

## Countrified: Lynne Vertannes

The smell of eggs, fresh from the chickens and mushrooms sautéing in butter and garlic. This is breakfast, my favourite time of the day. Coffee brewing – I almost float by my nose down the staircase to the array of breakfast scents.

As I grab the sourdough loaf that I had made the night before and slice a thick wedge, my morning bliss is rudely interrupted by a high-pitched scream. “What was that!” Mum walks in and sighs “That my dear, is your cousin Sofia.”

“Since when? What are you talking about?” My dreamy breakfast eyes are now more like who burnt the toast eyes.

“Mum, you are kidding, aren’t you?”

“No darling,” she says nonchalantly and goes about filling the sink with soapy suds to do the dishes.

“Mum!”

“Darling, please don’t whine. You know how Sofia loves to spend time with us on occasional weekends.”

“Well, not really. It’s been months since she ‘loved to spend time with us’. She treats this place like it’s her country escape from the city and only when she’s trying to impress someone. She doesn’t know the first thing about the farm or feeding the animals.” I’m interrupted by what looks like a chocolate-covered marshmallow as Sofia walks in, squirming in her white overalls, which are filthy and a pair of Gucci black, mid-heel boots. I eye these off as totally inappropriate but a pang of jealousy soars through me.

My jaw drops and eyes pop.

She is dripping in muck. “This is so disgusting. How do you people do this? Look at me.” Her high-pitched voice hurts my ears.

I look disgustedly at Sofia, “What the heck have you been doing and for the love of farm life, why are you wearing white?”

She huffs in frustration. I feel a little smirk grow across my face and bite my tongue.

“I need coffee” and she blunders onto our beautiful parquetry kitchen floor. I lunge forward, putting the palm of my hand on her chest. “Not looking like that you don’t” and I push her back.

“Excuse me.” She straightens herself and pushes me to the side. I slide my right foot under her left Gucci boot and topple her. Milton the pig rushes in snorting, pushing his snout onto Sofia and she screams. I now understand what she had been doing – Milton is not the easiest farm animal to feed.