

DELTARK THE TUNNEL-MASTER

COLLIN GOSSEL

INT. NICE DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON

DANA (early twenties), MOM, GRANDPA, and GRANDMA sit around the table, which is set with fancy plates and silverware. All are wearing nice sweaters and big smiles.

MOM

It's great to have you back from college for thanksgiving, Dana!

DANA

I've missed you all! And thank you guys so much for welcoming my new boyfriend.

GRANDPA

We actually haven't met yet! What's your name young man?

DELTARK (mid-twenties) sits next to Dana. He is wearing a strange, alien uniform that's heavily ripped and covered with dirt. He has a spike coming off each shoulder, and his hair is long, wild, and greasy.

DELTARK

(pleasantly)

Oh, hi there! I'm Deltark, Tunnel-Master of the World Beneath. It's great to meet you!

GRANDMA

(wary)

So, what exactly does a tunnel-master do?

MOM

Mom, don't be rude!

DELTARK

No no, it's fine! I oversee excavation of new breeding pits and travel-burrows throughout the entire North-American Sector.

GRANDPA

Ah, a working man! I like it. We need more of that in this country.

GRANDMA

Oh, frank, no politics at the dinner table.

DELTARK

I know what he means. Every day, one of my diggers comes to me whining. "There's gas. People are dying. I haven't seen the light in months." It's like learn some work-ethic!

Deltark chuckles and butters a roll. The family sips their drinks.

DAD walks in, carrying a turkey.

DAD

Turkey's ready!

The family goes "ooooh!" and claps warmly! Deltark's eyes widen.

DELTARK

Forgive me - what is turkey?

DAD

Well, it's a bird.

DELTARK

Ah. There are no birds in The World Beneath. We have vole, badgers, insects. You know, burrowing creatures.

DANA

What do you eat at Thanksgiving?

DELTARK

Dirt.

The family nods, trying to understand.

MOM

Well, anywho, before we eat, we always like to say a little grace.

DANA

Oh, Mom, can Deltark say grace? He's such an amazing speaker.

MOM  
Well, of course, honey!

DELTARK  
Oh, I don't know.

The family encourages Deltark.

DELTARK  
Well, alright.

Light applause. Deltark stands up, glass in hand.

DELTARK  
(unholy screech)  
ALL HAIL THE DARKNESS. THE BENEATH  
SHALL RISE AGAIN. FIRE WILL BE OUR  
WANTON MISTRESS, DEATH OUR TRUEST  
BROTHER. SHEE-ARK NA-TROM HA!

Deltark raises his glass.

DELTARK  
(normal voice)  
Cheers.

Dana smiles. The family raises their glasses, eyes wide.

DAD  
Alright, well, uh, let's cut this  
turkey. Oh, jeez, I left the  
carving knives in the kitchen. One  
minute.

DELTARK  
Allow me, Mr. Jameson.

Deltark produces a multi-bladed, swirling metal instrument from his pocket. The family takes a step back in alarm.

GRANDPA  
What in God's name is that?

DELTARK  
Oh, it's just your run-of-the-mill  
granite-grinder. It should be more  
than a match for this turkey.

Deltark calmly walks over, smiling at Mr. Jameson as he does so. He then stabs the grinder into the turkey with wild abandon. The family stares.

DELTARK  
 AYYYYAHH!

The turkey is shredded. Deltark eats a morsel.

DELTARK  
 Oh wow, Mr. Jameson, my compliments  
 to the chef. This is delicious.  
 Everyone, isn't this whole dinner  
 delicious?

Everyone murmurs their agreement. Deltark smiles and goes  
 back to his seat. Mom gathers herself.

MOM  
 Let's eat.

The family begins digging into the food.

GRANDPA  
 Deltark, could you pass the  
 potatoes?

DELTARK  
 Of course.

Deltark slams his boot against the ground. A dirty, bald  
 DIGGER dressed in rags bursts through the floor.

DELTARK  
 Potatoes. Grandpa. Now.

Nodding and slobbering wildly, the digger grabs the potatoes  
 and disappears back into his hole. The entire family sits in  
 silence for several seconds. Deltark continues eating.

Suddenly, the digger bursts up next to Grandpa and throws  
 the potatoes onto the table. Grandpa grabs his heart and  
 screams.

GRANDPA  
 Christ almighty!

DELTARK  
 It's no problem at all.

The digger makes a whining noise, like a dog.

DELTARK  
 No, digger! Only dirt for you  
 today! Back to your hole! Back I  
 say!

BLACKOUT