

The Daily Novelette

From Soup to Nuts
By Jane Osborn

WHEN it was agreed that Ballister, father and mother, should go to California the first of November, the rest of the Ballisters rather took it for granted that the usual Thanksgiving reunion at the Elms should be dispensed with. That is, all but twenty-year-old Janet, who was remaining at home that winter with old Uncle Ned, her brother, Tom, still at high school, and faithful Maggie, in the kitchen.

Wednesday night at eight her brother arrived with two classmates. They had had dinner on the way, knowing that "company" dinner the day before Thanksgiving would not be a welcome proposition to any housewife. A flushed but happy Janet met them in the family living room after Maggie had let them in.

"Well, sister," beamed Malcolm, "how goes it? We've brought husky appetites and we had a slim dinner tonight so as to have room for a big feast tomorrow. Have you ordered everything—from soup to nuts? Cranberry sauce, stuffing, nuts, raisins?"

Janet nodded in proud affirmative. "How much does the turkey weigh?" said one of the companions, feeling that he ought to add his comment.

He saw, but did not know the reason for a quick intake of breath on the part of Janet. She bit her lip.

"Thirty-five and a half pounds," she hazarded. "But I don't expect it till tomorrow. You know the butcher is so busy; sometimes he puts off the delivery until the day."

Malcolm was going to suggest an evening spent together in the big living room. But Janet excused herself. She said she had to see about the pies in the kitchen.

She fled to the kitchen and then up the back stairs to her room and donned her coat and hat. She fled down the back stairs and then through the lonely driveway of the Elms down the suburban street to the shopping section of town. Some of the stores were still open. Her own butcher had closed, but a rival showed a light still burning. "I'd like to buy a turkey," said Janet.

But the butcher assured Janet that no more turkeys were to be had. He had every bird to sell the one he had secured for his own family use. Janet went home and rousing Maggie from a catnap in the kitchen told her of her plight. "They are giving turkeys away to the poor folk down at the Second Church," said Maggie. "Maybe you could get one there."

"They were still giving out dinners at the Second Church and Janet entered the dimly lighted parish house, with shawl drawn close around her face.

"Could I have—have a turkey?" she asked the women at the desk. I am very poor."

Janet's idea was to get the turkey by hook or crook, then the next day to return to the church and explain and apologize and pay them two or three times as much as the turkey had been worth. The good woman looked up surprised. "We don't give out turkeys. We've had chickens and roasting pork in the dinners—but every dinner has been assigned. You know you have to have your application in ahead of time—I'm sorry."

Janet sighed and withdrew. At the door she sighed again, and thinking of the fiasco of her Thanksgiving dinner without a turkey, clenched her hands convulsively. The good woman at the desk did not see her, but a young man who had just come into the room did.

Janet looked, recognized and then rushed out the door. But he followed. It was Roderick Black—Roderick Black with whom Janet had quarreled two months' before over a trifle. Janet hadn't ever intended to speak to him again—so she assured herself.

"Something's wrong," Roderick said as Janet tried to turn her head from him. "You wouldn't be here at this time of night if you weren't in some kind of trouble. I've promised to deliver some dinners in my car." Roderick was

leading Janet to the car that stood at the curb. "Hop in," he ordered, "and in a minute I'll be back with the baskets."

Roderick took Janet beside him in front, and as they went slowly toward her home she explained. "I wasn't ever going to speak to you again," she said with a sob in her voice, "but I had to tell some one. I think I must be half-witted or something. No one with a brain would forget the turkey for Thanksgiving—"

Roderick soothed with one hand and drove with the other, but he did not drive to the Elms. Instead, he drove a mile beyond to a rather famous country tavern. There he came to a stop. Janet waited. Inside Roderick was

told that turkeys were scarce, that it would be ruinous to business to give up one. Roderick offered to pay twenty dollars for a twenty-pound bird. He doubted the amount, paid cash and came out with the turkey under his arm.

He drove Janet home before he went about delivering the church dinners. "I don't know whether to have dinner at the Salvation Army or at the inn tomorrow," Roderick said.

"If you—would you—do you think you would like to come and have it with us?" Janet asked.

"That gave Roderick courage. Before he would let Janet and her turkey out of the car at the back door of the Elms he asked her, as he had asked her on several other occasions, to marry

him, and Janet said Yes. Then she fled into the kitchen, threw off her ragged shawl, put on an enormous apron to hide her old dress and walked slowly into the living room.

"Whose car just drove up at the back door?" asked Malcolm.

"I guess that was the turkey," said Janet with an air of unconcern. "By the way, I expect Roderick Black for dinner tomorrow. You don't object?"

Why, I thought you and Ned weren't speaking. Janet laughed merrily. "That's an ancient history," said Janet, and as she bade her brother good-night a few minutes later she said: "We may have something interesting to tell you—tomorrow."



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Ar. Wilmington	12:01 AM	9:25 "	7:25 "	1:10 "	7:10 "
Ar. Washington	12:25 AM	9:45 PM	7:45 PM	1:30 AM	7:30 AM
Ar. Richmond	8:45 "	1:16 AM	11:20 "	12:35 PM	8:15 AM
Ar. Raleigh Southern Place			7:40 AM	8:28 PM	8:15 AM
Ar. Pinehurst			7:40 AM	8:29 PM	8:15 AM
Ar. Camden			10:11 AM	10:38 PM	8:15 AM
Ar. Columbia Savannah	5:30 PM	4:05 PM	11:25 "	10:38 PM	8:15 AM
Ar. Brunswick	9:00 PM	7:15 PM		11:00 AM	11:00 AM
Ar. Jacksonville	9:40 PM	8:35 PM		8:40 AM	8:15 PM
Ar. Tampa	5:15 AM	5:10 AM		8:15 PM	6:15 PM
Ar. St. Petersburg	7:15 "	7:15 "		8:15 PM	6:15 PM
Ar. Bradenton Sarasota	7:12 AM	7:12 AM		8:15 PM	6:15 PM
Ar. Jacksonville	10:00 PM	10:00 PM		10:30 AM	10:30 AM
Ar. St. Augustine Daytona (Seaboard)	11:00 "	10:15 "		10:30 AM	10:30 AM
Ar. Palm Beach	1:44 AM	12:57 AM		1:20 PM	1:20 PM
Ar. Miami	11:30 "	11:30 "		11:50 "	11:50 "

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