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## Here, Bossy

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# MEMORIES

"Here Bossy, here Bossy."

I couldn't see forever from halfway up the windmill, but I could see most of the pasture and locate the herd. There they were — all nine of them, and that included the calves. "Here Bossy, here Bossy."

They didn't listen to me, a twelve-year-old girl. The old bossy cows just kept on grazing, and I had to go after them; but at least I knew what direction to go. That good and tall windmill saved me many a step. Before that day I thought about climbing it, I used to traipse all over the pasture looking for the cattle. They sometimes were resting in the grove of trees, and sometimes they hid behind the plum thicket.

After jumping down from the last step, I would pick up my stick and hustle off to round up the herd. Just like the postman, come rain or shine, a hundred ten degrees or a blizzard, I had to go get those cows. I hurried on cold winter days. In the summer I sauntered, pretending that the pasture flowers were part of an Austrian meadow until I made my way behind the cattle and then a few, "Hey yas," and waving of my arms and stick and they would fall into a parade line toward the barn. I needed just the two milk cows, but where one went, the rest usually followed. I dropped into the back of the line, and as they chewed their cuds, I chewed bubble gum.

Back at the barn, my ranching chores ended until it was time to use the separator. Mother milked the cows. I wanted to, but she persisted that she didn't want a dried-up cow. So while she milked, I played with the waiting cats or crawled through the hay in the loft.

My sister used to have the cow-finding and bringing-in job, but she got married and moved to town, so the chore fell upon me. At first, it was exciting. I was part of the ranching process, then it got boring, and then I decided it was very unlady-like. Often, on the

walk after the cows, I would daydream about living in the city — no chores. No eggs to gather, no separator to turn, no hay to put in the feeders, and no yelling "Hey yas." What a life that would be, but I was stuck. I was too young to marry.

But, my fairy godmother was working on my dream, to change me from a small farm-ranch girl into a city princess. Yes, a couple years later, my daydream did come true. The farm was sold and I too moved to town. And after an education and a marriage, I moved to the big city. I was free at last. No more watching where I stepped in the pasture. No more looking for snakes before I reached into a hen's nest. . . . No summer breezes gently blowing the windmill wheel. . . . No wild flowers to pick for the supper table. No trusting milk cows with soft brown eyes and velvet noses. No wobbly baby calves to touch and love. Ahhhhh. . . . ^



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*—a piece of nostalgia from a city woman with good memories of Western Oklahoma ranching—*

## HERE, BOSSY

*— by Patricia Sherman*

ILLUSTRATION BY MARK SHERMAN