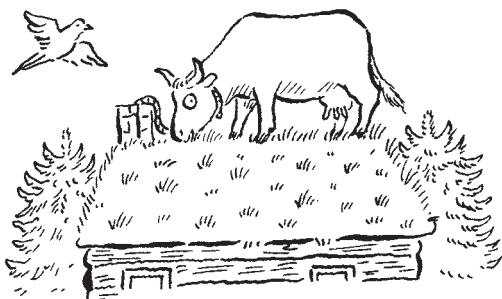


Robert Leeson
Why is the Cow
on the Roof?



illustrated by
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Why is the Cow on the Roof?



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Ola and Kari made a splendid couple, that's what everyone said. He was tall and broad-shouldered and hard working, she was quick and cheerful.

They lived in a cottage right up against the mountain, with their little baby, who crawled around the kitchen floor and gurgled and put things in its mouth to see what they tasted like.

In the shed outside lived a brown cow who supplied them with milk and cream, and behind the shed lived a black-and-white pig who was going to supply them with pork chops and bacon, but the pig didn't know that yet.

Every day Ola kissed Kari, took up his scythe and marched off to work in the fields while she got busy round the house.

And when the sun was well over the mountain-top, Kari would walk up the valley and call Ola to come down and have his dinner. So it went on day after day. It couldn't be better. In fact, they ought to have lived happily ever after.

But there was just one thing wrong.

Now and then, Kari was a little late calling Ola for his dinner. He'd come down to the cottage and find her sitting by the fire talking to the baby while she stirred the porridge in the pot.

"There you are, Ola," she would say. "Is that the time already? I've been so busy I forgot to come and call you."

Ola answered grumpily, "Busy doing what? I've moved halfway down Ten Acre Meadow and you've just been sitting here watching the pot and playing with the baby. I'd love a job like that."

Kari smiled at him. "Oh, Ola, you have no idea how many things there are to do in the house. There's butter to churn for our

dinner, the cow to feed and water, the kitchen to clean, the porridge to boil. And all the time I've got to watch the baby – and as for that pig, you need an eye on each finger to keep up with him.”

“All that, eh?” said Ola. “And what do you do for the rest of the day? Read a book?”

Kari shook her head. “You don't know. The time goes – if it's not one thing, it's another. I hardly have a minute to turn round.”

Ola was tired and grumpy and wouldn't be talked into a good mood. “Huh. I could do all that in half an hour, with one hand tied behind my back.”

“Could you now?” Kari was beginning to get a little annoyed. But she changed her tone and put her arm around her husband's shoulder. “Look, let's not quarrel over who does most work. Let's find out.”

Ola was suspicious. “What does that mean?”

“Tomorrow we'll swap places. What d'you

say? I'll go off haymaking and you stay home and look after the house. That way we'll see who works hardest."

"Why not?" Ola cheered up right away. "I like the idea." While he talked he was looking round the kitchen and working out how he would run the show, ha ha, and not have to slog up to Ten Acre Meadow and cut hay all day.

So they both went to bed in a good mood.

Early next morning Kari took the scythe over her shoulder and set off up the valley to join the haymakers. Ola waved her goodbye with a grin on his face and then got busy round the kitchen. Well begun is half done, everyone knows that. He'd soon have it sorted.

First he checked the baby was safe in the corner playing with its toys. Then he got cream from the dairy, poured it into the churn and began to swing the handle to turn it into butter.

After five minutes' hard churning he began

to sweat. Take it easy, Ola, he told himself. No hurry. He opened the churn, but the butter wasn't set. So he started to churn again, a little more slowly.

By the time the butter was nearly ready, so was he – for some light refreshment. Everything was going well – this job was a doddle. So he nipped down into the cellar for a drink of beer.

There was just one snag. The barrel hadn't been tapped. He looked round. Now which idiot had moved the mallet? Then he remembered. He'd used it yesterday and left it in the kitchen. Up the steps, quick look to see baby was happy, and then down into the cellar again. With a couple of sharp blows he knocked out the bung. Now he just had to fit the spigot into the hole and he could tap off a nice cool pint.

But as he stood with the spigot in one hand and the mallet in the other, he heard a strange scraping noise overhead. It didn't take him long to figure it out. The pig had