

## A Plump and Perky Turkey

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The people in Squawk Valley were downhearted and depressed. Thanksgiving was approaching, but without its special guest. They couldn't find a turkey for the feast they planned to eat. It looked like they'd be making do with bowls of shredded wheat. "A plump and perky turkey's what we need," they all agreed. "But finding turkeys nowadays is very hard indeed. The birds have gotten smarter, and they all seem quite aware that it's best to disappear when autumn leaves are in the air." A plump and perky turkey – stomachs rumbled at the thought. But how to trick a turkey into jumping in the pot?

Then Ebenezer Beezer had a thought pop in his head. "If we can't find a turkey, let's have one find us, instead! We could hold an arts-and-crafts fair," he declared, with wink and grin. "A fair with one grand turkey prize - that *all* of us could win! And since our goal is turkey, that's the theme we'll take to heart. We'll fill our fair with folks and fun and tons of turkey art. We'll make turkeys out of spuds and out of clay and out of rope. We'll make turkeys out of oatmeal, out of paper, out of soap! We'll hang a bunch of posters in the forest way down low, to invite some turkey candidates to model for our show. Why, even turkeys understand (as everybody knows) you can't make turkey art without a turkey there to pose."

The people in Squawk Valley held a poster jamboree! They plastered their creations onto every single tree. Now it happened in Squawk Valley, lived a turkey known as Pete. He was cocky, he was clever, and he really liked to eat. While he strutted through the forest, plump and perky through the pines, he was startled, and intrigued, by all those interesting signs. With a proud and jaunty gobble, he gave out a hearty cry – "A plump and perky turkey? Well, I'm sure I qualify." Pete applied for the position, and he strutted plump and proud. He could hardly wait to model for the large and eager crowd. "Yer hired!" shouted Beezer, for the folks had all agreed that Pete the Perky Turkey was the answer to their need. 'Twas the week before Thanksgiving when Pete posed to do his part, and the artsy-craftsy townsfolk started making turkey art. They make turkeys out of spuds and out of clay and out of rope. They made turkeys out of oatmeal, out of paper, out of soap. Thanksgiving Day, the artwork done, they asked the model down, to judge their

homemade turkeys and to pick the best in town. “Now when the judging’s over,” Beezer whispered with a smile, “we’ll tuck that model turkey in the oven for a while.” Pete judged each piece of artwork as the hungry crowd all cheered. He stopped to take a closer look, and then ... he disappeared!

There were turkeys made of spuds, there were turkeys made of rope. There were turkeys made of paper, there were turkeys made of soap. The room was full of turkeys, in a wall-to-wall collage. For a clever bird like Pete it was a perfect camouflage.

“He’s over here!” Old Beezer said. “He’s here!” said Jacob Green. They searched amongst the turkeys, but their bird had fled the scene. A note in turkey scrawl they found, half-hidden on the lawn: “Good-bye. I took my modeling fee.” (The oatmeal bird was gone.)

The people in Squawk Valley were left feeling rather blue. The only turkeys left in town appeared too hard to chew. “Oh well,” said Beezer brightly, as they gathered ‘round to eat. “Right now, at least I’m thankful that we still have shredded wheat.” That day folks learned a lesson that stuck firm with them forever. A plump and perky turkey can be pretty doggone clever.