

Jaffles in the Dark

It was a gusty winter's day in South Africa. My friend Lynn and I had been playing all day. I had come to visit my Grandmother's farm over the Michigan summer break.

My Grandfather passed away in 2003, leaving a sheep farm for my Grandmother to manage. I was born in 2006, so I never got to meet him. But I somehow feel like I know him; he was an extremely devoted farmer (and was good at it too); listened to talk radio and read the paper; he would disassemble a tractor in his work shed (nobody was allowed to touch ANYTHING), and then put it all back together again; he loved jelly and custard in the summer; ate prunes for breakfast; and one of his favorite phrases was "Penny for your thoughts."

I have come to know my Grandmother quite well. She is a person I have great respect and admiration for. When she was young she wanted to study veterinary science, however in those years, veterinary science was not really available to female students like it is today. She was able to teach herself to doctor sick and wounded animals. Many animals would not have made it without her and she raised many orphan lambs whose mothers died early on. Gardening is another one of her interests. She loves to plant huge winding gardens, filled with the most exquisite flowers, vegetables, and fruits. She cooks the most taste bud tingling, mouth watering meals and sweet delicacies. Just like me, she doesn't like heights, or snakes. What I do find strange is that she reads the obituaries in the newspaper. I never quite knew why...

Lynn's father is now the farm manager on my Grandmother's farm, Mon Desir. (In French it means 'My Desire'). Lynn and I have grown up together. We are both 10 years old (and counting). We see each other once a year, and it's hard (very, very hard) to say goodbye when I must return to Michigan.

We had been playing down by the two fishponds, blowing bubbles near the small, lower pond. The first fishpond was light and clear with a fountain spewing water from five green nozzles. It had fish

in it too, Koi fish. Two were silvery and their scales glistened in the sun reflecting rainbow colors. The other four were bright orange, and looked like tiny flames zipping about. The second pond was lower in depth, and the water had turned brown from the mud and pieces of soggy weeds floating on the surface. It was home to the many frogs that dwelled there. My Grandfather had always loved stones and built the two ponds from stones found on Mon Desir. It had become a luscious oasis as my Grandmother had planted gardens all around the ponds. Every time I visit, it's the first place I go.

It was starting to get cold and dark. Lynn and I got up from the ground, and walked to the bigger pond, only a few steps away. We climbed onto the massive rock overlooking the two ponds and played I-Spy for a few minutes. It had suddenly become dark! We decided to go inside, for we knew that after a long day of playing there would always be teatime. Teatime was everyday at 5:15pm where tea was served with a confectionary concoction to go along with it. One this cold day Lynn and I were really hoping for cheese scones or flapjacks. Cheese scones had a slight flavor of cheese that seemed to blend perfectly with a scoop of sweet, homemade apricot jam, and a dollop of cool fluffy cream. All of it fresh! The cream straight from my Grandma's jersey cows! And the apricot jam was made from her own fruit. Or flapjacks! The small round discs, very similar to pancakes, were a delightful delicacy to be eaten with golden syrup, while still warm!

All these culinary delights were whipped up in my Grandmother's kitchen, a jolly, bustling place. It always seemed to be the location where delicious smells came wafting out of! Thinking about these yummy thoughts while we walked back to the farmhouse, made the walk seem much longer. But when we walked in, instead of the illuminated kitchen, it was pitch black...

Eskom, the power company had made the lights go out. Again! This had become a far too frequent occurrence. South Africa didn't have enough power, so load-shedding was introduced. (Load-shedding is when the power supply is deliberately shut down by the supplier, so as to not put too much strain on the system, and cause damage).

Lynn and I looked at each other, our faces simply dark silhouettes in the shadows. We walked into a dimly lit kitchen. Surrounding the kitchen island was my Mom, my Grandma, and a family friend, Miss Sonja. As our eyes adjusted, we began to see the small glow of the candles that had been lit. A solar lamp was illuminated too. My Mom gave us headlights and when we put them on, we looked like minions! Then out of the corner, my grandma pulled a small blue single gas burner which was placed in the middle of the kitchen floor, away from all flammable objects. Then from one of the outside buildings, my Grandmother fetched... a jaffle iron! Little did I know that this thing could be the creator of such scrumptious, heavenly, yumminess!

I didn't know what a jaffle was. Well, the jaffle iron was odd enough. It looked like two round discs with a long handle! My Grandmother took two pieces of white bread and put a generous scoop of savory mince filling on one slice, then she put the bread and filling into the iron. She closed it up, lit the burner, and let it cook for a few minutes. When she opened the press again, a golden brown, pocket of deliciousness in a flying saucer shape was revealed! She gave it to me. I looked at the sealed pocket, my mouth watering already! I bit a small piece off the top. I took another bite, and another! I had reached the filling. As I took the fourth bite, the mince touched my tongue and a delicious taste spread through my mouth. Before I knew it, I had devoured the whole thing! Lynn too had gobbled hers down! And just then, a miracle happened! With a buzz and a crackle, the power came back on! Everybody smiled! With lots of laughter and happiness, all the jaffles were washed down with warm tea. The burner was pushed back into the corner, until the next time. Then we walked Lynn home and I went to sleep thinking about jaffles and how good they tasted!

The End!