

Khachapuri

By Nicholas R. Solari

The dark came early in those days, and the light was good for making dinner.

Jordan brought the logs in from the yard and they left splinters in his forearms. They kicked up clouds of sawdust as he dumped them in the stove. His wife, Maria, watched as they danced in the sunlight. Jordan watched his wife, which he found to be more difficult than he remembered. His gaze was gentle, more curious than demanding, but still she knew what it said. She took the cauldron by the door and went to the river. Jordan's eyes followed from the window and then turned to the cupboard. Everything he needed was sitting on the shelf.

First he took the bowl, then the sugar, then the yeast. He set them on the counter. Next, he took the flour and the milk. It was warm against his palms. He believed it was unspoiled. His cracked and tired hands brought the ingredients together in the bowl, and his fingers went to work. Once he had reproduced the smooth consistency he knew - two lumps, round and spotted like tiny swallows' eggs - he covered them with a towel and laid them by the stove. He waited for the dough to rise.

Maria returned with the cauldron, and it was full and spilling over, blacker in the parts that were moistened. Fresh dirt, sticking wet, clung to the bottom - the kind that only comes by digging - and Jordan knew what it meant. He took the cauldron in his arms and muttered his simple Georgian thanks.

“Madloba.”

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