

LEVELED BOOK • N



Spare the Turkey

Written by Jennifer McStotts
Illustrated by Nicolas Jackson

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Darryl was excited about having **Thanksgiving** at his friend Jessica's house. Then his mom said the word **vegetarian** while they were stopped at a red light.

"They're what?" Darryl asked.

“Vegetarian, dear. It means they don’t eat meat,” his mom replied.

“I know what it means,” Darryl snapped. “This is a **potluck**, though, right? So someone else will bring the turkey?”

“I doubt it,” his mom said. “They asked everyone to bring vegetarian dishes.”

“Having no turkey on Thanksgiving is just plain crazy. How are they going to make stuffing?” Darryl moaned. “I’m going to **starve!**”

“You might be surprised,” his mom said with a wink, but Darryl didn’t believe her.

“I need more than rabbit food for Thanksgiving,” he muttered.



His mom laughed as they pulled into the driveway of Jessica's house. Jessica burst out of the front door, looking excited to see them. She gave Darryl and his mom big welcome hugs before taking them inside. She introduced them to her parents and the other guests. In Darryl's mind, her parents looked a little too well fed to be vegetarians.





“I want to show you the dining room,” Jessica said. “Mom let me **decorate** it this year, and I made the salad.”

The dining room was fully decorated. Chains of different-colored construction paper hung from everything, including around all the chairs. Jessica had even woven multicolored placemats for each place at the table.



“How are we supposed to sit down?” Darryl asked.

“I hadn’t thought of that,” Jessica laughed. “I guess we’ll just have to break the chain.”

On the table sat the biggest bowl of salad Darryl had ever seen. Green, leafy things stuck out from the top. He could also make out onions, carrots, tomatoes, and what might have been beets.

“So this is it?” Darryl asked, looking at the salad. How much would he have to eat to feel full?

“Isn’t it fantastic?” Jessica asked.





“Oh, it’s . . . wonderful. The best I’ve seen,” Darryl said. It was an impressive salad—but it was only a salad. He didn’t want to be rude, though. Maybe he and his mom could get some real food afterward. Then they could laugh about their “Guinea Pig Thanksgiving.”

“I’m glad you like it,” Jessica said.

“We usually play board games until dinner is ready. Want to play?”

“Sure,” Darryl said, confused. It looked to him as though dinner was ready.





Playing board games with everyone was a blast, and Darryl met some cool people. Most of the guests weren't vegetarians, either.

"I've never had a better dinner than I've had in this house," said one.

"This family should open a restaurant," said another.

Darryl figured they were being polite because Jessica's family was right there. Either that, or they *really* liked salad.

Finally, Jessica's mom said it was time to eat, and everyone filed into the colorful dining room.

The room had changed. Every surface was filled with plates, bowls, and dishes of food. Darryl didn't know the names of half of them.



Everyone broke through the chain, sat down, and started passing the food around. There were mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, bean and cheese tamales, and vegetarian chili. Someone had brought a small



vegetarian turkey that jiggled on the table (and tasted nothing like

turkey). Darryl tried some sweet potatoes and yams, which he learned are two different plants. He also learned that stuffing made without a turkey is called **dressng**. He even had some of Jessica's salad and told her he loved it—because he did.



After the desserts, his mom leaned over and whispered, “I told you that you’d be surprised.”

Darryl opened his mouth to talk but then leaned back in his chair with a sigh. “I’m too full to argue,” he said.

Glossary

decorate (<i>v.</i>)	to make something more attractive by adding color or an ornament to it (p. 7)
dressing (<i>n.</i>)	a mixture often made of bread, seasoning, vegetables, and other foods that is served as a side dish (p. 14)
potluck (<i>n.</i>)	a meal to which people bring food or drink to share (p. 4)
starve (<i>v.</i>)	to die from lack of food; to suffer from extreme hunger (p. 4)
Thanksgiving (<i>n.</i>)	a North American fall holiday celebrated with expressions of thanks and a special meal (p. 3)
vegetarian (<i>n.</i>)	someone who does not eat meat (p. 3)

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Correlation

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