BREAD AND MACHINE
by Megumi Mandish

CHARACTERS:

- *CLOUD (fae, early teens)*
- *PEREGRIN (automaton, early teens)*
- *LAMPWICK (half-fae, mid-teens)*

(LIGHTS UP)

(PEREGRIN is seated at the table, eyeing a tray of steaming bread buns. CLOUD enters STAGE LEFT, carrying a fresh tray of doughnuts.)

CLOUD: Did you finish mopping?

PEREGRIN: Yep.

CLOUD: And you unpacked all the supplies?

PEREGRIN: Yep.

CLOUD: And you put them away like I showed you?

PEREGRIN: Yep. Am I done now?

CLOUD: I think so. Once we open, I can show you how to run the register.

(CLOUD sets the tray of doughnuts on the table and EXITS STAGE LEFT.)

CLOUD, cont'd offstage: What time is it?

(PEREGRIN checks the clock hanging above him.)

PEREGRIN: It's 4:30. Why do you have to wake up so early just for this?

CLOUD: I don't know. People like their bread fresh when they get up in the morning.

(CLOUD reenters STAGE LEFT with another batch of baked goods.)

CLOUD, cont'd: It's pretty interesting though, isn't it? I think bread is the best human invention to ever exist. It tastes like sunlight to me!

PEREGRIN: Hey! I'm a cool invention too, right?

CLOUD: You're pretty cool too, Peregrin.

(CLOUD EXITS STAGE LEFT. PEREGRIN eyes the baked goods before slowly picking one up and putting it in his mouth. CLOUD enters STAGE LEFT with another tray.)

CLOUD, cont'd: I think we're almost ready! Let me just grab a clean apron, and I can show you how to work up front.

    (CLOUD turns away to switch out his apron. PEREGRIN takes another pastry and eats it.)

CLOUD: Oh, Peregrin!

PEREGRIN, somewhat panicked, muffled with a third pastry: Yeah?

CLOUD: I forgot to tell you, Lampwick's stopping by today.

PEREGRIN: Really? That's awesome! But... didn't you say him coming back early is a bad thing?

CLOUD: Sometimes it is, when he's out gathering information for the network. But Mom told him to come help in the bakery today in case it gets too busy.

PEREGRIN: But we can handle it. You just hand food to people and take their gold, right?

CLOUD: A little more than that, but that's besides the point. I can't work out front.

PEREGRIN: Oh. Right, cause of the ears, and the wings, and—

CLOUD: Yeah. Getting arrested wouldn't be great for business.

PEREGRIN: I don't get why Geppeto can't just leave the fae alone.

CLOUD: I guess it's hard when you're the most powerful human alive. But I wouldn't worry too much. You're safe here. Every automaton that's escaped him hasn't been recaptured since.

    (CLOUD ducks behind the front counter. PEREGRIN grabs three pastries and shoves them into his mouth. CLOUD stands back up.)

CLOUD: Peregrin! What are you doing?!

PEREGRIN, mouth full: Nothing!

CLOUD: That doesn't look like nothing– Peregrin, spit them out!

    (CLOUD tries to pry the pastries from PEREGRIN, and the two struggle, knocking over a couple chairs. PEREGRIN swallows the last of the bread. LAMPWICK enters STAGE RIGHT.)

LAMPWICK: Hey, hope you two haven't destroyed the shop– Well, this is new.

CLOUD: Lampwick! Help me get his torso open!

LAMPWICK: His what?

PEREGRIN: No!

CLOUD: He just stuffed like four pastries down his throat! Help me get his torso open before his gears start locking up!

LAMPWICK: Yikes. Okay.

(LAMPWICK grabs PEREGRIN and hoists him up. CLOUD opens a panel on PEREGRIN and starts pulling pastries out.)

LAMPWICK: Geez, Peregrin, how many did you eat? You know you can't eat human food.

PEREGRIN: ...But I am human.

CLOUD: You're *part* human. Part human doesn't mean you have a digestive system. ...Is that a decorative candle in there? Are those *marbles*? What else have you eaten?

PEREGRIN: Why can't I be a real person? I want to be a real person.

CLOUD: You are a real person, Peregrin. Automatons are as real as any human out there.

PEREGRIN: Are you sure? Geppeto said—

CLOUD: Geppeto's a liar.

PEREGRIN: ...Okay.

LAMPWICK: Some of those look pretty stuck in there. Let's head upstairs– There's some extra tools in my room. Come on, you pastry thief. Time to fix you up.

(ALL THREE EXIT STAGE LEFT.)

(BLACKOUT.)