



Passover, new life

Jonah and Leo had been married for ten years already, they were a Jewish marriage certainly far from the orthodox branch, but nevertheless they love to honor their traditions. It was April 15th in the afternoon and both were busy with the preparations of the Seder, and although both were doing it with emotion, Leo couldn't help but notice a somewhat melancholic attitude on Jonah's part, he knew what it was for and it was a little sad he couldn't do anything about it as every year the same thing happened, no, there was nothing to do about it but take it with resignation and make it part of their tradition.

It was six o'clock in the afternoon, the scene was about to turn grey when a few knocks on its door distracted them from their thoughts, that would have to be Emmet. A puny and cheerful boy in his 20s, a frequent customer of Jonah's business, who had gone on to become one of his greatest friends since last year, they needed help getting dinner ready on time and he was the person they trusted the most.

After a few minutes the neat white tablecloth was on the table, the fine cutlery in its place, the glasses placed and ready to be filled at any time, the traditional keara was the only missing thing at the table at that moment, and the guests, of course. A broken glass sound in the kitchen caught the attention of Leo and Emmet who came to help Jonah, who apparently dropped the wine bottle by mistake and it was the only one they had prepared for the occasion.

The evening was approaching and the guests would arrive at any moment, luckily there was a liquor store nearby, Leo offered to go and replace the bottle they had just lost, he stepped out in a hurry leaving his husband and friend finishing the rest of the preparations. Minutes passed and one by one the guests began to arrive, half an hour passed when the door rang again, Jonah asked Emmet to open. Behind the threshold Leo waited with a bottle in hand and a seriously worried expression.

"You'll have to take my place" was the first thing he said, apparently a family matter of urgency needed his presence there so he had to leave as soon as possible, promising to arrive before the end of the night but it was important for him to get Emmet's word, "you'll have to take my place"... confused, the friend agreed before he could go back inside, he didn't know how to tell Jonah that her husband would be absent most of the dinner or why he couldn't tell him directly, resigned he hoped to find a good time to tell him.

The guests had already taken their place, a pleasant atmosphere could be felt with everyone talking, laughing, enjoying the meal, and Jonah happy among them doing his thing, this made Emmet feel even more the weight of the news he was about to give. He decided to sit by his side, in the place Leo would have occupied if he had been present and he relayed his message. The husband listened to him and as if he had been told the weather he reacted without hardly flinching.

To the friend's surprise the dinner passed as if nothing had happened, confused he decided to eat, he took his full glass and gave the first sip of the night. A strong taste between bitter and sweet invaded his mouth, he decided to take a bite of the meals he had in front but an urge to keep drinking got hold of him strongly, so he took a second sip, letting the festive atmosphere to get inside him.

The diners were still at the table, each one with his own, Jonah with a high spirit ate as if he didn't have a husband to wait for, Emmet was drinking his fourth glass of wine when he began to feel a slight dizziness product of alcohol, So he didn't know if the events that followed were real or a hallucination, only hours later he would react to his situation. With clumsiness and some urgency he rose from his seat confused; a total silence was made, the dinner stopped with all the laughter and singing, suddenly all attention was focused on him, with his host being the most interested person on him.

He took his hands to his stomach due to dizziness, a desire to vomit took hold of him, or was it another thing? , his intestines made very loud noises as his belly began to inflate by gas (he thought), slowly and uncomfortably expanding. Surprised he raised his arms to have a better view of what was happening, his belly inflated uncontrollably, more voluminous than what the clothes could bear, it peeked under his sweater bursting a pair of buttons from the shirt.

His face started a similar process, with his cheeks bubbling and changing shape and size, the skin of his neck began to pile up in a mass of fat that made him look like he had two chins, the look of fright on his face didn't bring any expression to the presents, those who contemplated the scene as if it was something of the everyday life; They paid him just the slightest attention, like hoping he'd finish up soon so they can continue with their dinner.

Another wriggle, he took his hand to the belly that hung flaccid and huge on his previously thin body, the trousers helped him to hold it a little, it had grown so much that he feared that it would overflow to the ground. He bit his lips in fright and spit once he felt it, apparently a layer of fine hair was growing quickly under his nose, he took his hands to the head in desperation only to notice that his long and careful combed tuft was no longer in its place, he was losing hair quickly. Gradually he began to feel tight inside his pants, his hip and butt were gaining volume to match the belly.

Finally the body ended up inflating gaining 35 kilos in this process, still feeling dizzy and a little suffocated inside those clothes, tiny for him. The belly protruded notoriously as the cloth could not contain it in any way. He felt the face that bore a distinguished beard, not only had it gained weight, also years, or at least in appearance.

A diner welcomed him, "Good night Leo, you took a while this time", and they all went on with it. At that time he remembered Leo's insistence to take his place, although he never imagined it would be so literal... Jonah took Emmet (or would he now be called Leo) by the hand and took him to his room. "Don't worry, the first time I was scared a lot, but this has happened every year for five years now, there's nothing else I can do but carry on, right?".

He was forced to take it just as naturally, what else was he left with? Where could he go knowing that no one would recognize Emmet again? He looked around for a moment, letting himself be flooded with resignation, making the first effort to get used to what would be his new home. On the night table was a framed photo of Leo, perhaps the first, the only picture of him in the whole house now that I thought about it.

Jonah helped him take off his sweater and pants, left him a complete change of clothes on the bed, sat down and changed. He left his clothes in a secluded basket in a corner, where he was able to count four other changes of clothes, all of them of different sizes and styles. He went out to dinner and welcomed his new life.