

Peanut Butter Cookies--An Alien Recipe

By Gail Storrs

Have you ever been shocked out of a deep sleep by a bright light in your eyes? Your mom or your big sister snaps on your room light and bellows:

“Get up! You’re late for school!”

Well, what if it wasn’t your mom? What if instead, you were being abducted by aliens, just like in the movies? It would be better than going to school, you say.

That depends.

When it happened to me, I had been dreaming about a real nightmare from school: Big Maggie. She’s the school bully, and lately had been terrorizing us all out of whatever desserts we had in our lunches; candy bars, brownies, M & Ms. You really don’t want to be on the receiving end of Maggie’s enormous fists.

Waking up from this bad dream found me in another one. I jerked upright in bed (I thought) and rolled down a ramp smack into a pit of sticky, brown goo. I was covered in the stuff! As I struggled to sit up, it dawned on me that the smell of the goo was familiar. Not a bad smell. It smelled like--like peanut butter, that’s it! What in the world was I doing sitting in a giant tub of peanut butter?

Of course, I wasn’t in this world any longer, but I didn’t realize it at the time.

A shadow came between me and the bright light. Looking up, my mouth fell open. Above me was a giant, green eye on the end of a long tentacle. I yelled. I couldn’t help it! The eye moved back and another joined it.

“You idiot!” Came a deep and very loud voice. “You can’t put Human Boy into peanut butter cookies!”

“I didn’t mean to, Sir,” quavered a high, thin voice. “I just. . . “

“We need raisins. Raisins, not Boys!”

“I was trying,” This voice was squeakier, younger maybe. “I thought it was the raisin factory! I must have done something wrong.”

“I’ll say you did something9 wrong! We come fifty thousand light years to get raisins for the Chief’s birthday cookies, and look what happens! I should never have left you alone with that machine.”

Raisins in peanut butter cookies, I thought. Yuck. I must really be dreaming. I’d better try to find out.

“Excuse me!” I yelled. The eyes jerked back over my head.

“Can you put me back if you don’t want me after all? I have to go to school.”

"It's talking!" squeaked the young voice, apparently belonging to the smaller eyeball.

"Of course it is," growled the elder. "That's what Human Boys do. We can't put you back, Boy," said Deep Voice, looking down at me, "until we figure out what went wrong with the translocator. And besides, we need something to add to this recipe. You're better than no raisins at all."

"I don't think you really want raisins or Boy in your cookies, do you?" I said, in a voice that was not quite steady. "My mom puts chocolate chips in hers."

"Chocolatechips? What's that?"

I tried to sit up again, but ended up sinking down into the peanut butter. This *must* be a dream. "Don't you know what chocolate is?" I asked, as I tried to pull one arm free of the goo (it made a horrible sucking noise). "It's the absolutely the best thing there is to put with peanut butter." I worked one hand into my pajama shirt pocket, where there just happened to be a now soggy bag of M & Ms. "Try this," I held it up.

With a whooshing noise, the bag was sucked out of my hand. Some crunching and mumbling followed.

"Usually," I put in, "You take the chocolate out of the paper before you eat it."

"Fantastic!" boomed the Big Voice. "You say this tastes good with peanut butter?"

"The best there is," I answered, while slowly but surely rolling my way to the side of the tub.

"We must have more of this, now. We will return you to your dwelling, and you will get us 500 of these chocolate papers!"

Of course, I did not have 500 packages of M & Ms in my dwelling. I mean, who does?

I yelled up, "But sir, what if . . . "

Splat! Apparently, they had figured out how to reverse my translocation. I landed flat on my back with peanut butter cushioning my fall onto the carpet. Mom was *not* going to be happy about this mess. Unless it really was a dream. But it felt too sticky for that. I picked myself up and oozed my way to the shower.

When I came out toweling my hair dry (it still smelled of peanuts) I was met by the smaller green eye. The rest of him, connected to the eye, was sort of like a squid, only green, and standing upright on its tentacles. It was about as tall as me, if you count the eyestalk.

"Where'd you come from?" I gasped.

"The Captain sent me to help you with the transport," it explained, squeakily. "Since the mistake was my fault, you know. I make a lot of mistakes," it added sadly, "and the Captain is sick of me, I guess. It's better to keep out of his hair for a while."

"Hair?" I asked.

"Figure of speech," it said.

"Well, anyway," I returned to the subject weighing on my mind, "I don't have anything to transport. That was my last bag of M & Ms. "

"Oh, no!" squeaked the Squid. "We have to find some! I know how to get raisins but not this choc stuff. The Captain will never let me do anything important again. He might even leave me here, and then I'd never get home. At least, not until the Chief's next birthday. That's about 50 of your Earth years." He sniffled a little, and his one big eye began to look moist, like maybe tears were about to start leaking out.

50 years! Did that mean I'd have to hide him from everyone for almost my whole life? I couldn't let Mom and Dad find out about him. Introducing my family to a one-eyed squid-like alien was worse than bringing home a stray dog, and I'd gotten into a lot of trouble about that not long ago. Besides, I was beginning to feel kind of sorry for him.

"We'll think of something," I told him bracingly. "Chocolate in your Chief's peanut butter cookies will make you famous, and then you won't be in trouble, you'll see. Let's just not make any noise—my mom's still asleep, and I don't think she'd understand having you here. What we need is a plan."

I dug out some paper and a pencil to make a list. It always helps me organize my thoughts when I put them down on paper. I wrote down all the words I could think of that pertained to our peculiar situation. Squid's eye bobbed gently over my shoulder.

Here's what we came up with:

Chocolate
Peanut butter
Cookies
Aliens
M & Ms
Need some!
Candy
Halloween
Tomorrow. . .

"That's it!" I hissed excitedly (I *really* didn't want my mom waking up yet), "Tomorrow's Halloween!"

"Holeen?" said Squid. "What's that got to do with choclot?"
"Everything!" I smiled.

The next day, or rather a couple of hours later, I was escorting my young "cousin" into my classroom to Show and Tell about the amazing costume we had created for Halloween. Squid had stuffed some of his tentacles into a pair of my old jeans and sneakers, and we let the others hang down around his waist.

"My cousin is here today to let you know about a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Since tonight is Halloween, you will be collecting a lot of candy. Tomorrow at lunch, you can have your picture taken with my cousin here for the tiny fee of one package of M & Ms, which will be sent to those less fortunate who never get to taste chocolate. You get your own picture to take home, and are entered in a drawing for a ride in his very own space ship! One entry per package--you can enter as many times as you want. M & Ms only, please."

It worked like a charm. That evening, I told Squid he'd done a great job as we were loading all the packets into the transport carton that had been sent for them.

"The Captain should be really pleased, don't you think, Squid?"

"Yes," he replied, "until he sets eye on the passenger. I wonder what he'll have to say about her?"

Guess who had won the drawing for a space ship ride? Big Maggie. I think she'd scared some of the kids into entering her name instead of their own. Talk about getting your just desserts! Anyway, we would all be very happy not to see her again for another 50 years.

"I'm sure they'll get along just great," I said, grasping his tentacle in farewell. "Be sure to stop by next time you're in the galaxy."

"Goodbye, and thanks, Human Boy," said Squid. "We'll find a way to keep her busy. Someone needs to stir the cookie dough until we get home to bake the cookies, and for once I'll be glad to give up that job to someone else. See you next time!"