

The turkey is hanging out in a ziplock in the fridge with containers of sides surrounding it. Slivers of pie in tins clutter the counter and the crockpot is still in the sink soaking.

Ah, it must be the day after Thanksgiving. I only wish. It's Saturday already and when I stumble into the kitchen in search of chocolate milk, that is what will greet me.

What happened to Friday?

Let me preface this by saying I am perhaps the worst shopper in the world. I don't like crowds, I don't like people being rude and I don't like standing in line. With these things said, one might wonder what the heck I was doing heading out to shop on Black Friday. The name itself has a dark connotation if you don't know how it got its name.

The answer is simple. She's about 5 foot, has long blonde hair and thinks the sun rises and sets on my husband's command — Lotus, our adorable niece.

She celebrated a birthday recently and Christmas is right around the corner so the goal of the day was to find her birthday and Christmas presents. A few others were lucky as well and their names were crossed off the list — the nice list, of course.

So off we went in the morning to the in-laws and then headed to the mall. Yes, the mall on Black Friday. Doorbuster sales. One-hour sales. This sale. That sale.

We hit a particular store first because saw a coat she liked in a flier. Well, the coupon we had didn't take affect until 2 p.m. It was 11 a.m. Really? You can't take my coupon now? I have the money right here in my hand and you don't want it until 2 o'clock? Whatever.

So we put our items on hold and moved on.

The Lotus experiment

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The most enjoyable part of the day was just talking as we walked and shopped. I don't get to spend much time with 12-year-olds so I'm curious what makes them tick. I asked a lot of questions and answered quite a few, too.

Several of her habits and mannerisms made me raise an eyebrow. Apparently, Lotus and my husband are a lot more alike than any of us first thought. Several things came up on Friday that made me turn my head to said hubby and smile. All he said was, "What? See, it's not just me." I'm not sure that applies here. They're practically the same person on some things so I'm gonna say, "Yes. It kind of is just you."

At some point we got to talking about farms. Lotus is a city girl and hasn't much exposure to the rural life we enjoy here. She and her parents passed a horse farm or two on the way here but that was about it. So I explained that we have all kinds of farms — horse farms, pig farms, dairy farms, steer farms, combined farms, farms with alpacas and llamas and goats and chickens and well, a lot of things.

Today, we might put up grandma and grandpa's Christmas tree. This evening we have another outing planned. I can't wait. I haven't completed disassembled Lotus and put her back together yet. I have a lot of work to do.