

# The Chile Pepper Story

by Jen Domeier

(c) 1996

for Joe

The Chili Master



THIS STORY MUST BE  
READ OUT LOUD. There

once was this chile pepper.

**HOhu--HOhu--HOhu--HOhu--H-Ohu--!!**

(not *Ho Ho Ho* like what Santa Claus says, but **Ho-o-hu-u-u-u** like this food is really hot and if I go “-tt” I’m gonna burn my mouth.)

**HOhu--HOhu--HOhu--HOhu--H-Ohu--!!**

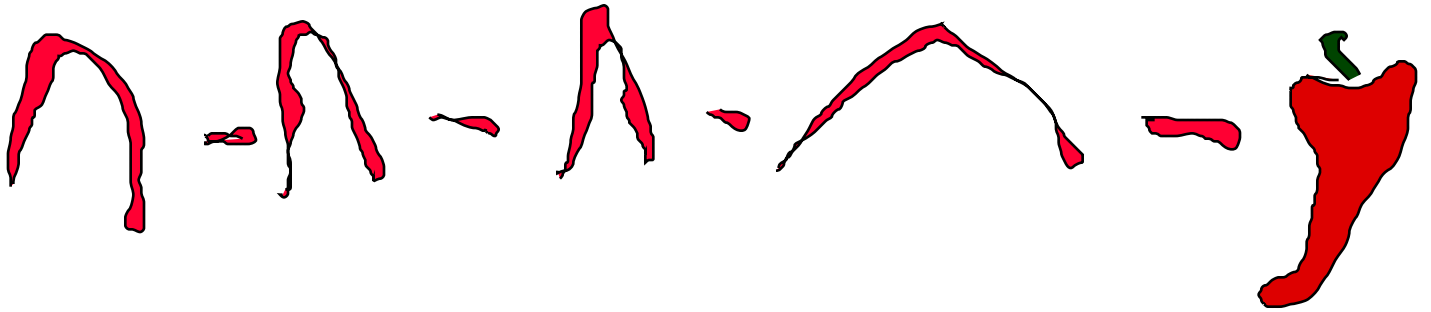
Chile pepper was very confused.

See, ever since she could remember, everyone had called her “chilly”, but deep down inside herself, she knew, she was really hot.

She decided to go to Texas, where all chile peppers go when they have questions they

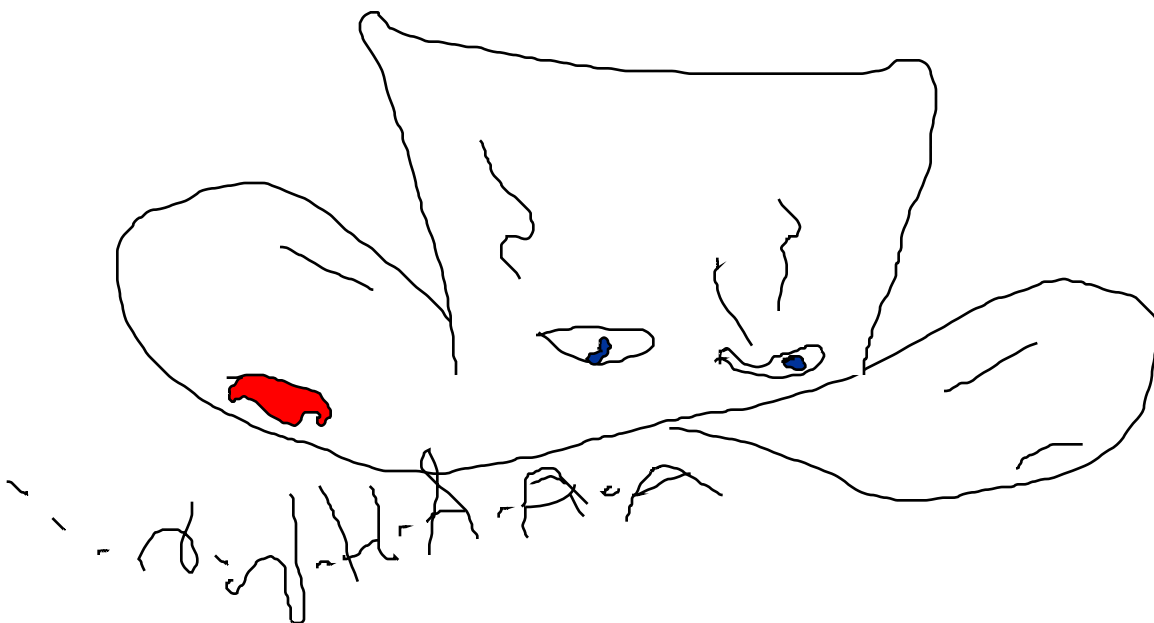
can't find the answers to, and she wasn't finding any answers in Seattle.

So she took off.



**HOhu--HOhu--HOhu--HOhu--H-Ohu--!!**

Somewhere in the middle of New Mexico, along the side of the road, she came across a hat. This wasn't your ordinary sort of..ordinary hat. This was a biig hat with a rim that looked like the pacific ocean, and it was just sitting there, on the side of the road.



“Hh-h-ey Hat!”, Chile called out.

“Burp”, said the hat, without even giving her as much as sidelong glance.

Chile was lonely for roadside companionship, “Hhello Hhat!”

“Burp”, went the hat.

“Hhhhhhaaaahhhh. Don’t call me hat. The guy whose head I hang on, calls me Sombrero. Call me Somber. Burp.”

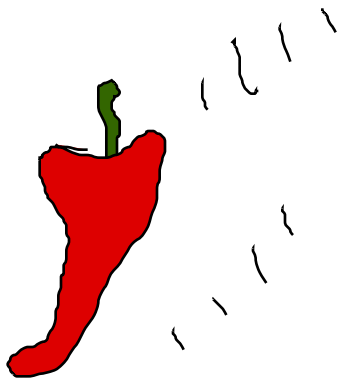
And the hat went back to burping.

“Well-.....um-..do you know why my mother named me chilly, when deep down inside, I know I’m really hOtt?”

“Burp, burp, burp. Who cares?”

Hhhhhhaaaahhhh. Man, I'm stuffed."

Chile Pepper then noticed a blob of red stuff on Sombrero's rim. The burps and the red stuff came together in her little brain, and she began to dance around, the way chile peppers do when they get nervous.



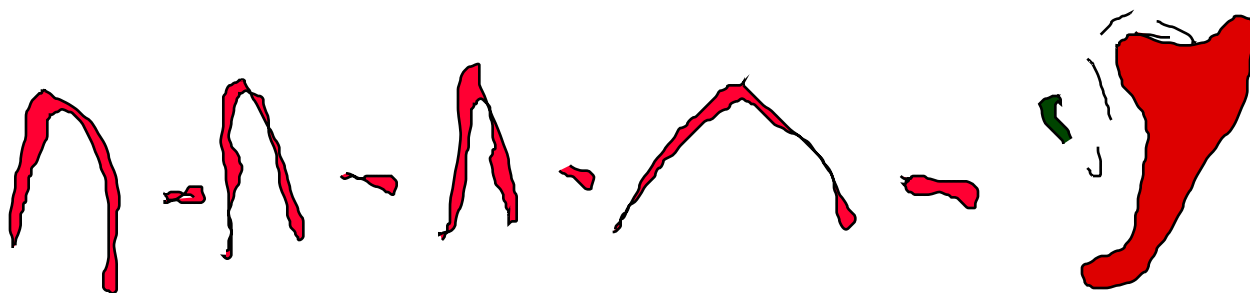
"Oh, Mr. Hh-hh-hh-hh-hat- uh- Sombrio. I think I'm gonna go to Texas."

"I don't carrre. If you see a bare-headed guy, tell him I really wanted to go to that cook-off. .... Man, I'm blue."

"Hho-ho-ho-ho--hOk."

And she took off.

HOhu--HOhu--HOhu--HOhu--H-Ohu--!!



As soon as she crossed the Texas border, she ran into a bunch of green chile peppers rolling around in a barrel with a blow torch underneath it.

“H0-ho-ho-ho-hhiiiih!! I came here trying to find out why everybody calls me chilly, when I know, deep down inside, that I’m hOtt.”

“We don’t care. We’re burning off our skins off so the humans will eat us. We have to be chilly or no one will eat us. We never say Hot or no one will eat us.”

“But that doesn’t make any sense.”

“Leave us alone. We’re concentrating.”  
said all the green chile peppers, and they went back to what they were doing.

“*Chile chile chile chile. Chile chile chile chile.*” they were saying, over and over. “*Chile chile chile chile. Chile chile chile chile.*”

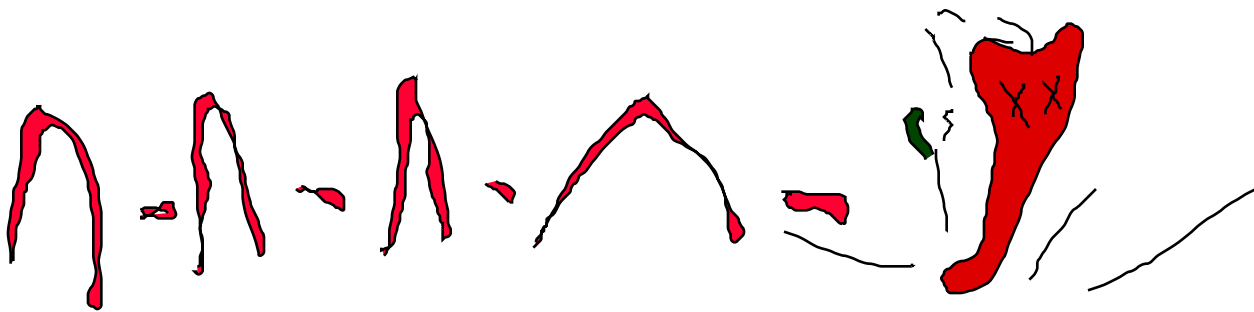
“Weird.” said the chile pepper. “I think I better get deeper into Texas-where everybody says *y’all.*”

And she took off.

HOhu--HOhu--HOhu--HOhu--H-Ohu--!!

This time, she was so eager to find the answer to why deep down inside her she feels hot, even though everyone has always called her chilly, she hopped into Texas with her eyes shut.

HOhu--HOhu--HOhu--HOhu--H-Ohu--!!



And when she opened her eyes, as far as she could see (which isn't very far for a chile pepper) there were motor homes. She knew she was in the middle of a deep down South, Texas Chili Cook-off.

But because she was short, she could also

see underneath a few motor homes, and under the one closest to her, was a big, wrinkly rattle snake, who honestly looked older than God.

“Tzss-ss-ss-ss-ssss.” said the Rattlesnake.  
“CHILE PEPPER COME OVER HEEERRRE.”

“Hh--Hh--Hhu--!! I don't think so!”

“Tzss-ss-ss-ss-ssss. If you want to know the answer to your question, you have to COME IN HEEERRRE.”

“Wha-ha-hat if I don't want to know the answer to my question?”

“I know you do and you know you do and everyone else knows you do, too. You can't do anything else but do what everyone else who had the same desire did and you will be the only chile pepper alive who knowssssssssss..... .”

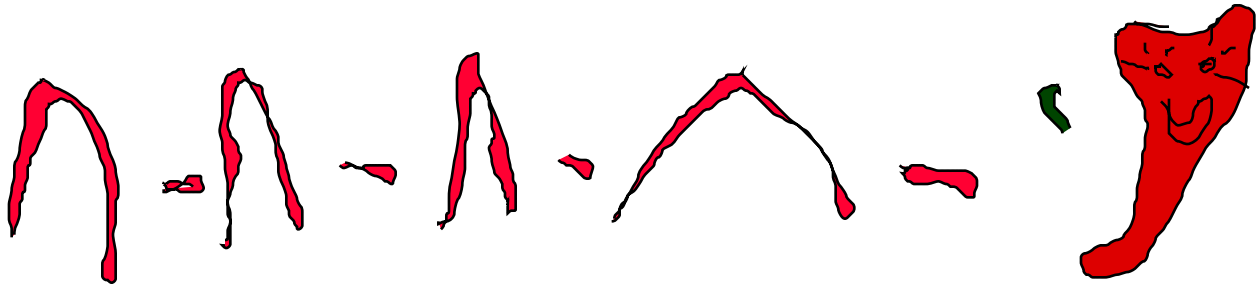
By this time, Chile Pepper was in a trance from watching the rattle snake wave his neck around and listening to all his long sentences.

“That’sssss right, sssstep right into heeerre, and I will tell you what you need to knowww about chhile peppers being hot with feearrr of being hhhhot- and feearrr of being hhhOt and how all the peeople are in feearr of everything that is hhot and how *chilly-chilly-chilly* keeps them all from running away into the other side of the ssssun. Sss-ss-ss-ss-ssssUN!”

And the rattle snake bit her.

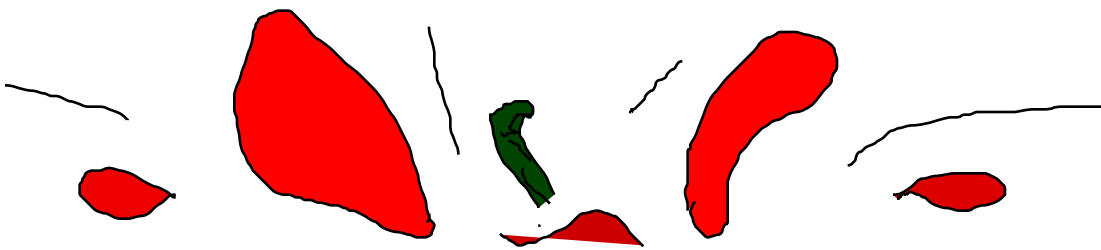
The chile pepper was so happy to hear what the rattle snake had said that she didn’t even notice that she had been bit. She went running towards the biggest pot of chili she could see.

HOhu--HOhu--HOhu--HOhu--H-Ohu--!!



And she took a dive.

Ppsshhh-h-h-h-h-h-h-h..



As the chile pepper headed towards a chunk of beef and her death, her joy and the emanence of rattle snake poison altered the chili, which won first place in the cook-off that year.

Farmer Bill, who thought he was responsible for that delicious flavor, grinned a big wide grin, packed his stuff in the back of his truck and went North, to go pick up that hat, that blew off his head, way back in New Mexico.



-the end