

## “The Mischief at Pumpkin Patch Farm”

It was a chilly Halloween evening at Pumpkin Patch Farm, and the animals were buzzing with excitement. "Tonight's the night!" snorted Penny the Pig, her little curly tail wiggling with anticipation. "We're going to explore the Old Barn! They say it's haunted!"

"I don't believe in ghosts," muttered Daisy the Cow, chewing her cud thoughtfully. "But it'll be fun to find out. Plus, no one's ever dared to go there after dark."

Gathering near the big oak tree, the animals formed a group. Alongside Penny and Daisy were Rusty the Rooster, Gabby the Goose, and Scooter the Squirrel. Each had a small lantern hanging around their necks, lighting up the darkness.

"I heard strange noises from there last week," Rusty whispered, his feathers puffing up in fear. "What if the ghost of Farmer Jeb is really there?"

"Nonsense!" squawked Gabby. "Ghosts don't exist. It's probably just the wind."

"But what if it's not?" squeaked Scooter, hopping nervously from paw to paw. "What if it's something worse?"

Ignoring their worries, Penny marched forward, her bravery masking the shivers running down her back. "Come on! We can't back out now."

As the group approached the barn, its massive, creaky doors loomed ahead like the gaping mouth of a giant. The wind howled through the wooden beams, and the moonlight cast eerie shadows across the walls.

"Who... who goes first?" Rusty stuttered.

"I will!" said Daisy confidently, though she moved cautiously. As soon as they stepped inside, a loud BANG echoed from the rafters. The animals jumped, eyes wide.

“What was that?!” Penny gasped.

“Probably just a loose shutter,” Daisy reasoned, though her voice shook slightly. They crept forward, scanning the barn for signs of life... or afterlife.

Suddenly, a pair of glowing eyes appeared in the corner.

“G-g-g-ghost!” Rusty squawked, flapping wildly.

“It’s just a cat!” Gabby scolded, waddling over. Sure enough, it was Mr. Whiskers, the barn cat, watching them with a bemused expression.

“I thought you guys were braver,” he meowed lazily. “The real surprise is upstairs.”

“U-upstairs?” Scooter gulped, his fur standing on end.

“Yep, if you’re not too scared to look,” teased Mr. Whiskers. With a flick of his tail, he sauntered up the rickety stairs.

The animals exchanged glances, then, one by one, followed. The staircase creaked ominously with each step. When they reached the top, they found a dusty attic filled with old farm tools and... costumes?

“What in the world?” Daisy murmured, looking around. The attic was covered in cobwebs, but in the center, there was a large, colorful banner that read: “HAPPY HALLOWEEN PARTY!”

“H-hello?” Penny called out softly.

Then, out of nowhere, a ghostly figure popped up! The animals screamed and huddled together. But instead of scaring them, the figure burst into laughter.

“Haha! Gotcha!” It was none other than Benny the Goat, wearing an old sheet with eye holes cut out. “You should’ve seen your faces!”

“What’s going on here?” Rusty demanded, feathers still ruffled.

Benny grinned sheepishly. “I just wanted to throw a surprise party. You know, a little Halloween fun. I didn’t mean to scare anyone!”

“Well, you did a good job of that,” Gabby honked, flapping her wings in mock anger.

As the shock faded, the group began to laugh. The attic wasn’t haunted after all; it was just Benny’s idea of a Halloween prank. He had even prepared a table of treats: apples, corn, and fresh hay.

“We thought there was a real ghost,” Daisy chuckled.

“Sorry,” Benny apologized, his ears drooping. “I didn’t think you’d really believe it.”

“That’s okay,” Penny said, smiling. “But maybe next time, let’s have fun without scaring each other so much.”

They spent the rest of the evening enjoying Benny’s surprise party, laughing and sharing stories. As they munched on their snacks, Scooter piped up thoughtfully.

“You know, we all got spooked, but we didn’t run away. We stuck together.”

Daisy nodded. “That’s true. Even when we were scared, we faced it as a team.”

“And that’s what’s important,” Penny agreed. “Halloween isn’t just about tricks and treats; it’s about friendship and bravery too.”

“Even if some of us are a little \*too\* brave for our own good,” Rusty teased, nudging Penny playfully.

The animals all laughed, the barn filled with warmth and cheer. Benny's prank had turned into a night they would never forget—a night of scares, surprises, and, most importantly, a reminder that no matter how spooky things seemed, they could face anything as long as they did it together.

**\*\*Lesson\*\*:** True bravery isn't about never being afraid; it's about facing your fears with friends by your side.