

Men Always Marry Their Mothers

by pokeystar

After reading an alarming article in a Muggle magazine, Pansy hatches a secret plot to get her man.

Or, Adventures in Baking

Chapter 1 of 1

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Harry thundered down the stairs in a near panic, his wand at the ready. "What the hell happened here?"

His girlfriend of two years looked up at him from where she lay sprawled on the extremely messy floor of the kitchen at number twelve, Grimmauld Place. "I am baking biscuits," she replied evenly.

"Baking. Biscuits. *You*. Are baking?" Confused and anxious, he paused to gather his thoughts. "The neighbors are all out on the square. They said there was an explosion. They were speculating about murders and meth labs out there. It's a good thing this place is still Unplottable or we'd have the police to deal with, too." He ran his hands through his hair in agitation. "You have never baked a thing in your life. Why now?"

"Because it's Christmas," she answered innocently as she sat up.

He just raised an eyebrow at her and waited it out. The clock ticked by as they watched egg drip from the ceiling onto the work table in the middle of the room.

"Oh, all right," she exploded in defensive anxiety. "You see, it all started with a magazine. A wickedly cunning plague of self-doubt that masqueraded as a fashion rag. I spotted it on Granger's sofa table..."

"Why...why was a fashion magazine on Hermione's sofa table?" He asked, completely lost, but not about to ask directions.

"I wondered about that too, actually. The girl lives in jeans and jumpers. She wouldn't know a Ferragamo from a frankfurter. And yet, *she* has a five carat square-cut emerald on her finger. Go figure." Pansy made a fluttering dismissive gesture with her heavily powdered hand and continued, "Anyway, it turns out she had the magazine because she's earning a doctorate in Women's Studies." She paused to tilt her head to the side. A clump of dough slid from the crown of head to her shoulder. "I didn't know you could *study* to be a woman. I think Herms should get a refund or drop out of the program because she doesn't seem to be learning much. I mean, the baggy, raggedity jeans! The horrible fuzzy jumpers! And no self-respecting woman lets their hair look like that on purpose... Where was I?"

"Uh... Women's Studies?" Harry replied bemusedly.

"Oh, yes. The doctorate. Her thesis is a comparative of British and American female self-image. So an American aunt of hers sends Hermione fashion mags via owl post.

She calls it research." Pansy snorted, and a puff of flour dust spun into the air like a plume of dragon smoke. "If that had been my subject of *research* at Hogwarts, my N.E.W.T. scores would have been much better than they were."

"Undoubtedly," he responded with patient irony as he helped her to stand on the slippery floor. "And why were you at Hermione's flat in the first place?"

"Granger and I are *friendly*, you know." At his look of disbelief, she put her hands on her hips, marring the fine cashmere of her top with a mixture of egg and vanilla. "In point of fact, she's asked me to be a bridesmaid at her *wedding*."

His jaw dropped slightly. "Really?" *Damn. Now he owed Seamus five Galleons.*

"Yes, really." She rolled her eyes. "I was there to help put the favours and programs together. There must've been a million little netty-circlly thingies, bits of teensy slippery ribbon and pastel sugared almonds. Seriously, what is it with her and house-elves? Does she not realize working makes them *happy*?" She paused, but Harry didn't have an answer for her. Frankly, he didn't understand it either. Having Kreacher around was fantastic.

"We were taking a tea break when I noticed the magazine on the sofa table. It was called Vague or Vogue or something, and it had the most luscious ball gown on the cover. It would be perfect for the Ministry's mid-summer charity dance," She sighed dreamily, then huffed in irritation. "But that freckled brat reached for it first..."

"Ginny, you mean?" Harry said mildly.

Pansy's eyes narrowed nearly to slits. "Yes, *Ginny*." She crossed her arms over her chest, leaving trails of eggy vanilla muck across much of her décolleté. "Fortunately, that particular shade of pink would look horrid on her, so I wasn't too worried. Until Herms told her she could have the magazine after she was done with it."

"So you took it?" He was appalled and amused at the same time. She might baffle him, but Pansy was never boring.

"I saw it first! I wasn't about to be second after that ginger bint." She gritted her teeth. *Again.*

He hid a smile. She was so cute when she was jealous. "I saved the best for last."

"Don't 'best for last' me, Mr. Platitude Potter." She stamped her foot, splattering the stove front with bits of batter and eggshell as it struck the grimy floor.

He just grinned and motioned for her to continue.

"So I Accioed it to me right as I left. I knew Hermione would think it was Ginny." She smiled with a sly smugness.

"And how did a magazine lead to this catastrophe?" he inquired as he gestured to the higgledy-piggledy disaster that used to be his comfy, orderly kitchen.

"Well, I got bored one day and had nothing else to do, so I opened it up and started reading." She took a deep breath and looked up at him uncertainly. "There was an article in it about men and how they marry women like their mothers, mostly. Personality-wise. Looks-wise. Background-wise. All-wise." She shrugged uneasily. "I started to think about all of our friends and realized it's true. Lavender is a lot like Molly. They certainly cook the same. Daphne is the spitting image of Mrs. Zabini. And Millicent is a clone of Greg's mum in every way. They even use exactly the same kind of wand."

"Hermione looks nothing like Narcissa Malfoy," Harry observed quietly.

She looked at him again and grimaced. "No, she doesn't. But do you know why there's a library at Malfoy Manor? I can tell you it's not there for Lucius." She sighed, and her shoulders slumped, sending a lump of dough squelching to the floor. "I realized something else, too. Almost all of our friends are married. Even Luna has a husband as looney as she is. And I'm not. We're not. Clearly, I needed to be more like your mum. So I went through your school trunk..." Without looking at him, she held up a hand to stop him at the sound of alarm he made. "Don't. Let me finish. I need to finish."

She breathed deeply and said, "I found the album Hagrid made you. You have her eyes, you know. But she had red hair. Like Ginny has red hair. And you asked her to marry you, didn't you, before you broke up for good?"

"That's when you dyed your hair," Harry said, not able to help himself.

"Yes. That's when I dyed my hair. I looked horrible with red hair." She shuddered at the all-too-vivid memory. "You didn't like it either, I could tell." She gave a lopsided smile at the emphatic shake of his head. "I didn't know what to do. It wasn't like I could go out and find a powerfully evil wizard to defy. They are a bit thin on the ground these days." Her lopsided smile turned wry. "Probably due to my Auror boyfriend being good at his job."

He chuckled a little in acknowledgement.

"Then it struck me that while Lily was your mum, she wasn't around for your formative years. Granger really harps on about that. The formative years are Very Important, apparently."

"So that's why you wanted to meet the Dursleys," he groaned. Poor Pansy. She had no idea just how much he'd hated living with them.

"I thought I was finally on the right track. I was hopeful too." She glanced up. Harry looked incredulous. "I mean, I am Pansy. She is Petunia. And your mum was Lily. All flowers, right? I thought maybe it was a sign." She sighed again. "Only I got that all wrong too. You practically moved out the second I started wearing that apron and insisting on a clean house. Thank Merlin! I was driving *myself* nutty. Do Muggles have Calming Draughts? I couldn't have got through that without them."

"Muggles do, only they call it Valium," Harry said as he stood closer to her, breathing in the scent of vanilla, butter, and...*rosemary*? "Is that a pine nut in your hair?"

She smacked his hand away as he reached to remove it from the sticky mass her follicles had become.

"So there I was, back to square one, completely at a loss, when we were invited to the Burrow for dinner."

She observed a glimmer of perception enter her boyfriend's eyes, but he remained quiet, watching her.

"I watched how you were with Molly, and I knew. She helped you with the platform at King's Cross. She knitted you sweaters and sent you treats. You'd asked her daughter to marry you. She was the mum I needed to emulate. Only, how? I can't knit. I wasn't about to start cleaning again." She shuddered at the thought. "And there is a distinct lack of vicious bat-shit psychotic witches around to threaten, slander and then kill." She let out a laugh that was half sob in tone. "Appalling, really. You lot are way too efficient in the ways of do-gooding and protecting the public." She sighed and threw up her hands in mock surrender. "So what was left?"

"Um... baking?" He thought that question might be rhetorical, but felt compelled to answer nonetheless. His heart ached for her. All this effort for him and he'd never guessed.

"Yes, baking." She spat out the word 'baking' as if it were an earwax-flavoured Bertie Bott bean. "I went to Granger for advice and borrowed another magazine, one named after some Muggle called Martha." She caught his skeptical look. "Yes, *borrowed*, with permission. I told her I wanted to bake you some Christmas biscuits."

He quickly muffled the laugh threatening to burst out of him at the thought of Hermione's reaction to that discussion.

"She assured me baking was just like Potions, everything carefully measured and stirred, and the timing needed to be precise. Check, check, check. I was good at

Potions." Her bottom lip plumped out and wobbled slightly. "Only, baking *isn't* Potions. It took me ages to figure out that *cookies* are biscuits. I still don't know what cups or ounces or Fahrenheit means. They claim to speak English, right? Why do Yanks insist on having different words and systems for everything?" She rolled her eyes. "I finally remembered that handy translation spell Snape taught us in fourth year."

"It sounds like you were doing all right," he soothed. He wanted to hug her, but she was covered in eggy goo, and he didn't think she'd let him anyways.

She gave him a hard glare and continued, "But what Herms forgot to mention was that unlike Potions, you can't use magic with baking. And so that is why I am standing in the middle of our kitchen, covered in sticky, sugary goo, surrounded by a cloud of flour dust with egg yolk dripping from the ceiling." She turned from him and gazed in dismay at the chaotic destruction around her. "Also, I'm afraid I scared Kreacher to death because he won't come when I call and I simply can't face cleaning another single thing."

"Ah, well. Don't worry about that. I sent Kreacher out on a long errand this morning." He shrugged apologetically.

"That's good news," she said, taking a deep breath again. "I did learn something after all this. I will never be like Molly or Petunia or Lily. And I'm glad, because I like being Pansy. Even though I can't knit or bake or stand cleaning. Even though I have black hair and I'm selfish and lazy and blunt. I know I make you laugh. You seem happy most of the time. You've even told me you love me. Several times. Outside of the bedroom. So either you take me as I am and like it or we call it quits...mmp!"

Harry snogged her practically senseless for several minutes, finally pulling back to take something out of his pocket. He kept a finger over her tingling mouth as he revealed the small velvet box in his other hand.

"My turn now," he said. "I was saving this for New Year's Eve, but I suspected you were getting impatient." He rubbed his finger along her lips affectionately. "Plus, Hermione is fluent in Slytherin now, so she clued me in a bit, yeah?" He looked straight into her wide blue eyes. "I love you, Pans. I wouldn't have you any other way, crazy covert plotting included."

He removed his finger from her lips to open the box as her eyes welled with tears. He knew it was safe to do so because Pansy never could talk properly when she was emotional. He almost dropped to one knee, but changed his mind when he saw the floor. Or rather, the floor he would see if it weren't covered entirely in gummy dough.

"Be my wife, Pansy Parkinson. You make me very happy as you are."

She managed to squeak out a pathetic "Yes!" and threw herself into his arms, dislodging flakes of dried egg-sugar-flour-butter paste in the process.

Harry captured her mouth and plundered it gently yet ruthlessly as his hands started to comb through her hair and his thumb stroked her cheek. Then he pulled back abruptly and stuck his dough-covered thumb in his mouth.

"Eeeeew," she complained with feeling.

"Not half bad," he said with a wink. "I like your biscuits. They're pretty tasty." He wiggled his eyebrows at her. "Maybe we should make *biscuits* together."

And they did. Make biscuits together, that is. Lots and lots of lovely biscuits. But that's another story. And a good baker never reveals her secrets.

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A/N:

"Hermione is fluent in Slytherin now" is a nod to "The Nothing Fights" a wonderfully funny dm/hg story by somandalicious, who also happened to look this over for me. She rocks, obviously.

TNF <http://community.livejournal.com/dmhgfcexchange/315755.html> (must be a member to read) - join here: <http://community.livejournal.com/dmhgfcexchange/profile>

or here: http://www.fanfiction.net/s/4709233/1/The_Nothing_Fights

Originally posted to the pphp_challenge LJ community; prompt was "baking cookies together."

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Among other recipes, Pansy was attempting to make

Rosemary Pinenut Cookies

Temp: 325 F

Bake Time: 13 minutes

Yield: 78

3 1/2 tsp coarsely chopped fresh rosemary

1/4 cup pinenuts, toasted. Plus more untoasted for topping cookies

2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour

1 tsp baking soda

1/2 tsp ground ginger

1/4 tsp coarse salt

10 tbsp unsalted butter, softened

1 cup plus 2 tbsp granulated sugar

2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

3 tbsp heavy cream

1 large egg

fine sanding sugar for sprinkling

1. Preheat oven. Finely chop rosemary in food processor. Add toasted pinenuts, pulse until coarsely ground. Transfer to a large bowl. Whisk in 2 cups flour, the baking

soda, ginger, and salt; set aside.

2. Put butter and granulated sugar into the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Mix on high speed until pale and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Mix in oil. Reduce speed to low. Mix in flour mixture. Add cream; mix until well combined, about 2 minutes. Mix in egg, then remaining 1/4 cup flour.

3. Shape dough into 3/4 inch balls, and space 2 inches apart on parchment-lined baking sheets. Flatten slightly with fingers, and top with a pinenut (or two). Sprinkle with sanding sugar.

4. Bake cookies, rotating sheets halfway through, until edges are golden, about 13 minutes. Let cool 10 minutes on sheets on wire racks. Transfer cookies to racks to cool completely.

The perfect cookie paired with tea, and great frozen in the summer!

from Martha Stewart's magazine (really).

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