A whimsical illustration of a smiling moon and stars in a night sky. The moon is large, yellow, and has a simple face with closed eyes and a wide smile. It is surrounded by numerous stars of various sizes and colors, including yellow and white. The scene is set in a garden at night, with a wooden fence and various flowers, including orange and blue ones. A young boy with brown hair, wearing an orange shirt and blue shorts, stands on a path, looking up at the moon with a curious expression. The overall atmosphere is magical and dreamlike.

*THE LITTLE BOY
WHO WANTED TO GRAB
THE MOON*

*Hélène Maldy-Terrasson
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*I dedicate this story
to my son Gabin,
for whom I imagined
this adventure.*

With thanks to my lovely Roy Hulsbergen

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Once upon a time, a long time ago, there was a little boy who really loved the moon. At that time, the moon was always round, full, serene and smiling.

She came every night to accompany the child to sleep. She told him stories of shooting stars, comets, clouds and the birds.

The child did not have a brother nor a sister and his parents were too busy to play with him and tell him stories. So he would have liked the moon to always stay in order to keep him company.

But she continued on her way, so that all the children of the world could enjoy her soft light and fall asleep while listening to her.



At the beginning of the summer vacation it was raining cats and dogs, and for several nights the moon remained hidden behind the clouds. The child, was very sad and could not fall asleep. I believe it was at that moment, he decided to catch her.

"As soon as she comes back, I'll catch her and I'll keep her for myself," the child told himself in the evening, while listening to the rain hitting the roof of the house.

He was afraid alone in the dark, and when he finally fell asleep, he had all kinds of nightmares that kept him waking up.



Finally, one evening, the rain stopped. The clouds gradually disappeared revealing some stars. The child, already in pyjamas for the night, put on his boots and ran out of the house in search of the moon. Then a surprise! She is there, smiling in the middle of the big puddle in right front of the house! The opportunity is too good. Without wasting time, he jumped into the puddle to catch his friend. "Spotch! ". He is very surprised not to have been able to seized it; he had, however, aimed well. Sitting, his buttocks in the mud, dripping, the pyjamas soaking wet and his boots filled with water, he finally saw the moon that smiled sweetly upon him, up there, right in the middle of the stars. Disappointed, he went home.

Very angry, his mother scolded him for getting dirty. She ordered him to go to bed immediately after washing. He had to go to bathe and go to bed fast!

Once in bed, his friend the moon taught him how to find ones way through the constellations. He fell asleep, a little annoyed at not having caught her, but happy to have found her again. That night, he did not have a nightmare.



A few days later, while waiting for his evening friend to go to bed, the little boy saw her get up behind the big tree in the garden.

All red, she was beautiful and rose slowly accompanied by the shepherd star.

The child jumped into his shoes and ran towards her. Without any hesitation, he began to climb the tree, as quickly as possible in order not to miss her this time. Too happy at the thought of catching the moon, he did not feel the branches scratching him, tearing his pyjamas and the sap of the tree spilling over his arms and legs.

At the top of the tree, he reached out his arm.

The moon was not far away, he thought he could catch her.

Alas, she rose higher all the time.

He stretched as far as possible, just failing to fall from the tree.

He could only just touch the soft moon.

Sadly, he watched her moving away into the sky, littered with billions of stars lighting up one by one.

He then descended from the tree, very tired and frightened because he never had climbed so high.

As he came home, his pyjamas all torn and dirty, his mother scolded him and to punish him, she forbade him to go out at night.



But the little boy was not discouraged. He then decided to wake up before the sun chased the moon, before his parents, before the first rooster crowing. Since he could never wake up first, he decided not to fall asleep and stay awake with the moon.

As she began her descend to the hilltop, where she usually disappeared, the child took his coat and boots, silently left the house, without making any noise. He ran towards the hill, and began to climb it as fast as his little legs allowed. Exhausted, he reached the top. But the moon was already gone because other children were waiting for him on the other side of the earth. He was sad and tired, so he lay down in the heather crying and fell asleep.

In the morning, his parents worried about not finding him in his bed, went off to look for him with the farm dog. Thanks to the fine nose of this good big dog, he was found easily, nestled in his cosy little nest of heather.

The parents were very angry because they were very afraid of losing their child. They decided to lock him in his room for the rest of the holidays.



He would have spent the whole of the summer alone with his friend the moon, however one day his great-uncle came to visit them.

This uncle was a brilliant inventor and he had just build a flying machine , he was very proud of and amazed everyone. He really loved his nephew and liked to teach him how to fly.

The child was an exemplary student and was very talented. After only a few days of initiation, he could do with the airplane all kinds of figures in the air to the great admiration of his parents and all the villagers. He had listened well to his uncle. He had learned how wind and drafts could carry him high in the air. He was taking good care of the aircraft, cleaning and repairing it, because he knew he had finally found a way to catch the moon.

A farmer's neighbor had lent his field as a runway and his barn to maintain the aircraft.

It was far from home, behind the hill, away from the eyes and ears of adults.

In the evening, the little boy happily fell asleep; he had worked out his plan to capture his friend and patiently waited for the hour.



On a festive night, when the adults were dancing and singing, the little boy slipped into his parents' room, opened the old wardrobe and took a very large fishing net that belonged to his grandfather.

At the three corners of the net he tied a large stone and at the fourth corner he fixed a long rope like a fishing net. He carefully folded his trap and went to get the airplane, while nobody was paying attention to him.

He finally took off in the direction of his friend the moon who, still smiling at him, could not imagine what was going to happen to her. He used the drafts that caressed the hill to gain altitude, he climbed, climbed, climbed so high that he soon reached at the level of the moon.

She, a little worried, hid behind a cloud. But the little boy, who was very familiar with the handling of his machine, made a loop over the cloud, unfolded his net and threw it towards the moon, who was trapped and towed to the ground.

With his booty in his arms, He ran to the house and hid the moon under his bed. With the fishingnet, he made her a little soft nest, brought her a glass of water, and, tired from his journey, he went to bed and fell asleep being the happiest child in the world.



The next morning the child found that the moon did not look very well.

" Are you sick ? He asked her.

"I'm not well, I need air, space, clouds and stars to live". She replied.

" You'll see ; I'll take good care of you, and in the evening you'll tell me stories only for me. "

"And what will become of all the other children without me? The moon retorted.

But the child did not hear; he was too happy to have the moon for himself.

He had breakfast and left, with his uncle, to fly with the airplane.

He intended to bring back small gifts for his friend.

In the evening, the child brought to the moon a little dew from clouds, some glitter of the comets, some feathers of birds which he had caught during his excursion with his uncle.

He went so far as to offer her the engagement ring of his grandmother, which contained a beautiful diamond and shone like the star of the shepherd.

But the moon was pale; nothing could replace her firmament. Sweetly, she mustered the strength to tell him a few stories to put him to sleep.

But the moon was dying.

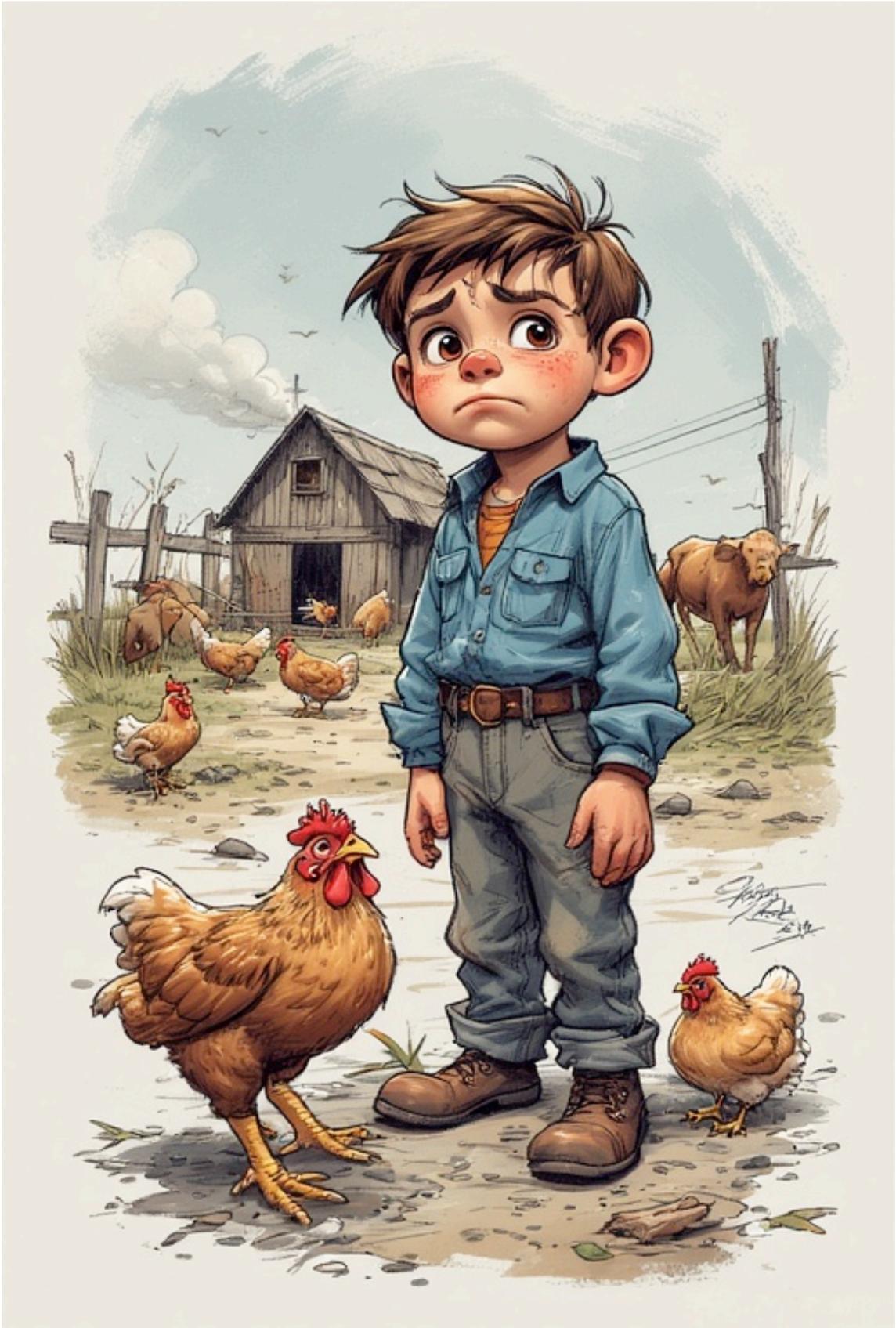


When the child woke up, he found his parents anxious because the moon had not appeared that night. The dogs barked, the hens did not want to lay eggs, the horse was nervous and threw kicks to anyone close by. The cow was making cheese, the cat was throwing up and the flowers were fading.

When the child and his uncle left with the airplane to go and see the sea, it had withdrawn and they saw only large expanses of mud. The clouds were threatening and it was a thunder storm that greeted them on their return.

When the child found the moon under his bed, she was already missing a quarter. The dew of the cloud was only a puddle of water, the glitter of comets turned to dust and the diamond was no longer shining. She refused the piece of cake the child was offering her.
"Eat, eat". Said the child.
But the moon was dying.

Gentle moon, brave moon, she found just a little strength to tell him a story.
It was a sad story ...



From day to day the moon withered, gradually lost her quarters and her stories were more and more sad.

The villagers were very worried because the wheat did not want to grow anymore, the mare could not give birth, the calf did not suckle.

Salads rose to weed, tomatoes remained green and hay rotted.

There was only one quarter of the moon left and the child became desperate.

He wanted to give her back her freedom but his uncle had gone to show his plane to the people of the capital and the moon, too weak, was unable to leave alone.

The little boy then went to find his friend, the little neighbor girl, who had just returned from a long trip.

He told her the whole story and they went to see the moon hidden under his bed.

The parents, and all the villagers, were gathered at the town hall to discuss the serious consequences of the absence of the moon. The little girl took the star out of her hiding place, took her in her arms and promised to find a solution to put her back in her place.

That night, the two children looked after the moon and it was they who told her stories.

The little girl, who had traveled a lot, told her about the Chinese walls, the Egyptian pyramids, the dances and songs of Mali, the sandstorms in the Sahara desert. The little boy told her the stories of the little red hen and the big bad wolf who wanted to eat her. The poor little moon finally fell asleep, but she did not shine at all.



The children were awakened by a lot of noise. Their parents and all the villagers had decided to go in search of the moon. They harnessed the horses and filled the trailers with food and water. They asked the children to take care of the animals and the kitchen garden and started to find the star so beneficial to all. The children watched the villagers leave in the shade of an old maple tree, when a light breeze dropped some fruit from the tree. The swirling swirl of seeds reminded the little girl of a trip she had made to Australia.

I think it was at that moment that she found the way to put the moon back in her place. " Quick quick "! Let's not waste time. Let's go get the moon and I'll show you what the aborigines in Australia do to hunt. " Said the little girl to the boy"! The latter went to fetch the moon hidden under his bed and they climbed to the top of the hill. Very slowly, the little girl took the moon by the point of a quarter and with a wide movement of her arm, threw her into the air.

The moon was spinning, spinning, spinning and was gaining altitude. On its flight the moon met drops of rain that made it swell, shooting stars that gave it back her brilliance. The more she climbed into the sky, the more she found her missing quarters and her brightness.



That night, the moon had regained her shape and her smile.

When the villagers came back, the foal was born, the hens began to lay eggs, the tomatoes blushed, the wheat ripened and the sea covered the mud.

The moon says to the children: "To thank you for having given me back my freedom, I will go down to see you every month to tell you a story just for you".

I believe that it is from this moment that the moon gradually loses its quarters until disappearing one evening completely to tell stories to the children, and the children of the children and so on.

The morning of her disappearance there is always a little girl accompanied by a little boy to put the moon back in her place.

She then gradually resumes her quarters to become completely round, full, serene and smiling.



