

**A Lovely Day for Ice Cream**

By Motke Dapp

Cake Daremont, inventor of the beloved *Jar of Faeries*, a lamp that carried the disclaimer: **Does not contain real faeries**, lived on the corner of Worgmorton St. and Eleanor Ave. It was a reasonable sized house, four times larger than he actually needed. He lived mostly alone, save for the stray pet or piece of chocolate pie. Cake was a lover of the ingenious and clever, constantly purchasing the latest in swanky technology destined to make his life more enjoyable, and Cake's desires included having an enjoyable life.

Ranking in the top seven of his most treasured technological treasures was his Robot Kitten, Banksy, made by Wibdib International, makers of the Unending Stick of Butter. He found his friend one day while using the Internet, searching for robot kittens. Banksy, named after the place where Cake kept his money, was great at math and puzzle-based games. He also enjoyed imitation catnip and the occasional ball of wire. When out and about, Cake liked to keep Banksy in a thermos, so when people would ask what he was drinking, he would simply tell them "kitten" and open the container. In general, people did not like this joke.

Every Thursday around 3:14pm, Cake would drive his unusually long car to Really Super Clean (We Mean It) Car Wash, the neighborhood car washing facility, where his friend Zooney worked. Zooney washed cars out of her love for Indian Chiefs and the off chance that she may run into one while washing a car.

It was on a particular Thursday in late August that Cake decided to ask Zooney on a date to his favorite ice cream shop. He handed the keys of his car to Ed Mustard, as was his custom, and grabbed his beverage container, finding Zooney moments later.

"Hello Zooney, I have something of great importance to ask you," he said. His thermos was tucked under his arm.

"Hi Cake. That sounds very exciting, but I must show you something first. What are you drinking?"

He unscrewed the lid, and Banksy peeked his head out.

"Kitten."

“That sounds delicious,” she giggled, grabbing his hand. “Let’s go.”

Cake knew that his question could wait, so he followed Zooney inside the bowels of the car wash. The loud washing sounds made it impossible to talk, which Cake thought best, because he only wanted to talk about ice cream, and this didn’t seem to be the best time for that.

She led him through a maze of hallways until they came to a supply closet. The walls were lined with belts, soaps, and other car washy things. She closed the door behind them and turned to face Cake.

“I was looking for a snack earlier and came across this.” She moved a few items out of the way and presented Cake with a non-descript box. She carefully opened the top. Inside was a smaller box.

“Are you ready?” she asked.

“Are you proposing to me?” he asked.

She shook her head, grinning.

“Watch.”

She held the coaster-sized box in one hand, pulling off the lid, visibly holding her breath as she did so.

Their entire surroundings changed in an instant. They were standing in a field, a cool breeze licking their faces. Clouds rolled past. The autumn leaves were swirling and playing all around them. Zooney squealed with delight then put the lid back on the box. They were back in the car wash utility closet.

“What just happened?” Cake asked.

“I don’t know! You wanna do it again?”

He vigorously shook his head *yes*.

She removed the lid.

A grandiose room filled with various fruit trees, waterfalls, and acres of vegetation sprawled in front of them. The brilliant sun warmed their faces. A group of unicorns sat around a large, stone table in the middle of the immense landscape, sipping on tea. They didn’t seem to notice the couple, standing only meters away. The unicorns were in no hurry to do anything. They just drank their tea. After a few minutes of gawking, Zooney returned the lid to the top of the box.

The familiar closet had returned.

“Were those unicorns?” Cake asked.

“I don’t know. Yes?”

“What is that thing?” Cake pointed to the box.

“I don’t know, but I love it.”

“Let’s do it again,” he said. She nodded and removed the lid.

Skyscrapers loomed before them. The sound, going from a closet to a busy, city street, was borderline deafening. Cake grabbed Zooey’s arm to pull both of them out of the way of a speeding taxi. Hundreds, maybe thousands of people filled the sidewalks, all of them oblivious to the couple with the box.

A gust of wind blew and pulled the lid from Zooey’s hand.

She gasped as Cake began chasing it down the street. His thermos went flying out of his hands and Banksy rolled out into the gutter. Programmed to be playful, he batted at a piece of trash beside him.

Cake finally caught up to the lid, securing it in his front coat pocket, returning to Zooey and Banksy.

The three of them did some shopping at a local boutique before returning the lid to the top of the box, transporting them back to the utility closet.

“I’m taking this home,” Zooey said.

They both regarded the box for a moment, smiles painted on their faces. Zooey looked up, a look of remembrance on her face.

“So what was it that you wanted to ask me?”

“Oh, I just wanted to know if you wanted to get some ice cream.”

“That sounds lovely.”