



Please enjoy the following excerpt from my novel, **BAKED-OFF** (ISBN13: 978-1-257-64395-3)

pre-heat

We are now in a new epoch of gastronomic excellence that, with a liberal seasoning of common sense, will draw on the best of old American cookery as well as on the technological advances of the new.

---- *James Beard*

There's a reason that humans were put on this Earth; and it wasn't to discover electricity or align the cosmos or anything like that. People were put on this earth so they could

play in dough.

Some lucky few get to play with the kind of dough that folds neatly into your wallet -- true enough. But I'm talking about plain, old, pasty, bally *dough*; the kind that sticks to your hands when you try to make a muffin ball or a biscuit...

...and that's where this story begins.

No, **no** – sorry. Actually, this story begins with a **recipe**.

Who in the hell created the crippling concept of folding exactly one-half tablespoon of *this* into three-quarter cups of *that*, after browning, sautéing and deglazing *the other* for 37-53 minutes per side, anyway? Suffice it to say, I am now and forever, indentured to this irksome ideology of fondling my foodstuffs with the pretense of precision (and 3x5 index cards) - and so are **YOU**. Don't lie to me.

We're **all** slaves to our fucking food fantasies!

I remember the first recipe I ever wrote down. After Nancy Merchant finished burning and blistering my knuckles with the sides of her hot-hot, metal, *easy-bake* oven pan, she made me write down her mother's recipe for IMPOSSIBLE CAKE. I never baked one though, because it sounded simply *awful*! Would YOU make this?

IMPOSSIBLE CAKE

1 box yellow cake mix

3/4 cups oil

4 eggs

1 can mandarin oranges

Mix everything together. The whole shebang. Bake in 9 x 13 x 2 inch glass cake pan at 350 degrees for 35 minutes.

FROSTING:

1 lg. can crushed pineapple

1 pkg. instant vanilla pudding

8 oz. Cool Whip

Mix pineapple with pudding; fold in Cool Whip. Frost cake and let set up overnight. Pray.

I didn't think so. Too bad for you though, because IMHO, it tastes **great**.

You see, after I penciled the recipe on to my little index card and tucked it away in a childhood scrapbook, I knew *I* was never going to make that mess when I grew up. But Nancy Merchant and her mom *specialized* in grafting the most complex and **gastric masterpieces** from bags of flour; combined with heat variances and controlled inferences of flavorings and goop. *Impossible fucking cake is delicious!*

Okay. Now that I've relieved my angst over the childhood cataclysm that led me to be an unabashed **foodie**, we can go on with the story.

MORE FOOD, FUN AND F-BOMBS TO COME.

(PS – *This is my first, truly **INTERACTIVE** novel. Be sure to check out the websites, blogs and twitter pages of all the main characters in the book. You can leave comments on their pages, download their playlists, tweet them – and even send them email!)*

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BAKED-OFF

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