

"You, Me and the Cake"

By

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ACT I

Scene I

Two men, dressed in clothes that were once nice (involving tweed and ties,) but are now disheveled, due to a very rough day, stand at a kitchen counter. The counter is empty except for a large mixing bowl. All cooking supplies and the oven are behind the counter, like on a cooking show. One, MIKE, is flipping through a cookbook.

LAWRENCE

I think I know how to bake a cake. I don't really think you need to be getting a recipe from that book you're holding.

MIKE

(looking up from his book, annoyed.)

Lawrence, this is a very important cake. We can't screw around.

LAWRENCE

I can bake a damn good cake. Damn good.

MIKE

(slamming the book shut.)

Alright, Mr. Cake Guy, what kinda cake can you bake? Huh? What's this great fucking cake that you can conjure?

LAWRENCE

It's an cinnamon apple crumble. My babushka taught me--

MIKE

Fuck your babushka!

LAWRENCE

Hey man, really not called for. She died like 3 months ago, pancreatic cancer.

MIKE

Look, Lawrence, you just really gotta realize, this is a very important cake. I don't think you'll ever encounter a cake this important again in the rest of your life. There are entire people out there that are less important than this cake. And this cake doesn't even exist yet. You really don't understand the gravity here, the gravity of the cake.

LAWRENCE

I do, I do... Just, don't be jibing on my babushka.

(CONTINUED)

MIKE

(opening the book and pointing something out to Lawrence.)

There's a recipe in here for a banana chocolate chip bundt. *(pause)* We should make a banana chocolate chip bundt.

Lawrence stares Mike down for a bit, then, with a quick motion, reaches down under the counter, pulls out a bundt cake tin, and slaps it on the table.

MIKE

(acknowledging the bundt tin)

Thank you. Without solidarity we are nothing. *(looking down at the book)* Without the cake, we are even less.

LAWRENCE

(looking at the book)

Eggs. 4 eggs.

MIKE

Is that for the first part, or for the whole thing?

LAWRENCE

The whole thing.

Mike dips under the counter to find eggs, Lawrence studies the cook book.

MIKE

(while putting the eggs on the counter)

Lawrence, you every try drylomite?

LAWRENCE

(getting flour from beneath the counter.)

Drylomite?

MIKE

You haven't heard of it? Damn it, Lawrence, you need to get out more!

LAWRENCE

What is it?

Mike begins to break some eggs into the bowl.

MIKE

You ever wonder what it'd be like to have public sex in the streets of 1933 Chicago? What's it's like to have a 1930's orgasm?

(CONTINUED)

LAWRENCE
No.

MIKE
You ever wonder what it's like to do acid in space?

LAWRENCE
No.

MIKE
(while pouring flour into the bowl, and stirring)
I don't either, you know why? Cause I've experienced it. Drylomine lets me do that. Drylomine helps a lot of dedictated drylomites live much enhanced lives.

LAWRENCE
Oh. That's good.

MIKE
Yeah. It's pretty good.

Mike is stirring and Lawrence, in response to the cookbook, gets chocolate chips out from under the counter.

LAWRENCE
So, dryolimine, is that what caused all this for you.

MIKE
Nah, I told you before. It was all Sheila.

LAWRENCE
Damn. Fuckin' Sheila.

MIKE
Yeah, and why are you in this whole mess, again?

LAWRENCE
What, why make me say it again?

MIKE
I don't know, I just find it a bit ironic, you're in this shit because of Mr. Takiyama, and I'm here cause of Sheila.

LAWRENCE
I guess so. You play with fire, you're gonna get burnt.

MIKE
Wow where'd you hear that one?

LAWRENCE
Why?

MIKE
I don't know, it just, it sounded very wise.

LAWRENCE
I don't think it's very wise, and I was the one who said it. I think I've heard it in crummy action movies.

MIKE
Just cause it's in a corny action movie, doesn't mean it's not wise.

LAWRENCE
Naw, I think that does mean it's not wise.

MIKE
I don't know, don't worry about it. You wanna chop up some bananas?

Lawrence dips under the counter and produces two bananas.

MIKE (cont'd)
We need three bananas.

LAWRENCE
Damn.

SCENE II

There is a banana tree. Lawrence and Mike stand at the foot of it, looking up. Mike is holding a rope.

LAWRENCE
How are we gonna get up there? These aren't like the trees back home, with branches and stuff. It's just, (pause) straight up.

MIKE
We'll find a way. Here, take this rope. Have you ever repelled before?

LAWRENCE
No. I've never repelled.

MIKE
Oh, fuck it, I'm pretty sure repelling is for going down anyway. But, we really need to get this last banana.

(CONTINUED)

LAWRENCE

Why don't we just do without?

MIKE

Do without? You want us to do without?

LAWRENCE

I just thought--

MIKE

Lawrence, listen to me buddy, we can't just do without. This cake, it's more important than you, more important than me. The ramifications of *doing without*... After all we've been through. It's all too risky. We need to climb this tree.

Mike attempts to throw the rope up and onto the tree, but fails.

MIKE (cont'd)

Damn.

LAWRENCE

What if we try to shimmy up.

MIKE

Shimmy? I haven't shimmied in months. I could always go for a good shimmy. Not sure if I still have the calves for it though.

LAWRENCE

It's worth a shot. Shimming is like riding a bike.

MIKE

How so?

LAWRENCE

Because you should probably wear a helmet.

MIKE

Helmet? This is America. I'm gonna give this my best shimmy. You know what I always say, shoot for the moon, and if you don't make it, you're fucking retarded.

Mike approaches the tree and tries to climb it. He fails.

LAWRENCE

Shit. Let me try.

Lawrence fails too.

(CONTINUED)

MIKE

What about this. I hold one end of the rope, you hold the other, and we'll slowly use the loop of the rope to get up the tree.

LAWRENCE

That doesn't sound like it's gonna work.

MIKE

It doesn't sound like it's gonna work? God damnit Lawrence! You can't say shit like that! You know Pontius Pilate told Jesus he didn't think Christianity would work.

LAWRENCE

That's not true. That's not what happened at all.

MIKE

When Mr. Monopoly invented Monopoly, people told him that no child would want to play a game about finance and real estate, that didn't stop him.

LAWRENCE

Fine, whatever.

MIKE

And you're negativity isn't gonna stop me from climbing this fucking tree. Grab the other side of the rope. We're going up.

Lawrence complies, and they fiddle around for a bit.

MIKE (cont'd)

You're right, there's no way this is gonna work.

They sit, backs up against the tree.

LAWRENCE

Nothing ever seems to work out for me. And now we're gonna screw up this whole cake thing.

MIKE

Don't talk like that. We'll get through this.

LAWRENCE

Mike, once we finish this cake, whose to say that's the end of it? Whose to say we won't have to deal with this more?

MIKE

It's gonna be a pretty good cake, man.

(CONTINUED)

LAWRENCE

And after this is over? Where are we then? I'm back to living with my scourge of a wife and working middle-management at a lower-mid-scale bread distribution company.

MIKE

I don't think this is really the time for you to be having emotions, or whatever you're doing.

LAWRENCE

You know the feeling you'd get when you're 9 years old and you just had a hard fucking day of elementary school, science, history, gym, a tough game of kickball at recess, you know, the works, and it's finally lunchtime, and you know your Mom packed you a fucking doosey of a lunch, like a really good lunch, Nutella and bananas on white bread, with a nice bag of chips—none of that salt and vinegar shit either, a nice plain ripple, and a little carton of chocolate milk. Real great shit. So you unwrap your sandwich, you pour some chips next to them, you're all pumped, ready to enjoy your meal.

MIKE

Yeah, so?

LAWRENCE

Then you knock over the milk. Right on the sandwich, drenching it. You're 9 years old and you see your soggy ruined sandwich and chips. And you're really hungry. (pause) Well, you know that brief moment in between your stupid fucking elbow knocking over the milk and bursting into tears? Can you picture that feeling?

MIKE

I guess.

LAWRENCE

I have that feeling perpetually.

MIKE

That's unfortunate but--

LAWRENCE

(finishing his sentence)
We need bananas?

MIKE

Yeah.

LAWRENCE

Well, we can always try to find another tree.

MIKE

How are we gonna find another banana tree?

LAWRENCE

How did we find this one?

SCENE III

Mike and Lawrence walk off stage, when they return there is a small fruit stand. A scruffy-looking man, Abraham, and Scandinavian-looking woman, Ticjana, sit on crates near the stand. Abraham takes a puff out of a corncob pipe. He looks at the pipe curiously.

ABRAHAM

So, that's crack. Cool.

Lawrence and Mike enter.

MIKE

Is that a fruit stand?

LAWRENCE

No way, can't be.

The crate-sitters spot Mike and Lawrence.

ABRAHAM

Holy shit! Is that fuckin' Laurie and Shithead?

LAWRENCE

Oh god.

MIKE

What are the chances of that?

Abraham excitedly jumps up and over to Mike and Lawrence.

ABRAHAM

Fuck! I haven't seen you fuckers since Junior year of college! What brings you here?

MIKE

Is that your fruit stand?

ABRAHAM

(excitedly)

Yeah! Yeah, it's my fucking fruit stand! And that's my girlfriend, Ticjana. She's from Iceland. They have the

(MORE)

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ABRAHAM (cont'd)

world's first gay prime minister over there, ya know. I'm sure you fags know a lot about that, right? Come over here, Ticjana, these are two of my buddies from college! (*grabbing Lawrence*) This is Laurie, he worked in the dining hall for whatever reason, but damn if he couldn't make a sweet corned beef and tomato sandwich.

LAWRENCE

I worked there to pay for my tuition.

ABRAHAM

(*grabbing Mike*)

And this is Shithead! Boy did we have some fun times, this kid and me, well, one day we rode some old pieces of wood down a snowy hill, you know fucking New England, everything's a snowy hill. And this guy gets a splinter a foot and a half long stuck in his thigh! Hilarious.

Mike and Lawrence step back.

ABRAHAM (cont'd)

Come on guys, pull up a crate, let's chat!

Mike and Lawrence hesitantly walk over to the crates.

MIKE

So, Abe, I see you got a fruit stand.

ABRAHAM

Yeah, man, top fruit stand in the territory. It ain't easy on the top.

TICJANA

Abey, may I see the pipe?

Abraham hands the pipe to Ticjana, who uses it.

LAWRENCE

So, you do crack now?

ABRAHAM

No, that was my first time. I experimented with what'd it'd be like on drylomite, but I wasn't sure it was too realistic.

MIKE

You're a drylomite?

(CONTINUED)

ABRAHAM

Yeah, I've been using for--

MIKE

(interrupting)
Abe, you got any bananas?

ABRAHAM

(apprehensively)
Yeah, man, I got some pretty sweet Cavendish over by the tangerines. (pause) Do you need 'em right now though? I figured we could sit and chat for a while. What do you need them for?

MIKE

You're a fruit dealer. I don't think what I do with my fruit is any of your business.

ABRAHAM

I'm just curious.

LAWRENCE

(intervening to stop a confrontation)
Yo, Abe, remember that time Sophomore year when you, me, Mike and Mitch the Bitch went to that party on the night of Valentine's day, prowling for desperate, depressed, drunk girls?

ABRAHAM

Ah, the three D's. Glorious weekend.

TICJANA

Abraham, I didn't realize you were such a chauvinist pig.

ABRAHAM

The grown ups are talking, Ticky.

MIKE

Look, Abe, we could really use some bananas.

ABRAHAM

(embracing Mike)
C'mon man, drop the business talk, let's just talk, like old friends!

MIKE

(pulling away)
Abe, man, listen, we really need those bananas.

ABRAHAM

(frustrated)
Why do you *need* bananas, when does someone ever *need* bananas?

(CONTINUED)

MIKE

We're making a cake. It's very important.

ABRAHAM

An important cake? You were always a fucking smart ass.

LAWRENCE

Mike--

MIKE

Abe, just let me buy some bananas. You own a fruit stand.

ABRAHAM

I just wanna catch up. You know, there's a lot of phallic symbolism in them bananas. You sure you're not a homosexual?

MIKE

What? No! Look, Abe, you don't understand, these bananas, this cake, they're real fucking important.

ABRAHAM

(angrily)

Alright, Shithead, explain to me the situation in which a cake is so important.

MIKE

I can't do that, Abe.

ABRAHAM

So you're keeping secrets from me now? You know what Shithead, just get the fuck away from my stand, you're not getting any bananas.

MIKE

(calm, composed)

Abe, I really need some bananas.

Abraham goes to his fruit stand and produces a machete.

ABRAHAM

(weilding)

Get the fuck out of here!

TICJANA

Abe, calm yourself!

Abraham approaches Mike, wielding the machete, with a crazy look to him. The ignored Lawrence produces a gun and shoots Abraham.

ABRAHAM

(clutching wound, dropping machete)
Oh, Laurie. Fuck you.

Abraham dies. Mike and Lawrence look at each other, Lawrence walks over to the fruit stand and grabs a bunch of bananas. He and Mike claim crates and sit down. Ticjana is cowering behind the fruit stand. Mike picks up a book off the ground.

MIKE

Oh, wow, I love this book, you ever read this shit, 'The Eternal Suffering of Ginger Ale' By Sid Adams?

LAWRENCE

No.

Ticjana runs away.

MIKE

Fantastic book. Really, it's like an amusement park for your soul.

LAWRENCE

I've read books like that before.

MIKE

No you haven't.

LAWRENCE

Oh.

MIKE

We should probably head back to the kitchen.

LAWRENCE

What about Abe?

MIKE

Don't worry, he'll decay.

SCENE IV

They return to the kitchen. Lawrence puts the bananas on the counter and references the cookbook.

LAWRENCE

Abe, Mr. Takiyama, Sheila, your Dad. This is claiming a lot of lives. We're claiming a lot of lives.

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MIKE

It's like a game of chess. Sometimes you need to sacrifice pieces to gain a strategical advantage.

LAWRENCE

Or just to get them out of the way.

After an awkward silence, Mike picks up the bananas and begins to peel and chop. He slides the chopped pieces into the mixing bowl.

MIKE

I'm glad we went through this together. I couldn't have done it without you.

LAWRENCE

You're a good guy Mike.

MIKE

(hesitantly confessing after a pause)
You know, it really was the drylomite. It was the drylomite that got me here, got us here. I made all that Sheila shit up. Oh, well, for the most part, she did have her hand in all this.

LAWRENCE

I know. I knew the whole time.

They stare each other down. Mike brings sugar, baking powder, and milk out from underneath the counter. He picks up the milk and a measuring device.

LAWRENCE

Half a cup.

Mike complies.

MIKE

You know, before all this, I was living in my parent's basement, manager at a Dunkin' Donuts.

LAWRENCE

Yeah, I know. A tablespoon of baking powder, or, baking soda. Oh, wait, both. A tablespoon of baking powder, and one of baking soda.

Mike, again, complies.

LAWRENCE

What if it's not over after this?

MIKE

What if it is? Then what, do we go back to that awful place? I can't go back there.

LAWRENCE

I don't think that's gonna happen. We're changing things.

MIKE

I think it's ready.

LAWRENCE

Ready?

MIKE

To put in the oven.

LAWRENCE

Oh. Oh yeah, preheat to 375.

Mike bends down and fiddles with a knob behind the counter.

MIKE

Alright. Then what?

LAWRENCE

Then, we wait.

MIKE

We're so close, I can almost taste it.

LAWRENCE

I think you're just smelling the cake. It's probably pre-heated. Pop the cake in.

Mike picks up the cake with one hand, and opens the oven behind the counter. He puts the cake back on the table, upon looking in the oven.

MIKE

What the fuck?

He reaches into the oven and produces a fully cooked cake. He puts it down next to theirs.

LAWRENCE

Where did you get that?

MIKE

In the oven.

LAWRENCE

Is it--

MIKE

(tasting the cake)

It's a banana chocolate chip bundt. Still warm.

LAWRENCE

Wow. So--

MIKE

We have the cake.

LAWRENCE

How'd it get made?

MIKE

I don't know

LAWRENCE

So should we--

MIKE

I don't know. I guess so, it's what we've been working towards.

LAWRENCE

I guess, pick it up. Let's go.

Mike picks up the cake and fixes his hair and jacket.

MIKE

Here we go.

Mike begins to walk off stage.

LAWRENCE

Mike, wait.

Mike turns, and Lawrence produces his gun, pointing it at Mike.

LAWRENCE

You can't go through with this, Mike, I just can't let you do this. There's no one here now. Everyone that could have stopped us is dead. It's just you, me, and the cake.

MIKE

(scared)

Lawrence--

(CONTINUED)

Mike puts his hands in the air, putting the cake in a very precarious position.

LAWRENCE

Be careful with that.

Mike slowly walks over to the counter and puts the cake down. As he backs away from the counter, Lawrence shoots him in the knee. Mike falls to the ground.

LAWRENCE (cont'd)

Here's the thing about the chess analogy, when you sacrifice real people, they don't get to enjoy the victory, cause they're dead, instead of sitting on the side of the board. Well, chess pieces are inanimate and can't observe anything, but whatever.

MIKE

Lawrence, please, I don't want to do this either, let's just forget it, I can go to the hospital, we can disappear. We'll open that deli in Brooklyn we were talking about. With the chopped up hot dogs with cole slaw in a pita. Forget the cake. Forget this whole thing.

LAWRENCE

Mike, this is a very important cake.

Lawrence shoots Mike again. He puts the gun in the unbaked cake. He takes a towel from behind the counter and wipes off his face and hands. He fixes his hair and clothes. He picks up the baked cake and begins to walk off stage. He pauses near Mike's body.

LAWRENCE

Hope they aren't pie fans. (pause) I know you like corny one-liners. Thought it'd be a fitting thing to say. (pause) You were a good guy Mike.

Lawrence walks off stage.

END