

Turkey Love
By Thomas van Kalken

<<Mindy is putting clean dishes away and humming to herself>>
<<Guyphone quacks>>

Mindy: Ope! it's my Guyphone telling me that I have a message!

<<energetic music plays as Mindy slams the door shut behind her>> <<it's a beautiful spring day outside>> <<Mindy sprints towards Guy's house>>

Mindy: Oh my wow, I gotta tell Guy Raz! Run, run, run, run, run, run, run!

Dennis: Hey Mindy. Mindy! Hey, where are you going? <<Dennis fades out as Mindy runs past him>> Why are you running away from me...

Postman: I've got a package here for you. <<the Postman is shoved>>

Mindy: <<still running>> Sorry, can't stop now. I've got big news!

Postman: <<fading out as she gets further away>> Oh, well in that case <<yelling after her>> why don't we all just stop thinking?

<<the postman fades out>> <<Mindy finishes running>>

Guy: Mindy?

Mindy: <<slightly out of breath>> Guy Razzy!

Guy: Mindy? Why are you so out of breath?

Mindy: Cause I just ran all the way over here from my house.

Guy: But your house is next door.

Mindy: Exactly, which is why I should probably move my gingerbread mansion to your kitchen!

Guy: Uh-huh.

Mindy: Anywho, do you know why I ran all the way over here?

Guy: Uh, not really no.

Mindy: Well, because, Guy Raz, it's the first day of spring, and you know what that means?

Guy: That my micro-organic cherry tomatoes are finally almost ready to harvest?

Mindy: What? No!

Guy: Oh, right.

Mindy: It's turkey season, Guy Raz!

Guy: Mindy, you can eat turkey any time of year.

Mindy: Oh, I'm not talking about eating turkey. Gross. I'm talking about turkey mating season!

Guy: Uh, what?

Mindy: Turkey mating season, Guy Raz! The flowers are blooming, the weather is warming and every wild turkey from San Francisco to New York City is looking for love.

Guy: Wait, I'm confused here, Mindy. Why exactly are you excited for turkey mating season?

Mindy: Because it means that they're about to start filming a brand new season of Fowling In Love!

Guy: Fowling In Love?

Mindy: Yeah, get it? Fowl, like a bird?

Guy: Uh-huh.

Mindy: It's only like the highest rated turkey match making reality show on the planet! I'm surprised you've never heard of it, Guy Raz.

Guy: Well, it never even occurred to me that someone would even make a show like that, Mindy.

Mindy: What's it about? Oh, great question, Guy Raz.

Guy: I didn't ask!

Mindy: <<ignoring him>> They take one female turkey and then introduce her to 5 eligible turkey bachelors. Then she asks them a bunch of questions and has to decide which tom she wants to take home.

Guy: Which tom?

Mindy: Oh yeah, the male turkeys are often called toms.

Thomas Fingerling: <<in distance>> What's that!? Someone say my name?!

Mindy: <<yelling back>> Nothing, Thomas Fingerling! Go back to your gardening!

Thomas Fingerling: <<in distance>> I ain't gardening! I'm stealing Mr. Razzy's turnips!

Guy: Hey!

Thomas Fingerling: Ah! Oh no! It's old farmer Razzy!

Guy: What?

Thomas Fingerling: Uh, I'm just gonna keep takin' yer ternips, okay? <<continues to plunder>>

gr: Ugh...

Mindy: Anywho, the season premiere is today. You wanna watch with me?

Guy: I don't know, Mindy. I'm still not entirely sold on the idea of reality tv?

Mindy: <<incredulous>> Oh, really? Well, you seemed pretty 'sold on reality tv' when Sunny and Ned got together at the end of Lizard Island.

Guy: <<slightly embarrassed>> Well, yeah, but that was because of the scientific observations that the show was based on.

Mindy: <<not believing him>> Uh-huh.

Guy: It's true!

Mindy: Well, would it help you to know that this show is also based on real life scientific observations?

Guy: Really?

Mindy: Yeah! The show is based on research from Dr. Richard Buchholz. He's a professor of biology at the University of Mississippi.

Guy: Oh, yeah. I think I've read some of his work.

Mindy: So? What do you say, Guy Raz? Are you in? Or are you in?

Guy: Well, I guess so, Mindy. Sure, I'm in.

Mindy: Yes! Reggie's waiting just around the corner.

Guy: Oh, great, Reggies coming to watch it, too?

Mindy: Well, I don't know if he's going to watch the show, but he did say he'd give us a ride.

Guy: A ride to where?

Mindy: Hollywood, Guy Raz!

Guy: Hollywood? What are we doing flying to Hollywood?

Mindy: I've got us two tickets to a live taping.

Guy: A live taping? Really?

Mindy: Yeah. Reggie knows a turkey who does the casting for the show, so...

Guy: And he was able to get you tickets?

Mindy: Yeah, but we gotta make a move. The taping starts in ten minutes.

Guy: Ten minutes?

Mindy: Yeah! Why do you think I ran all the way over here? Come on, follow me. Run, run, run, run, run, run, run...

Guy: Wait up!

<<Mindy scurries away>>

Reg: Coool!

Mindy: Hey Reg, you ready to go?

Reg: Coool!

Mindy: Sorry, I know I'm a little late but Guy Raz needed some convincing.

Reg: Coool!

Mindy: Alright, Guy Raz, come on.

Guy: Alright. <<Guy scrambles on top of Reggie>>

<<Mindy also scrambles on top of Reggie>>

Mindy: Let me just climb aboard Reggie and I'll pull you up.

Guy: Okay.

Mindy: Come on, grab my hand. There you go, there you go.

Mindy: <<over pa speaker>> <<doing pilot voice>> Uh, good morning passengers and welcome to this Reggie Air Flight, direct from here to Hollywood, California. And, uh, in the event of an emergency, adopt the brace position and put your head between your legs and kiss your booty goodbye.

Guy: What?

Mindy: <<over pa>> Thank you. And have a pleasant flight. <<pa speaker is hung up>> All right Reg, we're all strapped in, and here we go...

<<Mindy and Guy are rushed off as they fly across the country>>

Mindy: <<yelling over wind>> Coming in for a landing, Guy Raz. Hang on tight.

<<Reggie lands in a flurry of feathers>>

Mindy: Nice landing Reg, very smooth. You've been practicing? You still in one piece Guy Raz?

Guy: <<out of breath>> Yup!

Mindy: Great! Let's unbuckle and hop off here. Ugh. <<Mindy and Guy dismount>>

Mindy: <<taking a deep breath in>> Ah, Hollywood, California! You can smell the fake tan!

Reg: cool! cool!

Mindy: Oh, okay Reg.

<<Reggie flutters off>>

Guy: What was that?

Mindy: Oh, Reggie's just gonna twitch his script to a couple of studios while we're here.

Guy: Oh, great.

Mindy: Come on, Guy Raz, we're gonna be late for the taping.

Guy: Okay, Mindy, I'm right behind you.

Mindy: Hmm, okay, where is it? Oh, I think it's behind this door that says pirate.

Guy: Mindy, I think that says private! <<Mindy opens the door and an alarm goes off>> Gah, Mindy.

Mindy: Uh-oh.

Security Guard: Hey, you can't be here.

Guy: Oh, sorry officer. We're actually here for a taping of, um, what was it called again, Mindy?

Mindy: Fowling In Love.

Guy: Right, Fowling In Love, and we seem to have gotten a little lost.

security guard: <<pulls wires out of alarm>> <<alarm dies off>> Tickets to Fowling In Love, eh?

Guy: Uh-huh.

security guard: You lucky ducks.

Guy: Phew!

security guard: You want to head over to Studio 4H, over that way.

Guy: Great! Thanks for the help.

Mindy: Thanks buddy.

security guard: No worries! Have a good time!

Mindy: Come on, Guy Raz. The show's about to start! Walk, walk, walk, walk ... Opening the door.

<<the door opens and they walk into the hallway>>

Guy: So, Mindy, before it starts, tell me a little bit more about the research that this show is based on. What was his name again? Dr. Richard Buchholz?

Mindy: Yeah, great memory, Guy Raz.

Guy: Thank you.

Mindy: Okay, so this researcher has been observing wild turkeys in North America for decades and over that time has noticed a couple of things that turkeys do to try to attract one another.

Guy: You mean different things that the males do to try and get the attention of the females?

Mindy: Yeah, it turns out, they're super picky when it comes to selecting a mate.

Guy: Okay, so do they have some kind of mating dance, or is it more about what they look like?

Mindy: Well, that's what we're about to find out, Guy Raz. Hey, look, Studio 4H. We're here.

Guy: Oh, great.

Mindy: Come on, let's sneak in and try to find a seat.

<<door opens>> <<we hear the band warming up>>

Guy: Wow, this is quite a set, Mindy.

Mindy: I know. Looks like they really went all out this season.

Guy: Look over there, Mindy. I think there's some spare seats over there.

Mindy: Oh, yeah. Good eye there, Guy Raz. Let's go get 'em.

Mindy and Guy: Excuse me. Hey sorry. I'm just gonna squeeze. <<disgruntled groans of people as they move past them>>

<<Mindy and Guy sit down in their seats>>

Mindy: Gah! I am so excited!

<<the lights go down>>

Guy: Oh, Mindy. I think it's starting.

<<the band kicks into some up-beat music>>

Narrator: Hello, and welcome to <<crowd chants with him>> Fowling In Love! That's right! The only show that's dedicated to helping young turkeys find their one, true, mate.

<<audience awwws>>

Narrator: Right this minute, backstage, is one lovely female turkey and five eligible, young, turkey bachelors who are hoping to be her tom. Are we just about ready to meet these birds?

<<the crowd woos>> <<Mindy and Guy get into it>>

Narrator: All right, all right, everyone, please welcome our first contestant, the beautiful Butterball!

<<a turkey is flung onto stage>> <<gobble gobble gobble>> <<the crowd applauds>>

Narrator: Butterball is a wild North American turkey who comes to us all the way from New England. She enjoys long walks in forests and using her big old claws to scratch at piles of leaves. What a character!

<<gobble gobble gobble>> <<audience applauds>>

Narrator: And now let's meet the five male turkeys that will compete for Butterball's heart. These plump young fellas are from all over the United States– from San Francisco, California to Burlington, Vermont. Please welcome to the stage our contestants, Tom, Tom, Tom, Tom and Tom!

<<applause>> <<a flock of turkey gobbles>>
<<a ruffle of feathers and singled out gobble>>

Narrator: Haha, you said it, Butterball. What a crop!

<<the audience laughs>>

Guy: <<whispering to Mindy>> Wait, Mindy. They're all called Tom?

Mindy: Yeah, remember I told you that male turkeys are sometimes called toms.

Guy: Yeah, but I thought that at least they'd have different names. Doesn't that get super confusing.

Mindy: Oh yeah! And on top of that, most of these turkey flocks are related to each other.

Guy: Why is that?

Mindy: Well, because they all stick together to try and help each other out.

Guy: How?

Mindy: So, they all collectively decide that one of them should be the one to get the girl, and the rest of them will spend the entire time trying to make him look good.

Guy: You mean they'll try to convince the female turkey that one of the turkeys in their squad is the one for her?

Mindy: Yeah. They'll hype him up, show off his best qualities, try to make him look good, you know. Oh, look, they're about to start.

Narrator: All right , all right, folks. Let's get started. <<flurry of gobbles>> Tom, Tom, Tom, Tom and Tom, our first question is for you. What would you say is your most attractive feature? You may have a moment to decide as a group.

<<a flurry of gobbles as they all confer>> <<gobble>>

Narrator: And times up! Do you toms have an answer? <<gobbles>> One at a time. One at a time! Tom, why don't you speak for the group, please?

<<gobbles>>

Uh-huh.

<<gobbles>>

Uh-huh.

<<gobbles>>

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

<<gobbles>>

All right! The toms are in agreement and they have decided that their most attractive feature is... their snoods.

<<applause>>

Narrator: And more specifically, they agree that Tom there <<gobble>> the third front the left, has the best, most attractive snood among them.

<<audience ooohs and then claps>>

Guy: His snood, huh? Isn't that the fleshy little bit of skin that sort of hangs over the male's beaks?

Mindy: Yeah! How'd you know?

Guy: I once read a book on turkey anatomy.

Mindy: Really?

Guy: Oh yeah. It was really fascinating, Mindy.

Mindy: I find that hard to believe.

Guy: Well, I guess that snood on the turkey third from the end is pretty long, but I don't understand. Why would that be attractive to female turkeys? The snood doesn't do anything, right?

Mindy: Right! I mean, I guess they can make it change color sometimes, but aside from that, it's a pretty useless appendage.

Guy: So, if that's the case, why do the female turkeys care about it at all?

Mindy: Well, many of the researchers believe that it might be due to the fact that if a turkey is able to grow a really long snood, then it must also be pretty healthy. Like, it's got energy to spare!

Guy: I guess that makes sense. I mean, if a male turkey is so healthy that it's able to grow a big, long snood, then it's probably also likely that any little chicks that the turkey has would also be super healthy.

Mindy: Exactoritos.

Guy: So, what else do female turkeys look out for?

Mindy: Oh, well, keep watching. We're about to find out.

<<gobble>>

<<applause>>

Narrator: All right, all right, you dudes with snoods! Butterball likes your answer, but this next question is going to be a little more difficult. That's right, it's time for... multiple choice!

<<applause>>

<<a bunch of gobbles in response>>

Narrator: Is everybody ready? Tom, you paying attention? No, not you Tom. You're doing great. You, Tom! <<gobble>> Yes, you! Are you ready? <<gobble>> Okay,

here is your multiple choice. After the snood, which of the following attributes do you think is most attractive? Number one- caruncles.

Mindy: <<whispering to Guy>> Those are the pebble-like bumps on their head and neck.

Guy: Yeah, I know.

Narrator: Number two- skullcaps.

Mindy: <<whispering to Guy>> That's the toughened skin on top of the turkey's head.

Guy: I, I know.

Narrator: Number three- spurs.

Mindy: <<whispering to Guy>> Those are the talons on the ends of their legs.

Guy: I know, Mindy!

Narrator: Or number four- beards?

Mindy: <<whispering to Guy>> Those are the tufts of feathers on the front of their chests.

Guy: Mindy, I read a book about all this. I know what a turkey beard is!

Mindy: Be quiet.

Guy: Oh, sorry.

Narrator: I'll give you a moment to discuss amongst yourselves. <<the turkeys gobble to themselves and they confer>>

Guy: So, wait, the female turkeys have to consider all of these things when selecting a mate?

Mindy: Yeah, but some of them are more important than others. Let's see if this group of toms picks right.

<<gobble>>

Narrator: All right, all right. It sounds like the toms are ready to answer. Let's hear it. What did you decide?

<<gobble>>

Narrator: Huh, the beard! <<audience ooo and ahhh>> Very interesting. Now, tell us, how did you decide that the beard- the dark, hairlike, tuft of chest feathers- is the most attractive quality in a mate?

<<gobble>>

Narrator: Uh-huh, uh-huh, uh-huh. Because a vibrant coat of feathers means a clean bill of health. Very good.

<<gobble>>

Narrator: And you all believe that, Tom, third from the end, with the best snood, also has the most vibrant beard?

<<gobble>>

Narrator: And how about you, Butterball? What do you say? Do you agree with these fellas?

<<a beat>> <<gobble>>

<<audience applause>>

Narrator: Wow! Strong words! Tom, third from the end, has taken a large lead, thanks to the encouraging words from the other four toms! Ladies and gentleman, this competition is all but decided!

<<audience ooooohs>>

Mindy: Oh! I love, love!

Guy: Wow, Mindy, these other toms are really hyping up this turkey third from the end, huh?

Mindy: Yeah, like I said, this is what they do. They go around in flocks and support each other like this.

Guy: Amazing, but why would they do that? I mean wouldn't it be more advantageous for them to all try and find their own mating partner?

Mindy: Well, in the grand scheme of things, turkeys that are supported by other turkeys like this, are seven times more likely to find a mate.

Guy: Wow, that's quite a statistical advantage.

Mindy: Yeah, and since most of these turkeys are brothers, if just one of them finds a mate, it helps continue to grow for generations to come.

Guy: Wow.

<<gobbles>>

<<audience applause>>

Narrator: All right, all right, it's time for Butterball to pick a mate. Butterball, who's it going to be? Tom? Tom? Tom? Tom? Or Tom?

<<drumroll>> <<tension builds>> <<gobble>> <<confetti goes off>> <<the crowd cheers and the band plays>>

Narrator: Oh, and there it is! Tom, third from the left, is the winner! Congratulations Butterball, you have successfully Fowlin' In Love! That's right. wWhat a wonderfowl competition. And another beautiful step in the ongoing conservation efforts to protect the Wild American Turkey. That's all the time we have for today, folks! Make sure to join us next week for another episode of <<audience chants along>> 'Fowling In Love'

<<the band climaxes>> <<stage bell rings>>

<<Mindy's phone dings>>

Guy: What's the duck?

Mindy: Oh, that's just my phone telling me I have a text message. Let's see here. Oh, it's Reggie.

Guy: Oh, what does it say?

Mindy: <<Mindy opens up her phone>> It says he wants to meet us outside. he has a big surprise?

Guy: Huh, I wonder what it could be.

Mindy: Me too. Let's go find out.

<<Mindy and Guy barge their way past the other audience members>> <<the door to outside swings open>> <<they're walking back to where they left Reggie>>

Guy: So, Mindy, what did that host mean when he said that this was another step forward in conserving the American turkey.

Mindy: Well that's another reason why this show is so great, Guy Raz!

Guy: Why?

Mindy: Because conservation programs that helped bring turkeys together to have lots of little turkey babies is the main reason that the Wild North American Turkey has made a comeback in the last few years.

Guy: And a lot of those conservation successes are based on research like the one this show was based on.

Mindy: Yeah, that's why shows like 'Fowling In Love' are so important.

Guy: Right.

Reg: coo!

Mindy: Reggie!

Guy: What's the big news Reggie?

Reg: coo! <<fluttering of paper>>

Guy: What is it?

Reg: coo!

Mindy: A movie deal!

Reg: cooo!

Guy: You mean they finally bought your script, Rockin' Reggie'?

Mindy: Awe, congraturitos buddy! You're gonna be famous.

Reggie: Coo!

Mindy: I mean, more famous.

Guy: This calls for a celebration!

Mindy: Milkshakes anyone?

Reg: Coo!

Mindy: Yeah, i'm sure they'll have birdseed flavor. It's LA!

Reg: Coo, coo.

Guy: I could go for a birdseed milkshake.

Mindy: Gross!

END