

SILLY-DO SAVES THE DAY

Sylvester was a silly cat with coarse black fur. Because he was so silly, everyone called him Silly-Do. He lived in the barn with a goat named Tappity and a herd of cows. Tappity had coarse black fur just like Silly-Do, so Silly-Do thought they were brother goats. And since no other cats lived on the farm, everyone thought Silly-Do was a goat, too.

One day, Silly-Do and Tappity were playing in the barnyard. They jumped from one hay bale to another until Farmer Franklin walked by.

“I don’t believe it,” he said. “I’ve never seen a cat play with a goat.” He laughed and walked away, shaking his head in disbelief. “What a silly cat!”

Tappity snorted and ran into the barn, his hooves tapping across the stone floor. Silly-Do scampered in behind him.

“What’s a cat?” asked Silly-Do.

“You must be a cat,” said Tappity, “because I know I’m a goat, and Farmer Franklin said you’re a silly cat.”

“But I’m a goat!” stammered Silly-Do. “I have coarse black fur just like you.”

Tappity snorted again.

“And,” said Silly-Do, “I have gold eyes, just like you.”

Tappity stomped his hoof.

“And,” said Silly-Do, “I like climbing on hay bales, just like you.”

“I think you’re a cat,” said Tappity.

“A cat?” asked a brown cow as she entered the barn, the other cows following her in.

“You didn’t say you were a cat,” said a black cow.

“No!” cried Silly-Do. “I’m a goat.”

“If you’re a goat,” said Tappity, “you eat anything”—and he nibbled on a wooden beam holding up the roof of the barn.

“I can do that,” said Silly-Do. He bit into the wooden beam, but his teeth became stuck. He pushed and pulled as the others watched in amazement. With a growl and a grumble and one last pull, he flew backwards, mouth wide open, knocking over a bucket of water. The cows giggled and swooshed their tails.

“If you’re a goat,” said Tappity, “you dance”—and he hopped across the floor on his

hind legs, his hooves making TAP-TAP-TAP sounds that echoed throughout the barn. The cows laughed, so much so that the brown cow tipped over, spilling a feeding trough.

“I can do that!” hollered Silly-Do. He jumped across the floor, dancing just like Tappity.

“Wait,” said the black cow, “Tappity makes TAP-TAP-TAP sounds. That’s why he’s named Tappity. But you don’t tap, Silly-Do.”

“She’s right,” said the brown cow. “You *are* a cat!”

“And you know what they say about cats,” said a white cow.

“He’ll drink all our milk,” said the brown cow.

“And Farmer Franklin will be mad at *us*,” said the black cow.

“I’m allergic to cats,” said the white cow.

“You’re allergic to everything,” said the brown cow.

As the cows chattered on and on, Silly-Do backed up into a corner of the barn. He wanted to be a goat, and didn’t know why everyone called him a cat.

CRASH! The barn door swung open. A snarling gang of rats sauntered in, their leader pointing his bony finger at the cows.

“You girls owe me last week’s alfalfa,” shrieked the rat. “So my gang and I are taking it all, along with your milk!”

The cows gasped and pleaded with the rat. They moaned and mooed to one another, desperate to keep their alfalfa and milk. Through all the commotion, no one saw Silly-Do sneak into the center of the ruckus. He crouched low, his golden eyes fixed on the rat leader.

“Oh no!” cried the rat, seeing Silly-Do in front of him.

The cows stopped their chattering and all eyes fell upon Silly-Do. He crouched lower, wiggled his tail, and with the grace of a cat, pounced on the rat.

“It’s a cat!” called the rat as Silly-Do caught him by his tail.

“Run for it!” called another. The rats scattered, some out the barn door, others through holes in the wooden planks of the barn walls. Silly-Do batted the whimpering rat leader out the barn door.

SLAM! Tappity kicked the door shut.

“And don’t come back!” shouted Silly-Do.

The cows looked at one another.

“We sure do need a cat around here,” said the brown cow.

“Of course you do,” purred Silly-Do.

The cows mooed and cheered. Silly-Do and Tappity danced around the barn until the sun sank low in the distant sky.