that was beginning to be played as good as my zodiac sign. “SURPRISE, FOXY!!” the owl, the badger and the black bear said to me. That song was composed by the late fellow countryman Luis Cruz Cordero, and it was indeed Venezuela’s flagship Birthday song. My legs felt like collapsing at any second. I just couldn’t hold my joy...

*Ay, qué noche tan preciosa.
Es la noche de tu día.
Muestran todos su alegría
de esta edad primaveral...*

I found myself surrounded by the members of our *Association*, who were patting my back and hugging my shoulders one by one. “Happy Birthday, KitsuneJey”, I was beginning to hear from them, “and our best wishes for the years to come!!” The dragon of tanned muscles with spiky brown hair was carrying a wooden table that was left shortly in front of me...

In a ‘Dulce de Leche’ cheesecake that was laying on that table, lighted penis-candles were shaping the phrase ‘Rule Thirty Four’. “Happy Birthday again, buddy!!” the owl and the badger cheered. I wasn’t sure if it was because the Venezuelan song or the unexpected camaraderie, but I was beginning to feel like home. “Thank you”, I was replying to all of them, “thank you so much, guys!!”

“Next year’s *Kanamara Matsuri* will be exactly at your Birthday!!” Dael ventured to tell me. “Are you planning to come, foxy?!!”

I didn’t answer right away. Both the attendance of the *Kanamara Matsuri* and the guys of our kind were clapping at the rhythm of ‘Ay, Qué Noche Tan Preciosa’...

“Let me blow the candles of my cake first”, I replied happily to the black bear, “and I promise I’ll tell you!!”

And then, all the guys of our kind began to sing the last verses of Luis Cruz Cordero’s composition, in their most funny take of Spanish that I have heard in my entire life...

*Cumpleaños
feliz
te deseamos
a ti.*

*Cumpleaños,
dear Jey.
Cumpleaños
feliz...*

I closed my eyes and, after making my three wishes like I'm used to do in my homeland, I blew the candles...

E N D

Tuesday, April 1st of 2014

Story © **KitsuneJey**, 2014.
Featuring **Adam Primaeros**, **GoldenBoiBlaze**,
Mr. Narvasa (AtomicboyX) & **Dael** (Shadowfox13).
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Dedicated to my Travel Companions. Thanks for the Great Memories.