

## **And the cow jumped**

**By Wallace E Briggs (C)2018**

( 1050 words)

Once upon a time, there was a cow called Amber, a golden-brown cow, who lived in a field with many other cows – a dairy herd of Jersey cows. Twice a day they were led into the milking shed to be milked. Most of their time was spent either eating grass or hay or lying down to chew the cud. Unlike you and I, cows have two stomachs so that they can extract more goodness from the grass, and when their food moves down to their second stomach that is called ‘chewing the cud’. The whole process uses up a lot of cow energy so, they lie down while the cud is being chewed. That is when the magical conversion of grass into milk takes place. And the milk from Amber’s herd was the sweetest for miles around.

Amber had many friends. Not all of them were cows. There were hares and hedgehogs, rabbits and mice, deer and badgers, birds and, on warm summer evenings, bats. It was a happy life, until, that is, the winter arrived. Then the herd was brought inside to shelter from the harsh, cold weather. It was in the cowshed that Amber first met the shy little girl, who said her name was Sam, short for Samantha. The herd was snacking on dried protein pellets when she walked into the barn, plonked herself down on a bale of hay and just started talking.

Amber could not quite hear what Sam was saying so she pushed past her cow friends and hung her head over the fence rail right in front of the girl with long blonde hair. Sam looked up at Amber and introduced herself. “Hello, beautiful brown cow. I’m Samantha and I’ve come to stay, for a while, at my Uncle Joe and Aunt Agatha’s farm. Mummy’s coming soon, when she comes out of hospital”. Amber obviously understood and was very interested in what Sam had to say. Amber mooded gently and nodded her head to let Sam know she was listening. “I’m sorry I don’t know your name, but as you are wearing such a beautiful, golden brown coat I’ll call you Amber.”

Amber was surprised and delighted and scratched her chin on the fence post and thought how had Sam guessed her name?

Sam continued. “This is my first visit to Uncle Joe’s farm. Mummy and I live in a flat in Hamden Town, close to the city of London. I am not used to talking to animals. There aren’t very many around in Hamden, except for stray cats and dogs. The few real animals that we see are mainly at night. There’s a street light outside my bedroom window and I often gaze out for a while, over the rooftops and down the road before I climb into bed. Sometimes I catch a glimpse of a fox, usually walking down the middle of the road, and, often there’s a rat scampering along the gutter. The bats fly around the street light chasing the fluttering moths which have been attracted by the light from the lamp. But the bats hibernate during winter months and then it can be quite boring.”

Amber shook her head to let Sam know that she knew what she was on about. Then Sam walked over to the rail and began to scratch Amber’s head, just between her eyes. It was heavenly and her large dark eyes rolled with the pleasure.

“So far I like what I’ve seen around the farm. And I certainly like you, Amber. I wish I had a cow like you as a friend. You look so intelligent. Like you understand every word I say.”

Amber could only nod her agreement.

“When mummy comes out of hospital Uncle Joe says we’ll be staying here for a while until she finds her feet again. She’s lost a lot of weight since she was ill. The surgeons have cut out the sickness that was in her tummy and Uncle Joe says she’ll soon get well. All she needs is some long country walks and lots of wholesome country food to build her up again. Aunt Agatha promised to feed her lots of milk and cheese to help build up her bones again with lots of calcium.

“That’s where you and your friends can help, Amber. We need lots of your rich, creamy milk. Will you to help to make mummy strong again? I’ll come and see you every day and tell you all about what’s going on. I know you don’t get out very often in the winter.”

Amber decided she would do everything she could to help Sam and her mother.

“I’ll have to get back to the house now, Amber. It’s getting a little late. Aunt Agatha asked me not to stay out too long. I’ll be back to chat as soon as I can”.

And off she went leaving Amber with her own thoughts.

What Sam did not know was she just been talking to the cleverest cow this side of the rainbow. Not only was she cleverer than all other cows, she was also magical, a cow who could make dreams come true. When Amber jumped over the moon, all those years ago, she didn’t jump straight over it. She stopped for a while to eat some of the Man-in-the-Moon’s magical cheese and on the way back to Earth she collected a pile of enchanted stardust. The stardust transformed Amber into a golden-brown cow with astonishing powers.

Milk from Amber will provide the very best cheese and yoghurts and milkshakes for Sam’s mum and she would soon be well again.

Sam would never know the truth. Yes. She knew that Amber was a special cow but she did not know that she had befriended the cow who jumped over the moon. Perhaps Sam and her mum will stay at Uncle Joe’s farm and Sam knows she has found a friend she can talk to about absolutely anything in the world. Talking to the not-so-dumb cow is going to make Sam and her mother happy for a long time to come.

***Hey, diddle, diddle,  
The cat and the fiddle,  
The cow jumped over the moon;  
The little dog laughed  
To see such sport,  
And the dish ran away with the spoon.***