

by kimberly gadette

## \* CLAUS-trophobic\*

HANUKKAH LOVES TO COZY UP TO CHRISTMAS THE WAY AN *alta kocker* loves to hang out with a supermodel. Why? You have to ask? The answer is as obvious as the ribs protruding from the supermodel's size 0 holiday frock: It makes him look that much more attractive.

Not that Hanukkah doesn't offer delights in its own right. But next to Christmas? *Feb.*

Let's examine: On one side of the dreidel, Hanukkah allows Jews the world over to feel a part of the whole December *misbegoss* – the gifts, the decorations, the parties in which one over-fresses until one calls out the words "Jenny" and "Craig" more often than "Happy" and "New Year."

On another side of the dreidel, it seems that most rabbis and highbrow Hebrews agree that Hanukkah is not a big player in the Jewish holiday hit parade. Not when you have the star power of a Rosh Hashanah, a Yom Kippur, a *Pesach*. Even Purim is considered to be far more enlightening than the Festival of Lights. So why does Hanukkah get such attention? Plain and simple, it's product placement.

Therefore, the only real weight to this holiday... is the weight we gain from this holiday.

Moving on, if we can. On one side of the oily latke, there's, well... latkes. And Hanukkah gelt. Oh, that gelt. First there's the frustration of actually separating the sweet thing from its gold foil jacket. Hmm, that reminds me of the time my mother went to a party in a gold lamé sweat suit – all was fine until she had an exceptionally long hot flash. By the time we got her home and into a cold shower, it was midnight before we could actually peel the sweat suit off her.

Oh, sorry, sugar shock, where was I? That's right, the unpeeled Hanukkah gelt, that disappointing brown candy with its low-rent taste, sticking to, rather than melting in, one's mouth, a far cry from Godiva – if only one could open one's mouth to make such a cry.

Yet the disappointments continue to mount. For those celebrants who are afflicted with the Sickness of Instantaneous Gratification (or "SIG," named after a famous Jew who made a career out of treating hysterical patients, you might have heard of him, one Dr. SIGmund Freud?), Hanukkah is no

Maccabean dream. The gentiles, God bless them, get to rush downstairs in a frenzy on Christmas morning, throw themselves under a tree and rip open present after present. They root through the wrappings and squeal with delight, just like non-kosher Miss Piggys. Meanwhile, those suffering with SIG (don't laugh, my cousin's named Sig, and he's no party either), anyway, those suffering with SIG sit in the dark except for the infinitesimal throw of light from one *farstunkeneb* Hanukkah candle. We thank the Lord for that light. And then we receive his blessing: a pencil. One piece of a Reese. 24 hours later... a sock. Sometime in the next night or five... the matching sock. Nightmarish night follows dreary day, until the Menorah is fully lit and we can finally go on our merry way to someone's, heck, anyone's New Year's Party. Woo-hoo! Finally, a festive Festival where my head will be spinning faster than the Finkelsteins' dreidel!

Shame on me, I must overcome my Hanukraziness. Of course we must love our non-Jewish neighbors as ourselves. Everyone has their share of difficulties. Though we have a hard enough time with the double consonants of Hannukah, sorry, Hanukkah, or is it simply Chanukah?, what about that "Kwanzaa" with the double vowels? No one needs that kind of *tsores*. No one. And even with the neighbors' outdoor Christmas *megillab*, with the revolving skating rink and the assorted Ferris wheels and the live reindeer, so much sound and light that a good night's sleep is just a dream until Jan. 7, I know not everything is merry and bright. The electric bill for instance.

Worse, what if the Christmas tree lights had been left on overnight, and the good folks forgot to water that 12-foot fir houseplant, now as dry as *Bubbe's* latkes. A house going up in flames? Now that's some kind of bright.

Yet we'd do it one better. Because if our menorah got a little close to our curtains, I'd bet we would need more than just a *shpritz* of a fire hose. What with that darn Festival of Lights, I'd bet gelt dollars to fried doughnuts that our fire would blaze for a full eight nights.

On the upside: at least we wouldn't be sitting in the dark. ✧

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