

Farmer Sam's daughters had just bounded in and out of the barn, excited to get their morning chores done and that school was out for the day. Elsie, of course, had rolled her big, disapproving eyes at their enthusiasm. Forever Miss Negative, she clearly saw nothing positive about the day. She'd already mooed to the other dozen cows nestled in their stalls that the herd would be staying inside today in the nice, toasty warm barn. No way would she even consider venturing out into the cold day with its freshly fallen snow.

Blossom munched on the apple her dear friends, the young girls, had brought her as a treat. They seemed to understand that with yet another new year she intended to make a more determined attempt at better watching what she ate. Changing the quantity and adding more fruits to her diet, like these intriguing apples. She'd limit her grazing—once there was new grass out in her picturesque field—to eight of the hours there, instead of the full nine hours. She'd cut back a tad on what she ate in the barn as well. Well, maybe a cup or so less grain. No sense in going to extremes.

Finished with the apple, she politely thrust out her long tongue and licked the juice off her muzzle. She felt healthier already. *What had she heard the girls say one time?* Oh, yes, “an apple a day keeps the doctor away.” She was certainly for that. Being visited by the veterinarian was never something she looked forward to. Just seeing his pickup truck driving up the road set her double stomachs to quivering. And once she'd gotten much too close a look into the legendary black bag of medical torture instruments he carried with him. Her whole body shuddered at the memory of having seen what had appeared to be the biggest knife she'd ever seen in her life. She didn't even want to think what he might possibly do with it!

She forced the unpleasant thoughts aside and nudged open her stall door. Time to go on a little adventure for this delightful January day. Now that shed' feasted on corn feed and that delicious apple she was revitalized, ready for a stroll across the field to the far corner where she was certain her beloved Ferdinand would be waiting for her.

”Where are you going?” Elsie questioned in bovine displeasure. “Don't you even think about leaving this barn! I forbid it.”

Blossom stopped as she passed by Elsie's big corner stall. She cocked her head at the smaller Jersey and scoffed, “*You* forbid me! I think not.”

Without even waiting for a response, Blossom flashed her impressive rump at Queen Bee Elsie and pranced straight to the main barn door. *Forbid me? Really! As if!* She did the little trick with her nose and putting her hip into it and shoved the door open.

A blast of blustery air hit her in the face. *Oh, dear Lord!* Cold, far, far beyond cold. Only an insane cow would venture outside now.

“Close the door and get back to your stall,” Elsie snootily ordered. Several other cows grumbled similar commands.

More determined than ever to leave, Blossom planted one leg and then the other into the snow. Half of her lower legs disappeared. Glancing across the farm yard it might look like a photogenic winter scene, but she had a feeling more like her beloved farm had been cruelly moved to the North Pole. More words she’d heard the girls say at some point crossed her mind: “You’re not in Kansas anymore.”

She shivered from her nearly frozen muzzle to her udder far too close to all that snow. Behind her Elsie evilly snickered, no doubt delighted to see Blossom suffering from pre-frostbite.

Again, determination coursed through her. She focused on the belief that Ferdinand would have challenged the weather to meet her today. He was much like what she’d heard about postmen, afraid of neither sleet nor snow, etcetera, etcetera. He *would* be there waiting. *He would!* Or he’d definitely get a piece of her mind if she went all that darn way and he wasn’t!

She stepped briskly outside, shoved the door shut with her flank, and ordered her hooves to get moving. *Brrrr. Brrrr. Brrrr.* This whole romance business was tough stuff sometimes.

By the time she’d hoof-plowed her way across the field, Blossom wondered if her ears hadn’t frozen and fallen off. Her teats hadn’t, but they sure were complaining. Most of the way it hadn’t been too bad, but she’d had to force her way through a chest-deep wall of snow near the iced-over pond. She might have given up at that point and turned back except she’d been almost certain she’d heard Ferdinand rumbling to her. But it could have been an hallucination.

”Blossom, my love,” Ferdinand’s deep voice called out. “Come, let me warm you up.”

She almost snapped back, “You’re so not worth this.” But she turned her head and spotted the one-ton prime bull of her dreams in her field, only a dozen or so feet away. His thick hair was dotted with snow. His muzzle looked frozen, his nostrils edged in blue. But his eyes, those wondrous large brown eyes, sparked with the fire of his love for her.

“I’ll be right there.” Her frozen hooves were forgotten. The ears and teats she could hardly feel now were forgotten as well. A few minutes of rubbing against one another and all would be right with the world.

He met her half way, gave her that silly, sexy grin of his. “You’re losing weight, aren’t you, my love?”

Maybe she’d lost a half a pound, probably not. But she preened anyway. “It’s those apples the girls have been bringing me.”

He nuzzled his neck against hers and rumble-whispered, “Don’t lose too much, my beloved Blossom. I love you just the way you are.”

Then he nibbled on her ear. It wasn't frozen off after all and she sighed in pleasure. "I love you, too," she purred, thinking she sounded something like a contented **b** with its tummy full of milk. "I'm feeling warmer already."