



THE CHEESE by MARGIE PALATINI • paintings by STEVE JOHNSON & LOU FANCHER
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Reader's Theater adaptation by Judy Freeman.
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CAST OF CHARACTERS

RAT

CAT

DOG

CHILD

WIFE/MOTHER

FARMER/FATHER

FIVE NARRATORS

Visit Margie at www.margiepalatini.com

NARRATOR 1: The rat looked down in the dell and shook his head.

RAT: *(shakes his head)* What a waste of a chunk of cheddar.

NARRATOR 2: He turned to go into his hole, and then he stopped.

NARRATOR 3: He looked back at the cheese standing all alone in the middle of the meadow.

NARRATOR 4: So yellow.

NARRATOR 5: So mellow.

NARRATORS 1- 5: So tasty.

RAT: This is ridiculous. What's the point of a hunk of cheese being left out and lonesome when it can be enjoying the company of a perfectly fine rat like me? *(licks his lips greedily)*

NARRATOR 1: None that he could think of.

NARRATOR 2: The rat grabbed a napkin, and scurried down the hill for some dinner in the dell.

CAT: *(jumping down from tree)* And just where do you think you're going?

RAT: Me? Uh, why . . . just out for a short stroll.

CAT: You don't look like you're strolling. You look like you're scurrying and sneaking.

RAT: Scurrying and sneaking! WELL!

NARRATOR 3: The rat sounded very insulted.

NARRATOR 4: And, as he was quite a good actor, he almost convinced the cat that he was indeed just out for a walk.

NARRATOR 5: But the cat, who was very clever herself, caught sight of the napkin.

CAT: *(grabs napkin and holds it up)* Aha! And just what is this?

RAT: Oh, if you must know, I'm going to get the cheese.

CAT: The cheese? You can't do that. Everyone knows the cheese stands alone.

RAT: Give me one good reason why the cheese stands alone.

CAT: *(thinks)* Well . . . ummm . . . hmmm . . . It's the song. Yes. It's most definitely the song. The song says, "The cheese stands alone," and that's that.

RAT: Well, I think it's a silly song. *(grabs back his napkin)* And I'm going to eat that cheese.

NARRATOR 1: The cat looked at the rat. Then she looked down in the dell at the cheese.

NARRATOR 2: It did look rather lonely..

NARRATOR 3: The cat could not argue that the song was silly.

NARRATOR 4: And as finicky an eater as she was, the cat did have a fondness for a nibble of cheese now and then.

CAT: You know, I believe you may be correct. That cheese should not stand alone.

NARRATOR 5: The rat smiled and held out a paw. Care to join me for a bit of cheddar, my dear?

CAT AND RAT: *(joining paws)*

NARRATORS 1- 5: So off went the two, down into the dell, headed for the cheese.

NARRATOR 1: They were about to crawl under the fence --- when who should come running up but . . .

NARRATORS 2- 5: THE DOG!

DOG: Where are you going? Where are you going? Where are you going?

NARRATOR 2: The dog was such a bother.

CAT: Calm down and sit. If you must know, we're going to eat the cheese.

DOG: The cheese? The cheese in the dell? The cheese in the dell? But the cheese stands alone. Everyone knows that.

RAT: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Stop your slobbering. We know all about it. But why should good food go to waste because of some silly song?

NARRATOR 3: The dog thought.

NARRATOR 4: Which was not an easy thing for him to do.

NARRATOR 5: He looked across the dell at the cheese. It did look very lonely. And even the dog had to admit it was a silly song.

DOG: (*drooling*) You know, I could go for a nosh right about now myself.

NARRATORS 1- 5: So off went the rat, the cat, and the dog to eat the cheese.

CHILD: (*calling to dog*) Here, boy! Here, boy!

DOG: Woof! Woof! Arf! Woof! Arf!

RAT: That dog can never keep a secret!

NARRATOR 1: The child looked at the dog. She looked down in the dell.

CHILD: Why, you aren't thinking of eating that cheese, are you? Naughty, naughty puppy.
You know the cheese stands alone.

NARRATOR 2: The dog rolled over with a whimper and a whine.

DOG: (*hangs his head*) Woof! Arf! Arf! Arf! Woof!

RAT: This is pitiful.

CAT: I'll take care of this.

NARRATOR 3: The cat walked up to the child.

NARRATOR 4: Purred.

CAT: (*purrs*)

NARRATOR 5: Arched.

CAT: (*arches its back*)

NARRATORS 1- 3: Rubbed

CAT: (*rubs head against child's shoulder*)

NARRATORS 1- 5: And mewed.

CAT: Mew Mew.

CHILD: (*giggles*) You know, that piece of cheese does look awful yummy. And I haven't had my afternoon snack. How about you?

DOG: WOOF!

CAT: MEOW!

RAT: SQUEAK!

NARRATORS 1- 5: So off went the child, the dog, the cat, and the rat to eat the cheese.

NARRATOR 1: And then . . . Mother called.

WIFE: YOO HOO.

RAT: *(to child)* Shush!

CAT: *(to child)* Shush!

DOG: *(to rat and cat)* Shush?

CHILD: *(calls to Mother)* I'm going to eat the cheese!

RAT, CAT, & DOG: SHUSH!

NARRATORS 1-5: That child was completely unshushable.

RAT: What a little blabbermouth.

WIFE: No, no, you can't eat the cheese. The cheese stands alone. Wait until your father comes home.

NARRATOR 1: So they all waited for the cow to come home with the farmer, who was the father, who was told by the mother . . .

WIFE: *(to Father)* Your child wants to eat the cheese.

FARMER: *(shaking his head no)* Nope. Can't eat the cheese. Cheese stands alone. Everyone knows that.

NARRATOR 2: The wife looked at the child . . .

WIFE: *(looks at child)*

NARRATOR 3: Who looked at the dog . . .

CHILD: *(looks at dog)*

NARRATOR 4: Who looked at the cat . . .

DOG: *(looks at cat)*

NARRATOR 5: Who looked at the rat . . .

CAT: *(looks at rat)*

NARRATORS 1-5: Who looked at the cheese . . .

RAT: *(looks at cheese, sighs, and rubs belly)*

NARRATOR 1: It was very quiet until everyone's tummy started to grumble.

NARRATORS 1-5: Grumble, grumble, grumble, grumble, grumble.

NARRATOR 2: After a long day's work, the farmer's grumbled the loudest.

NARRATORS 1-5: Grumble, grumble, grumble, grumble, grumble.

FARMER: I suppose that song is rather silly.

ALL: *(all turn to cheese and stare, rubbing their bellies and nodding yes)*

WIFE: It truly is.

FARMER: *(takes off hat and scratches head)* What should we do?

NARRATOR 3: The rat elbowed the cat.

RAT: *(elbows cat)*

NARRATOR 4: Who poked the dog.

CAT: *(pokes dog)*

NARRATOR 5: Who nudged the child.

DOG: *(nudges child)*

CHILD: LET'S HAVE A PARTY!

DOG: WOOF!

CAT: MEOW!

RAT: SQUEAK!

NARRATOR 1: So the farmer followed his wife.

NARRATOR 2: And his wife followed the child.

NARRATOR 3: And the child followed the dog.

NARRATOR 4: Who followed the cat.

NARRATOR 5: Who followed the rat, who was already wearing his napkin.

NARRATORS 1-5: Down into the dell to EAT THE CHEESE!

NARRATOR 1: And then the farmer stopped.

FARMER: You know, if we're going to have a party, we really should have some apples from the orchard to eat with the cheese.

WIFE: Delightful idea. And I'll fetch a few pears.

CHILD: I'll get the crackers.

DOG: Some sausages would be tasty, too.

CAT: I insist on milk!

NARRATOR 1: So off went the farmer.

NARRATOR 2: And his wife.

NARRATOR 3: And the child.

NARRATOR 4: And the dog.

NARRATOR 5: And the cat.

NARRATOR 1: To get some apples.

NARRATOR 2: And pears.

NARRATOR 3: And crackers.

NARRATOR 4: And sausages.

NARRATOR 5: And milk.

NARRATORS 1-5: Everyone left the cheese alone except . . . you know who.

RAT: Take your time. I'll just stay here and hang out with the cheddar. Heh Heh Heh.

*(looks at cheese longingly, reaches out to take a piece, and then stops.
Sighs. Looks at audience)*

Shame on you for what you were thinking! I may be a sneaky rat,
but I'm still one big party animal. Hi-ho the dairy-o!

ALL: *(sing)* Hi-ho the dairy-o, we all ate the cheese!

THE FARMER IN THE DELL

The farmer in the dell, the farmer in the dell
Hi-ho the dairy-o, the farmer in the dell

The farmer takes a wife, the farmer takes a wife
Hi-ho the dairy-o, the farmer takes a wife

The wife takes a child, the wife takes a child
Hi-ho the dairy-o, the wife takes a child

The child takes a dog, the child takes a dog
Hi-ho the dairy-o, the child takes a dog

The dog takes a cat, the dog takes a cat
Hi-ho the dairy-o, the dog takes a cat

The cat takes a rat, the cat takes a rat
Hi-ho the dairy-o, the cat takes a rat

The rat takes the cheese, the rat takes the cheese
Hi-ho the dairy-o, the rat takes the cheese

The cheese stands alone, the cheese stands alone
Hi-ho the dairy-o, the cheese stands alone