



“Order up on table twelve!”

“On it!”

Winston hurried to the serving window where three servings of dessert were waiting to be delivered. Balancing two of the dishes on a small tray with the third sitting snugly on his other palm-up hand, he wended his way between the tables, diners, and other wait staff to what looked to be a family of felines seated by the darkened window.

“Evening!” the rabbit greeted them brightly with a buck-toothed smile, “Who’s having what?”

Each cat in turn indicated what they’d ordered, Winston duly handing out the pumpkin pie, strawberry pound cake, and ‘mocha ice cream trio’. As each dish left his grasp, he an odd pang of sadness that he wouldn’t be the one getting to enjoy them, in fact it was all he could do to stop his mouth watering as he eyed the assorted desserts. He inhaled deeply, as if the hefty lungful of air would squash those envious feelings into submission, then returned to his chipper demeanour: “Hope you enjoy!” Turning tail, he fled back to the kitchen, scooping up some empty dishes from a pair of businessmen deep in serious conversation about who knew what en route.

Once more surrounded by the organised chaos that was the chefs’ domain, Winston dropped the dirty plates and cutlery off with one of the work experience kids who had the unfortunate and tedious job of dishwasher. With no new orders waiting to be delivered, he allowed himself a short break.

Water bottle in hand, the rabbit leaned against the doorframe which led from the kitchen to the breakroom, swigging at regular intervals to combat the billowing cloud of heat that was ever-present in the generally spotless white and stainless-steel room. As he lowered the plastic canteen, his eyes fell upon a notice pinned to notice board (as notices tend to be). Taking a few steps closer allowed him to read more than just the heading, which proclaimed a job opening among the kitchen staff: it seemed that the head baker was departing for greener pastures, leaving a vacancy amongst the team of early risers to account for her understudy assuming the reins. Winston wasn’t unfamiliar with the creation of cakes, cookies, and pies during his time off. In fact, he had started to develop quite a reputation amongst his friends and family as the go-to bunny for festive catering.

“You could totally do that,” the little voice in his head said in a firm, encouraging tone.

*Yeah! I’d make a great baker!*

“It’d be better than being a waiter at least. And think of all the taste-testing you’d get to do.”

*Yes! I’ll fix my résumé as soon as I get home!*



Is there a more perfect smell than bread fresh from the oven? Well, apart from cakes, pies, tarts, pastries, muffins...Winston's eyes glazed over momentarily as those wondrous delicacies paraded past his mind's eye one after the other; what he wouldn't give to get his hands on some of those right now!

Then the scent that had stoked the fire of that train of thought wafted back up his nose, returning him to the real world just as easily as it had nudged him towards Dreamland: he was a baker, for crying out loud! Those sweet treats were his business! Cramming oven gloves onto his increasingly pudgy mitts, he tugged the oven door open to extract the golden-brown loaves which had been his first project of the morning. Each tray was then placed tenderly on the counter for its contents to cool and be inspected by the big boss (not that there was ever an issue with the bunny's baking these days).

After helping himself to the majority of the larger crumbs that littered the shining steel surface (all in the name of helping the clean-up, of course), Winston returned to what he'd been doing before becoming distracted by half a dozen loaves of warm, soft, delicious bread...mmm...

"Bread's good as ever, but maybe we could have a little less daydreaming?"

Winston started, his eyes refocusing and landing upon the portly mouse standing beside him, bread-testing stick in hand. "Oh! Sorry, Maurice," the bunny answered apologetically, his ears drooping slightly to complete the image.

"Just get those cookies baking, then you can help yourself to some of yesterday's overstock," the rodent said sternly, but for a small twitch of the corners of his mouth.

Winston's ears returned to full perk at that, his demeanour suddenly very business-like, "Yes, sir!"

"Atta boy," Maurice said with a chuckle, leaving the rabbit to work with a pat on the stomach; months ago, this would have seemed an odd gesture, but it was all part of being the fattest of the baking fraternity now.

Seizing the mixing bowl that he'd discarded to attend to the bread, Winston swiped a speck which had dribbled down the side of it with a finger which was then inserted into his well-trained mouth: yep, gooey, chocolate-chippy goodness as always! Having passed its third or fourth taste-test, the mixture found itself being dolloped onto a vast sheet of baking paper on an equally expansive tray, though neither could hold a candle to the chubby bunny tending to them. Then it was into the oven, still warm from its bread-baking escapades, with the numerous puddles of cookie dough, their eventual fate being to accompany any and all hot drinks the restaurant would serve later in the day.

Job done, Winston dusted his hands of floury residue, then began the waddle to the table at the end of the rainbow, his eyes already fixed on his first cupcake of the day.



“Good evening, sir! Can I tempt you with a free sample cookie?” Winston asked the harried-looking fennec hurrying past him. In spite of the curt ‘no’ he got in reply, the bunny’s beaming smile didn’t slip in the slightest as he called after the vulpine’s retreating back, “Not to worry, sir! Have a nice night!”

It was with a twinge of regret that Winston had given up his job in the bakery department, but there was simply no getting around the fact that he had quite literally outgrown the role. However, the restaurant’s owner was rather loathed to let go of his employee’s chipper demeanour and could still see a use for the increasingly vast lagomorph. Thus, Winston had landed a comfortable new job as a greeter: all he needed to do each evening was sit by the entrance to the restaurant (his capacity for standing had long since vanished amongst the rolls and folds of bunny blubber that he continued to accrue), greeting potential patrons with his most winning of chubby-cheeked smiles and rattling off the day’s specials.

As the rabbit turned his face away from the cheek and neck flab which had been partially swallowing it, he spied a group of people making a bee-line for him, one of whom was decorated with a party hat, a feather boa, and numerous party streamers.

“Hi!” he greeted them cheerfully, a redoubled smile adorning his face as they reached him, “A table for...six?” This was answered with a general murmuring of agreement. “Sure thing!” Winston said, punching this request into the tablet propped on a stand beside him, together with the ‘birthday boy’ note, “Head on inside and someone will be along to show you to a table in just a second.” He

beamed at them as they passed by, not minding the curious glances they were giving him and his largely exposed girth too much: he'd become used to such attention by now, and being simply enormous was part of his job description these days after all.

A short while passed, during which Winston successfully managed to get half a dozen or so passers-by to sample one of his cookies, a couple of which seemed to sufficiently impress their tester to lure them into the restaurant for more. Before the door beside the bunny blob could swing shut behind the latest patron, one of the wait staff he used to call a colleague came padding through it, pushing a small cart before them.

The otter gave Winston a grin, parking the delivery next to him. "A little something to keep our mascot in business," he said, opening a pair of doors in the side of the cart to reveal an assortment of cakes, muffins, tarts and the like.

With a look of utter delight adorning his features now, the bunny placed his sample cookies on the top of the cart for safe keeping while his chubby fingers were busy with the large slice of cheesecake he'd extracted. "Thanks!" he said thickly through his first mouthful, his expression of decadent bliss just as effective at attracting customers as his toothy smile. Sure enough, as he tucked into a second slice, the waistcoated mustelid was already leading a new group of patrons to a table; a good mascot means good business.