

## WATERMELON MAGIC (EXCERPT)

The Moose slowed the streetcar to a crawl. He didn't know what had come over him. One minute there was Mrs. Thickwhistle ready to step on board, the next minute he was speeding away leaving her jumping up and down in the road. What had come over him? And, more importantly, what was he to do now?

Mr. Cat, of course, didn't know the Moose was missing. He slept late and answered correspondence and sipped tea at his writing desk. Mr. Mouse was not thinking about the Moose as he sampled one type of cheese after another, making adjustments here and there to the production line.

But the streetcar station boss was thinking about the Moose and he was angry. According to Mrs. Thickwhistle, the streetcar left her standing in the road with her market basket as it sped away down Mockingbird Lane. What could the Moose be thinking? And, most importantly where was his streetcar?

Far off his regular route the Moose sat slumped behind the steering wheel of the missing streetcar. He was worried but he could not force himself to turn back. So, he pulled off the road and locked the doors. Then he walked slowly to a little grocery up the road. He called his boss on the pay phone.

"Sunshine Transit," answered the receptionist. "*Rain or shine, we're on time*".

"Uh hello", said the Moose. "Listen, I just saw a Sunshine streetcar parked in the big woods near Bloomington...thought you ought to know. No, my name's not important. I'm just an average citizen doing my duty... trying to help out you know. The driver? No, I didn't see the driver but I'm sure he's "OK".

Suddenly there was another voice on the line. It was the *boss*.

"Look here Moose, I know it's you. What's going on? Get back here right now and bring our streetcar with you. Thirty minutes or you're fired. Hear that Moose? Thirty minutes or you're toast."

The Moose only sighed and hung up the phone. He looked in his pockets--just five bucks and some change. And, he only had the clothes he was wearing on his back. He went in the store, purchased a hay sandwich, some cupcakes and a soft drink. Then he went out to the porch and sat on the steps to do some serious thinking.