On the short ride home, grandma and grandpa filled the kids in on the day’s events. Upon arriving home, both Julius and Tanya were surprised to see such a nice table setting and so much food prepared.

“Okay, where’s the caterer?” said Julius is his usual tone. “Mom. Dad. I know you didn’t cook all this food all by yourself. This is not normal.”

“You’re right son, but today is a special occasion because we have special guests. Now have a seat so we can get started on eating this turkey. I’ve had to smell it cooking in the oven all day, but your mom would not let me touch it,” said dad.

The six of them sat down at the dinner table and carried on their conversation. Julius and Tanya told their parents and grandparents about their day at school and updated them on their hobbies and sports. They talked about everything from the art projects they’ve been doing in school to the day Julius broke his arm playing baseball just down the street with his friends.

The table looked glorious. Mom and dad had not only prepared turkey, but they had also roasted some vegetables including broccoli and carrots, corn on the cob, as well as mashed potatoes. Of course, what would Thanksgiving be without mom’s famous homemade biscuits, the highlight of every meal. With a little bit of apple butter applied to the center of each biscuit, they tasted as if they had come out of the oven at the local KFC restaurant. Only better. *Mmm, delicious!*

The table was also covered with candles and tiny decorative pumpkins to set the mood of a true Thanksgiving meal. The adults drank a smooth glass of white wine while Julius and Tanya enjoyed a glass of apple cider. This was a meal NOT to be forgotten, ever.

After polishing off their scrumptiously seasoned turkey and side dishes, the family retired to the living room where they carried out their laughing and story telling. About fifteen minutes into the discussion, the all-important question had to be asked. Julius was the one to do it.

“Grandpa, how is your back?” he asked curiously.

Grandpa was prepared for this question. He knew that although it wasn’t his fault, his back injury had brought a lot of stress upon his family. When he was hurt at work, it changed their lives forever. He had insurance, and that paid for his surgery and most of his follow-up care, but it did not pay for the housekeeper or the gardener or any of the other costs the family had. Grandma had to take care of him and work as well. Instead of saving money, they began to go in *debt*. Grandpa had to quit his job, and has not been able to work since.

“My back is just fine. It’ll never be back to normal again. I have been exercising every single day and getting stronger. Your grandma has *meant the world to me* during my recovery. I think this would be an appropriate time to share the good news with you. I have a brand new job. You are looking at the head librarian at the Kansas City Public Library.”

“What? Seriously? Why didn’t you tell us earlier?” yelled mom as if she’d just heard man had reached Mars for the first time.

“We couldn’t come all the way to California without a surprise. I was hired two months ago. I spend a lot of time at a desk and do not have to do a lot of heavy lifting, only some. The doctor says my back is strong, and I believe he is spot on. I feel good. I feel strong. Most importantly, I’m taking some of the load off your grandma once again and finally making some money. That’s how we were able to afford this trip,” said grandpa.

It was grandma’s turn to say something. “Your grandfather never lost sight of coming out here to see all of you. We know it’s been too long, but we also knew he needed to be healthy to make the trip. As long as everything continues to improve, we’ll be joining you at that very table for a Thanksgiving meal every single year. Besides, Missouri is too cold for us senior citizens. We like the warmer winter weather.”

It was time for some hugs all around. Soon after that, dad’s mind wandered to that smell coming out of the kitchen. It was the smell of warm pumpkin pie.

“I’ll get the whip cream!” he shouted as everyone laughed. “This calls for a piece of homemade pie.”