

“They’re here! They’re here!” Stormy said excitedly. She pranced excitedly as she looked out the living room window. Alan smiled at her enthusiasm and came up next to her to look out with her.

“Who is it?” he asked. The doorbell rang, preventing her from answering. She walked over to the front door to let in their guests.

“Happy Thanksgiving.” Sylvie cried. She was dressed in her usual western shirt and hat. Taryn waved from behind her, conservatively dressed in a white t-shirt and coat. She carried her spear with her. Josh simply smiled from the back, his huge form overshadowing them all.

“Hey Sylvie, Taryn, Josh.” Alan greeted them. “How’s it going?”

“Fine.” Sylvie said as she followed him into the foyer. “It’s a little cold right now, but what can we do?”

“True, true.” Alan agreed. He pointed towards a small closet on the left side of the foyer. “Go ahead and set your coats and weapons in there. Our other guests haven’t arrived yet, so we’re just waiting for them.”

“Okay.” Taryn said as she put her spear in the closet and hung up her coat. She took the towel down from the rack and ran it over her hide to remove some of the wind debris off her hide. When she was done, she passed the towel to Sylvie who did the same. Finished, they hung the towel back up on the rack that had been purpose-installed for precisely that reason. Josh simply shook his hide to fling the needles and leaves off himself outside before coming in.

“It’s so good to see you.” Stormy said, hugging Taryn and then Sylvie.

“You to, Stormy. How’ve you been?” Taryn said as she hugged back.

Stormy shrugged fatalistically. “About as well as can be. Work has practically stopped, so we’ve been basically twiddling our thumbs.”

“Is there any idea on when work will resume?” Sylvie asked concernedly. Being out of work was hard, and she was concerned for her friend.

“No.” Alan said a trifle angrily. “There’s been no word at all.”

“I’m sure work will resume soon.” Taryn said peaceably. “In the meantime, let’s go to the other room. We will be more comfortable there I’d wager.”

Stormy laughed. “More than a little, I would think.” She agreed. The group left the foyer and walked down the hallway to the living room. As part of centaur furniture, several saddle like

“couches” had been arranged so that the centaurs could be comfortable. On the edges of the room were several La-Z-Boy chairs for the human members. Alan took one of those and settled in while the centaurs took the couches.

“So, are your parents coming?” He asked them.

“No. They wanted too, but unfortunately there was a council bash in town that my father had to go to.” Sylvie said a trifle sadly.

“My mom went with them to show support for the mayor.” Taryn laid a comforting arm on Sylvie.

“And yours?” Alan asked Josh. The big centaur looked up calmly.

“I invited her, but she had already agreed to go to my aunt’s for Thanksgiving. She couldn’t cancel by the late date.”

Alan nodded sheepishly. “Yeah, sorry about that. I wasn’t sure I could get the house in time or not.”

“Why not.” Taryn asked curiously from her couch.

“Well...” Alan began, but was interrupted by the doorbell. The group got up and walked to the front door.

“Hey, guys.” Ryan greeted as he stood on the stoop. He was bundled up against the cold and held a case of pop under one arm. “Hope you don’t mind, but I brought some soft drinks.”

Alan smiled. “No problem. We have a selection, but there’s always room for more.”

“Hey Stormy” piped the small voice from behind Ryan. The very young centaur practically bounded into the room, all energy and smiles. Behind her came her older sister, much more reserved.

Stormy smiled broadly. “Hello Amelia! Hi Rose. It’s great to see you!” She petted the head of Amelia who had glomped onto her and was holding her tightly around the middle.

“Well come on, everyone. Let’s go to the dining room and get this dinner started.” Alan said cheerfully. The group filed into the dining room.

The table was long and rectangular. Human-sized high chairs were set up to allow the human members to reach the table. Interspersed were several more couches, along with a couple that had extenders on them for the children. There were plates of fine china and delicate silver at each of the places, along with crystal goblets. Several dishes already graced the table, including;

a massive bowl of salad, complete with slices of fruits, tomatoes, cucumbers and croutons; three pitchers of water were spaced equidistant along the table, baskets of rolls sat next to them, covered with towels to keep them warm and nestled next to butter dishes. Cranberry sauce sat in a covered bowl, a large basket of fruit, gourds, and vegetables sat near one end. Apples, squash and peaches were just some of the offerings available. The guests murmured excitedly at the sight as they settled into their chairs.

“It all looks sooo good.” Amelia said excitedly.

“Don’t take anything, yet.” Ryan told her sharply. She withdrew her hands sheepishly from the salad bowl.

“Sorry.” She mumbled apologetically.

“That’s OK, Amelia.” Alan smiled warmly at her. “It’s never easy to wait. Let me get the bird, we can say Grace, and then we’ll eat, alright?”

Amelia nodded and immediately regained her chirpy demeanor.

Alan left the dining room for a minute and returned bearing a massive plate with a huge steaming turkey on it. The bird had to weigh twenty pounds, it was so big. Everyone stared at it.

“Where did you find a bird that size?!” Sylvie squealed.

Alan shrugged. “My uncle owns a turkey farm, and I got first pick this year. This monster was his prize winner last year, and he gave it to me for Thanksgiving.”

“Wow.” Sylvie said, impressed.

Alan proceeded to carve the turkey, passing the meat around for everyone. When the plates had made their rounds, everyone bowed their head and closed their eyes. Josh cleared his throat and spoke.

“More than two hundred years ago, a group of the first settlers set out from England with the hope of creating a new life in the New World. They crossed with fifty people, and landed with forty-nine. Two having died on the trip and one having been born. The first winter killed half of the pilgrims from starvation and cold and disease, yet they persevered and held on. The local tribe took pity on them, and helped them prepare for the long winter ahead. With bountiful crops the pilgrims had a great harvest. To celebrate their salvation, the Indians and Pilgrims had a great feast, where they gave thanks for the giving Indians.

We give thanks ourselves, for our ancestors and the people who had voyaged across the Atlantic to help found America. Amen.”

“Amen.” Everyone said fervently. They appreciated the history lesson that had been said, though they knew that hadn’t been the whole story. Grace having been said, they settled about eating. The table was silent except for the clink of silverware on plates and the muffled groans of contentment as empty bellies filled on the bounty.

When dinner was over, Alan, Ryan and Josh set about clearing the table and taking down the extenders and returning them to the basement. The kids cleared the table and brought the dishes into the kitchen where Stormy, Sylvie and Taryn put the spare food in the fridge and the plates into the dishwasher.

“This place is huge.” Sylvie commented to Stormy as she placed the turkey platter in the dishwasher. “How’d you guys even afford this place?”

Stormy laughed. “It’s actually not really ours. A friend of ours was visiting family out of the country and asked us to watch the place for her. We agreed and decided to have Thanksgiving here.”

“Oh.” Sylvie said. The sound of the menfolk returning dropped the conversation.

“Hey everyone. We found a card game downstairs.” Ryan said cheerfully. In his hands he held a popular guessing game.

“Cool! Let’s play!” Rose cried. She forgot her natural reservedness and looked an awful lot like her sister, bouncing on her hooves.

“Okay.” Ryan laughed. He turned to the cleared table and began setting up for the game. Everyone gravitated back to the table and took their places. Ryan dealt the cards and pulled out the first card.

“I’ll call.” Josh joked as he held his cards. The others laughed slightly at the bad joke while Amelia and Rose looked puzzled.

“Call? Call who?” Amelia asked.

“Ah, never mind.” Josh said hurriedly. He reddened slightly as Amelia and Rose looked at him expectantly.

“I’ll start.” Ryan said quickly to deflect the girls. Soon everyone was playing the game enthusiastically. Stormy and Alan worked well together, and soon pulled ahead. Amelia and Rose turned out to have a surprising amount of knowledge between them, and were able to close the distance in points. Sylvie and Taryn were just a little behind them and Josh and Ryan were trailing far behind.

"I guess this just isn't my game." Ryan sighed theatrically as another point was chalked up to Amelia and Rose.

"This is fun!" Rose insisted. She had relaxed and was running her hand through her platinum blond hair.

"I didn't say it wasn't fun," Ryan protested. "I just said it just wasn't my day."

"That's okay." Stormy said as she stretched. "We just hit the winning number anyway."

"Drat." Amelia said disappointedly.

"Better luck next time, squirt." Alan told her.

"Yep. Next time. Speaking of which, we need to start heading home." Ryan said.

"Awww!" Both of the girls said at the same time.

"Yep. Come on, it's time to go."

"It's probably time for us to hit the road as well." Sylvie said reluctantly.

They walked to the door. The girls hugged each other while the men shook hands. Everyone left after the goodbyes, making their way home in the dark.