C. EVERARD PALMER

A Cow called Boy

Illustrated by Laszlo Acs
A cow called Boy

THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL was a beautiful one. The sun was already up in Kendal and yellowing the land. And the schoolyard itself looked fresh from a summer of rest. The lawns were green and the trees had grown new buds, and the khuskhus grass, which had been planted in rows to prevent erosion, had been untroubled for two months by children playing hide-and-seek and looked healthy again.

After such a long break from school, the children were so happy to be going back that they arrived early.

Only Josh Mahon was late. Twice he had returned home leading his pet calf who was determined to follow him to school. But apparently the calf just didn’t feel like staying home, for as Josh was nearing the school for the third time he heard a soft moo behind him. He turned around to see Boy coming up the road.

“Boy,” he said resignedly, “not again! I told you animals are not allowed in school.” Josh wondered what to do now. “If I take you home another time I’ll be double late for school.” He put his arm around Boy. “You are bad, Boy. Very bad. But I love you. You shouldn’t have come, but I understand – in a way. We’ve been together all summer and it’s going to be my first day away from you. You can’t take that now, can you?”

To better think of a way to solve the problem Josh sat down on a stump by the roadside. He couldn’t go back home now or he would be in trouble with his mother. And he couldn’t go to school either, not with Boy tagging along. Maybe he would have to play truant. But on the first day of school? That was no way to start the term!

To himself he said, “I don’t want to miss the first day of school. Everybody will be there.”