

# Kitchen Conflict

By C. Jade Wyton

*After receiving a gift of butter and garlic from Weltaron's frequent visitor, Cirrus, the head cooks argue over what they could cook with it.*

***Contains mild violence.***

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'GARLIC BREAD!'

The shout was heard from two hallways down.

'NO!'

'GAR! LIC! BREAD!'

'NO!'

'I! MAKE! THE GARLIC! BREAD!'

'NO!'

A loud crash followed, alongside the groaning of the rest of the kitchen staff as Strilleburg took one of the old pots and began banging it loudly against the bench in her frustration.

'Garlic! What is! Point! Of having garlic! If! You! Will not! Let me! Use it!'

'I'm *propagating* it, Strilleburg!' Egeria threw up her hands in a shrug. 'So there'll be more later—'

'Only half! Other half! Other half for cooking!' Strilleburg cried. 'Give to me! For bread!'

'There's not enough to go around as bread!' Egeria snapped. 'We need to use it for something that can feed *everyone*!'

Strilleburg threw the pot on the floor and crouched on all fours, yipping in distress like an animal.

'Strilleburg!' Egeria snapped as the pot bounced towards her. She caught it, stopping it from rolling, and placed it down gently. 'We have to be considerate of our stores, and who will get what! We can't just make dishes willy-nilly—'

'Stores are full!' Strilleburg interrupted. 'Cirrus bring butter! Oobleck bring new flour! And new birds for new eggs! And pregnant goats for milk! And new supplies will come home with Astrid! We have plenty to last!'

'And what about when it runs out—'

'Ragtheim get more!'

'That's not an excuse to be wasteful!' Egeria growled. 'The new birds are quail. Have you seen the size of the eggs they lay?! They're tiny!'

'YOU ARE TINY EGG!' Strilleburg shot back. 'SMALL EGG! JUST LIKE YOU! LITTLE SCRAMBLE! JUST LIKE YOUR BRAIN!'

A chorus of *oohs* echoed through the kitchen as Strilleburg went back to her yipping, and Egeria put her hands on her hips and frowned at the woman.

'Be reasonable, Strilleburg,' Egeria scoffed. 'We have almost eight hundred mouths to feed. We *need* it to go around.'

'It needs! To taste! GOOD!' Strilleburg exclaimed. 'They deserve more than

flavourless nutrients!’

‘They deserve to not *starve* to death!’

‘They will not starve! THEY WILL BE DYING OF BOREDOM FIRST!’

Strilleburg rose to her feet and began gathering up ingredients. ‘I! Make! *Good* food for our family!’

‘You put those ingredients down *right now!*’ Egeria snapped, kicking her stepladder from the far bench to Strilleburg’s side so she could grab the chopping board she was trying to use. ‘I will not let you waste our resources!’

‘I will not let you feed this family *shit paste!*’ Strilleburg retorted. ‘I add flavour! Make tasty! Make *bearable* to put in mouth!’

Egeria made a grab for the ingredients, and Strilleburg aimed a bite at her hand to stop her— So Egeria *thwacked* her firmly on the forehead with her spatula... and so Strilleburg grabbed and shook Egeria’s stepladder, and earned another two whacks on the face. So Strilleburg tried to push her off the ladder; but she grabbed Strilleburg’s hood and held on, swinging from it as she continued smacking the woman with her tools.

None of the other cooks moved, as the two heads of the kitchen began squawking and wrestling.

‘Give me the fucking garlic, Strilleburg!’

‘No!’

‘*Give* it to me!’

‘*NO!*’

‘*STRILLEBURG!*’

‘What the hell is going on in here?!’

Both cooks froze, mid-strike, and turned to the newcomer in the kitchen.

‘Doll!’ they both exclaimed at the same time, releasing each other and motioning to the other.

‘Doll, you *have* to tell Strilleburg she’s being wasteful!’

‘No!’ Strilleburg barked back. ‘You must be telling Egg that she is being tight-arsed no-fun little skank!’

Doll put their hands on their hips, their face unreadable behind their mask. ‘And why would I need to say *either* of those things?’

‘She wants to use the garlic to make bread,’ Egeria explained. ‘When there’s not enough of it to make bread for *everyone!*’

‘Egeria wants to be making *regular* bread!’ Strilleburg retorted. ‘The family is *tired* of regular bread! They need *new* food! Tasty food! Food that will be reminding them that life is *worth* being alive for!’

‘Oh, yes, sure! Remind them how great it is to live, so that they know what they’re missing out on when they *starve!*’ Egeria huffed. ‘Brilliant idea, Strilleburg! I can’t believe I didn’t think of it myself— Oh, wait! No! I didn’t think of it because it’s *ridiculous!*’

‘Ridic— EXCUSING ME?!’ Strilleburg dropped onto all fours again, trembling in anger. ‘I am not! I am *not!* You are! You are red-ick-ah-luss-ing! I want family happy!’

‘And I want them *alive—*’

‘Both of you, *shut it!*’ Doll snapped, stepping between the pair and tapping a foot unhappily. ‘You’re *both* idiots. Strilleburg; Egg’s right that you need to make

sure there's enough of whatever you make to go around, or it will be unfair and cause fights. And Egg? Strilleburg's right that if you feed this family bread and venison *one more time* they might just end it all at the damn table.'

Both cooks sulked, turning away from Doll, though neither said anything as Doll stepped out from between them and made for the ingredients Strilleburg had pulled out. They looked over them for a long moment before turning and pointing at Egeria.

'You know how to make pasta, right?'

'Yes, I do. Why?'

'Get half the cooks together and start making it. Enough for the whole family,' Doll demanded, before pointing at Strilleburg. 'As for you. Get some of the flour that Oobleck brought home and whatever cooks Egg doesn't claim for herself, and get yourselves organised. I'm teaching you how to make creamy garlic butter sauce. We can add poultry, if you have any chickens that have stopped laying.'

Both of the cooks seemed satisfied with this middle-ground; a filling meal with flavour. Perhaps not as strongly-flavoured as garlic bread, and perhaps a little more resource intensive than a simple bread-and-meat meal, but it a middle-ground that satisfied them *both*. And they both immediately began ordering around the other cooks.

It was during the chaos of the preparation that the kitchen door creaked open and a little nose poked in.

Strilleburg and Egeria both turned to the boy that attempted to slip inside.

'No! No snacks!' Strilleburg cried.

'Singer, you can wait for food just like everyone else!' Egeria scolded.

Singer froze in place, clearly surprised at how quickly he had been told off. 'I was just gonna grab a bread roll—'

'You know the rules, Singer.'

'No bread! No snacks!'

'We need to make sure there's enough to go around.'

'You will ruin appetite, and miss out on good warm food!'

Singer huffed, kicking the dust on the floor and rolling his eyes. '*Franch woulda let me have a bread roll,*' he mumbled as he slammed the door.

—END—

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