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Bossy White's Escape

Mary Graham Bonner

Betty's pet cow had a round white spot just above her right eye, and so her name was Bossy White.

Every morning and evening, Betty milked her herself, carrying the bucket into the house twice a day. Before she did, she always drank a little straight from the bucket, so that Bossy White would see and be pleased, and look at her softly out of those great, gentle eyes.

Bossy White spent her days in the pasture and her nights in a warm stall in the barn. The pasture had a good wire fence all around it — which was just as well, because Betty's farm was near a swamp, and black racer snakes lived there. Black racer snakes will chase a cow if they can, and sometimes catch one.

But a piece of wire had broken somewhere in the fence, and one snake slipped through.

Poor Bossy White saw it coming and bolted, running for all she was worth, the snake moving fast through the long grass behind her.

A little boy happened to be passing just then. He saw the cow running and the grass moving, and he knew at once what was happening. He jumped the fence and called, "Bossy White! Come on, follow me!" — for he had often heard Betty use the name.

He ran in zigzags, cutting back and forth, and Bossy White followed his every turn. The snake couldn't keep up. A black racer loses ground quickly when it has to go back and forth across so much distance, and soon it was left far behind.

When they reached the barn, Betty was waiting to do the milking. She couldn't understand why Bossy White was trembling, or why the little boy was so out of breath.

When he got his breath back, he told her.

Betty was so grateful she couldn't find words for it at first. "Bossy White would



like to thank you herself," she said, "and I think the best way is a whole bucketful of her milk." The little boy, who was very poor and had an invalid mother at home, took the milk and carried it home carefully.

A much stronger fence went up the very next week. Bossy White was never chased again.

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