

## All Mixed Up

*[It is Sunday afternoon and Laura has walked down the garden to the field fence where an inquisitive cow is nibbling the hedge]*



Hello Mrs. Cow! Sorry. Perhaps you not a Mrs. Ms Jackson, our teacher, gets a bit cross when we call her Miss or Mrs. I don't think you mind. You look like a Mrs. to me - you're big and huggable.

I'm glad I came down here. You look bored too. There's nothing happening this afternoon and I didn't want to stay indoors. Dad's gone fishing. He doesn't take me because I talk too much. Well there's nothing else to do when I go except stare at the water and wait for nothing to happen. Mum's catching up on letter writing and Shaun's playing his trumpet. Can you hear him? Did you come to listen? He's only just started learning. He's not really playing it yet - just making lots of different rude noises with it. Maybe cows like those noises. I told Mum, 'I'm going to see the cows', but where are they all? Why are you on your own? The rest must be the other side of the hill or running away from Shaun's trumpet. You're not afraid of the others are you? Is there one thin one you think might eat you up?

We had that story in church this morning. Do cows know Bible stories? It was about the king of Egypt who had a dream. In the dream he saw seven thin cows coming up from the river behind seven fat ones. The fat ones couldn't have been looking because the thin ones ate them all up. Sorry Mrs Cow, I didn't mean to suggest you're fat. You're just lovely big.

We had another speaker this morning - Mr. Robin Alderson I think they called him. The rector doesn't preach much - which is just as well - he's so boring. Perhaps he's run out of things to say, though you'd wouldn't think that when he's chatting up the ladies in the coffee room! Mr Robin was good. he's as thin as bean-pole. I hope he doesn't find a fat preacher to eat. That's what Mr. Curtis said when Mr. Robin stood up to speak and said about the thin cows. Mr. Curtis sits behind me and he's always muttering comments during the service. 'If thin ones eat fat ones he's got plenty to choose from here,' Mr. Curtis said. I giggled and he didn't say any more. I expect Mrs. Curtis dug him in the ribs. He was right though. There's quite a mixture of thin and thick people in our church - fat I mean, not thick! We could end up with half a congregation if all the thin ones ate the bigger ones. Mr. Andrews would be first. He comes to us for lunch some Sundays. Mum says he needs feeding up. He's like a scarecrow - tall, with wispy hair right down to his shoulders. He's got enormous feet and hands and a toothy ear to ear smile. No, he's too kind to want to eat someone else. He won't be hungry anyway, not the way he tucks in when he's here. Dad always says he's afraid Penny Eliot's going to eat him. She's lovely, but when she talks to you she gets so close you think her long nose will poke you in the eye. She has big teeth which makes her look as though she's ready to bite you. But she's fun really.

As I was saying Mrs. Cow, Mr. Robin told us the story about the King's cows eating each other up. I wonder how they did it? Where would you start Mrs. Cow? Best eat the tail first I think. It would be hard to begin face to face. But then it was a dream. I expect it was like pictures on the telly merging into each other. The thin cow would show on top of the fat one and the fat one would gradually disappear till there was only one good size one. I don't think your farmer would like it if he lost half his cows, but then if there was a real famine they would all die. Don't worry Mrs. Cow, there won't be a famine and it was only a dream.

I think Joseph was very clever to know what dreams mean, though, of course God showed him. Still, Mr. Robin said Joseph must have been brave. If he'd got it wrong the king would have had him killed. I could do with Joseph to tell me what my dreams mean. though I don't remember much about it when I wake up. What a good thing the king remembered his dream! Joseph explained that the seven fat cows were like seven years when there was a good harvest and then there would be seven years of bad weather and no harvest. He told the king they should save half the good harvests so they would have enough in the bad times. It was a brilliant idea.

Mr. Robin went on to say that's how we should share our food and all the good things God gives us - and we should do it all the time, not just for seven years - no fourteen years wouldn't it be.. He told us some sad stories about hungry people in Africa and India and how lots of them have been helped by people sharing. He went on about governments and countries like ours in Europe, and about taxes and things... I didn't follow that but Mr. Curtis kept grunting 'Aye' every now and then.

We had a lady come into our assembly and she talked about greedy people spoiling the world because they want more than their share. A bit like Jamie Watkins with school dinners. he could do with someone very thin next to him. He's always first in the seconds queue and then he tucks into a bag of biscuits and things all by himself. He doesn't have friends to share with.

Right at the end Mr. Alderson - Mr. Robin I like better - told us that sharing was what Jesus wanted us all to do and we would do it more if we all were more like him. I do want to be like Jesus. I keep on telling him. When Mr. Robin was talking I thought about the thin cows eating the fat ones and that being a Jesus person is like letting him eat us up - like the telly picture - his picture covers ours till we're all mixed up with him. Wouldn't it be wonderful, Mrs. Cow, if everyone was like that. Oh, you've trimmed the hedge and want to go. I've talked all the time. I expect you feel like I do at the end of a sermon. Go and find the others then, but do watch out for the thin ones. Dreams may come true!