

Apoluna: "Step Four: Tame a Mythical Beast." Where would I find one, you stupid book!? Give me a clue, at least!

A plaintive YODEL pierces the air along with a thunderous sound, like a thousand timpani being struck, that shakes the stage. A COWBOY enters riding a horse.

Nope. Scratch that. While it's a man on a mule, it's all of a piece. His back is loaded up with prospecting equipment, flasks and a sloshy spittoon.

C.C.: Howdy, Little Miss! Uh, you can help me out, I hope. Have you seen a stampedin' herd of jackalope?

APALUNA: Oh, wow! I know what you are...I know this; I do! It's like a Minotaur or a Benatar or...

C.C. A Mule-taur, thank you. I hope yer' not mistakin' or makin' judgements on me. I call myself just Cowboy, preferably.

APALUNA: You're a Myth!

C.C.: And you would be too, if I'd had a lisp when I's talkin' to you. Get it...Little Myth? Anyhoo: back to the Jacklopes. My nose tells me they got startled by a skunk and headed this way, or so I thunk.

APALUNA: I didn't see anything — but I felt the ground shake. I thought we were having a small earthquake.

C.C.: No, them's the Jackalope:

(Yodel Intro)

IF THE GROUND'S A RUMBLIN' UNDER YA ON THE PLAIN
AND YOU HEAR THE SOUND OF THUNDER WITHOUT ANY RAIN
DON'T LOOK FOR CATTLE IN THE SKY, SON
KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE HORIZON

TO FIND THE FABLED HERDS OF JACKALOPE A'PLAYIN'
WHEN THE COYOTES TAKE UP YIPPIN' IN THE NIGHT

IF THE FULL MOON'S UP-A SHININ' OH SO BRIGHT
GO WHERE YOU HEAR THE WILD PUPS WAIL
HOPE TO SEE A FLASH OF HARE'S TAIL
TO GET THE FABLED GIANT JACKALOPES IN SIGHT
OH, THERE'S NO GREATER JOY
FOR A MULE-TAUR COWBOY
THAN RIDIN' ON THE OPEN RANGE
WITH HERDS OF LEAPIN' LEPUS
MAY THE GREAT GOD PAN KEEP US
WHERE THE SKY AND THE DESERT DON'T CHANGE
A YOUNG HUNTER THERE WAS NAMED ROY BALL
WHO FIRST HEARD THE JACKALOPE'S CALL
WITH A DEEP HUM AND A'RUMBLIN'
FROM THE SAGEBRUSH CAME STUMBLIN'
A HORNED HARE THAT STOOD 'LEAST 10 FOOT TALL
NOW ONCE A JACKALOPE'S BEEN SEEN THEN IT'S BOUND
TO BE THE CRITTER THAT CARRIES YOU 'ROUND
NOTHIN'S LIKE IT, THAT'S CLEAR
NOT A THING COMES PURT NEAR
TO RIDIN' IN THE JACKALOPE'S PLAYGROUND
OH, THERE'S NO GREATER JOY
FOR A MULE-TAUR COWBOY
THAN RIDIN' ON THE OPEN RANGE
WHERE THE JACKS AND THEIR JILLS
GO BOUNDIN' UP THEM HILLS
AND THE SKY AND THE DESERT DON'T CHANGE
(Yodel Solo)
OH, THERE'S NO GREATER JOY
FOR A MULE-TAUR COWBOY
THAN RIDIN' ON THE OPEN RANGE
WITH HERDS OF LEAPIN' LEPUS
MAY THE GREAT GOD PAN KEEP US
WHERE THE JACKALOPES BINKY ALL DAY-HEE!

APOLUNA: I missed them, then. I'm sorry I did.

C.C. They're quicker than greased lightnin', kid. I better git' on...

APOLUNA: Wait! My father's been gone and I found out today that he's up in the Moon, which is so far away, and — I see you're a cowboy but you're mythical, too — so I was hoping you could help me get up there — Would you?

C.C.: Eeeeh, well, I got a bad step and my haunches are sore. I might have the rickets. I can't mule-jump no more. I think it's best I trot along...

Apoluna: What about a Jackalope? You mentioned in your song...
"Once a jackalope's seen, then it is bound to be the creature that carries you around..."

C.C.: Hear that sound? A rumblin', isn't it? Yup, I better mosey...

APOLUNA: Could a Jackalope get me to the Moon? To see my father?

C.C. Could a — well, of course a jackalope could get you to the Moon. There's not a creature alive that has got somethin' on 'em. They're faster than cheetahs and tougher than pachyderms. They can leap hi'er than the stratosphere; burrow deeper than earthworms. And their antlers — well, let's jes' say: if they got into a tussle, Bunyan and Big Blue combined would sorely lack muscle. They can form river valleys by thumping their back paws; take down a redwood just trimmin' their dew claws. Little Miss, if it's to the Moon you need to git, then ridin' a Jackalope's your very best bet.

APOLUNA: Then take me to them, would you please?

C.C.: I would, you know, but I got these crooked knees...

APOLUNA: Then how do I find them?

C.C.: I...I can't tell ya'. (Sighs.) Zeus knows I've tried but they always outpace me and find someplace to hide. It's my fervent wish one day to provide m'self a respite from being my own ride but if I said I ever sawn 'em, then I must have lied.

APOLUNA: You didn't lie. I just thought — there might be hope.

C.C.: Here's some. Take my rope. It's actually called a lariat, and it's something you're gonna need to catch any rabbit runs faster than Secretariat. Now — I don't know what you're going through, of course, but — my dad was half-donkey and my mom was half-horse and then there was — well, they had a messy divorce and... I miss my Dad too, I guess is what I'm sayin' to you. So I hope this helps.

APOLUNA: Thank you. Will you come with me to find one?

C.C.: Not if you want to bind one to you; that's something you'll have to do on yer own. Besides, I've got foot rot and shin splints and what not. So — off with y'now — but a'fore you go, I just wanted you to know: A Jackalope sightin' I cain't guarantee; but I swear you'll meet no other Mule-taur than me.

Now turn the page.