

Milo makes dinner

There was an exhaustion that coated my body. I could feel it from the tips of my horns all the way to my tail. Hours and bled into days. Days into weeks. Somewhere along the way, I realized that my life had turned into a routine of waking up in the morning, wandering the streets of the market, and trying to fix any of the temporal holes that were ripping through the alleyways. It started out as an occasional blip. Since the last Lantern Festival, it had ramped up. I was allowed to be more hands on now that I was aware of who I was. I was able to fix what I saw with my own hands, as exhausting as it was.

Then I could come home. At the end of the day, I still had my spot at the end of Artisan Alley. Normally I would pick up my food from Kimber and then crawl in my unlocked window. Tonight, the lights were off at the bakery, and Kimber was ducking behind the wall, flicking her fingers, so her open sign turned to closed. I was too tired to question it, and ultimately knew that I was going to end up skipping my meal tonight in favor of sleep.

All hopes were dashed as I stood outside my window. There was a faint smell coming from within. Something crispy and sweet, but not in a good way. It was as if sugar melted and then burned to a thick ash, which then congealed into a river of smoke that was pushing out the cracks of my window. Quickly, I threw open the window, coughing as the smoke came billowing out. There was a loud clang from within my kitchen and the telling curse of Milo.

“Milo?” I coughed, fanning the air in front of me.

“Don’t come in!”

“It’s my house!”

A whirring sound pierced my ears. A small alarm meant to alert me if there was too much smoke while I slept. “Milo, you are burning down my house!”

“I’m cookin’ dinner! There’s a difference!”

“Not when there is ash on the floor.”

“I’ll sweep it up!”

Several more windows appeared as I crawled through the entrance, my house reshaping as a skylight appeared above, allowing the smoke to empty out of the room. Milo stood in the middle of my kitchen, suspenders down around his hips, shirt discarded somewhere. The sink was piled high with pots and pans. The floor had flour coating the tiles. And my fridge was somehow missing a door.

Wooden spoon in hand, Milo stared at me. "Surprise," he said with a half smile, a small tada motion appearing at the end of it.

I blinked. There were candles flickering on the table. Folded napkins on white plates. A bottle of wine was even chilling within the bucket. "What... is happening?"

"A date?" he said in a question. "A surprise date. More of an I am going to take care of you tonight because you've been working so hard kind of date. But... I don't know how to cook."

"I know that," I said. It was a notorious fact about Milo. Do not let him in your kitchen. The room would never be the same again.

However...

"You tried to make me dinner?"

"I did." He got excited, gesturing to whatever was in the oven. "I made steak and eggs with a gravy sauce and uh— blueberry cobbler."

My lips rolled into my mouth as I tried to hide my smile. The food was going to be inedible, of that I had no doubt. But he was trying. I could see it with the boyish look in his eyes. That eagerness to do something. It was something I had to respect about Milo. He tried. Fear of failing never held him back. If he didn't know how to do it, he still tried to figure it out.

"Well then," I said, walking over to the kitchen table and sitting down. "Let's try it then."

"Yeah?" His eyes brightened.

"Yeah."

Flipping a rag over his shoulder, he turned to the stove, making sure to shake his ass as he bent forward to pull the pan out of the oven. His pants stretched nicely across him and he knew it. When he turned around with a flowery mitten on, and a large pan between his hands, I tried

not to cringe. The food was clearly burnt and under seasoned. For his birthday, I was going to need to get him cooking lessons with Kimber. Hazel had been too nice when she had tried to teach him. Kimber would whip him into shape.

"Well, here you are, darlin'. The Milo special." When he placed it in front of me, he looked at me expectantly. I took my knife and fork and cut off a piece of what I thought was the steak, popping it into my mouth. I didn't think I had ever had something so charred and mushy all at once.

"It's... good," I told him, swallowing. Really, it was pretty flavorless. Which may have been a blessing.

"Yeah?" he grinned. "Well, let me get you thirds."

Before I could protest, he took the plate away, loading it high with the contents of the pan and dropping it in front of me.

"Oh, Milo. I don't think I can eat all of that," I told him.

His face fell. "But don't you love it?"

"I do, but—" My stomach was started to rumble. If I had a few more bites, I was going to be in the bathroom for most of the night. "You know, too much of a good thing..."

Leaning forward, Milo tilted my chin upwards, looking into my eyes as he leaned forward, brushing his lips against my own. "The real food is on the other side of the bed," he laughed. "You do not need to eat this."

"Oh, thank me," I said with relief.

He laughed loudly, pulling me up. I was taller than him by a few inches, but he still handled me as if I was a foot shorter. "You were really going to eat that?"

"Yeah."

"That's fucked up," he laughed. Walking me back towards the bed, my legs hit the edge of it and I fell backwards. He climbed on top of me, straddling my hips, hands bracing either side of my body. "Foods over there. Kimber made it."

"You just wanted to see if I would eat something you made?"

“Yup.”

“I’m too tired for this, Milo,” I laughed.

“Oh, my poor darlin’. Let’s get those boots off and some food in your belly. Then I’ll take good care of you.”

I laughed as he dipped his head down, placing kisses across my neck, down my shoulders and going towards my belly. My stomach rumbled as soon as he got to the line of my waistband. Milo’s head fell heavy on me. “Food,” he muttered against my skin. “Come on, darlin’. I want to have my way with you but you need energy for that.”

“I could be persuaded otherwise.”

Looking up at me, Milo grinned wickedly, the light of his eyes flashing brilliantly in the otherwise dark room. “Oh?” I nodded. “Well then,” he said. “Let me have my fun first. You just lay on back and think of that blueberry cobbler, yeah?”

I rolled my eyes at Milo but I couldn’t help the feeling of warmth that shot through me. I laid back, relaxing, the scent of smoke finally dissipating. Slowly, Milo traveled down my body, making happy little noises as he went, and I relaxed fully. I would need to have Milo make dinner for me more often if this was what I got.