

# An Early Christmas

Christmas came early to our humble abode this year. We have members of our family who are moving to Alaska next week. My cousin lived with us from her first grade year until she graduated from high school two years ago. Her husband is now a PFC in the Army and was recently stationed in Alaska. My father's niece came to live with us after she had been in at least three foster homes and my mother was approached by her case worker to discuss assuming custody of her. It was deemed much more beneficial for her to live with actual relatives. So on Thanksgiving Night of 1994, she came to our doorstep. I hate talking about her in the third person, but the first few years of her life were less than idyllic (and I will NOT get into that). Needless to say, she eventually became a much more important part of our family. Some of the little things that most of us take for granted she had to accept over time (leaving the bathroom door closed, getting too emotionally close too fast). However, I am ecstatic that she has grown into a young, mature, caring wife and mother to their 17 month old daughter. But like any siblings, we have had our share of quarrels.

So today was spent watching the Buckeyes handily defeat Northwestern (a three-peat to the National Championship is now out of the question, but a Bowl berth is still entirely likely). Then eating a feast after which I took a nap. After the nap, we watched all of the little ones open their gifts that were given to them before the departure. Later on, my cousin's best friend stopped by to deliver a rather expensive Build-A-Bear (or penguin as the case may be) and we played some Phase 10. I kept getting skipped time after time (by the same person) while another player continued on her way and eventually won the entire game. Not very strategically minded I must say. So, a bit of Christmas cheer arrived a bit early. May God bless the little family as they make their way

WAY North to Alaska.