

The Thanksgiving of my almost-17th birthday:

Here is what happened the Thanksgiving that was right before my 17th birthday:

I wanted our family to have one of those Thanksgivings like you see in ladies' magazines and homemaking magazines. We weren't going to have turkey, not plain old turkey! We were going to have duck! And my mother's special fruit and cream cheese salad, and all kinds of things that we had for years had at Thanksgiving. I was at work on the food from about 6 AM on. But no one was interested. My mom was angry with my stepfather Art, screaming mad, and under these conditions it was hard for my brother and sister to want to be anywhere near the kitchen, which was the center for the screaming fits. But I was determined. Maybe once the duck was cooked to perfection and everyone had become mellow from eating delicious food, things would change.

But things got worse, angrier, louder, awfuller. For some reason we all decided to pile into the car and go from Green Lake to downtown, and look at all the Christmas lights. But guess what? On Thanksgiving night, after dinner, there are no people. Or maybe only people who didn't have Thanksgiving dinner. I got a look at them because, during one of her angrier moments, my mother demanded that my sister and I get out of the car. She would pick us up later.

It was cold. But Chris and I loved it. It reminded us of Christmas. Unlike the tears that were drying on our cheeks. Why did our mother sometimes act as if she hated us? I was crying as I got out of the car, and asked my mother, "Why are you so mean, I was only trying to make a nice Thanksgiving for us?" She had no comeback, so she snorted.

Chris and I walked around a dark and mostly unpopulated downtown for about 20 minutes, then my mom saw us and asked my stepfather to stop and pick us up. She said nothing about the dinner, nothing about the fight, nothing about anything. I felt so empty. Because I had figured out why my mother acted this way. Now that we were almost grown up, she had begun to resent us. She was sure that we were not going to love her any more, and so she was preparing herself for this awful eventuality by not loving us.

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