



The Little Moose Who Couldn't Go to Sleep

Willy Claflin

James Stimson, Illustrator

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Clever and kind, this rhythmic bedtime story will make the kids “blorble” with joy.

Willy Claflin's *The Little Moose Who Couldn't Go to Sleep*, an endearing tale of a young moose whose active brain keeps her awake when she should be sleeping, will both entrance and comfort small children.

Written with kindness and humor in a lilting, rhythmic style that hints at the speech patterns of Jamaicans, the story of Little Moose and the difficulties she's having at school, all because she can't get a good night's sleep, will resonate with children whose active imaginations also keep them awake at night.

Meant to be read aloud, the book comes with a CD that will clue parents in to the rhythmic cadences of “moose speech.” Clever, invented words like “blorble” (bubbling musically to oneself); “gaddunk!” (the sound of a moose landing on a rug); and “shklork!” (the sound a moose makes when turning over in a bathtub full of mashed potatoes), are defined in a glossary, but add to the fun even before parents look them up.

James Stimson's lively, colorful illustrations beautifully enhance the tale. The art is simple enough to be appreciated by kids, but will also delight parents as together they follow Little Moose, riding on the back of one of the sheep she is supposed to be counting, on a journey among the stars to the home of Mother Moose. Both the sheep and Little Moose are sure that Mother Moose, who made everything in the universe, including “duckies and sheep, pond weed and thunder,” has exactly what is needed to resolve Little Moose's insomnia.

Storyteller, educator, singer/songwriter, and award-winning author and recording artist Claflin is a favorite at the National Storytelling Festival and at regional festivals across the nation. His own background is a story in itself: he is the great-grandnephew of Victoria Claflin Woodhull, the first woman stockbroker and first woman presidential candidate (1872) in American history.

With this imaginative tale, Claflin takes on what is, for many children and their parents, a rather sensitive problem. While there are many reasons a child may have difficulty sleeping, among them fear and loneliness, the soothing sound of a parent reading Claflin's “moose speech” and the compassionate help that Little Moose receives—help which is actually coming from within her own active imagination—are sure to help children find comfort and rest.

“I first met Maynard Moose one foggy morning years ago in downeast Maine...sitting on a mossy log, telling stories to a chipmunk and a crow,” writes Claflin about his “encounter” with his “co-author.” Claflin's wish is that all humanity might discover “the joys of gathering together to hear the old tales told again.” With this small book, the author has furthered that cause and added to that joy.

KRISTINE MORRIS (February 17, 2014)

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