

A Fun Bonding Activity

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A Fun Bonding Activity

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Summary

Season 1 AU

Ravi and Liv join a couples cooking class because Ravi has a fancrush on the woman teaching it.

Liv looked up from her laptop when Ravi entered the room.

“What’s up, Sport?” she asked, the elementary gym teacher brain from earlier that week still affecting her.

Liv frowned in confusion at the strange look on Ravi’s face. He was biting his lip as he crossed the room and placed a thin book of sorts on the desk in front of her. Liv gave him a questioning look before checking it out. It was their local community centre’s annual spring catalogue and it was open to a specific page.

“So, I’m planning to sign up for the baking class and I’m hoping you will too as a gesture of support and friendship and fellow morgue camaraderie and... err... what have you,” spoke Ravi with a pleading grimace-smile.

“Baking class?” replied Liv in surprise.

Ravi nodded.

“It’ll be a fun bonding activity?” he offered.

Liv hummed and picked up the catalogue. She could see that Ravi had studiously highlighted the baking class's title and dates in yellow.

“You realize that since the whole... zombie thing, I can't taste a whole lot, right?” said Liv. “If you’re looking for a new hobby to share, they’ve got other classes that might be more appropriate,” she offered while scanning over the rest of the page. “Oh, basket weaving!”

“N-no, no, it has to be baking,” said Ravi, shaking his head.

“Um, okay,” said Liv. “Hey, maybe Major would take the class with you!”

“No, he’s too... no.” Ravi's head-shaking sped up as he spoke.

“Aw c’mon, don't be embarrassed,” said Liv grinning. “You could bake cookies together! It’d be cute!”

“Oh, nevermind,” exclaimed Ravi, plucking the catalogue from Liv’s hands and turning to leave.

Liv quirked an eyebrow as she watched him go. After a few beats she let out a sigh and pushed back in her office chair. Ravi was a good friend and zombie ally, he rarely asked for anything of her, but was always there for her when she needed him. It was only right that she give his innocent request (odd as it was) a bit more attention. She stepped out into the main room where Ravi was already standing over their latest cadaver.

“Why does it have to be the baking class?” she asked as she approached.

“You’ll think me stupid,” said Ravi, not looking at her.

“Try me,” said Liv, adopting a *'cool teacher'* stance leaning back against the doorway with her arms crossed –before catching herself and trying to stand more normal.

Ravi blew out his breath. He straightened and turned to face her.

“You see, the class is being put on by one Kimberly Donovan,” said Ravi, some of his usual pep returning as he spoke. “She’s this food blogger that I’ve been following—”

“Oh! I remember her!” said Liv. “She was to thank for those Peanut Butter Brownie Bars you made that one time. I brought them on that stakeout and Clive wouldn’t stop talking about them for *a week* afterward!”

“Yes, those did turn out rather good,” said Ravi looking momentarily proud.

“And she’s the one putting on the class?”

“The very one,” said Ravi, a meek smile pulling at the corners of his mouth.

“Well you definitely have to go! You don’t just follow her, you *love* her!” laughed Liv.

“I mean, okay... I’m... a fan,” said Ravi, looking embarrassed.

It was *adorable* . Which really only served to fill Liv with sibling-like levity.

“NO, you *love* her! You downright *adooore* her!” teased Liv.

“I’m not twelve, Liv!”

“And that’s why you want me to come with you!” exclaimed Liv with sudden realization, completely ignoring Ravi’s disgruntled reply. “So you don’t completely *fangirl* and embarrass yourself!”

She looked over at Ravi in time to see his eyes narrow and his mouth draw into a frown. Liv had only a millisecond to wonder if she had angered him by going too far before he suddenly crumpled.

“Yes,” he whined, tipping his head back and scrunching his eyes shut. “I can’t miss this opportunity, but I also truly cannot go alone... because there’s no way I can behave like a normal human being when I’m suddenly in the presence of the skill and wit and charisma that is KIMBERLY DONOVAN,” he cried, shaking out his hands before suddenly lurching forward and grabbing Liv by the upper arms. “Oh, Liv, you *must* help me!”

“Wow, okay,” said Liv, before taking hold of his wrists and directing him out of her personal space. “You can sign me up for this baking class.”

“Thank you, thank you, thank you,” said Ravi.

“It'll be great,” said Liv, giving him a crooked smile. “ *'A fun bonding activity'* , right?”

“Precisely!” said Ravi with a grin.

It was Tuesday. Their first baking class was that evening. Liv had actually spent an extra fifteen minutes that morning trying to pick out what to wear in light of it.

“What does one wear to baking class?” she had asked her reflection in the mirror.

Even if baked goods were no longer something Liv would enjoy, she had decided it would be nice to attend a class. Dabbling in a hobby like a normal, living person sounded healthy. And spending time with Ravi in a situation that wasn't anything to do with crime scenes and dead bodies or the possible approaching zombie apocalypse seemed like a great idea as well. Yes, Liv was determined to enjoy this.

Ravi was buzzing with nervous energy at work that morning. It was adorable at first, but didn't continue to be endearing after about a half hour or so. So, Liv counted herself lucky that she was asked to spend the majority of the day chasing down a lead with Detective Babineaux. The only part she had to endure of Ravi's nerves then, were his hourly reminder texts of the time and place of the baking class that evening.

As promised, Liv arrived on time, and as expected, Ravi was already there. He was standing near the front doors dressed in his most dapper attire, but was looking more jittery than dapperly at the moment. Liv took a moment to observe him checking his phone and then his watch while shifting from foot to foot. She smiled to herself and shook her head before getting out of her car.

“Hey stranger,” she called out as she crossed the street.

“Ah, good, you're here,” said Ravi, some of his restlessness easing as she approached. “It seemed better that we enter together.”

“Enter together?” asked Liv. “Why? Did we have to show a print out receipt or something?”

“Because it's a couples baking class,” replied Ravi quickly, running all his words together and wincing hard as he spoke.

“ *What ?* ”

Liv craned her head around in surprise and it was then that she noticed that, yes, everyone else who was entering the community centre through this entrance was, in fact, walking with a significant other at their side.

“C'mon,” said Ravi, shaking his head and gesturing defeated acceptance before reaching for her hand. Liv allowed herself to be walked into the building, but it was mostly out of confusion.

“It didn't say it was a couples class in the catalogue,” she managed to whisper to Ravi as they entered the room that bore a nostalgic resemblance to her high school FCS classroom. Ravi led them to one of the free tables near the front, and only then did he let go of her hand.

“You had it highlighted,” continued Liv while Ravi put both of their bags under the table, “I read it and it said nothing about being a couples class.”

“Well,” said Ravi while taking a deep breath, “that one had already filled up when I called.”

“So, you purposely signed us both up for a couples class... as a couple... on purpose... and didn't tell--”

“Liv,” Ravi suddenly hissed, grabbing her sleeve and shaking it, “Liv!”

“Wha- oh!” Liv looked over where Ravi was gaping and saw a woman who could only be Kimberly Donovan walk up the aisle between the tables to the front of the room. “Okay Ravi,” said Liv, gearing up for the reason she was there, “breathe in for the count of six and hold it for the count of two. You can do this.”

Ravi nodded and began to comply though his grip on Liv's sleeve stayed vice-like. Liv nodded along with him and counted under her breath as he sucked in rough breaths.

“Through your nose,” she instructed, “breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. That's better. Yeah. You've got this. In; one, two three, four, five, six. Hold...”

Two elderly women at the table next to theirs were smiling over at her and Ravi. Liv gave them an awkward smile in return.

“He's a big fan,” she mouthed to them while tipping her head at Ravi. The two women cooed in unison, making Liv want to laugh out loud, but she managed to stifle it. Ravi was finally calming down and, funny as the situation was, he didn't need to feel mocked. He *might* deserve it considering he signed them up for a *couples* class without *telling* her, but she was going to be the better person here.

“Hello everyone,” spoke Kimberly from the front of the room. “Welcome to our couples baking class! I'm Kimberly Donovan, but you can call me Kim.”

“We can call her Kim,” breathed Ravi, wide-eyed. Liv smirked.

“Some of you may know that I run a food blog online and that I've just released my second cookbook, 'Eyes on the Pies'. I'm very fortunate to have been asked to lead the baking classes here this fall and I hope you all will enjoy having me.”

“Ooh, do you have that cookbook?” asked Liv quietly.

“Of course, and the one before it, 'Crustworthy Recipes' ,” Ravi whispered back, pointedly eyeing his bag sitting at their feet. “Do you think she'll autograph them for me?”

“I think she might,” replied Liv behind a grin.

“I see we have all sorts of lovely couples here,” continued Kimberly. “Some of you are obviously brand new,” she said, her eyes landing on Ravi and Liv specifically. Liv clamped her lips shut in a sheepish smile and could see out of the corner of her eye that Ravi was doing something similar. “And some of you seem much more established in your relationships, which is absolutely wonderful! I find that time in the kitchen together is great for any relationship. Food and food preparation is fantastic for bringing people together, don't you agree?”

There was some murmured agreement from the group. Kimberly smiled.

“So, for the next few weeks, we will be baking some tasty treats. This course is for people of all levels of experience, so we will be starting with kitchen health and safety today and then we will bake one of my favourites; Spiced Rum Cheesecake. It is simple and delicious.”

“Okay, if you hold the mixing bowl, I will scrape the.. uh.. dough,” said Liv.

“How come I have to hold the bowl?” asked Ravi, already picking it up.

“Because you’re the big strong man in this *relationship*,” said Liv with a grin as she picked up the spatula.

“Oh don't be silly, Liv,” said Ravi as he tilted the bowl so she could better get at it, “we both know you're stronger than me.”

“You two are so adorable,” spoke Kimberly from behind them causing Ravi to startle so hard that he almost dropped the bowl. Liv snorted indelicately at Ravi's expense. “Have you been together long?”

“Actually, we're ju--” started Liv but she was cut off by Ravi who was quick to respond in a slightly deranged voice. “Not long, no...” he said, “just about uhh... four months, now... yeah.”

“Four months and you're taking a baking class together,” said Kimberly approvingly, though it was painfully cheesy. “You're off to a great start.”

“Thanks,” said Liv before an idea popped into her head and she turned to smile brightly at Kimberly. “I have to admit, I'm not much of a foodie, but Ravi here, he's *quite* a big fan of yours.”

“Oh, is that so?” asked Kimberly, looking over at Ravi who set down the glass mixing bowl with suddenly slippery fingers.

“Uh, well, yes, I mean, I follow your blog and.. have tried a recipe ...or two,” stuttered out Ravi.

“He made these *amazing* Peanut Butter Brownie Bars that were the talk of the town, right *dear* ?” said Liv, placing emphasis on the 'dear'.

“Th-they seemed to go over well at work,” said Ravi with a helpless smile.

“That's fantastic,” said Kimberly. “I'm always happy to meet a fan!”

Liv smirked over at Ravi who was giving her a wide-eyed look of warning.

“Well, it looks like everyone is about ready for the next step,” said Kimberly, giving both Liv and Ravi pats on the shoulders. “I guess I should get back up there.”

“For sure,” said Liv, “oh, but Kimberly...”

“Yes?”

Ravi seemed to know what Liv had in mind because he began shaking his head at her with a look of terror in his still-wide eyes. Liv smirked at him before turning back to Kimberly.

“If it isn't too much trouble, would you mind autographing Ravi's cookbooks after class today?” asked Liv with her most earnest and innocent of expressions. “He made sure to bring them just in case.”

“Of course!” said Kimberly before turning to Ravi and patting his shoulder, “I'd love to, Ravi.”

“Thank you!” said Liv since Ravi was too busy doing a fish impression to respond.

Ravi was frozen to the spot as Kimberly left them and walked back to the front of the room to address the entire class. Liv stared at him for a beat before shrugging and picking the mixing bowl back up in one arm so she could finish scooping the batter out.

“I can't believe you did that,” breathed Ravi, finally.

“Oh good, you're talking,” said Liv, “for a minute there I thought you were broken.”

Liv set down the bowl and then used the spatula to lightly smooth out the top of the cheesecake batter in the cake form. She felt the table shift slightly when Ravi leaned against it beside her.

“Are you mad?” asked Liv, looking over at Ravi.

“I... no? ...I don't know how to feel,” said Ravi with a small laugh and a shake of his head. “And besides, I probably deserved a bit of ribbing after forcing that farce on you.”

“Think nothing of it, *my love*,” said Liv with a ridiculous wink.

Ravi rolled his eyes and opened his mouth to speak, but that was the moment Kimberly addressed the class which immediately stole Ravi's attention. Liv smiled to herself and set down her spatula to listen, too.

The room was filled with an overwhelming aroma of delicious spices. The air was heavy with the smell of the Spiced Rum Cheesecake each group had baked. It was glorious. Liv was more than a little sad that she would hardly be able to taste the slice she had just set on her plate. She had known coming into the baking class that she wouldn't be able to enjoy the

baked goods, but it was still disappointing to look at the beautiful cheesecake she and Ravi had made and know she'd hardly be able to taste it. She put on a brave smile as she lifted the fork.

“Ready to try our creation?” she asked Ravi.

“If it tastes anything like how it smells, it will be amazing,” replied Ravi as he lifted his own fork.

They both made a show of taking bites of their individual slices of cake. Liv watched Ravi as she slowly chewed. The texture was just like she remembered a fine cheesecake being, but there was barely a hint of flavour. Ravi, though, his eyes fell shut and he let out a guttural groan of 'mmm'. Liv would have to enjoy her piece vicariously.

“Is it *that* good?” she asked with a small laugh.

“Oh, Liv,” he said after swallowing his mouthful. “I am *so* sorry I made you do this. It is absolutely criminal that you can't taste what I'm tasting.”

Liv bit her lips together in an attempt not to laugh and set down her plate. Ravi was obviously having some sort of religious experience. She had to look away because it was actually a bit awkward to see him in such a state.

“I'm glad you're enjoying it,” she said. “And we have so much that we can probably share the rest with friends tomorrow –they let us take it home, right?”

“I hope so,” moaned Ravi around his third bite. “It would be a crime to waste this.”

“Alright everyone, once you've all had a chance to taste your creations,” spoke Kimberly from the front, “you can get a cardboard box up here to use to take the rest of your cake home and then I ask that you load your plates, forks, and knives up in our industrial dishwasher and

finish cleaning up our tables before you go.” Ravi grinned at Liv in triumph at the mention of the cardboard boxes.

“Next week,” continued Kimberly, “we will be trying something a little more tricky as you all have done so well with your cheesecakes today! Thank you so much for coming and we will see you then!”

Ravi was quick to get a cardboard box from the counter at the front of the room when Kimberly had finished speaking. Liv helped to put the cake into the bottom of the box and fold the cardboard into the proper box shape around it with him. When they were done, the classroom was beginning to clear out.

“Hey, why don't you take your books to Kimberly, now, and I'll do up these dishes,” said Liv.

“Oh gosh,” said Ravi, eyes widening. “I don't think I can do it.”

“Are you kidding me?” asked Liv, laughing. “You just spent the last two hours cooking in the same room as her. I'm sure you can handle another few minutes while she signs your books.”

“M-maybe I should wait until next week,” said Ravi.

“*Ravi*, ” pushed Liv.

“Okay, okay,” said Ravi nodding. “Okay. I... okay.”

“You've got this,” said Liv, picking his bag up off the floor and handing it to him.

“Yeah, okay, yeah,” said Ravi.

Liv watched him nervously walk up to Kimberly where she was standing scrolling through something on her smartphone. Kimberly straightened when he approached. She grinned and nodded to which he quickly pulled his cookbooks out of his bag and handed them to her followed quickly by a sharpie pen – the man was prepared. Liv grinned to herself before cleaning up their table and taking the dishes to wash.

“Wow, this is *fantastic*, ” exclaimed Clive between bites of the leftover Spiced Rum Cheesecake.

“Thank you,” said Liv and Ravi proud and simultaneously.

“And you two baked this?” asked Clive in a rather 'detectivey' voice while gesturing at them with his fork.

“Yes,” said Ravi while Liv was mostly busy feeling judgmental at how quickly Clive was already shovelling his next bite into his mouth. “We joined a couples baking class together. It's every Tuesday evening for the next five weeks.”

“Maybe try stopping and taking a breath in between bites,” spoke up Liv.

“Ah, so that's why Liv had to bow out early yesterday,” said Clive, not acknowledging Liv's comment before taking another forkful of the cake. “I have to say, this is probably the best cheesecake I've ever had –and that is saying something because there was this gourmet cake shop down the block from my apartment. They had *the best* cheesecakes.”

Liv and Ravi shared a look.

“WAIT,” said Clive, suddenly. “A *couples* baking class? You two... when... what? You're a couple?”

“Only on Tuesdays,” said Liv. “Isn't that right, sweetums?”

“You are absolutely correct, my dear,” replied Ravi.

Liv laughed as the wide-eyed look on Clive's face morphed into something resembling confusion and then finally a mildly trepid acceptance. He shook his head and took another bite of the cake.

“You two are nuts,” he said, “but this cake is amazing.”

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