

BEST IN SHOW

SCENE: A group of animals are waiting to be judged at a community fair.

ROLES (4): Clarence (the cheerful cow), Sheldon (the sensible sheep), Horace (the happy horse), Patricia (the pretty pig)

READER AGES: 8 years and over

CLARENCE: (*cheerfully*) Oh, I just love show day! Don't you? The sights, the sounds, the excitement... it's all just so wonderful!

SHELDON: Well, yes. It is all rather lovely. A lot of fuss though, don't you think?

PATRICIA: (*in a pompous tone*) And don't we deserve a bit of fuss being made over us every now and then? Look at us all! We are the finest examples of our species to be found anywhere. Take Horace, for example.

HORACE: Me, Patricia?

PATRICIA: Yes, Horace. What a fine horse you are! Look at those long, strong legs! That soft mane! Those big, beautiful eyes! You are a specimen of perfection. I wouldn't be surprised if you win the *Most Shimmering Mane* award this year.

HORACE: (*a little embarrassed*) Why, thank you, Patricia. That's very kind of you to say. My owner did put some special liquid in my mane this morning. Conditioner, I think. It makes my mane smell like apples and freshly cut grass.

CLARENCE: Oooh, grass! My favourite!

HORACE: Speaking of fine looking animals, you are looking particularly radiant today, Clarence. Your eyelashes are longer than any I've ever seen!

CLARENCE: Oh, Horace, that's such a lovely compliment. I'm hoping to win the *Most Luscious Lashes* award this year. My owner put something special on them this morning - something called 'mascara'?

HORACE: Mascara? I've never heard of it. What does it do?

CLARENCE: Apparently, it makes the lashes get longer and curlier. (*hopefully*) Do you think it's worked? I didn't get a chance to check myself in the mirror before we left the farm this morning.

HORACE: (*kindly*) You look wonderful, Clarence. Simply delightful.

CLARENCE: Thank you, Horace. I really want to make my owner proud. I know how much he wants to win a blue ribbon at the show this year.

PATRICIA: Speaking of blue ribbons, I think Sheldon is a certainty for the *Softest Fleece* award. (*to Sheldon*) It's shining like silk, Sheldon!

SHELDON: As long as it keeps me warm in the colder months, that's the most important thing!

CLARENCE: Sheldon, stop being so sensible for a minute. It's completely acceptable to admit how lovely you look. Do you think you could win?

SHELDON: (*unsure*) Well... I guess I could. Though Sophie the Sheep has some very elaborate accessories in her fleece - lots of ribbons and fancy clips. Maybe the judges might like her better.

PATRICIA: Nonsense, Sheldon! Your fleece is much softer than Sophie's. I'd vote for you if I were a judge.

SHELDON: (*slightly embarrassed*) Thank you, Patricia. That's very kind of you. Might I mention how particularly plump you are looking today? And your skin is the pinkest that I have ever seen it.

PATRICIA: (*gushing*) Oh, Sheldon, you know how much I love compliments! Tell me more about how wonderful I look.

SHELDON: (*thinking*) Well... your snout is simply shimmering, Patricia. It looks as soft as velvet.

PATRICIA: Oh stop! You're too kind.

HORACE: Have you been entered in the *Most Twirly Tail* competition this year?

PATRICIA: Of course! I've won it three years in a row. My owner expects me to bring home that blue ribbon and I'm not going to let her down!

SHELDON: Speaking of blue ribbons... who do you think is going to win *Best in Show* this year?

HORACE: (*sadly*) Horses never win *Best in Show*.

CLARENCE: Neither do cows.

PATRICIA: Nor do pigs.

SHELDON: I don't remember a sheep ever winning *Best in Show*, either.

The animals sit in silence. They are all feeling sorry for themselves.

CLARENCE: Who needs a *Best in Show* award, anyway? It's only a piece of blue ribbon.

PATRICIA: Whatever do you mean, Clarence? You were just saying before how important it was to you to win the blue ribbon for your owner.

CLARENCE: Well, yes... it's always nice to win prizes for having the most shimmering mane, the most luscious lashes, the softest fleece or the most twirly tail. But there's some things in life that are more important than all of those things put together.

HORACE: Like what?

CLARENCE: Like happiness. Like kindness. Like friendship. I might not win a blue ribbon today, but with all of you as my friends, I feel like I've already won.

PATRICIA: What a lovely thing to say, Clarence. You know, you really are quite a clever cow.

The animals hear an announcement indicating that the judging is about to begin.

SHELDON: Sounds like it's show time! Good luck, everyone. Let's go out there and show those judges what a cow, a horse, a pig and a sheep can do!

THE END

