

A Stew and Dance

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/42712323) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/42712323>.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	3rd Life Last Life SMP Series , Double Life SMP
Relationship:	Jimmy Solidarity & TangoTek
Character:	Jimmy Solidarity , TangoTek
Additional Tags:	Cooking , Dancing and Singing , Food , Fluff , Ambiguous Relationships , Domestic Fluff
Language:	English
Series:	Part 4 of To break bread
Stats:	Published: 2022-10-29 Words: 1,913 Chapters: 1/1

A Stew and Dance

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Summary

“Me-nu-do.” Jimmy pronounces each syllable carefully. “Is that like, Italian?”

“Spanish, actually. Well, the actual dish is from the Philippines. It’s a tomato stew, kinda. It’s got potatoes and carrots and pork.”

“Oh my gosh, thank goodness, I was starting to get sick of beef.” Jimmy turns to pat one of the cattle. “No offence.”

Tango grins. “I don’t think they’ll be offended that you’re not eating them, Jimmy.”

Jimmy laughs. “True, true.”

The whole atmosphere is... nice, really. It's the most relaxed Jimmy's felt in the two weeks he's been here. It's definitely a nice change of pace from the... well, the arson. But it seems Scar's had his satisfaction for now, so he and most of the server are dormant or too caught up in their own petty squabbles. Jimmy's sure the time will come when chaos will break out again, but for now, it's him and Tango, peacefully cooking menudo. It's very nice. He definitely knows that Tango needs the peace.

...wait he should probably help Tango shouldn't he.

(In which Tango and Jimmy get a bit distracted.)

Notes

me, a filipino: i'm giving you the highest honor i can bestow *has them make filipino food*

aka in which two white men do the filipino practice of cooking menudo and also singing as loud as you can with no regards for your neighbors

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

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The noontime light streams through the windows, washing everything in a comforting golden warmth. Jimmy softens as he watches Tango, who hums as he drops pork into a pot of water, covering it afterwards and leaving it to boil on the furnace. He then takes the garlic and crushes it, peeling the broken skin off and depositing it in their compost bin—a leather bag—before chopping the cloves. The rhythmic sound is satisfying as Tango expertly and quickly minces them up, and Jimmy can’t help but admire how easily he seems to do it.

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Pushing himself off the fence, Jimmy sheepishly walks up to his soulmate, and asks, “Hey, can I help?”

Tango turns to him, wide-eyed. “Oh! Oh yeah sure, uhh here.” He grabs an extra knife and hands it to Jimmy, who barely stifles a squeak upon seeing the sharp blade come at him. Tango notices, and tilts his head in amusement. “Don’t tell me you’re not used to chopping food,” he teases.

“N-no, I’m plenty familiar with it. I’m also just...” Jimmy gingerly takes the knife, “...very careful.”

Tango chuckles and turns back to the garlic. “Fair, fair. You can chop the onions.”

“Oh... okay.” Jimmy adjusts to the knife’s weight, then takes an onion. He peels it, cuts it in half, and starts to chop.

The sting comes soon enough.

“Ohhh, no,” he mutters as his vision goes blurry with involuntary tears. He tries to fight through, using what remains of his vision to keep chopping, but it feels like his eyeballs are on fire.

“Jimmy?” The warble in Tango’s voice makes it clear that he’s also feeling it. “Don’t tell me you did what you just did?”

“I’m sorry, I just-” Jimmy carefully puts down the knife and raises a hand to wipe his eyes.

“NOOO!” Tango grabs Jimmy by the wrist and drags him over to the sink. “Wash your hands first, *then* wash your eyes! You’ll get more onion in them if you do that.”

“*Auuuouuuughhhh*,” replies Jimmy, who at this point can’t see a single thing. His head starts throbbing from the dehydration and how hard he’s shutting his eyes.

Jimmy washes off all the remaining residue on his hands, and Tango takes it upon himself to wash his eyes. He slowly waits for his vision to return and the pain to fade.

Tango sighs. “I’ll do the onions, okay? You can do the carrots.”

As the wooden walls and Jimmy’s tired reflection in the water comes back into view, he sighs. “Yeah, maybe that’s fair.”

Tango explains later that the trick is to cut the onion in half, and then place the inside part facing down, so the fumes don’t waft up. Jimmy swears, *swears*, that he *did* do that, and Tango just smiles and says he believes him.

So the onions are chopped, placed on a plate well away from Jimmy, along with the garlic. Tango busies himself with the potatoes, Jimmy the carrots. He carefully peels and dices them according to Tango’s instruction. He looks over to the pot, where the water has been boiling for a good couple of minutes; Jimmy’s aware because he’s right next to it, and has been uncomfortably feeling the steam slowly warm the right side of his face. He notes that the pork has greyed considerably. He informs Tango, who goes to drain the pot and transfer the pork to a bowl. He tells Jimmy to stir the garlic, onions, and tomato sauce in the now-empty pot, and Jimmy does so. Soon the fragrant scent fills the room, thankfully overpowering the smell of the cows. However Jimmy’s arm is starting to get a bit weary, and though the task is nice, it’s still mundane enough for his mind to start drifting.

It drifts to a song, a jaunty pop tune, which starts looping. Absetmindendly, Jimmy starts humming it, then, quietly, sings the first lyrics.

“*Heeeyy*,” he sings in falsetto, “*Hey, baby. Ooh, ah.*” He smiles. “*I wanna know...*”

“*If you’ll be my girl.*”

Jimmy whips his head to look at Tango, who stares back with a wide grin. “‘Hey Baby’, right?”

“I- uh, yeah!” Jimmy grins back. “You know it?”

“Of course I do.” Tango takes a breath, and continues as he scoops up the diced pork and deposits the pieces in the pot, “*Hey, hey baby!*”

“*Ooh! Ah! I wanna-*”

“Hold on, hold on, what’s that part?”

“What?”

“The ‘ooh, ah’ thing, what is that?”

Jimmy pauses his stirring to give a puzzled look. “It’s part of the song.”

“Not in the version I remember. Also, don’t let the pork burn, it’ll stick to the pan.”

“Oh right, sorry.” Jimmy resumes stirring. “It’s in the DJ Otzi song! Don’t you know it?”

“DJ who?”

Jimmy gapes. “The guy who- wait, how’d you know the song, then?”

“Bruce Channel? The guy who first sang it in the sixties?”

“It’s from the *sixties*??”

Tango looks beyond aghast. He turns away, to the bowl of pre-prepared water, waving a hand. “Just- stir the pork, I need to process this.”

“You don’t mean that,” Jimmy says, indignant.

“How do you not know it’s by Bruce Channel, it’s a classic!”

“Surely I’m not at fault for this!”

Tango simply pours in the water in silence, and Jimmy sighs.

After a short amount of time has passed, with Jimmy stirring and Tango putting in seasoning and the rest of the vegetables, Jimmy smirks.

“*Ooh.*” He giggles with a shit-eating grin, and Tango groans, though a smile starts to form on his face. Jimmy barks out a full laugh and continues, “*Ah!*”

“I don’t even know why you’d include tha-”

“*I wanna know!*” Jimmy continues singing at full volume, throwing a hand into the air. “*If you’d be my girl!*”

Tango finally drops the act and beams, singing back, “*When I saw you walking down the street.*” He starts to bob his head, just slightly. “*I said, that’s the kind of gal I’d like to meet!*”

“*She’s so pretty, lord, she’s fine—*” Jimmy yanks the ladle out of the stew and puts it near his mouth, making Tango shriek at the splatter, “—sorry! *I’m gonna make her-*”

They sing together: “*Mine all mine!*”

Jimmy starts to step back, shimmying a bit as he does, and Tango follows with eagerness as they sing, “*Hey, hey baby!*”

“*Ooh, ah!*” Jimmy can’t help but keep in, giggling at Tango’s exasperation.

“*I wanna know, if you’ll be my girl.*”

Jimmy reaches out his free hand, and Tango takes it. “*Hey, hey baby!*” he starts again. They guide each other in an impromptu freestyle, something vaguely reminiscent of a boogey. “*I wanna know, if you’ll be my girl.*”

“Pretty sure there’s supposed to be just one chorus there?” Tango asks.

“Is there? I dunno, just go with it.” He holds the ladle closer to his face again. “*When you turned*

and walked away, that's when I wanna say-" he moves the ladle to Tango, who smiles wider at the prompt.

"Come on, baby, give me a whirl." He leans closer to the "microphone" as he sings louder, *"I wanna know if you'll be my girl! Hey-*"

"No, it goes '*I wanna know, I wanna know*' -"

"It does not!"

"Yes it does!" As a distraction technique, Jimmy throws Tango into a twirl, and Tango yelps with surprise while Jimmy quickly moves into the next part. *"When you turned and walked away, that's when I wanna say, come on baby-*" He moves closer to the now-exasperated Tango, crouching a bit so he's just under eye level, swinging his shoulders to the beat as he looks up at his partner. Tango smiles as he does so. *"Give me a whirl!"* He moves the ladle between them, and Tango jumps back in.

"I wanna know if you'll be my girl!"

Tango drags Jimmy in closer, catching him off-guard, but he quickly adjusts, their position now more reminiscent of a traditional partner dance. Jimmy still holds up the ladle, however awkward. They step and sway to the tempo with unfaltering energy. *"Hey, hey baby!"*

"Ooh, ah!" Tango adds, and Jimmy gasps.

"You said the ooh ah!"

"Sure did!"

Together again: *"I wanna know, if you'll be my girl."*

As revenge, Tango twirls Jimmy, who only shouts "Hey!" and laughs.

"Hey, hey baby! Ooh, ah, I wanna know, if you'll be my girl!"

They continue singing the chorus for a while, both forgetting how many times it's repeated, as they dance together around the room with wide grins, throwing each other into a twirl everyone once in a while. At one point, Jimmy dips Tango, who squeaks in delight.

(He asks Jimmy how he learned to do it; Jimmy can't remember, but he remembers flowers.)

It's a bright scene, golden light streaming over the boys as they sing until their throat becomes sore, and the delicious smell of menudo growing ever stronger.

Hold on.

"The menudo!" Jimmy exclaims, and Tango only yells as they both scramble over to the pot. Jimmy quickly dips the ladle back in and stirs, marvelling at the rich red colour it's accumulated. He feels his heart sink a bit upon seeing that the stew at the bottom had stuck slightly and turned a darker colour, but upon scraping it off easily, it seems fine.

"Is it good?" Tango asks. "Quick, taste it."

Jimmy does, blowing a bit on it before taking a sip. It was still a bit watery, but Jimmy hums pleasantly at the flavour, the pork clearly having been assimilated into the tomato sauce. He scoops up a piece of pork as well and tries it. The fat easily shreds and melts on his tongue. "It's good!" he

reports with delight, and Tango makes a relieved sound. “It’s on its way, dude. Here, try.”

Tango hums too upon tasting. “Oooh, dude that’s great!” He grins wide, his eyes glimmering. “I’ll add a bit more salt and pepper, but hey, that’s not bad!”

Jimmy nods, taking back the ladle and continuing to stir. He takes the moment to calm his breath—he hadn’t realised how much the spontaneous dancing had taken out of him. Tango watches serenely as he starts to put away the knives and plates for later cleaning. While he does so, he hums.

“Hey, hey baby. Ooh, ah.”

“I wanna know,” they sing together, quietly in the afternoon warmth, and harmonies wafting with the menudo’s scent, *“if you’ll be my girl.”*

End Notes

menudo recipe: <https://www.panlasangpinoymeatrecipes.com/menudo.htm>

....yes the onions thing is from personal experience KJDSK

i couldn’t put it here because tango wouldn’t remember, but i’m thinking either tango found a recipe randomly while on hermitcraft, or he had a nice chat with tapl when spectating mcc because... tapl is the only filo mcc contestant i know of lol. i need to make it make sense somehow.

jimmy thinking menudo is italian is a very gentle tease at the fact that jimmy can’t identify spanish at a glance, apparently (from sausage’s empires videos). jimmy i love you but why are you so british.

as for the song, i wanted to pick something that at least one of them knew, and i remembered a song jimmy sang in a phasmophobia video. thought it’d be good for the vibes :D [fun fact i underwent a complex rabbit hole of research for this](#). yes i’m normal why do you ask

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