

## The Morning After

Maggie cast her eyes around the long, makeshift banquet table and sighed. ‘What are we meant to do with all these leftovers?’

‘I don’t know. Make a stew?’ Lizzie replied. She rolled up her sleeves and began piling dirty plates onto a wooden tray.

‘I suppose we could toss the venison and the vegetables into a pot, but...’ She pointed to the remains of three, large fowls, hardly touched. ‘What about those? What could we do with them?’

Lizzie shrugged. ‘The turkeys? Wasn’t a fan, if I’m being honest. Too dry. Would it have killed them to add a bit of seasoning? *Honestly*. If I’d known the guests were bringing them, I’d have made some gravy and maybe a nice cranberry sauce to serve on the side.’

Maggie gathered her long skirt and bent to pick up an earthenware jug off the ground. ‘Still, I’m grateful,’ she said, straightening. She set the jug on the table and crouched to collect strewn cups. ‘This year’s harvest would’ve been pitiful if they hadn’t stepped in to help us.’

‘Nice people, the Wampanaog. Couldn’t ask for better neighbours, really.’

‘We’re lucky we settled here in Plymouth instead of further south, don’t you think?’ Maggie asked, rising to her feet. ‘I’ve heard savage rumours about the Pequots. Captain Standish reckons they’re cold-blooded killers.’

‘Oh, I wouldn’t listen to a word Standish says. The man is a shameless drunk,’ Lizzie replied. ‘Come to think of it, all of our men are. Just look at all the beer and cider they went through last night!’

Maggie put down the stack of wooden cups and dusted off her skirt. ‘Yet, here we are, cleaning up after them whilst they sleep it off.’

‘Did you happen to notice the Wampanaog men?’ Lizzie asked, lowering her voice.

‘I thought that Squanto fella was quite a dish. Gorgeous hair. *Lurvly* arms,’ Maggie said, grinning.

Lizzie swatted her friend’s arm playfully with a rag and laughed. ‘You’re such a minx, Maggie! What I meant was... Did you see how the men did all the serving? They even offered to help clear up before they left. The women didn’t lift a finger once they sat down.’

‘They were looking after their children.’

‘Weren’t we doing the same? We also did the gathering, cooking, serving, and now, the cleaning,’ Lizzie said grudgingly. ‘You know what I think? The women must rule the roost in their culture. A matriarchal society, I think it’s called.’

‘How did they get that right, I wonder?’ Maggie asked.

‘No idea, but they could teach us a thing or two. I didn’t risk my life and travel all this way to the New World just to carry on taking orders from men. It’s 1621 for Pete’s sake! It’s high time we’re treated as equals.’

‘Amen to that, Lizzie.’

Lizzie glanced around the table then tore off a bit of turkey and popped it into her mouth. ‘Pie.’

‘Pardon?’

‘The leftover turkey. We can put them in a pie.’