

Short Story 4: Touching Metal

Warning: Smoke inhalation is bad for your lungs. Wear a mask. Also more cats.

Joey coughed as smoke billowed out of the shop. He ran in, safety glasses on. The CNC router was smoking. The wood Alejandro had cut was burnt. A piece of smoldering metal sat on the CNC Router, burning a smiley face into it.

"Hey Joey~" said a voice.

He looked around, confused. "Down here!" said the metal face.

He frowned, "What? You can talk?"

"Yeah!" said the metal face, "Let me take you to Metal Mill Land!"

"Um, what?" he asked.

"Just touch me and I'll take you there!" said the face, exasperated.

Joey looked around, maybe he inhaled too much smoke? Was he going crazy? "Um, why me?" he asked, "Why not Gavin?"

"Cause you can actually Mill," said the face as if it were obvious, "Duh."

He frowned. "But won't I get burned?" he couldn't believe he was actually talking to a piece of metal. He was going crazy. Maybe it was 'cause of Lowell.

"Just touch me!" shouted the face.

He closed his eyes and extended his finger. "Okay...." Swoosh!

Joey opened his eyes and "Where are we!" he shouted in surprise and awe.

The land was made of metal. Everything was made of metal. He felt the floor beneath his feet. It was metal. The face floated next to him, "Welcome to Metal Mill Land! I got you a cat!"

"Wha-" Before he could say anything else, he found himself being transported back to Lowell.

He opened his eyes. He was back in the shop. The CNC Router had magically fixed itself and the face was lying, still, unmoving, and silent. "Meowr."

He frowned, "WTF just happened?"

“Joey?” asked Kaitlyn, poking her head into the shop, “You okay? Oh! You fixed it! That was fast!”

“Yeah...” he said.

“Wait! Why do you have a cat too? Is it made of metal?” asked Kaitlyn, “What’s its name?”

The cat jumped on him. Its fur was soft, yet had a metallic feel. It felt good. “Yeah, I have a cat, It’s name is... Cesium.” (Cesium is the softest metal in the world.)

Daniel and Akemi ran into the shop and started squealing. “Bring your cat to the playdate too!” says Akemi.

Kaitlyn facepalms.

Moral of the story: Touch burning metal and it will send you to a magical place. (Don’t actually...)