

## Episode Sixty-one:

I was woken up in the morning by my girlfriend's kisses. She spread them all over my neck and cheek, covering my right side in them. My face lolled towards her, pecking blindly back. It made her giggle. Bella pushed herself up so she could hover over me, taking my mouth as her fingers slid into my hair.

My arms curled around her waist, pulling her on top of me. Sighing softly, she laid her head on my shoulder. Her weight was so nice. It made me want to fall back asleep just as we were.

"What do you need to do today?" Bella asked in my ear, her fingertips tracing over it lightly.

"We don't have to do anything," I mumbled, barely able to open my eyes.

"Well, I need to at least prepare a few things for Christmas. And it's stuff that would be good to film," she offered in a light voice. "It's recipes I can do in my sleep."

Finally, I opened them. "Is that something you're interested in doing? You don't mind me filming you while you work?"

She shook her head. "No, I love making videos with you. They're so much fun." She moved her finger over my cheekbone to my lips, pecking them lightly.

Slowly, I smiled. It had been ages since I had filmed anything at home. I hadn't been in the mood when I wasn't too busy. "What do you need to make?"

She sat up while still on me with her injured foot held out at a funny angle so she wouldn't sit on it. Bella pushed her hair behind her ear as she thought, her chin tipping back. "So, I wanted to make cranberry sauce for our meal tomorrow and blackberry jam to go with our dinner tonight. I got some nice chicken. You can film me making that too." She bit her lip. "The cookie dough, too. It needs to sit overnight, at least, and I'm going to bake them and the pies tomorrow. Oh, I need to make the dough for that today too- the crusts. Everything is pretty quick

and easy. And we can make more tomorrow, too. Finish the chocolate chip cookies, and I was going to make vegan sweet potato pie for Lauren and a fruit one for us.”

“Oo,” I drew out. “That’s a lot.”

“Nah,” she waved me off. This was where my little girl was the cockiest. “Like I said, it’s all really simple. And fun. These are some of my favorite dishes to make.” She bit her lip for a moment, then grinned at me.

“Oh, well, in that case…” I dragged out playfully as I sat up on my elbows. She leaned down to kiss me, hunching over to do so. “I can’t wait to see how it all turns out. I’ve been excited to film stuff like this with you.”

Smiling widely, she brushed her nose against mine. “Me too. Why don’t we get a shower? I’ll make the blackberry jam first, and we can have it on toast with some coffee for breakfast.”

“Perfect.”

When she stripped, Bella took off her brace, too. Her tiny toes were just as swollen as they could be. She frowned at them, wiggling them a little. She could, but it wasn’t comfortable. Wordlessly, I ran into the kitchen to get the aspirin and a bottle of cold water for her. She seemed confused until I passed them to her when I returned.

Flushing, she popped the tablets into her mouth. “Oh, thank you.”

“Do you think you’ll be up for our trip?” I questioned gently. Everything I had planned with the help of Jasper could be enjoyed while sitting down. But if she was in pain, nothing would be fun. As much as I wanted to go, I wouldn’t have hated hiding from the world with her at home. As long as I was with my girlfriend.

“Of course!” She promised swiftly. “I’m fine. It’s just a bit achy now, and the medicine will help. It’s better than it was yesterday.”

I picked her up off the bed. “Well, I’ll try to keep you off your feet as much as possible.” She was grinning as I sat her on the bench in the shower. When I twisted to shut the door, she pinched my ass. She beamed at me innocently when I turned to look at her with a raised eyebrow. “Oi, cheeky girl.”

“This is a splendid view,” she teased, winking up at me.

While she got dressed, I made coffee and hurriedly picked up the mess I made the day before. I hadn’t let her out of the bedroom hardly and was just leaving our rubbish everywhere. I shoved the takeout boxes into a sack and put it into the garage for later. The entire time, I could

hear the hairdryer going. She had a lot of hair to work with, so it took her a while. Bella's beauty was worth the wait.

I even swept. I wasn't sure when the last time that happened was. It was why I had a maid service. It was probably when I lived in the flat with Jasper, but I wasn't very good at it, so it wasn't something that happened often. My best friend was more of a neat freak than I was, but the final year I hired a cleaning service because I couldn't be arsed to do my merger part. He didn't hate it. I had offered to continue it once I left. It wasn't much, but he refused. He was moving into a much smaller apartment and always worked, so it wasn't messy, anyway.

When the coffee was ready, I brought her a mug. She was working on her face, painting it up with a fat, fluffy brush along her cheeks. Bella didn't have to do that to be beautiful, but she made herself look like a masterpiece every time she did.

"I love your hair straight like that. Your curls are stunning, but it's so shiny- like ebony. And it's so long," I complimented her before I took a sip. It made her blush, her eyes going to the vanity top, focusing on her tools. "So, what else do you need me to do?"

"I just need to finish getting ready, and then I'll prep the kitchen."

I nodded in understanding. "Alright. I reckon I'll start setting up the cameras. Call me if you need me." I kissed the top of her head. Her grin was so pleased.

When she came hobbling out with her cane, she was dressed in shorts and a red blouse that looked lovely against her olive skin. Right away, she went to cleaning dishes and wiping the counters before bringing out the supplies she would need for the beginning videos. I enjoyed watching her work. This confidence in her was alluring. I wanted her to tell me what to do. Boss Bella was hot.

"You really should make a list of stuff you want to learn to cook," she commented suddenly, looking over her shoulder at me as she washed the berries. "Add it to our file. Like twenty things. Don't go crazy. We should start small. I mean, I know what I'd like to teach you, but it will be easier to learn if you're doing stuff you want to do."

It was cute she thought I would learn anything other than I was terrible at cooking, but I would do whatever she wanted. I could be the clown to her straight-man act.

"What would I put on it? 'All of your cooking.'" I made finger quotes as I spoke.

She giggled. "That's a bit much. Um, I don't know. Fried chicken, maybe. Desserts you like. Your favorite snacks. Is there something from a restaurant you'd want to learn to cook?"

"Oh," I drew out slowly. She had obviously thought about this while I was busy staring at her ass. "I don't know. I'll think about it."

“That could be a fun video. Eddie learns to cook his top five favorite foods.”

Every time she planned our future together, it made me happy. Even if it was technically for work. I was already having more fun than I did when I was alone, though. If the videos weren't a hit, I still wanted to make them with her. But something told me they would be amazing. My girl had been a natural at everything else...

“We could make it a whole series,” I replied. I smiled as I glanced at her. “I'm ready when you are.”

“Me too.”

After washing my hands, I came to the island to stand beside her in front of the camera. Just as I turned it on, I pecked her cheek. “You start us off, beautiful. Okay?”

She grinned, her bright, mismatched eyes gazing into mine. I felt stuck in them, held in place by her command. Finally, she shook her head as if she was in a trance, too. “Got it.”

When I winked at her, it made her blush and look away like an excited teenager. I knew the feeling completely.

“Three, two, one...” I began right before I goosed her bum. She squeaked and laughed, her head thrown back for a second. Bella hadn't been expecting it.

She took a deep breath and forced a perfect smile for the camera. “Hi! Today we're going to do something a little different. Eddie is going to actually cook the food he has to eat. Hopefully. Maybe. It's the goal, at least,” she teased.

“Hopefully, this video won't be titled ‘Eddie blows up his kitchen.’ Lucky for me, and probably for the LA fire department, I'm joined by the crazy talented Bella Swan, former professional chef and current master of my kitchen.”

She quickly shook her head. “I cooked in a professional kitchen. I wouldn't say I was a professional chef. But I can make sure nobody is going to blow up this kitchen today. I can't promise you that you won't burn yourself, though.”

My girlfriend was trying so hard to be serious. “Well, there are no guarantees in life,” I spoke in a too big voice, putting my hands on my hips dramatically. She snorted, just like I wanted, and glanced away for a moment. “What are we making, master?”

Her entire face twisted up as she tried to control it. She broke and stuck her tongue out at me.

“Mistress,” she replied challengingly before roughly coughing in a signal for me to behave. That wouldn’t happen. This was too much fun, and there was no one to stop me from having as much playtime with my girl as I could. She was going to try, though. “Blackberry jam. It’s super easy to make, better than store-bought, and is amazing on ice cream, in cakes, on toast, or with roasted chicken. And the recipe is really versatile because you can switch out the blackberries for raspberries or cranberries. Strawberries or blueberries, too. It just depends on what’s in season or on sale. It’s really quick, too. So, let’s get started.”

I was correct. I could tell right away that Bella was made for this. She controlled the shoot perfectly, though I doubted she understood what she was doing. From the best shots to what to say, she showed me her director skills. All she needed was a clipboard with her notes. Between takes, I took them on my phone for later. Though she might have been in control, she was willing and able to follow any of my instructions, too. I couldn’t understand how she didn’t make it on the stage. She was captivating. This wasn’t my bias. She was already exceeding my expectations in ways I couldn’t have imagined before.

Nothing was hurried, and it was obvious she was having fun. She made fruit spreads for me to keep well after she was gone, ensuring I would have her cooking for ages. When the chicken for our dinner was done, she started making the sides- a quick salad and steamed vegetables with French bread.

“I’m going to leave the cameras up for tomorrow, but I’m going to back up the footage real quick,” I told her after I gave her a kiss on the forehead. She was still on her stool at the island, slicing the loaf. “Pick out some wine for us, yeah?”

Grinning, she pulled me down for another peck on the lips. “Yeah. No rush. The chicken needs to sit for at least another ten minutes. Oh, after dinner, I’ll write down the recipes for the videos.”

“Ah, perfect. Thanks.”

I hurried into the office, sliding the first SD card into place. It would take a few moments to copy everything over. We had over four hours of roll. It made me excited to edit. I would make sure at least one video a week with her was posted so she could have a steady income for the next few months. I hated how worried she was about money, and this would make her feel better. This was her baby, and she deserved the cash for it.

There were dozens of files to upload. When the first was done, I grabbed my headphones and watched it. It started with the kiss on the cheek and ass pinch. Her face was so funny. I wouldn’t put those in the final product, but it made me happy to have that recorded forever. The joy was clear in her eyes and the way she carried herself. She loved what she was doing.

I sent the first unedited file to Jasper with a bunch of heart-eye emojis.

The next morning, I woke up to a message from him. “Are you really sure she’s never done this before?”

“She keeps just getting better and better,” I replied. “She’s going to make me so much bread. Both literally and figuratively.”

“And this is what she wants to do?”

I smiled at his question. “It was her idea. We filmed all day, and we are today too. She’s going to make truffles and salted caramel. She keeps spoiling me with snacks. And she’s making stuff and preserving it so I can have some later. You should see my kitchen. It is just filled to the brim with wonderful food.”

“Oi, stop rubbing it in. I’m jealous enough as it is. I’m eating take away chips with chicken salt straight from the greasy sack.”

“Oh, I do miss chicken salt,” I actually sighed when I typed it.

“Want me to send you some?” He asked right away.

I sent several heart emojis. “Yes, please. Thank you.”

“I got you, darling. Oh, and I got that poster you sent. Thank you. It’s lovely.”

Smiling to myself, I was happy he liked it. He seemed to be in a better mood, but it was hard to tell over text. I hoped he was.

When our breakfast was finished, I took a picture of the plate. It was scrambled eggs, toast with each fruit spread, sliced avocado, and kiwis. I sent it to Jasper.

“You’re just bragging now,” he complained.

I chuckled. “I am. Sorry. She’d happily share with you if you were here,” I promised.