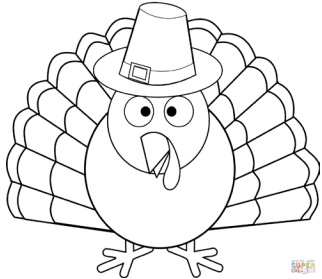




Follow Your Own Gobble



Tom Turkey lived on Farmer Fred's Turkey Farm about five miles down Furnace Road from Conneaut. A week before Thanksgiving, Tom Turkey and Farmer Fred stood by the wooden fence surrounding the barn. Farmer Fred watched Tom and his friends eat buckets of corn. Finally, Farmer Fred said, "You are a tubby troublemaker, Tom."

Tom Turkey answered back, "It is true I am tubby, but that is your fault. You are trying to fatten me up for Thanksgiving."

Farmer Fred did not understand what Tom Turkey was telling him. Farmer Fred thought that Tom was just saying, "Gobble, gobble, gobble!"

Tom was really saying: "I am going to march in the Conneaut Christmas parade. If I march long and hard enough I will not get fat. I can run fast enough so you cannot catch me!"



"Gobble, gobble, gobble, yourself," Farmer Fred said. "You and your gobble gobbling cause me a lot of trouble. Trouble, trouble, trouble, every time you gobble, you cause me trouble, trouble, trouble!"

"Follow your own gobble song, and you can never go wrong," Tom told him.

"Remember my son Alexander and the hayloft?" Farmer Fred said.

"Alexander started it, Tom said. "He threw me out of the hayloft window because he said he wanted to see if turkeys can fly. I flew and so did he! He flew straight behind me, straight out the window. I steered so he would land in a pile of hay. He landed in a pile of hay!"

“Mrs. Fred did not think it was so lucky. She had to pick hay out of Alexander’s blue jeans. Now he wants to fly drones and airplanes when he grows up instead of staying on the farm.”

“I was just trying to help,” Tom gobbled. “And now I am going to the Conneaut Christmas Parade. It is almost Thanksgiving, you know.”

“You will cause trouble if you go to the parade. Stay home and spend Thanksgiving on the farm with me and my family.”

“You want me to spend Thanksgiving on your table,” Tom gobbled.

“I do not want you anywhere near my table. You remember my daughter Karen’s birthday party? You chased her dog Dudley around the table so hard that he knocked her birthday cake on the floor and it got squashed. There was frosting all over the place.” Mrs. Fred had to bake her a new birthday cake and we had to shut Dudley in the barn so he would not knock her new cake off the table and eat that one too. And I still close Dudley in the barn when Mrs. Fred bakes a cake.”

“Mrs. Fred can bake all of the cakes for Karen she wants. Dudley is going to the Conneaut Christmas Parade with me. Follow your own song, and you can never go wrong,” Tom gobbled.



Tom turned and opened the barn door so Dudley could escape. He grabbed the yellow backpack that he had packed for Dudley and the orange backpack that he packed for himself. He had packed two peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and five chocolate chip cookies in each backpack. He planned to buy them each a mug of hot cocoa to drink while they watched the parade.

Tom and Dudley ran alongside each other through the streets of Conneaut. They ran down Jackson Street, their backpacks bouncing behind them. They ran down Sandusky Street, where Tom tripped over Dudley’s tail and fell. They ran down Mill Street where they stood in front of the railroad tracks by the Railroad Museum watching the Nickel Plate train go by. They ran by the Conneaut Historical Museum where they got stuck in a snowdrift.

Finally, Dudley and Tom got to Main Street. The Conneaut Christmas Parade was just starting. Tom could hear the Conneaut High School Band playing Jingle Bells.

Tom and Dudley watched the floats line up behind the band. Dudley saw Santa Claus on his Christmas float and barked a message telling Santa that he wanted Milk Bones and a squeaky toy for Christmas.

A man with wide white whiskers was talking to a woman standing next to Tom. Glancing at Tom, the men told the woman that Mr. Conneaut Mayor would pardon a turkey as part of the parade celebration. "He is standing right over there. He is wearing a Christmas tree name tag."

Tom gobbled a question. "What does pardoning a turkey mean?"

The woman standing next to Tom laughed. "Yes, our mayor is in good company. History says that President Abraham Lincoln made a train whistle stop in Conneaut on his way to Washington D. C. to become president. Pointing at Tom, the woman said, "One Thanksgiving in the White House, the cook was feeding a turkey getting ready for Thanksgiving dinner. President Lincoln's son Tad begged him to pardon the turkey, President Lincoln pardoned the turkey and the cook sent the turkey to a nearby farm to live and long and happy life."

"That is it! "Let us find Mr. Mayor. He can pardon me and I will not worry about Thanksgiving anymore. Let us go Dudley."

The man with the white whiskers put his hand on Tom's wing. "Wait a minute before you go rushing off. Mr. Conneaut mayor is.."

"The Christmas parade train right in front of us," Tom said. "Look at the Christmas trees on its wheels."

"Excuse me!" Tom said to the people in front of them.

"Excuse me!" Dudley said to the people beside them.

Tom and Dudley managed to get to the train steps, but then a man with square shoulders and a square mouth that did not smile stood in front of them with his arms outstretched. "This is the Christmas parade train. Only the mayor and his friends can ride on it," the man with the square mouth said.

"This is an emergency! I have to have Mr. Conneaut Mayor pardon me, "Tom said.

"Pardon you? What did you do?" the square mouthed man asked.

"I'm a trouble making turkey that Farmer Fred wants to have on his table for Thanksgiving dinner."

The square mouth man frowned a square mouthed frown.

"Can't you be less trouble?" he asked. "Can't you get along with Farmer Fred?"

“I follow my own gobble song,
So, I will never go wrong,” Tom answered.

“You can’t come aboard,” the square mouthed man said.

Tom gave a gigantic gobble in the square mouthed man’s ear. The square mouthed man bent over putting both hands over his ears. Dudley and Tom hurried aboard the train, Dudley and Tom peeked into every seat, looking for Mr. Conneaut Mayor. Are you the mayor? Tom asked a man with a curly moustache.

“Are you the mayor?” Dudley asked head in a wide pink hat.

“No,” said the man, twirling his curly moustache.

“No,” said the woman, removing her wide pink hat.

Finally, Tom and Dudley reached the seat where the engineer sat, driving the Conneaut Christmas Parade train. “Have you seen Mr. Conneaut Mayor?” Tom gobbled.

Dudley woofed woofed and Tom looked more closely at the engineer. “Farmer Fred!”

Dudley held on to Farmer Fred. Tom Turkey ran past the square mouthed guard and dove into the crowd around the Conneaut Christmas parade train until he saw a man wearing a Christmas name tag. He grabbed the man and pulled him into the train. Tom gobbled and gobbled at the at Mr. Conneaut Mayor. The Mayor scribbled something on his Christmas tree name tag and handed it back to Tom. Tom handed it to Farmer Fred. “Here is my pardon. Now can we go home in peace and pasta for Thanksgiving dinner?”

Farmer Fred smiled. “Happy Thanksgiving Tom and Dudley. Let us go home.

Tom thought for a minute then he sang:

Follow your own gobble song,
You will never go wrong,
But here is the thing,
Be sure to let everyone else sing!

