

KERRYGOLD and the VET

ONE MORNING KERRYGOLD THE IRISH COW WOKE UP IN THE BARN NOT FEELING TOO WELL.

"WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE PROBLEM?" ASKED MARIA THE MARE. "I'M NOT SURE," REPLIED KERRYGOLD. "ONE MINUTE I'M VERY COLD, NEXT MINUTE I'M VERY WARM. I'M SHIVERING AND MY NOSE IS ALL STUFFED UP TOO."

"IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU'VE CAUGHT THAT COW FLU THAT'S BEEN GOING AROUND," SAID MARIA. "I HEARD THAT ALL THE COWS OVER ON HALLORAN'S FARM WERE SICK LAST WEEK. THEY SAY YOU FEEL TERRIBLE FOR A FEW DAYS AND THEN IT GOES AWAY."

"I HOPE SO," SAID KERRYGOLD.

JUST THEN FARMER SEAN CAME INTO THE BARN FOR THE MORNING MILKING. HE NOTICED RIGHT AWAY THAT KERRYGOLD WASN'T HER USUAL SELF. HE CAME OVER AND PATTED HER GENTLY BETWEEN THE HORNS. "WHAT'S WRONG, GIRL? NOT FEELING TOO WELL TODAY?"

KERRYGOLD SHOOK HER HEAD NO, AND SNEEZED A FEW TIMES. FARMER SEAN PUT HIS HAND ON HER FOREHEAD. "MY GOODNESS, YOU'RE VERY WARM!" HE SAID AS KERRYGOLD WATCHED HIM WITH HER SAD BROWN EYES. SHE DIDN'T LIKE NOT FEELING WELL.

"I THINK IT MIGHT BE A GOOD IDEA TO CALL DOCTOR McCANN," SAID FARMER SEAN. "HE'LL HAVE A LOOK AT YOU AND IF THERE'S ANYTHING WE CAN DO TO MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER, WE'LL DO IT."

KERRYGOLD FELT VERY GRATEFUL FOR THIS. SHE WAS REALLY FEELING TERRIBLE AND SHE KNEW THAT DOCTOR McCANN HAD HELPED MANY OF THE OTHER ANIMALS ON THE FARM WHEN THEY WEREN'T FEELING WELL. HE HAD ATTENDED TO MATILDA THE CAT'S SORE LEG AND TO MARIA'S FOAL JUNIOR WHEN HE HAD HURT HIS HOOF ON A STONE. HE HAD HELPED FARMER SEAN AND HIS WIFE JENNY THE NIGHT THAT ALICIA THE PIG GAVE BIRTH TO HER LITTER OF

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PIGLETS.

SO AFTER GIVING KERRYGOLD A HUG AND A BIG RED APPLE TO MUNCH, FARMER SEAN WENT OFF TO CALL DOCTOR McCANN. THE DOCTOR ARRIVED ABOUT AN HOUR LATER. IN THE MEANTIME KERRYGOLD HAD GONE BACK TO SLEEP. SHE JUST COULDN'T SEEM TO STAY AWAKE.

WHEN SHE OPENED HER EYES, THE DOCTOR, FARMER SEAN, AND JENNY WERE STANDING IN HER STALL TALKING.

THE DOCTOR WAS A TALL MAN WITH A RED BEARD AND A KINDLY FACE. HE WAS YOUNG.

"GOOD MORNING, GIRL," SAID THE DOCTOR WHEN THEY SAW THAT KERRYGOLD WAS AWAKE. "I'M HERE TO HELP YOU FEEL BETTER!"

KERRYGOLD TRIED TO MAKE THE COW VERSION OF A SMILE BUT SHE COULDN'T, SO SHE JUST NODDED HER HORNS A FEW TIMES. THE DOCTOR CAME CLOSER WITH HIS BAG OF INSTRUMENTS. HE TOOK ONE OUT - IT WAS A STRANGE-LOOKING THING WITH TWO EARPIECES AND A METAL PIECE DANGLING DOWN FROM THE MIDDLE. HE HELD IT IN FRONT OF HER SO SHE COULD SEE IT AND SNIFF IT. KERRYGOLD'S EARS WERE ALL CONGESTED BUT SHE THOUGHT HE CALLED IT A "STETHOSCOPE".

THE VET PUT THE EARPIECES IN HIS EARS AND PRESSED THE METAL PIECE TO KERRYGOLD'S CHEST FOR A FEW SECONDS. IT FELT COOL.

"WELL, HER HEART IS FINE, BUT I HEAR A LOT OF CONGESTION IN HER LUNGS," DOCTOR McCANN TOLD FARMER SEAN AND JENNY. THEN HE TOOK OUT A SMALL BOX AND HELD IT BETWEEN HER HORNS. "AND SHE'S RUNNING A TEMPERATURE TOO."

AT THAT POINT POOR KERRYGOLD SNEEZED AGAIN, TWICE. JENNY RAN UP WITH A CLOTH TO WIPE HER NOSE.

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DOCTOR McCANN MADE A FEW MORE TESTS ON KERRYGOLD'S EYES AND EARS, AND THUMPED HER GENTLY ALONG THE RIBS. HE LISTENED AGAIN WITH THE STETHOSCOPE.

HE PATTED HER ALONG THE BACK - THAT WAS PART OF THE EXAMINATION - AND THEN PATTED HER BETWEEN HER HORNS - THAT WAS JUST TO MAKE HER FEEL GOOD. KERRYGOLD WOULD HAVE GIVEN HIS HAND A LICK IN RETURN BUT SHE JUST DIDN'T FEEL WELL ENOUGH.

"IT'S DEFINITELY THE COW FLU," HE ANNOUNCED TO FARMER SEAN AND JENNY. "NOT AS BAD AS THEY HAD IT OVER AT HALLORAN'S, BUT ENOUGH TO MAKE HER UNHAPPY."

"IS THERE ANYTHING THAT WILL HELP?" ASKED JENNY. "WE'RE NOT USED TO SEEING OUR POOR GIRL SO OUT OF SORTS."

"I CAN GIVE HER A SHOT," REPLIED THE VET. "ONE SHOULD HELP A LOT. I HAVE SOME PILLS YOU CAN GIVE HER FOR A FEW DAYS TOO, UNTIL SHE'S BACK TO HER OLD SELF."

KERRYGOLD LISTENED WITH INTEREST. SHE STILL FELT AWFUL BUT SHE WAS HAPPY TO KNOW THAT HER HUMAN FRIENDS WERE GOING TO HELP HER. SINCE SHE WASN'T SURE WHAT A "SHOT" WAS, SHE WAS A TINY BIT WORRIED, BUT SHE TRUSTED DOCTOR McCANN AND KNEW THAT HE WOULDN'T HURT HER.

THE VET TOOK OUT A LONG POINTY THING FROM HIS BAG AND WALKED AROUND TO KERRYGOLD'S FLANK, THE PART ON HER SIDE OVER HER RIGHT REAR HOOF. JENNY STOOD IN FRONT OF KERRYGOLD PATTING HER HEAD AND TALKING TO HER.

ALL OF A SUDDEN KERRYGOLD FELT A LITTLE PINCH. IT WAS LIKE THE BITE OF A HORSEFLY.

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'THAT'S IT!' SAID THE VET. HE WAS DABBING AT HER FLANK WITH A PIECE OF COTTON. KERRYGOLD WONDERED IF THAT WAS THE SHOT HE HAD BEEN TALKING ABOUT. IF IT WAS, IT CERTAINLY WASN'T ANYTHING TO WORRY ABOUT. AS A MATTER OF FACT, SHE WAS STARTING TO FEEL A BIT BETTER ALREADY!

MARIA THE MARE - CURIOUS AS ALWAYS - CAME OVER AFTER THE THREE PEOPLE LEFT. "WHAT HAPPENED?" SHE ASKED. KERRYGOLD TOLD HER ABOUT THE SHOT.

"I GET THOSE ALL THE TIME," SAID MARIA PROUDLY. "AND SO DOES JUNIOR. FARMER SEAN SAID THAT THEY HELP HORSES STAY HEALTHY."

"WELL, I HOPE THAT ONE DOES THE SAME FOR ME!" SAID KERRYGOLD. "I DON'T LIKE FEELING BAD!"

"THAT'S MY KERRYGOLD!" EXCLAIMED MARIA. "AND IN A FEW DAYS YOU AND I WILL BE BACK OUT IN THE PASTURE AS IF NONE OF THIS HAD EVER HAPPENED!"

"I LIKE THAT IDEA," SAID KERRYGOLD WITH A YAWN. "EXCUSE ME, MARIA - I'M VERY SLEEPY. SEE YOU LATER!"

AS KERRYGOLD STRETCHED OUT FOR A NAP, SHE THOUGHT ABOUT HOW WONDERFUL IT WAS THAT SHE WAS ALREADY FEELING BETTER. SHE CLOSED HER BIG BROWN EYES AND WAS SOUND ASLEEP IN TEN SECONDS!

THE END