

The Substitute Turkey  
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“Hoo-HOO!” Maru could hardly contain himself as the front door opened, the fluffy-cheeked owlbear beaming as he cooed out a happy little greeting. “Happy Thanksgiving, Rowan!” His broad and fluffy hands held a slender gift bag, the housewarming gift almost dwarfed by the downy feathered tips of his hands. Rowan the deer had been Maru’s friend for years now, but this year was something special, the two were set to celebrate their first holiday together. Holding it out proudly to his auburn-haired and grey furred dinner host, the sweet deer smiled broadly as his beaky friend thrust the gift out into to his cream-furred arms.

“Maru, oh gosh, thank you! I wasn’t expecting you to get me anything.” The deer flicked his oval ears, a broad grin on his muzzle as he opened the bag, removing a bright and fresh bottle of white wine, the vintage glistening in the late-fall sun as Maru hooted again in excitement.

“Nonsense! You invited me over for dinner tonight, it’s the least I could do... I hope you like it?” Rowan smiled as he turned the bottle over and browsed through the tasting notes on the back. A full bodied, oaked white Burgundy wine, rich and bold, but crisp when refrigerated a little. A perfect accompaniment to a holiday turkey.

*How convenient*, Rowan thought to himself as he looked up into the sparkling eyes of his owlbear friend, the cutie quickly stepping inside and out of the chill fall air, removing his scarf and outer jacket to reveal his warm and fluffy brown fur. “Oh, sweetie, it’s wonderful, thank you! I’ll be sure to serve it tonight.” As Maru made himself comfortable, the deer couldn’t help but give his friend a tight hug, followed immediately by a little teasing squeeze on the midsection, a prod at how his owlbear pudge always seems to plumpen towards the start of winter. “Mmm... you’ve been letting yourself go, butterball! Go ahead, make yourself at home, I’m finishing up with the prepwork in the kitchen now.” Hesitating for just a moment, Rowan waited for his guest to step out of sight of the door before clicking the lock shut, slipping a pin in it to ensure that a possibly panicked main course couldn’t escape so easily.

“I’ll try not to get in your way while you work, if there’s anything I can do to help, let me know. Oh, Rowan, you got pumpkin beers too?” Maru hooted as he found one left out for him on the coffee table. The deer lived in a quaint and quiet rural home, the kitchen and living room blended into one another, creating a perfect comfy living space for entertaining guests. As the owlbear sat himself down on the couch, feathers poofing out softly as he did, Maru couldn’t help but breathe a sigh of relief at being on vacation at long last. “I’m so glad to be finished with my winter preparations this year, it’s been so much more work than I expected.”

“Oh yeah! Go right ahead, they’re still selling the good pumpkin ales.” Rowan chuckled as he stepped around the big kitchen table, a beautiful lace tablecloth laid out for the coming feast, and over to the countertop where a pile of unchopped vegetables still lay on the cutting board. Next to him were two bowls, one for the finished carrots, potatoes and onions being rendered down into quarters by the rhythmic chop chop chop of Rowan’s chef knife. The other held a large bowl of fresh stuffing, moist and soft, made from fresh torn bread, celery, onions, carrots, some chicken stock and egg for good measure, mixed up and settled nice and rounded in the bowl. With a broad grin, he set to work chopping the remaining veggies, heaping into the waiting bowl. “It sounded like it, lots of work to be done. I hope you didn’t exhaust yourself, cutie.”

"Nah, I at least took it slow. Lots of, y'know... wood to stack and the leaves to clean up and... Hoo! Certainly wound up sore afterwards." Taking a long swig from his beer, the relaxing owlbear gave an eye over the kitchen area, appraising the sights and sounds of his host working on tonight's meal.

"Just don't make yourself too stringy and tough, tender turkey is what we're looking for." The little prod made Maru blush as he remembered the little squishing tease on his midriff, the downy feathers on his cheek standing on end just enough to reveal his shy little red-flushed cheeks.

"You're one to talk, Mister Venison... or should I say Veni-Yum." Rowan shot a little smirk back at his owl guest, just in time to see Maru curl up a leg to help hide his groin from view. He always loved scoring a critical hit on his friend's submissiveness. "I don't think hunting season is quite over yet for your people."

"Ohhh nooo, what ever will I doooo?" Rowan feigned worry with a dramatic swoon before tossing the last of the chopped veggies in their bowl. "The big strong owlbear wants to make me into a Thanksgiving tenderloin!" Taking a little oil, salt and pepper, the deer made sure his veggies were nice and well-seasoned, giving them a little toss.

"That's right, I'm gonna getcha and eat ya all up in your own home!" Playfully, the owlbear wiggled his feathered fingers at his friend, before swilling back the last of his beer and standing to grab another from the refrigerator. "Hey, you need any help over here? I don't wanna leave you alone on cooking tonight, especially when you told me to come over so early."

The deer thought for a moment, cradling his muzzle in his hand and tapping his cheek with a fingertip before saying, "You know, there is something you could help with. Could you get the roasting pan out of the cabinet over there? I gotta get one other thing ready." With a smile, Rowan bent down to deal with something in the cabinets, moving and shuffling a few pots and pans as he did.

"Of course! By the way you never told me what we- ...what we..." Maru reached out to open the thin cabinet off to the side of the refrigerator, the one that normally stored a few odds and ends, as well as baking sheets or roasting pans tipped on their side. But he was taken aback at the sudden realization that Rowan didn't have a normal kitchen cabinet. Instead, the shelving had been removed to make room for storing a single, very large roasting pan, tipped up longways side, about a head or two shorter than Maru's height. The pan's tall walls only hid its interior until the owlbear began to slide it out, the critter suddenly confronted by the fact that there were four wrought-iron tie down points built right into the bottom of the pan. This wasn't your usual cooking equipment, but something very clearly designed for a predator chef to use on their live-cooked prey. His face flushed with red under his cheekfluff, Maru turned his head on his owl-like neck, craning back as he got a good look at Rowan and finished his sentence, "...hoo... are we having... for dinner...?"

In the time it took Maru to pull out the pan, the deer had his own tools ready, two thin straps of leather designed to work like flex-cuffs. All it would take was a pull and a clip, and the intended victim would be incapacitated perfectly. Taking a little step forward, his hooves clapping on the kitchen floor, Rowan couldn't help but lick his chops as he bleated out, "Already said... tender turkey."

It all happened in a flash, Maru dropping the massive pan with a clatter, landing open-side up on the kitchen floor as he backed away from the person he thought was his friend. The deer was always so sweet! And he never ate meat, not in front of anyone at least. He couldn't possibly be a predator, this

couldn't possibly be happening?! Taking another few steps forward, the deer reached out to grab for his turkey's arm, Maru yanking away at the last moment as he almost stumbled back over the coffee table in the living room. Feathers flustered, the poor critter realized he had to get out, rushing back down the little front hallway and gripping the door tight. The knob turned, jiggling in its hole, but the door did not budge! Already panicking, Maru threw himself against the stuck door, pudgy cheeks and frightened beak peering out the small window with such a look of worry, as the cold early-winter breeze whipped a few orangy-brown leaves across the yard.

There were no neighbors near Rowan's quiet, rural plot of land. Nobody would hear him scream, and nobody was coming to his rescue. Trying the lock, Maru realized it was jammed, the bolt unable to turn. His fingers caressed the deadbolt, confused as to what why it wouldn't turn. Before he could investigate any more, Rowan had closed the gap, planting his chest fluff and all his cervine weight, against his guest's back, slamming his body square into the wooden door. Maru let out a startled 'Hoo!' just as his arms shot out to his sides in a frantic bid to get away from the unassuming predator. All he did was make it easier to get caught, two practiced hands reaching to grip the owlbear's limbs and yank them back and down. It all happened so quickly, Maru gasping as he felt his elbows bend at a ninety-degree angle, wrists slipping through the holes of the cuffs before a quick zip tightened them up and held him in a perfect box tie, his elbows awkwardly squirming at his sides like a turkey's wings.

"R-Rowan, pl-please! Please don't..." Maru gasped as he felt his former friend nuzzle up against his shoulder, one hand firm on the restraints as he gave a little sniff and nibble along his entrée's neck, unable to help but run his tongue over the downy feathers along his neck.

"Mmmm... you taste absolutely perfect, my tender morsel... promise I'll make you look your best for the holiday." Nervous hooting soon turned to panicked hooting as he was dragged backwards by his arms, legs dropping out from under him as Rowan pulled the scrabbling owlbear away from his one chance at freedom. But instead of going right to the kitchen, there would first be a stop in the bathroom. Shoving the bound bird through the doorframe and locking the door behind him, the chef deer went to work on his quivering and shaking dish-to-be. Reaching his hands out to grip the owlbear's backfeathers with his paw before giving a hard yank. Rowan was surprised at how wide Maru's beak could open, a resonant 'HOO!!!' piping out of the plump owlbear's throat as he turned to see Rowan holding a handful of feathers.

Shaking his head, the owlbear's eyes squinting in pain as tears drooled out the corners, Maru did the only thing he could do now... plead. "Please... oh please, I- HOO!! I promise I'll do anything. I-I'll hunt for you! H-HOO!!! I'll bring you back a meal, anything, but th-th- HOOO!! Th-thaaaat..." Rowan didn't seem too concerned with bargaining as he went about the process of defeathering his very large turkey, occasionally having to push him back against the toilet if his squirms got a bit too close to the door. But despite his close size to Maru, Rowan's experience as a predator helped him keep control, and soon Maru found himself growing more and more naked. Tender, pink, goose bumped flesh ran up and down his arms and legs, while his blushing face could no longer hide behind his downy cheek feathers. Any spot that was predominantly fur was quickly dealt with by a swipe of the razor.

"Ohhhh there's nothing you can give me that I don't already have, cutie... a turkey for the holidays is the only thing I'll accept... now, hold still, I don't want to have to make giblet gravy earlier than I need to." The teasing comment came with the sensation of a cold razor blade pressed tight against the boy's inner thighs, running up to his taint and back down around his balls. For all his

struggles, Maru got very still as he felt the blade chip away at the fur on his most sensitive parts, the tender fluff revealing the owlbear's soft sheath, already swollen out from the growing arousal he was trying to keep hidden from his chef. "Mmmm... my my... what's this little turkey? Is that a pop-up timer you've got between your legs?"

"N-noooooo... I... Hoo!" Maru furrowed his brow, flicking his pink, defeathered ears back in frustration, before he felt the firm hand of his host-turned-chef starting to toy with his squishy sheath, the owlbear suddenly becoming flustered more and more as the pink tip of his cock began to peek out from the tip.

"Ohh no? You don't want me to touch it? Then why does your cock get nice and hard when I play with it, little turkey?"

"B-Because... Because... ohhhh..." Moaning softly, Maru gasped and shuddered as he felt himself give in to the arousal, shivering and huffing as the gentle touch of cervine fingertips caressed and teased over his cock, from the base, all the way up to the head, even toying around the glans, and letting his pad tipped fingers spread the slit open, teasing out the first little drool of precum. Rowan grinned as he collected the little dribble on his fingertip and offered it up to Maru's shy little beak, the chubby cheeked bird-bear first trying to refuse it, then squawking in shy frustration as his beak was opened for him and the dribble of salty pre spread against his tongue. He could have bit, hard, but his arousal betrayed him, the slowly stiffening and swelling shaft Rowan had in his other hand felt so good, he found himself lost in the flustered moment and even suckled on the offered up dribble before coming to his senses. "Because I'm not a turkey!" He finally stammered it out just as Rowan's pink-padded paw left his beak.

"Mmm... I dunno, Maru... you're cute poultry up top." He reached up to give the owlbear's pudgy cheeks a pinch. "And down low you've got beautiful, thick drumsticks." A hard slap to the rump punctuated the comment. "You even make your own gravy like a good butterball..." Jerking off the beautiful pink cock before him, Rowan decided to sample his own taste of the drippings, licking his deerish chops in an exaggerated way as the owlbear tried to squeeze his thighs together. "I think you look exactly like a holiday turkey should..." Quivering, Maru couldn't say anything in response, the distraction between his thick bearish thighs enough to keep the pudgy bird quiet, save for a few nervous hoots. Once he'd finished plucking and shaving, Rowan gave his poultry a scrub in the shower, making sure he was presentable for the roasting pan before bringing him back out to the kitchen.

The shy owlbear could only watch as his omnivorous chef casually lifted the oversized roaster off the floor and set it down on the counter. "I though you said you were going to help, Maru?" Rowan couldn't help but chuckle as he gave it a quick dust off. "No matter, I've got a more important job for you... go on, get up." The owlbear stood blinking for a moment at the roasting pan, gaze turning back to his chef, then down to the roaster, back again to see the deer crossing his arms.

"P-please Rowan..." Rowan furrowed his brow at the response, the plucked clean poultry only managing to flap his elbows like cute wings as he squirmed a little in place.

"Maru, this will go a lot nicer for you if you just relax... you're not leaving this house today..." With a smirk, Rowan reached his hand down and tenderly stroked the owlbear's shaft, teasing out yet another flustered little hoot from his meal. "...but you might just enjoy yourself before your date with

the oven.” As his turkey relaxed, Rowan gave him a little push where his neck and shoulder met, his broad chest puffing out as he tipped backwards against the countertop, legs scrambling in the air before his rump landed firm in the roasting pan. It would not take much work to ensure he stayed still. Rowan began by flipping his tender turkey over, rump-side down, so he lay awkwardly on his rear and forearms, a pose which forced him to puff out his turkey breast. Threading a few lengths of cooking twine around his upper arms, the deer worked quick to tie off his elbows so that they spread out just a little bit, the perfect approximation of turkey wings. His legs would pose a harder challenge, the thick bear-esque limbs kicking and scrabbling against the bottom of the pan, threatening to send the bowl of stuffing across the room if he lined up a good kick

Rowan practically put his full weight down on the kicking limbs, forcing them to the bottom of the pan so he could tie Maru’s legs off, crossing the ankles and securing them with a tight crisscross patterned knot. Despite the owlbear’s protestations, Rowan began to carefully fold his legs up, strapping the ankles to both thighs, the shy little owlbear becoming more and more vulnerable by the minute. As his thighs were tucked up against his belly in an approximation of drumsticks, cute little feet curling and splaying, his chef finished off the bonds. Elbows to knees and then knees to the lower restraints, ensuring he couldn’t move a muscle aside from the occasional pathetic flap of his arms or squirm of his legs. Pausing to admire his work, Rowan chuckled as he took a bowl of melted butter, seasoned with a mix of sage, basil salt and pepper, and began to slather it slowly over the owlbear’s helpless form. One hand tipped the bowl onto his belly and chest, the other slowly lathering the oily butter into tender poultry flesh.

“H-hey, please! I... Hoo!!” Any last minute protests were cut short as the drizzle of warm butter rolled down his belly and cascaded around the turkey’s groin, his cock and balls suddenly awash in fragrant butter, followed up by Rowan’s exploring hand, using the slippery, messy baste to get every crevice, while occasionally reaching between his thighs to stroke that needy cock. Maru’s head flopped back against the roasting pan, huffing and hooting loudly as he felt himself edged closer and closer, always kept a few strokes away from his orgasm.

“See? If you’re good, you get to enjoy yourself...” Rowan chuckled as his hand left Maru’s cock, the throbbing little sausage bouncing up and down as he returned to the owlbear’s head, wiping his oily palm off on the turkey’s face lewdly. “...though I don’t doubt you’ll be a little uncomfortable for the next part.” The deer chuckled as he turned the roasting pan on the countertop, letting Maru’s legs point towards him as he gripped up the massive bowl of stuffing. Shaking his head, the owlbear tried to plead but found himself gasping and shuddering as pudgy cervine fingers invaded his tight little ass, prodding with just one at first, then two, soon three and then a whole hand, Rowan unable to help but enjoy the sight of his eager meal’s cock throbbing between his thighs as his ass was opened up. “There we go... just try to enjoy it, you’re going to feel very full soon...”

“H-hoo-OOOOO!!” Maru picked the wrong time to look up, wide eyes framed by his thighs as Rowan picked up a glob of fresh, stock-soaked stuffing and proceeded to jam it forcefully his turkey’s opened asshole. Maru arched his neck, tongue lolling out of his beak as he felt the whole hand disappear inside of him, sliding up to the wrist before the gooey stuffing was deposited and the invading fist removed. Again, and again, the process was repeated, with only the slick stuffing as lubricant. But each time his hand slipped inside, or pulled back out, it ground against Maru’s prostate, causing the nervous little turkey to buck and squirm, his cock giving a tender leap in response each time it caressed

his pleasure button. And despite the slowly swelling belly, pouching out with each handful of stuffing, Maru was clearly enjoying himself, even as he began to burp and groan at the overstuffing of his gut. "Please no more... I'm so full, Rowan..." His face might have looked uncomfortable, but the hot flush of embarrassment was clearly still upon it as the deer gave a testing rub to his gut.

"Awww... look at you, handsome... tight as a drum after taking all that stuffing... I just need to make sure it doesn't come out again." Taking the last vegetable off the chopping board, Rowan chuckled as he showed his guest the big russet potato he had picked out special for his rump. "Just relax, sweetie..." Slowly, he pushed the fat root veggie up against his turkey's hole, Maru shaking his head in a panic as he gave the broken pucker a tease with it, before the tuber slipped inside his broken hole, seating itself as a perfect plug with only a little of the stuffing squishing out. Giving the veggie one last tap, to make sure it wouldn't pop out, Rowan couldn't help but add one last barb to the mix as he began spreading the lovely chopped veggies all around his guest-turned-poultry. "Mmmm... We gotta be careful... don't want your needy turkey timer to pop too early... but that potato is doing a good job keeping you hard, isn't it, cutie?"

While the deer tucked a few of the chopped veggies into a little pile to prop up his head, Maru shuddered as he realized how close he was to his end, quivering his slicked-up form as the oven's preheat timer dinged merrily. Rowan smiled as he gave one last look over his entrée, before producing a bright red apple from the countertop. "Normally..." he said with a little grin as he contemplated the apple, "I ask my dinner guests if they have any last requests... but I'm going to offer you something special, since you've been such a good friend..." Maru's beak drooped, the owlbear keeping quiet and listening as he felt his cock pulse softly in the warm kitchen air. "...I want the next word out of your mouth to be a simple yes or no... Anything else and I'll assume you mean no. Tell me, my butterball owlbear. Do you want me to give you one last orgasm before you pass?" Slacking his beak, Maru gulped as he looked away to the side. This was humiliating. He was prepared. Shaved, buttered, stuffed and garnished. There was no escaping his fate... and worse, the stuffing made it impossible for him to stop drooling precum, an incessant arousal throbbing between his thighs that his hands couldn't reach.

After a moment of pause, he finally turned back to Rowan, looked him in the eyes and simply said... "Yes, Chef."

"Good little butterball..." The deer's smile curled to a wicked grin as he tucked the apple in between the curves of turkey's beak, the owlbear moaning at the way it wedged his jaws open. Maru felt the world around him move and shift as Rowan hefted the massive roasting pan up and over to the oven's door. He was careful to shift his weight in order to get the oven open without embarrassingly dropping the turkey. But once it was, Maru felt the blast of heat roll over his naked form, skin tightening into goosebumps as his roaster slid along the metal rack backwards, the kitchen disappearing as the gaping oven maw surrounded his body from all sides. Glowing coils framed the owlbear's view to the left and right as he watched Rowan settle him inside. "...I'll see you at your first basting. Once you've had a little time to cook, we'll see about getting you off."

"Mnnn?! MMMPFH!" Maru grunted into his tight apple gag, one last muffled hoot escaping as the oven door closed before his very eyes, locking him into the seething heat. His view darted softly, left and right, nothing but roiling heating coils, the bathing orange glow radiating all across the owlbear-turkey's body. It wouldn't take long for Maru to have to close his eyes, his buttered-up cheeks seething hot as the roiling heat swelled about his body. It wouldn't take long for his discomfort to reach a fevered

pitch, the boy twisting his pudgy body as hard as he could in the pan, doing anything to try and evade the torrential heat, just as the layer of oily butter began to steam. The fragrant scent of warming oils hit Maru's nose, the pain welled up around his body underscored by the sudden realization his flesh from tip to tail had already turned from soft pink to a bright, angry red.

"MNN!! NNNGH!! MNNN!" Maru pleaded with muted half-words, his body yanking hard against the bonds that held him in such a degrading position, barely managing an inch of wiggle as he futilely tried to free a wing, a drumstick, anything. Opening his eyes once again, he was treated to the sight of his chef through the oven window, having pulled up a stool and popped open one of his cold beers to relax. Rowan's other hand gently stroked his own eager cock as he watched his meal suffer. For a moment, a tear drooled down Maru's face, his feet gently curling in the seething heat, his pounding shaft displayed proudly between his tucked up thighs as he lay helpless amidst a death bed of vegetables. Clenching his eyes once again, Maru cried out louder just as the tear began to sizzle on his cheek. Rowan's face slowly curled to a broad, perhaps cruel, smile as he stroked himself off, watching his owlbear friend scream and struggle in a frenzied final bid to escape.

"Mmmm... just like that, my little turkey..." Rowan bit his lip softly as he watched, drinking up the show. Every muffled plea, every twist of his body. He could even make out when his name was called, muffled by the apple gag and cried out first in fervent panic, and then slurred desperation as Maru's body began to lurch in the height of distress. Each breath came with a heavy heave of his chest, pauses to try and regain his strength accompanied by wincing moans as the oven overpowered him. All the while, Rowan watched and stroked himself off, panting ever so gently as he took another swig of his beer just as the oven timer dinged cheerily. His confused mind blinked a few times as Maru watched his deer friend stand and open the oven door. The heat-addled owlbear could only hope it was a miracle.

It was a breath of fresh air, or it would have been had Maru's angry-red body not been radiating so much heat, enough that the cool outside air hardly touched him. Moaning into his apple gag, the exhausted owlbear opened his sluggish eyes, pleading that this was all just a game, that he was going to be let out. His hopes dashed the moment he felt an icy chill hit his body, a panicked squawk escaping the turkey's beak as Rowan upturned the dregs and foam of his beer over the helpless fowl's belly, a festive sizzle of pumpkin ale adding to the natural drippings and sweat coming off the meal to be.

"Gotta make sure you don't dry out," offered Rowan rather unhelpfully as he lifted a basting brush dipped in a bowl of melted butter and began to paint long broad strokes of herbed butter back over the helpless poultry, teasing the bristles over wide swaths of heat-ravaged flesh. But he had promised a final orgasm, and took his time basting the owlbear's erogenous zones. He contemplated the whimpering half-hoots that Maru made while toying with that turkey breast with each tender swipe of his bristles. Soon, the teasing dipped lower, and Maru moaned in heat-fueled distress as he felt the brush toy along his thighs and over his groin, getting closer and closer to his arousal. "Oh my, sweetie... this turkey timer looks about ready to pop up..." Rowan chuckled as he began to haphazardly baste over the owlbear's throbbing shaft, the stiff pleas soon turning to uncoordinated moans as endorphins flowed, the strange juxtaposition of pleasure and pain bringing renewed struggle to Maru's panic.

It wouldn't take long. It never did when the meat was as secretly willing as Maru was. As his head flopped side to side, eyes lidding ever so softly, Maru struggled and spasmed in need as his chef teased and basted his cock with the warm fluid, occasionally dipping the bristles down to his balls or circling the softening potato plugging his ass. With a shuddering moan, and thrusting his hips as far as

the bonds allowed, Maru panted through his nostrils as he could no longer contain it. A rush of endorphins hit his body, causing the half-baked bird to lift his head in one last gasping hoot, hips bucking in time as he came hard across his belly and chest, the first blob managing to plop straight onto his beak. Rowan coaxed him through the warmth of the afterglow, cooing softly before raising his brush to tenderly slather the fresh owlbear cum into his belly and chest, proudly leaving that last gob to bake into a darkened spot on his face, before tucking his turkey back in to roast at long last.

With the afterglow fading, so too did Maru, his body giving out as he was returned to the oven to finish on his own time. Rowan chuckled as he watched his turkey's eyes close for the last time, head laying back fitfully on its bed of veggies. Content with his victim's final moments, the deer decided instead to grab himself another beer. It would take about fifteen minutes or so for the unconscious struggles and involuntary gurgling hoots to quiet down, leaving the owlbear's transformation to poultry complete. The day would be tortuous in a very different sense for poor Rowan. He had to sit and wait, idly playing with himself as he watched the minute changes to his meal. How his flesh turned to a beautiful dark red, soon shaded a golden-brown hue. How a fresh baste of herbed butter brought a crisp suppleness back to his meat. And how, the more he dripped savory, natural juices into the pan, the more his belly began to pouch out, the stuffing deep inside expanding with nowhere else to go.

Hours later, Rowan nearly squealed as he heard the oven timer go off for the last time. His hooves clapped in an excited scramble to the kitchen, like a fawn at the holidays, his eager shaft bobbing between his thighs as he raced to bop the timer off. With oven-mitted hands, the deer could hardly contain himself as he slid Maru out one last time, his body quiet and still at long last, a beautiful golden brown and bound in the perfect turkey pose. Carefully, making sure not to drop him, the deer walked shaky-legged over to the holiday table, placing his guest of honor upon a few sturdy wooden trivets before gathering up some of the drippings and carefully tenting the bird in foil to let the roast rest. It wouldn't take long to finish the preparations: cook up a simple pan gravy, pop the cork on the lovely gift wine, apply some adorable oversized turkey frills over his exposed and browned feet, and finally settle down with a few buttered dinner rolls to complete the Thanksgiving spread.

With a broad smile, Rowan opened the foil-wrapped roast, gasping as fragrance practically rolled out from under the cover to reveal a perfectly cooked bird. Steam wafted from Maru's nostrils and around the edges of his beak, his body cooked beautifully through to a perfect death. The deer tried to suppress his rush, his urge to eat egged on by his throbbing lust. Taking a breath, he first plated up a lovely helping of roast vegetables onto his platter, a fitting final resting place for his friend-turned-food. With a last flourish, honing his carving knife over the roast, the host turned his attention to the guest of honor, who had been awaiting his big moment with endless patience. Licking his lips, the deer began to carve.

Carefully, the knife blade dipped down to Maru's chest, touching the crackling skin ever so gently as he picked a spot to be pierced by the carving fork. As juices ran clear down the side of his lovely turkey breast, Rowan began to carve thin, tender slices of breast meat from the owlbear, carefully plating each one so it draped over his roasted vegetables, before returning to cut the next. Deciding he wanted some dark meat to round out the meal, the deer did the same to one of Maru's thighs, a gentle puff of warm steam wafting off the drumstick as he layered out the juicy dark meat. Finally, slipping the blade up between his meat's legs, Rowan carved off the prize for his dish, the cooked-hard shaft he had



spent so long teasing. Slicing like butter, he placed the now very much popped turkey timer down on the plate, making sure to smother the rich meat in gravy before setting himself down at last.

All that hard work, all that patience grooming his friend for the holiday feast. It all paid off. As Rowan lifted his glass of wine, giving it a soft sniff with his snout before putting the glass to his mouth, he felt the fur on his neck stand on end... something unsettling, the sensation of being watched. Despite being feint, the off-putting moment was just enough to raise his eyes to the nearby window, just in time to catch something shift behind it. Black, but perhaps also white? The vague shape flashed out of the window frame before he got a good look, the deer's confused mind thinking at first it might have been a cat... hard to tell though, maybe it was some leaves fluttering in the wind? Shaking it off, Rowan smiled as he put his knife and fork to the tender meat, sighing happily as he cut a perfect first bite. A little light meat and a little dark too. Popping it in his mouth, he didn't bother with manners as he chewed aloud, smiling up at the baked bird on his table. "Happy Thanksgiving, Maru, hun... You came out perfect."