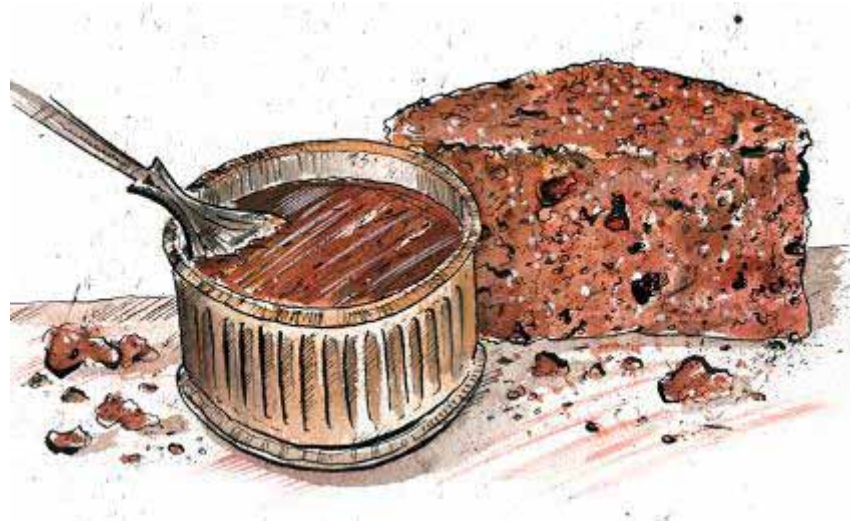
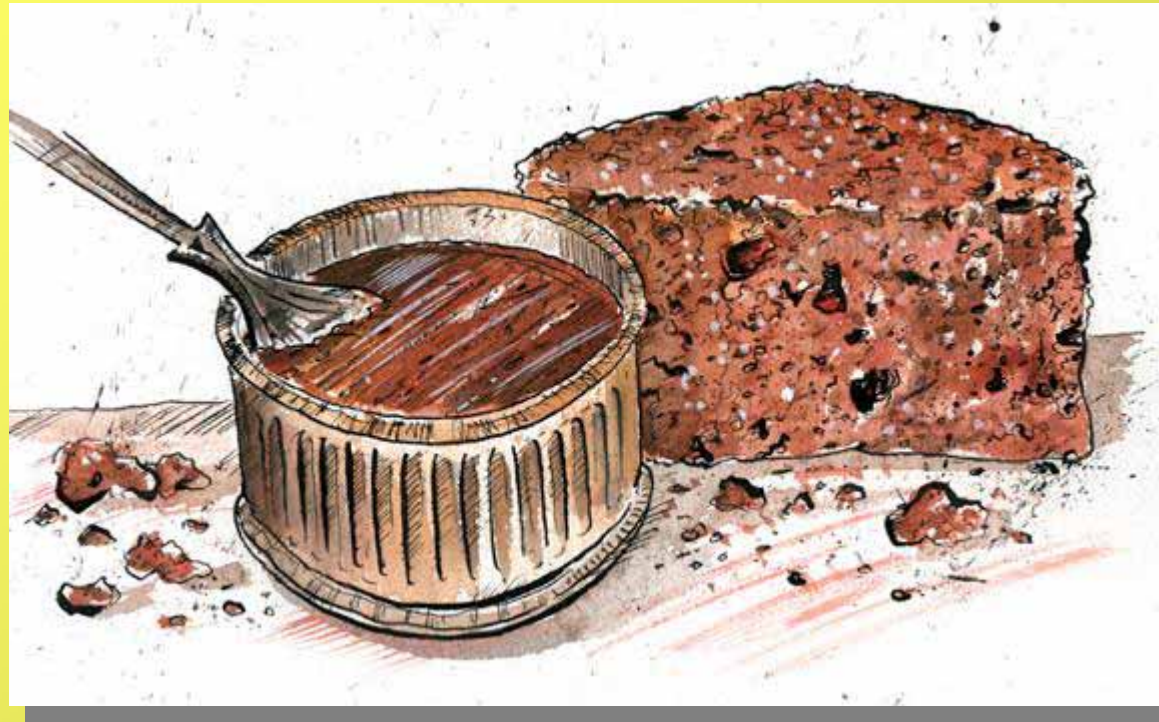


*The Mysterious  
Flourless Chocolate Cake*



*A Story  
by  
Cynthia L. Peterson*



*You need to know right up front that you are experiencing one of life's biggest mysteries for me. Moreover, I sure hope you savor it. However, I am getting ahead of my story and you have a questioning look on your face. So let me start at the very beginning.*



*Once upon a time, there was a famous baker, known across the world, for his ability to make the perfect; I mean the absolute perfect, melt-in-your-mouth, flourless chocolate cake. You could say he was an artist with a gift that no one else, even though many had tried, could replicate.*



*People would flock to the village on the first Saturday morning of every month, stand in long, I mean four hour long, lines trailing down the street and through the village, just to have the chance to sample this "artist's" perfect, flourless chocolate cake. Believe it or not, because this is a fairy tale, these samples were not even the perfect flourless chocolate cake. They were the rejected smidgens furiously thrown aside by the famous baker when his cake did not come out of the oven with the perfect aroma, the perfect size and of course, the perfect melt-in-your-mouth taste. Even so, folks across the land stood willingly for hours upon unending hours, just to have one chance to experience this once in a lifetime taste.*



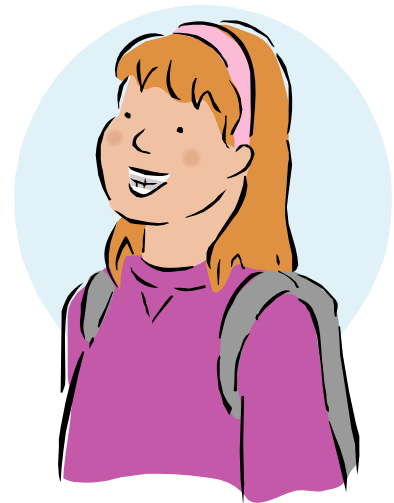
*Only the very first person in the line would have the opportunity to purchase this absolutely perfect, melt-in-your-mouth flourless chocolate cake. Mind I say "opportunity" because if that first person did not pass the test given by the famous baker, they were swiftly booted out of the shop and the next person would then find himself at the front of the line.*

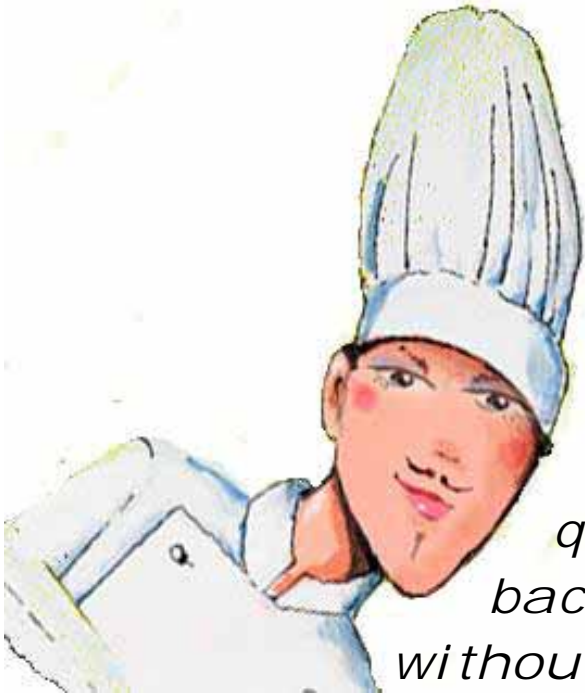


*I suspect you are now curious about "the test". The baker wanted to establish that the buyer was worthy of his creation. This was not a true false test. This was not even a multiple-choice test. This was a "why do you think you should have this absolutely perfect, melt-in-your-mouth flourless chocolate cake even touch your lips, not to mention the lips of your family and the guests you will serve it to?" Nevertheless, without going into any of the very secret details of this test, let me say YOU are very privileged today because you do not have to experience this painful, soul bearing, exhausting test. YOU can enjoy this sumptuous, scrumptious, perfect , melt-in-your-mouth flourless chocolate cake.*

*Well, one Saturday morning, after twelve people had failed the test, the baker looked down to find a tiny young girl standing in front of him. He thought to himself, "there is no way a child this age is going to have enough wisdom and life experiences to pass this test." But, this was not his problem. He had his standards to keep up and no child, no matter how big and round and pleading her eyes were, was going to be given his perfect, melt-in-your-mouth flourless chocolate cake without passing his test.*

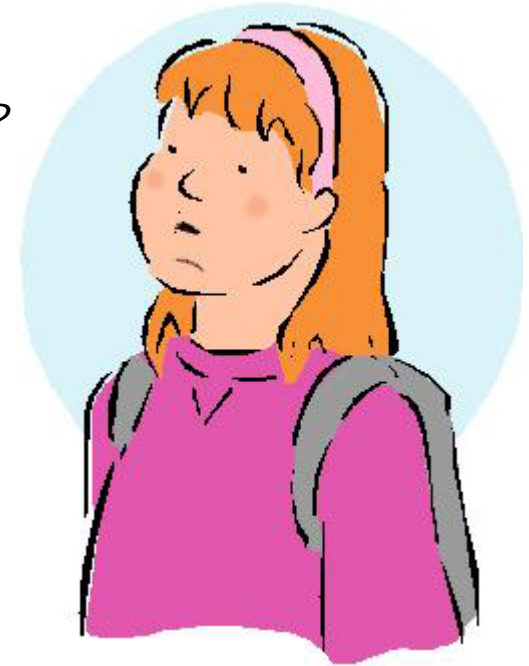
*So he began. And to his surprise she answered the first question correctly. Then the second question. And the third. Now he was getting anxious and actually felt insulted. That this young child could even possess the knowledge to answer his questions was next to impossible. He assured himself that the final question would be the stumper and he need not worry that his perfect, melt-in-your-mouth flourless chocolate cake would fall into the hands of this snotty nosed child.*





*When it came time for the last question, which meant of course that she had answered all the others perfectly, he got this wicked, self-serving look over his face. He folded his arms across his chest and leaned toward her, his eyes glaring into her big brown eyes and he almost shouted out the question with triumph in his voice. Then he sat back, gloating. The little girl,*

*without any hesitation at all, gave her answer. Could he have heard her right? Did she just pass his test? How could this child possess the intelligence to correctly answer all his questions?*



*Then, out of his stupor, he heard her little voice say, "Please sir, may I have your cake?" Still stunned, he boxed up the cake and handed it to her. Clutching it tightly, she walked out his door. How could this have happened? Why would a child be deserving of his perfect, melt-in-your-mouth flourless chocolate cake?*



*While he was puzzling over all that had just happened, in the back of his mind he heard a noise. It was growing louder by the moment. In fact, it was starting to get so loud that he was startled out of his daze. Was it clapping? He walked slowly to the front of the shop and stared out the window. The tiny girl was cutting very thin slices of his perfect, melt-in-your-mouth flourless chocolate cake and handing them out to everyone. As the people stood in a well-mannered line, waiting for their piece, they were clapping.*



*Then there was silence. Everyone had a piece and in unison they took a bite. Then another. Then another. Until their slice was gone. Then they all turned toward the baker and began to clap again. He did not understand. Every unworthy person out there had eaten his perfect, melt-in-your-mouth flourless chocolate cake. How could this be?*

*He saw the little girl approaching. She came into the shop and stood in front of him. "Thank you sir, we all enjoyed your cake and we were wondering if you could bake more so all of us can take them home to our families." His mind raced, "So then everyone will have a taste of my perfect, melt-in-your-mouth flourless chocolate cake? But then I will have to make hundreds of them. I will not be able to do this by myself. I will have to find more bakers and teach them. I will have to expand my kitchen to handle all of this".*

*The light bulb turned on over his head. Ta da. What a concept. Sharing his talents. Why he could even write a cookbook to include all of his desserts, of which there were many. He had to get started today. There was so much to do. So much to share. That last thought grabbed him and he smiled. Then he looked at the little girl and she smiled. He swooped her up and gave her a great big hug and she returned it.*

*The simple and pure thoughts of a child helped him to see the possibilities. And it wasn't just the business. In fact, it was the joy and approval on her face and the faces of all who had tasted his cake that he reveled in. Now he wanted more than ever to share his art. And he did!*





*And that is why you are now holding his perfect, melt-in-your-mouth flourless chocolate cake. And that is why I will now have the chance also. So please excuse me while I finally try the, up-to-now, mysterious, perfect, melt-in-your mouth flourless chocolate cake.*

# THE RECIPE

16-20 Servings

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*2—8 ounce packages of semisweet Chocolate (16 1-ounce squares)*

*2 cups butter (4 sticks)*

*1 cup sugar*

*1 cup half and half*

*1 tablespoon vanilla*

*1/2 teaspoon salt*

*8 large eggs*

- 1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees f. Grease 10" by 3" springform pan.*
- 2. In a heavy 3 quart sauce pan over low heat , heat the butter, chocolate , sugar, half and half, vanilla and salt, stirring frequently, until chocolate melts and the mixture is smooth.*
- 3. In a large bowl, with a wire whisk beat eggs slightly; slowly beat warm chocolate mixture into the eggs until well blended.*
- 4. Pour batter into springform pan.*
- 5. Bake 45 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the cake 2 inches from the edge comes out clean. Cool the cake completely in pan on wire rack.*
- 6. When cake is cool, carefully remove side of pan; wrap the cake still on the pan bottom, in plastic wrap and refrigerate until well chilled, at least six hours.*
- 7. Unwrap cake; remove from bottom and sprinkle with powdered sugar.*
- 8. Refrigerate cake until serving.*
- 9. ENJOY*



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