Sweet Simplicity

I gaze out of the glimmering bakery window and up at the late afternoon sky, which once turquoise tint has darkened into a shade of orange, pink, and purple. The last bit of sunshine illuminates the white walls and reflects onto the tile floor. The fake and decorative foam cakes are scattered throughout the room, begging to entice customers. I am drenched in the artificial light of the display window, only accompanied by a trail of sprinkles that the sugar cookies left behind before they were bought and the lingering smell of the chocolate cupcake that once stood by me. There are some crusty brownies and snicker doodles on the shelves nearby, but I am the last cupcake.

It is a quiet evening at the bakery ever since the afternoon sugar rush. We have not had a single customer in hours, meaning I might not be eaten. The heat from the ovens warms the room so much that my white cream cheese frosting is beginning to melt. Yes, I know. I am boring and colorless. I am also a vanilla cupcake, only adding to my blandness. My plain flavoring is probably the reason that I am the last treat standing. Great... You see, everyone wants elegant, vibrant, or decorative cupcakes, because they like eating attractive food, but just because I am vanilla does not mean that I do not taste well. I have feelings too. My personality shines through my flavor, which is vanilla...Oh fudge, this is difficult! Why wasn’t I died blue or a made into a confetti cake? Or why was I not at least garnished with a cherry or something?

Suddenly the giant woman who baked me earlier today appears from behind the granite counter, her strawberry blonde hair in a messy bun and flour smeared across the front of her apron. She exhaustedly removes the translucent gloves from her hands and wipes away a bead of sweat on her forehead. Looking toward the large, black clock
mounted high on the wall, she mumbles to herself in relief and then hollers towards the kitchen, “Hey! We only have a half hour before closing! I’m going to toss whatever’s left! Why don’t you guys clean up?”

A chorus of disembodied voices hums what sounds like a yes from the back room. I look over at her as she fingers with the buttons of the gray cash register and I wonder about what she just said. *Toss whatever’s left? Maybe she is feeling sick and needs to throw up? Humans do have a lot of weird phrases.* But rather than upchucking, she steps toward the display case next to mine, opens it, and reaches in to grab a crumbly brownie. *You would think working in a bakery all day would make you sick of sweets. But I guess she is hungry.* However, she does not take a bite of it, she just drops it into the small trashcan that is wedged in the nearby corner. *What? Why would she waste the brownie?* I stare at the smashed dessert in horror, which lies on top of a mound of wrappers and other garbage. *Wait, I could be next!* I swallow so hard that I can almost taste my own sugar sprinkles. *I actually do not taste too bad. Wait! Focus, Vanilla! Please do not throw me away! I was only baked this morning! I have so much to live for!*

But to my dismay, the woman continues to throw out the brownies and with every footstep she draws closer to my display case. I am sweating so much that my muffin bottom begins sticking to the thin wax paper on the metal tray beneath me. *Goodbye cruel world! I only lived a life of 9 hours, but I lived it to the fullest!* I feel her heavy and exasperated breathing from behind. *Here it comes! This is the end!* A cool breeze blows past me as she opens the display case and chills run down my pink paper lining. I freeze and stand in place, even though I was never able to move around anyway. I shut my eyes, bite my lip, and brace myself for the monstrous hand that is about to grasp hold of me.
Oh, fudge! Goodbye! But I do not feel fingers dig into my fluffy sponge waist or anything at all.

Phew! I am saved by the sound of the bakery door’s golden bell dinging. Thank goodness! Thank you kind customers! I am surprised to see a little red headed girl enter followed by a giant man who must be her father. The woman greets them with a smile and places her gloves back on. “What can I get for you two? We’re running low on our treats, but we still have a bit of a selection.”

The father looks above at the large, hand written chalkboard menu for a second. “I probably shouldn’t have any sweets, but could I get a coffee with some creamer, please?”

“Of course! And what can I get for you, sweet heart?” she asks the tiny girl whose mindlessly playing with the tool of her magenta skirt. I swear her hair looks just like red velvet cake!

Shyly, the child shuffles across the tile in her sparkly silver ballet flats and towards the large display case. Her big blue eyes roam the shelves with excitement, but all of a sudden her gaze locks on me. She hastily presses a pudgy finger against the glass and reveals a smile of missing teeth. “I want the one with the pink wrapper, please. Vanilla is my favorite.”

It takes me a moment to process her words. Vanilla is my favorite! She wants me! I will not be thrown away! I am wanted! Maybe being plain isn’t so bad? She must find my simplicity very tasteful. I am very classy. But as long as I am making some one’s day a bit sweeter, I think I am okay with being just old fashioned me.