

KERRYGOLD'S PRIZE

THIS IS A STORY ABOUT KERRYGOLD THE IRISH COW. IT'S NOT A LONG STORY BUT I HOPE YOU'LL ENJOY IT!

THERE'S A LOVELY COUNTRY CALLED IRELAND ACROSS THE OCEAN FROM HERE. IT'S A VERY GREEN COUNTRY AND THERE ARE MANY COWS, SHEEP, AND HORSES LIVING THERE, ALL GRAZING ON THE THICK GREEN GRASS.

ONE OF THESE COWS WAS NAMED KERRYGOLD. SHE WAS CALLED THAT BECAUSE SHE LIVED IN A PLACE CALLED COUNTY KERRY AND BECAUSE SHE HAD A LOVELY LIGHT-COLORED COAT THAT SHONE LIKE GOLD IN THE SUNSHINE.

KERRYGOLD LIVED ON A BIG FARM WITH MANY OTHER COWS OF DIFFERENT COLORS. SOME WERE BROWN WITH WHITE FACES, OTHERS WERE BLACK AND WHITE (NANNY CALLS THEM "REAL COWS"). NO MATTER WHAT COLOR THEY WERE, THOUGH, ALL THE COWS HAD THE SAME JOB - TO GIVE THEIR MILK TO FARMER SEAN TO MAKE DELICIOUS BUTTER AND CHEESE. THE BUTTER AND CHEESE COULD BE SOLD IN STORES ALL OVER THE WORLD, EVEN CAPE COD!

ONE DAY KERRYGOLD WAS GRAZING PEACEFULLY NEAR THE FENCE OF HER FAVORITE PASTURE WHEN A CAR DROVE UP. IT STOPPED AND A MAN AND A WOMAN GOT OUT. THEY BOTH SEEMED HAPPY TO SEE KERRYGOLD.

AS THEY WALKED OVER TO THE FENCE THE WOMAN WAS SAYING TO THE MAN, "JIM, WE HAVE TO GET HER PICTURE!" "I'LL GET THE CAMERAS, SALLY," SAID THE MAN. KERRYGOLD DIDN'T KNOW WHAT ELSE TO DO SO SHE CONTINUED GRAZING. BUT OUT OF THE CORNER OF HER EYE SHE COULD SEE JIM AND SALLY TAKING PICTURE AFTER PICTURE.

FINALLY THEY GOT BACK IN THE CAR. BOTH JIM AND SALLY HAD BIG HAPPY SMILES ON THEIR FACES. KERRYGOLD THOUGHT SHE COULD HEAR THE WORDS "LOVELY" AND "PRIZE" AND "FARMER" AS THE CAR DROVE OFF IN THE DIRECTION OF THE FARMHOUSE.

AS KERRYGOLD STOOD TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT HAD JUST HAPPENED, HER FRIEND MARIA THE MARE TROTTED OVER. "WHAT WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?" ASKED MARIA. "I HAVE NO IDEA," REPLIED

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KERRYGOLD. "I NEVER SAW THOSE PEOPLE BEFORE."

MARIA THE MARE CLIMBED A LITTLE HILL IN THE PASTURE SO SHE COULD SEE DOWN THE ROAD. "I THINK I SEE THE CAR PARKED IN FRONT OF THE FARMHOUSE," SHE CALLED DOWN TO KERRYGOLD. "MAYBE FARMER SEAN WILL TELL US WHAT'S GOING ON."

MARIA'S NEW FOAL WAS CALLING FOR HIS MOTHER ACROSS THE PASTURE. "GOTTA GO," SAID MARIA. "IF I CAN I'LL STOP BY BEFORE MILKING TIME." KERRYGOLD WAS CHEWING A BIG MOUTHFUL OF GRASS AND HAD TO NOD HER HEAD TO MARIA TO SAY SO LONG.

BUT FARMER SEAN DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING THAT NIGHT OR THE NEXT DAY OR THE NEXT DAY AFTER THAT. KERRYGOLD TOLD MARIA SHE THOUGHT FARMER SEAN WAS WAITING FOR SOMETHING. PRETTY SOON KERRYGOLD HAD FORGOTTEN ABOUT JIM AND SALLY - OR WOULD HAVE FORGOTTEN IF MARIA HADN'T KEPT REMINDING HER. "IF IT'S IMPORTANT, MAYBE WE'LL FIND OUT SOME DAY," SAID KERRYGOLD WITH A SIGH. "I HOPE SO!" SAID MARIA.

THEN ONE MORNING A WEEK OR SO LATER KERRYGOLD WAS SURPRISED TO SEE THE SAME CAR STOP BY THE FENCE. THIS TIME NOT ONLY JIM AND SALLY GOT OUT, BUT FARMER SEAN AND HIS WIFE JENNY TOO. EVERYBODY HAD BIG SMILES ON THEIR FACES. FARMER SEAN WAS CARRYING A BIG BLUE RIBBON AND JENNY HAD A LOVELY CROWN MADE OF LITTLE RED AND YELLOW FLOWERS.

WHEN KERRYGOLD CAME OVER TO THE FENCE TO SAY A FEW MOOS OF GREETING, FARMER SEAN PLACED THE BLUE RIBBON AROUND HER NECK WHILE JENNY PUT THE FLOWERY CROWN VERY GRACEFULLY AROUND HER HORNS. THEN FARMER SEAN AND JENNY STOOD PROUDLY ON EITHER SIDE OF KERRYGOLD WHILE JIM AND SALLY TOOK PICTURE AFTER PICTURE.

"CONGRATULATIONS, KERRYGOLD!" SHOUTED JIM. "YOU HAVE BEEN VOTED 'THE PRETTIEST COW IN IRELAND' FOR THIS YEAR. YOUR PICTURE WILL BE IN NEWSPAPER, ON CALENDARS, ON THE INTERNET, ON YOUTUBE ... EVERYONE IN THE WORLD WILL KNOW ABOUT YOU!" JENNY HAD TEARS

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IN HER EYES WHILE SHE GAVE KERRYGOLD A BIG KISS ON THE NECK. FARMER SEAN SMILED HIS BIGGEST SMILE BUT HIS EYES WERE DAMP TOO.

WHILE ALL THIS WAS GOING ON, MARIA THE MARE AND HER LITTLE FOAL TROTTED ACROSS THE PASTURE TO SEE WHAT ALL THE EXCITEMENT WAS ABOUT. "DO YOU THINK THEY'D TAKE OUR PICTURES TOO?" "OF COURSE!" SAID KERRYGOLD. MARIA TOSSED HER MANE TO GET IT JUST RIGHT FOR THE PICTURE BUT THEN NOTICED THAT THE FOAL HAD STRAW STUCK TO HIS MUZZLE, SO EVERYONE HAD TO WAIT UNTIL HE WAS CLEANED UP.

WELL, SOON THERE WERE ARTICLES IN ALL THE NEWSPAPERS ABOUT KERRYGOLD, WITH PICTURES OF HER WITH HER FAMILY AND FRIENDS. FOLKS FROM MILES AROUND STOPPED BY TO OFFER CONGRATULATIONS AND TAKE A FEW PICTURES OF THEIR OWN.

"IT'S BEEN FUN BEING 'THE PRETTIEST COW IN IRELAND'," SAID KERRYGOLD TO MARIA A FEW WEEKS LATER, "BUT I STILL HAVE WORK TO DO!" "I KNOW," SAID MARIA WITH A LAUGH. "MILKING TIME! SEE YOU LATER!"

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