

Popsicle Pick-Me-Up

By: RaddaRaem

Distant and rhythmic thooming could be heard, and felt, in the lonesome convenience store. Chin propped against his palm, the blonde furred canine manning the register sighed and flicked a padded digit along his phone's screen. His fingers cupped tightly round its plastic edges as the booms and fuums escalated in intensity. Candy bars shuffled against one another and plopped to the tiled floor. Plumes of dust rained down from the light fixtures overhead. Bottles of juice, milk, and water slid forward on their shelves where they bonked and tonked to a halt against the glass panes of sliding freezer doors. In time the Labrador's head came to bobble against his palm while he struggled to remain firmly planted against the freshly swept floor. That proved all but impossible once a particularly pronounced set of sneakers took to stomping in place just before the entrance.

"The cool down is just as important as the warm up," the owner of said sneakers reminded herself while she wiped sweat off her fuzzy brow. Her brown furred fingers brushed against the pale pink bangs of hair draping down over her forehead. Jogging in place, the red panda's breasts jiggled and bounced atop her pronounced tummy every time her thick knees bopped against the underside of her gut. Her arms remained held up along her sides as wrinkles formed and flattened in waves along the soft yellow tanktop clinging tightly to her generosity.

Sprawled out along the counter the dog manning the now mobile register clutched uneasily at what few fixtures were bolted into the floor. Packets of cigarettes jostled noisily against the locked plastic case behind him.

"One one-thousand, two one-thousand, three one-thousand..." the looming lass counted aloud. The columns of air drawn up then forced down by the rise and fall of her thunderously thick thighs, along with the legs attached to them, buffeted the shop at her feet with refreshing gusts of wind. The bushes, trees, and bike rack lining the sides of the building rustled and rattled accordingly. Inhaling and exhaling in short bursts she struggled to keep her lungs anything other than deflated at any given moment. "Mfff. Six-one thousand? Eh. Six one-thousand, seven one-thousand..." she wheezed between breaths. Her round tipped tail, alternating between orange and rust red stripes, flicked behind her tiredly. Those stomps slowed to a, relatively speaking, soft and steady shuffle as she counted up to her stopping point. "Nine one-thousand..." Fists clenched, the persistent panda's brown furred thighs clapped together. "Ten one-thousand! Phew."

Cassie took to panting while she errantly tapped her feet against the concrete. Her color coordinated sneakers, sporting dark umber soles, chestnut colored sides, and an amber tinged tongue, smacked loudly against the stony ground. She failed to resist the urge to slouch. Head hung low, the

large lass peered down at the shin height windows swallowed up by her shadow. The sights that greeted her prompted the panda to lick her lips.

With great hesitation, Cassie dropped to her knees. Hair tied back into a ponytail, her pale pink locks brushed against her orange furred back upon her descent. The muscles lining her calves clenched angrily in displeasure while she did so. Biting into her lip, she poked the, thankfully, push door open. A jingle accompanied the action. "Say! Uh... you wouldn't happen to accept PayPanda here would you?"

"We both know that's not what its called," the cashier plainly stated as he patted down his disheveled fur.

"One of these days you'll crack. One day, Kenan. One day you'll laugh at my crappy puns." Her white furred ears flicked excitedly while she brought her head down towards the concrete. A smile creased her puffy white and orange furred cheeks as the ambient heat simmering below wafted up towards her.

"If that's what you have to tell yourself," the Labrador shot back as he stifled a snort. "So what'll it be today?"

Shuffling upon her knees, Cassie's black gym shorts tugging uncomfortably taut against her rear, the red panda fished her phone out of her pocket. "Ohhh the usual. One Banana Blast, please!" Squinting against the glare reflected off the screen, Cassie clicked a finger against its side repeatedly. In short order she ratcheted up the brightness to drown out the encroaching sunshine. Apps rendered visible once more she tapped and swiped until her payment was rendered.

Kenan arched his brows when the displaced cash register beeped at him. "You know we don't deliver, right?" Sauntering out from behind the counter he moseyed on towards the ice cream freezer along the far wall. Picking up and putting back fallen candy bars as he went, the canine dragged a hand along the frost caked sliding door upon arrival.

"Oh like you have anything better to do," his colossal customer shot back with eyes half lidded.

A puff of arctic air prompted him to nip at his otherwise empty surroundings unprovoked. Reaching in, Kenan snatched up the popsicle of Cassie's choice. He sighed while he brushed flakes of ice off its wrapper. "It's a good way to kill all of fifteen minutes, I'll give you that."

"You're welllllllcome," Cassie smirked as she retracted her doorframe filling finger. The door gently swung shut with a jingle. The same sound accompanied its opening all of a few seconds later.

Plastic pinched between his golden furred fingers, Kenan freed the popsicle from its brightly colored confines and stepped out into the muggy summer air. "You don't need to hear the scripted spiel that's supposed to accompany every purchase, do you?" The canine reached forward and wedged the popsicle into the narrow gap between two him-sized fuzzy digits.

The red panda blew a raspberry and rolled her eyes. Slowly, ever so slowly, Cassie affirmed her grasp on her flimsy fruity treat. "Already missing the AC?"

"Sure am."

"Get outta here," Cassie sniggered. With a wave of her free hand she shoed him back inside. After allowing Kenan time enough to set up shop back behind his counter, the red panda rose to her feet. Toosh sashaying side to side she slowly lowered her rear onto the roof of the convenience store. Mindful not to squash the ventilation or electrical units atop it she slowly made herself comfortable. Popsicle in hand, she stared at it and sighed. Gone were the days when she swung by to clear out the shop's entire stock of frozen sweets on a daily basis. Her budget, nor her waistline, could abide by it any longer. "Trying to burn off more than I take in," she reminded herself. Tongue blepped out she daintily brushed the popsicle along its pink surface. She shuddered in delight at the sugary sweetness that smothered her taste buds. A sincere smile creasing her cheeks, Cassie contentedly slurped and blepped at her post-workout pick-me-up.