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Short Story: Take a Trip To The Temple Of The Great Tomato

By Jesse S. Somer

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Jimmy Jenkins Jr. is not an adventurer, traveler, or pioneer. Far from it, Jimmy has had the same job, in the same office for 15 years. He's got about 2 years of holiday time built up because he never, and I mean never, goes anywhere, not even to the Coast for a day in the sun. He works very hard, is an amicable fellow, but is single, 39 years old, and boring. Boring is this guy's middle name. I don't think he has any hobbies and he never has anything interesting to say, just small talk, and the obligatory work speeches. I wanted to crack this man's shell of monotony and blandness, but how?

You see I'm the complete opposite to Jimmy, his antithesis, and yin to his yang, black to his white. I live for excitement. I live to travel. Beaches, festivals, treks, foreign food, culture, nature, historic sites, and shopping in unfamiliar lands are what make my blood run, my spirit fly, and my heart beat faster than the speed of light. I just had to wake up this man from his static, stagnant existence. I mean there could be nothing unknown about this guy; everything was right in your face, out in the open.

Well, before I began my "Crack Jimmy's shell challenge", I had more important things to do, like get the hell out of there. The famous La Tomatino Festival in Spain was about to happen and I had rigorously organized my trip on the Internet. It's truly amazing the amount of information and help you can get from all the traveling web sites. I like to be organized and prepared for all eventualities that might happen. My air tickets and hotel were booked in advance, and I got all the `juice' on visas, currency, and transportation (train from Valencia to Bunol-\$3.00!) from the Net. I've printed off maps of the city and town, got lists of all the famous attractions, nightspots, and the best restaurants for that authentic paella experience.

So anyway, the weekly festivals were in full motion and I was having the time of my life. A feeling of impending excitement was pervading the air as everyone was getting ready for the culmination of the festival- the biggest food fight in the world. 125 tonnes of tomatoes to be turned into human ketchup in just two hours! No one knows exactly why the tradition began back in the 1950's, but it has become a bit of a religious occasion for those who worship the Temple of the Great Tomato, nah, it's actually

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Christian. Doesn't matter much to me, I just wanted to be part of the chaos—I even wore a white suit. People say this is a metaphorical attempt at suicide, but I'm always up for a challenge!

Here we go! The battle began. The air turned red, people going berserk at the height of excitement. It seems the white suit wasn't the best idea. I got hammered. Total pulverization. I felt like the wind had been knocked out of me as the tomato integrated itself into my soul. I lay on the ground, people running all around me yelling and screaming in Spanish. I looked up through the ketchup dripping thickly off of my eyelids. That's when my mind was totally blown away into oblivion, never to be the same again. Standing in front of me smiling, throwing handfuls of squished tomatoes was none other than Jimmy Jenkins Jr. He bent over, looked me straight in the eye and said,

"Richard Woodward, fancy meeting you here."

I stuttered in astonishment, but no comprehensible words came out. Either the shock or the tomatoes

in my mouth were creating the problem. Jimmy spoke again, his smile as wide as a tomato—mad maniac,

" Let me let you in on a bit of secret Richard. I know you won't give me away. You see buddy, I've got an identical brother. We make it look like we're always working for the company, always on time, always there. But in reality we're sharing one man's life and when the other man is at work, the other is traveling the world having huge vacations and partying like mad. It really is hard when it's my turn to go to the office and act so incredibly boring and predictable. Pretty cool eh?"

He then lifted a giant (what looked like a genetically altered) tomato and screaming a tribal yell, smashed it into my face. He then laughed and ran into the tomato—red sunset leaving me `bloody' and bewildered.

Jesse S. Somer

Jesse S. Somer is a space—traveling human hoping to show his fellow Earth—dwellers the hidden opportunities found in the Internet.

Hanukkah Story and Party Ideas

By Mrs. Party Gail Leino

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Hanukkah Story and Party Ideas

The word

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is Hebrew for dedication. Hanukkah is a holiday celebrated to commemorate the

rededication of the holy temple in Jerusalem in 165BCE after the Maccabees, a group of Jewish fighters, victory over the Hellenist Syrians. This was a big deal because Antiochus, the Greek King of Syria, had outlawed all Jewish rituals. Antiochus also made the Jewish people worship Greek Gods. When the Temple was being rededicated there was only enough oil to light the temple lamps for one evening. Instead there was a miracle and the temple lights stayed lit for eight nights until more oil was found. Because of this miracle Hanukkah is known as the festival of lights and it is celebrated for eight days and nights, the same amount of time the temple lights stayed lit. Oil is a reoccurring theme in the Hanukkah celebration due to the lamp oil.

Foods fried in vegetable oil like Latkes and Sufganiyots, are traditional ways to celebrate at a

. Latkes are potato pancakes made from grated potatoes, onions, eggs, and flour that

are fried in vegetable oil and served hot with applesauce and sour cream. Sufganiyots are basically jelly doughnuts with no holes, also fried in vegetable oil, and covered with powdered sugar or cinnamon.

like the Dreidel game bring traditional fun to the holiday. The Dreidel is a

four-sided spinning top with a Hebrew letter inscribed on each side. Some great Hanukkah party ideas like decorating the party area with Dreidels, Menorahs, Stars of David and other

can really make the Hanukkah celebration special for all your family and friends.

such as Hanukkah tablecloths paper plates and napkins are an excellent

way to serve Hanukkahs traditional foods. A great tradition to start with your family would be to share in telling the story of Hanukkah. Always remember that Hanukkah is a holiday rich in history and traditions and passing these traditions down from generation to generation is a way to preserve and enjoy this joyous celebration.

Mrs. Party... Gail Leino is the internet's leading authority on giving the best possible

, using proper

etiquette and manners while also teaching organizational skills and fun facts.

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