

EASY AS PIE

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INT. ASHLEY'S KITCHEN - MORNING

ASHLEY, late 20s, a quiet African-American woman caught between her conservative childhood and her current modern lifestyle, hands a CUP of COFFEE to ERIN, early 30s, a feisty blonde doctor in medical scrubs.

ERIN  
Thanks, love.

Erin kisses Ashley on the cheek and takes a sip of coffee, then chokes.

ASHLEY  
No, Erin, that's actually coffee!

Erin starts laughing, set down the cup, and begins hugging Ashley.

ERIN  
Ashley, my love, my darling, light  
of my life, That is not coffee.  
That is, that is, I don't know  
what that is but that is not  
coffee.

Ashley rolls her eyes, and adjusts herself in Erin's arms.

ASHLEY  
It tasted like coffee to me.

Erin hold up the mug.

ERIN  
This is disgusting!

ASHLEY  
Exactly.

ERIN  
Okay, that's it. You have to move  
in with me, and I will make you  
coffee every morning until you  
love it.

Ashley shakes her head, still playful.

ASHLEY  
No, no coffee!

ERIN  
Yes, coffee, and sugar, and cream,  
and lots and lots of coffee.

They both laugh. Then Erin looks serious.

ERIN (CONT'D)  
We could still live together,  
though... even if you do drink

(mock horror)  
Iced tea!

Ashley chews her lip as she thinks.

ASHLEY  
Maybe. I don't know. It's  
just...

Erin pokes her.

ERIN  
Just...?

ASHLEY  
What would I tell my parents?

Erin looks confused.

ERIN  
The truth?

ASHLEY  
Oh my god, no.

Erin looks hurt, but she hides it quickly.

ERIN  
(jokingly)  
Am I that bad?

ASHLEY  
What? NO! No. It's not you.  
It's them... they're just old and  
southern and... southern.

ERIN  
But you still love them.

ASHLEY  
I love you more?

Ashley kisses Erin. Erin looks slightly mollified.

ERIN  
You ready to go to work?

Ashley looks momentarily confused.

ASHLEY

What? Oh, I switched shifts with Bryan, didn't I tell you? I've got today off.

ERIN

And what will you do on this whole day without me? Mourn our parting? Build a monument to our love? Arrange a ballad in my honor?

ASHLEY

Probably bake a pie.

Erin laughs.

ERIN

You're hopeless.

She arranges a serious expression on her face.

ERIN (CONT'D)

Until tonight, Nurse Grumpy.

Ashley gives a small smile.

ASHLEY

Until tonight, Doctor Silly.

They kiss. Erin leaves.

INT. ASHLEY'S KITCHEN - DAY - LATER

Ashley opens an OLD RECIPE BOOK in a tiny apartment kitchen. She begins baking a pie. She mixes dry ingredients, FLOUR, SUGAR, SALT in a bowl using MEASURING CUPS AND SPOON, sets the crust with a ROLLING PIN and the lemon filling, and begins whipping cream in a LARGE BOWL and an ELECTRIC MIXER.

She stops and frowns at the cookbook.

ASHLEY

That can't be right...

Ashley hesitates, then pulls out her LAPTOP, a Macbook covered in stickers, and opens up a webchat with MOM&DAD.

INT. LEANNE'S KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

WAYNE, (50s) a large, mellow African American, read the newspaper in a spacious, sunlit, southern kitchen.

Something RINGS.

Wayne picks up the SPIRAL CORD PHONE on the wall next to him.

WAYNE

Hello?

The RINGING continues.

Wayne puts down the newspaper in confusion. He looks around the kitchen, and notices the old, PC DESKTOP on a desk in the corner.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

Oh.

Wayne moseys over to the computer. After examining the screen, and shaking the mouse to get it to work, he clicks "ANSWER CALL". Ashley's face pops up on the screen.

INT. ASHLEY'S KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

ASHLEY

(slipping into a southern  
accent)

Hi Daddy. How are you?

INT. LEANNE'S KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

WAYNE

Ashley! I haven't heard from you  
in ages!

Behind Wayne, LEANNE (50s) a stereotypical African-American southern woman, hair perfectly coiffed, peers over the counter holding a perfect LEMON MERINGUE PIE she just pulled out of the oven.

LEANNE

Is that our Ashley Grace?

WAYNE  
(to Ashley)  
I'm doing just fine, Sugar, how  
are you?

Leanne sets down the pie and runs over to the computer.

LEANNE  
Let me talk to her!

INT. ASHLEY'S KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

ASHLEY  
Actually, I was hoping to talk to  
Momma...

INT. LEANNE'S KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Leanne runs into Wayne to stand in front of the computer.  
He steadies her.

LEANNE  
How ARE you, sweetie?

ASHLEY (V.O.)  
Great, I was just working on a  
lemon meringue pie, and the recipe  
says to put in the sugar after  
whipping the egg whites and that  
just didn't seem right to me...

Leanne puts a hand over her heart.

LEANNE  
Well, it's been ages since I made  
a lemon meringue pie.

Wayne looks at the perfect lemon meringue pie on the  
counter in confusion.

Leanne glances behind herself, then pulls Wayne slightly  
over to the side to cover the pie from view.

LEANNE (CONT'D)  
Let me find the recipe.

Leanne steps to the side so that the web-cam can't see her.

LEANNE (CONT'D)  
 Oh, it is such a mess in here.  
 Why don't you tell me how things  
 are going while I search.

Wayne and Ashley give each other a look of exasperation.  
 Ashley rolls her eyes.

LEANNE (CONT'D)  
 It's been so long since we talked!

INT. ASHLEY'S KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Ashley looks uncomfortable.

ASHLEY  
 Things are... good. Busy, you  
 know, with work and stuff.

LEANNE (V.O.)  
 You know, then new neighbors have  
 just the nicest son. He's....  
 divorced, but I think the two of  
 you should.

ASHLEY  
 Oh, no. Mom, you don't need to do  
 that.

She laughs.

Erin walks into the kitchen, slump-shouldered from a long  
 day of work. She looks confusedly at the computer.

Ashley looks alarmed.

LEANNE (V.O.)  
 Why, sweetie, have you met  
 someone?

ASHLEY  
 Uh, actually Mom, I'm in a bit of  
 a rush, I've got to, um, get  
 going.

INT. LEANNE'S KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

LEANNE  
 Oh, would look, I've got the  
 recipe right her, Sweetheart.  
 (MORE)

LEANNE (CONT'D)  
 Just like I thought. You need to  
 mix the eggs with cream of tartar  
 and sugar *first*, then whip them  
 all together.

Leanne starts walking back in front of the computer screen.

INT. ASHLEY'S KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Erin starts to walk towards the laptop.

ASHLEY  
 (to her parents)  
 Great, thanks, bye!

Just as Erin reaches out to kiss Ashley's cheek...

INT. LEANNE'S KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The call ends.

Leanne and Wayne stare at the blank computer screen.

LEANNE  
 Now, who was that?

WAYNE  
 Who was what?

Leanne looks confused. She touches her cross necklace.

LEANNE  
 I thought I saw... nevermind

Leanne turns back to the pie.

LEANNE (CONT'D)  
 You want me to cut you a slice,  
 darling?

WAYNE  
 Mmmm, yes please.

He turns to glance at the computer screen again.

WAYNE (CONT'D)  
 (under his breath)  
 She's dating a ginger?

INT. ASHLEY'S KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Erin looks confused.

ERIN

Who were you talking to?

Ashley says nothing. She cracks an EGG into a bowl.

ASHLEY

Just my folks.

Ashley mixes in CREAM OF TARTAR and SUGAR.

ERIN

Your parents?

ASHLEY

Mmmhmmm.

Ashley grabs the ELECTRIC MIXERS and begins whipping the meringue. She looks up. Erin is furious and trying to hide it.

ERIN

I-I got of early so that maybe we could... dinner or ... and you don't want your parents to even see me?

Ashley pours the meringue on top of the lemon filling.

ASHLEY

I just... I-. I don't want you to get hurt!

ERIN

You don't want-you're the one who's!

Erin stops. She takes a deep breath.

ERIN (CONT'D)

You've told me so much about your parents, about what they've been through, civil rights stuff and, and you always talk about how much they've done for you and how much you love them- and you can't imagine me being a part of that?

ASHLEY

You don't understand! My parents, my mother... is southern.

(MORE)

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

Southern. She drives a white minivan and wears a hat to church and handwrites thank-you notes for the garbage man. Telling her I'm a lesbian would be like spitting on my grandmother's grave!

Erin claps a hand over her mouth. She tries to form words but nothing comes out.

Ashley arranges the meringue with a SPATULA, not looking at Erin.

ERIN

I thought... I thought maybe we could have something someday. That maybe, you know, marriage or kids or,

Erin takes a deep shuddering breath.

ERIN (CONT'D)

But if you can't even tell your parents, maybe we should stop seeing one another.

Ashley whips around.

ASHLEY

No! Don't, don't do that.

ERIN

I'm sorry. I have to go.

Erin leaves.

Ashley stands in the kitchen. She starts crying, but grabs the spatula with a vengeance, spreading the meringue into shape.

She stick it in the oven and set a time for five minutes.

Breathing like a marathon runner, she pulls out her laptop. Ashley hesitates, turning around, wiping her face, before pressing the webcat and calling MOM&DAD.

The system waits.

Leanne's face pops onto screen.

LEANNE (V.O.)

Ashley, darling, twice in one day!

ASHLEY  
Mom, I have to tell you something.

INT. LEANNE'S KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Leanne leans towards the computer.

LEANNE  
Sweetheart, what's wrong? What happened?

ASHLEY (V.O.)  
I did meet someone. Someone important.

Wayne, mid-way through his pie, puts his fork down. He stares, not at his daughter on the computer, but at his wife's face.

LEANNE  
Well that's fantastic! Bring him out for Thanksgiving.

INT. ASHLEY'S KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Ashley curls and uncurls her fists as she speaks.

ASHLEY  
Okay, sure, but the thing is...

She stops, unable to say it.

INT. LEANNE'S KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Leanne struggles to keep her tone light. Wayne stares darkly at her.

LEANNE  
Sugar, if he's your Mr. Right, that's all I need to know.

INT. ASHLEY'S KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Ashley laughs nervously.

ASHLEY  
Well, doctor, actuatlly, but-

INT. LEANNE'S KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

LEANNE  
Doctor? Doctor!

(she turns to Wayne)  
Honey, call the church!

Leanne notices Wayne's grim expression. She looks at him questioningly.

INT. ASHLEY'S KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

ASHLEY  
(unable to hold it in)  
Momma, she's my girlfriend. I'm a  
lesbian, the doctor's my  
girlfriend.

Ashley stares at the computer screen, seeing only the back of Leanne's head.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
Momma?

The timer RINGS. Ashley turns, grabs the pie out of the oven (meringue nicely toasted) then turns back to the computer.

Leanne still hasn't turned around.

Ashley holds the pie in front of her, almost like a shield.

She sniffs.

INT. LEANNE'S KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Leanne's expression hasn't changed. She's still looking at Wayne with blank confusion.

Wayne sets down his pie and walks over to her, grabbing her hand.

She snatches it back, grabbing her cross necklace. She begins breathing faster, her expression angry.

ASHLEY (V.O.)  
Momma, please, I love you.

Leanne whips around like a hurricane.

INT. ASHLEY'S KITCHEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

LEANNE  
Pumpkin or pecan?

Ashley is confused.

ASHLEY  
What?

LEANNE  
Pumpkin or pecan? Your... your  
girlfriend, does she like Pumpkin  
or Pecan? What kind of pie should  
I make for her on thanksgiving?

Ashley starts laughing, tears in her eyes.

ASHLEY  
I-I don't know! I'll have to ask  
her...

\*

She freezes.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
I have to ask her.

Without another word, Ashley shuts down the web chat.

INT. LEANNE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Leanne struggles for breath, staring at the blank screen.  
She looks at Wayne helplessly. He takes her in his arms.

Leanne wilts against him.

Wayne holds her close, and kisses the top of her head.

Leanne pulls away from him, and looks up at his face.

LEANNE  
How... how?

Wayne shrugs.

WAYNE

At least we don't have to worry  
about a shotgun wedding?

Leanne looks horrified, then laughs, then shakes her head helplessly.

She looks up at him smiling. He smiles back at her.

Wayne grabs the plate of pie, and cuts out a bite, which he feeds to Leanne.

EXT. CITY STREET BY APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Erin sits on a bench by the side of the road, on her cell phone, staring at the cement.

ERIN

Yeah, Mom, I told you...

A shadow of a woman appears on the cement in front of Erin. Erin looks up.

ERIN (CONT'D)

I gotta go.

Ashley stands in front of her, holding a slice of pie on a plate.

ERIN (CONT'D)

What do you want?

Without looking Erin in the eyes, Ashley sits down next to her. She puts the plate and two forks between them.

ASHLEY

I told them. My parents. They  
want to know if you'll come out  
for Thanksgiving.

Erin's face lights up, but she's quiet. She takes Ashley's hand, still hesitating.

ERIN

... only if there's pie.

Ashley smiles slowly. She leans her head on Erin's shoulder. Erin pulls the slice of pie forward. They both start eating.

THE END.