

GOBBLE GOBBLE



KELSEY
SOLIZ

Gobble Gobble
a turkey shifter whychoose novella
Kelsey Soliz

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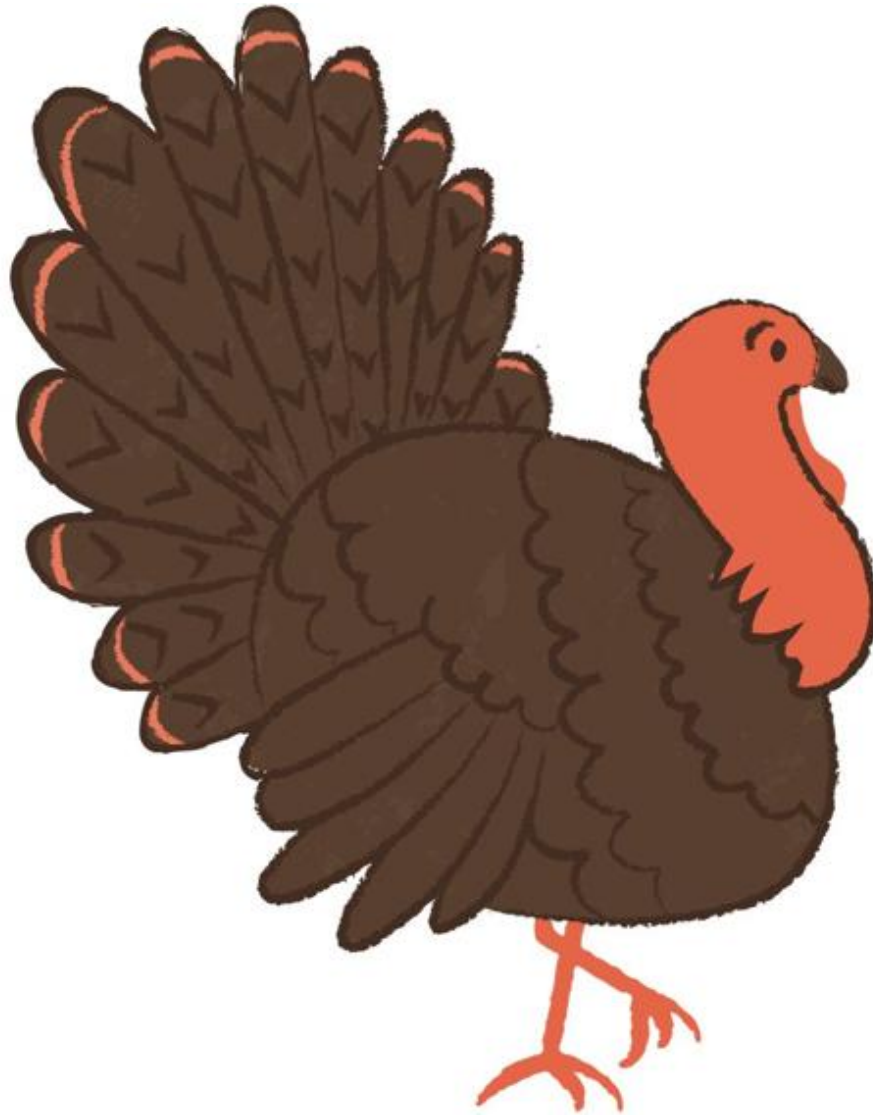
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for all you kinky fucks that like to read weird shit



Grace

I knew this was a ploy to get me out of the office, and yet...I couldn't exactly fault my father. Hadn't I just been thinking this morning that I needed a higher vitamin D intake? More D in general, more like.

“It's not a long assignment, Grace. They have a cabin for you to stay at and everything. And think of what it could do for the paper! You know we've been struggling to hold on to our subscribers lately. Small town newspapers are failing, and this is the chance for something great.”

“I'm not sure, dad. This seems...kind of extreme.”

My dad guffaws and waves away my concerns. “Please. It's a week in a cabin, on a working farm, around a bunch of young,

passionate farmers. Would do you a world of good to be around people your own age. Plus, you'd be helping the farm out. Doing this piece, being there around the clock, you're going to get a great feel for what the farm and company are all about. If everything comes out the way I know it will, the paper will sell like crazy, and the farm will get a bunch of publicity for their new programs."

"It's just a turkey farm, dad. What could me spending a week away from the office possibly do to help our newspaper? All that's doing is taking me away from stories I should be writing. Don't you think it's better if I stay here and try to find actual ways to save the paper?"

My dad rubs the back of his neck and steps farther inside my office, looking uncomfortable. For the first time in a while, I look closer at him and notice he's starting to show his age. He looks like he's tired of the grind. Makes sense though; he took over this paper from his father, who took it over from his father before that, who founded it. It's been in our family for four generations now, but today, more people are getting their news from social media. It's hard to stay in print when your company becomes irrelevant to everyday life.

"What is it, dad? What aren't you telling me?"

"I wasn't going to say anything, but you staying here to brainstorm more ideas to save the paper won't work, because, well, after the end of the year, there won't be a paper."

The silence is loud, my heartbeat pulsing in my ears. "This newspaper was supposed to be my legacy, dad. What do you mean, there won't be a paper after the end of the year? I've got ideas! Look we just need to try—"

"Honey, you know I appreciate how much you've done for this paper. I know that without you, we never would have lasted as long as we have. You're an incredible writer, and you're meant for more. This paper...it's holding you back."

"That's not true. I love working here!"

"Grace, honey, I reached out to Graham at The Herald, and he's already seen lots of your work. I told him about the piece I was pitching to you about the turkey farm, and he agreed. At the

end of your week on the farm, you're going to have this amazing human interest piece to share, and Graham is going to love it, and he's going to offer you a position with them. The pay is going to be way better, and you'll actually get benefits—"

"The *Herald*? Dad! How could you? They've been sabotaging us for years!"

"Sometimes, we do what we have to do to take care of our kids. Me? If we let the paper go, I can retire, and you'll have a much more stable job. You'll be able to provide for yourself. I don't want to see you struggling to hold together a failing business your entire life like I have. You have a gift, Grace. The readers love your pieces, and you deserve to work somewhere that can appreciate you more."

I feel tears start to prick my eyes. "But...this paper is our *family*, dad. It's all I've ever known. Were you seriously not going to tell me? Just ship me off and hope the job offer was sparkly enough to tempt me away from here?"

"I don't know what I was going to do, because this isn't easy for me. I've always dreamed about retiring and watching you continue the paper, but...dreams change. I can only be optimistic for so long, and I'm out of fuel. Graham is going to take great care of you."

"I bet." Graham. The man is so slimy. The *Herald* is a state-wide paper, and Graham has been trying to poach me for years. He's also been trying for years to get into my pants. "How did this farm thing even come about? It doesn't make sense; that farm is an hour away. Why on earth did they seek out *our* paper to cover them?"

"Don't look a gift horse in the mouth."

"Dad. No one says that anymore."

At this point, dad is exasperated that I'm not just doing what he wants, but I've never been good at following blindly. "Grace, I just want to see you happy. This paper can't sustain us both anymore, it's barely been sustaining us the past few years. I'm tired. Your mother has been wanting to travel around, but I've always been too busy. I want to give her this before we're too old to enjoy it, and it just feels like the right time to walk away."

A sense of betrayal washes over me, lighting up the temper that I'm famous for. I want to scream, and I want to yell, and I want to throw things, and I want to trash everything; but I can see in his eyes that it's done. "I see," I say, instead of vandalizing the office.

"I'm sorry Grace, really."

I think more than anything, what hurts is that he left me out of the decision. "Why didn't you *talk* to me? I really think I could keep this going, Dad. If you want to retire, then retire. I can bring on somebody and find a way make it work."

He stares at me again, weighing something in his mind before he stops trying to hold back anything at all. "I've already sold the building."

"You what?!" I screech, standing up suddenly. My chair tips back behind me, the clutter of it echoing in the office. "How could you do that behind my back?"

"Because I knew you'd fight me," he says dejectedly. "I knew you'd want to drag it out and throw more money into it, but we've got nothing else to give it, honey. This paper has been something to be proud of, but now it's time for new adventures."

My brain is racing, trying to take in all the different information, but it's just a storm of confusion in my head right now. "This feels so sudden," I whisper.

"That's part of the reason I want you to do this story, too. It'll give you time away from the office, away from me, to get some perspective. This guy seemed really excited about having you there—"

"Wait, what? What do you mean? Do I know him? Why would he be excited about me being at his farm?"

My dad shrugs, but he's on his way out of my office now. He leans against the door jamb for a second longer and looks at everything, likely trying to make plans for clearing out the building. I can't say I'm completely shocked that this is happening, because part of me knew that we were on our last legs. We've talked about it several times, but never seriously. Or at least *I* never thought it was. Clearly he did.

“I got an e-mail from the farm. They said they recently bought the company attached to the farm, and they’re eager to carve out a spot in the community. Said they read some of the things you wrote in our paper and saw your picture and said that you’d be perfect for this assignment. You’ve always wanted to dive deeper into journalism. Think of this as a baby step. Hands-on experience at a farm with turkeys? You’ll get to learn about their business too, I suppose.”

“Doesn’t feel like I have much of a choice,” I say defeatedly.

“This will be great, Grace, like a retreat. Plus, they manufacture vegan Turkey for the holidays. Guaranteed somebody there will understand your hatred of meat. Maybe you’ll even make a new friend. Or a new *boyfriend*.”

“Oh my God. Is *that* what this is about? Another attempt for you to set me up with somebody? Dad, I’ve met everybody in town. If I wanted to date somebody, I would be by now.”

Dad looks entirely too pleased with himself at this change of subject. Me meeting “somebody special” as he likes to say, is one of his favorite non-work things to discuss. “They’re new to town, and you should check out their website. Looks like a good group of guys running this together. I’m just saying that it wouldn’t hurt to keep your options open while you’re there.”

“I’m not going to start up something with the subject of a project. If I’m there, I’m there for *work*; I’m there to interview them and get to know them from a business standpoint. There will be zero flirting going down.”

Another damn smile. “Good luck with that. Try not to worry about the business while you’re away. I’ll give you the stuff that Graham gave me so you can look it over, but it looks like it would be really good opportunity for you. He even said you could work remotely so you wouldn’t have to leave town.”

My dad pats the door down like he’s telling it goodbye as he walks back down the hall to his own office, and I’m left with so many questions. This is more than I can process on my own, So I text my best friend Amy to see if she can meet for drinks later.

I start looking into this company my dad wants me to do a piece on and have to stop several times, because the faces and

bodies of the guys running the place are really bad for productivity. The four of them all very much give off hipster farmer vibes, and it's working for me.

It's a bit odd to see a website about people so passionate about turkeys, but I suppose it is a turkey farm. One that doesn't butcher them though, apparently. No, they tout being a rescue of sorts for turkeys, and they manufacture vegan turkey products, as my dad mentioned. I've actually purchased the product their company makes a bunch of times, but if they're new to the company then I guess that doesn't mean much to them.

When it doesn't feel like there's anything else to get done, I toy with the number my dad gave me to the farm, with a contact name of Dylan. Staring at him on the screen makes me nervous to call, because there's something about him that draws me in. In his bio picture, he wears a reserved smile as he looks at the ground, his black hair brushing his shoulders as he walks through a pen full of turkeys. I can't see his eyes, but everything about him is tempting.

I definitely shouldn't put myself into a position where I want to lick the people I'm there to learn from, but if the alternative is staying at the office that I now know is about to disappear, why shouldn't I take this opportunity?

I pick up my phone and call Dylan before I lose the nerve, and he picks up quick enough that it feels like he was expecting my call. "Hello?"

Fuck. I'm totally screwed. Even his voice has me squirming. "Um—"

What even are words?

He laughs, and it's low and sensuous and rich, making me feel like we're sharing an inside joke. "Is this Grace Stratham calling me?"

"Wow, you're good."

"Not really. Not a lot of women have my number, sweetheart."

Oh *gods*. Pet names are my fucking *weakness*. "R-right. Um, my dad just told me about your offer to, erm, stay at the farm?"

And...do things?"

There's a commotion in the background, and then the speaker is muted after he shushes somebody, but it sounds suspiciously like the other voices are saying my name excitedly. What the hell?

"Sorry about that. Yes, we'd love to have you out here to...do things."

It kind of sounds like he's making fun of me, but honestly I would be too. I sound incredibly stupid. "I'm so sorry, it's been a bit of an eye-opening day for me, and my brain isn't working too well at the moment. What I meant to say is, I've looked over the offer to host me on your property for the week so I can help promote the events you're planning on hosting. I'm using the word 'host' too much, aren't I? Anyway...turns out, there's not a whole lot happening at the office this week, so..."

More voices in the background start cheering, then it sounds like someone gets slapped or maybe punched. I'm so confused. "Excellent. We'll see you tomorrow. 10 am."

He hangs up then, and I frown down at my phone, wondering if it was an accidental hang up or not. When he doesn't call me back I guess that he did it on purpose, but it was rather...abrupt.

Amy saves me when she texts me to say we should meet up early because she's bored, so I take that for the lifeline it is and hurry out to meet her. I make sure to let my dad know on my way out I'll see him when I'm back next week, and I don't stick around to check in with him any further. I'm hurt by everything he revealed without actually including me in the decision making. I may not be in charge of the company yet, but I've worked here since I was old enough to, and I grew up here. I thought that meant I had a little sway here, but apparently not.



Amy is this larger-than-life woman that I've loved my whole life. When I walk into our meet up restaurant, I find her sitting with her signature bun, cute bangs perfectly smooth over her forehead, waving me down as she sucks down a cocktail. I'm grateful she thought ahead and ordered one for me as well,

because that means I don't have to immediately flag down the waitress and beg her to start inebriating me.

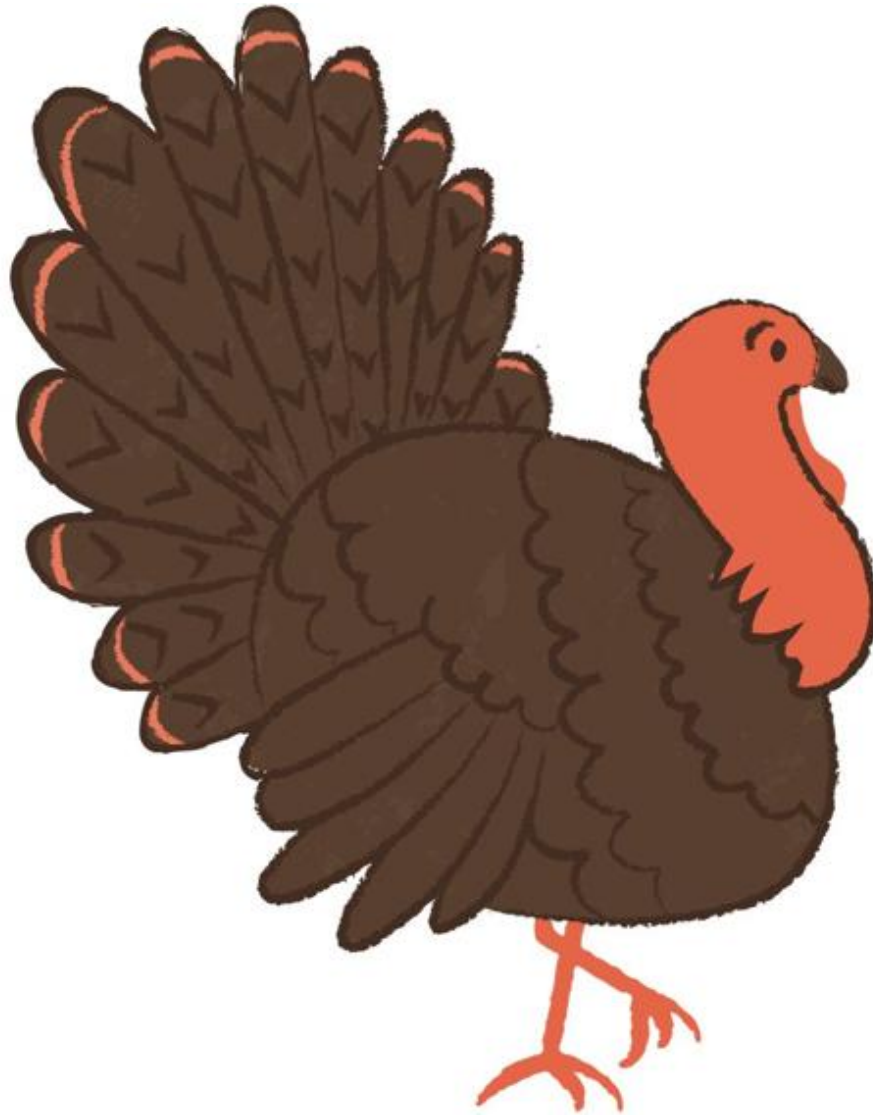
A few drinks in and I spill everything to Amy, whose eyes are huge and disbelieving at everything I learned today. Just talking about everything helps validate how shitty I'm feeling, and she insists on coming home to help me pack for my week away; especially once we look up the farm and I show her the guys I'll be following around.

Now, she's happily married, but she has no shame in supporting my single girl life.

A few bottles of wine later and I think I'm packed for a week at a farm, but it's not until her husband is picking her up with an amused knowing smile on his face that I realize how weird the next week is going to be.

My apartment is where I feel most comfortable. I hate sleeping at other places because it keeps my mind too alert when I'm unfamiliar with the surroundings. Not to mention my incredible lack of social skills, as evidenced by the simple phone call I subjected poor Dylan to.

Just to be sure he knows I didn't mean to be stupid, I text him. At this point, my being inebriated is actually really helpful, because none of the droll things that I might normally say make an appearance. Instead, I come off as being sexy, fun, and outgoing. He's actually pretty funny and is giving me belly flutters, which means when I eventually I fall asleep, it's with a smile on my face. I'm ready to go hang out with my new bestie in the morning.



Abram

“You’re nervous, too, huh?”

I’m full-on chugging coffee at this point, knowing I’ll be jittery in a little bit and that will only make me even crazier than normal, but it’s not like I can meet the love of my life with two hours of sleep and *no* caffeine.

“What time did you finally pass out?” Eli asks with a smirk.

He looks way more rested than I am. He’s already showered and has his nice clothes on, facial hair trimmed, and even has the mental clarity to be making something nutritious for breakfast.

“Was I actually supposed to sleep? Hm. Weird. Didn’t get that memo.”

“You’re fucked, dude. You know how weird you get when you’re tired. You’re going to be loopy as hell.”

“Yeah, but you’ll all be thanking me when she shows up ready to throw down. *Dylan gave me his phone*. That was not a gift I was going to waste.”

“No shit, you were talking to her all night? Did she know it was you, Abram, and not Dylan, her supposed boss for the week?”

I shrug, chasing down the gulp of coffee with a gulp of milk, because it seems like that’s easier than just mixing them in the cup. Eli gives me a look of disgust, but it’s totally working. “The point is, I charmed her. She was calling us besties by the end of the conversation. I fell asleep with her giggling in a happy stupor. Or maybe it was a drunken one; but I did you all a favor. I’ve got this *in the bag*.”

“We’ll see about that. You’re not worried about being friend zoned? Do women usually want to mate men that they see as their ‘besties’?”

I deflate, my whole plan going up in flames. Is he right? Did I screw things up?

“Morning,” Dylan says as he finally enters the kitchen, phone hanging out of his pocket. I want to grab it and text her, see how she’s feeling after her marathon wine session last night, but Dylan keeps swinging his hips just out of reach, no doubt on purpose.

“Do I need to remind anyone to keep cool today? Or are we just planning on being a bunch of assholes that tell her too much too soon and freak her the hell out?”

“I’m definitely planning on being an asshole, but I’ll try not to pull anybody else into my antics.”

Eli smacks me on the back of the head before plating the apple cinnamon oatmeal he just made for all of us, with some veggie sausage on the side. I grab the toast out of the oven and

throw it on a plate as well, scowling at Dylan when he knocks my hand away from the coffee pot. “You’ve had enough.”

“Thank you,” Eli says to Dylan. “Don’t think he was getting the hint from me.”

“Nobody is going to be an asshole today. I will find ways to keep you away from her all day if you can’t control yourself,” our last flock mate says as he joins us in the kitchen.

“Mason, there’s no way you’re that crafty.”

“Yeah, we’ll see.” He’s smiling, so I know he’s not actually going to attempt anything to keep me and my woman apart, but that doesn’t mean I won’t keep a close eye on him.

Once we’re all done eating and I have time for a quick shower and a change of clothes, I’m feeling closer to my normal, less punch-drunk self, and am crazy excited for her to get here.

Fated mates are funny things. For some reason, shifters have developed this uncanny ability to recognize their partners with very little information. When we first decided to purchase this company and move to this farm, we all kind of had it in our heads that we might find our mate soon, because such things are always preceded by sudden life changes.

A sudden urge to move across the country and start a turkey rescue? Yeah, that screams ‘your mate encounter is nigh’. Or maybe it was me that screamed that. I don’t know, the details are fuzzy. What isn’t fuzzy is the day we saw her picture in the paper. That was all it took for all four of us to be head over heels in obsession and feel the pull towards her.

Even though we were kind of expecting it to be soon-ish after the move, it still took us all a bit by surprise. There’s no way to be prepared for the way that hits you. One moment you’re stirring peanut butter into your coffee, and the next you’re choking on your sprinkle covered toast because your heart has latched onto a sweet angel with freckles that lives an hour away. We started making our love nest the same day, completing it just in time for her to agree to come stay here with us.

“Alright, she’ll be here any minute. I need everyone on their best behavior! Remember, she’s here to write an article about us

and the business, so we need to lead with that,” Dylan calls as he smooths his hair one last time in the mirror.

“What if we’d rather lead with our dicks, though? That seems like much more fun.”

Eli laughs as he shoulder checks me out the door, lacing up his shoes on the porch. “More fun, yes. Also much more like sexual harassment.”

I wave that notion away, lacing up my own shoes and pulling on a hoodie.

I can play it cool; I can *totally* play it cool.

I do not, in fact, play it cool.

The second her tires sound on the driveway, I’m pushing past all the other members of my flock and racing down the driveway. I meet her at the gate and hop into the passenger seat without any preamble, and I hold my hand up for a high five, because that’s how all great romances begin.

“Erm...”

“Abram. Abr-am. I can see how you might get ‘Erm’ from that, but let’s start this relationship on the right foot.”

“Daddy was right. Always lock your doors.”

“Psh. That doesn’t apply to new besties.”

She turns a beautiful shade of red, making me crave cranberry sauce. Ooh, maybe she’d let me spread it all over my chest so she can lick it off. “Do you like cranberry sauce?”

“You’re not Dylan. I was talking to...”

I point ahead, encouraging her to move the car a bit more forward. “I can see the confusion. When Dylan got tired of being woken up, he kicked me out of bed with his phone and told me to knock myself out.”

“Shit. I didn’t mean to...I was probably too tipsy to be having conversations. I am so sorry. Maybe I should just go—”

“Nope. You’re never leaving. Come on woman, drive.”

“A bit extreme,” she mumbles under her breath. I think I might have embarrassed her, but it’s nothing a little turkey yoga

won't fix.

“So how was the drive?”

She peeks at me out the corner of her eye, looking uncomfortable. “It was only an hour. It was fine.”

“Well you're here, and we're going to have SO. MUCH. FUN!”

I jump out of the car before she's fully parked, needing to be by her side of the car so I can open her door. She'd want me to.

I'm a little bit hasty in my calculations of her speed though, so she definitely slightly runs me over, but it's completely my fault. I let out a very unseemly squawk, but it's mostly because the car pushing me over caught me by surprise. Not because it hurt. Much.

Nonetheless, I jump right up and open her door as she sits there in shock, ignoring all my flock mates as they stand in various states of shame for being associated with me. I'm used to it though, and I know they love me. It'll be fine.

“Oh my god, are you okay? Why the hell did you jump in front of my car like that? Are you crazy?”

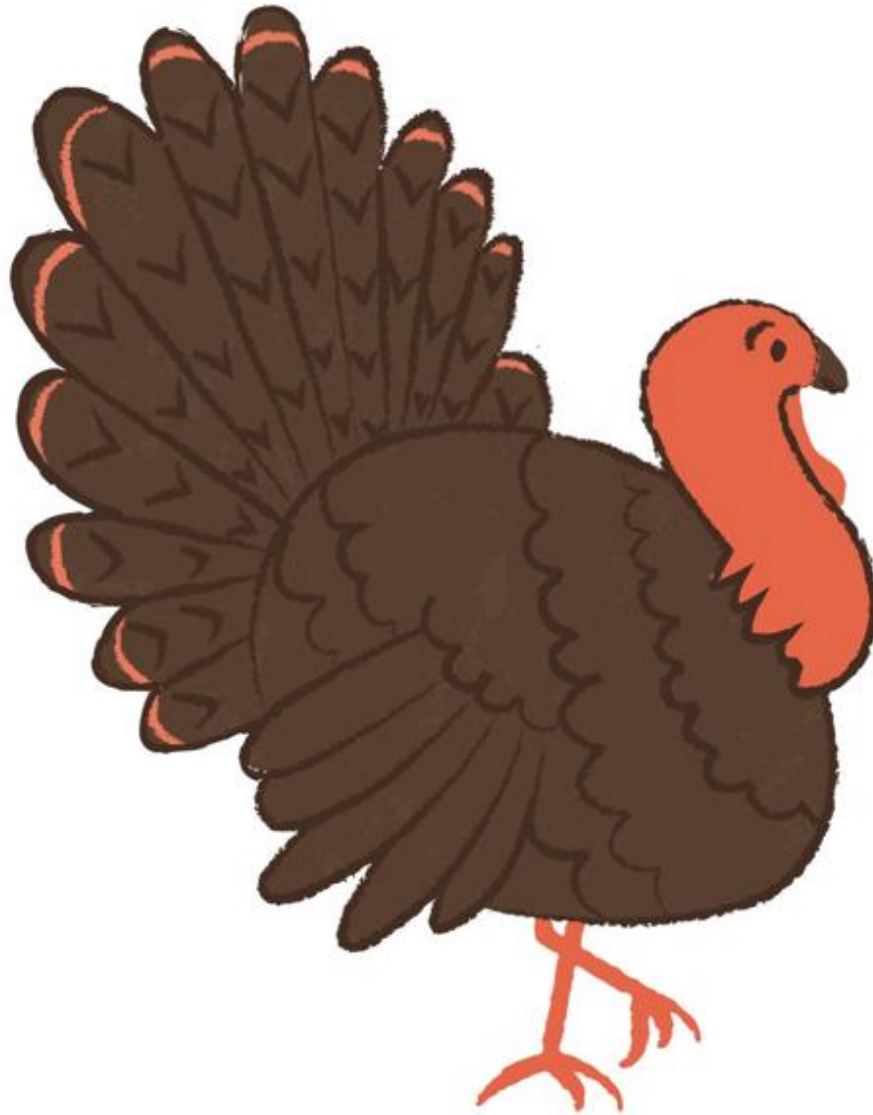
Eli interjects, stepping forward all suave. “We don't like to use the c-word around here. His therapist says it's a bad association for him.”

Yeah, that's true.

“I'm Eli, welcome.”

He pulls her by the hand and breaks her right out of feeling awkward about the interaction she was just a part of, and then Dylan takes over because Mason is laughing too hard to speak properly. I won't tell him his laugh sounds suspiciously like a gobble, because it's fun to listen to.

Grace pops an eyebrow at the sound, but Dylan finishes off the introductions and spirits her away, glaring at us over his shoulder as he removes her from all of our collective presences, because apparently we can't be trusted. Rude.



Dylan

“Any questions?”

I’ve been showing Grace the ropes all day, walking her around the manufacturing facility to show her our production set up, then through the turkey enclosures so she could get a feel for what we do. I won’t admit that it made me hard when she claimed the turkeys were all ‘cute’, but I succeeded in keeping her away from the other dumbasses in my flock for most of the day, so it’s a win in my book.

“Um, not at the moment. I uh, want to apologize, though. For being so unprofessional last night. I swear, that’s not like me at all. Yesterday was just a rough day for me, and my best friend and I probably drank way too much trying to handle it, and,

well, yeah. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to cross any professional lines."

I look around the farm as I inch closer to her, trying to look completely inconspicuous. "We don't stand on ceremony much here."

"It sounds like I was pretty annoying though. I don't quite remember the way my brain was working, but I definitely shouldn't have been texting you guys. I feel mortified at my behavior, and I promise it won't happen again."

She starts inching her way toward the door of her cabin for the week, but I'm not ready to let her go. "I've tried to be professional all day, but I have to admit it's not very much fun. Didn't get to do the one thing I really wanted to do with you."

Grace tilts her head to the side and leans against the doorframe, her brain trying to figure out where I'm going with this.

"I want you to know I respect your job, and I think it's cool that you're into learning about different things like this," I say, indicating my new property, "so you can write about it. That being said, I can't leave you here tonight without making sure you know that if you feel like being unprofessional again, we're just right over there in that farmhouse."

I wink at her and take a step backward, hoping the subtlety is working on her. We only have her for a week, so we need to make sure she knows we're interested. Our instincts tell us she's it for us, but she's human. Humans need more time to choose their partners, so we need to figure out a way to keep the balance between showing her we're interested and not scaring her off.

"Are you...was that you hitting on me?" She smiles, and my feet stop moving away from her.

"Did it do anything for you?"

"You didn't lure me here under false pretenses, did you? The four of you are all incredibly...attractive, but this assignment is kind of a big deal for me, and I don't want to mess it up. My future career is kind of on the line here, and I don't want to sabotage that."

I nod, wanting her to know we respect that. “That’s fine. But,” I look at my watch, noting it’s nearly bedtime now. Dinner was pretty casual, and I was so, so good all day. “I think your workday is over, right?”

“It is...”

I take a step towards her. “Then you should know all of us are *very* interested in you. We do need this article because we’re new to town and need all the publicity we can get, but we all want you as well.”

“Well, I’m flattered; I feel like it might cause problems if I gave into —” She slams her lips closed, trying to redirect her words.

That’s all I was looking for though, a chink in her armor that tells me she’s interested in us. I kind of figured that though with the way she was texting last night, because even if most of it was Abram talking, I still enjoyed reading through everything carefully the second my eyes opened this morning. It made me hopeful that we might be able to win her.

I hop onto the small front porch on the cabin and back her up, leaning on the doorframe so I can tower over her and be all she sees. “Would you consider dating us at least when you’re done with work activities for the day? Spending some time with us so you can get to know us?”

She looks nervous, but she’s not putting any more space between us. “Not wasting any time, are you?”

“Don’t see much point in wasting time. I know what I want, so I’m going to go for it.”

“What if I said I wasn’t interested in you that way?”

“Then I’d drop it.” She opens her mouth to speak, but I’m not done. “Until tomorrow. Then I’d try again. And again. My *flo-business* partners would probably be trying as well though, just so you know. I don’t control them nearly as well as I’d like to.” Fuck. I’m so flustered being this close to her that I almost called them my flock mates. That wouldn’t weird her out or anything.

“It might get messy if I spend time with each of you though, don’t you think? If I ended up...kissing anyone or something,

I'd feel really uncomfortable around the others. I think it's best if we just keep this professional."

I turn my head away enough to whistle for Eli, who I know is lurking behind the cabin. He pops up next to the porch railing almost immediately. "Yeah, boss?"

"Was he there the whole time?"

"Ye-No. Nope, not at all." Eli catches himself when I stare him down, changing his tune. I nod a happy smile for playing along.

"Just wanted to show you something, is all," I answer him.

"You got it." He pulls on the top of the railing and hoists himself over, sitting on the top of it so he can see whatever it is he thinks I'm going to show him.

I turn back to Grace though, hooking an arm around her hip. "One kiss, then I'll back off if you want." I wait for permission, and when she gives me a slight nod, I go for it.

I can come off as being a bit intimidating and moody, but she makes me want to take risks. I take her mouth as I pin her against the door jamb, my other hand winding into the back of her head so I can hold her to me while I taste her.

It's almost like I'm licking apple pie between her apple lip balm and the cinnamon gum she's been chewing, and I don't think I'll ever eat the dessert the same way again. I let out an involuntary growl as she starts kissing me back, her hands falling to my back as her nails work their way against me.

We get lost in it, and nothing else exists at that moment. It's more than I'd ever imagine, kissing my mate for the first time. She's sweet and soft underneath me, her breath coming in quick gasps as she takes and gives.

Eventually Eli starts cussing under his breath and it snaps her out of our headspace, and a hand on my chest has me pulling away a scant few inches. I can't look away from her eyes, can't unfeel the connection that exists between us.

"What the hell was that?" Her eyes are wide, and her body is moments away from telling me it was a mistake, but like always, my flock has my back.

“Mouth porn!” Abram yells from somewhere nearby. Probably up in a tree again, that creepy fucker.

“Oh my god, is everyone watching right now?”

“Tell me that didn’t feel crazy to you, and I’ll back off.” I ignore her question, because she might as well learn now that we like to watch.

Grace chews on her lip, but I’m quick to pull her lip away from her teeth, because it makes me want to chew on it myself too badly. Her pink tongue darts out to moisten her lip as my hand falls away, and I’m hard as hell where our bodies are connected, but it feels so far from awkward.

“I...I...can’t. I’d have to call myself a liar.”

I grin triumphantly. “That mean you’ll spend some time with us and let us get to know you better?”

“I’m confused. When you say ‘we’...”

“Oh, we’re all for polyamory,” Mason inputs, now sitting on a rocking chair on the porch of the cabin next to hers, sipping a soda. “We all want to do what Dylan just did, for sure.”

She looks around at all of us now, confusion marring her pretty face. “Why though? You don’t even know me! I know there’re only small towns nearby, but surely you have more prospects available than just me...”

“Are they prospects though, if we don’t want them?” Mason poses, taking another sip of soda.

“Okay, I don’t think I’m going to make any headway arguing the why. You probably all have an excuse worked out for everything, right?”

I nod towards her and smile, thrilled she understands us so soon.

“I think...this is too much, too fast. I need some space.”

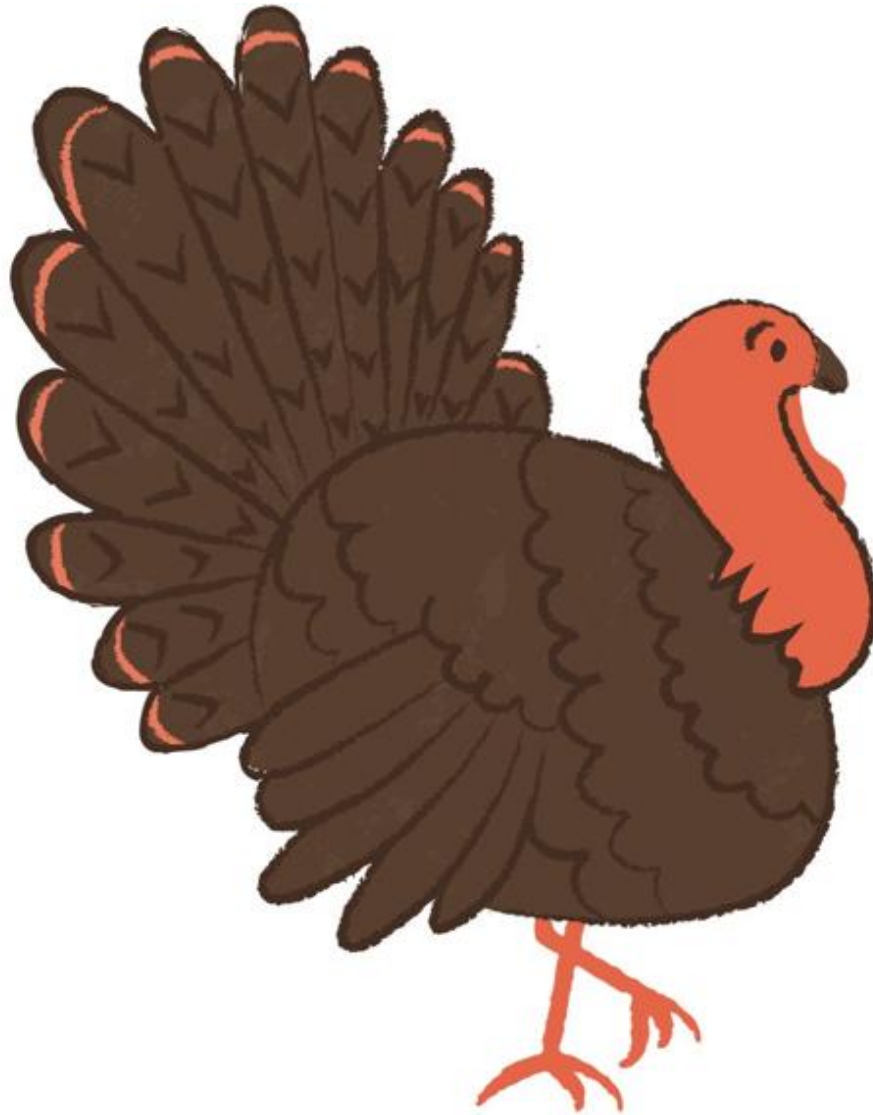
“Alright, we’ll let you get some rest. Sleep well.”

I’m disappointed of course, but she’s still here on my property, so I’m also still thrilled. It’s hard to not feel frustrated because I can feel the obvious way she’s perfect for me, as can

my flock mates, but she doesn't have that. She only knows us from today, and she's going to need some time.

There's a chance that she'll start to feel the bond now that I've established a small connection with her, but time will tell.

Her hand twitches as I turn and head off, like she wanted to stop me from leaving, but she talks herself out of it. My workday is far from over, so I head off back to the turkeys while my flock mates all tell her goodnight themselves.



Grace

After traipsing all over a farm and through a big factory building all day, I thought I'd have worn myself out enough to sleep well, but here I am, three AM, still wide awake.

If I flip on the light or make an attempt to stay awake it will only be worse, so I'm stuck prisoner in my bed, in the dark, trying to tell myself that I'm okay to sleep. My mind is racing though, listening to all the different sounds and sinking into the bed that very clearly isn't mine.

I drift into that weird half sleep that is in no way restful before I start hearing turkeys from the farm nearby, gobbling their little hearts out. Such a funny noise. Maybe I should have

brought some ear plugs though, I can't imagine I'll be able to sleep when the animals are clearly on their own schedule.

What I'm not prepared for in the least, is for their calls to start sounding...pleasant.

The more I listen, the more it feels like I can almost understand them. They sound happy but nervous somehow, which is beyond bizarre.

I'm losing it.

First I think the turkeys are cute, when all my life I've sworn they're the ugliest birds around, and now I'm feeling more relaxed than I have all night while they try and...sing? If turkeys could sing a lullaby, I'm convinced this is exactly what it would sound like.

Weird magic trick, but I fall asleep finally, drifting into dreams of...you guessed it, *turkeys*. They're surrounding me and crooning to me, gobbling and shaking their feathers.

By the time I wake up, the turkey calls feel like they're ingrained into my brain, and my brain starts shooting images off in my head of all the guys and their crazy proclamations last night.

They were just crazy proclamations, right? Do they seriously all want to date me?

I find that I'm...feeling incredibly needy.

A gobble sounds again from outside and now that I'm associating the calls with the pretty men that watch over them, it makes me think of them. For just a minute, I allow myself to fantasize what it might be like to let myself explore things with four different men that all know about each other.

I'm not one to worry about other's opinions, and I've been called a whore for a lot less, so the idea of dating four men is surprisingly not alarming; I think what's freaking me out the most is how certain they all were that they wanted to start something with me.

Fuck. I'm like, *really* turned on right now.

I didn't bring any toys with me because I figured I could handle going a week without, but with only night one over, I'm

already regretting that decision immensely. Could really go for that fun little egg-shaped vibrator I recently bought right about now.

It doesn't take much to find release once I recall the way it felt for Dylan to lean over me in the doorway and take control of the kiss, my fingers doing a pretty mediocre job of getting me off. Most guys only do a mediocre job as well, so that's actually a compliment to my fingers.

I feel a little icky when I'm done though knowing I was imagining Dylan touching me, because I'm here to work for him. Isn't that supposed to do it for some women, though? Men that are off limits?

Amy will steer me straight.

I don't care that it's only 8 am, Amy will be on her way to the office and will make time for this. It's super important.

"Love! How was your first day?"

I flop back onto my bed, feeling dramatic. "Too good, Ames. The farm is actually pretty cool, I don't think it will be too hard to hype them up in an article. Everyone here is so into what they do."

"You know, that's great, but I don't need to know about the business side of things. Are they as attractive in person as they are on their webpage?"

I groan. "More. But something sort of weird happened last night, and I don't know how I feel about it..."

"Damn it. You had an orgy, didn't you?"

"What the fuck? No!"

"Well then it's not that big a deal. Whatever it is."

"Your reasoning never ceases to amaze me."

I dive into how they all claim to want to date me, for lack of a better term, detail the crazy hot kiss Dylan gave me and how all the other guys somehow showed up at the right time and basically cheered him on, then the way they all tried to linger and how weird I felt when they finally left. I didn't include the

way the gobbling noises seemed to have worked me up while I slept, because there are some things we just don't share.

“And you turned them down?”

“No, I just...I don't want to ruin this opportunity for my career, and it was eerie how sure they all were about wanting me. I didn't even spend that much time with most of them!”

“It sounds like they're all really close though, right? I bet you they're texting and sharing every snippet about you they can. Think about it— hot woman comes to stay at their farm, with an excuse to follow them around; you charm one, you charm them all. Didn't you say you were up all night the other night drunkenly texting one of them? Guys are simple. That's probably all it took for them to know you're cool as hell. Then you showed up and they saw how gorgeous you are as well? Guaranteed that they all read that whole conversation.

“Knowing you, you were flirting like crazy because that's what you do when you're drunk, but you're also surprisingly charming when you're drunk. You could make anyone fall in love with you, easy.”

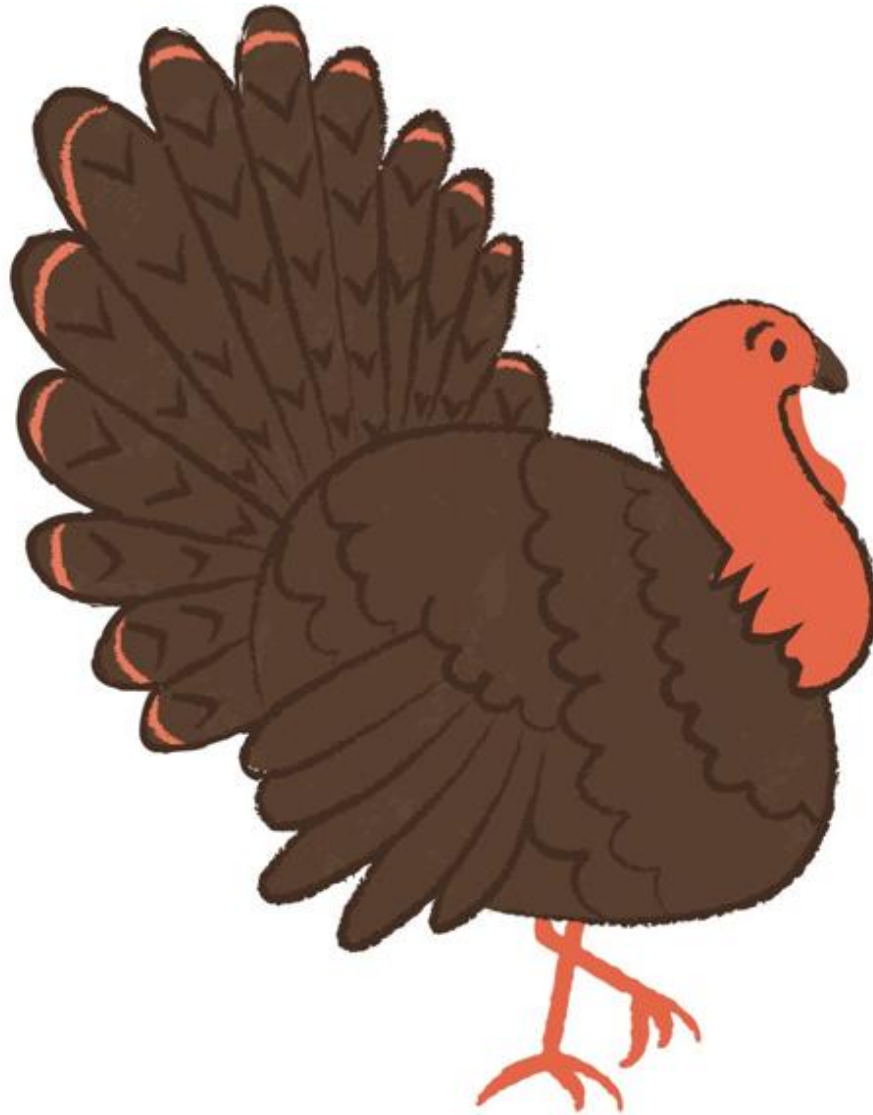
Is that what happened? “So you're for this? Me throwing caution to the wind and letting myself have some fun? Even it completely fucks with the job I'm here to do?”

“They said you could hang after work hours, right? That's a pretty smooth work-in. What you should do is get off the damn phone with me and go start your day. Watch them today, figure them out a little. Trust your instincts; if the guys give off as any sort of red flag, then you'll know what to do. On the other hand...”

I read her mind, because I've been doing it for most of my life. “On the other hand I'm stuck on a farm for a week with a bunch of attractive men that want me. Yeah, yeah, things could be worse. Okay, I'll keep you posted.”

“You better. Have fun!” She sings the last word before hanging up, and I feel much better about the day now.

After I shower, I think I'm ready to handle a bunch of men that say they want to date me.



Mason

I use the reflection in her window to make sure my bow tie is nice and straight, perky even. We may be on a farm, and I may technically be a farmer, but I *will* still look good.

I can hear her flitting around inside getting ready, because after a day of once again trudging about the farm, and begrudgingly spending time with other employees that help run operations, her workday is officially over once more and she's ours.

I give my beard one more comb through with my fingers before I hear her twisting the knob on the door, unknowingly putting herself in my personal bubble.

“Hi, gorgeous. I’ve been thinking, since we’re like officially dating and all, I really think we need some sort of special handshake or signal we can give each other. You know, like all the great couples have in movies? Or some little line that they say that makes them giggle? I’ve always wanted to have a secret line with somebody...”

Her eyes dart from side to side, and I think she’s trying to find backup, which is a horrible idea because my flock mates will encourage the shit out of these moves I’m making right now. Except for Dylan.

“Mason...” she says slowly. I can tell she thinks I’m not going to like whatever she’s about to say, but she’s wrong. If she says it, I’ll like it. Honest. She could tell me just about anything and I’d bat my eyes and ask her to go on. “I haven’t agreed to actually date you yet. I’ve been thinking about it, but this is very... forward.”

I jump in a semicircle so my back is facing her. “Is this better? When I’m backwards?” I spin around again. “Totally joking. Yep. Okay. The lady wants to go slower. All right. May I accompany you to dinner, my lady?” I hold out my arm and guide her down the steps, even though I know she’s capable of handling them on her own seeing as there are only three of them.

“Oh my god! What is he doing out? Shouldn’t he be in his pen?” Grace squats down to see the turkey waddling closer, and I swear to god for a second she thinks it’s a puppy. She realizes it’s a turkey at the last second though and takes a step back towards me. “It’s not like a wild turkey or something, right? He’s not going to charge? Wait, do turkeys charge?”

The turkey in question lets out a gobble, but I know he’s just laughing.

Grace puts her back to my chest like I can protect her, and I notice she shivers a bit at the next gobble the turkey lets out. Well that’s damn interesting. Maybe Abram’s halfcocked mating serenade last night worked some magic after all.

Being the opportunist that I am, I carefully rub my hands up and down the outside of her arms, trying to soothe her. My mouth is now very close to her neck, and I take in the earthy

scent of her that's almost like sage with maybe a hint of brown butter. It makes sense that she smells like holiday goodness seeing as how she's fated to be ours.

"He won't hurt you Grace," I croon. That's a double meaning, because none of us would ever hurt her; but I'll leave that to her to figure out later.

"H-how do you know?" she stammers.

I look the turkey straight in the eye, daring him to look away. "We've got a couple on the property that like to roam about freely. Do you see how he doesn't have the marker on his feet like the others do? These ones come and go as they please, but they're all gentle. I promise. Do you want to pet him?"

She takes a deep breath and leans into me a little bit more. It's a huge bird. He's even bigger than the other ones in the pen, because he's not exactly like those other birds is he?

"Look," I say, "he's actually pretty evenly tempered." I crouch down and hold out my hand like I'm enticing him with something, but that's just for show. He knows exactly what's happening, the bastard.

He plays along though, coming up to gently peck at my hand, his snood jiggling as he steps a little closer. His feathers are shiny, and I can tell he's been preening himself, because he's as shiny as I've ever seen him.

He's making me look bad.

I run my hand gently along his back, the glossy feathers soft under my touch. "See, Grace? He actually likes the attention, I promise."

"This is nuts," she says as she takes a step closer.

I'm resting my hand on the bird's back gently, showing her that he likes it. Grace leans over me to watch for just a few minutes more to make sure that it's safe.

"He's not going to hurt you, sweetheart."

"What do I do? Do I need to hold out my hand like you did?"

"You can if it makes you more comfortable. We actually don't have the greatest sense of smell though, so it won't do much for

him. He's used to being around people."

"We?" she questions.

My face turns red and I'm biting down on my tongue hard. I never thought it would be this difficult to keep such a big part of myself away from somebody, even though I've had years of practice. We know it's going to rock her world once she finds out what we really are, so we need to make sure she's more comfortable around us before that happens. "Slip of tongue," I explain, trying to brush it off.

"Okay I'll touch him, but if he does anything to me I'm throwing you in the way and running back inside."

"Wouldn't have it any other way," I smile.

Her hand finally reaches out to tentatively stroke the feathers she can reach, but when the bird leans into her a bit she slowly gets more and more comfortable until she's crouching in front of me, nestled in against me. She's leaning into me for protection and it feels really good. "There, see? Told you he was sweet." I put my hand on top of hers and guide her to stroke him a little bit more, showing the places that I know the bird likes.

"Does he have a name?"

I shake my head to prevent myself from blurting out all our secrets. "There're four of them that wander the property like this, but they're never really around at the same time. It's hard to tell them apart at times, so no, we don't really call them anything specific."

She accepts this until the bird wanders off, but she stays against me just a moment longer before slowly straightening her body out. When I stand to match her, we're still touching.

"That was really cool," she says softly. "Thank you for making me feel comfortable."

"Of course."

Not wanting to push her again, I study her eyes and get lost in them for a moment. They're a stunning shade of blue with a touch of green swirled in, making them look like they're backlit. My mouth is tingling, imagining what it would feel like to be pressed against hers.

Yeah, screw this. She's not pulling away, so I'm going for it.

The rush is impossible to describe. It's swirling colors and pulsing sounds and glittering lights behind my eyelids; it's my whole nervous system on the edge of frying itself as she starts to kiss me back.

I quickly start to run out of air, but I'm terrified to pull away for more in case it breaks the spell. She's still kissing me back, and I never want it to end.

The kiss reaches a natural conclusion eventually, and even though I didn't get to properly taste her, it's everything a first kiss should be. Dreamy and sweet, making me feel starry-eyed.

"I've never had a kiss like that before," she whispers.

I lift my hand to brush a dribble of moisture off her bottom lip, then leave my hand on the side of her face. "I knew it would be incredible."

"Why do you want to date me? What is it that pulls you to me?"

I map her expression, note the slight twist in her eyebrow as she mulls this query over, the way her eyelashes flutter a little faster than normal telling me she's affected by me. "Sometimes there's a pull towards people you can't really explain, almost like that conscience in the back of your mind, a gut reaction telling you something is good. Or maybe it's more of a premonition, like when you have a sudden desire to pick up an extra carton of milk at the store, and then your neighbor stops by in the afternoon asking to borrow some. There's something about your spirit that likewise calls to me, that tells me that if we let ourselves, we could be something incredible."

"That's...awfully poetic, and not at all what I expected you to say."

"What did you expect me to say?"

"Most guys just compliment my looks or brag about what they want to do to my body. It's...refreshing to not have a come-on involve me removing my clothing."

"Oh, I've got plenty of those too if you want them. Wouldn't want to be beat out by the competition."

She laughs a small, secret laugh that softens her face. “I think I’m good. Maybe I’ll save those for later?”

“Name the time and place. We’re not asking for some major commitment,” because I’m not about to tell her that we’re already planning out which kind of ring to buy her, “we just want to know if you’re interested in this kind of thing. Holding hands, trying some new things, more kissing if you feel up to it...”

I’m caught off guard when she pushes me backwards into the railing of her porch, stepping into me so she can take control of the next kiss. This one is a little surer, and I love the confidence she comes at me with.

“Why does this feel so good?” she asks with swelling lips.

I slide a hand to her hip and pull her into me, teasing her lip with my tongue until she opens for me. The shock of her tongue against mine has me groaning out loud and my hand tightening on her hip. “Because it feels like you were made for us.”

She pulls back again, reaching down to straighten my bowtie for me. She smiles at it. “I like this. It’s very...you. It’s just strange to feel like I want to kiss you so much when I’ve spent hardly any time with you and it’s...it feels like we’ve been doing it for years. It’s alarming.”

“You know that saying, that if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is?”

She nods.

“Doesn’t apply here. At all. We’ll have plenty of time to get to know each other, but this can be a part of it. Getting closer physically doesn’t have to come later just because that’s how it usually done.”

“Nice line.”

“Not a line if I’ve never used it.”

The mood breaks when she takes a step backwards and fluffs out her shoulder length hair, the setting sun catching on the shades of red hiding in the brown strands. “Should I be asking questions about your polyamory statement yesterday?”

“We don’t date much. We’re basically like brothers, and we tend to do almost everything together. We’ve always assumed we’d end up with one woman between us because it just makes sense to us.”

“Riiight. That’s...kind of crazy. Is that done often?”

I shrug, uninterested in what other people are doing with their romantic lives. For shifters, sharing mates is second nature. “We know lots of people that live this way and they’re pretty happy. You think you could at least keep an open mind in that aspect? Get comfortable flirting with all of us? See if you can get behind us all flirting with you?”

“In front of each other?”

“One thing you should know before we go any further is that the four of us don’t get jealous like that. It’s a nonissue for us, so don’t feel like you’re doing something wrong if you feel like hanging out with one of us and not the others. We definitely don’t mind PDA either. Just sayin’.”

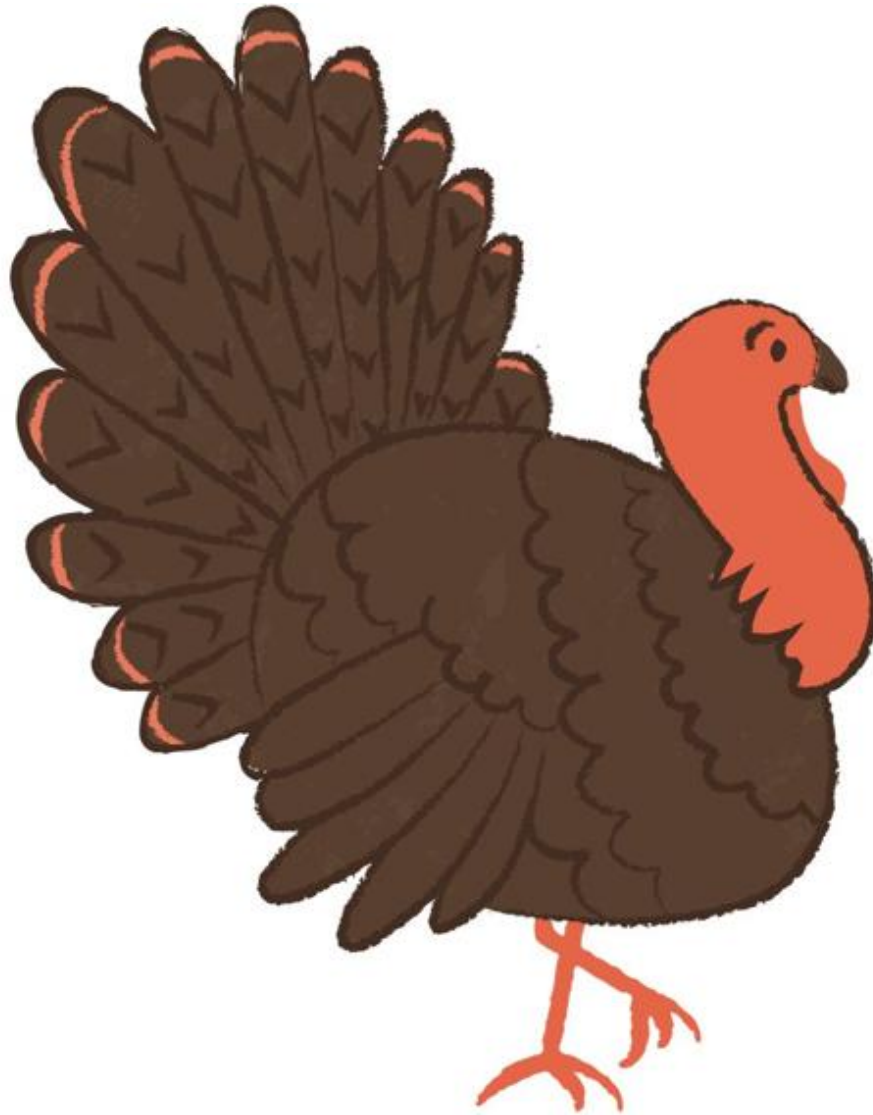
“Well. I think I need to think about this for a bit now and try to wrap my head around it. I heard you yesterday but I wasn’t sure you were serious. I’ve never even considered trying to date more than one person at a time because I’ve never found more than one man at a time that tempts me.”

I snort, because she’s basically admitting that all the guys she’s met are lacking.

“Are we tempting you?” My tone doesn’t indicate the anxiety it feels to put myself out there like this, but she doesn’t aim to hurt.

“Honestly, I think I’m beyond being tempted and firmly in the territory of intrigued.”

“I’ll take that. Come on, let’s go get you fed. I actually did intend to come retrieve you for dinner at our house. They’re probably wondering what’s taking so long.” I mean, they won’t be because Abram has wandered far enough away now that that he’s likely shifted back and told them all that I’m with her still, but...she doesn’t know that.



Grace

My third day at the farm, and I find myself regretting that I'm halfway done with my time here.

After dinner last night, and an impromptu game night that had me in stitches, I can see all of these guys as being people I would want to hang out with even after this assignment. The problem is they live kind of far away, so I'm not sure how that's going to work.

It was amusing to see how they interact while we were playing all the different card games they had in their closet, all ridiculous ones where you have to match answers to prompts and then you take turns judging whose answer is the best. Between that and the beers we all drank between us, I ended up

just crashing at their place in a guest room, because it seemed like such a logical choice at the time.

Still felt like a logical choice when sober me awoke to shirtless men in the kitchen cooking breakfast, flipping pancakes and slicing fruit with fingers that I couldn't stop staring at.

I needed some time to myself and some time to finally get some work done for this article I'm supposed to be writing, now that I feel like I have enough information about the farm to write it. So that's what I'm doing. Or at least attempting to.

What I'm actually doing, is staring out the window and replaying how gentle they all were when they tucked me in last night, kissing me on the forehead when they thought I was asleep. The way they refused to let me take the couch and instead made up a fresh bed just for me in a nice smelling guest room is hard to forget. They even went to the trouble of finding me things to sleep in and producing a new toothbrush for me to use, making sure I was absolutely as comfortable as I could be even though I was pretty drunk.

Not as drunk as I was during my text conversation with Abram the first night, but enough to feel it when I woke. It's hard to remember any past boyfriend that's ever been so sweet with me, and it's making me want things.

The cursor on my computer screen blinks at me annoyingly, reminding me that my page is still blank. I'm supposed to give at least some sort of outline to The Herald by the end of the day, to show them how the article's coming along. I also got a very personalized e-mail from Graham, hinting at the job offer and telling me he's looking forward to working together.

There's something about this farm though that makes me not want to leave. I've lived in the same small town my whole life, and even if this is only an hour away from it, it feels like I'm in an entirely different state.

I know I'm just here to learn about the company and write an article, but the lines are starting to get blurred and I'm getting comfortable here.

As part of my walking tour yesterday, Eli told me all about the fall festival that's happening next week, the one this article is supposed to help promote. The guys haven't owned this farm all that long, even if the vegan turkey product has been around for a while. They've been making a few changes to it that they're about to release as well, recipe alterations that I got to sample. Vegan turkey has no right to taste as good as it did.

In the short time the guys have lived here though, they've come up with all sorts of ideas to get the community involved with their farm. For some odd reason they're very passionate about these turkeys that they house, and the birds live like kings.

Their pens are so well kept that they rival the apartments of some hookups I've stayed at on occasion, and the fields the turkeys get to roam around in are bigger than any I got to play in when I was a kid. And they're all so gentle.

I can still sort of tell the difference in behavior between the turkeys they have in the pen and that one that was running around the property wild yesterday, and I can't quite figure out what makes them different, but even the ones in the pen seem to listen to the guys. It's unnerving.

They tell me they're going to be doing yoga sessions with the turkeys wandering around, which is not necessarily something I'd ever think I'd want to do, but the birds have a certain charm after you've been around them a few days.

I had another weird dream last night, and the gobbles sounded closer than ever even though I was in their house instead of this cabin which has thicker walls. At times I could have sworn the turkeys were right outside my door, but there's no way those guys would have let turkeys into their house.

Actually, I guess that's not too crazy. They all baby talk to them, and I even saw Dylan lift one of the massive birds up earlier and snuggle it, so if they did let some inside on occasion, I don't suppose I'd find it overly out of character.

When I've procrastinated as long as possible, I'm finally able to put some of my thoughts to paper and get enough of an outline to send it out. By the end of the day I haven't heard back from Graham at The Herald, but I try and put it out of my mind. If this thing with the bigger paper doesn't work out, I have no

idea what I'm going to do about a job, because I've always banked on working for the family paper.

I'm sitting on my porch with a book and some tea that Mason brought over for me, trying to relax before dinner time, when a fancy black car pulls into the farm's property. Instinct tells me that it's nobody here to talk shop with the guys.

Graham looks so out of place as he steps onto the dusty gravel drive, and even though I've never been his biggest fan, the way he looks at the farm has me putting him even lower on the list of people I care about keeping in my life. The turkeys are pretty much noisy at all hours of the day, and the distaste written on his face makes it clear he doesn't find it half as entertaining as I do.

"Can I help you?" Dylan shuts the door behind him and storms down the steps to greet Graham.

"Ah, yes. I was just looking for Grace? I have it on good authority she's staying here. Writing an article for me?" I very much enjoy how unsure he suddenly sounds.

Technically the article is for *my* paper, but because there's a job offer attached to how it comes out, he's unfortunately able to construe it that way.

Dylan's taking Graham in in return, crossing his burly arms that are trying their damndest to escape the confines of his plain white T-shirt. For being a farmer, he looks an awful lot like the type of guy my dad would have been warning me off from in my teenage years. I've seen his motorcycle out back too, so he's definitely not your stereotypical farmer.

Ready to intervene, I drop my book and make my way across the driveway, praying like hell that Graham doesn't try any of the shit he's tried in the past when I've been around him. He thinks he's a hot shot because he's in charge of a statewide paper, on some weird power trip that I will never understand. He's not even close to being somebody important, but if you spent time around him, you'd think everybody should know his name and feel lucky to be in his presence.

"Hey Graham," I call out. "Did you get the article outline I sent over?"

His face changes in a flash. His fakely warm smile eats up all the rigid lines that were just there when he was talking to Dylan and looking around at the farm. “There you are. If I’d have known the accommodations here were so rustic, I would have offered to put you up in a local hotel while you were working on the article for me.”

The defensiveness that washes over me for this place takes me off guard. “I happen to love the cabin they’ve put me in, thank you. Was there something wrong with the article?”

I don’t like the way he’s talking about this place that’s been so welcoming to me. I put myself close to Dylan without even thinking about how it might look, not caring there’s not much room between us. Between him and Graham, Dylan’s definitely the one I prefer to cozy up to.

“Maybe we could step inside that cabin of yours and chat?”

“Yeah sorry buddy, ain’t gonna happen. You wanna talk to my girl here, I think she’s happy to do it out in the open.”

I shouldn’t like the way it sounds when Dylan claims me like that, but I really fucking do.

“This is what I was afraid of,” Graham mumbles to himself. “You really want to do this out here, Grace?”

As familiar as he sounds saying my name, we haven’t had all that many interactions over the years. They’ve mainly consisted of him hitting on me and me turning him down. Of course I’ve never told my father this, which is why he was probably so excited about the job offer, but the job offer was a good one regardless.

“Well seeing as how the article involves their home and business, yeah I think we should just do it here. I don’t understand why you’re here? You would have had to drive for two hours to get to us. Surely you remember how to reply to an email.”

That gross smile dips on his lips again, the one that says he’s pretty sure it’s affecting the moisture levels in my panties. It’s really not though, unless you count negative values. “What’s a few hours of driving if I get to see that smile of yours?”

I barely refrain from rolling my eyes and take a deep breath instead. He can't even tell my smile is fake, and yet he thinks he's got me figured out. "Please, Graham. They're preparing dinner right now and I don't want to keep them waiting."

"Look Grace, I know you saw the job offer I gave your dad. It's a solid one."

"It is," I say.

"Not of a lot of opportunities around here for journalism, and I think you'd be a great asset to the team."

"Which is why I'm very seriously considering the offer," I respond. "But to my understanding, it's all contingent on the article I'm writing, right? I only gave you the outline, the article isn't finished yet. I thought the deadline was Friday."

"Maybe I could have called instead of just shown up—"

"You definitely could have," a clearly annoyed Dylan says.

"But the outline... well, it had me a little concerned about your professionalism with the subjects of the article."

Now I'm trying to figure out what the hell he's talking about. He doesn't make me wait long though, because he unfolds a paper from his pocket and starts reading it out loud to us. It's the outline I sent to him, which doesn't make any sense, because I'm still not seeing the problem.

"You talked more about the men who live here than the work they're doing."

"I did not." I catch Dylan smirking out of the corner of my eye, and before I know it, his arm is around my waist with his hand resting on my hip. I definitely don't hate it.

"Can we please go inside, Grace? I don't want talk about this in front of company," Graham pleads.

Now I *really* don't want to talk to him alone, so I stand my ground. "Can you please just tell me what you're concerned about? We weren't expecting company and have plans for the evening."

"Hmm," Abram says from behind Graham. I didn't even know he was back that way, he's so sneaky. Blended right into

the turkeys, I guess. “I think he’s concerned because your outline made it clear you were getting closer to us, and he doesn’t like that. Judging by the way he keeps looking at you, I’m going to guess does this job offer came with a contingency that you date him.”

I laugh at that projection, out loud and boisterously. Because that’s absurd. “Abram, he would never do that. He’s a professional.”

But Graham’s jaw is clenched, his hands are now in his pockets, and his stance is a little closed off as he stares down Abram.

“Wait, is *that* what this is about, Graham? You drove all this way to what, try and pee on your territory? How many times do I have to turn you down before you realize I’m serious? ‘No’ isn’t good enough for you?”

“You’ve told this man no before?” Dylan asks solemnly.

“Grace, don’t be like this,” Graham says turning back to me. “You’ve always known where this thing between us was going to go. I know your dad approves of us getting together, and I’ve always been transparent about the way I feel about you. You should make the right choice here, for your future. Just think about the kind of house I could provide for you, the lifestyle we could have. You’d be a respected journalist and live in the city. I know you want all that.”

Deeper and deeper he digs himself, making me get angrier by the second. Especially when he’s evading my question. “I need a yes or no, Graham. If I say yes to the paper and tell you that I will never be interested in a romantic relationship with you, would I still have this job offer?”

“Your obstinacy isn’t nearly as charming as you think it is, Grace.”

“Oh my God, it was just a ploy, wasn’t it? You don’t really care about my work at all, do you?”

“I take care of what’s mine. and I want that to include you. Of course I care about your work, but I care about you as well. And you’re going to stand here and tell me they aren’t pulling the same damn thing? That you didn’t enter their property and they

didn't instantly start crawling all over you? How is that any different than what I want?"

"You don't even know me." In some ways, it is a similar situation, but the difference is how I perceive the guys versus how I perceive Graham. Dylan was pushy, but I know for a fact that if I hadn't been interested, he would have respected that. Graham definitely doesn't.

It's crazy that I enjoyed kissing Mason so much when I barely knew him, but me barely knowing these guys and me barely knowing Graham are two very different situations. They have very different feels, and the difference is I could never see me wanting to kiss Graham. Dylan on the other hand? I'm a half second away from climbing him and taking all the attention he's focusing on Graham for myself.

"No, maybe I don't know everything about you Grace, but I know we have similar dreams, and that we look good together. But I'm not going to keep putting myself out here and trying, making a fool of myself when there are other women I could be pursuing that are more interested."

"Please pursue them," I beg. "Honest. And I can't believe I have to say this, again, but *I don't want to date you*. I'm not attracted to you, I'm not entirely comfortable with you, and if you expected me to fall into bed with you for a job, you seriously misjudged who I am."

"You turning my job offer down?"

And suddenly I know that I absolutely have to. Because even if he was skating around the notion that I'd have to sleep with him or at least date him for this job, that would never be worth it. Even the expectation he might have that I could change my mind, needing to see him every day or talk to him every day if I was working remotely, would be hell. If this is just an outline for an article that he might be picking up, I can't imagine the stress I would be under constantly going through day by day having to report to him at some level.

Completely unsure what comes next, I lean a little bit closer to Dylan for comfort and strength, and I clear my throat. "Graham, you need to leave this property."

“But—”

“You heard her,” Eli says, not looking as good-natured as he usually does. There’s a glint in his eye that’s getting me a little hot and bothered.

“You’re going to regret this, Grace. There’s no other paper nearby that will take you.”

“Then I guess I’ll have to figure something else out, but it’s none of your concern.”

“I drove all the way out here. You’re seriously just going to turn me out like that?”

“He’s so damn entitled, isn’t he?” Abram wines. “Thank god you were never fooled by this one’s face. I knew you were a smart one, pretty girl.” He turns back to Graham. “Go on boy, git.”

Fighting off the happy cloud that wraps around me at Abram’s words, I focus my energy on Graham so I can get him the hell out of here. None of us will be enjoying our evening until he’s gone. “Nobody asked you to drive here. I sent you an e-mail, and that’s how you should have responded. It’s not okay for you to show up like this, demanding things of me when we don’t even have a contract yet. If I were you, I’d listen to these guys. This is their property, after all.”

He climbs into his car and slams the door, another red flag I didn’t need to see; I already know that I want nothing to do with him. Graham taking his anger out on his car tells me it wouldn’t be too far of a jump for him to take that anger out on people instead of objects.

“Thanks for wasting my day, bitch. Be sure and tell your dad you butchered the job offer, and that there’s no place for you there at my paper.”

The guys all snarl at the name calling, but it doesn’t bother me because he’s a piece of shit. “Leave now before we call the sheriff. You seem like you’d be a really shitty boss, anyway.”

He speeds off while Abram yells something about Graham having a small dick, which does wonders for breaking through all the tension now hovering.

When his taillights finally disappear from sight, the guys all converge on me at once, stroking my arms or my hair, putting an arm around me, comforting me.

“Did we ruin things for you?” Dylan asks quietly.

“Not at all,” I confirm.

Dylan, smiling, carefully brings me closer as he wraps his arm around me. “That was an interesting outline you sent him. What were the words he read out loud? *Four talented, passionate farmers running a charming animal rescue?*”

“I’ve got some talents I could show you,” Abram says under his breath.

I shake my head, already feeling better. “I’d still like to do the article and stay here for the rest of my scheduled time if it’s alright with you guys? I’ll make it great for my paper, but it won’t reach as many people as it would have if The Herald would have printed it. There are some online contacts I can reach out to though that will spread the news. We can also hit social media to make sure people know about the events.”

“That sounds like a plan,” Mason says. “None of us are any good at social media.”

“It’s pretty fun actually to market that way once you get the hang of it. You can interact with a lot of people that you wouldn’t have normally been able to.”

I don’t know what I’m going to do about a job after, but I guess I’ll figure it out.

“Please, stay,” Dylan says. “It’s not your fault that The Herald is run by an egotistical prick like Graham. You know we’re more than happy to have you here, and you’re welcome to stay as long as you want beyond that if you need somewhere to hide out or if you particularly enjoy our company.”

It’s a tempting offer, but I’m just kind of taking this one day at a time. “Let’s start with dinner and I’ll figure the rest out later. Graham doesn’t need to take up any more of our time.”



As always, the dinner they cook is delicious. As they clear the plates, I'm once again struck by the differences in these guys and others I've been involved with in the past. No one has cooked for me like this, and I'm realizing how incredibly low I've set my bar.

The guys told me I'm not allowed to help with dishes or cleanup, so I head to the living room instead, not ready to end the night in my own cabin alone.

Just as I curl up and start admiring the view out their picture windows, a quiet argument breaks out in the kitchen, making my ears perk up. These guys haven't so much as disagreed in front of me if they weren't completely joking around, so I'm not sure what's changed now, but they don't make me wait for very long.

The kitchen goes silent as footsteps start making their way toward me, but they don't simply walk into the room and sit next to me. They had said something about maybe putting a movie on or something, which is obviously just an excuse to get close and cuddle, but I'm okay with that.

What happens is the strangest thing I think I've ever seen.

Mason comes out first, and I can only describe his movement as a strut. He's half dancing, half parading as he walks across the living room, then doubles back to do it again. The whole time, he's staring me down and then his hips get into it as his feet shuffle across the floor.

It's very disconcerting. Especially when Abram joins in, but Dylan is still standing there looking back and forth between me and his friends who are behaving quite oddly, projecting red flags into space.

"Umm, are you... looking for something? Are you nervous about something maybe? What's happening?"

"Do you like my walk, Grace?" Mason asks in a strangely husky voice. He stops in the middle of the room with his feet more than shoulder width apart and crouches into it, his hips in a squat position as he holds his arms out.

"Is this some weird form of charades I'm unfamiliar with?"

“I told you this was a stupid idea,” Dylan chastises. “You’re gonna scare her off. It doesn’t work if she doesn’t know what you’re doing, dumbass.”

I want to run, and common sense tells me to get out of there as fast as possible, but something else tells me to stay where I am, because for some reason, the way they’re moving is getting me the tiniest bit turned on.

In this moment I don’t understand my body at all, but I can’t take my eyes off of the guys, either. The more I watch, the more I want to watch, until it feels like I’m almost in a sort of trance. Something overtakes me, and I shift on the couch, placing my feet on the floor. I don’t get up yet, but then Eli looks a bit excited in my response and joins into the fray. Now they’re all sort of stomping in an almost-coordinated fashion, doing some sort of weird dance? I don’t know what’s happening. I should definitely be freaking out.

“Why do I like this?” I ask anybody who can answer me. From the way I’m reacting now, you’d think I was in the front row of a strip show. And then Mason rips his shirt off, and my mouth goes dry and an ache forms between my legs that confuses me further.

Dylan slides onto the couch next to me, pulling me onto his lap. His hands start out innocently on my knees, then they stroke up and down my thighs as I lean into him, throwing all caution out the window and giving in to what my body wants right now. I feel safe, even if it’s a little weird. Maybe this will just be like one of those crazy stories down the road that nobody ever talks about.

“Grace,” Dylan whispers into my ear. “There was another man trying just talk to you tonight, and we try to be civil, we really do, but we feel very... possessive over you.

“This is gonna feel incredibly fast to you I’m sure, and we want to give you all the time you need to decide, but we’re having a hard time holding back our instincts when we want you as badly as we do.”

I keep watching the spectacle in front of me, my pulse pounding as my hips subtly start to grind on Dylan.

“You asked us why you like this? That’s because you’re responding to what they’re doing. This is a mating dance, Grace.”

“What? Why would you guys need to do that? And why do you have to do it *this* way?”

“Do you believe in soulmates?”

I frown as I think about it. “Can’t say I’ve given much serious thought to them.”

“What if we told you they were real for some people, and that those people had a way of discerning who’s theirs was?”

Dylan’s hands are high on my hips now, pulling me into him so I can work some of the tension out of me that the guys are inspiring. They step a little closer to me, and I find that I’m holding my breath now.

“I’m not sure what to think about that,” I say honestly.

“Well let’s imagine then for a moment, that you believe in them. Let’s pretend that the world is far more magical than you’ve ever realized, and that there’s a part of the population that most people will never know about, that are given true mates. Soulmates that they’re able to identify from a picture.”

It does sound crazy, but it’s also reverberating in my head like a song I heard once in a dream and could never quite remember. “What do you do when you find these soul mates?” I’m intrigued now, hanging onto his every word.

Eli steps to the forefront of the trio of men, stomping one foot as he pushes a hip out over and over again with his arms out, muscle straining, and he looks so damn vulnerable that I want to reassure him he looks anything but ridiculous.

“This is how we show you that we want you. And I don’t mean the kind of want you where we end up falling together in bed and then go our separate ways. You see how hard they’re working? The way their bodies are taut and coiled and controlled? These are moves they’ve been waiting their whole lives to perform, and if we were in that magical world I was just talking about, it would be their way of telling you that you’re

their soulmate and that we can't live without you. They're trying to impress you and show you they'd make good mates for you."

His words are crystal clear, and objectively speaking I should be nervously laughing and finding a way to edge out of the room and run; but my nipples are pebbled, my breathing is shallow, and my blood feels like lava under my skin as it courses through my body. My legs are spread far apart now, and I find my body is desperate for theirs.

"You're not dancing," I observe. "Are you saying I'm not your soulmate?"

"I wasn't sure how you were going to react. I thought it was too early to do this, so I thought one of us should keep you calm and help you understand things. It's taking a lot of will power for me to stay here instead of joining them right now. I don't want you to run, because I know how this looks. The way you were raised, the world you think you know, you should take one look at this situation and tell us that we've all lost our minds. And if you run out of here, we'll never get this moment back. We'll never get a do-over, not one that feels like this."

I can kind of understand what he means, because it feels magical in here right now; like there's glitter dust falling from the sky and hitting all of us, connecting us in some way.

"We are not men like you're used to dating or being with, Grace. This thing we're chasing with you, it's not any sort of passing fancy. We're all in, because we know that we could look the world over and never find anybody as perfect for us as you are. We were called to this town, and it was clear why when we saw your picture in the paper. We're meant for you, and we'd love nothing better if you just stayed here on this farm with us forever.

"But we know we can't ask that of you yet, so instead we'll ask you to take it a day at a time. Commit to us for a month or so, and then for six months, and then a year, and then however long you need to know your mind."

His words sound far away as my arms tingle, and I find myself standing up, inserting myself between the three men. They all turn to face me and continue their dance, and I can feel the heat their bodies are generating from their movement.

“So to recap, soulmates are real, and you’re telling me that I’m it for you?” Dylan gets off the couch and the guys make room for him in their circle, and when he starts the same movements that the other guys are doing, I actually let out a little moan because it’s completely overwhelming. It feels like I’m drugged, but at the same time, my head is very clear, making it easy, *too easy*, to accept everything that Dylan just said. Maybe it’s because I don’t want to question it, because it all feels so true.

Eli shifts to being in front of me, and he moves even closer than he was, nearly brushing against me now. I reach out, because I feel like I’m gonna die if I don’t kiss him right now.

He comes to me easily, kissing me with a passion I’ve only experienced twice in my life before; both times have happened on this farm. Maybe this is why the whole soulmate thing doesn’t feel like a crazy man’s dream, because when he kisses me like this and our mouths are moving together, it feels like our souls are connecting. I don’t have to spend weeks or months or years with him to know his heart, because somehow I’m getting a fuzzy outline of it just by being near him. It’s calling to me, just like the other guys are.

The words *mating dance* flutter around in my head and I try to make sense of them as I cling to Eli, feeling the others near my back but not quite touching it. What animals do mating dances? Because humans sure don’t. Maybe there are some cultures that use dance as a form of wooing potential partners, but this doesn’t feel like that. This feels like something more primal, something as old as time.

As I run my hands down Eli’s sides and then under his shirt, I realize his skin has very pronounced bumps on it that tickle my fingertips. I slide higher and eventually he just pulls his shirt right off as well, giving me all the access I want.

His whole torso is covered in these bumps, but they don’t look red or irritated, they’re more like an intense form of goosebumps. I run my hands along them, and they seem to flutter under my touch.

“I don’t think you’re ready for some truths yet, Grace,” Eli rasps, “but if you inspect these other guys, you’ll see their skin

looks similar when they're excited."

A gobbling sound echoes so loudly in the room it sounds like it's coming from the guys, so I whip my head around, wondering how the turkeys can sound so loud from inside this room. At this point it's like a Pavlovian response from those damn dreams I've been having. It doesn't make sense that I only get excited by such sounds when I'm with these guys, but I'm grateful that being around actual turkeys does literally nothing for me. I'd be checking myself into a psych ward so fast if that were the case.

"Did you like that? You did, didn't you?" Eli whispers. "You're farther along than I imagined; farther than any of us hoped for."

Eli spins me so I can watch Dylan dance, strutting around then squatting and shaking out, performing movements that look oddly similar to ways I've seen the turkeys outside move.

As soon as that thought hits me, I can't get away from it.

The way he stamps his foot and kicks it back, the way he shakes his chest as he moves and how his throat bobs up and down as he emits a repeat of the sound I just heard, the picture in my head gets a little clearer.

It's the most Impossible thing I've ever imagined, but I'd still rather be here than anywhere else right now. "Does anybody want to explain to me why I'm not freaking the hell out right now?"

"Usually when somebody outside the community is found to be the mate of people like us, it's because somewhere in their family, at one point, there was somebody that was like us. That gene has been dormant inside you and will never fully develop, but it's enough to calm you when you face down your destiny. It's your body's way of helping you accept us as your mates, because your mind knows what we are, even if you don't want to say it right now. Someone in your family was like us, and your blood knows it. That's why you're reacting to us; that's why you like the way we're moving, why it's affecting you."

I turn to Mason after his pronouncement and see that he's taken off the round glasses he usually wears and has tossed them

onto the couch. His eyes are the color of denim jeans, and without the glasses there, they're so clear and easy to fall into. "Is that so?" I reply, still far too calmly for this out of body experience.

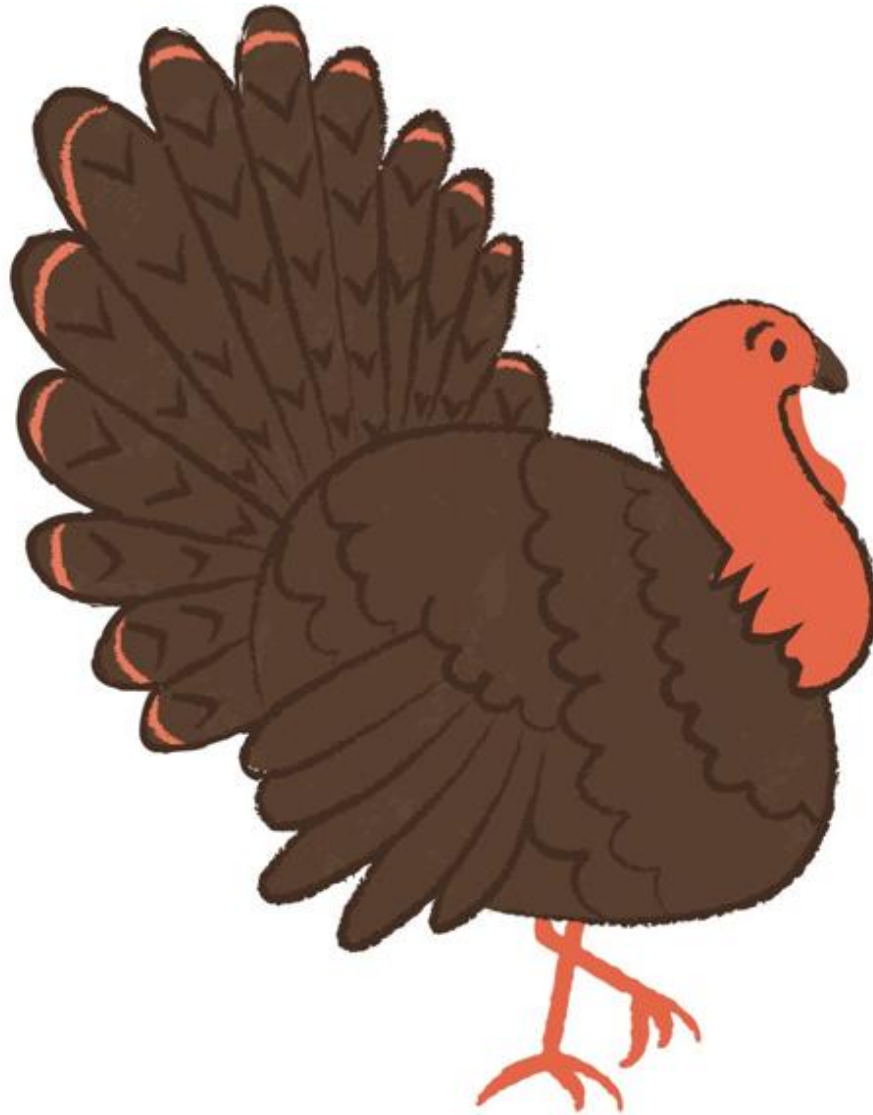
All at once the movements stop, and I'm left panting and itching in my skin, with all my clothes irritating me to the point that I need to strip out of them. All I want is to feel air on my skin followed by the hot breath of these men.

"You guys discussed dating me, and told me you wouldn't get jealous about kissing; how far does this go if all of you are pursuing me? I can't lie to you, there's no way to hide the way my body feels right now. It's like a live wire ready to go off, and if you guys feel uncomfortable all having sex with me, you need to make that clear now before I touch you in a way you don't want me to. I feel like I'm on the edge of some sort of sexual frenzy."

"Are you saying you want to give us a shot?" Abram asks, stepping up to my back. His chest is bare as well, and I don't need my hands to tell me that he's got similar bumps going all over his torso.

It seems impossible, but I have to know for sure. "You think I'm your soulmate?" I ask all of them collectively, because I'm understanding that's how it's going to work somehow.

"We *know* you are our soulmate," Abram corrects. "We usually just shorten the term to mate, but we've been waiting our whole lives to feel like this, for a woman to come along that we could claim for our own. It feels like it's taken forever to meet you; but we'd wait forever to make it happen."



Eli

Don't shift. Don't shift. Don't shift.

It's an easy enough mantra to repeat, but much harder it turns out, to execute.

I thought Abram was crazy when he said it was time to present ourselves to her tonight, because I thought we were months away from even having that *conversation*, but after he pointed out how earnest the douche with the car was in his attention to her, I'm pretty sure we all lost our shit.

No one was going to take her away from us, and it was time to lay all our cards out for her to see, because if we let the rest of this week play out and couldn't convince her to stay, then we'd be stalking her. I hear that's frowned upon in most places.

In the few days she's been with us, it feels like I've been playing catch up with the rest of my flock mates, because I've never been able to put myself out there like they do. It's hard for me to talk to most people, but someone that is beautiful, and amusing, and fated for me? Can you understand the type of pressure I'm under?

I'm bad at talking but I'd love nothing more than to sit and hold her, spend some time getting comfortable together. But that's going to have to wait, because once this mating dance started, we couldn't just stop mid strut and say, *'Uh, actually, never mind. That was nothing. Just pretend we walked in here normally.'*

Especially once she started reacting to us.

We've had to listen to Abram bragging about his midnight crooning outside Grace's window, had no idea it was working, but that shiver that traveled down her spine when she heard a gobble that close for the first time? Her head dropped back a little and her knees thought about going out.

Fuck.

And now Dylan and mason have gone and sprung all sorts of information on her in an attempt to explain what's happening in our living room, and to my absolute surprise, she was getting turned the fuck on. I can tell. Her pupils are dilating more every time I look into her eyes, her breathing is ragged, and then there's the fact that she just straight up asked if we were okay with group sex. Bit of a giveaway, that. Even I can read that signal.

Dylan is the top of the pecking order in our flock so he should be the one to respond to her query, but with the memory of her curves under my hands still lingering heavily on my fingertips, I once again steal all her attention.

"Fate chose us because she knew how goddamned perfect we could be together. She just had to get us together so we could do the rest. Nothing you're feeling right now has anything to do with this potential bond, just to be clear. Anything you're feeling, you're feeling it because you're affected by us, just like we're affected by you.

“It just means we know we could love you so easily if you give us a chance. Once you let us in, things will move fast because it’s going to be difficult for any of us to go slow once we all know how it feels to be together.”

“So, is that a yes on the sex question?” She raises an eyebrow, unphased by my ramblings.

I bury my hands in her hair and tilt her face up so I can see it better. “Grace, we’re a fl-group. We’re a group, and in our community we’ve known that means we would be sharing a mate. In our teen years, we developed these marks that lead us to finding each other, so the idea of sharing you is something we’re more than comfortable with.”

“Because you’ve done it before?” She bites out.

“Never. We’re not innocents Grace, but we’re also not fuckboys. Let’s just not go down that road, okay? Nothing good will happen if we do. All you need to know is, we’ve been waiting for our mate to experience things as a group, and there is absolutely no jealousy between us.”

“Thank fuck.” She leaps at me, wrapping her legs around my waist, nearly knocking me over in her haste to eat my face.

My hands sink into her perfect ass as my legs straighten out, but then somebody starts guiding us down the hall to the bedroom, and I’m grateful there are four of us because it means I don’t have to stop kissing her as they help us get to the bedroom without bumping into any walls.

Grace pulls away from me long enough to check out her surroundings, taking in the giant bed with fluffy white blankets and the canopy above it with soft lighting— what, we like ambience okay? Before she’s right back on track.

“Gonna get naked now, ‘kay?”

“Should I get naked too?” I ask, just to be polite. Don’t want to make an ass of myself by assuming.

“Would make the next part much easier,” she quips.

I smile as I reach down to undo my belt, then she’s topless against me and I’m leaning over her on the bed, and she’s breathtaking.

I actually forget how to speak for a few seconds while she lays on my bed, hair fanned out under her, and lips swollen from kissing me. She's blinking quickly, trying to keep up with the progression of things, and I flex my hips against her on instinct.

Grace gasps at the hardness pressing into her, and my head falls down as I'm completely overwhelmed. "Tell me you're clear headed enough to decide you want this," I beg.

"Clear headed is a terrible description, but I want this. I want you, all of you." She bites her lip at the admission and looks around at all my flock mates, then her eyes fall on me again. "I've been telling myself since I arrived to not act on the crazy attraction I feel towards all of you, but then you had to go and give me permission to do just that. And *then* you did that strangely erotic dance, and there's no reason I need to keep myself from what I want. *Desperately.*"

"Good enough for me," I say before diving right back in. Her leg wraps around me, but the rest of the guys aren't here to be observers; she wants all of us, she's damn sure going to get all of us.

I smirk as they get to work, because her eyes widen when they start stripping. They leave their underwear on until they know she's still comfortable and wanting to move forward, but her eyes take in the bumpy skin that we all get when our emotions are heightened, when our feathers are threatening to poke through.

For a second I see a hint of a feather in Dylan's hair, but with a deep inhale it's gone and he's back to being focused on our mate.

"You look so good underneath me, Grace." I lave kisses all over her neck and collarbone, then Mason is there to remove her pink satin bra, baring her gorgeous breasts to all of us. "If I wasn't already hard as a fucking pumpkin right now, that would have sent me over the edge. Fuck. Those things have been around me all week, and I knew they'd be as gorgeous as the rest of you. Bet they taste as good as I imagined, too."

I get my mouth on a nipple as Abram takes the other one, then we let our hands link up as we travel down grace's stomach

and under her pants, which are kind of cramping my style, but she's soaked.

Abram and I both groan at all the wet heat we discover, and the way she's bucking into our touch is enough for Dylan to feel comfortable stripping her down more.

Once our hands have nothing restricting them, Dylan and Mason spread her legs with a hand on each ankle, opening her wide up for us. She must feel vulnerable as hell right now, but she's in the throes of this moment and all she does is encourage us to keep touching her.

The texture of her nipple on my tongue has me salivating, and I can't get enough of her into my mouth. I crave that suffocating feeling of having her flesh block my biggest airway, so I suck her into my mouth as much as I'm able and do my best to consume her as mine and Abrams' fingers dance between her legs. We slide all over the place from her body's response, and she's fucking gone.

"Please. More. I want more."

"Yes, ma'am." I tease her with a finger, sliding it inside her body and then Abram is there as well, filling her up more.

"You gonna handle all four of us, mate?" It's a bold choice to call her that so soon, but she reacts to Dylan's question with a firm head nod, brazenly shifting her hips to chase what she wants.

It's cozy with all of us kneeling over her, but we all manage to stuff a finger inside her at the same time, stretching her a bit as we develop a rhythm.

Abram lowers his head to lick her clit while the four of us all finger fuck her, and I'm transfixed by the story playing across her face. She's deeply lost in us, thrashing and crying out louder and louder as we pump into her body.

Abram impersonating a Hoover on her clit has her screaming out a release and flooding our hands even more.

I do my best to kick off my pants with only one hand available to unfasten them, because there's no way in hell I'm going to stop touching her unless I'm made to. We ease her

down from that release with gentle touches, brushing kisses along her legs while Abram lays down next to her and nuzzles into her neck.

“Damnit, that was too good,” she pants.

I smile to myself and mentally high five each of my flock mates. “There are benefits to having four of us to please you, beautiful.”

“You’re not done, right? You’re not going to develop some twisted sense of righteous chivalry and decide you don’t want to push me too far in our first encounter or something?”

I stroke myself as I kneel between her legs, eyeing the mess we all made together. “That doesn’t seem like something you’d particularly care to hear right now, so no.”

She lies there breathing heavily, staring at my hand moving and pulling at my cock. “I’ve never been with more than one person at once.”

“You just set your limits, okay? If you get sore and want to stop, or stop feeling it and want to stop, or just get uncomfortable, tell us. We stop the second this stops being fun for you, because that’s the whole point of this. Fun.

“We want this connection with you, but we should have fun setting it up. Is there anything you don’t want right now?”

“Don’t think I’m in the mood for anal.”

I choke. “Sorry. Didn’t...ah...” I have to clear my throat before I can talk again. “Wasn’t even going to suggest that. We won’t get too adventurous yet, but if there’s something in particular you want, just let us know.”

“Can I...”

We let her find her words, giving her space to gather the courage to ask for what she wants. She’ll learn soon that she’ll get anything she wants from us in one way or another. “I think I’d like to be spit roasted.”

This time it’s Dylan that starts choking, but only because I’ve stopped breathing and am about to blow from her merely saying things so plainly. “Of course, Grace. That’s...yeah. We can do that.”

I reach for a condom from the side table so we all feel safe, and I watch Mason and Abram pull her up and get her onto all fours after they all get condoms ready, too. I slide in behind her and play with her ass cheeks for a second, spanking her lightly just so I can watch her ass bounce. “God, this is my new favorite view.”

She wiggles her hips at me, and I slide in slowly, hissing when she immediately starts squeezing me. Dylan climbs in front of her and offers her his cock, and she wastes zero time in sucking him down. As she goes down on him, she shoves herself harder onto me, trying to top me.

I grab onto her hips though as Dylan wraps her hair around his fist, putting the power back into our hands.

“Her fucking mouth is so hot. Fuck. I’m practically going down her throat.” Dylan’s head throws back as he gives himself over, flexing against her gently so he doesn’t hurt her.

It’s fucking impossible to not work myself up into a tizzy when I’m watching that play out in front of me, but there are four of us for a reason. If I can’t get her there again, it will be up to the next guy.

I needn’t worry though, because as soon as I start getting close, I notice Abram is underneath her once again licking her clit and feeding his new addiction, even if puts his face way too close to my balls. I can feel his breath on me as I claim her, and when I hit that pace that announces I’m about to be gone, she clamps down on me and screams around Dylan’s cock, pulling the cum out of my balls so fast that it’s nearly painful. Looks like she’s pulling everything out of Dylan’s balls as well; she’s getting a hell of a two ‘fer.

I twitch for a solid minute before I can pull out of her body and collapse next to her, getting out of the way so Abram can take my place. I don’t know if the same orgasm keeps cresting or if he has managed to pull another one out of her, but as he starts pumping into her I watch her cute toes curl up and her spine stiffen as she screams again.

“That’s certainly not helping my stamina,” Abram mutters. The look on his face is pure rapture as he stares down at Grace

taking him, and the noises coming out of his throat as he takes her are far from human.

“Not going to ask...” Grace says in response as her face is finally free and open to breathe easily once more. Mason is the last one that has yet to feel her this way, but I see the intent plastered all over his face.

He kisses her gently, an awkward angle though it is, while Abram continues to take her, slowing down now to wait for Mason to join. “Grace, have you ever been double stuffed?”

“You mean...two of you inside the same place? Does that even work?”

“Only one way to find out...” Abram trails off.

“Fuuck. I don’t think regular men will ever do it for me again after this. Didn’t think turkeys would be this kinky.”

Every single one of us freezes as she lays our secret bare.

“Did I guess wrong? Oh god, are you pigeons or something? Is that offensive? I’m so sorry!”

I can’t help it. I start cracking up, because the look on her face...not one I’m going to forget soon. She’s got drool drying on her chin and her hair’s beautiful fucking mess and her cheeks are flushed and her ass in the air, and it’s pure art.

“Shut up! This is all new to me, okay? Just be grateful I’m not freaking out over the fact that I’m the one getting stuffed by birds! Damn it! This is going to lead to therapy, isn’t it?”

I crawl up and gather her into my arms, smoothing her hair back and kissing her perfect goddamned cheeks. “We’re turkeys. You sure you don’t want to run out of here screaming?”

She looks around at all four of us to get a read on the room before shrugging her shoulders. “He’s already balls deep in me and I already swallowed down Dylan, so wouldn’t be much point in leaving now. Might as well finish my rounds before I contemplate running away in terror more seriously.”

“You’re going to keep us on our toes, aren’t you?” I ask, loving the shit out of everything happening right now.

“That depends. I haven’t seen your feet properly yet, because you’re all still wearing your socks like absolute psychopaths. Do you even have toes? Or are they bird claws?”

“You’re making fun of us, aren’t you?” Dylan accuses. He looks like he’s moments from cracking up as well, though he’s doing an admirable job of keeping it contained. “We’ve got cocks, don’t we? We only turn into turkeys when we feel like it. Otherwise we’re all man.”

“No you’re not. One of you has been crying like a little bitch out my window all night, giving me sex dreams. Go on, ‘fess up. Who was it?”

Abram starts fucking her again, unapologetic. “I wasn’t crying.”

“And now you’re pouting like a little bitch, aren’t you?”

Her face is smiling so hard as she tries to bury it into the blanket, but Dylan isn’t having any of that. He strides up to her and grabs a fistful of her hair, gently yanking her face up so he can kneel down and meet her eyes. “You done with the sass yet?”

His lips twitch as they have a stare off, then she starts squealing because Abram starts pushing a finger inside her ass. “NO ANAL!” she yells immediately.

“Anal requires a dick. This is just a little bit of fun. Relax.”

She does, then she seems to enjoy it some. Her fingers begin to claw at the comforter or whatever guys’ thighs are unfortunately in reaching distance, which means I end up with a bunch of deep red scratches all over my legs, but it’s totally worth it.

“Is that okay, Grace?” Dylan asks, serious now.

“Y-yes. I...like it. It feels good.”

He watches her face for confirmation before nodding and swiping the pad of his thumb tenderly across her cheek. “You’re taking all of us so well, aren’t you? You just love having all these cocks to yourself, don’t you? Such a good girl, Grace.”

“Fuck. You. And your damn. Dirty talk! Can’t you see he’s trying to FUUUCKKKK!”

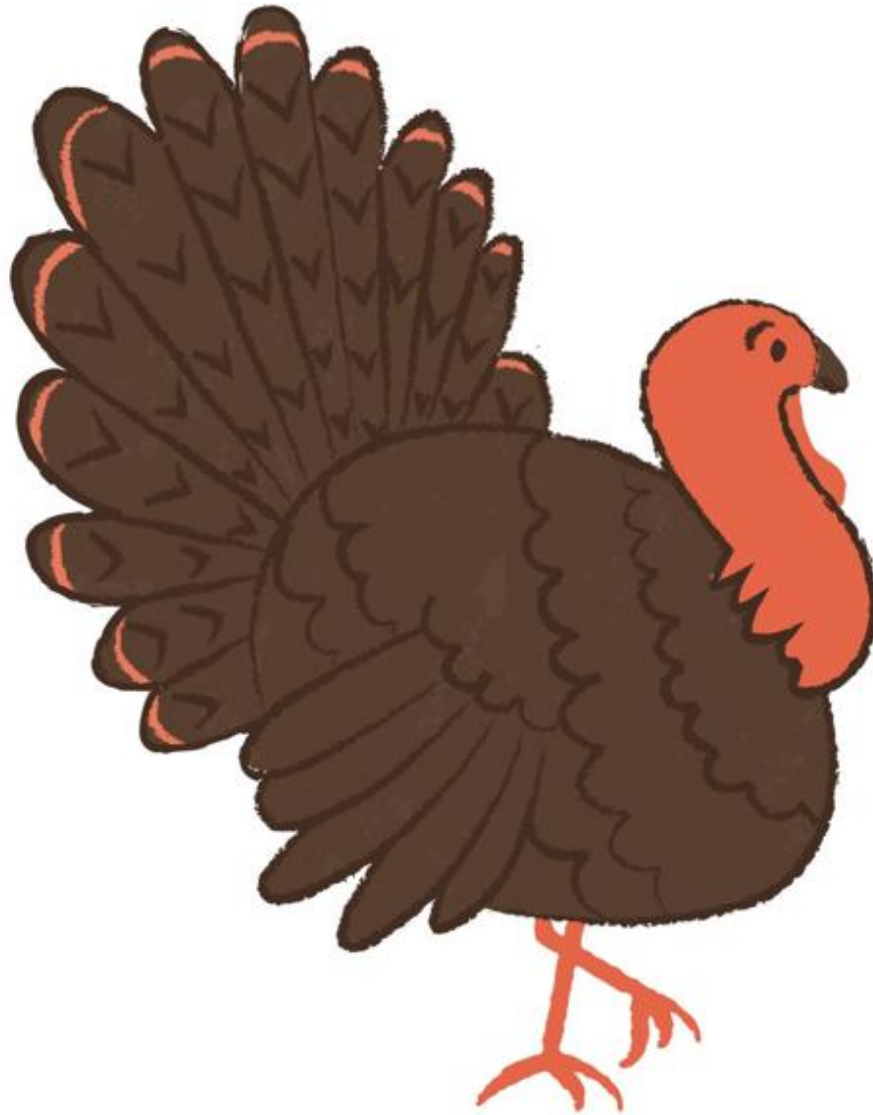
Abram gets a really cocky grin on his face as Mason slides into place between Abram's thighs, propping Grace up on his chest. He gives more attention to her poor, ignored breasts as he starts angling himself to enter her, and Abram pulls out for a second to give him room.

She slides down onto Mason and his whole face scrunches up, his hips moving up off the bed over and over again as he claims her.

This whole scene feels insane, like I'm watching it from above. Never knew how intense it would be to have this with my flock, to love on our mate and be together in this way. So many feelings are rushing forth, gratitude that they're here with me, affection for how much they all mean to me, and pride that we have such a perfect mate to fall for.

Being completely spent, I can't do much more than just watch Abram and Mason work their way inside of Grace together with clenched jaws, and I watch their collective release play out on their faces moments later.

I know this day is going to be imprinted on my mind for the rest of my life; the day that Grace saw us for who we are and instead of running, chose to stay. There's always the possibility she might run tomorrow, but for now, she's in our arms and everything is good.



Epilogue

Grace

I send the final article off to my dad and pack up my bags, uncertainty making my hands shake. Am I doing the right thing in leaving?

I know they think I'm their mate, and what we shared the other night was beyond incredible, but I feel like I can't truly accept them until I get back into the real world and can find a clear head.

Even though I've been mostly working, staying on this farm has felt more like a fairytale; especially once we woke up from our filthy dirty sex session and spent the day mostly naked,

cuddling on the couch and bathing together. I took a lot of showers that day.

But reality is living at home with my parents in the apartment above the garage that they had done up for me, and it's going to the small supermarket in town once a week to stock up on groceries, and it's waving at people in town that I've grown up around.

It's blurry weekday mornings when everyone is trudging into work with mugs full of hot coffee they brewed at home, because we don't have any proper coffee shops in town and everyone's too simple to purchase travel mugs.

It's the tree with the tire swing I've seen out of my bedroom window my entire life, and it's the newspaper office that smells like paper and leaves your hands feeling gritty from the ink residue.

"You ready?" Dylan asks from the door of my cabin.

None of them are particularly thrilled I'm leaving, but they say they trust that I'll be back when I'm ready.

"I think so."

He nods and grabs my bag for me before I can, escorting me out with a hand on my lower back.

Abram is slumped against my car with a sad face on, and I'm going to guess that the two 'wild' turkeys currently trying to dent my hood are Mason and Eli. "Come on you guys, I'll be back next week for the fall festival, and we can talk about spending the holidays together. Stop pouting."

"But you smell so much better than they do," Abram complains as he wraps himself around me like ribbon.

"You know how to find me; I gave you my address. If you get lonely, just come see me. I'll literally only be an hour away."

Abram steps back and then immediately jumps into the backseat of my car. I stare him down, but he carefully buckles himself in. "I got lonely, and you offered. Joke's on you."

He stares straight ahead while bird Mason jumps off the hood, shifting back into his normal hot self. "And now you have to

leave with my naked body burned into your mind. Have fun leaving.”

“So this is going to be a thing then, huh? Get over here, give me a kiss.”

It doesn't make sense that we're already this comfortable around each other, but I'm rolling with it.

“You're coming to the fall festival, right?”

I roll my eyes at Dylan. I know he heard me just say that I was, but it's kind of...cute how concerned they are with me leaving. Even clingy Abram is charming.

“Eli? You going to keep on being a turkey?” I tap my foot and wait for him to change back.

He lets out a loud gobble in response, jumping off the hood of my car with his caruncles jiggling away. Is it weird that that crazy looking thing is one of my kind-of boyfriends? I'm choosing not to think about it right now. I figure in time, it might become normal. Maybe.

“Look. You guys know I need to do this. Even if I had decided I was ready to jump all in with you guys, I'd need to pack up stuff at my house, talk to my family, wrap up my life there...”

“Is that what you're going to do?” Eli asks as he finally shifts back. “Is that why you're leaving?”

“Give her space, man. Stop making her feel bad for doing what she needs to do. She's not leaving us.” Dylan turns to look at me. “You're not leaving us, right?”

“Only in the physical sense. I'll call you tonight and I'll be back before you know it.”

After another round of hugs and kisses and I'm on the road, with a very satisfied Abram in my back seat. Not sure why he decided he wasn't going to sit in the front, or when he even put a suitcase in my car, but it's definitely there.

“Your parents going to be okay with me crashing at your place?” Abram asks when we're nearly back home.

“Should have thought of that earlier. You’ll be fine. I’m an adult, and as long as you don’t poultry out, it will be fine.”

It’s silent for a few minutes, and then when I’m pulling into my driveway, he lets out the rest of his insecurities. “Are you mad I invited myself along? If you really need time to yourself, I can get one of the guys to come get me.”

I step out of the car and grab my bag from the trunk, waiting for him to step out nervously as well. I grab his hand and step into him, peace settling over me. “Not mad. But I’m not going to be able to entertain you at all hours, so you’ll have to find something to do when I’m working.”

“I can do that. Come on, let’s go meet mom and dad.”



Of course they love him. I think they’re more just happy that I’ve finally found someone I have actual intentions with, but Abram charms them as we have dinner and catch up. I’m still a bit salty over what my dad did, but a talk with my mom clears it up. He thought he was only saving me from the stress of the decision, wanting to free me up to be my own person and pursue my dreams.

There’s been a shift in me over the past week and I’ve accepted, begrudgingly, that the family paper is ending. I think.

I’m still not completely sure what I’m going to do about a job, but when my parents find out how Graham treated me, they’re completely supportive of me not getting a position at The Herald; especially when Abram is there to go into further detail about what an ass Graham was when he arrived uninvited at their farm.

Abram passed the meet the parents test, and even planted a bug in their ear that his *business partners* were interested in pursuing me romantically as well. Best to give my parents time to come to grips with that, but it’s my life so if they have anything to say about who I spend it with, that’s not on me.

Amy is beside herself when I bring Abram along to hang out at her house with her and her husband, because she, too, has been waiting for someone to truly catch my eye. It’s not that

I've been disinterested in dating, it's that I haven't had a huge pool to choose from and no one has been great. Until now.

Of course Amy already knows all about how I'm actually sort of with all of the guys, not just Abram, and she supports it fully, as a good best friend should.

Abram walks around town and befriends everyone while I work at the office, though my hours are significantly shorter now that I know we only have one more issue left before we're done forever. It's bittersweet planning our last ever issue of our small-town paper, but I think I'm ready for the next chapter in my life. Hard not to be when I've got four guys happily planning our future.

As the days tick by and we get closer to the fall festival, I can tell Abram is getting twitchy about not being at the farm to help, so even though it's completely his fault that he's not there, I decide to drive back a few days early because I'm sick of telling myself to wait a little longer.

I've told my parents I'm not sure when I'll be back, because I'm winging it.

Ha! Get it?

When we pull up to the farm, the first thing I see is a beautiful woman with long glossy hair laughing with Dylan, who has a genuine smile on his face as they stand awfully close together at the turkey pen. My heart sinks in my chest, thinking I made a huge mistake not announcing my impending arrival, but when he hears my car, his face just lights up and he ditches her so fast that I have whiplash and I wasn't even next to him.

Of course we've been talking every day and texting nonstop, and I feel even closer to all the guys now than I did when I left last week even if we've been apart, but when he scoops me up and swings me around, there's a feeling of rightness that fills all the shadowy places in me, making me feel like I'm home.

Yes, I know that sounds stupid and naïve because I've known them for going on two weeks, but we're still not committing to anything here, we're just cautiously optimistic about where things will go, and looking forward to figuring everything out together.

“What are you doing here? I thought you weren’t coming until Friday?”

I hook my thumb towards where Abram is already carrying both our bags inside the main house, because after sleeping with me all week, he’s not even pretending we’re sleeping apart. Not fighting it; he’s snuggly.

“He was getting antsy, and I guess I was too. But is this...a bad time?” I look around him towards the woman still casually leaning against the turkey pen, her cute black vest and knee-high boots over dark denim making her look way more put together than I am in my sweats. We left at the last minute, and I probably should have changed, but when you’re comfy, it’s hard to motivate yourself to dress up.

“Who, her? Eva, come here!”

Mason crashes into me and lays one on me, dipping me and grabbing my ass. “Doth mine eyes deceive me, or is my long-lost mate home at last?”

I giggle, which is what his intention was, I’m sure. “Long lost? It’s been five days, my guy.”

“Grace, this is my sister Eva. Eva, this is our Grace.”

Sweet, sweet relief. Now that I’m not raging with potential jealousy, I can see the family resemblance. I hold out a hand, hoping she didn’t realize how bitchy my thoughts were for like five seconds.

“Hey Grace. Thank god you decided to come back early. Couldn’t get these guys to talk about anything other than how perfect you were. Maybe now they’ll actually be able to finish setting up for the festival. You here to help?”

“And then some. Can I just say I’m really glad you’re their sister?”

She laughs and Dylan turns red, rubbing the back of his neck. “That must have looked bad. Sorry.”

I wave him off. “We’re new, and we still have lots to learn about each other; I need to learn to not to jump to conclusions. Let’s go inside and you can show me what’s still left to be done for the festival.”



The festival goes off fantastically, leaving us with a mess at the end of the day, but I think it was all worth it. With Eva in one of the cabins, on the *far* side of the property she made sure to inform me, we collapse on the couch in their living room, all of us worn out but happy.

“You guys killed it. Did you see how many signups we got for turkey yoga?”

“You like it here,” Eli teases. “You just said ‘we’.”

“You knew I liked it here. Has a lot to do with your cocks, I won’t lie.”

“No cocks here. Sometimes called Toms, but male turkeys are called gobblers.”

“That joke was terrible,” I groan.

“You still laughed though,” Eli points out. That I did.

“I think our success was largely thanks to all the work you’ve been doing all week on social media, Grace. You’re really good at that. Did you figure out what you’re going to do for work yet? Because if you’re available, we could hire you for marketing.”

“I’ll consider it; I’m hesitant to tie everything to you guys right off the bat, but I’ve got some leads that will let me work from wherever. Don’t mind helping out with social media for you guys at the same time though.”

Silence sits happily for a few minutes while we lie there, my hands linked up with Mason and Dylan. I close my eyes, enjoying the way their hands start to trace designs on my arm, waking my body up.

It’s all very calm and cozy, and I even start to drift off a bit because I’m so relaxed, until Abram jumps up and announces, completely unprovoked, “I made cranberry sauce this morning,” before he runs off.

I sit up, confused. “Am I supposed to follow him?”

Dylan groans and rubs his hand over his face. “Only if you’re turned on by the idea of forever ruining thanksgiving for

yourself.”

“I have no idea what that means.”

“You’ll want to, I promise!” Abram yells from the kitchen.

Mason jumps up and pulls me with him, leading me to the dining room. My jaw drops, because...what is going on?

“You didn’t seriously think you were going to fall in with turkey shifters and not have at least an occasional reference to you being our feast, did you?” Eli says as he prevents me from leaving.

“I understand why you are all vegetarians, and why you’re all about canvassing for the vegan turkey products and avoid eating eggs—”

“Chicken shifters are assholes, but it just feels wrong to eat the eggs, you know?” Mason says with a totally straight face. Yeah, not going to get into the numerous types of shifters I don’t need to know about right now, because ignorance is bliss.

“But why on earth is there so much gravy? And are you... eating a bowl of cranberry sauce with a *spoon*? Is that a pillow on the table? I have so many questions...”

“We are morally obligated to enjoy thanksgiving foods, even if we’ve had to alter traditional recipes to suit our preferences. The first day I met you and you blushed, I had a vision of you spreading cranberry sauce all over my chest and licking it off of me. Your cheeks were the very same color,” Abram says with a happy smile.

My jaw is still on the floor, and I’m trying to ascertain which direction this budding sexual deviancy is going to go that’s rising within me. How long have they been prepping for this scene?

“Please explain the vat of gravy,” I whisper, scared to hear the answer.

Dylan peers around Abram to the kitchen, sucking his lower lip into his mouth. It’s his way of telling me I probably don’t want to know the answer.

“I think I’m going to take a shower and get ready for bed. Yep, definitely.”

I march out, pissed that the thought of licking cranberry sauce doesn't mortify me as much as it should, right as Abram yells, "You know you want to be stuffed by a turkey, Grace! Just admit it!"

Fuck. I'll never be able to eat thanksgiving food with a straight face again. Maybe we'll have to start a new tradition and eat tacos on thanksgiving instead.

On second thought, that might be even worse.

Resigned to my fate, I start pulling off my clothes. They want me spread out on their table? I should wash the farm funk off first.

Turn away now, dear reader, because all that talk about me not wanting to get stuffed by turkeys was absolute shit. Save yourselves.

"Meet me upstairs in ten, *with* the gravy!" I yell behind me as I retreat.

THE END





THE TURKEY
WASN'T THE
ONLY THING
BEING STUFFED
ON
THANKSGIVING



**GRACE KEPT
GOING BACK
FOR SECCONDS**



**...AND THEN,
THEY GAVE HER
THE GRAVY**



**THEY GOBBLED
HER RIGHT UP**



THE STUFFING
WAS HER
FAVORITE PART
OF
THANKSGIVING



**IT WASN'T THE
BASTER MAKING
HER MOIST**



IN A SHOCKING
TURN OF
EVENTS, THE
TURKEYS
SMOTHER *HER*
WITH GRAVY

GRACE WAS THE
ONE GIVING
THANKS,



AND SHE KNEW
WHAT SHE WAS
THANKFUL FOR.

Are you not entertained?

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Other Shit I've written

Four Betrothals Series

(you like dragons, bro?)

Four Betrothals

Four Bonds

One Family

Women of the Shelter Series

(you like wolves, bro?)

Broken Wolf

Lost Wolf pt. 1

Lost Wolf pt. 2

Hemlock Academy.

(you like sex and chaos, bro?)

First Addition

Second Glances

Three to Find

Four Trials

Territory Walk

(you like dream magic and chaos, bro?)

Territory One

Walk Faster

Fated Paths
Catching Eagles
Blurred Lines
Solid Ground
End of the Road

Stand Alone Options

All of Santa's Reindeer (you lik reindeer, bro?)
Hidden (You like omegaverse, bro?)
Lowlife (you like rockstars, bro?)
Getting Back Me (you like low angst fluff, bro?)
Theirs to Claim (you like fated mates, bro?)
Like Father, Like Son (you like contemporary MFM, bro?)
Under the Magnolia (You like angsty second chance
romance, bro?)
Monsters In My Bed (you like monster smut, bro?)