

Sample Memoir

ReadWriteThink: Making the Cut
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The Unexpected Dangers of Roasting Marshmallows

Autumn is like eating a hot fudge sundae. It smells good, looks good, and tastes even better. Sue, my roommate, and I had invited a couple friends over for dinner before our weekly Wednesday get-together in town. The meal was peaceful enough but then my sweet tooth called, "S'mores!" I could envision a lovely marshmallow, roasted to perfection, melting together with a chunk of chocolate between two graham crackers. "Let's build a campfire and roast marshmallows," I said. The girls agreed. It was a perfect fall evening; the clouds were cottony and the breeze was chilly enough for a sweatshirt. I could hardly wait to get started.

"Sorry," Sue replied. "I passed Smoky the Bear today in town and he said that the chance of forest fires is HIGH." I, however, was not discouraged. If we couldn't cook outside, we could always come up with an alternative inside. Our gas stove would make a marvelous substitute for a campfire. Out came the marshmallows, Hershey's chocolate bars, and graham crackers. I thought it might be going just a bit far to break out the three-foot metal roasting sticks, so I settled for a fork. I shish-kebabbed a marshmallow and carefully placed it over the wavering flames. It took a few tries before I could lightly brown the marshmallow instead of turning it into a fiery inferno; I hate burnt S'mores.

At last, my campfire creation was ready. My mouth began to water. The girls were getting out of their seats and heading to the stove, ready to get their own forks and follow my brilliant example—when, unfortunately, our enthusiasm came to an abrupt halt.

I realized that the remains of my marshmallow were beginning to drip off my fork. Since I like things to be neat and tidy—and wouldn't dream of placing a new, perfect marshmallow on a slimy, gooey fork—something had to be done.

I did not stop to consider the scientific fact that if one places a marshmallow on a fork, holds it over an open flame, browns the outside of the marshmallow—which one eats—but is left with the goo in the middle, which appears uncooked—the fork will still be hot. Yes. I shoved the fork into my mouth, clamped down with my lips, and expected to finish off the remains of the marshmallow. Suddenly, everyone was gaping at me—eyes wide, jaws dropped. I felt nothing but heard a sickening, sizzling sound echo in my ears. In a daze, I separated my lips and removed the fork from my mouth—along with quite a bit of skin. I almost laughed, but then the nerve endings that hadn't been singed recovered from their initial shock. Frantically screaming, jumping, and waving my arms in a cooling motion, I ran towards the freezer to get ice, to be met with empty trays; I settled for a wet paper towel.

When I was finally able to stand calmly in one place, Sue inspected my wound and informed me, "Well, Bec, the inside of your mouth looks like the belly of a dead fish." With those words of comfort, she and the girls traipsed off to youth group—without a single S'more. I was left to my own devices. I tried to ingest some antibiotic cream to lessen the pain, even though the label said "FOR EXTERNAL USE ONLY." I don't think it worked, but the ice cubes that my neighbor donated did.

I don't eat S'mores anymore. And that is not the only thing that has changed. Now, when the cool winds begin to blow and fall is in the air, I taste fresh apple cider, glazed donuts and antibiotic cream.