

Great Scott!

By Scott Goodman



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The Case of the Bouncing Bobbin

It was a dark and stormy night. Suddenly, I was startled by a frightening noise followed by eerie silence. Looking in the direction that the silence emanated from, I deduced that my embroidery machine ceased to embroider.

The little frowny face on the embroidery machine's error screen mirrored my own look of horror. I reached for the hand wheel and attempted to change fate. The machine met my attempt with equal force...stalemate. Trying to stay one step ahead of "Christine", I started removing my hooped project. The project was immovable and frozen in time. A quick glance underneath confirmed my suspicion. Bird's nest. Seemingly meters of thread. My project became one with my machine. This is where the tale becomes PG-13 for language and violence.

Prepping for surgery, I reached for my bird's nest tool. The hook tool felt like an old friend as I snagged the offending knot of thread. With the scalpel in other hand, I deftly excised the connecting pieces with the surgical precision of a Beverly Hills cosmetic surgeon.

After cleaning the field of all debris and carefully examining each component for damage, I gently reassembled the precious pieces with deliberate care. How? Why?

Following a path of experienced logic, I checked the upper threading path for any missteps. All seemed fine. The bobbin seemed to be loosely wound with thread that matched the upper thread color. I removed the foreign thread and noticed only a small amount of bobbin fill thread remaining. The mystery at hand? Why did the upper thread wrap around my bobbin.

The plot thickens. I checked the hook timing and clearances; all were on the money. The bobbin case was in perfect condition; no nicks, punctures or scratches. I inspected the threading path looking for any nicks, cuts or abrasions that could snag or divert the upper thread. All looked pristine. I rewound the bobbin and continued with my project. My embroidery continued, almost without a glitch, when the frightening noise followed by eerie silence struck again. This time, I called in my markers and contacted my extended Network of Intelligent Technicians With Insight and Tact or NITWIT. After much dialog, consensus was reached using SCIENCE. Removing my haunted machine from the candle-lit inverted pentangle on the ground, I inspected the bobbin. Per the prevailing theory, I observed minor bumps, nicks and abrasions on its perimeter. I replaced the bobbin with a freshie, loaded with high quality bobbin fill thread, and behold! The evil spirits and demons were exorcised from my embroidery machine. The culprit? The almost-empty bobbin is lighter in weight than when full. The seemingly microscopic bumps and nicks on the almost-empty bobbin's edge caused it to jump and dance about while rotating. With Blue Angels-like precision the bobbin popped up periodically, catching the pirouetting, stitch-in-formation, loop. Once the bobbin becomes lassoed, every rotation causes another loop until...eerie silence.

With apologies for some really bad writing, sometimes our greatest embroidery problems can be confounding for your local factory-authorized technician. While your technician generally assumes that you are not clinically insane (unless you bring in documentation), his or her challenge will be duplicating your symptom(s). There are many challenging areas that can cause you grief. In no particular order: thread, threading, stabilizer, bobbin, needle plate, bobbin case, poor design digitizing, poor sizing, design density problems. Invariably, something minor can cause disastrous results.

Our service center is located in the culturally-diverse, Southern California area. We have a special room where customers can set up their embroidery machine, with the intent of duplicating their demons in arms' reach of a sympathetic technician. We have seen our clients pray, chant, dance, sing, curse and sprinkle Evian water about the room (we don't like to judge).

When you have an issue that confounds your local technician, bring in all that you can. Try to keep your machine in the same state (threaded, hooped, etc.) as when the problem occurred. Your technician is part of a greater community that will listen, embrace and offer viable solutions.

Special thanks to my favorite technician, Charles Sweeten from Brother International.

Who is your favorite technician and why? Let me know, I'll give him/her a big pat-on-the-back. Send me an email: GreatScott@kneedle.com or Facebook me: [Facebook.com/GreatScottSews](https://www.facebook.com/GreatScottSews)

