

## Beneath a Beaver Moon

Unless it was cloudy, the big yellow sun rose every morning to light the day and warm the faces of a close-knit family who lived on a farm by the river. Until one crisp November morning; when Coppertop Farms lost two treasured members of its family.

Warble was the first to be missed since he always tried to gobble right after the rooster crowed each day. Warble was the biggest and oldest turkey they had on the farm, and he had become just like family – even with a gobble that sounded like he had pebbles in his throat! But Warble didn't gobble that morning because he was gone. The farmer scratched his head, what could have happened? He wondered.

Next, Miss Fran, the family grandma, hadn't come to breakfast. When they went to her room to check on her, they discovered she wasn't there. This made the family deeply worried. Fran had begun to forget things like what day it was, or where she left her glasses. Lately, she'd even become lost a time or two. And only a week ago when she hadn't returned from feeding the chickens, they found her wandering around in the Alfalfa field. It seemed as if Fran forgot that she had lived on the farm since long before her son; the farmer was born. And now, to think that Fran might have wandered off in the night was a scary thought indeed.

The farmer's wife called all the neighbors, and everyone agreed to set up two search parties; one would search to the south, one to the north. Everybody knew Fran and Warble would be easy to spot, so the parties set out on their search. They knew it might be a long day ahead.

Especially for Fran, who had awakened just before dawn, while the family slept peacefully beneath the full Beaver moon. Stepping into her slippers, Fran slipped her hairbrush into the pocket of her housecoat and crept quietly out the kitchen door. Time was running out, she knew. She must get to the river to set traps for the beavers. Fran stopped at the barn to wake up that big old turkey. He could protect her against bobcats, she thought.

Warble didn't like the idea at all. He'd been perfectly cozy in the barn, and besides, everybody knew that turkeys can't see well in the dark.

"It isn't dark with that full moon up there," Fran told him as she picked up an empty bucket "Now, let's go."

Reluctantly, Warble followed. He'd been down to the river a million times and had never seen a beaver. But if Miss Fran said there were beavers, he supposed there must be.

Before long, early morning birds began to stir; chirping cheerfully. Sunrays boldly pierced the Cottonwood canopy above, as Fran scanned the river with eyes of an eagle and one of her slippers floated briskly downstream. She swayed slightly in the current that flowed swiftly past her knees, and Warble hoped she wouldn't fall. And then he heard the voices. It was a search party, calling their names! Warble gobbled once.

"Shhh!" Fran spat "It's just Indians. They won't bother us if we're quiet." she whispered

Indians? First beavers, and now Indians. Something was not right, Warble thought with dismay.

He gobbled again, but Fran put a finger to her lips and gave him an angry look. Then, she swayed again and fell down into the water with a yelp and a splash. Oh no, oh dear, Warble began to pace back and forth along the riverbank. He thought he might have a heart attack. But Fran had started to float down the river, not even trying to swim! Warble gobbled and gobbled again. Oh, if only he could bark like a dog, he thought desperately.

“Warble!” boomed the voice of the farmer, “I thought I heard you, old boy!” The farmer saw Fran in the river and raced into the water.

Other members of the search party had arrived, and everyone talked at once as the farmer carried Fran from the river. “Is she alright?”

Fran spit a little water “Of course I’m alright!” she snapped “Almost had that beaver!”

“Mother,” said the farmer “There haven’t been beavers around here in fifty years—“

“Nonsense,”

“And you shouldn’t walk around in the dark,” the farmer continued

“I didn’t,” Fran fished the hairbrush from her soggy housecoat pocket, “I brought a flashlight.”

The farmer shook his head, “Let’s get on back for Thanksgiving dinner, okay?” he helped Fran into the neighbor’s jeep and even allowed Warble to hop in too.

“Thanksgiving you say?” Fran’s eyes looked sleepy

“Yeah, you like turkey, don’t you?” the farmer asked

“I got us a turkey right back there,” Fran pointed at Warble, and he gulped.

The farmer laughed “What we have back there, Mother, is a hero.”

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