

## Lavender

“Oh, Jim, dear!”

“Yes, honey?”

“If you go out for anything, do pick up those shirts from the dry cleaners, won’t you?”

“Yes, honey.”

“Have fun, and tell Butch I said ‘hello’!”

He waved to his wife then turned, almost running into his neighbor as he continued barreling down the sidewalk.

“Ope!”

“Oh, gee, Luce, I’m so sorry!” He put his hands on her shoulders to brace her against the impact.

“I didn’t see you there!”

“Long as the pie’s safe, I’ll be alright.” She motioned back with her chin as she slipped neatly out of his hands and continued on her way. “I left the other half for you and Butch. Don’t leave a mess in my kitchen!”

“We won’t! Have fun with your Bridge game!”

She ignored him and continued walking up the driveway he had just left, greeting Sally with a wide grin and a kiss on each cheek.

“Oh, Lu, you shouldn’t have,” Sally said, trying to peek under the cloth covering the pie.

“It’s your favourite,” she whispered coyly as she moved through the door that was being held open for her.

“Well *that* narrows it down!” Sally snorted, following her into the house.

“So,” Sally continued as they entered the kitchen and she began to make a pot of coffee, “what’s the occasion?”

“Oh, you know me; I just love to bake.” She set the pie down and began to fuss with the tablecloth.

“Yeah, when you’re upset.”

“I’m not upset.”

Sally strode over and lifted the edge of the cloth covering the pie, other hand in a fist on her hip. She pursed her lips and glanced up at Lucy from beneath her brows.

“Oh, don’t look at me like that, Sal!” she huffed. “It’s not that bad!”

Sally raised an eyebrow. “You spent hours on this crust, Lu; I think I might need to call Jim and make sure we have bail money.”

“Oh!”

“I’m serious; what’s going on?”

“Nothing’s going on.”

“Hand-cut leaves neatly arranged on the top of this pie say differently.”

“Why don’t we take a ride and get those shirts you told Jim to get from the dry cleaners? That would be better than staying in this stuffy ol’ kitchen...”

“There are no shirts.”

“What? Then why did...”

“You know why, Lu.”

Lucy sighed through her nose and began rubbing her forehead.

“So...are you going to tell me who’s kneecaps I need to bust, or do I have to wheedle the information out of Butch?”

“You don’t need to bust anyone’s kneecaps, Sal.”

Sally waited, leaning against the table with her arms folded across her torso. After a long moment, Lucy replied, “It’s in celebration of the hundredth time my parents have asked when Butch and I are giving them grandchildren.”

“I think they’ll be waiting a while.”

“Yeah...” Lucy shifted uncomfortably.

“Do you want kids?” Sally asked softly.

She thought about that a moment, turning to look out the far window. “I think it might have been nice.”

“Might have?”

“If things were different.”

Lucy felt a pair of arms wrap around her waist, a chin rest on her shoulder.

“There’s nothing wrong with a couple of gals getting together to play Bridge twice a week while their husbands mess about in the garage.”

“Do you even know how to play bridge?”

Sally grinned against her neck. “Not a clue.”

Lucy sighed, leaning her head back against Sally’s shoulder. “I wonder if those boys even know how to work on cars.”

Sally snorted. “If those boys know the difference between a three-eighths and a half inch drive, I’ll eat my apron!”

They looked at each other and started laughing.

“You know,” Sally said after the tension dissipated a bit, “I heard you can go to the doctor’s office now and have it done; you don’t have to actually sleep with a man if you want to have a baby. It could even be Butch’s if you want it to be.”

“Isn’t that expensive?”

“I dunno; even if it is, I’m sure we could save or fundraise for it. It’s just nice to know you have options, is all.”

“Yeah, if you can afford it.”

“Jim and I would help.”

“Well, what about you?”

“Oh, I told my parents we’re infertile.”

Lucy stood straight up. “You what?”

Sally grinned. “I told them we’re infertile. At first they thought I meant *Jim* was infertile, and they hinted at me getting a different husband, so I told them it was *me* who couldn’t have kids so they’d stop asking. They did mention something about adoption once or twice but I pretended to be so completely distraught about not having my own that they just don’t mention it now.”

Lucy stared at her. Sally moved towards the stove. “Coffee?”

Lucy nodded slowly, taking a seat at the table. Sally made them each a cup, and brought two small plates over with her when she returned. She cut into the pie and placed a slice first in front of Lucy, then herself, digging into her portion wordlessly after taking her seat. The silence was punctuated only by the sound of Sally’s fork on her plate.

“I have a feeling I’m going to regret having said anything...”

“No, no, I-I’m glad you did...”

“...because it probably means I won’t get to eat this pie again.”

Lucy shot her a look; a wide grin began taking over Sally’s face.

“You were right,” she said, sticking her fork in her mouth, “it *is* my favourite.”

Lucy rolled her eyes.

“Think about it,” Sally continued, “and let me know what you and Butch decide. If you decide not to, we can always get matching Pomeranians.”

Lucy snorted. “Pomeranians are a poor substitute for children.”

“So Dachshunds, then.”

“Sal!” Lucy shook her head, but try as she might, she couldn’t hide the smile turning up the corner of her mouth.

“Or we could actually learn how to play Bridge; join a club with the other housewives or something.”

“Oh, that would be rich!”

“Well,” she said, leaning in, “then how about we stick a pin in it for now, and get to our own ‘Bridge game’, huh?”

“You’re incorrigible!”

Sally took Lucy’s hand and lifted it to her lips, placing a soft kiss on her knuckles, coaxing her out of her seat.

“That, my darling, is why you love me.”