



Death of a Turkey



by R.T. Trimmer

With the holiday season approaching here in our corner of the Garden Spot County, it seemed like a good time to get out and dust off some of the more memorable home-cooked Thanksgiving dinners of the past.

I particularly remember a Thanksgiving dinner of about fifteen years ago. It was my second year with my first wife (actually, she's my present wife, but the phrase does seem to keep her on her toes.) She comes from good Lancaster County stock just outside Mount Joy (boy, do they know how to eat!) and we had been invited to the farm for the big dinner. My brother (ol' hip-shot Tom) had just been pardoned from the U.S. Army and was looking for some good home cooking too. Well, after all, he had just spent twenty-seven months touring such resort areas as Oklahoma, west Texas, New Jersey's swamps, and Schweinfurt, Germany. After a long two years of beef and beer, we felt Tom should try something with

feathers. And thereby hangs our tale. Sneaky, huh?

Wednesday evening we got a call from Arlene's mother. Arlene is the wife I mentioned earlier, just to clarify the records. We were to help provide the Thanksgiving dinner! Arriving in the dark, chilly night, we were all promptly introduced to Brunhilda, thirty pounds of hissing, foul-smelling, evil-tempered female goose. Tom and I had been presented with the problem of arranging for the assassination and butchering of Brunhilda (about the equivalent of a clout on the ear with a splintery board!).

Trapping the goose in the floodlit barnyard, the family settled down on fence rails to Ha-Ha their way through our Roman Circus. After ten minutes of wrestling that honking horror, I would cheerfully have bitten her head off, if I could have held on! We were bloodied, muddied, winded, and so spattered with fertilizer, we could have been rolled into a nearby field and plowed

under.

"Shoot 'er!" Pop suggested happily. The tears in his eyes and the stitch in his side brought him to more violent thought than his natural attitude.

"In the head if you do," Mom insisted. "If you spoil the meat, you'll get roast beef tomorrow."

Well, since Tom and I are the naturally gifted outdoor types we are, this seemed more in keeping with our talents. But fifty shots later, we hadn't ruffled a feather of that elusive beast. Arlene was almost helpless with laughter.

"Okay smarty, d'ya

know why they don't send donkeys to college?" I panted. "Can you do any better?"

Dropping from the fence, she took the pistol I offered (smugly knowing she probably had never fired a handgun before in her life), calmly sighted along the barrel, and deftly blew

both eyes out of that crummy bird with one shot! We wasted more meat chasing Brunhilda for ten minutes.

Farmgirl!

We picked the feathers in deep, red-faced silence.

Brunhilda sure tasted good the next day, though!

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November, 1977

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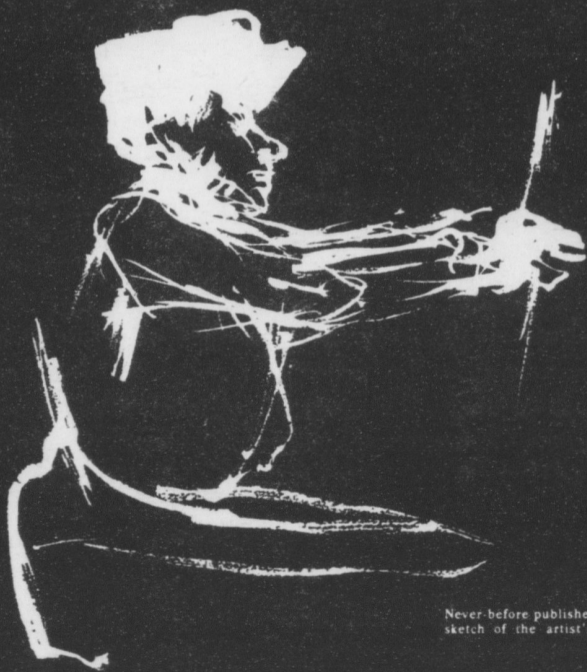
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