



20-Farmer Rat

bl/br, cl/cr, pl/pr, gl/gr, fl/fr

One quiet day Farmer Frank Fox gave Rat a call. "Hey Rat!" said Farmer Frank. "Want to help me on my farm?"

"Help do what?" asked Rat.

"Well," said Frank, "I have a corn crop to plant, I have to take the cows out to graze, and I have a flock of geese whose wings I need to clip."

"That may be fun," said Rat.

"You will have to catch a plane," said Frank.

"I hope it will not crash," said Rat.

"Be brave!" said Farmer Frank. "A farmer must be brave!"

"I AM brave!" Rat said. "I just do not like to brag."

"Okay," said Frank. "If you catch the plane at nine you will be here by brunch. We will eat, then you can help me."

Rat came on a plane. Rat and Farmer Frank Fox ate brunch, then went out to work.

"See this plot of land?" asked Frank. "This is where we plant corn. You need to dig the seed in, like this." Rat saw how Frank dug

in the seed.

"I can do that," said Rat. "Stand back and watch me work!"

"Wait," said Frank. "You must be brave, Rat. This is the land of the black snake, and the black snake is a mean snake. A black snake is as big as a rake, and it will bite you!"

"The black snake does not scare me!" said Rat. "I am brave. I just do not like to brag."

"Okay, good," said Frank. "But hear this one thing: Do not run from the black snake or it will bite you in a soft spot."

"What soft spot?" asked Rat.

"Where you sit down," said Rat.

Rat did plant the corn. It was hot. When

all the corn seed was in the soil, Rat sat down on a clump of grass to rest.

"Hisssssss!" A black snake came up to Rat, and it sang the Song Of The Black Snake:

*"I am the black snake, I hide where it's hot,
I bite the cats who plant corn on my plot,
When you go back to your place in the town,
You'll think of me every time you sit down!"*

"Aaahh!" screamed Rat, and he got up and ran. The black snake did not lie—it bit Rat on the buns! Rat ran all the way to Farmer Frank.

"Did you plant all the corn, Rat?" Frank asked.

"Yes," said Rat.

"Wow!" said Frank. "Have a seat! I will get

you a glass of tea."

"No thanks," said Rat. "I think I will stand."

The next day Farmer Frank took Rat with to take the cows out to graze.

"Now, what you do here, Rat, is drive the cows out to the grass," said Frank.

"Drive them on a bus?" asked Rat.

"No," said Frank.

"Drive them on a train?"

"No," said Frank. "What I mean is you must ride this mule and make the cows go out to graze."

"I think I should tell you," said Rat, "that I have had bad luck with mules in the past."

"This is not a bad mule," said Frank.

"I'm glad," said Rat.

"His name is *Luke*," said Frank.

"Oh no!" Rat yelled. "Where did you get him?"

"From Ranger Tim," Farmer Frank said.

"Frank," said Rat, "I hate to tell you this, but this is a bad mule. He bit me last year. This mule is a real brat." Now Luke was angry.

"Rat," said Frank, "all you have to do is keep a good grip on him, and do this one thing: Be Brave. Luke must see no fear in you or you will be in bad shape."

"I have no fear," said Rat. "I am brave. I just do not like to brag."

"Okay," said Frank. "I will bring you a glass of tea at nine. Then Farmer Frank left

Rat The Cat with Luke.

Rat got the cows out of the pen, then went to get up on Luke. Boy, did Luke look mean.

"Luke," Rat said, "I am Rat The Cat. You are a mean beast, but you do not scare me. I have no fear. I do not like to brag, but I am brave. I have much pride, but no fear."

Rat did ACT brave, but Luke could see that Rat was full of fear. A mean mule like Luke can smell fear. And a mean mule like Luke can also smash a cat.

"FLAT The Cat!" said Luke as he made Rat flat.

When Farmer Frank came with a glass of tea, Rat was still flat in the grass.

"The cows are lost!" yelled Frank. Rat got

up.

"Do not blame me!" said Rat. "It was your mule! That Luke is a real creep!"

"Rat, you have too much fear to farm," said Frank. "You must be brave to farm."

"I AM brave!" said Rat. "I just do not like to brag. Your mule is just plain bad!"

"Okay," said Farmer Frank. "If you are so brave, then it is time to clip the wings on my flock of geese. But Rat, you must be brave or the geese will chase you and bite you."

"Geese do not scare me," said Rat.

Rat went up to the geese to clip their wings, but the geese saw how Rat's bones did shake.

"You geese do not scare me!" Rat yelled,

but the geese could tell Rat was not brave.

Then Rat heard one of the geese yell "*Get Him!*" and the chase was on. The geese made Rat run all the way back to the plane.

"Whew!" said Rat as he ran onto the plane. "Now I am safe from those mean geese!"

But when Rat sat down he screamed "OWWWWW!"

Then Rat said, "That black snake DID say I would think of him every time I sit down!"

Rat IS brave. New things can be scary, but Rat will try new things. Sometimes we need someone to help us learn new things until they are not scary.

Vocabulary

bl

black block bless blend blame

br

brag brat brunch bring brave

cl

clip cling clamp clean

clap clump clam clear

cr

creep crest crop crash crust crate

pl

plow plant place plead

plot plane plain plan

pr

price pride prime prank prop

gl

glass glad glare globe glue

gr

grip grass greet grain

gripe graze green grab

fl

flip flat fleet flock fluke

flap flag fleece flake flop

fr

Fred free Frank frisk frail

Dictation

Do not blame me if the black snake
bites your buns.

Did Rat bring the brave brat to brunch?

Did the clam cling to the clean clump
of grass?

The creep made the crate fall off the
crest of the hill.

Did Rat plow the plot so we can plant
the seed?

We will need a crate as a prop for this
prank.

I am glad we had glue to fix the glass
globe.

Rat will gripe if the cows graze on his grass.

Did a flock of geese land on the fleet of
ships?

Did Frank frisk Fred and is Fred still free?

Weird Words

heard	their	every	whose
geese	iceberg	look	cows
work	jumped	your	you'll
farmer	down	Rat's	soil