

LEVELED BOOK • Q

Sweet Potato Challenge



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The Challenge

"Yum, these cupcakes are good," Deon said, as he reached for another. "I love the chocolate chips in them."

"Thank you," his cousin Latanya said. "I made them."

"I'll bet I could make cupcakes if I tried."

"No way," Latanya said. "Boys can't cook."

"Who do you think some of the greatest chefs are?" Deon said.

Latanya made a face.

“I **challenge** you to a contest,” Deon said. “Let’s both make cupcakes next Saturday, and let Grandma and Grandpa Jackson judge them.”

“Cupcakes are simple. If you want a challenge, let’s try something **unusual**.”

“How about we make something with sweet potatoes?” offered Deon, knowing that Grandma Jackson made a great sweet potato pie. He thought that he would win the contest if he used Grandma’s sweet potato pie **recipe** and she was the judge.

“It’s a deal.” They slapped palms, agreeing to let Grandma and Grandpa judge the contest.



The Recipes

Latanya's recipe:



Apple Sweet Potato Bake

1 17 oz. can of sweet potatoes, drained

2 apples, peeled and sliced

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup chopped pecans

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cinnamon

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter

2 cups mini marshmallows

- 1 Toss apples and pecans together with brown sugar and cinnamon in a bowl.
- 2 **Alternate** layers of apples and sweet potatoes in a 1-quart **casserole** dish.
- 3 Pour melted butter over the top. Cover.
- 4 Bake at 350 degrees for 35 minutes.
- 5 Sprinkle marshmallows over top and **broil** until lightly browned.

Deon's recipe:

Grandma Jackson's Sweet Potato Pie

3 large eggs

1 cup sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon cinnamon

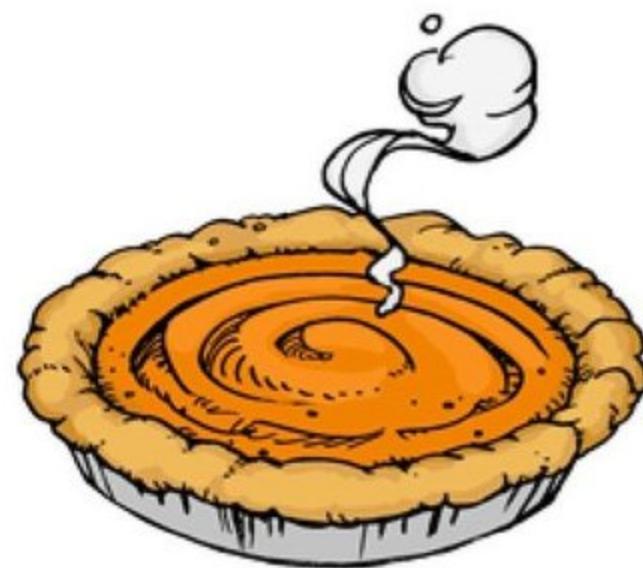
$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon allspice

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon nutmeg

1 cup heavy cream

3 cups cooked & mashed sweet potatoes

1 unbaked 10" pie shell



- 1 Beat the eggs well.
- 2 Add sugar, salt, and spices.
Mix thoroughly.
- 3 Add cream and stir.
- 4 Add mashed sweet potatoes,
and mix thoroughly.
- 5 Pour mixture into pie shell and bake at
350 degrees for 1 hour.

Step One

On Saturday morning, Latanya asked Mom to help her with the steps in her recipe that a grown-up needed to do. First, Mom peeled and sliced the apples and chopped the pecans. Latanya tossed the apples into the bowl. Some of them missed. After gathering the apples up, she measured the pecans and carefully put them in the bowl.

Then she packed brown sugar in a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup measuring cup and added it to the bowl. She measured the cinnamon. Latanya took a big spoon and *very* gently tossed it all together in the bowl. She tasted one apple slice. Mmm!



First, Deon cracked the eggs and poured them into a large bowl. He was careful not to let any shells fall in. Deon had asked Dad to help him with his recipe. Dad turned on the mixer to beat the eggs.



"I'll get the chocolate chips," Deon said.

"There are no chocolate chips in Grandma Jackson's recipe," Dad said.

"Won't they make it better?"

"You can't mess with Grandma's recipe. It has been a family **tradition** for as long as I can remember," Dad said.

Step Two

Second, Latanya put a layer of apple mix from the bowl into the bottom of a 1-quart casserole dish. Then she added a layer of sweet potatoes. She added another layer of apples and then sweet potatoes. *This dish will beat anything Deon can come up with, she thought.*





Second, Deon measured the sugar and the salt. The salt poured out fast, and he almost poured too much. Then he measured the spices—cinnamon, allspice, and nutmeg. He got a big spoon and mixed everything together in the bowl with the eggs.

Oh, it smelled so good!

Steps Three and Four

Third, Mom melted the butter, and Latanya poured it over the top of the casserole. Then she covered the dish with a piece of aluminum foil.

Fourth, Mom put the dish in the hot oven. Latanya set the timer for 35 minutes.





Third, Deon measured the cream and poured it in. He stirred the mixture.

Fourth, Deon measured the mashed sweet potatoes and added them. The bowl was pretty full. As he mixed, it splashed on the counter, and he even got a little on himself.



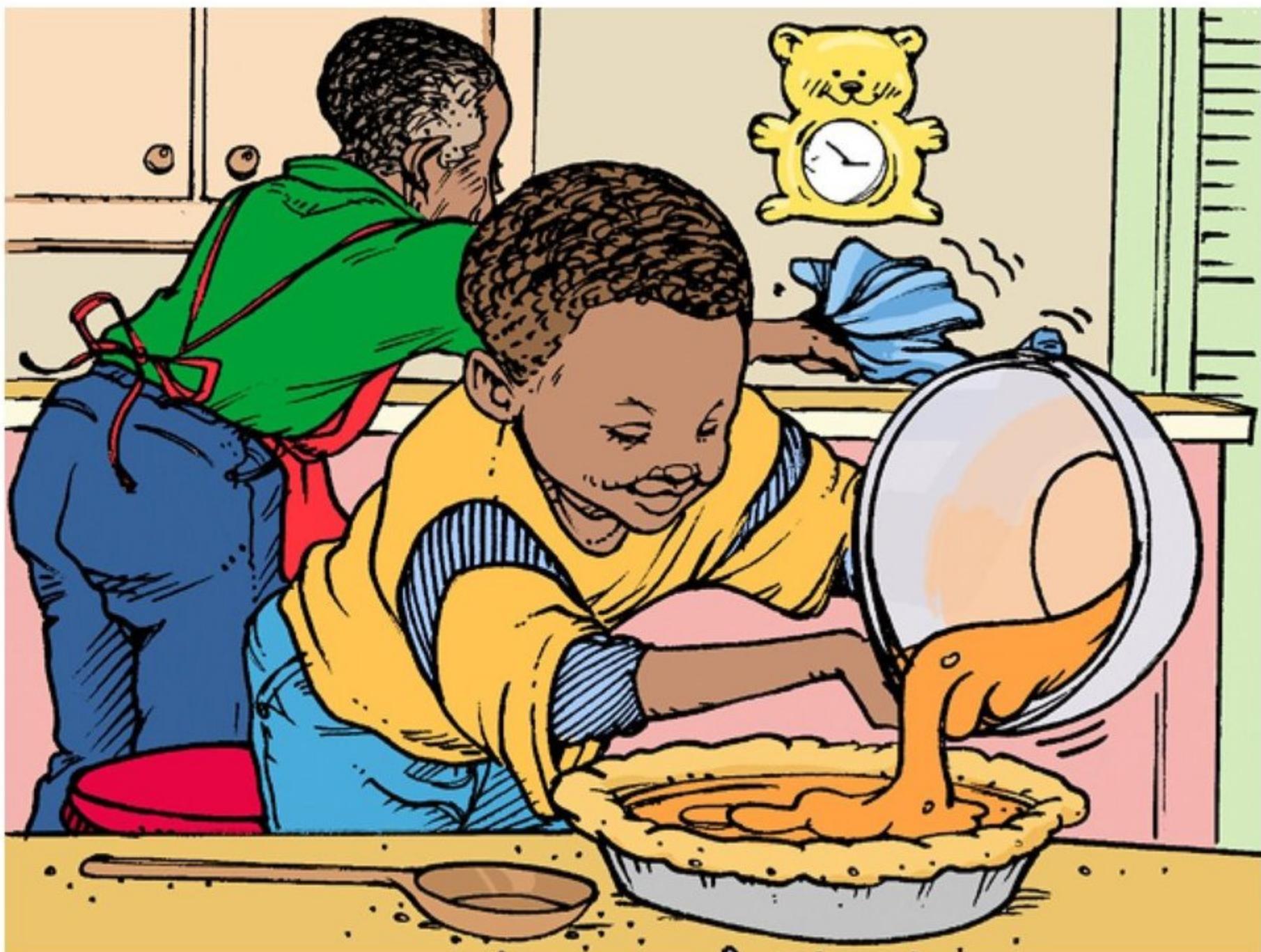
Step Five

While the dish baked, Latanya measured the tiny marshmallows. They kept falling out of the cup. When the timer rang, Mom took the hot dish from the oven. *Oh! It smelled so yummy!*

Latanya took the marshmallows and **arranged** them on top of the bubbling food. They started to melt. She licked her lips. *Grandma will love this.*

Mom put the dish under the broiler, and Latanya watched it until the tiny white dots turned golden. *Oh! It looked beautiful!*

Latanya and Mom started for Grandma and Grandpa's house.



Finally, Deon poured the mixture into a pie shell. He didn't spill much.

Dad put the pie in the oven. Deon set the timer for 60 minutes, or 1 hour.

As the pie baked, a sweet, spicy smell filled the kitchen. *Grandma will be so proud of me. I bet even Grandpa will choose mine*, Deon thought. *He loves Grandma's sweet potato pie more than anyone.*

When the timer rang, Dad took the pie from the oven, and they started for Grandma and Grandpa's house.



Taste Test

Once everyone arrived, Deon's dad and Latanya's mom put the dishes on the big table in front of Grandma and Grandpa. Grandma and Grandpa said Latanya's mom and Deon's dad used to **compete** too, only they competed against each other in sports, not cooking.

The two parents smiled and teased each other about who was better at soccer now.

Grandpa and Grandma laughed. Then they started to judge the cooking contest.

First everyone tasted Latanya's dish. "This is delicious, Latanya," Grandma said. Grandpa nodded and winked at Latanya.

"It's yummy, especially the marshmallow part," Deon said, looking a bit disappointed. "I think it's better than mine."





Next, they tried Deon's pie.

"Oh, what tasty pie!" Grandpa said. "This recipe does taste familiar."

Grandma winked at Deon and smiled.

"I was wrong. Boys can cook," Latanya said, a bit worried that Deon would win after she had worked so hard. "This is really good!"

Deon smiled. *It's a good thing I followed Grandma's recipe, he thought.*

Grandma and Grandpa whispered to each other at one end of the table. Finally Grandpa said, “Both dishes looked beautiful and tasted delicious. We’d like to order one of each for Thanksgiving dinner.”

“So it’s a tie?” Latanya’s mom asked.

“That’s the way they always decide contests like this,” Deon’s dad said with a smile.

Grandma winked at Grandpa. “I think we may have added another recipe to our family tradition.”

Latanya and Deon were too busy eating the food they had made to care about who won.



Glossary

alternate (<i>v.</i>)	to place by turns (p. 6)
arranged (<i>v.</i>)	put in order (p. 14)
broil (<i>v.</i>)	to cook by direct heat (p. 6)
casserole (<i>n.</i>)	a type of stew cooked slowly; also, a glass or earthenware dish used to bake and serve food (p. 6)
challenge (<i>v.</i>)	to dare someone to compete (p. 5)
chefs (<i>n.</i>)	the head cooks in restaurants (p. 4)
compete (<i>v.</i>)	to try hard for something that someone else is also trying hard for (p. 16)
recipe (<i>n.</i>)	a set of directions for making something you can eat (p. 5)
thoroughly (<i>adv.</i>)	completely (p. 7)
tradition (<i>n.</i>)	beliefs, or a way of doing things, handed down from one generation to the next (p. 9)
unusual (<i>adj.</i>)	uncommon (p. 5)

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Level Q Leveled Book
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