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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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The Barn Dance

Of course, all you little folks who have been to dancing school know about the barn dance, but perhaps not all of you have heard the story of the first barn dance and where it took place.

One night, the farm animals decided to have a party and chose the barn as the perfect venue for their dance. Excitement filled the air as they discussed the upcoming event. The cat volunteered to play the fiddle, the dog offered to play the drum, and the goat claimed he could play the flute. They would form the orchestra in the hayloft, leaving ample space on the floor for the dancers, some of whom had large feet and required room to move.

Madam Duck arrived early to secure a good seat. Although she didn't dance due to her large feet, she wanted to observe all the costumes from her comfortable spot in a tub of water.

Mrs. Gray Tabby and her three daughters, accompanied by frisky kittens, entered the barn. The kittens shook their tails while Mrs. Tabby greeted Madam Duck.

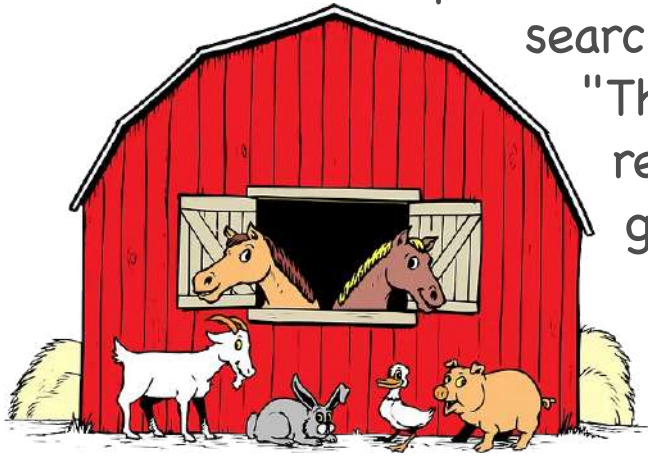
Curious, the duck asked if the kittens would dance.

"I will see who's here first," responded the cautious Mrs. Tabby, while the kittens giggled behind her back.

The orchestra, now assembled and tuning their instruments, caught the attention of the horse, who

poked his nose out of his stall, eagerly searching for a dance partner.

"There's Miss Pig," the horse remarked. "I'll ask her to lead the grand march with me."



With enthusiasm, the horse trotted over to Miss Pig and invited her to join him in the

grand march. Flattered by the horse's choice, Miss Pig curtsied and accepted. Meanwhile, the cow looked on, feeling slightly upset that she hadn't been asked. But a big dog approached her, bowing gallantly, and she happily took his arm. A calf, a sheep, a cat, and a small dog formed their own group.

At that moment, the donkey brayed loudly as he entered the barn. Startled, he exclaimed, "Well, of all things! Why didn't you wait for me? I should have led this march. I wonder who will be my partner. I need someone tall and stately."

The dog suggested, "Take the goose; you two will make a good match."

Smiling sweetly, the donkey bowed to Miss Goose, who blushed and turned her head aside.

Just then, the gobbler and a dignified-looking turkey arrived. They joined the donkey and the goose in their march. A lively goat pranced in and asked one of Mrs. Tabby's daughters to be his partner. The kittens giggled once again and hid their faces behind their fans.

"May I have the honor of having one of your charming daughters as my partner?" the goat asked. Mrs. Tabby chose one of her daughters for him, while the other two rolled on the floor, giggling.

White Rooster entered with the brown hen. He appeared rather disgruntled when he saw the horse leading the march. Nevertheless, he joined the procession, following behind the goat and the kitten, and lifted his feet high.

Meanwhile, Madam Duck expressed her opinions about the guests to Mrs. Tabby. "Look at that silly Miss Pig," she remarked. "She has been smiling since the horse spoke to her. He's probably telling her how graceful she is, and she actually believes it. And just look at Miss Mooly! The idea of such a clumsy creature attempting to dance! She should know better. Look, she even stepped on the pig's tail."

"And what about the donkey and that silly goose?" continued the duck. "Have you ever seen such a poorly executed march? They are out of step the entire time. Honestly, Mrs. Tabby, your daughter is the belle of this dance. It's a shame she doesn't have a more attractive partner."

"He seems as handsome as anyone here," responded Mrs. Tabby, somewhat defensively. "And he certainly moves gracefully."

The duck then observed, "They're getting ready for a quadrille."

The dog, who played the fiddle, acted as the prompter. When he called, "Eight hands around," Miss Mooly

stumbled over a loose board and fell, causing others to tumble over her.

"Look at that," exclaimed the duck, jumping out of the tub. "Isn't she the clumsiest thing?"

However, order was quickly restored, and the dance continued. Suddenly, the goat, who played the flute, took center stage and performed a lively hornpipe. Despite his whiskers, he proved he hadn't lost his youthful spirit. The donkey expressed his desire to perform the sword dance but couldn't find a sword. Someone suggested using a sickle, but the donkey insisted on swords, so they waltzed instead.

Old Hen, who had a brood of chickens in one of the empty mangers, poked her head out and complained about the noise, stating that her children couldn't sleep. She remarked that it was time for the decent animals to go to bed. Just then, the duck noticed the guinea hen.

"If she isn't wearing that old polka-dot dress," the duck remarked, "she has worn it since as long as I can remember." She cast a disdainful glance at poor Miss Guinea.

At that moment, all eyes turned toward the doorway. The peacock had arrived, fashionably late, with his tail displayed in its full glory. Slowly and with measured steps, he advanced, looking straight ahead. The music ceased, and the other animals moved aside, creating a path for the peacock. He gracefully marched through the barn without turning his head left or right, then disappeared into the night through the opposite door.

His grandeur and dignified manner overwhelmed the other animals, leaving them in awe. No one felt inclined to dance anymore. Mrs. Tabby gathered her daughters and bid farewell, while the animals departed the barn in pairs. Madam Duck remained until everyone had left. "I just wanted to see if that old flirt of a horse would go home with Miss Pig after behaving so foolishly all evening," she said to the guinea hen.

"He did," replied the guinea. "I saw them leave together."

"I suppose he saw me watching him," said the duck. "He knows exactly what I think of him. It's a shame you didn't have a partner, Miss Guinea," she added before turning to leave.

"Oh, I didn't mind," responded the guinea. "I was there to watch, just like you."