

Operation Chocolate Cake

by kalina_blue

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Draco Malfoy was regretting that he ever proposed to Astoria Greengrass. It had been a stupid idea. Well, at least it hadn't been his idea...his mother had suggested that Astoria would make a fine wife for a Malfoy, and his father had added that a connection between their two families would be very beneficial for Malfoy Inc.

Draco, not wanting to dispute his parents' wishes, had taken the family heirloom that had adorned the fingers of future Malfoy wives for centuries and presented it to Astoria. He didn't particularly like Astoria, certainly didn't love her, but the marriage was a business matter, and the family business mattered the most. Therefore, his own feelings were inconsequential.

Astoria had been delighted and graciously accepted the proposal of the Malfoy heir. The date had been set for the following May...a time carefully picked by their parents to ensure that the Malfoy/Greengrass wedding would be the most important event on the social calendar that month.

As far as Draco had been concerned, he had done everything that had been asked of him, and he completely expected not to be bothered with the whole wedding business until it was time for him to look good in his dress robes and say "I do."

Apparently, though, his mother and Mrs. Greengrass had different plans. Half an hour after Draco had obediently bent down on one knee, the two ladies had launched an offensive that would have put any general...wizard or Muggle...to shame.

The upcoming wedding was being planned in every imaginable detail, and Draco's notion that he wouldn't have to concern himself with his wedding until the actual wedding day had soon proven to be an illusion.

His mother, who had relied on the service of house-elves her whole life, had suddenly decided that her only son's wedding was far too important to be left in the hands of lowly creatures. Mrs. Greengrass and Astoria had immediately backed her up, and to Draco's disgust, he had been included in the battle strategy.

This was the reason why he was sitting in a tiny bakery, on a day that would have been perfect for some Quidditch, about to order a chocolate cake for his wedding because apparently it was en vogue to have a chocolate wedding cake.

His mother was in Italy with Astoria and Mrs. Greengrass, hunting down fabric for the bridesmaid dresses, and was therefore unable to oversee the chocolate cake mission herself. When she had ordered him to pick out the wedding cake, Draco had been appalled to be sent on a common errand. However, he hadn't won the argument when he was six and had wanted to go out and play although he was wearing his new robes, or when he wanted to learn the Wronski Feint instead of ballroom dancing when he was sixteen, and now at the age of twenty-six he knew that arguing with Narcissa Malfoy was fruitless.

Lucius Malfoy's extended business trip, on which the head of the Malfoy empire had embarked mere hours after his beloved wife had declared she wouldn't rely on the house-elves to organise the wedding, was beginning to look less like running away and more like a strategic retreat by the hour. Slytherins weren't known for their self preservation for nothing.

So Draco resolved to make plans for his own business trip...which would conveniently last until the day before W-Day. However, he had to buy a chocolate cake first, and this was proving to be far more complicated than Draco had anticipated.

He had expected to be choosing between dark and white chocolate...considering that the cake was for a wedding the choice would have been obvious...but as the excited owner of the most renowned wizarding bakery in Britain had eagerly informed him, there were no less than thirty-four different kinds of chocolate cakes, and Bernard VanBrown's Bakery specialised in them all.

Draco had been ushered to a table where he had spent the last two hours sampling Sacher Cake, Molton Chocolate Cake, Torta Carprese and thirty other kinds of chocolate cake, each sweeter and more unique than the last. He now understood why his mother had insisted that he was best suited for this job. He couldn't imagine Narcissa or Astoria eating that much pastry...dress fitting would have become a nightmare.

Draco, however, harboured a bit of a sweet tooth and was on the verge of deciding that common errands might have their merits after all. At the very least, sampling the cakes was the first thing about his upcoming wedding he truly liked.

His good mood, however, evaporated quickly when the door to the bakery opened and two people entered. Resentful, Draco watched from his table in the corner as Hermione Granger and the Weasel were led to a table on the other side of the bakery, where they enthusiastically began to sample cake, oblivious to Draco's presence.

Draco felt the onslaught of chocolate cake beginning to disagree with his stomach. He hadn't even known that Hermione had gotten back together with the Weasel. The break-up of the Golden Couple three years prior had been front page news, but their reunion apparently hadn't made the papers yet.

"This is the last sample, Mr. Malfoy," Bernard VanBrown announced loud enough for everyone in the bakery to hear his name. Putting a plate with the thirty-fourth piece of cake in front of Draco, Bernard continued his ramblings, oblivious to his customer's sudden discomfort. "This is a White Chocolate Creation with Macadamia nuts and marzipan. Very popular for weddings."

Draco felt slightly ill...which he stubbornly attributed to the avalanche of cake he had eaten, certainly not to the most recent customers of the bakery...but still he didn't dare refuse the cake he was being offered. Bernard Van Brown seemed very serious about his profession and just eccentric enough to feel affronted were Draco to neglect sampling every single piece of cake. Feeling the desperate need to leave the bakery as quickly as possible, Draco accepted the plate.

Satisfied, Bernard shuffled back behind the counter, and Draco hurriedly took a bite of the cake, painfully aware that Hermione and the Weasel had now taken notice of his presence and were watching him. Draco tried his best to ignore them, something he was very well practiced at because he had been ignoring Hermione...and most importantly any feelings he might still have for her...ever since the two of them had broken up. On most days the fact that he once stole Hermione from the Weasel and that they had actually been very happy together, at least for a while, was nothing but a dim memory.

Before Draco had time to swallow the awfully sweet pastry, Hermione got up from her table and walked over. The Weasel remained where he was, staring daggers at Draco.

"Enjoying the cake?" Hermione asked acidly.

Draco had difficulties swallowing the cake past the lump in his throat, but once he had ascertained that he would not suffocate or suffer the indignity of speaking with a full mouth, he gave Hermione his best arrogant look.

"Immensely. Thank you for asking," he replied, his smile just as fake as hers. "I'm sure Astoria will like it very much."

He could hear Hermione draw in a shuttering breath at his mention of his fiancée, and he saw the tears in her eyes, but she didn't comment.

"I didn't know you were going to become the next Mrs. Weasel after all," Draco said when her lack of reply became awkward.

"I'm not," Hermione hissed, and Draco did his best to ignore her tears. "Ron and I are here as friends, picking out a cake for Ginny's birthday."

Draco was flooded with relief, but made sure his emotions didn't show on his face.

"Unlike you," Hermione continued, "I'm not in the habit of dumping my boyfriends just because my friends and family might not approve and then asking the next best bimbo with an acceptable family tree to marry me."

Tears openly flowing down her face, Hermione picked up one of the plates...the Sacher cake, if Draco recalled correctly...and dumped it in her ex-boyfriend's lap. Then she turned around and walked back to the Weasel.

Draco stared after her, cake splattered all over his expensive suit, wanting to call her back, but knowing that he shouldn't. Bernard came running, shocked to see the mess and at a loss of what to do.

"Just a little accident," Draco stated with false calm, getting up and dropping cake on the floor in the process.

"I'll be taking the last one."

Before Bernard could say anything, Draco Disapparated. Operation chocolate cake had technically been a success, after all, he had decided on a cake. However, Draco was beginning to think that the victory wasn't worth all the casualties.

End

A/N: Wanna Bet On A Bear Hug prompted me with chocolate cake.

This was written in December, but I didn't have the time to post it before now. Thanks so much to my awesome beta, rules_of_jinx, who made some excellent suggestions.

Reviews are always appreciated.