

Inside a house there is a table.

On the table are two pieces of sponge cake.

One is chosen and two more appear.

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The best cake wins. A door of the wall beside the desk slides away to reveal a passage.

From chinatown we walk through the tunnel to chinatown.



The test is operated by a robot whom we never see, or the spirit of the house decides when to test us and lays out the cake. We can't anticipate when this will occur, sometimes about once a week, sometimes months go by and then one day, sweaty from carrying groceries up four flights or standing in line for napa, boba and soba, we return to a table laid.





Which sponge cake do you prefer?

A or B

B or C

C or D

D or E

E or F

F or G

G or H?

A goes to Paris

B goes to New York

C goes to Chicago

D goes to Tokyo

E goes to Honolulu

F goes to L.A.

G goes to Seattle

H goes to London

I goes to Philadelphia

J goes to Boston

K goes to Rome

L goes to San Francisco

We haven't always made the same choices. Sometimes you pick a strawberry roll and I a triangular wedge with a fine layer of butter. You see friends in Tokyo and I lie on a beach in Honolulu. But for a two-year period of blind taste testing, we more often than not picked cake C, for its lift and particular eggy sweetness.

C

The trap door in Summerrrr House instantly unlocked, we climbed in, and walk through to find ourselves wandering that small Chinatown at night.

After many tests we were better able to identify C and then wanted to spend those nights eating dinner together and so tried to find C, even though the house began to make longer and longer lists of sponge cake for us to decipher. It was no longer matcha verse plain, but one plain sponge cake against another with subtler variations of crumb, weight and vanilla. Although we wanted to have dinner together, sometimes we misidentified C. Sometimes another sponge was honestly better and we would go elsewhere.

We have been to every Chinatown in the world.