

# **BILLY WHISKERS' TRAVELS**

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## CHAPTER I

### BILLY RUNS AWAY FROM HOME



he other kids of the big flock on the pretty Swiss farm thought that they were having a very nice time, but Billy did not like it very well. He could run faster, jump higher and butt harder than any of the other kids of his age, and he wanted more room. Nearly every day he stopped for a while beside the high fence and looked out through it at the green slopes that ran up to the mountains. The leaves looked so much fresher and more tender there, and the sun so much brighter; besides, there were rocky places—he could see them—which would make such fine playgrounds and jumping places. His wise old mother shook her head when he told her about these things.

"You are too little yet, Billy," she always said. "You are not yet strong enough to be out in the world alone, even if you could get away from here."

"Just wait till I get big," Billy would say, shaking his head, and then he would scamper away to slyly nip the whiskers of some sober old goat, or to romp or play fight with one of the other youngsters.

He was the most mischievous kid in the flock, and because of that his mother named him Billy Mischief. Farmer Klausen, who owned him, was nearly as proud of him as Billy's own mother could be.

"That's the smartest and strongest young goat I've got," he used to brag to his neighbor, fat Hans Zug, but for all that he kept a sharp eye on Billy and would not allow him to break away from the flock and escape, as he sometimes tried to do when they were being driven across the road from one pasture to another.

One day, when Billy was almost a full-grown goat, his chance came at last. Farmer Klausen was standing in the middle of the road to see that none got away, while his boys were driving the flock over to the lower meadows. Billy, who came up with the others, looking as innocent as a goat can look, suddenly wheeled, and with a hard jump landed his broad head and horns square in the stomach of his master. Farmer Klausen gave a yell, threw up both his hands and went heels over head into the dust, while Billy, scampering over him, ran as hard as he could for the hills.

Coming down the road toward him was fat Hans Zug with a yoke across his shoulders from which hung two great pails of goat's milk which he was taking down to the chocolate factory in the valley. Slow-witted Hans, when he saw neighbor Klausen's goat getting away, never thought of setting down his pails, but spread out his arms and stood square in the middle of the road, waving his hands and shouting: "Shoo! Shoo!" It was a big mistake to think that he could scare this scamp goat by saying "Shoo!" or by

keeping his fat body in the road, for Billy came straight on with his head down, and just as Hans thought that maybe he had better step to one side, Billy gave a mighty leap and doubled Hans up just like he had Farmer Klausen.

"A thousand lightnings yet again!" yelled Hans as he went over. The two pails came down with a thud and a swish, and goat's milk ran all over the road and down the gulleys at the side. Hans Zug's dog, which had been sniffing at the roadside to see if he could find the trail of a rabbit, now jumped out and came at Billy. With one jerk of his strong little neck the runaway goat picked the dog up on his horns and tossed him clear over his head, where he landed plump on top of fat Hans and knocked the breath out of him for a second time, just as Hans was getting up. Then Billy, feeling fine from this nice bit of exercise, kicked up his heels and galloped on.



*The two pails came down with a thud and a swish*

Just as he reached the woods he turned around and looked back. Farmer Klausen was on his feet again but had no time

to chase Billy, for he was cracking his long whip and running from one side of the road to the other to keep the rest of the goats from breaking away. Billy could hear his loud voice from where he stood. Hans had also rolled to his feet and was holding his pudgy hands across his stomach, where he had been hit, while he looked dumbly at the rich, yellow milk which was in puddles everywhere. Thick-headed Hans was just making up his mind that the milk had really been spilled when another goat dashed by him, as fast as its feet could patter. As it drew nearer Billy saw with joy that it was his mother, and he waited for her. When she came close Billy called to her:

"Hurry up! We are never going back any more."

He kicked up his heels again in pure delight and was about to plunge into the woods when his mother called on him to wait, and he did so, though he did not like to do it, for the last of the flock was now safely in the other pasture, the gate was being closed on them and Billy knew that in a moment more Farmer Klausen and his boys and neighbor Hans would be coming after them.

When Billy's mother came up even with him she was panting so hard that she could not speak, but she did not stop. She kept right on running, and he followed, curious to see what she meant to do. As soon as they were out of sight of the men, she turned from the road into the woods, and by-and-by reached a little hollow which was all overgrown with bushes. Into this she raced, and Billy, now seeing what she was up to, scampered lightly along behind, thinking it to be great fun. The hollow grew deeper and wider and

shadier as they went on, and at last she turned and scrambled up the dim, pebbly bank, where she plunged into a dry little cave. Here she lay down upon the ground to get her breath, while Billy climbed in beside her and listened. Soon he could hear the heavy pat, pat, of the feet of Farmer Klausen and his boys on the road, which was now high above them.

"They'll never find us here," he said.

"Don't 'baah' so loud or they will hear us," panted his mother. "My! I'm getting too fat to run any more, but if you were bound to go out in the world, I was bound to come with you. You're not old enough even yet to be trusted alone. But you are right about one thing; unless they catch us, we're never going back."

Suddenly they both became very still. The noise of the footsteps had died away, but there was a slow rustling of the leaves in the hollow. Something was coming toward them!

Nearer and nearer to where Billy and his mother lay hidden came the noise, and soon they saw a dim, dark-gray shape among the underbrush turn straight up toward them. It was a large wild boar, one of the fiercest animals that rove the forests of Europe. It had a great, shaggy head and cruel-looking curved tusks nearly a foot long. The two goats were in one of his hiding-places, and they knew that he would not stop to say "Beg your pardon" when he came up; whatever he had to say would be said with those sharp

tusks. The space was too narrow for them to run out past him. Billy's mother was scared, but not Billy.

"The only thing for us to do is to fight," said he, and, jumping to his feet, he stood at the mouth of the little cave and gave a loud "baah!" which was to warn the boar that it had better go about its business.

The boar stopped and looked up at Billy with little wicked eyes, then he gave a loud snort, and, lowering his head, started to run straight up the hill toward them. Billy waited until the boar was close upon him, then he gave a sudden jump and landed square upon the fierce animal's back. The beast squealed and whirled around to rip Billy with his tusks, but before he could do so Billy himself had whirled and had hooked the big animal in the side. There was another squeal and Billy jumped out of the way. The animal turned and dashed after him, but in turning, his side was for an instant toward the mouth of the cave. It was just that instant for which Billy's mother was watching, and with all her might she jumped, butting him in the side with such force that he went rolling over and over, squealing and grunting, into the hollow. Billy was for jumping down after him but his mother knew better than that. She knew that it would be only an accident if they could whip this wicked animal, as the boar was so much the stronger, and that it was better to run than fight.

"Come quickly!" she cried, springing up the hill.



Billy stood for a moment, hardly knowing whether to follow her or not, but just then the boar scrambled to his feet and started after them, snorting and with fire-red eyes.

"Billy! Billy!" screamed his mother. "Do as I tell you!"

Even then, Billy, who never had known what it was to be afraid, wanted to stay and fight it out, but the sight of his mother scampering up the hill decided him. He was more afraid that he might lose her than he was that he could not whip the boar, so he took after her. The boar was also a good runner, but he was not nearly so nimble a climber as the goats and they soon out-distanced him, gaining the road, where they ran on as fast as they could go.

The road soon came to a narrow place where the trees stopped and the rocks rose straight up on either side. They were half way through this narrow stretch when Billy's mother stopped.

"Goodness!" she exclaimed. "I forgot about Farmer Klausen and his boys. They will be coming back past this way pretty soon, and if they meet us in here there will be trouble. We can't turn back on account of the boar and they will surely catch us."

"Well, then," said Billy, once more showing his bravery, "if we can't go back on account of the boar, we might just as well go on ahead and meet whatever comes, as to stand here wasting time. Maybe if we hurry we can get out before they get to us."

"I'm proud of you, Billy," said his mother.

They started to run on again, but had no more than done so when, sure enough, they saw a man coming toward them. It was fat Hans Zug, and the minute they saw who it was Billy laughed.

"Just watch me roll him over," he said, and started, as hard as he could go, toward the big round farmer.

When Hans saw Billy coming toward him this time he did not wave his arms and cry, "Shoo!" In place of that he put his hands on his stomach and turned around to run away from this little, white cannon-ball of a goat. It was comical to see the fat fellow waddling along, holding his hands in front of him, but he was making such slow progress that Billy felt sorry for him and thought that he ought to help him a little. It only took a few jumps to catch up with Hans and then—biff!—he struck him from behind so hard that Hans almost bounced when he hit the ground.

"A thousand lightnings, yet again!" yelled poor Hans.

He was just grunting his way to his hands and feet again when Billy's mother came along behind and—whack!—she gave him another tumble. This time he did not stop to look in either direction, but rolled over to the side of the road and, getting to his feet, tried to claw his way up the steep rocks, feeling almost sure that a whole regiment of goats of all colors and sizes was after him.

"Ten thousand, a hundred thousand lightnings!" wailed Hans. Billy, nearly laughing himself sick, waited for his mother, and when she came up they both pranced on. They had nearly reached the end of the narrow pass when they

saw coming toward them Farmer Klausen and his two boys. The boys were running on ahead, quite a little distance in front of their father, and Billy said quickly:

"You take Chris and I will take Jacob!"

So when they came up to the boys they just dived between their legs. Billy upset Jacob easily enough, but Chris was lighter, and when the fatter goat tried to escape between his legs he simply fell over on top of her. Without stopping to think what he was doing, he grabbed his arms about her middle and hung tight, while she raced on for dear life. By this time they were up to the farmer. Billy easily dodged him, but it was not so easy for his mother. With Chris hanging on her back, Farmer Klausen was able to grab her by the horns and hold her tight.



*He grabbed his arms about her middle and hung tight.*

"Billy, Billy! Help!" squealed his mother, and Billy whirled around to come back at once. He flew through the air as if he had been shot out of a gun, and when he landed against the stooping Farmer Klausen, that surprised man turned a

somersault clear over Chris and the old goat, then Billy's mother easily shook Chris loose and away they went again.

As soon as they got through the narrow pass they turned once more into the woods, which here sloped upward. They had now passed the last of the farms, and beyond them lay nothing but wooded hills and the mountains. Up and up they scrambled until at last, near nightfall, they came to a little, grass-grown tableland, watered by a tiny stream that tumbled down from the mountains, and here, after taking a long drink, they rested. After a while they made a good meal from the tender young grass that grew at the side of the stream, and lay down again. Soon they were fast asleep, side by side.

It was nearly midnight and the moon was shining brightly overhead, when they were both awakened by a terrific scream, and at the same moment a soft, heavy body landed upon Billy's back! Sharp claws struck his hide and sharp teeth sank into the back of his neck!



"GRAB HIM, CASPER! HOLD HIM!"

*"GRAB HIM, CASPAR! HOLD HIM!"*

## CHAPTER II

### HE LOSES HIS MOTHER



It was a mountain lynx that had sprung upon Billy from the rocks above. This lynx often came down to the highest of the goat farms, and had many times annoyed fat Hans Zug and Farmer Klausen by stealing nice, fat young kids for his supper. This time, however, he had met his match, for Billy's mother no sooner saw the animal light upon her offspring than she scrambled to her feet, and, with a short, quick jump, plunged her sharp horns into his side. The lynx screamed, and loosing his grip on Billy, turned to fight with the mother goat. The moment his weight was lifted, Billy, quick as a flash, ripped at the underside of the beast with his sharp horns. That made the animal snarl and loosen his hold upon Billy's mother, and between them they soon, in this way, gave the lynx more than he had bargained for, so that presently he fled howling up the steep rocks with the two goats chasing him as far as they thought it safe. Then they came back to their grassy spot, and bathed their hurt places in the cool, running water.

"Now, Billy, you see what the world is like," said his mother. "Don't you wish that we were safely back in Farmer Klausen's pasture?"

Billy dipped his scratched hind leg in the water and held it there while he shook his head.

"No," he said, "this is better. Only I'm glad that I didn't get a chance to run away until I was so big and strong."

His mother sighed, but looked at him proudly.

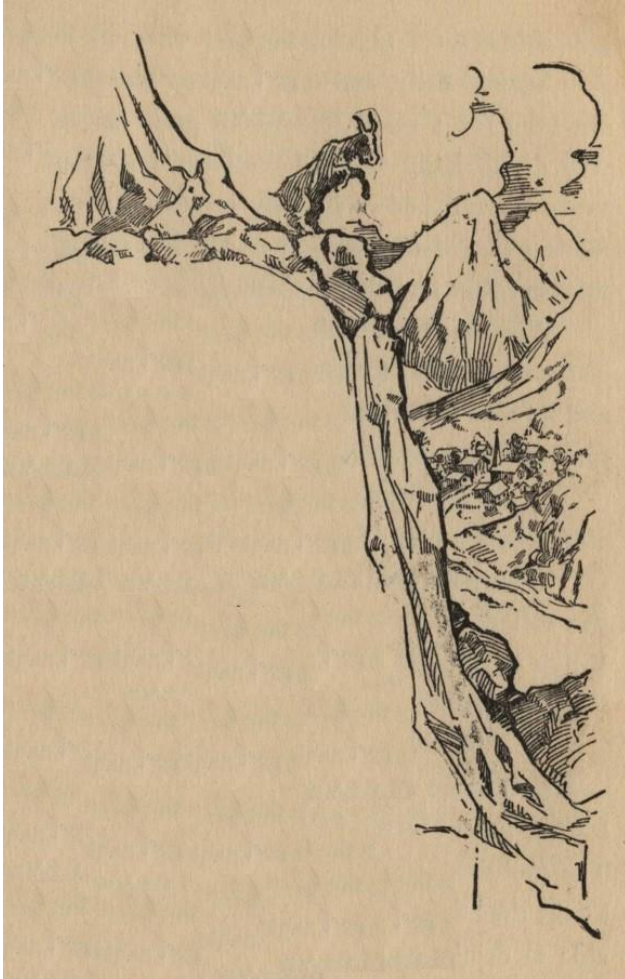
"You are a brave young goat," she said, "and it would be a shame to keep you shut up in a pen."

In the morning they were a little stiff from their hurts, but Billy was still eager to travel and see the world, so they went on into the mountains. About noon they followed a little ravine down to a plateau where there was a whole herd of chamois. These graceful animals are about the size of a goat, but they are not so heavily built and are much swifter. At first the chamois did not want to let the goats join them, but old Fleetfoot, the leader of the herd, said that they might stay if they were not quarrelsome, but that they would have to look out for themselves if hunters came that way.

This little plateau was a beautiful place, all carpeted with grass and backed up by towering rocks. At one end was a cliff looking out over a valley, at the further end of which was a little village. Billy, in his eagerness to see the world, ran at once to the edge of the cliff.

"You reckless Billy!" cried his mother, running after him. "Don't go so close to that cliff or you will surely fall over and break your neck!"

"I'm not afraid," boasted Billy, and actually stood on his hind legs at the very edge.



*Stood on his hind legs at the very edge.*



Just then a few loose stones came rolling down the ravine, and like a flash the entire herd of chamois were gone, leaping across a broad chasm to a little ledge upon the other side, where there was a second path that led among the rocks.

"Oh, what shall we do?" cried Billy's mother. "Here come two hunters with guns, and we can't jump where they did. Why, it's twelve feet across there!" She was frightened half to death but not for herself, for she threw herself squarely between Billy and the hunters.

The hunters were ignorant fellows, and as soon as they caught sight of the two goats they thought that these also were chamois, and one of them, lifting his gun, shot at them, grazing the head of the mother goat. She toppled over against Billy, and that knocked him over the cliff. If it had not been for a small tree which grew out of the cliff about half way down, Billy would have been dashed to death, but the tree broke his fall and so he only lay in the valley stunned, while the hunters picked up his mother and in great glee carried her away, thinking they had shot a chamois.

When they got back to their guide he told them their mistake, and saw, too, that the goat was only stunned; so they gave it to him and he sold it next day to a man who was buying some extra goats for Hans Zug, to stock a goat farm in America.

In the meantime poor Billy lay almost dead at the base of the cliff, where a man found him about an hour later.

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