

Cakewalk

By Eorge Dobbs

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“Ya’ll ready fo’ the big dance?” asked the raspy voice of Mr. Newhamton, the master.

He was fat and as round as the full moon.

He wore a white shirt and over the top of that, a black vest; both looked as though they were too small and would rip apart any moment.

“Nay sir, Sissy ov’ yonder is sick!” cried out Jasper.

He was standing in the doorway to the right of Mr. Newhamton and pointed over to a lady dressed in a pure white tutu.

The white contrasted against her skin (which resembled the night sky)

“I can’t sit up straight, my sides rip apart!” she sobbed.

“But we have such a great audience and they were all looking forward to you both dancing the tango,” Newhamton’s face resembled a wild boar.

Mr. Newhamton waddled over to the window and gazed upon his plantation of cotton.

The sun stretched its delicate fingers over each plant and gently caressed them.

“Well! now I’ve to tell them all to nick off, I’ve no show for ya’ll!” he said.

Jasper stood sombre in the corner, when suddenly he perked up straight.

“Sir! I say sir! I could dance by myself,” he said exultantly.

“How you gonna dance by yourself?” Newhamton asked.

“I’ll dance, I’ll impersonate you! Yessum, I’ll pretend to be you! Wait on! The rest of the w
to be you too! You can choose a winner and hand on that lovely cake your wife made to the winner!”

Jasper watched a bead of glistening sweat roll from the corpulent forehead of Wild Boar Newhamton, and he watched it fall off of his face to hit the wooden floor below.

“Would you care for some water Mr. Newhamton?” Jasper asked.

“Quiet nigger! I am a thinking!” Newhamton yelled.

Newhamton stood in thought before he brought his hand up from his side and let it fall onto his bounteous belly.

“Well, I say, I was looking forward to tha’ scrumptious cake out there, but if you want to please my gues
with your little, dance\walk,”

~~to~~ “kewalk!” Jasper yelled clapping his hands together.

“~~Yes~~ kewalk. Then I guess I can miss it,” Newhamton said defeated.

“Great sir! I’ll go and inform the others of the nights proceedin’s!” Jasper yelled from halfway d

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“We ’ave to impersonate ~~the~~ that runs this place,” Jasper spoke in a hushed whisper.

“If ~~the~~ boar, yo’ mean Newhamton, then tha’ be easy! All we ’ave to do is put water on our faces fo
stick a pilla up our shirt and sweat profusely!” an extremely dark women laughed.

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“Nay Cheyenne! Yes, we have to impersonate him, but, also, we have to dance *Cakewalk*!” said Jasper in jubilation.

Excitement was visible in his face, not because of the large gleaming grin splashed across it, but also because of the glimmer in his eyes.

“*Cakewalk*?!” said another man.

Jasper stood on his toe-tips to try and see past the black sea of people to view the man, but he couldn’t locate him.

“Whoever says that, it is called *Cakewalk* because we have to walk, well actually dance, fo’ a cake

“Sounds queer to me,” said the voice that could not be found.

“Queer it may be, but fun it is! Imagine, fo’ one night in our lives we can put behind us our differences. We aren’t treated like blacks, but we’re normal. Most o’ all, my friends, we can criticise the person we most!” Jasper yelled.

Amongst the sea of night painted faces, stars began to twinkle and light up as each one of the people that stood in front of Jasper, smiled at the idea of not being black for two minutes of their otherwise black life.

Their teeth shined and beamed under the dim light.

“Right, well let us hop to it!” one man yelled.

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“Please make welcome to my most extravagant lounge room, a one man act,” Newhamton paused and let an almost identical version of him wander in from behind a red curtain.

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The clone of Newhamton was taller, but not leaner.

The same white shirt and black vest clung onto the bulging stomach; the starched pants fell endlessly to

the ground.

The room was filled with covered giggles and inaudible whispers.

Newhamton gave a concerned and helpless sigh, "This here is one of my cotton pickers, Jasper. Tonight, he will perform foâ€™™ yaâ€™™ll what he likes *Cakewalk*. Others will follow, each will act as yours truly, myself, and the winner will be awarded that cake over yonder. So, please enjoy,"â€™™ Newhamton gave a subtle clap and resumed his seat.

Jasper waddled to the centre of the makeshift stage and took an arduous bow which was awarded with quiet claps and more covered giggles.

He waved in an eccentric way to the pianist to start, and then pretended to wipe sweat from his brow.

He lifted an arm to reveal a large dark perspiration mark before he started to bounce and bop around like Mr. Newhamton.

At the end Jasper, took a bow and was followed by six other performers who all danced in the same fashion, each adding their own zestful qualities to their performances.

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Wild Boar Newhamton rose from his seat at the end of all the dances.

To add to his embarrassment, each and every one of the people in the room were laughing so hard that the women had to have their corsets loosened and the men had to take off their tight vests.

Newhamton quietened them, "It is with great pleasure, and embarrassment, thaâ€™™ I award the winner of the *Cakewalk* competition, Jasper, with this lovely vanilla cake,"â€™™ he said regrettably as he handed the cake to Jasper.

Jasper grasped the cake, "I knew itâ€™™d be a hit!"â€™™ he said exuberantly.

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