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Cheesecake Factory A Week Before Christmas

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Cheesecake Factory A Week Before Christmas

Holiday Custom

Informant:

Carter Tilt is a sophomore at Utah State University. He was born and raised in Utah. His family would be his parents and siblings.

Context:

This was collected before our shift as janitors at Utah State University started. We were in our janitorial office in the Edith Bowen building. The office is next to the schools cafeteria’s back door where they would unload food and such needed for lunch. The office feels like a closet because it is small and cramped and has random cleaning supplies around, a cordless vacuum on an old chair, old window cleaning chemical sitting on a shelf, and a double monitor computer on an old desk. There were four of us waiting for the fifth person in our crew to show up so we could walk over to the Education building together so we could clean it. Carter was standing in the door way of the office while I was sitting in the chair in front of the computer. Hunter, his close friend and coworker, was sitting in front of the key box that holds our keys. Silas, another coworker, was sitting against the west wall of the office. Everyone was listening as each person told their story.

Carter wasn’t sure when they started this tradition, he and his family have been doing this for as long as he could remember.

Text:

Shannon(S): “Alright, go for it”

Carter(C): “Alright, so, the week before Christmas, not a particular day, just on the week before, uh, my family and I always go to a Cheesecake Factory[slight pause], just because we like going to Cheesecake Factory and it’s always nice to go when there’s snow falling, and there’s magic in the air[said semi-sarcastically]”

(Polite laughing from Shannon and Carter)

S: “Define family, like is it your intimidate family, grandparents,

C (talking overtop S): “It’s just my intermediate family, so it’s just”
S (talking over C, fade away): “aunts, uncles…”

C: “like my parents and my siblings”

S: “k, and then do you have a specific Cheesecake Factory that you go to or is it like any Cheesecake Factory?”

C: “Uh, it’s usually the one by Fashion Place Mall”

S: “Sweet, and then[elongated] if you’re travelling, for like, I donna know[said quickly], two weeks during Christmas, would you go to a Cheesecake Factory? Or would you all just be like “Nahhhhh”?”

C: “Uh, if it’s, if it’s more of a vacation then like my dads going on a business trip and we all just kinda going along then, we’ll usually try and do it[said sort of questionly, with a voice lift near the end of it], but I mean we’ve gone some places where it’s like in the middle of nowhere and there’s not one[said sadly and quietly.]”

S: “Mmm[sound of agreement], alright got it”

Texture:

Carter was relaxed while we were talking, he would occasionally use his hands to emphasize a point, like at the point where he was telling me about the week before. Mostly his hands were in his pockets. He had his resting face on until we got to talking about the magic in the air. He said it like someone who would talk about a cheesy movie trope.

Everyone in the room was relaxed as we told stories. The whole atmosphere was relaxed and welcoming.

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