

This is the sequel to "[Having Her Cake](#)". It will make more sense if you read that first (I've always wanted to be able to say that on one of my stories!)

Janeway gets cooking. Chakotay gets the benefit.

Thanks to elem for the fantastic beta!

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"Welcome to my humble abode, Chakotay!" The door had flown open before he'd even had a chance to knock. "It's so good to see you. I've missed you."

Chakotay was a little surprised at the welcome but didn't really have time to give it much thought as Janeway dragged him inside and gave him a hug. He was so happy to see her and was especially delighted to see her so relaxed.

"Kathryn, I've missed you too." He looked at the surroundings as she ushered him through the hall, towards the rear of the dwelling. "This is a lovely house."

"Wait until you see the kitchen."

Did Kathryn Janeway just *wink* at him?

"Do I need protective equipment to enter?"

"I'm going to make you eat those words, m'dear."

"As long as I don't have to eat the food."

They finally entered the kitchen. Chakotay had to admit it wasn't what he had expected and he was impressed. It was shining and functional and he couldn't see a replicator anywhere.

After motioning him to sit down, she remained standing with her hands on her hips in a classic Janeway pose.

"It's funny you should say that, Chakotay." There was devilment in her eyes and she sported a cheeky grin. "Guess what your surprise is?"

Chakotay laughed. "Oh, *no*. I thought you were my friend!" He held his hands up in mock horror. "It's not nice to invite people over for lunch and then threaten them, Kathryn."

"Hrmp," she gave him a sideways grin that showed she really wasn't upset, "it's lucky for you I have a big weakness for that cute smile of yours, otherwise *you'd* be the first course."

Janeway opened a drawer, pulled out an apron and mock glared him through narrowed eyes as she very deliberately put it on and tied it around her waist.

"I thought I'd start with mushroom soup, followed by a vegetable stew and finish off with my best dish, cherry pie. How does that sound?"

"Lethal."

Her hands went to her hips again; an action that reminded him of the many times it had boded ill for an assortment Delta Quadrant enemies.

"You're *serious*?"

"Deadly serious," she replied as she placed a chopping board on the bench and along with it, the biggest kitchen knife he'd ever seen.

"I wish you wouldn't use the term 'deadly' when you're talking about food," he gave her another smile, "especially *my* food."

As she chopped up a pile of vegetables into the most consistently symmetrical pieces he had ever seen, Janeway filled him in on her family and how wonderful it was to be with them again.

"Even Phoebe." Janeway laughed, scraping the remarkably uniform cubes of food into an enormous pot on the stove, and as if answering his unasked question, she turned to him. "Don't worry, I used vegetable stock, rather than beef. Same for the soup."

Chakotay was impressed at how confident she seemed as she sniffed and tasted from the two large pots on the stove and then added handfuls of fresh herbs to one. She appeared so competent but he wondered idly what sorts of restaurants there were in the area.

"The soup I made yesterday because the recipe said it was better the next day. Our stew will be ready in about an hour." She quickly wiped down the bench. "Now," Janeway plopped a large brown paper bag down in front of him, "please tell me you know how to pit cherries. We've got this whole lot to do for your pie."

They happily sat together for almost the entire time, preparing the fruit and talking about the crew and the upcoming debriefing. Janeway didn't miss a beat while she checked on the soup and stew. She even made the pie crust as she continued to talk *and* did it all while looking supremely confident.

Chakotay was mesmerized by the pie. He had to admit it *looked* like a pie and the filling *looked* like filling. She placed the cherries on top of the somewhat ominously named, but handmade, 'cherry pie cement'.

Janeway placed the pie in the oven remarking that it would be ready after they'd had their stew. Chakotay thought it an inevitable and tragic waste of cherries and tried to mentally prepare himself for the soup and main course. Although touched that she'd been thoughtful enough to make his favorite soup, he was also wary of the prospect of her ruining the taste of it for him for life.

She handed him the wine and the opener and pointed him in the direction of the dining room. At least there would be alcohol, real stuff, to help him through the trauma.

"Sit! Sit. Please." Janeway bustled into the dining room carrying two large bowls. Seeing the size of them made Chakotay wince. Oh well, what were friends for, if not to suffer together.

As he reached for his napkin, he looked down into his bowl. It looked, well, *okay*. The aroma, he was surprised to realize, was *wonderful*. Could it be possible? It was much more probable that he was experiencing a hallucinatory effect of poisonous mushrooms, but he dismissed that idea, as he hadn't eaten any yet.

"Chakotay, you're supposed to eat it, not scan it for hostile life forms."

"You made this?" he asked, pointing at his soup with a spoon.

"Try it and I'll tell you the whole story."

He held his spoon poised over the soup dish, aware of Janeway's eyes staring at him. Dipping it into the bowl, he moved it to his mouth, all the time assuring himself that medical attention was never far away. His eyes closed as the taste registered.

"Well?"

He sighed in relief, "Kathryn, this is, without a doubt," his spoon went into the bowl and back to his mouth and he made a little humming sound, "the best mushroom soup I have ever tasted." He wiped his lips with a napkin. "Okay, who made it?"

"Me. *Honestly*," she sighed, "I *knew* you wouldn't believe me. It all started with my counselor..." she passed him the bread dish.

As Chakotay finished his soup, Janeway outlined the initial off-hand comment the psychologist had made and her family's subsequent reaction. "They were just like you. Except, they laughed - well, howled with laughter, actually."

Chakotay laughed. "And you naturally got mad..."

"*Steamed*. No pun intended." They both laughed. "So I decided that I would at least *try* to learn to cook."

As she picked up the now empty soup dishes, she explained how she found that she enjoyed cooking and how quickly she 'd become obsessed with it.

"When I was trying to master basic pastry, I stayed up for 48 hours straight." She laughed, "You'll thank me for it when you taste that pie. Ready for the main course?"

"If it's as good as the soup, I may move in for good."

Janeway laughed and, as she went to retrieve the next course and the door closed behind her, Chakotay could almost swear that he heard her comment, "That's the plan."

*Nah*. Not possible.

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"Kathryn, the soup was wonderful, the stew excellent but the pie was a masterpiece." Chakotay leaned back in the sofa and stretched. "I'm stuffed."

"I'm glad you enjoyed it." She beamed at him, and joined him in the living room, carrying two cups. "This will be the best coffee you've tasted in quite a while."

"Sounds great ." He reached out, took the offered cup, and looked towards the kitchen. "I'm considering asking for more pie."

"Why don't you have some with your dinner? You will stay for dinner, won't you?"

He had never been able to refuse her anything, but the prospect of more of the pie made the decision to stay even easier.

"If it's no bother, I'd love to stay for dinner."

Janeway sat on the sofa next to him and curled up like a cat. Chakotay would even say she purred when she sipped her drink.

"Wonderful!" she exclaimed. "We can discuss some of the crew's plans for during and after the debriefing."

However, in the end, they'd sat on the sofa and reminisced about many of the good times they'd had onboard Voyager. Chakotay particularly enjoyed Janeway's recount of meeting her doppelganger . The one who had caused them all the trouble.

"She really said she thought you'd be taller?" Chakotay seemed to find this hilarious.

"Are you saying I'm short?"

"When's dinner?"

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"Oh my," Chakotay leaned back in his chair. "Lunch was wonderful, but that dinner was amazing. Thank you, Kathryn. This is the best day I've had since we've been back in the Alpha Quadrant."

"You're more than welcome, Chakotay." Janeway got to her feet and made her way to the kitchen again, but propped the door open so she could still see and speak to him, "I know you've had dessert, but I just want to share something else with you."

He watched her playing with her beloved espresso machine. The thing looked like something from a Borg cube, but anything that helped her be this happy and content was obviously not something to be feared. He could hear her voice, but he knew instinctively that she was talking to the equipment. That thought caused a surprising and strong wave of nostalgia to wash over him, realizing the happiest times on Voyager were the times they'd spent together.

Suddenly, she was in front of him, holding two mugs. Her face showed her concern.

"Chakotay, are you all right?"

"I'm more than all right." He roused himself from his reflections and, smiling up at her, reached for his coffee. He peered into the mug. "What's that big white lump in there?"

"Vanilla ice cream," she handed him a spoon, "it's supposed to be gelato, but I prefer ice cream. It's called an 'affogato'." Giving him the trademark Janeway grin, she added. "Trust me."

"Always."

They had talked and talked. It was so much like their early years on Voyager, before the pressure, stress and whatever else had ground Janeway down to such a degree that she 'd withdrawn and pulled away. It had become so pronounced that in their last few months before the Admiral had come to bring them home early, there seemed to be very little of 'Kathryn Janeway' remaining.

Chakotay had no idea what time it was but he knew it was late. Very late. As much as he wanted to stay, it was time to leave. He discovered though, that probably due to finishing off the pie with yet another variety of coffee a little while before, he was feeling more than a little full.

"I don't think I can move." He said with a slight chuckle.

"Then don't."

"What?"

No one could read Kathryn Janeway's emotions like Chakotay. It was something he'd prided himself on over the last seven years. As he studied her face, he saw determination, hope and a more than a little apprehension. The final emotion that registered on her face was resolve. He'd seen it many times.

Janeway leaned across to him and without breaking eye contact, gave him the tenderest of kisses. Her eyes closed as he pulled her to him tightly and deepened the kiss.

As they broke apart, Chakotay finally saw Janeway register something he'd never seen before - a shy smile.

"I have a marvelous recipe for berry muffins." Janeway winked. "Stay for breakfast?"