

Yay For Octo-Moms!

by Thomas Van Kalken

<<We open on a crowded beach where we hear crowds milling in the distance and waves lapping.>>

Guy: Ahhhhh, what a lovely day for a beach trip ... the sun is out, my 70 spf sunscreen is on... and Mindy is nowhere to be seen! Where is she? We said to meet here at 10 o'clock ...

<<waves continue to lap>>

Dennis: Okay Reggie, hand me that bucket and shovel please

Reg: Coool!

Dennis: No! Reggie! Not that bucket and shovel the other one. The one that looks like a goldfish!

Reg: Coool!

Dennis: No! The other one that looks like a goldfish

Reg: Coool!

Fingerling: Alright G-Force your serve.

G-Force: You sure your ready for this old man?

Fingerling: Oh yeah, dude! I was born ready!

G-Force: Alright ... watch out; here comes the smack attack! Heeee yah!

<<G-Force serves the volleyball>> <<Fingerling gets hit square in the face>>

Fingerling: Oof! Ow!

G-Force: I told ya to watch out.

<<waves>>

Guy: Well, I'm sure Mindy will show up soon. In the meantime... I think it's about time I got started on my book ... <<rummages through bag>> 'a history of elbow patches and their uses'. I don't know if there's such a thing as the perfect beach read ... but I think this comes pretty close! <<Guy opens the book>> <<page turn>> Chapter one ... <<reading>> 'Elbow Patches and the Pharaohs!' Oooh ...

<<suddenly there's a lightning storm as the wow machine materializes>>
<<electricity builds until>>

Mindy: <<through loudspeaker>> Iiiiiincooooooooooming!

Guy: Mindy?

<<a huge splash as the wow machine crashes down into the water>> <<a big wave washes over everyone on the beach>> <<everyone is dripping wet>>

Dennis: Peh peh! Aghhhh! My sand castle!

Reg: Coool!

Dennis: Fine, our sandcastle whatever.

Guy: Gah! I'm soaked. <<smoosh sfx>> <<defeated>> My book!

<<the hatch on the wow machine gets unscrewed and opened>>

Mindy: I made it!

Guy: Mindy!

Mindy: Guy Razzzy!

Guy: Mindy! What are you doing in the wow machine? You completely soaked my book!

Mindy: Gah, sorry Guy Raz! I'm still trying to get the hang of those water landings.

Guy: I can see that.

Mindy: But now that I'm here we can get going.

Guy: Get going? Get going where?

Mindy: To the nursery! Why did you think I asked you all to meet me at the beach?

Guy: Uh, I thought we were having a nice relaxing day on the beach?

Mindy: You mean sitting around in the sun doing nothing?

Guy: Yeah.

Dennis: I was building a sand castle!

Reg: Coo!

Dennis: Reggie! You are not the lead architect!

Reggie: Coo!

Mindy: Booooooooooring!

Guy: Well, why did you bring us all to the beach then Mindy?

Mindy: For science Guy Raz!

Guy: For science?

Mindy: Yeah!

Guy: I'm not getting it Mindy.

Mindy: You don't have to get it Guy Raz. All you have to do is trust me completely and get in the wow machine.

Guy: but...

Mindy: Now come on Guy Raz... Anything for science?

Guy: <<sigh>> Anything for science.

Mindy: Yay! Who else is in?

Dennis: [running up] Oooh, me, me, me! I wanna come!

Reg: Cool!

Mindy: Okay, Reggie and Dennis are in. Hop in!

Dennis: Hooray! [chanting] Wow machine! Wow machine! Wow machine!

<<flutter of wings>> <<Dennis climbs aboard and down the hatch>>

Mindy: Fingerling? G-Force? Fancy a ride?

G-Force: I gotta stay back and teach Fingerling a lesson in volleyball.

Fingerling: What?!! You couldn't teach me a lesson if you tri- <<he gets hit in the face with a volleyball again>> Oof! Ow!

G-Force: I'm sorry, what were you saying?

Mindy: Alright, don't get too violent while we're away. Come on Guy Raz, hop on in.

Guy: Alright.

<<Guy scales the wow machine and gets in>>

<We transition to inside the wow machine>>

Mindy: Alright, everyone strapped in?

Guy: Yup!

Dennis: Yes!

Reg: Cool!

Mindy: Alright, let me just switch to submarine mode here.

<<big button push>> <<the wow machine starts to submerge>> <<submarine atmosphere, sonar beeps in the background>> <<there's a leak>>

Guy: Mindy! There's a massive leak in the side of the wow machine!

Reg: Coo!

Mindy: Not to worry Guy Raz. Let me just get out my gum here. <<Mindy peels off a piece of gum>> <<she starts chewing>> <<mouthful>> Chewing, chewing, chewing!

Guy: Mindy!

Mindy: <<spit>> Okay, there! <<squelch>> That should hold it!

Guy: Should?!

Mindy: Now where was I? Oh yeah, everyone hold onto your butts!

<<the wow machine quietly puddles away underwater>>

Guy: So Mindy, remind me again about where we're heading?

Mindy: We're heading to the nursery Guy Raz!

Guy: Right ...

Dennis: A nursery? You mean like for babies?

Mindy: Yup! But not the kind of babies you're thinking of, Dennis!

Dennis: Oh really? And what kind of babies am I thinking of?

Mindy: Small, pudgy, two arms, two legs?

Dennis: <<gasps>> Those are the babies I was thinking of!

Mindy: Yeah, well these babies have 8 arms, suckers, and live at the bottom of the ocean!

Dennis: Whaaaaaat?!

Reg: Coo!

Mindy: Because the babies in this nursery... are octopus babies!

Guy: Octopus babies!

Dennis: Awww! Ew!

Mindy: Yup! It's known as a brooding ground and it's where mama octopus go to give birth.

Guy: Really?

Mindy: Yup! As far as the eye can see, scientists estimate that there could be as many as 20,000 octopuses down here ...

Dennis: 20,000!?

Reg: Cooo!

Guy: What makes this spot on the ocean floor such a hot spot for octo-moms?

Mindy: Well Guys Raz, it all has to do with the temperature.

Guy: The temperature?

Mindy: Yeah, and we should be getting to just the right depth now for me to show you what i mean. Let me just wind down this window here.

<<Mindy winds down the drivers side window>> <<water starts flooding in and splashing everyone>>

Dennis: Aghhhh! I'm getting all wet! Peh, peh, peh!

Reg: Cooooo!

Guy: Gahhhh! Mindy! You're letting the ocean in! Close that window!

Mindy: One second Guy Raz ... <<exertion>> I just need to grab this thermometer off the side of the wow machine. <<more exertion>>

Guy: Well hurry up! We're all getting soaked!

Reg: Coo! <<shakes his wings>>

Mindy: Hee yah! <<Mindy dislodges the thermometer and brings it inside>>

<<Mindy winds up the window and the water slowly stops pouring in>>

Mindy: Oooh, little wet in here. Let me just drain the cockpit real quick ...

<<Mindy presses a button and the cockpit drains like a bathtub>>

Mindy: Right, now where was I?

Guy: You were telling us about the water temperature!

Mindy: Oh yeah, right. So if we take a look at this here thermometer, we can see that the water is...

Dennis: I only know how to read Canadian temperatures.

Mindy: What?

Dennis: Canadian temperatures! You know, Celcius!

Mindy: Ooooh, got it.

Dennis: Can you read the thermometer Guy Raz?

Guy: Let's see here. 52 degrees fahrenheit

Dennis: Which is 11 degrees celsius in Canadian temperatures

Reg: Coo

Mindy: Right.

Guy: i don't understand Mindy. What's the significance of this water being 52 degrees fahrenheit?

Mindy: Well, if we just rewind this thermometer here

<<Mindy starts turning a crank ... it sounds like a wind up toy>>

Guy: What the...

Mindy: We can see that the temperature is dropping.

Guy: Oh yeah ... look at that, the temperature now reads 35 degrees.

Dennis: Which is 1.5 degrees Canadian!

Mindy: Exactly! The surrounding water is much much colder. But down here, it's relatively nice and warm.

Guy: I don't understand Mindy. I would have thought that the lower down you go, the further away you get from the sun, the colder it would get.

Mindy: Usually that would be exactly correct Guy Raz, but this place is special.

Reg: Cool!

Mindy: You see, this part of the ocean floor is heated by underwater volcanoes!

Dennis: Ooooooooooh.

Guy: Ahhhhhh! And that hot magma from the volcano running underneath here heats the surrounding water on the seafloor?

Mindy: Exactoritos!

Guy: And these octo-moms like warmer waters for giving birth?

Mindy: You tell me! The octo-nursery should be just over this ridge!

<<the wow-machine sub powers forward. magical music builds as we crest a ridge>>

Everyone: Wooooooooahhh ...

Mindy: Oh yeah ...

Guy: Mindy! There's thousands of them!

Dennis: They look like fleshy little soccer balls! but with long arms, and suckers...

Reg: Cooo!

Guy: This is most octopuses I've ever seen!

Mindy: It's the most octopus anyone has ever seen!

Guy: What do you mean?

Mindy: Well when scientists first discovered this breeding ground in 2018. It was the largest group of octopuses ever recorded!

Guy: Wow!

Reg: Coo!

Guy: So why are so many of them here?

Mindy: Because of the warm water helps shorten the octopus's gestation time!

Dennis: Guess station time?! I don't know what time it is at the station!

Reggie: Coo

Dennis: Fine. I'll guess 5.

Guy: Not guess station time Dennis! Gestation time! It means the amount of time that it takes for the octopus baby to hatch out of its egg.

Mindy: Exactly, these scientists found that these higher water temperatures were able to cut down the octopus's gestation time by as much as four times!

Guy: Woah! That's so much faster.

Dennis: No wonder all these octo-moms come here!

Reg: Coo!

Guy: And so I'm guessing that a shorter gestation time means that their eggs have a higher chance of hatching and being healthy too?

Mindy: That's right, but do you know why?

Guy: No

Mindy: It's because of a strange behavior that the mama octopuses do when they're waiting for their eggs to hatch

Guy: What is it Mindy?

Dennis: ohh! is it reading?

Guy: Reading?

Dennis: Yeah, like reading a book.

Mindy: How is that a strange behavior Dennis?

Dennis: Well, have you ever seen an octopus mom read before? hmmm?

Guy: I guess I haven't.

Mindy: It's not reading! it's starving ...

Guy: Starving?

Mindy: Yeah, for the entire time that these octopuses are waiting for their eggs to hatch, they won't eat anything! They just sit watch over their eggs, protecting them from predators.

Guy: I know that moms are always sacrificing but that's nuts. No food for the entire time their eggs are gestating?

Mindy: Yeah, which is usually around 4 years, but can be up to 8 years.

Guy: 8 years! With no food?

Dennis: I can't go 5 to 8 minutes without food! <<starts munching>>

Mindy: Dennis, is that a sandwich?

Dennis: No, it's a hoagie.

Reg: Cool!

Guy: How can these octopuses go 8 years without food?

Mindy: Well, they can't.

Guy: What do you mean?

Mindy: Well, most of these octo mom's don't make it through this brooding process. They make the ultimate sacrifice for their little babies!

Dennis: <<gasp>> They die!?

Mindy: Yeah, and they use their bodies to protect their eggs from predators.

Guy: That's pretty gruesome Mindy.

Mindy: I know right!

Guy: And so i'm guessing the shorter they're able to make their gestation period, the longer they're able to stay alive to protect their eggs?

Mindy: Exactoritos.

Guy: Huh, now it makes sense why there are so many octopuses here. Warm water means less time for your eggs to hatch. And less time for your eggs to hatch means more chances for your octo-babies to survive!

Mindy: You got it Guy Raz!

Dennis: Ooh everyone look! Over there!

Mindy: What is it?

Dennis: That octo-egg is octo-hatching!

Guy: Where!?

Reg: Cooo!

Dennis: Just there ...

Guy: Oh yeah! See if you can get a bit closer Mindy!

Mindy: You got it captain ...

<<Mindy presses some buttons and pushes the wow sub forward slightly>>

Guy: Just there Mindy ...

Mindy: Easy easy... aaaaaaand stop!

<<the wow machine stops>>

<<bleeps and bleeps>>

Mindy: Activating octopus translator

<<bleeps and bleeps>>

Guy: Octopus translator?

Dennis: Look! It's happening! It's happening!

Mindy: Shhhhhh!

<<we hear the egg slowly crack open followed by baby cries>>

Guy: Naw, it's so cute!

Dennis: Awwwwwww

Mindy: It's so cute I'm gonna barf!

Reg: Cool!

Dennis: Yay for octo-moms!