

Episode Title: Loretta Lynn's Tribute to Women

Episode Summary: In today's episode, Sid Evans, Editor-in-Chief of *Southern Living* Magazine, talks to groundbreaking country music icon Loretta Lynn about cathead biscuits, her new album *Still Woman Enough*, and growing up in Butcher Hollow, Kentucky.

Episode Transcript:

(Biscuits and Jam Theme begins - Fiddler's Barn on Epidemic Sound)

Voice Over from SID EVANS: *Welcome to a very special edition of Biscuits and Jam, from Southern Living. I'm Sid Evans, editor-in-chief of Southern Living Magazine. Today's guest came from humble beginnings, but now she's known as country music royalty. And for the better part of her sixty-plus years in the music industry, she's always dressed for the occasion.*

LORETTA LYNN: I never had clothes like that before, you know? So, now that I can afford them, you bet I wear them. And everybody talks about me wearing them. "She's gonna wear them big old gowns again?" You're damn right I'm going to wear big gowns! And I love them.

Voice Over from SID EVANS: *Nominated for 18 Grammys over her career and inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1988, Loretta Lynn is the most awarded female country artist of all-time. Born and raised in Butcher Holler, KY and a songwriter since childhood, her hits like "Fist City" and "You Ain't Woman Enough" have become anthems for every generation that's followed. Her new album Still Woman Enough -- Loretta's fiftieth studio record overall -- finds this queen of country dueting with some lifetime friends and fellow stars like Tanya Tucker, Carrie Underwood, Reba McEntire and Margo Price.*

Voice Over from SID EVANS: *On today's show, Loretta tells me how she wrote "Coal Miner's Daughter": Her most-recognized song and a cornerstone of American music.*

LORETTA LYNN: "Coal Miner's Daughter? I sat down on the back porch of the old home place and just looked up the hill and started...."Well, I was born a coal miner's daughter", and I wrote the song.

LORETTA LYNN: It's like writing a poem and, you know, no big deal. You can find that you can do a lot of things that you didn't know you could do.

Voice Over from SID EVANS: *Plus cathead biscuits, the secret to her cornbread and much more today on Biscuits & Jam.*

(Music ends)

SID EVANS: Well, Loretta Lynn, it is an honor to have you on Biscuits and Jam.

LORETTA LYNN: [laughs] I love biscuits and BlackBerry jam.

SID EVANS: Well, who doesn't? [laughs] .

LORETTA LYNN: I think everybody does.

SID EVANS: Well, this is a *Southern Living* podcast, so of course, I want to ask you about cooking and I wondered, did your mom teach you how to cook?

LORETTA LYNN: Well, Mommy did the best she could with what she had. She didn't have much.

LORETTA LYNN: She had taught me how to cook beans and...fried potatoes.

SID EVANS: What were some of her specialties?

LORETTA LYNN: Anything mommy fixed was good, I just loved her cooking.

SID EVANS: Well, whatever she made, she must have made a lot of it with eight kids.

LORETTA LYNN: Eight kids and 10 with her and daddy, you know?

SID EVANS: Right.

LORETTA LYNN: Oh, the table was full. But nobody made a move, nobody talked. Daddy laid down the law at the table, you know, and, um, Jay Lee, he was a tiny thing when he was baby and...so daddy always had him in his lap at the table. Daddy fed him, you know? So daddy had him in his lap, feeding him. He said he wanted bean soup. So daddy was taking—getting him some bean soup in his plate. I'll never forget this. And one bean fell off into the plate. And Daddy said, oh, my God. And Jay Lee said, "Oh, that's all right, Daddy. Maybe one bean won't matter." [laughs]

SID EVANS: Well, you wrote a book called *You're Cooking Is Country*, and you said in that book, "I'm not a pretty cook, but my cooking tastes better than it looks." Is that still true?

LORETTA LYNN: That's right, I'm not a pretty cook.

LORETTA LYNN: I just cook.

SID EVANS: Well, your daughter Patsy once said that some of your best creations come from your mistakes.

LORETTA LYNN: Oh mercy. Well, I didn't make too many mistakes because I didn't have the food to do that with.

SID EVANS: Right.

LORETTA LYNN: Didn't dare make mistakes.

SID EVANS: Well, baking has always been a part of your story. And you met your husband through a pie contest, is that right?

LORETTA LYNN: Yeah. That's right. But the baking cornbread was one of my favorite things.

SID EVANS: What's the secret to a good cornbread?

LORETTA LYNN: Cornmeal. [laughs]

SID EVANS: And Crisco, I imagine, you used to be a spokeswoman for Crisco for a long time.

LORETTA LYNN: Right on.

SID EVANS: What are some other things you love to bake?

LORETTA LYNN: Everything there is to bake, I did it, you know? Biscuits, corn bread, uh, I bake cake. I can cook anything.

SID EVANS: Well, Miss Loretta, I read in your cookbook, uh, that your husband Doo made excellent biscuits. Was he a good cook?

LORETTA LYNN: Doo is a better cook than I was. He was a great cook. The babies always wanted him to make the biscuits for them because he called them cat head biscuits. Don't ask me why he did that, because they were just biscuits. They called them cat head biscuits and they loved them.

SID EVANS: Well, I'm guessing they were pretty big if they were cat head biscuits, did he like to make a big?

LORETTA LYNN: He made pretty big biscuits. He made them bigger than it did.

(Instrumental music break)

SID EVANS: Well, Loretta, I wanted to ask you about the holidays, and I know family has always been so important to you. And I'm wondering how you all celebrate the holidays.

LORETTA LYNN: You know, we didn't celebrate the holidays, honey. We didn't have a lot of food. And we didn't, we didn't have enough food to try to celebrate things, you know? We just cooked what we had and was happy to get what we had. And, uh, that's the way it was.

SID EVANS: And when you celebrate the holidays now, how do you like do that? Do y'all sing, um, when you all get together for Christmas?

LORETTA LYNN: Oh, yeah, we'll sing. Not at the table, though. We're very quiet at the table but when dinner is over with, we, we do what we want to. We sang, we have a good time.

SID EVANS: Is there a favorite song that you all like to sing together, around Christmastime? I once heard you say that you loved "White Christmas."

LORETTA LYNN: Oh, I do. I love Bing Crosby's singing "White Christmas". I loved him. He was a great singer. We would have a good time singing and we made merry the best way we could.

SID EVANS: You know, we ran a great picture of you and one of your ballgowns about a year ago, and I'm wondering if you still like to wear those on special occasions?

LORETTA LYNN: Oh, I wear it for all my shows. I never had clothes like that before, you know?

SID EVANS: Mm-hmm.

LORETTA LYNN: I never...so, uh, now that I can afford them, I—and Tim makes them, you bet I wear them. And everybody talks about me wearing them. She going a wear them big old gowns again? You damn right I'm going to wear big gowns. And I love them.

SID EVANS: Well, we love them. And I just love that picture of you that we ran and everyone here loved it and our readers loved it.

LORETTA LYNN: Well, thank you, honey.

SID EVANS: They're just beautiful.

LORETTA LYNN: Well, I appreciate the readers loving them, too. Thank you all out there!

(Music break)

SID EVANS: Well, I want to ask you about songwriting. Um, you've been a songwriter for most of your life and you've written some of the best songs of all time. And I'm wondering if you can tell me how you sit down and write a song?

LORETTA LYNN: To write a song, I write about me a lot, you know? And, "Coal Miner's Daughter?" I sat down on the back porch of the old home place and just looked up the hill and started...."Well, I was born a coal miner's daughter," and I wrote the song.

LORETTA LYNN: It's like writing a poem and, you know, no big deal. When you're hungry, you can find that you can do a lot of things that you didn't know you could do.

SID EVANS: Mm-hmm. Does it start with the words or do you have to pick it out on a guitar?

LORETTA LYNN: No, it starts with the words.

LORETTA LYNN: [sings] Well I was born a coal miner's daughter....

LORETTA LYNN: How could you start out any better than that?

(Loretta Lynn's "Coal Miner's Daughter" plays)

Voice Over from SID EVANS: We'll continue with the great Loretta Lynn, after the break.

(Biscuits and Jam Theme begins - Fiddler's Barn on Epidemic Sound)

Voice Over from SID EVANS: Welcome back to Biscuits & Jam, from Southern Living. I'm Sid Evans, and we're talking with the incomparable Loretta Lynn.

SID EVANS: And did your mother sing to you when you were little?

LORETTA LYNN: My mother taught me how to sing. My mother taught me the songs that I sing. Uh, and I go to school and sing them soon as she had teach me one.

LORETTA LYNN: The great Titanic and the—all these songs — Mommy taught me how to sing them and I would sing them.

SID EVANS: Loretta, I've always been a big fan of Jack White, and you worked with him on that fantastic album, *Van Lear Rose*. Can you tell me about the first time you met Jack White?

LORETTA LYNN: It seems like I've known him all my life but I've not, you know? But me and Jack really work good together. I love Jack White. And Jack loves me. And we work so good together, we don't even have to talk. We just look at one another and know what the other's gonna say.

SID EVANS: [laughs]

LORETTA LYNN: And that's how we work.

SID EVANS: Are you all still in touch?

LORETTA LYNN: Oh, yeah, not as much as I would like. I need to be with him more often. Uh, so we're going to get together some more and we're going to write a lot together.

SID EVANS: Well, one of your songs together "Portland Oregon" won a Grammy for best country collaboration, so that's great news for everybody that there may be more to come from you two.

LORETTA LYNN: Well, thank you.

(Loretta Lynn's "Portland, OR" plays)

SID EVANS: Well, I want to ask you about your new album. You just released your fiftieth studio album called *Still Woman Enough*, and congratulations on that.

LORETTA LYNN: I'm trying to fool everybody. [laughs] Oh, me.

SID EVANS: Well, you have some wonderful collaborations on there with Reba McEntire and Carrie Underwood and Margo Price and Tanya Tucker. Why did you want to bring in so many voices on this album?

LORETTA LYNN: Well, these are all my girlfriends, and I love them all. You know, I love these girls. And if they ever need me for anything, all they have to do is holler.

LORETTA LYNN: And because that's all I had to do, you know? And I love these girls. Love them with all my heart.

SID EVANS: What did some of them say when you asked them if, if they would be on your album?

LORETTA LYNN: You know, they never turned me down. They just said, yes, you know? That feels—it was great. It was great.

SID EVANS: I know they were very honored to get that phone call.

LORETTA LYNN: Well, they worked hard, you know? And I sure appreciate that. And I love them, every one. I'll do anything for them that they need me to do. So all they have to do is holler at me.

SID EVANS: I want to ask you about a song called "One's on the Way", that you did with Margo Price.

SID EVANS: And it sounds like a really sweet song, but it's also kind of got an edge to it and I'm wondering why did you want to bring this song back right now?

LORETTA LYNN: Oh, it's always a good one, aint it.

SID EVANS: It sure is.

LORETTA LYNN: Somebody's got one on the way all the time.

SID EVANS: Well, you had seven brothers and sisters. So your mom had one on the way for a long time.

LORETTA LYNN: She had eight kids. I mean, she was the best mother in the world.

SID EVANS: Loretta, could you just sing a little verse of that song, "One's on the way"?

LORETTA LYNN: [sings] They say to have her hair done. Liz flies all the way to France.

LORETTA LYNN: [sings] And somebody's in a discotheque gonna—Jackie's in the discotheque doing a brand new dance. And the White House social season should be glittering and gay. But here in Topeka, the rain is falling. The faucet is a drippin' and the kids are bawlin'. One of them is toddlin' and one is a-crawlin' and one's on the way.

(Loretta Lynn's duet with Margo Price (2021) "One's on the Way" plays)

SID EVANS: Oh, it's just such a great song.

LORETTA LYNN: Thank you.

SID EVANS: Loretta. You wrote, "You Ain't Woman Enough", back in 1965. And now you're back with a terrific version with Tanya Tucker. Can you tell me a little bit about your friendship with Tanya over the years?

LORETTA LYNN: This girl...we've been together ever since she's been singing. She comes to see me when she was a little tiny girl. Come out to see me sing when I was doing, "You Ain't Women Enough", in a place down in Georgia. And we've been together ever since. I love, I love Tanya. She's got a heart as big as anybody could guess. I'll tell you, she's a great little girl. And I love Tanya Tucker. She's my girl.

SID EVANS: Loretta, you've broken so many barriers in country music over the last 50 years, what are some of your hopes for the future of country music?

LORETTA LYNN: I'm just hoping I do as good as I have, I do as good coming up.

LORETTA LYNN: I always want to do good. Now I always want to break barriers.

SID EVANS: Well, you are certainly breaking one with this album, and to have your fiftieth album coming out is just a really incredible achievement. [9.5s] , you've been such an inspiration to so many artists and especially women. Who were some of the women that really inspired you as an artist?

LORETTA LYNN: Well, you know, Patsy and Kitty Wills. There wasn't that many women singing when I started.

SID EVANS: Right, it was mostly men.

LORETTA LYNN: Yeah, it was all men. But we showed them.

SID EVANS: What are some of the things that Patsy Cline taught you?

LORETTA LYNN: Well, She'd give me clothes and showed me how to wear them. Patsy was so good to me. She, uh, gave me food, she made curtains for my house. Patsy was one in a million. That's about all I can say.

SID EVANS: Mm-hmm. Well, I know you must miss her every day.

LORETTA LYNN: I do miss her everyday and I loved her, but —I love her so much.

SID EVANS: Well, Loretta, you're someone who's been through some tough times in your life and you've written a lot of songs about resilience and endurance and toughness, and I'm wondering what you would say to people who are going through tough times now after the last year that we've all been through.

LORETTA LYNN: Keep on going, girls.

LORETTA LYNN: We keep doing it and keep doing it as good as you can and, you'll be great.

SID EVANS: Well, I hope you'll keep doing it and doing it as good as you can, too.

LORETTA LYNN: I will. Thank you.

SID EVANS: Well, Loretta Lynn, it has been a great honor to have you on Biscuits and Jam.

LORETTA: Well, thank you very much.

(Biscuits and Jam Theme begins - Fiddler's Barn on Epidemic Sound)

Voice Over from SID EVANS: Thanks for listening to my conversation with Loretta Lynn. Her new album *Still Woman Enough* is available wherever you get music.

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Biscuits and Jam is produced by Heather Morgan Shott, Krissy Tiglias and me, Sid Evans, for Southern Living. Thanks also to Ann Kane, Danielle Roth, Erica Wong, Jim Hanke, Matt Sav and Rachael King at Pod People.

We'll see you back here next week for more Biscuits & Jam!

Music ends