



How the Cow Jumped Over the Moon

An extract from *The Cat and the Fiddle*
by L Frank Baum

Little Bobby was the only son of a small farmer who lived out of town upon a country road. Bobby's mother looked after the house and his father took care of the farm. Bobby himself, who was not very big, helped them both as much as he was able.

It was lonely upon the farm, especially when his father and mother were both busy at work, but the boy had one way to amuse

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himself that served to pass many an hour when he would not otherwise have known what to do. He was very fond of music, and his father one day brought him from the town a small fiddle, or violin, which he soon learned to play upon. I don't suppose he was a very fine musician, but the tunes he played pleased himself, as well as his father and mother, and Bobby's fiddle soon became his constant companion.

One day in the warm summer the farmer and his wife determined to drive to the town to sell their butter





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and eggs and bring back some groceries in exchange for them. While they were gone Bobby was to be left alone.

“We shall not be back till late in the evening,” said his mother, “for the weather is too warm to drive very fast. But I have left you a dish of bread and milk for your supper. Be a good boy and amuse yourself with your fiddle until we return.”

Bobby promised to be good and look after the house, and then his father and mother drove away to the town.

The boy was not entirely alone, for there was the big black tabby cat lying upon the floor in the kitchen, and the little yellow dog barking at the wagon as it drove away, and the big moolie cow lowing in the



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pasture down by the brook. Animals are often very good company, and Bobby did not feel nearly as lonely as he would had there been no living thing about the house.

Besides he had some work to do in the garden, pulling up the weeds that grew thick in the carrot bed. When the last faint sounds of the wheels had died away he went into the garden and began his task.

The little dog went too, for dogs love to be with people and to watch what is going on. He sat down near Bobby and cocked up his ears and wagged his tail, and seemed to take a great interest in Bobby's task of weeding. Once in a while he would rush away to chase a butterfly or bark at a beetle that crawled through the garden,



but he always came back to the boy and stayed near his side.

By and by the cat, which found it lonely in the big, empty kitchen, now that Bobby's mother was gone, came walking into the garden also, and lay down in the sunshine and lazily watched the boy at his work. The dog, Towser, and the cat were good friends, having lived together so long that they did





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not care to fight each other.


By the time the carrot bed was weeded, the sun was sinking behind the edge of the forest and the new moon rising in the east. Bobby began to feel hungry and went into the house for his dish of bread and milk.

“I’ll take my supper down to the brook,” he said to himself, “and sit upon the bank. And I’ll take my fiddle, too, to pass the time until Father and Mother come home.”


Bobby took his fiddle under his arm and carried the dish of bread and milk down to the bank. He sat upon the edge and, placing his fiddle beside him, leaned against a tree and began to eat his supper.

The little dog had followed at his heels, and the cat also came slowly walking after





him. As Bobby ate, they sat one on either side of him and looked as if they too were hungry. So he threw some of the bread to Towser, who swallowed it in the twinkling of an eye. Bobby left some milk in the dish for the cat, and she came lazily up and drank it in a dainty, sober fashion.



Then Bobby picked up his fiddle and began to play some of the pretty tunes he knew. As he played he watched the moon rise higher and higher until it was reflected in the water of the brook. Indeed, Bobby could not tell which was the plainest to see, the moon in the sky or in the water.

The little dog lay quietly on one side of him, and the cat softly purred upon the other. Even the moolie cow was attracted



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by the music and wandered near.

After a time, when Bobby had played all the tunes he knew, he laid the fiddle down beside him, near to where the cat slept, and then he lay down and began to think.

Very soon Bobby's eyes closed and he forgot all about the dog and the cat and the cow and the fiddle, and dreamed he was Jack the Giant Killer and was just about to slay the biggest giant in the world.

While he dreamed, the cat sat up and stretched herself, and then began wagging her long tail, watching the moon that was reflected in the water.

But the fiddle lay just behind her, and as she moved her tail, she drew it between the strings, where it caught fast. Then she gave



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her tail a jerk and pulled the fiddle against the tree, which made a loud noise. This frightened the cat and she started to run. But still the fiddle clung to her tail, and at every step it made such a noise that she screamed with terror.


In her fright she ran straight towards the cow, which, seeing a black streak coming at her and hearing the racket made by the fiddle, also became frightened and made such a jump to get out of the way that she leapt right across the brook, over the very spot where the moon shone in the water!

Bobby had been awakened by the noise, and opened his eyes to see the cow jump. At first it seemed that she had actually jumped over the moon in the sky.





The little dog laughed to see such fun caused by the cat, and ran barking and dancing along the bank, so that he knocked the dish. It slid down the bank, carrying the spoon with it, and the dish ran away with the spoon into the water of the brook.



Bobby, recovered from his surprise, ran after the cat, which had raced to the house, and soon came to where the fiddle lay, it having at last dropped from the cat's tail. Then he had to go across the brook and drive the cow back over the bridge, and roll up his sleeve to recover the dish and the spoon from the water.

Then he went back to the house, and sat down to while away the time before his parents returned by composing a new tune.