

The Runaway Birthday Cake



Yavuz DEMİRKIRAN

The Runaway Birthday Cake

Yavuz DEMİRKİRAN



Lily woke up on her birthday morning with a bounce in her red sneakers. Sunlight danced on her yellow polka-dot dress, and her springy black curls bounced in two puffs tied with a sky-blue ribbon. Today was her seventh birthday, and she could already smell something wonderful coming from Grandpa Tomas's kitchen. She raced downstairs, her hazel eyes wide with excitement.



Grandpa Tomas stood by the table in his faded green cardigan and flat cap, his white beard twitching with a smile. In the middle of the table sat the biggest birthday cake Lily had ever seen. It was as tall as she was and wide as a doorway, with thick pink frosting, three tiers, and white piping swirls like little clouds.



The cake had two big shiny chocolate-drop eyes and a cherry nose. Stubby frosting legs poked out from the bottom, wearing tiny white shoes. A single tall striped candle stood on top, and sprinkles dotted the frosting like freckles. "It's perfect!" Lily cheered. Grandpa Tomas winked. "I baked it extra special this year."



Suddenly the cake wiggled. Its chocolate-drop eyes blinked. Then it hopped off the table on its stubby frosting legs and ran out the door! "Wait!" Lily shouted, her red sneakers slapping the floor. She chased the runaway cake down the garden path, her blue ribbon flapping in the wind. The cake bounced past the rose bushes and disappeared around the corner.



Lily followed the cake past the baker's shop and the old stone fountain. She spotted it slipping into a narrow alley. There, a tiny girl with short black bangs and patched blue overalls sat on a step. The cake stopped right in front of her, and its cherry nose wiggled. The girl's dark eyes went wide. "Is that for me?" she whispered.



The girl's name was Mira. She wore a too-big grey sweater and had a single daisy tucked behind her ear. "I never had a birthday cake," she said softly, touching the pink frosting. The cake wiggled its chocolate-drop eyes and did a little dance. Lily didn't know what to say. She had never met anyone who didn't get a birthday surprise before.



The cake bounced away again, and Lily and Mira ran after it. It led them to the village square, where a boy in a patched cap was drawing pictures in the dirt with a stick. The cake spun around him, leaving a tiny swirl of frosting on his nose. The boy laughed. Soon a girl with braids and a boy with a wooden toy joined the chase.



The cake visited the children who never got birthday surprises. Some lived in small houses at the edge of the village. Some helped their parents at the market all day. The cake stopped to give each one a little wiggle and a sprinkle of joy. Lily watched as shy smiles turned into giggles. Her heart felt warm and full.



Mira tugged Lily's sleeve. "Why does it keep running?" she asked. Lily thought about her own birthday morning, how excited she had been for her cake. But these children had never felt that. "I think it's showing us something," Lily said. "It wants everyone to have a birthday." The cake nodded its cherry nose and did a happy spin.



By now, a whole parade of village children followed the cake. There was Mira, the boy with the patched cap, a girl with a red scarf, twins with matching freckles, and many more. They skipped and laughed, their bare feet and worn shoes tapping on the cobblestones. The cake led them to the village square and stopped in the middle.



Lily looked at the children's shining faces. She thought of her cake waiting at home, and she made a decision. "Let's have a big party here!" she announced. "Everyone gets a slice!" The children gasped. Mira's daisy bobbed as she nodded. "But we need chairs and candles," she said. Lily grinned. "I know just who can help."



Lily ran home and found Grandpa Tomas on the porch, his walking stick in hand. "Grandpa, the cake ran away, and now all these children want a party!" she said. Grandpa Tomas chuckled. "Well then, let's bring the party to them." He loaded chairs and candles into a little wooden cart, and together they hurried to the square.



When they reached the square, the cake was waiting. But something was different. It now had dozens of tiny candles all over its tiers, one for each child. The single tall candle on top still glowed. The cake wiggled its chocolate-drop eyes and did a little bow. Grandpa Tomas set up the chairs, and Mira helped pass out paper plates.



Lily stood beside the cake and looked at all her new friends. "This is the best birthday ever," she said. "Because now we can all celebrate together!" The children cheered. Grandpa Tomas lit the candles with a match, one by one, until the whole cake twinkled like a starry sky. "Make a wish, everyone!" Lily called out.



All the children closed their eyes and made a wish. Then they took a deep breath and blew out the candles together. The flames flickered and went out, and everyone clapped and laughed. The cake wiggled happily, and its cherry nose seemed to smile. Grandpa Tomas cut the first slice, and Lily handed it to Mira, who beamed.



As the sun set, the village square was full of children eating cake and sharing stories. Lily realized that her birthday had turned into something even better than she had planned. "Celebrations are best when everyone gets a slice of the fun," she said. The cake did one last happy wiggle, and everyone cheered for the runaway birthday cake.