

Chapter 8

101 Things to do with a Halter

“This week’s Happy Plan is going to be a competition.” Myles stood facing the other horses, hiding something behind his back.

“Oooo, I love competitions!” Sparks eagerly exclaimed. Forest also looked excited, but Willy looked doubtful.

“It doesn’t involve getting left behind, does it?” Wall*E nervously asked.

“Nope, it doesn’t. The name of the competition is 101 Things to do with a Halter. The way it works is we all have to stand in a circle and pass this halter around.” Myles revealed a halter and leadrope from behind his back. “When the music stops (Tater-tot is our DJ today) whoever ends up holding the halter needs to come up with a

creative thing to do with a halter.” Tater-tot, who was lurking behind a fence post, stepped out with a portable radio and took a bow.

The horses were murmuring excitedly amongst themselves as they formed a circle around Tater-tot. Brushy, Forest, and Sparks looked focused and determined, but others, like Ginger, looked skeptical and hung slightly back from the circle. “What happens if you can’t think of anything?” Ginger asked.

“Well, then you are disqualified and can sit out and watch the others. The last person in the game is the winner. Everyone ready?” An unnatural silence fell amongst the horses. Even Little Black stopped his low muttering. “Let the music begin!”

Tater-tot dramatically pressed play on his radio, and tunes blared out into the fields. Berry and Wall*E started dancing as the horses quickly tossed the halter from horse to horse. Suddenly, the music stopped. Paddy was standing with his hoof in mid-air. He was about to throw the halter but wasn’t quick enough!

“Paddy! Start us off.” Myles said.

Paddy paused for a minute, then went over to Brushy and whispered in his ear. They both took one end of the halter and lead, and stretched it tight. “Limbo!” Paddy called out. Some of the horses laughed, as Tater-tot turned on the music again and all the horses played a rowdy game of limbo. Forest, who got out on the second height, grumbled that it wasn’t fair because some horses were just born taller than others. Wall*E and Berry, on the other hand, smugly went lower, lower, and lower until Wall*E sneezed



and bumped his belly in the middle of his turn and Berry was the winner. Little Black complained that all



that bending down was too hard on his knees.

“Okay, back to our circle!” Myles called. The next horse who got stuck with the halter was Finn, who gave one end to Homer and used it for a game of jump rope. (The horses got very tangled up! They didn’t have much practice jumping rope).

Willy got two halters and wore them like wings on his back, while Brushy set up a long jump in the arena, with a halter and lead to mark the starting line and the distance jumped.

When Buttons was stuck with the halter, she built a rope bridge over the creek. The others asked her to test it out, but she refused, arguing that “there was nothing functional about Willy’s wings either.”

Homer hung a halter from a tree as a swing, which was functional, amazingly enough. They all took turns swinging high into the air, despite the desperate creaking sounds coming from the tree.



Myles pretended the halter and leadrope was a fishing line, and “fished” in the creek with an apple tied to the end until Paddy crawled up and bit the bait. Myles had a very large fish to haul in!

Ginger secretly thought that halters should be worn the proper way only, and that all the rest of this was nonsense. Nevertheless, when her turn came she gave an excellent lasso demonstration on an



unsuspecting Buttons.

Berry got lots of halters and tied them around her waist like a hula skirt, with the lead ropes hanging down. She danced and twirled! Wall*E’s turn was right after Berry’s. He surprised everyone when he tied on the halters in exactly the same way Berry had tied on hers. Myles shook his head. “Berry just did the hula skirt, Wall*E. You have to think of something else.”

Wall*E smiled mischievously and said, “I did think of something else. I’m an octopus!” Everyone laughed and rolled their eyes, and the music kept playing. When it was Paddy’s turn, he disappeared for a minute and then came back and told everyone to walk over to the haybarn. Just as they were rounding the corner, Buttons and Brushy, who were in the lead, did a giant spook and crashed into the horses behind them, who also spooked. “Snake!” shouted Brushy. There was chaos for several minutes, before Paddy, who was laughing uncontrollably, went over and picked up the “snake.” It was a halter and lead rope! No one was very amused.

Forest set up a high jump, and Little Black insisted on wearing the halter as a hat, with the lead rope tied around his chin in a bow. Myles wrote “Happy” on the ground with lead ropes, and Sparks set up a tightrope. (Tater-tot was the

overwhelming winner of the tightrope walking contest!). One by one, the horses got eliminated as they ran out of ideas for things to do with a halter. Finally, it was just Myles and Berry left. They battled on, using the halter as a climbing harness, a fancy way to tie up one’s tail, the start and finish lines in a race, a personal space circle, a tool to drag things with, and a way to block off areas of the pasture.

The music stopped on Berry, and she paused. The silence stretched on as all the horses looked at her in suspense. Finally, she shrugged her shoulders and smiled sheepishly. She was out of ideas! The horses cheered for Myles. But Myles had one more idea. They tied together all their halters to form a really long rope. At the very top they used a saddle pad and a halter to make a kite, and sent it soaring up into the air. It danced in the breeze, so colorful against the blue sky overhead! They all went home contented, and thanked Myles. They knew one thing was for sure. They would never look at a halter in the same way again!

