

Snowball

The kitchen at Sunshine Village Senior Living Community is full of cool stuff. There are high stools that spin around really fast and long metal counters that are so shiny I can see my reflection. And of course there's all the cooking gear.

Mom says the ovens can fit six baking sheets at one time. She would know. She's the new chef here. On Saturdays I'm her *sous chef*, which is like a helper. Or at least I thought I was going to be her helper. But today she doesn't want my help.

"Go explore the place, Nico," she says. "That'll be more fun than being stuck in here." Maybe for her. I'd rather stay in the kitchen. But Mom wasn't asking, she was telling.

So, I open the kitchen door. But before I can step out, a white ball of fluff leaps past my ear. It lands on the counter and slides all the way down, like a bowling ball aiming for a strike.

Instead of bowling pins, the fluff ball hits a huge metal dish of broccoli salad. The dish flies in the air. It hovers for a split second before it clangs on the tile floor. Bits of broccoli are everywhere. The fluff ball hisses and jumps. I guess it feels the same way I do about broccoli salad.

Mom shouts and I duck behind a stack of cereal boxes. Then a lady with a walker comes pushing through the door. “Save my cat! My Snowball has escaped!” she cries. She has a lanyard that says Sylvia.

Mom lunges for the cat, but she misses. It jumps onto a stool and starts spinning. It’s going faster and faster, with its feet sticking out and its tail straight up, when suddenly it flies off and lands – splat – in a vat of macaroni and cheese. It does land on its feet. I guess what they say about cats is true.

Mom is freaking out and Sylvia is moving slowly, so I guess it’s up to me to catch this creature. It’s no longer a Snowball, more like a Cheese Glob. It eyes me warily, like it knows what I’m thinking. I lean over to get it out of the mac and cheese, but before I can scoop it up, it jumps again.

This time it lands in the sink. Right in a tub of dishwashing water. It meows like crazy and springs up again, only to skitter through the last of Mom’s lunch prep. It leaves footprints in the meatloaf and whiskers on the apple pie. And then I finally catch it, holding it close so it won’t scratch me.

Just then, a bell rings. “Lunch time!” says a cheerful voice outside the door. Mom and Sylvia and I look at each other. And then we all start laughing.



This page has been intentionally left blank.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. Who is Sylvia?
 - a. The narrator
 - b. The narrator's mom
 - c. The cat
 - d. The owner of the cat

2. What did the cat knock over first?
 - a. Broccoli salad
 - b. Macaroni and Cheese
 - c. Meatloaf
 - d. Apple pie

3. How do you think the narrator feels about broccoli salad?
 - a. He loves it
 - b. He doesn't like it
 - c. He wants to have it for lunch
 - d. He thinks its nutritious

4. Why do you think they all laugh at the end?
 - a. Because the situation is ridiculous
 - b. Because it's lunch time and all the food has been ruined
 - c. Because sometimes laughing is better than crying
 - d. All of the above

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

1. Who is Sylvia?
 - a. The narrator
 - b. The narrator's mom
 - c. The cat
 - d. The owner of the cat**
2. What did the cat knock over first?
 - a. Broccoli salad**
 - b. Macaroni and Cheese
 - c. Meatloaf
 - d. Apple pie
3. How do you think the narrator feels about broccoli salad?
 - a. He loves it
 - b. He doesn't like it**
 - c. He wants to have it for lunch
 - d. He thinks its nutritious
4. Why do you think they all laugh at the end?
 - a. Because the situation is ridiculous
 - b. Because it's lunch time and all the food has been ruined
 - c. Because sometimes laughing is better than crying
 - d. All of the above**