

Second Place Prose – Middle School

“Jack Dahmer’s Cooking Show!”

Aidan Cleary

8th Grade

St. Francis Xavier

“Gooooooooood morning, people! Welcome back to Cooking Show with me, your host, Jack Dahmer! Today we’re going to be making that meal that all your friends, neighbors, and families love! The meal that brings people you hate back into your dining room for another evening when you didn’t want to deal with anyone! That’s right, today we will be making your Great-great-great-grandmother’s special meatloaf, because she’s not around anymore to do it for you.”

Jack walks over to the refrigerator and pulls out a package of ground beef, some onions, eggs, fancy tomato ketchup, and sets them down on the counter. After that, he grabs the beef and gathers it places it in the bowl. “Normally you’d want to use only about one pound of this stuff,” he says while handling the ground beef, “but don’t make that mistake. They call it MEATloaf for a reason, guys.

“Next we gonna add that panko (bread crumbs) and diced onions. Now, of course since I forgot the panko in the cupboard, I gotta grab that real quick.” Jack power-walks over to the tall cupboard on the other side of the kitchen and opens it to grab the bread crumbs, then closes it very quickly. Wait, was that human foot?

“Why didn’t you tell me that was there?” Jack harshly whispers after turning his head to what seems to be the film crew. He immediately shifts back to a fake smile. “After those bread crumbs finally in there, we gotta add a bitta’ egg, milk, some Worcestershire sauce, and only God knows why, but ketchup.”

He walks back to the fridge and grabs a petite bottle of Worcestershire and two-gallon jug of milk. “Now always be careful when pouring milk into your measuring cups because, with me at least, they have a tendency to... GAHHHHH!”

Jack fumbles with the milk but luckily only wastes half of the jug. “Alrighty. Now once we get all of those in, all that is left are the spices. All we need is salt, pepper, onion powder and dried parsley.” Jack grabs a small bowl of the already mixed spices and tosses them into the mix. “And now finally, get your hands in there and MIX.”

Jack did indeed mix the pre-cooked meatloaf. In fact, he mixed it so well that -- “It’s all crumbly now, and as you see it cannot stay together...” he muttered a quick swear under his breath and pulled together another fake smile. “...but that will not matter once we cook it! So, now we need to get the meatloaf in a nice big loaf pan.”

Jack whipped open the cupboard underneath where he was working to grab a somewhat large tin and flipped it over so the open side was facing up. Inside, however, was a nasty labyrinth of cobweb and a 3-inch-long bulging spider nestled in the middle. This time Jack could not hide the emotion of pure horror on his face. He screamed and he leaped away, dropping the pan. Sweating from fright, Jack continued. “That actually isn’t the worst thing I’ve

seen in this kitchen, believe it or not... Well, it looks like we're going to need a different pan for the loaf, ah! The muffin tray!"

From the same cupboard he pulled out a much flatter pan that had fifteen divots in it for muffin making. Surprisingly, it was very spiderless. "Now as soon as we get the actual meatloaf part in, we can get started on the sauce. All we need is vinegar, brown sugar, and more ketchup. This part's very easy because we just need to mix it around in our bowl here."

He grabs the last three ingredients, then there is a large thud that came from the refrigerator. "Oh no, he might've fallen..." Jack said in almost a whisper while keeping his head towards the bowl as he squirted the ketchup. "Then, as soon as it's all stirred up-" Thud. "Glaze it over the top of your meatloaf and-" Thud. "-oh, for heaven's sake!"

He impatiently walks to the fridge, but the second he reaches for the handle, the door swings open. Frantically, he lunged forward to catch the humanoid-shape that was falling out of it and shoved it back in. Wheezing for air, he slams it back shut, a nervous grin forming on his face. Walking back over to his work station on the counter, he says "And now, all we need to do is set the oven on 350, and toss it in there for a little less than an hour. Don't put anything to cover the loaf while it's in the oven."

At last, after a long commercial break, Jack reaches into the oven without a mitt and pulls out his meatloaf-muffins. "There we have it, folks! Just let it rest for about ten minutes so it can stay together. I will see you all next time, on Jack Dahmer's Cooking Show!"