

Billy Whiskers Jr.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Night Grows Tired of the Farm.

Westward Ho!

The Collision.

Billy Jr. Gets a Taste of the West.

Billy Jr. as Leader of the Sheep.

A Fight With Wolves.

Billy Jr. Learns Something about Cowboys and Indians.

Billy Jr. and the Firemen.

Billy, the Christmas Tree, and the Irishwoman.

Billy Jr. Has Some New Experiences.

Billy and Stubby.

Small Adventures.

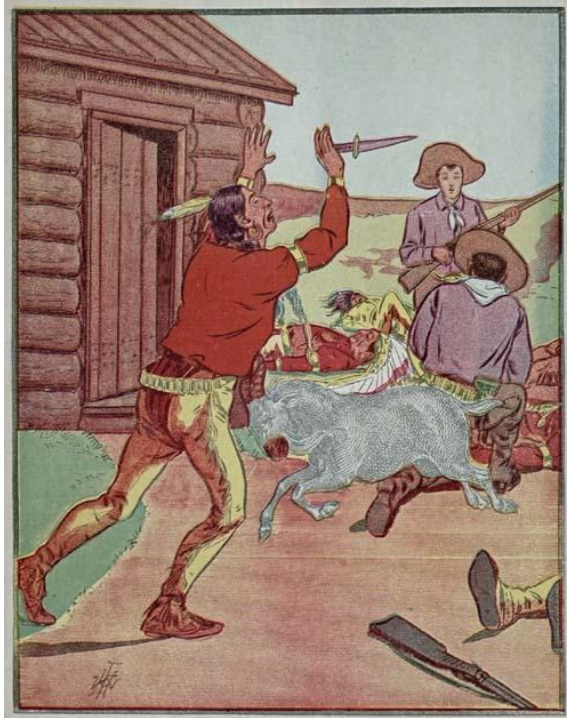
The Midnight Fire.

The Bull-Fight.

The Escape.

The Volcano.

An Unexpected Trip.



HE RUSHED UPON THE TREACHEROUS INDIAN.

THIS BOOK
IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED
TO
MY LITTLE GODSON,
JACK HANSON MICHENER.

*Night Grows Tired
of the Farm.*

Night Grows Tired of the Farm.

NIGHT had not been home more than three weeks when he commenced to get restless and tired of the quiet life on the farm. It was such a change from the adventurous, exciting life he had been leading that he did not know what to do with himself. This going to bed with the chickens and getting up with the sun, with nothing to do all day long but graze in the pasture or sleep in the shade, did not suit him; so he whispered to Day one day:

“This life is driving me mad. I am going away the first chance I get. I have it all planned. Come over here by the stream and I will tell you all about it.”

“Oh, Night, don’t go away and leave us! It will be so lonely without you. Why! I think it is perfectly lovely here; it is so clean and quiet, and then we know we are not going to be hurt or starved one day and petted and stuffed the next, like we were when traveling.”

“I know, dear, but you are a girl and like the quiet, while I am a boy and like adventures. Why! I like to get into scrapes just for the fun of getting out of them. Besides, there is another reason why you like it here. You need not think I have not noticed how that handsome goat with the long hair and curved horns almost as long as my own, makes sheep’s eyes at you, for I have. And so, Miss Day, you are in love. I see you are blushing, for the inside of your ear is as red as blood, and that is a sure sign a goat is in love. Well, how do you like it? It is nicer than you thought when you took me away from Spotty, isn’t it?”

“Oh, Night! do forgive me. I never would have done it if I had thought you felt as I do now. But I did not know then; and I wanted you all to myself. I know I was selfish and jealous, but do forgive me, won’t you?”

“Yes, dear little sister, I will forgive you because I did not care so very much for Spotty. If I had, you could not have kept me from her. I would have found my way back to Madeira, if I had spent the rest of my life looking for it. But you see, don’t you? that now you will be happy and contented; father and mother don’t need me now that they have you, so I am going out to see some more of the world and try to find another goat as nice as you are to marry. If I do, I will bring her back here and we will always live happily forever afterward, as they say in the story books.”

“But when and where are you going, Night? Do tell me. And you will surely wait until I am married, won’t you?”

“I am going West. I have heard all about the wonderful prairies, plains, and mountains out there, where there are hundreds of thousands of sheep, and how each flock has a large goat for a leader. Now it is my ambition to be one of those leaders.”

“How in the world will you get there? It is thousands upon thousands of miles from here, and you can’t walk all the way.”

“No, my dear, I know I can’t walk it, but I can walk part of the way and steal rides occasionally, like the tramps do. I will get there somehow, for I never failed to do anything which I made up my mind to do if I stuck to it long enough. I can just see those immense mountains lying so still and solemn, cut by innumerable bridle paths and cañons, where the sheep seek shelter from the driving storms, protected from the wolves that sneak down to

devour them by their big billy-goat leader. He gives the signal of danger and with the shepherd drives off the hungry wolves.”

“For mercy sakes! don’t talk of going where there are wolves, for they will tear you to pieces and I shan’t close my eyes until you get back, I shall be so worried,” said Day.

“Don’t fear for me, sister mine. No old wolf will get the better of me while I have two such long, sharp horns on my head as I now have. Why, a wolf is nothing more than a wild dog, and you know how I treat ugly, cross dogs.”

“I don’t believe father will let you go,” said Day as a last resort to discourage his going.

“Oh, yes, he will. He was young once and liked adventures as well as I do now; and mother won’t mind after a few days, because she has you.”

“Won’t mind. Well, I guess she will. Forty me’s can’t take the place of you in *her* mind; she is so proud of your strength and beauty. You needn’t get conceited, but you know you are very handsome with your silky black coat and long beard, almost as long as papa’s. Every young nanny in the pasture has been making eyes at you since you came back. Why can’t you fall in love with my chum, Belle? I am sure she is pretty enough for any goat to fall in love with. And then you could live here and not go away and leave us all again. I feel it in my bones if you go you will never come back again. Do try to live here, Night, won’t you?”

“I would do anything for you, Day, that I could, but I couldn’t and wouldn’t fall in love with that long-nosed, sheepish-looking Belle with washed-out blue eyes, even to please you.”

“Oh, Night, she hasn’t washed-out eyes and she is considered a beauty.”

“Well, I don’t admire your taste. Whoever wants her can have her, for all of me. Here comes mother and we must stop talking, for I don’t want her to know I am going away until my plans are complete.”

Night had grown so much like Billy since he had been away that he was no longer called Night but “Billy Whiskers Jr.”

Billy Jr. had taken to spending all his time by the fence that ran along the roadside, and he was getting thin from watching so much and eating so little. When his mother noticed this, she said:

“My dear son, why do you spend so much of your time down by the road where the grass is dusty and scarce instead of here by the stream where it is clean and fresh?”

“Oh, I don’t mind the dust,” he answered. “I stay there so that I can talk to the horses, cows, and sheep that pass by.”

“But you are getting thin, and your coat is dirty and shabby from want of care. And you act as if there was something on your mind. Can’t you tell your mother what it is that is worrying you?”

At this Billy Jr. broke down and told her all his plans; how he was longing to get away and go West; but he could find no one who could tell him how to get there. All the animals that passed along had been born and raised in the East and knew no more of the West than he did. Nannie answered:

“You are just like your father was at your age. I have been afraid for a long while that you were dissatisfied here; and though it will

nearly break my heart to have you go, still I will not forbid your doing so.”



So Billy Jr. kept up his watch by the fence and at last was rewarded by hearing this news: A loose colt from one of the neighbors told him that a gentleman from away out West was visiting at their place and that he had brought his horse with him. This horse told them all about the big West every evening when they were all shut in their stalls; and he, for his part, was crazy to go.

“That is just what I am crazy to hear about for I want to go there myself. Can’t you kick the stable door down to-night so I can get in and hear what he says?” said Billy Jr.

“Certainly I can, for my stall is the outside one, and I will do it when I hear you bah outside.”

“Thank you very much,” said Billy Jr. “I will be there as soon as the hired man has left the barn, so he won’t see me and drive me back.”

And for the first time in many days Billy Jr. ate a good dinner and rolled and rolled in the clean sand to shine up his much neglected coat, which, when he had finished, shone again like satin. As evening drew on he was all impatience for it to get pitchy dark and for every one to go to bed, so he could be off. At last he thought it was dark enough for him to try it, especially as his coat was so black it was not easily detected.

He jumped the fence where he and Day had jumped it when they had returned from their travels and, turning down the road, he was soon on his way to the neighbor’s to hear what the horse had to say about the West.

Westward Ho!

Westward Ho!

BILLY JR. soon found himself at the neighbor's, bleating for the colt to kick down the door. This was done with two kicks and Billy Jr. walked in and was introduced to the horse from the West.

“I am glad to make your acquaintance,” said the horse. “I hear you are thinking of going West and would like to know something about it and how to get there. I also heard that you thought of walking and trusting to stealing rides on the cars if you could not get there in any other way. Now I hate to discourage you but, strong and brave as you are, you could not do it. You might get as far as the Great Plains, but these you could never cross. You would die of hunger and thirst if not with lonesomeness long before you had got a quarter of the way. Imagine yourself on a vast prairie without a hill or a tree in sight; the ground as level as if rolled out with a rolling-pin and covered with sage brush and short buffalo grass, coarse as straw and dry as chips; not a living thing in sight but a jack-rabbit or two and a buzzard flying overhead waiting for your dead body. This buzzard has been following you for he knows from experience that it won't be many days before you are stark and cold in death, either from hunger or thirst. Or, if the worst should come to the worst, you might be torn to pieces by a pack of prairie wolves as hungry as yourself.

“Sometimes cattle stray from the flock and try to cross the plains alone and get as far as Dead Lake—a lake of alkali water that lies in the desert. This water is as clear as crystal and looks so tempting to the poor thirsty cattle that they often drink it, though all around its margin are the bleached bones of other cattle that have drunk of

its poisoned waters and died. One can't blame them for drinking, for it looks so cool and refreshing to them as it lies there clear and tempting, rippled by the breezes that blow over it. Oh, no! Mr. Billy, better wait and content yourself here or get shipped through in a car as I was."

All this gave Billy Jr. some things to think about and he went home feeling blue and depressed and almost ready to give up his cherished plans. But next morning he awoke with the same burning desire to go, and he made up his mind that faint heart never got anywhere nor did anything, and he decided he would start anyway and follow the sun in its direct course west day after day and see where it would bring him. If it did not lead him where he wanted to go, it would at least give him adventures, hardships, and pleasures, and they in themselves were worth going after.

About 11 o'clock in the morning, while he was telling Day that his mind was made up to start the next day at sunrise, he looked up and saw the horse from the West turn into their lane with a fine-looking gentleman on his back. He ran over to the fence to see if he could not get a word or two with the horse. When pretty near to him, the gentleman stopped his horse and Billy Jr. heard him say:



“My soul! but that is a fine-looking goat. I would give a hundred dollars to have him West to lead my flocks.”

“Bah, bah,” bleated Billy Jr., which meant, “You can have me for ten cents.” As the gentleman rode on, Billy Jr. said to himself, “Oh, why can’t people understand us as we can them? for then I could plead with him to take me West!” And he walked off and butted an inoffensive goat in his anger and tried to pick a quarrel with him. But the goat knew Billy Jr.’s reputation too well and refused to fight.

Right after dinner Billy Jr. saw Mr. Windlass and the gentleman who had ridden into the lane that morning coming into the pasture. He did not go to meet them because he felt cross and disagreeable, so he stood staring at them, chewing grass like an old man chews tobacco. However, they came straight up to where he stood, and he heard Mr. Windlass tell the gentleman how he and the white goat over there (pointing to Day) had come to him one morning and he

had never been able to learn to whom they belonged or where they came from, though he had advertised in all the papers.

“I had a black and a white kid a couple of years ago, but it is not likely they could be the same ones grown up and come back.”

“I don’t know,” answered the gentleman, “goats are queer creatures. Mr. Windlass, what will you take for him? I have been looking for a big jet-black billy-goat to lead my flocks for a long time. The wolves are getting pretty bad out West on the range and a goat makes a good leader. I want a black one, as his color would distinguish him from the white sheep immediately. Besides, your goat has other points in his favor; he is strong, large, a good fighter you say, and has long, sharp-pointed horns. Name your price and I will take him and have him shipped West in the same car with my horse when I go. I will charter a car and put feed in one end of it and have the other partitioned off into two stalls into which I will put the goat and horse.”

Billy Jr. failed to hear what Mr. Windlass asked for him, but he heard the gentleman say:

“It is a bargain and I will send my man for him to-night, for I expect to leave very early in the morning for Boston to catch the westbound train.”

“Hurrah! Hurrah! Papa Billy and Mamma Nanny, come here and hear what glorious news I have for you. I am going West tomorrow!”

Nanny nearly fainted when she heard the news, it was so sudden, and even staunch old Billy Whiskers shed a tear when he thought of his gallant young son leaving them, perhaps forever. While for

Day, she just rolled over on the ground and cried, but was soon comforted by a handsome young goat only a few months older than herself.

True to his word, Mr. Wilder, the Western gentleman, sent his man for Billy Jr. just before dark; and when the goats saw him come through the gate preparatory to leading Billy Jr. off, they all gathered round to say a last farewell, and old Billy, Nanny, and Day all followed him to the gate and watched him with streaming eyes through the palings until he was out of sight. The man led Billy Jr. to the depot, and there he was put into a freight-car with the Westerner's pet horse, Star.

"Hello, Mr. Billy Jr.! Glad I am to have you as a companion. You did not expect to have such good luck as this when last I saw you. You will find this beats walking all to pieces."

"It certainly does," answered Billy Jr. "This piece of luck is beyond my greatest expectations."

Just then the train gave a jerk forward and stopped suddenly, which sent Billy Jr. off his feet, it was so unexpected, and bumped Star's nose against the end of the car.

"Well, I never!" said Billy Jr. "This is worse than the rocking of a vessel for knocking one around."

"Yes, and the worst of it is you can never tell when it is coming. If one only could, he might brace himself for it and not get hurt," said Star. "I hear you have traveled a good deal by water and that you were once shipwrecked," said he. "Won't you tell me something of your adventures?"

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

