

Book  
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# Sassy Pants

LEARNS

How To Make Amends

written by **Carol A. Brown**



illustrations by Nada Serafimovic

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Summers Island Press

Thorne Bay, Alaska



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ISBN-10:1-944798-01-3  
ISBN-13: 978-1-944798-01-7

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Published in the United States by  
Summers Island Press  
P.O. Box 19293 Thorne Bay, Alaska 99919

Website: [www.SummersIslandPress.com](http://www.SummersIslandPress.com)  
For information contact: [info@summersislandpress.com](mailto:info@summersislandpress.com)

Summers Island Press is an imprint of the Wilderness School Institute, a non-profit educational organization that offers outdoor youth activities in wilderness settings, including training in wilderness skills and nature studies, as well as the publication of curriculum on related subjects, through the Wilderness School Press, Lightsmith Publishers, and their children's imprint Summers Island Press.

SASSY PANTS LEARNS To Make Amends --2nd Edition

What people are saying about  
Sassy Pants Learns To Make Amends...

*"I love Sassy Pants Makes Amends—a story about true forgiveness and the consequences of our actions. The dialogue is delightful and filled with character lessons laced with humor. A wonderful, insightful children's tale!"*

*Elaine M. Cooper, Author of Fields of the Fatherless*

*"As a parent, there is much to talk about in this sweet book -- educationally, spiritually, and emotionally. I found this to be a delightful book, and for any child who didn't grow up on a farm, they will especially enjoy learning about the endearing animals in this story."*

*Lorilyn Roberts, author of The Seventh Dimension series*

*"I loved reading this second Sassy Pants book by Carol Brown. The little boy in me came alive and learned a lot and I think the grandpa in me did, as well. What a great story for children and a great way to learn deep truths. Carol has a beautiful way of presenting important character traits to little readers and listeners."*

*Tom Blubaugh, author of Night of the Cossack*

An almost true story based very loosely on some facts.

*Dedicated to my grandson, Antonio, who has learned to  
forgive even though he is not “the one who broke the  
friendship,” and to apologize when he is!*



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What Happened After This Story



A bit about  
**Farmer White's Farm**  
and **What Happened Before This Story**

An interesting thing happened every spring on a woodsy little farm backed right up to the state forest, tucked away in the hills, not very far from the old Mississippi River. Most of the state of Iowa is flat like a pancake, but this farm was in the one spot the glacier missed when it slid off the North Pole and flattened everything in its way.

Here, it left behind hills, valleys, little creeks, and rivers. A peaceful, quiet place where animals with frazzled nerves came to heal. Farmer White said the farm would have been much larger if it was not standing on end!

Even the animals were different on Farmer White's farm. Sometimes, they seemed almost human. Each spring all the new ones gathered around the water hole where the clearest, coolest water bubbled up from an underground spring. New little pigs, sheep, kittens, chickens, ducks, and so on, as well as any new grownup animals that Farmer White brought to the farm. There

was lots of talk, and lots of stories.

There was an old sheep (from the Merino wool family) who kept things in order by telling stories about all the young ones. Some were good, and some not-so-good. Smart young animals could learn how to avoid trouble by listening to her lessons.

Sassy Pants hoped she was one of the smart ones but she wasn't sure, yet. Miss Merino had already told a lot of stories about her. Some good and some not-so-good. The good ones made Sassy Pants smile, and feel “proud as a pig,” all over. But the not-so-good ones made her frown and say, “Oh, hooey!”

Then she would try to find something better to do for next time. There was a lot of excitement over a Sassy Pants story because you could learn something from it, either way. And she was always up to something unexpected.

Miss Merino taught a lot of manners and rules of the farm that way. But—since she was the best storytelling sheep in Waukon County—nobody minded. And since she always gave a little tease about the next story on the tail of the last one, everybody wanted to hear what happened next before they even got started.

“Are we ready?” She pushed her glasses a little



higher on her nose.

A chorus of voices sang out, “Yes! Yes!”

“Yeah—what happened when Sassy Pants got shocked by the electric fence after being so naughty and mean to everybody?” someone asked. “Did she Keep getting in trouble after that?”

“Well . . .” Miss Merino waited till everyone settled down (she always did that). “Last time, Sassy Pants didn't care about anything or anybody. And she certainly didn't listen.”

“You can say that, again!” said a little lamb named Molly. “Once she got stinky mud all over me and my own Mom almost didn't recognize me. I could have starved to death!”

A gasp, and then some whispers like “How can you starve from being dirty?” and “What's being stinky have to do with anything?” went up from some members of the pig family.

“Because Mom doesn't like feeding strangers,” said Molly, “and I smelled more like a pig than a lamb. Thank heavens my ears were still clean, or she never would have known who I was.”

“Oh, Hooey!” whispered Sassy Pants to herself. Was this going to be a good story, or a not-so-good one?

Then she just had to speak up. “But I didn't know that back then, so it shouldn't count. Right, Miss Merino?”

“Not exactly. Because Sassy Pants had plenty of others telling her what not to do, by then.” Miss Merino always told a story like you weren't the one that was there. In fact, you had to listen hard to see what really happened to you. “But today we're going to find out what happened to Sassy Pants after she got shocked by the electric fence. Because as some of you know, she's been quite the busy pig, since then. Can anyone guess what she should have been doing?”

This time, it was one of the older lambs that answered. “She should have been saying sorry all over the place!”

“That's exactly right,” said their barnyard instructor. “But just saying it isn't always enough. You have to somehow show that you mean it.”

“I meant it, all right,” Sassy Pants interrupted, again. “I cried my eyes out in the mud wallow for almost a whole week! You can even ask Old Clyde.”

“Now, we're getting ahead of the story, Sassy Pants,” said Miss Merino. “But to be perfectly fair we probably should start with Old Clyde. Because you

really did set out to make things right. Except—as we are about to find out—it isn't that easy to fix a friendship when you were the one who broke it...”







## Chapter One

# Sassy Pants Has A Problem

A horse the size of a bus was slowly grazing under the walnut trees. Old Clyde was Farmer White's almost-retired, big, old Clydesdale workhorse. He was carefully nipping off new clover tops, being careful to not bite into bitter walnut shucks left from last fall.

The breeze blew a sound his way and then blew it the other way. With his head down he couldn't tell for sure where it was coming from but every now and then he could hear a faint sound. What was that? He decided to find out.

The closer he came, the clearer the sound became. Someone in the pigpen was crying, sobbing big, huge sobs all the way from the tail to the snout! Finally he saw her. There in a muddy little ditch where last night's rain ran downhill, in between little dams of twigs and rocks and dead leaves, down in the bottom of the ditch, sat Sassy Pants, all alone.

She was weeping and wailing, her eyes all red and

puffy. Clyde knew she had been crying for some time—there were clean lines on her face where little rivers of tears had washed the dirt away.

Old Clyde made enough noise so that Sassy Pants knew he was there. Gently, he said, “I’m sorry, Sassy Pants. What seems to be the problem?”

Hearing the kindness in his voice, Sassy Pants only cried harder. So hard she snorted! No matter how much the warm, happy sun tried, it was not able to dry her salty tears. Old Clyde waited and let her cry. Finally, she tried to speak.

“Old Clyde, nobody will play with me or talk to me. Nobody wants to be my friend!” Sassy Pants began to sob again. “No-nobody t-t-trusts me!” She sobbed another big sob.

“Oh, I see. Did someone say that they do not trust you, or is that how you feel?”

“Y-yes, they said so! Porketta and my other brothers and sisters said they don’t trust me and don’t want to listen to me. Big brother Bruno told me to grow up. He was sick of me. My mamma told me to go find something to do. It is all she can do just to take care of this year’s babies! She doesn’t have time to take care of me, as well. Does she think I’m still a baby?” Sassy

Pants wailed.

Then she stopped a minute to snort before she went on talking. “Kitty Cat and Beatrice Hen told me they don’t want me around. Molly and the other lambs run away when they see me. The kid goats told me to butt out, and Darlene and Dominic Duck fly away when I come near. The geese won’t speak to me. Nobody will be my friend.” Sassy Pants wailed, and sobbed, and snorted some more.

“Hmmm,” said Old Clyde. “Sounds to me like you have some fence mending to do, like you need to make some amends.” The walnut trees bowed and nodded in the wind as it blew through with a woosh, as if the wind and the trees agreed with Old Clyde.

Still sitting in the muddy little ditch, Sassy Pants sniffled. “What is fence mending? What is amends?”

“Well,” said Clyde, sizing her up, “it is a way to fix a broken friendship when you are the one who broke it. But you have to really want to fix it. You have to care enough about the friend you hurt that you will do what you have to do in order to earn their trust. It is a lot of hard work.” Clyde started to walk away as if he was going back to grazing in that yummy patch of new clover he had found.

“Wait, Clyde, wait!” Sassy Pants grunted and scrambled up out of the ditch, slipping and sliding in the wet mud, making rocks, twigs, and dead leaves fly. “Old Clyde, tell me how to amend a fence! Please tell me. All winter long I have had no one to talk to, no one to play with. I don’t want to be without a friend any more. Tell me how to fix what I broke. I know I hurt just about everyone’s feelings. I was mean and rude to some very nice folks. I had all winter to think about it. I had very poor manners. I didn’t notice, and I didn’t care. Now, I do. How can I fix that? I want the others to like me and trust me. I want friends, but I don’t know how to fix it!”

Sassy Pants started to sob again—great big sobs from her tail to her snout. Last fall the shock from the electric fence broke the stone that was forming on her heart. She began to notice. She even cared, but now it was too late. It didn’t make any difference!

Old Clyde stopped and turned around. He looked long and hard into Sassy Pants’s eyes. “Okay, Sassy Pants.” Old Clyde leaned over the fence and spoke softly into Sassy Pants’ ear. “This is what you need to do...”

Then, when he finished telling her what to do, he



said, “And you can ask me questions, any time, or just come to talk.”

Sassy Pants’ head was full of thoughts, and she made no response. She stood there blinking at Old Clyde, who slowly clomped away and went back to grazing in that clover patch.





## Chapter Two

### **Sassy Pants Gets A Friend**

Spring is a special time of year on Farmer White's farm. The air is warm and the new grass tastes and smells wonderful. Animals can be outside and don't have to stay all cramped up inside the barn.

The wind is soft and warm, and whispers. Then it might suddenly blow hard and almost push things over. The wind is very playful like that. The sun and wind make the animals feel so glorious they just have to kick their heels, swish their tails, and run until they are out of breath.

It was that kind of day when Old Clyde came walking up to a young lamb with a rather unusual request. "Well, hello there, Molly! You seem frisky today."

Molly stopped kicking and leaping and running and skidded to a stop in front of Old Clyde. "It is a great day for kicking and leaping and swishing your tail, Old

Clyde. Want to join me?”

“No.” He chuckled. “I don’t think that would be a good idea. I might hurt myself. I’d throw my back out for sure. But there was a day when I did plenty of that, so I know what you mean. The way we old folks celebrate is to raise our heads to the sky, take a super big breath of that glorious air, and then slowly let it out!”

“Is that all? What kind of fun is that?”

“Oh, you should try it sometime. A few good deep breaths can even make you young ones feel happier. But, Molly, I came to ask you something.”

“Old Clyde, you can ask me anything. You are so nice to me. And you don’t make fun of me when I can’t say my words. Or when I get worried, nervous, or scared sometimes. I would be happy to help you.”

“Well, here’s the deal. Yesterday, as I was out grazing under the walnut trees alongside the pigpen fence, I saw Sassy Pants sitting in the washout near where the electric fence is. She had been crying. The problem seems to be that now that she notices and she cares, no one trusts her. No one wants to play with her or be her friend, no matter what she says. Molly, I am wondering if you would be a friend to her.”

“Me! Why me? Why would I want to be her friend

after what she did to me? I don't trust her, either! We are nothing alike! She is loud and busy, and she's always either talking or moving. I don't know, Clyde!"

"I thought that might be the case," said Old Clyde, "but hear me out. You may not trust her, but you could be friendly and play with her, on occasion, so that she could earn your trust. Allow her to prove to you that she can be trusted. She is very lonely. But I would understand if you don't want to do it. I just thought you might be someone who is able to give her a second chance."

Molly took a deep breath and studied Old Clyde. "I will think about it. Because it is you asking me, I will think about it. But only because of you."

Which was really brave of Molly. Because she was one of those lambs that Sassy Pants rubbed mud on and made smell like a pig. It is very upsetting and distressful to have your own mother question whether you belong to her, to have her ask, "Are you really mine?" Because she did not want to give Molly's lunch to someone else.

That was scary. So Molly did not trust Sassy Pants. In fact, she avoided her! She was not sure she wanted to give her another chance. She needed time to think about it.



Finally, she decided if it didn't work, she would just tell Old Clyde that she had given it a try, and that would be the end of it. But she was still pretty sure it wouldn't work.





### Chapter Three

## What Is Forgiveness?

The very next day, Sassy Pants saw Molly grazing in the same clover patch Old Clyde found the day before, and called to her over to the pig-pen fence. She wanted to know if the lamb would help her practice her apology to Gerald Gosling Goose III.

Last summer, she had called him a “silly goose” and said he didn’t have the sense to come in out of the rain! She really hurt Gerald’s feelings by talking that way. Of course he would not come out of the rain. He loved the rain. Because he was a water bird.

So, Molly stood on her side of the fence (where she couldn't get any stinky mud on her) and listened while Sassy Pants practiced.

She started with, “Gerald, I am sorry for calling you a silly goose. I just couldn’t help it! You looked so funny with all those little pin feathers! Ha, ha, ha!” Sassy Pants started laughing so hard she was soon rolling on the ground.







Molly did not laugh. Instead, she shook her head until the pig stopped laughing. Then, she said, “It isn’t funny, Sassy Pants, and that is not an apology.”

“Yeah, okay, I know. Old Clyde said, ‘No excuses. No explanations.’ Okay, how about this? Gerald, I am sorry I called you names last summer. I realize I hurt your feelings. But, Gerald, I was teasing! It was a joke!”

Molly shook her head again.

“Oh, Hooey!” said Sassy Pants. “Okay, okay!” She cleared her throat. “Gerald, I know I hurt your feelings, last summer, when I called you names. I apologize. But you are such a goose!”

“Sassy Pants!” Now Molly was getting frustrated. “Oh, I knew this was not going to work!”

“All right! I will be serious,” Sassy Pants promised. “Gerald, I want to apologize for calling you names last summer. I hurt your feelings. That was wrong of me to do. I didn’t notice that your feelings were hurt. Gerald, you gotta learn to take a joke!”

“Sassy Pants, just stop it!” Molly scolded.

Sassy Pants screwed up her face. “This is not easy. Let me try one more time. Okay. Gerald, I apologize for calling you names last summer. I know that you are a water bird and you love the rain. I was just messing with

you, Gerald. Uh-oh ... Oh, man!” Sassy Pants kicked a big clod of dirt and swayed back and forth. “Oh, man! I can’t get this right! I don’t know if I’ll ever get it!” She sounded discouraged, but she did not quit.

Instead, she kept trying to say it right—like Old Clyde said, with no excuses, no explanations, absolutely none. But after about fifteen more times that didn't work out, Molly was on the ground in a heap, with her head between her hooves, just shaking her head and thinking Sassy Pants just did not have it in her!

Then it was Sassy Pants’s turn to shake her head. “I always want to say why I said it, or something! To just say, ‘I did it, it was wrong, and please forgive me.’ That is hard! Old Clyde said it was hard work, and—boy, he was not kidding!”

Then, all of a sudden, a lightbulb seemed to turn on in Sassy Pants' brain.

“Hey, Molly! Molly! I got it! Listen to this: ‘I am sorry for calling you names, Gerald. That was rude and I hurt your feelings. I know that now. Before, I did not notice, nor did I care, but now I do. Will you forgive me?’ Then she jumped up and down like a yo-yo on a string.

A bunch of crows who were watching from the

walnut trees seemed to agree. They cawed as loud as they could, and announced to the world, “She did it! She did it! She did it!”

Sassy Pants took a big breath. “Will you come with me, Molly? I need someone with me so I don’t chicken out! Oops! I shouldn’t say that, either. What if the chickens heard me? Oh, wow—This learning to watch what I say is hard stuff!”

Molly had to agree. Every time Sassy Pants opened her mouth, out came something that was best left not said! But off they went to find Gerald, anyway. Sassy Pants leaned against the pigpen gate and slipped out into the barnyard.

“Umm...Sassy Pants,” said Molly, “aren’t you supposed to stay in the pen?”

“Well, yeah.” She got a funny, puzzled look on her face. “But if I have to wait for him to fly over into the pigpen, just to get a chance to apologize, it would never happen. Anyway, I won’t make trouble. I’ll come right back. Besides, I’m getting out to do a good thing. So, I think it’s okay.”

They had to do some looking to find Gerald. The whole time Sassy Pants was repeating her apology over and over so she would not forget! Finally they found

Gerald and his mother, Goosey, eating grass by Mrs. White's goose-berry bushes. They were startled at first and started to leave, but then stopped.

Gerald had grown a lot over the winter! He was almost as large as his mamma. He was beginning to look rather tall and stately, too. In a goose sort of way. But there was tension in the air. Both of them puffed up their feathers, ready to hiss and run at Sassy Pants to give her a good pecking.

They looked at the lamb, then at Sassy Pants, and back to the lamb, again. They were surprised to see the lamb and that naughty, dirty pig together. When Goosie didn't say anything, Sassy Pants took a couple steps closer.

Her ears and tail drooped. She lowered her head a bit and spoke. Her voice was almost gentle. "Gerald, I know I called you names last summer. I am sorry. I was rude, and I hurt your feelings. I know that now. Before, I did not notice, nor did I care, but now I do. What I did was wrong. Will you forgive me?" Then Sassy Pants stepped back and waited.

Gerald looked at Sassy Pants, then looked at his mamma and asked, "Mamma, what is forgiveness? How do you do it?"



“Hmm...,” she had to think a minute to answer that big question. “Well, son, if you forgive Sassy Pants, you make a decision. You cannot forget what she said, but you can choose not to stay angry with her, or hold it against her. What she said was not true, so you choose not to let it make you feel bad about yourself, and you choose not to let it affect your friendship.”

“But, Mamma, she is not my friend! I don’t trust her.”

“That’s all right,” Goosie said. “You don’t have to trust her just because she says she is sorry. You can be friendly without telling her things that are important to you. Let her show you by what she does that you can trust her. You can let her earn your trust. You do not have to pretend it didn’t happen because it did happen. And it was not all right! But you can choose to give her another chance to prove she can be trusted.”

Gerald thought for a while, and then in a crackly teenage voice not nearly as impressive as his name, he said, “OK. I forgive you, Sassy Pants.”

Sassy Pants thanked him. Then nodded a goodbye and left.

Wow! She had stood there and listened to Goosie explain how to forgive! That had to be hard to do, but

she did it, and she did not interrupt or make one excuse—just like Old Clyde said to do. And Molly was so proud of her, she was going to find Old Clyde and tell him what a good job she had done.

Just then Sassy Pants groaned. “But how do I make amends to Gerald? Hey, Molly, if you think of something that would help Gerald trust me, would you tell me?”

Molly said she would try to notice something Gerald cared about that Sassy Pants could care about, too.

“Hey, Molly! Race you to the pigpen gate! Last one there is a rotten egg!” Sassy Pants took off like a shot. Suddenly she stopped. Then turned around. “Do you think it’s okay to say that? About the rotten egg?” she asked breathlessly.

“Once, I heard Maude, the setting hen, tell some of the other hens about what to do with a rotten egg,” said Molly. “Hens know about rotten eggs. So, I don’t think anyone would care if we said, “Last one there is a rotten egg!”

“Okay, race ya!” Sassy Pants took off like a shot, again, with Molly on her tail.

Once she got back inside the pigpen, Sassy Pants

decided to take a wallow in the mud. But she had to tell Molly one more thing, first. “If you think of something I can do for Gerald, you holler! I really want to make amends. That 'I’m sorry' stuff is just the first part. Old Clyde said my apology just brings me up to zero. Now, I have to think of good things to do that are important to Gerald! Whew! I’m tired!”

After that, she headed for the mud wallow, and Molly headed for the shade tree by the creek. The young lamb much preferred her own favorite spot beneath a big shady tree beside the creek that bubbled along so happily it sounded like singing. There were pools of quiet water where it curved around that made a perfect place to drink.

She liked to listen to the wind in the trees, and the birds singing, too. Molly liked peaceful, quiet things. But after such a noisy busy morning, the lamb didn’t think there was one quiet place in Sassy Pants!

It wasn't long after she had drifted off to sleep that a thought jerked her awake, again. She suddenly knew what Gerald cared about, and how Sassy Pants could help.





#### Chapter Four

## Sassy Pants Earns Some Trust

Between the time Sassy Pants had lived in the Big House, returned to the pigpen, then finally discovered she was not a people, she had learned to do pig things very well. Which is why when Molly called her from the other side of the fence, she was busy lounging in the mud wallow.

“Sassy Pants! Sassy Pants, come quick!” the lamb called.

And Sassy Pants came running.

“What, Molly? What? Did you think of something?” Thick, smelly, slippery mud dripped off one ear and plopped on the ground with a wet, splooshy sound.

“Gerald is afraid of the water! I was at the pond the other day when Goosie was teaching the new goslings to swim. She scolded Gerald because he was not going near the water. She said, ‘Gerald, a stately young gander like you! You should be out there leading the

flock! One of these days your father will not be here and you will have to lead the flock! You should practice leading now, Gerald, so the others are used to following you!”

Molly took a deep breath and went on. “Then I remembered last summer, and how Gerald refused to go into water when it was too deep to touch bottom or see his feet. You go into water, don’t you, Sassy Pants? You can even hold your breath for a long time under water, can’t you?” she asked.

“Yeah, I love to play in the water. What are you thinking?”

“Well, maybe you could help Gerald get over his fear of water!”

“How would I do that?” Sassy Pants looked a bit doubtful.

“You could take a deep breath and walk on the bottom of the pond, with Gerald, floating on top. That way, he could reach out and touch you until he gets some confidence of his own. After a while he would be paddling away, enjoying being on the water. Then you could pop up a little distance away from him, and he would realize he had been paddling where he couldn’t touch the bottom, or even you! Do you think it might

work?”

“It’s worth a try!” Sassy Pants slipped out of the gate, again, and away they went to find Gerald. He was all by himself, without his mama, this time. They were lucky! Not only was Gerald by himself, he was down by the pond! Sassy Pants thought it would be best if Molly told Gerald what they were up to. He would be more likely to believe a lamb rather than a pig.

Now a funny thing happened.

Molly was so involved helping Gerald, and Sassy Pants, that she forgot all about being shy and afraid to talk! And it took some talking to get Gerald to agree to try swimming. He would do it only as long as no one else was around to see. So, for three days in a row, Molly and Sassy Pants sneaked out and down to the pond to practice with Gerald.

Sassy Pants would take a deep breath and walk along the bottom. Then, Gerald would paddle a little way out from shore. He stayed between Sassy Pants and the shore. He was close enough to shore that he could get there if he needed to, and he could reach out and touch Sassy Pants even if he could not touch bottom.

On the third day, Sassy Pants suggested they start in



a different place, so they did. After a bit, she popped up a long way from Gerald. When he saw her, he flapped his wings and paddled hard. Water flew all over the place! Then he realized that when he paddled hard he went faster!

He was swimming!

Sassy Pants and Molly cheered and made a fuss over him! Then he practiced diving, pulling up tender shoots from the mud, swimming fast, swimming slow, and even making figure eights. Finally, with his newly found confidence, Gerald swam out into the pond, to the deep part,

They were so proud of him, and the three of them chattered like a bunch of chipmunks all the way back to the barnyard. Boy, was Goosie going to be surprised! The next day would be a really big day. Gerald would swim with all the other geese, and everyone would be there to see him.

But it was even better than that.

First, Gerald waddled down to the water and slipped in with the others. Then he set off for a patch of reeds, tipped over, and pulled some tender shoots from the bottom with his beak. Some of the little goslings saw him, and followed.

When Goosie saw that, her beak fell open! Her Gerald, was leading the flock! She was the proudest mama on the farm, that day, as she sat on the pond and watched him.

“You did it, Sassy Pants!” said Molly when they returned to the barnyard. “You really did it! You are way past zero, now. Old Clyde will be so proud of you!”

“You mean we did it,” Sassy Pants corrected her. “You were the one who thought of it!”

“Yeah, but you were the one who held her breath until she nearly popped!” Molly laughed, then started off to find Old Clyde, and tell him how well the swimming practice went.

Sassy Pants leaned on the gate and slipped back into the pigpen.

She had no idea how good it felt to help someone. Right then and there she decided it felt a lot better than when she was always being so mean. “I think I like it!” She said to herself. Then she just stood there for a while, feeling what it feels like to feel good all over. Inside and outside. And for the first time, ever, her insides felt quiet.





## Chapter Five

### Kitty Cat

The next amends Sassy Pants made was for Kitty Cat. It happened on a lovely sunshiny day, with blue skies and a soft breeze. On this very fine day, Kitty scheduled the kittens to have pouncing practice. Kitty was busy catching up on the barnyard news at the watering hole.

As kittens will do, the little ones wandered off, pouncing as they went. But it wasn't long before Kitty Cat was on their trail looking for them. She rounded the corner of the corncrib and came upon a sight that almost made her pass out!

There was Sassy Pants, laying all stretched out in the dust, and her kittens, Thomas and Thomasina, were practicing their pouncing by jumping at Sassy Pants. The pig would wiggle her tail and they would pounce. Then she would wiggle one ear—and then the other—and the kittens would pounce, again. But when she wiggled her ears and her tail (with the burnt black hairs

on the end) Thomas pounced on the tail and Thomasina went for an ear.

At the sight, Kitty turned every shade of color in her calico! She turned white with fright for her babies—never mind they were nearly grown! Then she turned a sick-looking yellow at the thought of what could happen. Then she turned gray as she began to be angry with Sassy Pants. That rude, dirty young pig should not be playing with her kittens! A scratch would teach her a good lesson!

Kitty Cat was shaking she was so angry!

She walked over to Sassy Pants' snout, with her tail twitching a warning. "What exactly do you think you are doing, young lady?" Kitty demanded with a phhhh!

Sassy Pants flicked an ear back so she could see who was talking. "Hi, Kitty! I was on the other side of the fence when you told the kittens it was time for pouncing practice!" She twitched her tail, again, and Thomas pounced. "So when the kittens came around the corner of the corncrib, I invited them to pounce." Then she twitched the other ear for Thomasina to pounce on.

"I see," said the cat. Slowly—one by one—her colors began to settle down into calico, again. "Well,



carry on, then. I will watch from the fencepost.”

She leaped up where she could keep a watchful eye on Sassy Pants and observe the kittens’ technique. This was their second summer, and they would soon be taking the test for their hunting licenses. Very soon they would need to be independent hunters. Pouncing just right is very important. It can make the difference between lunch of mouse-all-rotten, or an empty tummy!

After the pouncing practice was done, Kitty Cat called her kittens. They ran off for somewhere else, chasing each other and tumbling in a ball as they went.

“Sassy Pants,” she said, “that was very thoughtful to let the kittens maul you like that! You were so patient, too. You never once snapped at them. But I see you have some scratches there. Do you think you need something for that?”

“No, thanks. Pig skin is pretty tough,” Sassy Pants assured. “I’m just fine! And any time you need a break, I’d be happy to help. I was mean to you and the kittens last summer, when I scared you up under the corncrib. I apologize. I would like to ask you to forgive me for that and I would like to make amends.”

“Amends?” Kitty looked puzzled.

“Amends,” Sassy Pants explained, “is what Old Clyde says is the way to fix a friendship when you are the one who broke it. It is more than just saying 'I'm sorry.' It is even more than not doing hurtful things. It is doing stuff for the one you hurt that shows them you can be trusted. You try to notice and you try to care. You keep doing that for as long as it takes until folks can trust you! So, like I say, Kitty, when you need a break, I would be happy to play with the kittens.”

Kitty Cat arched one eyebrow and twitched her tail. “I'll remember that.”



Afterward, Sassy Pants went looking for Molly, and finally found her at the corner where her pen and the pasture meet. Right near the walnut tree. She could hardly wait to tell about making amends to Kitty Cat.

“Hey, Molly! Whaddya think? I did this one all by myself—without even practicing! Maybe I can do this!” She talked too fast for the lamb to answer. Because by the time she got her mouth open to say something, Sassy Pant was already off to the next thing.

“Now, I have to go apologize to Boss Hog, Molly. And it isn't going to be easy. He's so big and mean-looking it's scary! Will you come with me?”

Molly nodded, yes.

Sassy Pants shook her head. “I was so naughty for so long, I'll probably have a new habit by the time I'm done making amends to all the ones I hurt. Hey!” She jumped up and down with excitement at her thought. “Maybe it will get easier to say, “I'm sorry,” the more I practice.”

Then, she stood totally still, looked dreamily off into the distance and said, “Or maybe by then I will change so much that being nice and doing nice things will just come natural. Maybe I won't have to keep going back to tell people I'm sorry all the time. Maybe—someday—I could be as nice as you, Molly. Do ya think?”



## Chapter Six **Hen Party**

Oh, good grief! At the crack of dawn! Sassy Pants wondered if that silly rooster had to crow every day just to announce to everyone that morning had arrived. She rolled out of her comfortable little straw nest and headed for the pig feeder. She had to have some food in her stomach if her brain was going to work. She had



been stewing for days and still hadn't thought of a way to make amends to the chickens for terrorizing the hen-house.

“That little stunt I pulled on Banty, pretending to listen and then snorting and snapping at him—not cool,” she said to herself. “Not very friendly, either. Why should the chickens

trust me? They do not have one reason! What can I do about it?”

She decided to talk with Old Clyde, again. Maybe he would have an idea. But instead of ideas of what to do, Old Clyde had something else in mind. Instead, he taught Sassy Pants about respect and honor. He thought that would help more.

“Snapping and calling others names is not respectful,” he began. “Remember how you scared Grey Tommie up the light pole? That was not respectful, either. And you told Fred he was the one

with a problem. That did not honor Fred. And what about your attitude toward the Boss Hog? That was neither respectful nor honoring.”

“Oh, hooey!” sighed Sassy Pants. Hearing everything she had done wrong said all in a row like that, made her realize she hadn't done





any good things last summer. Not even one.”

Then he said, “Tell me something. How do you feel about the electric fence?”

That made Sassy Pants shudder in her hooves just thinking about it. “I don’t touch it,” she admitted. “I leave it alone.”

“That’s because you respect it. You don’t push it, try to get under it, over it, or out. Right?”

“I guess so.”

“You don’t call it names, do you?”

“No.”

“You respect the fence. It has a right to be here because Farmer White put it there. Every animal on the farm has a right to be here because Farmer White chose each one of us and put us here. There is a place for each of us on the farm—you belong, I belong, we all belong!”

Sassy Pants didn’t have anything to say about that, so she didn’t say anything.

“Farmer White respects us by providing a place to sleep, something to eat, and a place to live, Old Clyde went on with his explanation. “We respect him when we stay where he puts us and do what he asks us to do. You showed respect to Gerald and Goosie when you

apologized. You took responsibility for what you did without excuse. That showed respect. You did not interrupt Goosie when she explained how to forgive. You showed respect by listening.”

Now, things were finally beginning to make some sense to Sassy Pants. “What about the honor part,” she asked. “How do you do that?”

“We honor each other when we say good things about each other—and to each other—that are true,” the horse replied.

“Like noticing the fine job of hunting that Grey Tommie does and telling him that. Maybe tell Kitty Cat the same thing! It might be complimenting Banty Rooster on how regular he is at waking everyone with his fine crowing each morning.”

Sassy Pants groaned when he said that because she did not like to wake up that early.

“Or maybe it could be telling Martha cow how you admire the way she brings the cows in every afternoon in such a neat line,” he went on. “No one steps out of line. It is quite remarkable!”

“I think I'm starting to understand.” Sassy Pants laid on the grass, deep in thought. “Old Clyde? Do you know how many chickens there are on this farm?”

“Not exactly.”Why?”

“Because that’s how many I have to apologize to, make amends with, and show respect and honor to!” Sassy Pants’ eyes crossed and she rolled over on her back with her feet in the air like she was dead!

“Sassy Pants!” The old horse could not help laughing! “Maybe you can think of something that will make amends, show respect, and honor all at the same time—to the whole bunch of them, all at once.”

“Sassy Pants whirled back over and was on her feet in a flash! “That’s it, Old Clyde! I never thought of that! It would have taken me all summer to apologize to each and every one. I’d never get done! Everybody at the same time is a great idea!” Then she made a beeline for the pig-pen gate without even saying goodbye.

She was in such a hurry to find all the chickens that she forgot.

The first group she came to was a group of young laying hens. She had bothered them so much last spring, they couldn’t even lay eggs! Right now, they were busy scratching for bugs and chatting among themselves, and...saying things about Sassy Pants that were not good.

“What a pig! Pa-kak!” Cornia clucked. “She has no



sense, she can't even think about how someone else feels. She's a dumb-cluck, if you ask me!" Then she laughed at her own joke. "Pa-kak, pa-kak, pa-kak"! She laughed so much it sounded like she was cackling. "Pa-kak! Pa-kak! Hick!" In fact, she laughed so hard she gave herself the hiccups!

It even made Old Bitty laugh. Old Bitty was a very large Rhode Island Red chicken who did not have a funny-bone in her body! Usually, Old Bitty only had time to scratch for bugs and lay one egg every day. She didn't have time to be silly. But that was the funniest thing she ever heard and she couldn't help herself.

"Shh—here she comes!" a sleek hen with shiny black feathers, named Agila, warned. The hens gave Agila "watch-chicken" duty. It was her job to alert everyone of approaching danger from hawks and varmints. Agila could spot an eagle a mile away. If there was movement anywhere, she saw it.

Everyone got quiet when Sassy Pants arrived.

But instead of doing something mean, the pig cleared her throat and said, "Good morning, ladies. I want to apologize for making your lives miserable last summer. I know I upset everybody. So, I'd like to ask forgiveness and make amends.

Old Bitty stuck her neck out and looked closer at Sassy Pants. Did she mean it? Then the old hen pulled her head back, found her best frown, and said, "Humph! Pigs is pigs!" After that, she stomped off across the barnyard with her beak in the air and her feathers in a fluff. No forgiveness would come from Old Bitty.

Sassy Pants' ears, tail, and head all drooped. Looking sad and miserable, she turned to go back to the pigpen. It didn't look like she was going to get any forgiveness from the chickens.

"Sassy Pants!" Linda Leghorn spoke up, first. "Sassy Pants, Old Bitty is that way with everybody. The rest of us forgive you. Right, girls?"

There were a few quiet cackles to show they agreed but they were still not so sure.

"Because we heard what you did for Gerald and how Kitty Cat let her kittens practice pouncing on you," the hen explained. Agila sees just about everything that goes on, don't you, Agila?"

"Agila has been telling us everything you've been doing, lately and we talked it over, ourselves. We all agree it's quite remarkable. We even heard you were looking for ideas. So, we thought up a good idea for

you.”

“You thought of something I could do for you? That's just what I was looking for!” Sassy Pants suddenly felt honored. It was the very first time in her life she ever felt that way. “Whatever you thought of, I'll do it.” She didn't know what it was, yet, but even if it was a triple summersault, she would do it.

“We would like you to tip over a big anthill.”

“What?” For a minute Sassy Pants was quiet as she pictured a bunch of angry ants crawling up her nose and into her ears. Maybe even biting her.

“Maude just had a new brood of chicks. That would save her tons of scratching and give the chicks some active protein in a hurry! If you wouldn't mind, that is.”

“Um... I... I guess I could do that.”

Sometimes making amends was not easy! But Sassy Pants was determined. Except when she was on her way to the henhouse to find Maude, she rounded the corner of the granary at a full trot, and bumped right into Beatrice and Banty. Because she never walked anywhere; she was always going at a full trot! Both the chickens squawked, fluttered, and flew up into the air. Then Banty flew for the fencepost to get out of Sassy Pants's reach!

“Beatrice! Banty! I just want to apologize for my behavior last summer. Banty, pretending to listen, then snapping at you was wrong. Calling you names was wrong, too. Last summer I did not care. But now I do, and I will not be behaving like that anymore. Will you forgive me?”

Beatrice and Banty were willing to forgive but it might take a long time to get over squawking and flying whenever they saw Sassy Pants. It would take even longer to build up their trust, again.

The pig thanked them and then continued on to find Maude. Turns out that chicken knew exactly where a





big anthill was. And Sassy Pants rooted it up with her nose, then tipped it over until ants were running all over the place.

In fact, she stirred up more ants in thirty seconds than Maude had ever seen in one place! Then hollered, “Let me know when you find another one, and I’ll do it, again!” Then ran off quick, shaking her head and snorting. Mostly because the pig didn’t want to hang around long enough to get too many ants up her nose and ears.



Word of the feast of ants got around the barnyard fast, and the gossipy hens kept the bulletins flying about where the next feast might be. After that, it wasn't long before the chickens were clucking happily at the sight of Sassy Pants rather than squawking and flying every which direction.

Having Sassy Pants around to help meant far less scratching, and lots more feasting! If it was not ants, it was box-elder bugs, grubs, or some other bug that they liked just as much. Forgiveness was given and accepted, friendships blossomed, and their trust was finally earned.

Only Old Bitty held onto her first opinion. "Pigs is pigs, is all I can say!" That's what she thought, and she was sticking to it!



## Chapter Seven

### **The Cold Tail...And Other Amends**

Now that amends had been made with the chickens, it was time for Sassy Pants to turn her attention to others she had hurt or offended. It was hard to find ways to make amends to everyone. So, she decided to ask for more help from Molly.

Once, again, they put their heads together (but not too close), trying to think of ways to make amends to some of the other animals. Like Grey Tommy, Fred the bull, and Reginald Ram. And there was always that dreaded encounter with Boss Hog looming in the back of her mind, but she kept putting him at the very end of the line.

Once, when they were trying to listen to what the stream had to say, and what the trees thought, a wise old hoot owl suggested she start with who-who-whomever was most important, first.

“That's a good idea,” agreed Molly. You might as

well start with Boss Hog. I know you don't want to look him in the face, but he is your father! That will be the hardest apology you ever make. Just start there and get the worst over with!"

Sassy Pants looked miserable. Down went her head and tail; she rocked back and forth and kicked dirt clods.

"Yeah. Yeah, you're right. He's my dad, but he is scary! You could call me chicken liver, huh! I would rather tip over twenty anthills than do that! But I guess you're right."

"I thought you had a tough hide, Sassy Pants!"

"My hide is tough, but not my heart! Not anymore it isn't. Molly?"

"What."

"I know Old Clyde asked you to be nice to me. You have not only been nice, you have been a real friend. You stayed with me when the apologies were hard to make. It really helped to have you there. I don't think I would have been able to stay at this amends thing if I was by myself all the time. But now it looks like this thing could last forever. So, maybe I shouldn't take up any of your time."

"I don't mind so much, anymore, Sassy Pants.

Besides, it's been kind of fun watching you change from mean to friendly.”

“Well, thanks for sticking with me. Thanks for being my first friend!” And with that she whirled around and took off at a trot to find the big Boss Hog.

Sort of.

Because before she even got far, she found Fred, the bull, and apologized for the attitude she had when he tried to help her see what her bad behavior was doing. She ended her apology with, “And, Fred, I am glad you are here on the farm. Your strength makes the entire herd feel safe and secure. I think that is a very good thing.”

Next she spotted Grey Tommie taking an afternoon nap in a sun spot on the board fence. “Grey Tommie, I want to apologize for my behavior when you tried to help me see the consequences of my actions last summer.”

Grey Tommie opened one eye.

So, she kept talking. “I understand the fright I gave you cost you three of your nine lives.”

Grey Tommie opened the other eye.

Sassy Pants kept going. “I'm really sorry for what I did. I was rude. I would like to ask your forgiveness,

and make amends.”

“Forgiveness?” said the cat. “Amends?” Grey Tommie lifted his head off his big paws.

“Forgiveness is the way to fix a broken friendship when I was the one who broke it,” she explained. “And amends is me caring about the things that you care about.”

Grey Tommie stood, arched his back, stretched, and yawned as if this was all so boring, and so ordinary. Like he wasn't interested. He didn't say a word. Instead, he jumped down off the fence and, with a flick of his tail, disappeared under the corncrib.

That made a big question pop into Sassy Pants' mind. A very important question. So important, she knew she would have to ask the oldest, wisest animal on the farm. So, she went off to find Old Clyde.

She was so concerned about it, she forgot to even say, hello. “Old Clyde—Old Clyde!”

“Whoa, Sassy Pants,” he said when she finally found him in the farthest pasture. “You better slow down before you fall down. You're all out of breath.”

She sat down in the tall grass with a thump. “I need to know if...” A big bumblebee was buzzing around a clover flower very close to her, and for a minute she

watched it gathering pollen. Then she wondered where he kept all his honey. Then she...

“If what?” The horse's deep voice reminded her he was still waiting.

But it took a minute for her to remember why she came because she suddenly realized she was hungry. She better hurry up with all these apologies! “Oh, yeah. I need to know if forgiveness works every time. Because it sure didn't work on Grey Tommie a while ago. He just got up and walked away. He didn't even say one word!”

“Ah, he was just giving you the cold tail. People call it the cold shoulder, but cats give you the cold tail. It's their way of making sure you know they were hurt, or offended. Some take longer to accept forgiveness, that's all. But now it's your turn.”

“My turn?”

“Your turn. Because now you have an opportunity to forgive Grey Tommie. Not to hold his behavior against him, or let it affect your friendship. Try again. But next time, try giving him honor. Cat nature is to appear that they don't care, but they care very deeply.”

“Oh, I get it. I did that too when I wanted back in the Big House. When someone hurt me, I wanted to hurt

them!”

Old Clyde nodded. “The only way to stop the hurting is to forgive, and forgive, and forgive. Be prepared to have the same thing happen again. Remember, forgive, forgive, and forgive. Amends is not always an easy thing to do.”

“Oh. Now I get it,” Then she was off to try, again. Without even saying, goodbye.

It took three, or four tries, and three, or four cold tails. But, one day, she found him grooming on the granary steps. And even though she was starting to feel like she was talking to herself instead of him, she tried, again, anyway.

“Grey Tommie, I also wanted to tell you how I've noticed what a good hunter you are. How you hunt for Kitty Cat and the kittens, besides just yourself.”

Grey Tommie lifted a huge paw and extended the claws one at a time. Click...click...click... Then he examined each one carefully.

“I have also noticed that you even bring a catch to Mrs. White, and leave it in front of her door!” Sassy Pants was really amazed about that, because in all the time she lived in the Big House, she never saw Mrs. White eat a mouse. But she never got too angry about





it, because she must have known it was a gift.

Grey Tommie began to purr as if in agreement and to groom his face with that big paw.

“You are a very good hunter!” She said then, not waiting for any answer. Maybe he would never answer. But that was okay, too. At least she had done the right thing on from her side, and she felt much better about it.

But now it was definitely, positively, absolutely time to find the big Boss Hog. Scary, or not, she had to do it. But not because she was so brave.

It's just that he was the last one on her list.



## What Happened at the End of the Story

Miss Morino took her glasses off and sat quietly, staring off into the distance, hooves folded in her lap—as if the story was done.

“Miss Morino.” Little Leo Lamm in the second row wiggled forward. “Did she find the Boss Hog, or didn't she? Did she ever apologize to him?”

“Oh, yes, Leo, she did find him but not that day. Because before she found Boss Hog, she encountered the strangest creature she had ever seen! So our next story—which is important for all young critters to know—will be about strange creatures.”

“But we want to know what happened when she talked to the big Boss Hog!” wailed Leo.

“And you shall. But next time,” responded Miss Morino. “Next time!”

The wise sheep always left off the last thing in the story so her young listeners would be sure to come

back for the next lesson. Even if only to see what happened next, rather than to learn.

But they always learned something. No matter what!

The End



# What's Next?

Different, or dangerous?  
Nobody knows until...




## Sassy Pants

LEARNS

About Strange Creatures

*(They're everywhere!)*



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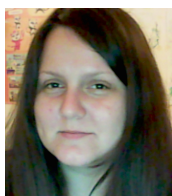
**SASSY PANTS** Learns  
About Strange Creatures



## About the Author

**Carol A. Brown** grew up on a farm not too different from the one in this story. She, rode horses bareback, milked cows, learned to cook on a wood burning stove, and make delicious pancakes. As an adult, she taught elementary school, college and university, as well as graduate level courses. Now, she writes books that teach vital truths to both adults and children. You can visit with her over at:

**CarolABrown.com**



## About the Illustrator

With a master's degree in book design and illustration, **Nada Serafimovic** has worked on books for many different countries. She also loves animals, singing, and playing the flute. She believes children's books should not only be fun to read, but add something good to their personalities. With an amazing talent for bringing characters to life on the page, she is wonderful at making that happen. You can see more of her art over at:

<https://www.facebook.com/colourfulshadow/?fref=ts>

