

Myron's Magic Cow

Marlene Newman

Jago, Illustrator

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A yellow-haired girl, whose traveling companions are three bears, is bad news. A surprise is in store for anyone who takes her up on her offer of a great deal on a cow. In addition to the humorous tone of the story, this can be a lesson to children to be careful about talking to strangers.

Myron feels like he is the only one Mama ever asks to go to the store when she runs out of something. Little does he know, but when she needs milk for pancakes one morning, Myron will bring home more than he went to the store to get. After some crafty trading on the part of the golden-haired con artist, Myron ends up amazed by an offer of his choice of milk. ("What'll you have—regular, skim, or one percent?" Well spoken for a cow.)

The author spent nineteen years teaching elementary school reading, writing, and library skills in New York, and enjoying every type of book that libraries had to offer. While *Myron's Magic Cow* is her first children's book, she treasured the times she read with her children, grandchildren, and many students over the years. This story about a magical cow who grants a little boy's wishes was originally written as a play for students. The real magic that Newman shares is her love of words.

The illustrator's art has graced many children's books with fairy tale-like themes. While most of his work is at least partially digitalized, he adds a personal feel by harmonizing paint, photography, and pencil for his unique style. His artwork evokes a giddy reaction with mysterious undertones. Jago may be best known for his children's artwork in Brave Tales, Ltd. books like *Tom and the Giant*, *Madgy Figgy's Pig*, and *Lutey and the Mermaid*.

Throughout *Myron's Magic Cow*, smart-aleck repartee from skewed fairytale characters erupts. ("Listen," the girl continued, "there are already three bears in my car and the cow just won't fit. You need milk and I need money—so let's cut a deal.") As one storybook figure after another shows up, Myron is in the dark about most of their identities. He just wants to get to the store and back so his mom can make the pancakes. Excitement is just around the corner when his newfound friend, the magic cow, offers him three wishes.

In the tradition of *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*, *Myron's Magic Cow* will make reading fun, and some kids may offer to run errands for their mothers.

KATIE KLEIN (August 18, 2009)

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