

## Chapter 28 - Workshopping

Hess and his sous chef work on the main meal of the day: a sweet potato and truffle macaroni cheese, topped and grilled with a parmesan crumb and accompanied with a few baked cauliflower florets and a rocket side salad. Although they have to stop every once in a while when a passing grope turns into a two minute smooch and fondle session.

"It always amazes me how you can turn something so mundane as macaroni cheese into a gourmet meal," Cal says, clutching the back of his chair with a Pavlovian stare at the two dishes of sizzling pasta in the centre of the table.

"I'm just amazing," Hess grins, leaning forward on his chair as they wait for the master to arrive.

"I came looking for you earlier and found the kitchen empty," the white wolf continues in a playfully accusatory tone. "I couldn't seem to find Ember either for some reason."

"Any other clues Sherlock?" Hess sticks out his tongue and smiles, wiggling his body a little as he leans.

"Seems like a pretty open and shut case to me. Can't help but notice what a good mood you're in too."

Hess frowns and pushes himself upright so he can fold his arms. "Dunno what you're taking about."

"I convinced him he was cute," Ember chuckles proudly.

"Ruination." Voigt tuts and shakes his head, smirking at Cal who attempts some reason.

"Never know, he might be less of a brat if he finally believes he's our cute li'l gamer nerd."

"Bunch'a dicks," Hess growls and tilts his head away.

"There's my boy." Voigt laughs and tousles the chubby wolf's head fur making him growl more.

"I doubt I'll ever understand you three," Ember sighs, shaking his head with a bewildered grin on his face.

The master appears shortly after and the meal is put in motion. As Alek is collecting some pasta on his fork he looks over at the new wolf, addressing him first.

"How are you feeling, wolf?" He asks plainly, delicately bringing the food to his mouth.

"Uh ... f-fine, master."

"About tomorrow, I mean."

"Oh! Oh, well ... I'm nervous. But after going into town and being around the staff earlier, I think I might be ok."

Alek nods in understanding. "Cal suggested to me earlier the idea of putting the calming spell on your chastity collar. Do you think that will be necessary?"

"Master," Hess interrupts before he has chance to reply. "I'd like to deny this, please. Not while he's in the kitchen helping to cook everyone's meals. I don't want him hurting himself."

"You're quite right, Hess, I hadn't thought of that. I don't want him wielding sharp knives while he's under the effects of subduing magic." He turns back to Ember, "I'm sorry, it's all down to you I'm afraid."

"That's ok, master. I ... should be fine," Ember agrees with a nod, attempting to convince himself in the process.

"If you need to escape, excuse yourself quietly and go to the bathroom, but only if you truly must."

"Yes, master."

"I'm sorry Cal, please tell me of the rehearsal. Was everything to your liking?"

"Yes, master, thank you."

Cal sets down his cutlery and goes into granular detail on how well each team performed, speaking on behalf of his entire retinue. He expresses some expectation for certain staff where points of improvement were issued, but otherwise stresses how pleased he was and is confident of a smooth performance tomorrow.

"Good news indeed, thank you." He turns to Hess who is currently attempting to extract a burnt crumb from a single macaroni. "Hess," Alek says sharply, getting his attention. "How about catering. Any issues with food?"

"Oh! No master. Everything's done and ready for tomorrow. Ember was really good too by the way." He winks subtly at the wolf across the table who perks his ears and then immediately pulls them back in silent appreciation.

"Two for two, you boys are spoiling me today." He turns to his right with a hopeful smile. "Voigt, please tell me that wretched fountain is working."

"Gladly master. It's working."

"Ah!" Alek claps his hands together and smiles broadly at the three of them. "Keep this up tomorrow and I might give you boys another treat I've been thinking about."

The four wolves all lift their heads excitedly and look at each other, all speculating in their own way what it could be. Hess likely hoping for an hour with the spill-band.

"My security team were exemplary also, master but there's still the issue of that one -"

"Oh, I almost forgot," Cal says, cutting him off. "I finally got the call that his checks have all passed. They spelled his name wrong so they couldn't find the guy in the system."

"Morons. Well, thanks for that, I'm happy to go ahead then now, master."

Both dishes of the macaroni are polished off, Voigt ensuring the edges are scraped down and put on Hess's plate before some little sponge puddings are served out with hot or cold custard.

"Thank you both for another splendid meal," Alek says, scooping down the sides of the bowl with his spoon. "Once you're done with the dishes, Ember, please bring your drawings up for us to discuss." Alek catches Hess's expression lower. "Don't worry pet, I promise I won't keep him long. I know you boys like to have some personal time after dinner, and I won't encroach on that where I can."

"Yes, master," the chubby wolf acknowledges sheepishly, embarrassed about being exposed for looking forward to spending more time with Ember.

The master excuses himself and Voigt and Cal go off together raising some final thoughts with each other about the banquet tomorrow. The other two clear away all the used cutlery and crockery and ferry them to the sink to be washed.

“Hey,” Hess says, handing Ember a wet plate to be dried, “if you need to break away from all the hoity-toity folk, just act like you’ve been given a drinks order or something and come in here. I’ll see you right.”

“Thanks Hess, you’re a good wolf.” Ember wraps an arm around him and pecks his fluffy cheek. Hess flusters at this.

“I just don’t want to see you get all upset. It’s gonna be pretty hectic.” Ember nods and woefully returns to drying. “But hey, at least you get a bit of stress-relief tonight.” He leans over the sink and wiggles his behind suggestively.

“Just what I need, post-cum-clarity before a lavish party consisting of extremely wealthy humans.” He chuckles and nudges his chef’s belly. “I’m looking forward to it.”

“Me too, that knot’s gonna fill me up just right, I know it.” He adds dreamily.

“You’re such a perv.”

They soon finish up, distracted again every so often when Hess’s thoughts wander out of his mouth and start turning Ember on. When the dishes are all done and put away, they finish up the rest of the cleaning, wiping down surfaces and sweeping and mopping the floor before separating in the hallway.

Ember steps into the drawing room, finding an unnatural unwelcome to the pitch black with the drapes shut. The reflected edges of cabinets scaffold the darkness over the light from the doorway with a crushing force comparable to deep sea pressures. He obliterates the gloom by turning on the light and quickly grabs his childish doodles while the harsh shadows lurk behind every corner. There’s no stranger sense than being alone in an unfamiliar room, especially in dim light. He escapes and shakes off the prick in his fur then scurries upstairs and raps on the master’s door.

“Come in come in, sit down,” Alek says, getting up from his desk as the wolf enters. “Let me see those drawings again and you can run through them for me.”

“Sorry they aren’t very good, and for my terrible writing,” Ember moans defeatedly, tossing the pile onto the desk and slumping down in the chair offered to him. “You know your drawing room is really creepy in the dark.”

Alek smiles. “Ah, yes ... that was the room my father was murdered in.”

Ember straightens his back and grips his knees as he stares at the master, his mouth suddenly very dry. “R-really master?”

“No, not really.” He chuckles and Ember noisily releases the breath that had caught in his throat. “It’s just an old house pup, they always looks spooky at night.” He turns his attention to the desk, “Now, let’s see. Your drawings are perfectly fine for someone with no practice; and while the handwriting may be bad, it’s legible, and that’s all that matters really.” Alek sits back down and spreads out the papers out on his desk. “So please, tell me what your thoughts were.”

Ember sighs, feeling his heart-rate returning to normal, and points to one of the pages and a cluster of scribbles on it. “These were my first ideas. You said about how you can’t use tags because they need a permanent connection, so I thought ‘what if the tags were fused to a wire?’, which could then be ... I dunno, tied to the collar somehow. Then the tag could still dangle but the connection always be there.”

“Hmm, I like the first part, because you could use a thin braided cable for better strength, but I’m not sure how you’d seal it to the D-ring without it coming off. Perhaps something like a spring loaded clamp? Like crocodile clips but shaped like a rounded spanner head.”

“Yes master. I couldn’t figure that bit out, which is why I have the wire tied in a knot.”

“It could get pretty noisy too if you have a lot of tags connected at once.”

“Yes master, I wouldn’t enjoy that.”

“So what else did you think of?” Alek asks, looking at the other drawings. “What’s this one with the studs?”

“Oh, I don’t really know what the limitations of spellbinding are, but I thought about if you could attach them to metal studs or gemstones, you could pop them into place and then just pull them off when you’re done. They should have solid connection because I used to have a shirt that used them instead of buttons.”

“I honestly love the idea, I’d never thought of that one myself, and the friction fit push buttons would solve both problems. However, my biggest concern is how easily they could come off. If they got caught on an item of clothing, or a stray claw coming up for a good scratch, one could pop off and get lost in a sewer drain.”

“Yeah that wouldn’t be good at all.”

“We’ll keep it as a favourite though. Perhaps it could be workshopped later into being something more sturdy. Let me hear the rest of your ideas.”

Ember steps through some more of his ideas, ranging from using rivets that act similarly to the studs but they get pushed into holes in the collar, to using stickers.

“And finally there’s the tiles which you saw earlier.”

“Yes and I’ve been mulling them over a lot since I first saw your design. Let me know what you think to this.” He pulls out a new piece of paper and starts drawing a similar picture to the one Ember did only much neater. “The biggest problem we have with the tiles is how they lock into place. My first idea was to use something like a nut and bolt, sort of like how a door hinge connects.”

The wolf leans over the table to get a better look at the drawings, seeing him position a driving pin above a group of interlocking teeth at the top of the tile.

“It’d be very fiddly for the wearer.”

“Yes, but you’d get used to it. My biggest issue is losing the nut.”

“You do hate us losing our nut,” Ember titters, and Alek rolls his eyes with a smile that shows he’s annoyed that he’s smiling. “Why not just screw into the collar instead?”

“Yeah, I could thread the last tooth so it screws into that instead. Still, there are other options I considered.” He draws the next tile under the collar showing how it would slot in from above. “I like this one, but I can’t think how to put a lid on to stop it coming back out.”

“Hmm ... oh, what if you make it round?”

“You wouldn’t be able to slot it in if it was round.”

“Sorry,” he shakes his head with an embarrassed smile, “train of thought moved faster than my mouth. I thought about the idea of rotating the tile once it’s in to lock it, but it wouldn’t work because of the corners. So I thought, ‘OK, get rid of the corners’.”

“Oh, you’re thinking about having like a notch that fits a groove and then you turn it to lock it in place? I like that idea.” Alek quickly draws this as an option.

“You could always use magnets.”

"I would if silver was magnetic." The human sighs.

"You know the whole silver thing is rubbish right?" Ember asks, raising an eyebrow. He's met with an incredulous stare and quickly holds his hands up defensively. "Just checking."

"I know it does nothing to werewolves, pup. I'd hardly make you wear something that could hurt you. Silver has a couple of benefits, it's good for magical continuity, and I can't deny it's effect in vanity. There's a beauty in silver that I personally love to see around your necks."

"You like to see your wolves wearing pretty jewellery, master?"

"Well, if I'm going to make you wear collars 24/7, I'd like them to have a bit of style. It's alloyed with germanium too to resist tarnishing, so I'm told." He smiles. "But anyway, my last idea was to use some sort of snap-fit. Maybe have a bit of plastic or sprung metal so that it could be locked into place that way." Alek draws a tile with a strip near the left and right sides cut away, leaving two arms of metal with a bulb at the end. This would be slotted into the grooves the same as the previous but the bulbs would pop into two holes cut on either side, like a side-release buckle.

"This one seems good. What's wrong with doing it like this?"

"It's the same problem I have with a lot of them honestly, which is that when the tile isn't in, it leaves an unsightly fixture on the collar that could potentially have sharp edges. The teeth of the first one would look awful, the grooves of the other two even worse."

"Ah, yeah, they would look ugly without the tiles." Ember says, nodding. "You could have ones in there that don't do anything."

"Yeah but then you guys would need to carry around blank ones or find somewhere to put them when you need to swap in a tile. You may have noticed that pockets are a rare commodity among the nude."

"I have noticed, master," he grumbles quietly. "How likely is it that we'd want to swap over the tiles anyway?"

"Well that's the point. The spells that will be on the tokens could be fun or functional ones. So it might be pretty frequent."

"Oh! How about you make them reversible?"

"I'm not sure I understand." Alek scrunches his face as he tries to think. "They would still be making contact regardless of the way you put them in."

"Could you amend the spell so that it only works if the symbol is on the outside?"

"No ... it doesn't really have a concept of what 'outside' would mean ... but," Alek leans on the table and ponders for a moment. "I could modify the spell to only work through certain materials."

"That could work. And if you're going down that route, you could go with the slot and magnet idea and just put some iron in there."

"Could do, yeah. I'll have to do a lot of protective magic on them anyway so that they only work on your collars in case one ever gets lost. May as well code for this too."

"That sounds good to me, master." Ember wags, happy to have helped in this process.

"You're a good boy, aren't you pup?" Alek says admirably, making the wolf blush.

"I don't want to agree, but I feel like I should because it's you." He whines but his tail flaps continually on, beating the chair.

“That’s my boy. Now come here at let me take your collar off.”

“Master ... if it’s alright with you, I’d like to spend my next, er ... load, in Hess.” He looks away to the side and fidgets on the chair.

“I want to measure it.” Alek says with a wide grin.

“Oh.” Ember turns his body away to grant his master access, happy to hide his face after saying something so embarrassing.

“I’m glad to hear you’re doing that. I sometimes cum in him, but it’s rare. He deserves a nice filling from one of you wolves after all this time.” Alek lays the collar down flat and starts doing measurements for Ember’s neck. He remains turned away, awkwardly twiddling his fingers. Alek clips the collar back on and stands up. “Alright, you’re free to go. Have fun with my Hess, but be careful with that big knot of yours, alright?”

“Y-yes master.” Ember says, standing up as well, struggling to keep eye contact. He knows how easily everyone talks about sex in this house, but it still feels unusual to mention it in front of the master. He controls everything that happens in this house, so when Ember gives a directive that he’ll be using his cum to fill Hess, it feels unnatural and defiant, despite being given the freedom to do so.

“Thank you for all your help today, Ember.” Alek adds before he turns to leave. “You did a great job in town and with being around all the staff, and the collar stuff too; I’m very proud of you.”

Ember’s tail starts up again and he looks at the master properly now, forgetting his embarrassment. “Thank you, master. I did my best.”

“Then your best is more than I could have hoped for.” Alek pulls the wolf in for a short hug and pulls away. “Off you go now. I’ll continue working on these designs and see if I can get a prototype sorted.”

“Yes master, thank you.”

The towering wolf smiles and lumbers over to the door, his dick already getting excited from all the praise and the prospect of being inside Hess again.