

THE MISADVENTURES OF MR. BROWN

A short and silly story.

Once upon a time, there was a farmer named Mr. Brown. Mr. Brown was a loud and shouty fellow, who always thought he was right. He liked his farm, and he liked his way of life. One of the things he liked the most about his farm was that he raised cows. Every Summer, he'd go out there onto the pastures and shoot the cows he wasn't able to sell. His family would have a wonderful Summer of hot beef dinners; there wasn't a thing he would change.

One August afternoon, he took his rifle with him down to the pastures. Bang. Bang. Thud. One cow went down and the rest went running. The farmer shot the other one he wanted, and then used his tractor to drag them into the shed. With a friend, he was able to get the meat he wanted, and his wife stored it all in their large refrigerator.

The next day, Mrs. Brown was cooking this wonderfully big roast dinner. Parsnips, potatoes, dumplings, gravy, and lots and lots of beef. Mr. Brown was so looking forward to it - he had worked reasonably hard all year and another roast dinner from his wife was the kind of reward he always looked forward to.

But, all of a sudden, a knock came at the door. Although Mrs. Brown usually answered the door, she'd been made to be very busy in the kitchen, so Mr. Brown got it instead. He was rather surprised to find the village vegan outside his house, staring him down in disgust and disappointment.

"*What's your beef?*" the farmer asked.

"I live right next door," the village vegan began, "and we have to put up with the smell of your roast dinners all the time. It drives us crazy!"

Mr. Brown laughed at him. "Is that because you're jealous of all the beautiful meat we get to eat? *Piss off, you.*"

"**MEAT IS MURDER!**" the village vegan screamed, before getting the door slammed into his face.

It was clear to the farmer that this deranged idiot didn't know what he was on about. Mr. Brown felt smug and satisfied as he sat down in his tub chair, waiting for the dinner. And then, a short time later, the dinner came. After gleefully smiling at his wife without saying a word of thanks, he looked eagerly onto his plate. Parsnips, potatoes, dumplings, gravy, and lots and lots of *HELP ME!*

"Woah!" Mr. Brown exclaimed. His family gasped at him in surprise.

"Is something wrong?" Mrs. Brown asked, terrified.

"Didn't you hear that? That cry for help?" he said.

"*You're a cry for help,*" remarked his teenage son, before getting smacked round the ear.

The family remained silent for a moment.

“No dear, I’m afraid I didn’t hear anything,” his wife replied.

Mr. Brown remained confused as ever, as sure that he was right as he always was, and looked back onto his plate. Suddenly, he found himself compelled to stare into the slices of beef.

‘I’m watching you.’ ... said the beef to the farmer. Mr. Brown checked to see if his family heard anything. It was apparent that they did not, and Mr. Brown realised what was going on, even if he couldn’t quite believe that the meat on his plate was talking to him and him alone.

Later that night, he was thinking about the village vegan and what he had to say. Was meat murder? Was Mr. Brown so inconsiderate for allowing the smell of meat to waft into the village vegan’s straw hut next door? And if he were to change his ways, who would he be doing it for: the animals or humanity?

First, Mr. Brown decided that he did not care one bit how the animals felt, but he did care for the interests of some humans. Particularly, the ones in his village. And although he did not care one bit about the village vegan, he wondered if he may have had a point. Did it bother people that the smell of roast dinners was able to waft into their homes? Surely they would have enjoyed the smell – but then again, some people had allergies, irritations or disorders which prevented them from enjoying such great things.

Meat wasn’t murder. Some people didn’t enjoy the smell of meat – apparently. So Mr. Brown said this to himself: “Whenever I’m making a roast dinner, I will shut the windows so that my neighbours will suffer less.” He pat himself on the back and went to sleep.

The next day, he began walking around in the village. However, he began to smell a wonderful smell... somebody was cooking a roast dinner! What a surprise. The smell was so strong – but it was then that something occurred to the farmer: the smell from *that* house might end up annoying other people too, just as he thought that the smell from his own household would.

Mr. Brown decided to preach this as his new gospel. He told everyone he could find that from now on, they should not leave the windows open while cooking strong-smelling meaty meals; this way, everybody’s neighbours would suffer less.

And throughout the village, the residents did this. Nobody complained about the scent of roast dinners anymore. Whenever you went through a walk in Mr. Brown’s village, the air was as clear as day. The village vegan was certainly happy about this. So were a few others who could better enjoy their walks in the village. But not everybody shared this view. Many were disappointed that part of what they loved about their village - the pleasant smell mostly found on Sunday afternoons - had just been taken away from them. In fact, more people were now unhappy than satisfied, and the unhappiness was far greater in magnitude than the satisfaction.

In a short amount of time, the disappointed residents were all aware that this was Mr. Brown’s doing, and they wrote to him to express their woes. Mr. Brown was very sad when he read the letter; he understood that despite having the best intentions, he had made things worse. He had made the simple mistake of assuming that everybody wanted one thing, when most people did, in fact, not want that thing. He recognised that the majority of the village would be much happier if things were changed.

Mr. Brown knew that he wanted to make his village happier. He was trying to sort things out accordingly. And did this because he cared about (most of) the people in his village, driven by his moral beliefs, his emotional views, and his motivation to satisfy these views. This was how Mr. Brown checked to see if he was acting virtuously, in an attempt to avoid the mess he had created before.

After meeting with the people in his village, Mr. Brown apologised, explained himself and made amends. Later on, a small group of them went out to get a good roast dinner from the pub. It looked like everything was going well on this warm Monday evening.

Sadly for Mr. Brown, upon entering the pub, he found out that today was the first of many 'meat-free Mondays'. And when he saw the village vegan sitting at a table, enjoying a Quorn steak with his partner, Mr. Brown went ballistic.

The End