For generations, my family has lived in Maryland horse country. Nestled between suburban Baltimore and Amish farms, its low rolling hills are blanketed in green, interrupted only by long rustic wood fences which seemingly go on forever but, in fact, mark the property boundaries between horse farms. While most of the homes here are stately and grand, my family’s is small and humble, as befits tenants of a great estate.

My favorite time of year is Fall, for this is when the trees realize their multicolored potential and we are visited by families of quail and pheasant, each seeking sanctuary from amateur hunters. It is also the time when horses and hounds charge across the countryside, jumping fences, and crossing creeks in pursuit of the scented bag which has replaced the fox.

An old stone Anglican church on our property hosts Thanksgiving morning every year. The hounds and the horses, with their red-jacketed riders, assemble in front of it for a blessing by the pastor. Neighbors and tail-gating townspeople also gather to witness the blessing, letting the brisk autumn air blend with the prayer, sending it Heavenward. I stand at the periphery of the congregation, content to soak in all of the sensations from a discreet distance.

“Tom! Tom, where are you?”

That is the voice of my young neighbor, Frankie. He’s only five and we have been friends for about three years, now, ever since his parents allowed him to play with me. I turn from the ecclesiastic ritual to answer my friend’s call. He seems quite distressed and, as I get nearer, he continues to shout and wave his arms,

“Tom! Tom! You’ve got to get away from here!”

Now, he bends down to me and throws his arms around my neck, crying as he repeats,   
 “You’ve got to run away, now!”

Why, I wonder, would I want to run away from my home? Such a thought has never crossed my mind. Then, I see Frankie’s father running towards me.

“Frankie” his father says, “Go back to the house. Your Mother has made your favorite pancakes.”

The look on his face is one I vaguely remember from a few years ago when one of my relatives went missing: a sort of crazed, wild-eyed expression. His father leaps towards me and, I contemplate running, but am so overtaken with the suddenness of his arrival and behavior, that I stand stock-still.

“Tom!” Frankie cries again. “You’ve got to run!”

His father grabs me by both ankles and flips me upside down. Frankie rushes towards him, hitting him in the legs and saying, “I won’t eat Tom!” I won’t eat turkey ever again if you kill Tom.”

Just before I pass out, my brief life passes before my eyes and I realize: this is what happens when you become The Dinner.

What a surprise/ twist ending! Totally unexpected, especially with the super mood you’ve created. Great use of description and dialogue. Congratulations on a great job!

The only thing that stopped the flow of the story is the lavish description that seems to be from a much older narrator. It stopped me when you introduced Frankie and said that they played together. Perhaps if you don’t mention ages and only say they’ve been friends, that could solve it as I left in my note above. You could also shorten the ending so the reader wouldn’t have enough time to figure out what’s going on for a bigger shock