

# The Cake Forest

*by* Shawn Misener

All of the trees are made of cake, and depending on the kind of tree, a different kind of cake. The kids are happy at this astounding revelation. To all of them except for Alex (a certified nature enthusiast) trees were boring pieces of shit that were good for the occasional reckless climb and nothing else. Now they are delicious and spongy.

They look like amateur beavers, all twenty-seven of them on their knees, gnawing through frosting bark. My wife is taking notes on a huge purple flower, listening to the kids as they shout out what tree corresponds to what flavor. In the case of a confusing or borderline tree she personally takes a bite herself. The elms are cherry, the holly are dark chocolate, the birch are lemon, and so on and so on.

It isn't long before I realize that pretty much every tree in the known universe is represented in this particular forest, and that there is only one of each tree. No regard to climate zones or any other known distinction.

"This is a fucking trap," I whisper to my wife. "Somebody planted these things to lure our kids in."

"Oh, don't be silly. I hate it when you get all conspiratorial." She shakes her head and wanders away with her giant flower notepad, following the random bellows of our children's discoveries.

But my hesitations prove correct. With a thunderous smash a black beaver the size of a hippo falls from somewhere above. Rising on two legs, it laughs in a deafening, evil baritone. "STUPID FUCKING HUMANS! ALWAYS A PREY TO CAKE!"

I lift a finger in the air as if to make a point, but it's useless. I'm not sure what point to make. Ten more gigantic beavers thud onto the forest floor, snatching up my children and crunching their bones with yellow teeth the size of manila folders. My wife tries to fend one off with her flower but is sent flying out of the picture by a casual and deadly beaver tail. In a matter of seconds all of the kids are mashed up and piled neatly in the center of the beavers, who

appear to be holding a religious ritual. The smallest one, who is still comparable to a reliable old milk cow, is splashing frankincense throughout the proceedings with a shiny thurible.

He's singing the one Enya song I know.

