

THE REDEMPTION OF BLEEPHUS McCARDLE

By Barry Levenson

Bleephus McCardle would not understand why people made fun of him.

Bleephus wondered: What's wrong with wearing socks that don't match?

His girlfriend was not so forgiving. You are such a nerd, Bleephus! No one wears a red sock on his left foot and a yellow sock on his right. No one!

Correction, my dear Carvella, I do. And I am proud of my attire. Would you prefer that I wear the red sock on the right foot and –

Don't be sassy, Bleephus.

(Bleephus was often sassy.)

Besides, Carvella, who made these rules? Who decided that socks must match? Did this come down with Moses from Mount Horeb?

Yes, it did, Bleephus. *Thou shalt not mix the colors of thy socks.*

(Now who is being so sassy?)

Bleephus exuded a major Harruumph and they walked silently to the circus where Carvella said she was hungry. (I'm hungry, Bleephus, please feed me.)

Bleephus escorted the lovely Carvella to the hot dog stand because Carvella was longing for a plump and juicy hot dog. Carvella issued her order in her usual bold and raspy notes:

One giant hot dog, Mr. Hot Dog Vendor, grilled to perfection, served in a toasted bun with mustard and ketchup.

Mustard and ketchup? YELLOW MUSTARD AND RED KETCHUP???

Bleephus shook his head. The angels wept. The entire circus stopped to sneer at Carvella. It is only a wonder of mercy that a bolt of lightning did not pierce her breast.

Carvella learned then and there that decent people do not mix mustard with ketchup. They do not even mix ketchup with ketchup. They do not put ketchup on hot dogs at all. Period.

But what about the red sock and the yellow sock of Bleephus? Could he not see the message in the attempted blend of ketchup and mustard?

A moment of realization was about to descend upon Bleephus when the Master of the Circus spotted Bleephus and his unmatched socks.

“You, good man, you with the red sock and the yellow sock upon your two feet! You are the clown that has been foretold to us. Come join our circus and the world will be yours.”

And that is why it is okay for clowns to wear one red sock and one yellow sock but it is not okay to put ketchup and mustard on a hot dog.