

## **The House at the End of the Lane**

He missed nothing. He couldn't afford to. These were tough times to be living in. Each to his own. Take what you can. Ha!... There was nothing here to take. He wondered again what was going on. He shifted himself. Tried to peer into the kitchen window. All was dark inside. Nothing moved.

Something was moving out here. A black shadow dropping noiselessly from a fence. Time to move Robin knew. Pressing himself into an overgrown laurel he continued his watch.

Waving its head slowly, greedy green eyes glancing around, the intruder crept towards the back door. It jumped onto a wheelie bin and began staring into the kitchen window. It began meowing pitifully.

Robin knew all her tricks. He'd seen her playing up to the nice old lady; seen that scheming feline lapping up the milk the nice old lady brought out for her. Yes, nice old lady moving slowly, painfully, stooping to stroke her. He had watched the vile black shadow from down the lane wrapping itself around her old slippered feet, purring with delight. Such a nasty piece of work.

It was warm and damp, the garden full of fruit going soft on the ground, covered in flies and slugs gorging themselves and wriggling worms. It was then that the nasty thing happened.

Robin could see it clearly, see her holding the bowl of milk, fat cat twining round her legs, see nice old lady falling, see the milk spilling; hear the bowl smash, and a body crumpling against the door frame. See fat cat disappearing down the lane, heading home.

Robin hung about keeping an eye on things. Nice old lady looking strange, making weird moaning noises, not moving when he lightly tapped her hand. Feeling peckish he went flitting off in search of

food. He found a few bits to keep him going. Checking again on nice old lady he found she hadn't moved.

Stopping by the house some time later there was such a commotion going on Robin kept himself hidden. So many people buzzing about, strange lights flashing. He checked the backdoor. Nice old lady wasn't there. Suddenly the door was slammed shut from inside. Robin jumped. This was scary. "Time to move on," flashed through his head. "I'll miss her. She was so kind to me, a real friend; saw me through the bad times; never let me starve."

He had gone, hiding himself in the woods, never too far from here. This was his place. Men came and put up a wooden sign by the front door. People came down the lane, looked around the house, shook heads and left. It was colder now; first frost. Robin sat on the sign regularly, watching, and waiting.

Two people get out of a car, open the gate; glance around.  
" *Robin's Nook*. Isn't it sweet? Maybe this could be the one!"

"Mm. Bet it needs lots doing to it."

Robin shuffles a little on the For Sale sign, fluffs out his feathers, and turns to look at them, tips his head to one side. His cute look. He knows what he's doing.

"Look. Look! A real robin lives here. So sweet?"

"I'd say he looks smart..... but let's take a look inside?"

"Crumbs!" Robin thinks.