

Rando's Quest for King Cake!

Every Mardi Gras in the bustling city of New Orleans, a cheerful, short-haired, black and brown Beagle puppy by the name of Rando and his owner, Chloe, came down from the north to spend the Mardi Gras holidays in New Orleans. Being the young, energetic puppy that he was, Rando was always thrilled to view parades and tour the famous city streets of New Orleans with Chloe. But the main reason that he looked forward to visiting the city was because of "king cake," a cinnamon roll-like cake in the shape of an oval with frosting and colorful sprinkles only eaten during Mardi Gras. Chloe, however, restricted his obsession over king cake to only a small piece of the slices that she eats, so as to not disrupt his strict diet of dog kibble. Chloe was such a huge fan of king cake that she named Rando after her favorite New Orleans bakery, called "Randazzos." Rando was given a small allowance of king cake, but he always found himself craving more.

One sunny Mardi Gras morning, while Chloe and he were viewing a parade, Rando saw a cart selling fresh king cakes to the crowd, the perfect way for him to indulge in his favorite treat! Suddenly, the cart disappeared behind the crowd, and Rando knew that if he did not act then, he would not have such an incredible opportunity again. So he broke free from his leash using his powerful jaws and ran. He ran and ran through the legs of the crowd as fast as lightning until he lost track of the cart, and it was nowhere to

be seen. Just then, he saw a young couple enjoying a freshly-bought slice. In his frenzy of excitement, he ran over to them and began to whimper and jump at their feet, to which the couple responded by shooing him away. Since Rando was a Beagle, a kind of dog specifically bred for hunting and tracking, he assumed that finding his favorite treat would be a piece of cake. But little did he know that this was just the beginning of his quest for king cake.

The next place he headed was Magazine Street, where parties were frequent and Mardi Gras festivities were at an all time high. There, he discovered a small bakery with all sorts of special king cake flavors such as original, cream cheese, pecan, praline, strawberry, and bavarian cream, all on open display. Without hesitation, he made his pick, a good-old-fashioned original. After all, it was the only kind he was allowed to eat, so he thought it must be the best choice. Just as he jumped onto the display and opened his jaws for a long awaited bite, he heard the distinct accent of an ill-tempered French baker with a rolling pin in his hand, and before he knew it, the boulanger was through the bakery door and yelling after him. Since he was just a puppy, he had heightened reflexes and swiftly ran out of his path just in time. He turned into an alley on the side of the road once he was out of the baker's view and continued on the lonesome search for his favorite Mardi Gras treat.

At long last, he made it to the one place that he was sure to find king cake: The French Quarter. As he strolled by searching for some, the festivities and decorations of

the city caught his attention. Lining the streets he saw the intricate and beautiful abstract brush-stroke paintings that artistically display New Orleans made by street artists for people to admire and to potentially purchase. This made his hunger for king cake worse, however, because many of them were depictions of perfect king cakes and people enjoying the southern delicacy. The fantasies of enjoying a large slice became stuck in his mind just as moths stick to a light. Looking to the sky did not help him either because Mardi Gras streamers colored purple, green, and gold caused him to think back on the shining, sugary sprinkles that are the signature of every king cake. Then, suddenly, he saw it: a large sign on a building that said, “Randazzo’s: Best King Cakes in Town.” He could not believe his luck when he realized that he was right in front of the best bakery in town, and even better, Chloe was outside searching for him with a big, colorful, slice of king cake! He ran to her with incredible speed and leaped into her arms. “You finally came back!” she exclaimed. “I knew I would find you here!” Just like that, as quickly as Rando’s quest for king cake had begun, it had come to a sweet, sweet end as he finished off his big slice of king cake.