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How Flowers Taught the Two-Legged Cows to Know Her Name

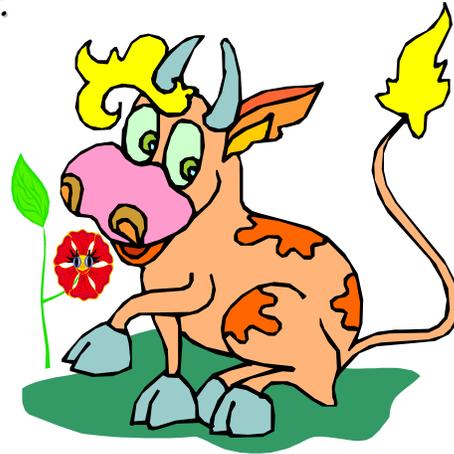
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Flowers was not her full name. For that matter, it did not even sound like ffff-ull-ow-er-rrrs in Cowlish, it was more of a... “Mmmowerrrrzzz” ... and, it was short for a much longer cow name that was quite unpronounceable by the average two-legged cow. True-cows, the four-legged variety of course, could pronounce her full name and true cows knew her name meant

"She Who Smells the Flowers First."



Flowers remembered the stories of how she got her name. As a very young calf, she and her sisters would be among the first to lead the two-legged cows into the field. Although, unlike her sisters who would go straight to the tender grasses growing by the stream to begin eating breakfast, Flowers would stop at each and every flower along the way.

She would revel in the glorious smells of the yellow Wood Poppy, Prickly Pear and Frostweed; the orange Hawkweed, Milkwort and Spotted Touch-me-not; the rich brown Sumac, Seebox and Groundnut; the flame red Phlox, Hibiscus and Indian Blanket; and, the blue Hepatica, Periwinkle and Wild Flax.

And so, it was no surprise to anybody when Flowers grew to be a heifer and it was time for her to be given her true name that the Council of Elders would choose to name her SheWhoSmellsTheFlowersFirst. Of course, by now, only her Mother still called her that; everyone else just called her Flowers. Everyone else, that is, except the two-leggeds.

The two-legged cows had always been kind to Flowers and she could not remember them not being around. She had her favorites, the one called Pa particularly.



Pa was a strong male and the largest of the herd that included the alpha female they called Ma, and two calves called BigJoe (he was quite small) and Li'l Billy (who was anything but). In spite of his size and bulk, this one called Pa was the most gentle, the most kind, and the most dependable. He would always open the gates when it was time to return to nest, he would always bring food, and; he would talk.

Most of Pa's talk was gibberish... you know, that sing-song, collection of ay's, ees, ies, oh's and oo's punctuated by those explicable percussive clicking sounds two-legged cows make, the ch's, ka', and ta's. Of course, any well educated true-cow needed to be bi-lingual and Flowers had struggled to learn the language (if you could call it that) of the two-legged (a courtesy that the two-legged did not seem anxious to return, for very few of them appeared to be making an effort to learn proper Cowlish.)

Still, there was one thing that really bothered her about the two-legged; *they did not know her real name*. Oh they had a name for her all right, and it was a nice enough name she supposed (if you were a two-legged). They called her Eighty-one, and when she heard them bleating out "Aaaaateeeeewhaaaanuuun," she knew they meant her.

So, why did it bother her so that they did not know her real name, after all, they were only two-legged cows. Even the one Flowers liked so much, the one called Pa; he was still only a two-legged cow and could not be expected to pronounce her name in Cowlish.

But still, day after day Flowers would hear...

“Aaaaateeeeewhaaaanuuun ...

Aaaaateeeeewhaaaanuuun ...

Aaaaateeeeewhaaaanuuun...”

“What an ugly stream of sounds,” she thought. It bothered to hear this because her name was *Flowers*; not Eighty-one! “Aaaaateeeeewhaaaanuuun” doesn’t mean anything”; she would complain to her sisters, “its just sounds strung together!” Her real name meant something! It spoke of who she was and what was important to her. Even now, in the prime of heifer-hood, she still stopped to smell the flowers first. Aaaaateeeeewhaaaanuuun was not her name and was therefore, just not acceptable. So, Flowers made a decision to do what no true cow had ever been able to do. She decided to teach the two-legged cow called Pa to know her name.

At first, Flowers thought it would be easy. After all, how difficult could it be to say “Mmmowerrrrzzz”? Certainly no more than the “Aaaaateeeewhaaaanuuun” sound they made now. So, her first strategy to teach the two-legged cow called Pa to know her name was simple. She would gently and kindly correct him when he misspoke. And so, when Pa would say “Aaaaateeeewhaaaanuuun”, Flowers would say “Mmmowerrrrzzz” back to him.

Over and over again, Pa would say, “Aaaaateeeewhaaaanuuun”
and Flowers would say “***Mmmowerrrrzzz***”,
and Pa would say, “Aaaaateeeewhaaaanuuun”
and Flowers would say “***Mmmowerrrrzzz***”,
and Pa would say, “Aaaaateeeewhaaaanuuun”
and Flowers would say “***Mmmowerrrrzzz!***”

This went one until all the other true cows begged Flowers to stop, for they had become so tired of the two-legged's blithering. So, she tried another strategy. Every morning, when the true cows would lead the two-legged cows to the field, and the calves would rush ahead, Flowers would be the first among them. Many of her friends thought she was being quite un-cool (after all, this boisterous scrambling for the tender shoots by the stream was really something for calves, certainly not for the sophisticated heifers they had become). Even when her older sister LiesDownInThePoop and her younger sister SeemsToAttractMoreFlies laughed at her for her morning antics, Flowers thought it worth the humiliation if just this one, big dumb two-legged cow could get right. She hoped Pa would see her every morning, over and over smelling the flowers and begin to associate her with the yellow Wood Poppy, Prickly Pear and Frostweed; the orange Hawkweed, Milkwort and Spotted Touch-me-not; the rich brown Sumac, Seebox and Groundnut; the flame red Phlox, Hibiscus and Indian Blanket; and, the blue Hepatica, Periwinkle and Wild Flax. They were all flowers and so was she!

But, no, not only did Pa not learn, he did not even seem to notice what Flowers was doing. This one called Pa was clearly learning disabled. Still, Flowers persisted, longing to hear Pa speak her name, her beautiful “Mmmowerrrrzzz!” But still, he just didn’t get it! Flowers was beginning to think that these two-legged cows were just unteachable. Sure, they could be trained. You could get them to clean your nest, refresh the hay bales, and even pick up the poop! But, she wondered, could they really learn? You see, Flowers wanted Pa to more than just make the sound of her name, Mmmowerrrrzzz, or “Flowers” in his gibberish. She wanted him to “understand” *why* he was making that sound. She wanted him to know that “Flowers” was *her* name, not Aaaaaateeeewhaaaanuuuun. She was Mmmowerrrrzzz and she was proud of her name and what it meant to her. So, she conceived one last desperate strategy. She would go right into their nest (a place no self-respecting true cow would ever want to go). She would confront Pa and his entire herd. She would sit them down, get their attention, look them directly in the eye and say very clearly and distinctly, “My name is Mmmowerrrrzzz!”

It was in the season of the FallingLeavesAndColderWinds that Flowers tried her radical plan. The day was not even half over, the Mother's udders still hung loose; the time to summon the two-leggeds was still far off. And so, as you can well imagine, all the other cows thought it very strange when Flowers boldly walked up the hill, past the stream where the calves grazed on the tender shoots and even past the field where the Mother's munched and complained to one another about "What's the matter with the young Heifers these days!" And, you can imagine how aghast all the true-cows were when Flowers walked right up to the WireThatBites! Surely Flowers would stop there! No true-cows in their right mind would touch the WireThatBites...duhhhh ...hello... the Wire – that – *BITES!!!*

But Flowers did something even more bizarre! Everyone starred in disbelief as she began to run right at the menacing WireThatBites! "What is this crazy kid doing?" thought the Mothers. "We taught her not to do go so close!"

“Mmmowerrrrzzz!” bellowed her Mother, “That’s quite enough!” But Flowers did not listen and she did not slow down! Instead she broke into a full gallop, like the tall cows that the two-legged cows sometimes rode upon. She ran and ran for all she was worth, intently, deliberately, undeterred she dashed toward the WireThatBites and the whole community of true cows shuddered for there would be no saving Flowers now. She could not stop, she could not swerve, she could only careen headlong into the menacing wire and feel its bite. She would forever have the scar, like old TalksTooMuch who keeps to herself and doesn’t talk at all any more.

Then, when catastrophe seemed inevitable, Flowers did something that no true-cow had ever done before. No one had ever taught her; no one had ever expected it; but she knew she could do it and she did. ***She jumped!***



Oh sure, the other true cows could jump and often did...but they were little jumps, the kind of jumps that were expected and the kind of jumps that the calves were taught to do and the kind of jumps that properly educated Heifers were expected to do. This jump was very different.

Flowers soared, like the soft-coated cows that flew overhead. She took to the air in one great leap that carried her up and up, higher and higher, spinning and turning, whirling and revolving not at all gracefully and looking quite ridiculous to all the true-cows, not to mention to the collection of tall-cows, ground-scratching cows, bearded-cows, and even the troublesome barking-cows who were also watching in astonishment!

Even Pa and the other two-legged cows had gathered to watch this extraordinary event. They watched until at last Flowers landed on the other side of the dreaded WireThatBites, coming to a rolling and tumbling halt, digging up the ground and leaving a long furrow behind her.

She landed smack in the center of the huge flower garden of the two-legged cow called Ma. She looked ridiculous, covered head-to-hoof in Pansies and Petunias, Daisies and Daffodils, Roses, Geraniums, and Jack in the Pulpit.



As you might imagine, Flowers was very, very embarrassed. All the other cows; true-cows, soft-coated cows, tall-cows, ground-scratching cows, bearded-cows, and even barking-cows laughed at her sitting amid the flowerbed!

Flowers was thoroughly frustrated and angry with herself. She had tried so hard to teach Pa this simple thing. It would have meant so much to hear this dear animal, the two-legged cow called Pa speak her name, her true name. She was a failure; she had not taught Pa to say “Mmmowerrrrzzz!”

And so, you will understand how embarrassed Flowers was as she watched Pa approach her in the garden. She knew he’d want her to lead him back into the field now, but she dreaded having to walk past all her friends, looking like she did now, the result of her very undignified landing in Ma’s garden. And so, perhaps you will also understand how surprised Flowers was when Pa came close, showing his teeth in that way the two-legged cows do when they are amused, making that silly chuckling sound, and speaking the most beautiful words Flowers had ever heard.

The other two-legged cows understood why Pa had said what he did. What else could he say to this flower-covered creature sitting among the Pansies and Petunias, Daisies and Daffodils, Roses, Geraniums, and Jack in the Pulpit? The other two-legged cows knew exactly why the one called Pa said,

“Come on *Flowers*, let’s go back to the field.”

As with most of the sounds made by two legged cows, Flowers understood only one word, but it was the one word she longed to hear, it was the word “Flowers” and that meant “Mmmowerrrrzzz”!

He had said it! The big, dumb two-legged cow had said her name and, best of all he had a reason to call her “Flowers!” He had learned her name!

For many years thereafter, Mmmowerrrrzzz (“Flowers” as Pa liked to call her) lived happily among the true-cows. She too became one of the Mothers and, in her time, passed onto the greater pasture where all the flowers smell sweet and all the young green shoots are tender. But while she lived, the two-legged cow called Pa, and the ones called Ma, and Big Joe, and Li'l' Billy all addressed her properly for not only had the two-legged cow called Pa learned her name, but so had the rest of the herd.

Even today, when the season of FallingLeavesAndColderWinds comes, and the two-legged cows gather at their feeding troths and make their gibberish to each other, they speak with fondness of Flowers, the cow who dressed herself in Pansies and Petunias, Daisies and Daffodils, Roses, Geraniums, and Jack in the Pulpit. And just this morning, when the young calves led the two-legged cows into the field, they *all* stopped to smell the flowers first, remembering Mmmowerrrrzzz and the story of how Flowers taught the two-legged cows to know her name.

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