



***The Moon and Farmer McPhee* - Margaret Mahy**

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Farmer McPhee is a hardworking man who puts all his energy into caring for his farm and the animals. By evening, he's exhausted. He plods home, head down and weary. All he wants to do is eat his dinner and crawl into bed.

Outside in the moonlight, the farm animals are kicking up their heels. They're twirling and swirling under the full moon. Trouble is, they're very noisy. Farmer McPhee is in no mood to have his sleep interrupted. He storms out and shuts the animals into the barn.

But the moon peeps in the window at the grumpy farmer and catches his attention. The silvery light draws him outside. He discovers beauty in the countryside at night and feels the urge to sing and dance. He wakes up the animals and they race outside together. Mahy's energetic, rhythmic storytelling unfolds the action at a fast pace.

David Elliot's illustrations show Farmer McPhee as a stocky, serious fellow in the daytime. Yet in the evening, he looks defenceless in his striped nightshirt and crumpled hat. The expressive, good-natured animals frisk in the moonlight, eager to include the farmer. Subtle colours, golden torch light, and the luminous night sky enhance each scene.

Cut-outs and fold-out pages add interest to this quality publication. Stitched binding and a hard cover ensure it will last repeated readings.

Reviewed by children's book author, Jean Bennett.

