

## Sink or Swim

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And then for some odd reason, my husband declared that we should spend at least 50% of the holidays with his side of the family. My parents didn't take it well. They celebrate all holidays on their given day. My mother says - there are no make-ups – so if I miss a holiday with my side – I'm out of luck.

For this reason, over the course of our 14 year marriage, I have whittled down my husband's percentage to approximately 7%. He gets Ground hog day and Labor day and I get all other holidays with my family. If asked, he will tell you that it's a completely unfair pro-rata percentage, but deep down he loves every minute of it. That's because he is a cookie cutter

who has been allowed into the world of nutcrackers.

Now, there is nothing wrong with being a cookie cutter. In fact, if it were not for these families, holiday sweaters would become obsolete. Members of cookie cutter families are known to gather together every year around a beautiful holiday table, the centerpiece of which is their glorious turkey. They banter back and forth and everyone is courteous and pleasant. Dad smokes a pipe, Mom wears an apron and kids frolic in the meadow. On Thanksgiving, they each draw a name out of a bowl to determine what \$10 dollar Christmas gift they will buy for their chosen, cherished, family member. And on Christmas day, when they open their gift and see that beautiful scarf that sister has bestowed on them, they are happy to have it.

I don't recall frolicking in any meadows growing up. And if I were to give anyone a scarf for Christmas, my cherished family member would outwardly grumble and ask me for the gift receipt.

You see, I hail from the other type of family...my family are all proud card carrying members of the nutcrackers. You have to be pretty tough nut to make it through one of our holidays. But if you can make it through, it will be one of the best holidays you have ever had.

Now, nutcrackers have rules: 1) No holiday sweaters...of any kind. If you wear one, my Granny will tell you that you look ridiculous; 2) You must buy a gift for everyone...and it better be a good one...if not, my mother will hand it back to you and say "you just keep it; "3) Be fully prepared to answer my Uncle Lee's questions: "How much money did you make this year" and "who did you vote for." Should he deem that you could have earned more money or that you voted for the wrong person, he will call you an idiot and walk away; 4) If you have gained any weight since the last holiday – wear something loose fitting – because my Aunt Ann can spot those five extra pounds like nobody's business and has no qualms telling you "that nobody wants a fat wife."

We eat a lot, laugh a lot and usually at least one person cries and leaves in a huff. It's truly a day of joy and family!

When my cookie cutter husband was lucky enough to attend his first nutcracker holiday, he was a little taken aback. His first Thanksgiving experience was a classic. He took his plate, walked around the buffet and then turned to my mother and asked, ever so politely, "Excuse me, but

where is the turkey?" My mother replied, "We stopped doing turkey years ago ... none of us like turkey...try the lamb."

"That doesn't make sense...its Thanksgiving... is she kidding about the turkey?," he asked me in a whispered panic. "Nope," I said and walked away.

He called out to me – but I didn't look back – that's because nutcrackers have a sink or swim mentality...and I had to make sure he was a swimmer.

He is. So much so, that he has banded together with some of the other cookie cutters who have married into my family and now each holiday one of them brings a turkey and sits it right next to my mother's lamb. My mother doesn't like it one bit.

This year, my husband claims he and my cookie cutter sister-in-law are even going to break out their holiday sweaters. I've told him to go for it... nothing says Christmas like watching Granny make somebody cry.

### **Telling Tales** □

Angel Kane and Becky Andrews live in Wilson County. This is their story (or tale) about their life, families and times that they share. Besides their weekly column Telling Tales Angel and Becky Co Founded Wilson Living Magazine. The idea of developing a magazine for Wilson County first came to Becky and Angel one afternoon while they sat on her back porch watching their children play in the backyard.

They were discussing the outpouring of emails, calls and responses to their column "Telling Tales" and wanted to find a way to capture that community spirit. People were stopping them wherever they went to share their own "tales." They suddenly realized everyone has a story to tell and many of these stories were amazing. And in that moment, Wilson Living Magazine came to life. Be sure to check out Wilson Living Magazine at [www.wilsonlivingmagazine.com](http://www.wilsonlivingmagazine.com)

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