

THIDWICK, The Big-Hearted Moose

Dr. Seuss

Up at the Lake Winna- Bango... the far northern shore... Lives a huge herd of moose, about sixty or more, And they all go around in a big happy bunch Looking for nice tender moose-moss to munch.

Up at the lake Winna- Bango, one day, they were lunching, Just strolling along and enjoying their munching... (For the moose- moss that day was especially fine)... When it happened that Thidwick, the last moose in line, Saw a Bingle Bug sitting. The bug called out, "Hey! It's such a long road And it's such a hot day, Would you mind if I rode on your horns for a way?"

"Of course not!" smiled Thidwick, the Big-Hearted Moose. "I'm happy my antlers can be of some use. There's room there to spare, and I'm happy to share! Be my guest and I hope that you're comfortable there!" So the Bingle Bug picked out a nice easy seat And the moose went on looking for moose-moss to eat.

Well... An hour or so later The bug heard a squeak, And he heard the small voice. Of a Tree-Spider speak. "I say!" said the spider, "you've got a nice place! That moose seems quite friendly, Has such a nice face... If I got on, too, Do you think he would mind...?"

"Hop aboard!" laughed the bug. "And I think that you'll find that moose won't object. He's the big hearted kind!" "I accept," said the spider, with joy and delight." And he started a web horn to the right.

While the spider was spinning, he heard a gay song and a fresh little Zinn-a- zu bird came along. He stopped. And he stared. And he chirped, "Well! Well! WELL! What a smart place to build! What a great place to dwell! I've been living on trees ever since I was born, but here's something new! Why not live in a horn! If there's room there for two, then there's room there for three!" "There's plenty of room!" Laughed the bug. "And it's free!"

Thidwick stopped walking. What was all that talking? These guests had caught Thidwick the Moose unawares. "Hey!" he called out. "What goes on there upstairs?"

"Just building a nest, sir." The Zinn-a-zu said, and began yanking hairs out of poor Thidwick's head. And he plucked out exactly two hundred and four! "Don't worry," he laughed. "you can always grow more!"

Then he dozed off to sleep in his fine moose hair nest. "This bird," murmured Thidwick "is sort of a pest! But I'm a good sport, so I'll just let him rest, for a host, above all, must be nice to his guest."

“Besides, now, it’s getting quite late in the day and surely tomorrow they’ll all go away.”
But, alas! The next morning the suns early light rought to Thidwick’s sad eyes
a most unwelcome sight...

“Meet my wife!” said the bird. “I was married last night. “And, perhaps by the way, I should mention to you that her uncle is coming to live with us, too. You’re a very fine host so I knew you’d be willing...”

Then the uncle, a woodpecker, started in drilling!

All Thidwick’s friends shouted, “GET RID OF THOSE PESTS!” “I would, but I can’t.” sobbed poor Thidwick. “They’re guests!” “Guests indeed!” his friends answered and all of them frowned. “If those are your guests, we don’t want you around! You can’t stay with us, ’cause you’re just not our sort!” And they all turned their backs and walked off with a snort.

Now the big friendless moose walked alone and forlorn, with four great big woodpecker holes in his horn. “What holes!” whispered Hernan, a squirrel, who spied ’em. “What holes to hide nuts in! *Hmmm!* Mind if I tried ’em?”

“They’re yours!” called the woodpecker. “Get right inside ’em! This big hearted moose runs a public hotel! Bring your nuts! Bring your wife! Bring your children as well!” So the whole squirrel family all jumped on, pell mell.

And the very next thing the poor animal knew, a Bobcat and turtle were living there, too!
NOW what was the big-hearted moose going to do?

Well what would YOU do if it happened to YOU? You couldn’t say “Skat!” ’cause that wouldn’t be right. You couldn’t shout “Scram!” ’cause that isn’t polite. A host has to put up with all kinds of pests, for a host, above all, must be nice to his guests. So you’d try hard to smile, and you’d try to look sweet and you’d go right on looking for moose-moss to eat.

But now it was winter and that wasn’t easy, for moose-moss gets scarce when the weather gets freezy. The food was soon gone on the cold northern shore of Lake Winna-Bango. There just was no more! And all Thidwick’s friends swam away in a bunch to the south of the lake where there’s moose-moss to munch. He watched the herd leaving. And then Thidwick knew *he’d starve if he stayed here! He’d have to go, too!*

He stepped in the water. Then, oh! What a fuss! “STOP!” screamed his guests. “You can’t do this to us! These horns are our home and you’ve no right to take our home to the far distant side of the lake!” “Be fair!” Thidwick begged, with a lump in his throat....

“We’re fair,” said the bug. “We’ll decide this by vote. All those in favor of going, say ‘AYE,’ all those in favor of staying say ‘NAY.’” “AYE!” shouted Thidwick, but when he was done...

“NAY!” they all yelled. He lost ’leven to one.

“We win!” screamed the guests, “by a very large score!” And poor, starving Thidwick climbed back on the shore. Then, do you know what those pests did? They asked in some more!

They asked in a fox, who jumped in from the trees, they asked in some mice and they asked in some fleas. They asked a big bear in and then, if you please, came a swarm of three hundred and sixty-two bees! Poor Thidwick sank down, with a groan, to his knees. And then, THEN came something that made his heart freeze.

Bullets came zinging right past Thidwick’s face! Guns were bang-binging all over the place!

“Get that moose! Get that moose!” Thidwick heard a voice call. “Fire again and again and shoot straight one and all! We *must* get his head for the Harvard club wall!”

Thidwick took his heels with that load on his head! With five hundred pounds on his horns, the moose fled! He could have run faster without all those pests, but a host, above all, must be nice to his guests.

Up canyon! Off cliff! Over wild rocky trail! With bullets bang-bouncing around him like hail! Up gully! Through gulch! And down slippery sluice, with his hard-hearted guests raced the soft-hearted moose!

Then finally they had him! Because of those pests, he had run out of luck, because of those guests on his horns, he was stuck!

He gasped! He felt faint! And the whole world grew fuzzy! Thidwick was finished, completely... ..or *WAS* he...?

Finished...? Not Thidwick! **DECIDEDLY NOT!** It’s true, he was in a most terrible spot, *But NOW he remembered a thing he’d forgot!* A wonderful something that happens each year to the horns of all moose and the horns of all deer. Today was the day, Thidwick happened to know...

... That OLD horns come off so that NEW ones can grow! And he called to the pests on his horns as he threw ’em, “you wanted my horns; now you’re quite welcome to ’em! Keep ’em! They’re yours! As of ME, I shall take myself to the far distant side of the lake!”

And he swam Winna-Bango and found his old bunch, and arrived just in time for a wonderful lunch at the south of the lake, where there’s moose-moss to munch.

His old horns today are where you knew they would be. His guests are still on them, all stuffed, as they should be.