

A note from April Grace

Hey, y'all!

I thought you might want to know about something that happened at Grandma's wedding reception which I didn't mention in the book.

After the ceremony, some of those wretched Beason men-guests clustered around the refreshment table, and they went fudge-crazy or something. I guess they thought they were being sneaky, grabbing handfuls of fudge when they thought no one was looking and popping it in their mouths like a bunch of starving squirrels. By the time the cake was cut, the punch poured, and everyone had plates, there was about three dinky pieces of fudge left.

Boy howdy.

Anyway, here is Mama's recipe for my favorite fudge in the whole entire world. She lets me help her make it. One time she told me, "April Grace, one of these days, this is going to be your job."

Be sure to read Mama's tips at the end, so that your fudge will turn out as good as hers.



Marshmallow Fudge

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (1 & $\frac{1}{2}$ sticks) margarine.
- 3 cups sugar
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup evaporated milk (one small can of Pet milk)

Mix sugar with milk until dissolved, then add margarine. I cut the sticks into chunks so it melts faster. Melt over medium heat, then bring this to a full boil, *stirring constantly* so that none of it sticks or scorches.

Continuing boiling and stirring for 5 minutes.

Remove from heat.

Add gradually and stir until melted:

- 1 (12 oz) package of semi-sweet real chocolate chips

Add:

- 1 t. vanilla
- 1 jar (7 oz) of marshmallow crème

1 cup of chopped nuts (optional)

Do this fairly quick before the fudge begins to set up then stir really well until everything is smooth and blended.

Pour into a greased 9 X 13 pan and let cool before cutting. ***You need to have this pan prepared before you begin cooking.***

Mama says never use butter in this recipe. Sometimes the fat in butter makes recipes do wonky things, like not set-up properly, so that you have to eat the candy with a spoon. 😊 It still tastes good, but it's not as much fun.

Have the package of chocolate chips open and ready to pour into the hot melted mixture. Also, it will be easier for you if the jar of marshmallow crème already open and ready to add. Use a rubber spatula instead of a spoon to get all that gooeyness out of the jar. It's quicker, easier, and you can scrape the jar pretty clean.

Grandma sometimes makes this fudge. Instead of chocolate chips, though, she uses two of those huge honkin' Hershey bars. She breaks them into bits and adds them. My own personal self, I prefer the semi-sweet chips, but the milk chocolate candy bars make it good, too.

Even bad fudge is good fudge, but Mama says she's never had a failure with this recipe.



A note from April Grace:

Here's a recipe that not a lot of people have ever tried, or even heard of. It's what you might call "regional." Just so you know, Isabel St. James turns her nose up at it, but good ol' Ian will eat it until he pops!

Sometimes we have biscuits and chocolate gravy for breakfast. Sometimes we have it at night, like a special treat.

Chocolate gravy is not like sausage gravy. There is no meat in it. It's sweet and smooth, and while it's hot, you pour it over fresh, hot, buttered biscuits. It's as good as dessert, no matter when you have it.

And y'all know how much I love chocolate!

Mama's Best-In-The-World Biscuits

- 2 cups of flour
- 2 heaping tablespoons of baking powder (yes, that is TABLESPOONS)
- 1 teaspoon of salt

Mix these together really well.

Cut $\frac{1}{2}$ cup – $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of shortening* into the dry ingredients until it is all well-mixed.

Dribble approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of milk, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup at a time over the dry mix until dough is sticky but still firm enough to handle. (You may need a little more or a little less milk)

Turn out the dough onto a floured surface and gently knead it until it holds a nice pliable shape about a half-inch thick. With a biscuit cutter, cut into biscuits and place on a lightly greased baking sheet or baking pan. Bake at 450 degrees for 12-15 minutes, or until nicely brown.

I like them best when the outsides are all nice and brown and crunchy but the insides are still soft.

*Mama says for best results, always use **Crisco** brand shortening for biscuits.





Chocolate Gravy

In a saucepan:

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of flour
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup of sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cocoa

Mix all these dry ingredients well.

Stir in 2 cups of milk and mix until smooth.

Add 2 beaten egg yolks and 1 teaspoon of vanilla and mix well.

Over medium heat, stir this mixture constantly until it thickens. (If you don't stir it constantly, it will scorch and might even be lumpy.) This will take a while, about 8 or 10 minutes. When the mixture is thick, add 1 tablespoon of butter and stir until it is melted and mixed in well.

You should have the biscuits already made, baked, and hot in the oven, ready to come out.

Split open a biscuit, butter it really well and spoon this nice hot chocolate gravy over it, then dig in. I betcha you'll love this treat. It's been around since before Grandma was born, and she's an old lady!!

Messy Malodorous Malarkey

Discussion Questions

1. In the first chapter, April Grace picked up all the papers, pencils, books, and clothes that Myra Sue dropped on the ground in her excitement. Name the reasons why you think April did this.
2. Being bored happens when we feel there is nothing interesting going on or anything fun to do. Name three things you can do to keep from feeling bored.
3. Why did April Grace secretly call Ernie Beason in chapter four? Is it ever a good idea to try to help someone when you don't know all the facts?
4. Is it hard for you to keep quiet, even when you know that if you speak up you're going to get in trouble?
5. Discuss what should be done if you find someone is injured. What are some good first aid tips for everyone to know?
6. Do you think Mrs. Hopper had a good reason to worry about Lacey exploring the outdoors by herself? What were those reasons?
7. Have you ever had a lot of guests stay in your house at the same time? Tell about that experience.
8. What do you think April Grace could have said or done differently while the Beasons were staying with her family?
9. Do you hope Aunt Pookie and April Grace stay in contact with each other as they said they would? Why or why not?
10. Who is your favorite character in this story, and why?



Messy Malodorous Malarkey Word Search

B Q B H Y Z R E Y B A B B Y S Z V Z X W
 H R D O K A M K D E X N W E B Q A O P K
 L K D R L O C A N X J B I O H P B G N K
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Apples
 Baby
 Bicycle
 Breakfast
 Cellar
 Cheese
 Clinic
 Crochet
 Family
 Football

Friendship
 Geese
 Grandfather
 Groceries
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 Hug
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