

# Christmas on the Farm

**C**hristmas Day was only two days away and it had been snowing hard on the farm. All the barns looked like they were covered with thick white blankets.

Tommy looked out of the window and watched his dad's old yellow tractor chugging away in the distance. His mum had gone into town to buy last-minute gifts and food for their Christmas dinner.

Tommy was daydreaming about the treats she might bring home when he heard something rumbling down the lane. A big red truck pulled up outside.



It was Mr Johnson from the Christmas tree farm and he was holding two huge Christmas trees. “Two trees for you, young Tommy. Sign here, please.”

“Two trees. Why have we got two?” asked Tommy.

“Don’t ask me, lad. Ask your mum and dad. They ordered one each.”

Tommy signed the form with his best handwriting then Mr Johnson drove away again. Tommy stood admiring the trees until his fingers and toes tingled with cold, then he went back inside and sat by the fire to warm them. His cat Luna stretched and jumped onto his lap.

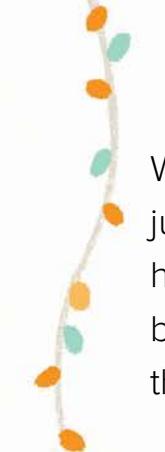
“I bet we’ve got two trees by accident, Luna,” said Tommy. “I bet Dad didn’t know that Mum had already ordered one – or the other way around. What shall we do with the second one?” Suddenly, Tommy had an idea.

“I know! Let’s put it in the barn for the animals. You can have a Christmas tree of your own.”

Luna sat up and purred.

“I’ll ask Mum and Dad when they get home,” said Tommy, then he spent the rest of the afternoon planning how to make the animals’ Christmas tree look special. ➡





When his parents got home, it was just as Tommy had guessed – they had ordered two trees by accident, but they loved his idea for a tree in the barn. Tommy went to bed excited.



The next morning, Tommy's dad put up the Christmas trees. The tallest tree stood in the barn. Tommy helped his dad with the chores first, then he asked his mum for the leftovers from last night's meal, as well as some old dishes, string and as many paper bags as she could spare.

"What are you going to do with it all?" asked his mum.

"You'll see," said Tommy.

He crunched his way through the fresh snow to the barn, laden with as many things as he could carry.

First he filled several paper bags with oats. He tied these halfway up the tree for Arrow the mare. Then he made up some mini bundles of hay and tied them beneath the bags so Gertie the cow could reach them. On the lower branches, he tied more bundles for Buttercup the calf. From the leftovers, he found three juicy bones, which he tied further down the tree for his sheepdog, Rover. In between the bones, he tied up Luna the cat's favourite turkey treats.

Next he filled a big dish with potato peelings for Penny the pig and her piglets. He filled another dish with grains for the lambs, and the last one with corn for the chickens. He put them all under the tree.

Finally, he tied carrots around the bottom of the tree for the rabbits he often saw hopping around the fields,





and he topped the tree with a little basket of nuts for the squirrels, just in case they visited too.

When Tommy finished it was the strangest Christmas tree he had ever seen. "I hope the animals like their presents," he said.

He ran back to the house to fetch his mum and dad and Luna. His parents were just finishing trimming the proper Christmas tree in their living room and it was all lit up and sparkly.

"Now let me show you mine," said Tommy, hopping from foot to foot with excitement.

At the barn, Mum and Dad were amazed by Tommy's tree. It was a marvellous sight.

"Well, let's see what the animals make of it," said Dad, opening up the stalls.

Of course, the animals came straight over to the wonderful tree and, within seconds, they were feasting on the delicious gifts Tommy had made for them. ➡



Arrow the mare, Gertie the cow, Buttercup the calf, Penny and her piglets, the lambs, the chickens and Luna the cat were all merrily crunching and munching. Rover the sheepdog, who had been snoozing in the corner, smelt something tasty in the air and bounded over, and it wasn't long before three rabbits hopped into the barn and two squirrels scurried to the top of the tree to gnaw on the nuts.

There was neighing and mooing and oinking and bleating and clucking and purring and woofing and twitching and nibbling – and laughing too!

“Well done, Tommy,” said Mum and Dad, grinning.  
“That was a brilliant idea.”

Just then, the bright moon peeped out from behind a cloud and lit up the whole barn. At that moment the animals stopped eating. They turned to Tommy and said, “Thank you, Tommy. Merry Christmas to you!”

Tommy gasped, wide-eyed with wonder. But, just as quickly as it came, the moon ducked behind another cloud and the animals carried on eating as though nothing had happened. Had he imagined it? Had the animals really just talked to him? His mum and dad gave him a knowing nod and led him from the barn, so the animals could enjoy their Christmas feast in private. Tommy grinned and never ever forgot that magical Christmas on the farm. 🌀

## WRITE IT!

Some people used to believe that at the stroke of midnight on Christmas Eve, animals could talk like humans. Do you have a pet? What do you think it would say to you if it could speak? Write an imaginary conversation between you and your favourite animal.