

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED ON PUKE BEFORE THE GREAT FAMINE

Shenizan Katarn was just an ordinary farmer. Well, to be honest, I'm not sure how well the adjective "ordinary" applies to a farmer living far beyond the outer rim of the galaxy on a planet called Puke which was orbiting a binary solar system and could never quite decide which gravity pull to follow. But except for those somewhat extraordinary circumstances you could at least call him normal. Well, with one exception.

The farm had been in his family for generations and knowledge was being passed on from one to the other early in their respective childhoods. So Shenizan already could tell the difference between a Magellan Bra Bush and a Rigellian Terror Tree when he was five years old (one time, though, he failed in doing so because of a nasty cold he had. The Bra Bush and the Terror Tree, you see, can only be distinguished from each other by their rather peculiar smell). He was quite good at making the usually stubborn ploughrabbits obey, and once he even managed to get one of them to drink a pint of extra strong lager. The results, in case you wondered, probably could best be compared to those mysterious corn field circles here on Earth believed to be caused by UFOs.

Farming on Puke, though, was not always a fun job to do. Due to the extremely erratic orbit the planet followed around the two suns, one could never predict which season was to come next. This, as you can imagine, made it extremely difficult to plan anything in advance, especially sowing the appropriate plants and the like. Consequently being a farmer was a highly lucrative yet very risky business. And that's exactly where the one ability lay that made Shenizan stand out from the others: somehow he could sense what was up next season-wise, and his guesses were right almost every time. He couldn't quite explain it, it just seemed to have been this way all his life.

At first the other farmers thought that he was just lucky, but after a few years they got suspicious and secretly spied on him. It didn't take long until everybody was doing just as Shenizan (or the farmers that had spied on him or the farmers that spied on the farmers that spied on Shenizan and so on) did, and the whole economic system went completely out of balance. Now there was an extreme surplus of agricultural products on Puke and prices started to fall rapidly. Understandably this annoyed Shenizan a lot since only a while ago he had been the one with the largest profits.

So one year he deliberately sowed exactly the wrong type of fruits and vegetables, while secretly taking a web designer course (the PukeWeb, as it was called, was just beginning to blossom) and equipping himself with state-of-the-art computer technology. The very next season, when the harvest of every farm was ruined and useless due to his predictions and all the other farmers went bankrupt, Shenizan officially quit the farming business and started his own advertising agency.

A lot of people died of hunger, but Shenizan lived happily ever after.