

Baking Bread Redux

by Errant Etta

She shrugged out of his arms, her voice chilly “Really Steed, this was something I was doing for,” she hesitated, stopped.

“Nothing that can’t be remedied, Mrs. Peel. You go get us something to wear, I’ll see what I can do here.” His reply was almost an interruption.

She turned on her heel and he watched the swing of her naked buttocks as she walked out the door. He busied himself filling the sink with hot sudsy water in preparation for chores ahead. “A tidy kitchen is essential, Mrs. Peel” he called out through the kitchen door. “A place for everything and everything in its’ place, my Auntie Mildred used to say.” He closed canisters, put them back in their proper places and began to wipe the surface of the worktable. A wicked, self-satisfied grin spread across his face.

She returned wrapped in a blue terry cloth robe, a towel turbaned round her hair. She offered him a large fluffy towel. He looked at it, his face puzzled. “Well, nothing I have would fit you, Steed. If you plan on this sort of thing happening often, maybe you had better come prepared.” She arched her right eyebrow, turned and began to wash the dishes.

Leaning down to retrieve his shirt from the floor where they had left it, “*Perhaps I should.*” he thought to himself and made a mental list of the necessities. “*I wonder if she would give me closet space, a drawer perhaps.*” He shook the thought from his mind, put on the crumpled shirt, leaving it unbuttoned, wrapped the fresh towel she had brought around his hips and began to gather and fold the clothing scattered about the room.

When he was finished he talked to the back at the sink. “Now, Mrs. Peel we’ll see what we can do about this bread you’re so keen on baking.” He opened the canister marked flour and sprinkled a handful on the surface of the table. She watched him over her shoulder. He spread the flour over a large area, liberally dusted his hands and took the blue bowl to the place he had prepared. He upended the bowl and scrapped all the dough out onto the floured surface. Reaching for the sugar bowl he took four lumps, ground them between his palms and sprinkled them on the amoeboid mass.

“Steed?”

“You must feed the yeast, Mrs. Peel, or they won’t work for you. They must be starved by now. They’ve expended all their energy rising to such great heights.” He gave her a devilish grin.

“And how do you know so much about it? Don’t tell me your did a turn as a baker between all your other exploits.” She pointedly ignored the innuendo.

“A misspent youth Mrs. Peel, some of the happiest times of my childhood, spent at the knee of the cook. At eight, wanted to be a chef, go to the Cordon Bleu, my father

had other ideas. Couldn't have a Steed being a cook, not even a four star chef."

The lilting tone of his voice, the cadence made her smile. "And how old was this cook? Young, pretty?"

"I was only eight, Mrs. Peel," he said his voice smiling, "that was the parlor maid. Mrs. Garner was a gray haired grandmother, plump as befitted her profession, made wonderful meals. Bread was her specialty. Scones, pop-overs, any kind you like, always there ready to be eaten. Everyone hung about the kitchen. Waiting for the next creation to come from the oven." As he talked he kneaded the dough. She watched the rise and fall of his broad shoulders. She saw his hands press down, the muscles rippling under dark hair sprinkled on his forearms. She felt her face become warm, the memory of those hands. She tossed her head. Pushed the thoughts aside, busily began to wipe the counter.

"You could clean out that bowl, if you would, re-oil it."

She bristled at the order, but turned to put the bowl in the water. Washed, rinsed, dried and oiled she sat it beside him on the table. He picked up the mound of dough, pulled it gently. With the release of tension it sprang back to its' original shape. He deposited it in the bowl, expertly flipped it to oil both sides, and covered the bowl with a damp cloth.

"Now we wait." He turned toward her.

"I'm not leaving this kitchen, Steed. I want this bread to," she stopped as he closed the gap between them. "It's to be a gift. I was" he stopped her mouth with his.

It seemed that all the nerve endings in her body were in her lips. But she was mistaken; his hand slid into the opening of her robe and the brush of the slight roughness of his palms made her aware that her entire body was as responsive as her mouth. She felt a thrill begin deep inside her and felt the heat he kindled between her thighs.

"Steed," she pushed him away, " no, please, just until we get it in the oven."

"We can set the timer," he said as he turned to put his words into action. "Thirty minutes should do it."

"We may not hear." She remembered the times in his arms when she wouldn't have heard or cared if a bomb dropped right outside the door.

"As you wish, have a chair, we'll talk or, perhaps a game." He turned and took two glasses from the cupboard, a bottle from the rack and opened it after examining the label. He filled both glasses and offered her one.

She sat; she didn't know what to make of his sudden change of heart. She took the

glass he offers and sipped. Marveled that a liquid could feel so dry on her tongue. She held it in her mouth a moment before swallowing. She felt its' distinctive burning as it passed down her throat. "What sort of game did you have in mind?"

He looked down at her his eyes full of mischief, his hair curling over his forehead. "One you may not have played before. I'll explain as we go along. It's a test of control. The general idea is you must be perfectly still, no movement, no reaction, no speech. You'll go first of course. If I did I couldn't explain the rules." He looked at her face to gauge her reaction.

"I'm not sure I understand." She looked at him quizzically.

"Just a moment, I'll be back in a flash." He left and she brought down her brows. She heard noises, drawers opening.

"What are you looking for?" She started to rise.

He appeared at the door. "Finished already?" He looked at her glass. "Let's begin, shall we?" He pushed her back down in the chair and took the towel from her hair. He began to unsnarl the tangles with a comb, evidently what he had been searching for. His touch was gentle as he worked the teeth through her long snarled hair.

"Where did?"

He cut her off. "Two points down, no talking. The object of this game is complete control. You never can tell when such a skill might come in handy. You know you might be called upon to observe the enemy." He waxed eloquent, "Behind enemy lines, the slightest movement or sound could put them on to you. It's a very useful skill to develop." He elaborated with a smile in his voice. "The rules are for each infraction two points are taken from the total. You're graded on reaction. Degree of reaction is judged against provocation of course."

"You didn't say ready, steady go! Steed." She protested. "Play fair now! I didn't know the rules."

"Have you ever known me to be unfair in games, Mrs. Peel?" He was the picture of an affronted gentleman even in his Turkish towel and wrinkled open shirt. "Alright then," he continued, "ready ,steady, go. In answer to your question, no, I have never been a hairdresser." He continued to comb and stroke her hair. "Have you never groomed a horse? The tail is longer and coarser than your bright mane, but the same principles apply." He droned on but the gentle movement of her hair and scalp caused gooseflesh to raise all over her body. She heard his voice but the meaning if his words ceased registering. When the hair was free of tangles he took the brush and using long smooth strokes brushed from the scalp to the ends. Her head felt heavy. She wanted to lean it back against him. Finally the urge was so strong she gave in.

“Two points this time, Mrs. Peel, fair’s fair.”

She started to protest.

At the movement of her lips he said with a grin, “Another word and two more down.”

She clamped her lips together. “*I’ll bet he’s making this up as he goes along.*” She narrowed her eyes and gazed straight ahead. She wanted to ask if facial expressions counted. She caught the tip of her tongue between her teeth.

He laid the brush aside and began to run his fingers through her hair. His fingertips followed the outline of her ears, her cheekbones. Down the sides of her neck and under her chin. Traced her lips, her brows, the tender skin around her eyes. The slow tracery was maddening. She seemed to be aware of nothing but the tips of his fingers and the points where they contacted her face. A small, almost electric tingle seemed to pass between the feather light touch of his fingers and her skin. Her eyes closed and she lost herself in the sensation.

The loss of contact was almost painful. She opened her eyes and he was in front of her. The smoky hooded eyes seemed to darken as they looked into hers. He smiled that small, special smile that always made her blood run faster. He knelt in front of her chair. She tore her eyes from his and followed his hands as he opened her robe. He pulled the garment down so that it bared her shoulders. He began the slow torturous movements again. He didn’t take his eyes from her face as he slowly traveled down her body. He watched her lips part and her breath come faster. When he had reached her breasts he leaned forward and added his warm tongue to his arsenal. Teasing the hardened nipples with his tongue. He suckled each one and she could feel a tugging deep inside her. The feeling grew and she began to press her breasts against his mouth.

He pulled back, “Two more down, Emma.” He said huskily and returned.

When she could stand no more he moved down to her belly. He placed his hands behind her buttocks and brought her forward to the edge of the chair. She was unresisting as she let him position her. He spread her thighs and began to trace a path from her knees to her groin. Slow, so slowly he traveled. Her entire body quivered. Then he was there. His tongue invaded hidden places, she could not think, he found the bud, the center of her universe and circled it with the tip of his tongue. Tiny flicks of pressure, she shuddered and pushed against his mouth. He suckled it like a nipple and the exquisite tugging cause her to lose control. “Steed” she buried her fingers in his dark hair and thrust against him. Her universe exploded. She sank back into the chair. He lifted his face; her fingers still entwined in his hair.

“I think that’s at least ten more points.” His smile was broad, his face shining with

her moisture.

Her mind drifted, she knew she should be returning his taunt in kind but couldn't gather the energy required. He stood. She leaned forward and laid her cheek against his hard belly. She rested there 'til her breathing slowed. She felt the languid stillness that comes with each fulfillment. He caressed her hair, her cheek and smiled down on her. Wondering at the passion she displayed. Proud and glad that he could arouse her, satisfy her, that she trusted him enough to be so vulnerable.

The buzzer sounded loudly. They jerked apart the moment broken. They realized together what it was. Laughing he pulled her to her feet, "Thirty minutes was about right." He pulled the robe up onto her shoulders and tied the belt. "Go wash your hands, we'll make the loaves together. They have to rise again you know."

"Thirty more minutes? Is it your turn?" She let her eyes drop to the bulge under the towel wrapped around his hips.

"I thought I had my turn in the bath, but" he replied with an evil grin, "I'm up for anything."

"Let's finish this bottle of wine and wait 'til the loaves are in the oven, Steed. What I have in mind may take a little longer."