

**BILLY WHISKERS  
AT HOME**

**BY  
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**THE CROWD OF ANIMALS BELOW CRIED,  
“TELL US SOMETHING MORE!  
TELL US SOMETHING MORE!”**

# *Billy Whiskers at Home*

# CHAPTER I

## THE CHUMS BACK HOME

ONE morning in early spring Mr. Watson rolled up the shade at his bedroom window to see what kind of weather was promised for the day when, glancing over to the lane, whom should he see running down its long stretch but Billy Whiskers, Stubby and Button.

“Am I seeing things or is that really and truly my old Billy Whiskers come back to the farm after being away all these years?” he murmured.

“William, what *are* you talking about?” asked his wife, who was yet in bed.

“Come to the window and see whether or not the goat, dog and cat running along our lane are our old pets Billy, Stubby and Button,” he replied. “But of course they must be, for where in the wide world would one ever find three such animals traveling together?”

By this time Mrs. Watson was in her kimono and slippers and at the window. “I don’t see him,” she said at last.

“You don’t? Down there where the lane runs into the barnyard,” said her husband.

“Oh, yes, I see him now! And do look at the way all the cows, horses, chickens and even Old Shep and Matilda, our tortoise shell cat, are rushing to meet those three. Talk

about animals not having sense and feelings! Why, they are almost eating their old friends alive! The way they are all rubbing noses and fussing over them to show their joy at seeing them once more! I feel like hugging them myself! Where do you suppose they have been all these years?" Mrs. Watson asked.

"I don't know, but I would give a good deal if those three could talk and tell us where they have kept themselves and the experiences they have had, for I wager my best hat they have had some very exciting adventures with many hardships thrown in. I must hurry and dress and then go out to see them," said Mr. Watson. "I don't want them to think I am not as glad to see them as my animals are."

"Wait a few minutes and I will go with you," said his wife, bustling about.

When Billy, Stubby and Button saw Mr. and Mrs. Watson coming, they ran to greet them. Billy nearly baaed his head off to show his delight, while Stubby twisted his body into hard knots and wiggled his stub of a tail so fast one could scarcely see it. As for Button, he rubbed himself against them until he almost wore the skin off his back.

"Well, we are glad to see you back," said Mr. Watson, "and we hope you are going to stay with us and not run off right away. My dear, you take Stubby and Button to the house and give them a big breakfast while I do the same for Billy here at the barn. My sakes alive, whom do we see coming on the run from behind the barn but the whole Billy Whiskers family! The procession is headed by Nannie,

Billy's dear little wife. From the surprise so plainly shown in all their faces they could not have known he was going to arrive."

"Look, William, look! From the way they are greeting one another one would think they were humans instead of animals!"

"I tell you what, my dear, you see before you six of the finest full-blooded Angora goats you could find in a lifetime. They are all so big, strong and handsome, and have such silky hair and graceful horns. Billy and Nannie are pure white and perfectly mated. So too are Billy Junior and Daisy, his wife. Billy Junior's coal-black hair makes a fine contrast against Daisy's coat. As for the Twins, they are their father and mother over again, Punch being black and Judy white."



“Now Billy is back, we can expect exciting things to happen,” remarked Mrs. Watson, “for wherever he is, there is always something going on. See, William, what is next to welcome them! How those pigeons and doves cluster around them, some even alighting on their backs! As they are the mail carriers for the animals, before night every farm for miles around will hear the glad tidings that Billy Whiskers, Stubby and Button are back home. See! Didn’t I tell you? There they go now, flying in all directions! Here, Stubby, Stubby, Stubby! Here, Button, Button, Button! Come with me and get something to eat!” she called as she turned toward the house.

“Oh, grandfather, stand still and watch me,” said Punch to Billy Whiskers. “I can jump so high! See, I can jump over your back!” and he ran off a few yards and then made a flying jump over Billy’s back. “I have learned to do that while you have been away on your travels.”

“That was pretty good, but next time raise your feet a little higher for you nearly took a chunk out of my back,” warned Billy.

“I can beat Punch jumping,” said Judy, “though he says I can’t because I am a girl. Watch me and see if I can’t!” But just when she jumped, Billy moved away and she leaped high in the air with nothing under her.

“Oh, grandfather, what made you move? Now stand still and I will do it again.”



“No, thank you! I’ll take your word for it that you can jump higher than your brother; I can’t spare any more of my flesh to-day.”

“Daddy, you stand still then and let me jump over you,” pleaded Judy.

Billy Junior heaved a sigh of resignation and stood still while Judy leaped over him, her feet held so close to her body that there was a full foot between his back and her feet.

“See! Don’t I jump higher and better than Punch?” she asked proudly.

“Oh, children,” exclaimed Daisy, their mother, “don’t always be vying with one another. All you do these days is to argue. Can’t you play without quarreling and fussing?”

“We don’t fuss or quarrel, mother. We just tell each other what we think and want.”

“Well, don’t do it so emphatically then,” replied their mother.

“Oh, there goes Farmer Jones’ flock of goats down the road to the pasture. Can’t we go with them? It is such fun to play with them in their pasture.”

“Yes, you may go if their man will let you. But I am afraid when he sees you he will drive you back,” replied Daisy.

“Well, if he does, we will wait until he gets them in the pasture and goes home. Then we will run down the road and crawl under the fence. There is a big hole we know

about that is large enough for us to crawl through, for we were down there yesterday and crawled through and played with them all the afternoon. Come on, Punch, let's go and try it."

And off they scampered, while Billy Whiskers followed Mr. Watson to the barn door where he waited for him to bring out his breakfast. He soon returned with a peck of carrots and some oats, and while Billy ate, the animals and fowls stood around and asked questions as to where he had been, and eagerly listened as he told what he had seen.

When Stubby and Button reached the house with Mrs. Watson they found Bridget waiting at the door—the cook who had been there when they left the old farm.

"Well, well, well!" she exclaimed on seeing the two, "and is it yezselves I see wid me two eyes? And glad I am to see ye! Though I know yer heads must be filled wid devilment ye have picked up while yez were away. And yez had enough to last ye all yer life when yez lift us! Unless time has put some sinse in yer heads, which I hope it has! But here! Yez didn't come home to hear me talk but to git something to eat. Just wait around a minute and I'll give yez the best breakfast yez have had since yez lift, and one that'll make yezselves stick out like barrels!"

"Bridget is the same old girl, isn't she?" said Stubby.

"Yes; her bark is worse than her bite," replied Button. "Yum, yum! I smell something delicious cooking, and here she comes with two plates heaped full of food!"

They had just finished their meal when Bridget came rushing out of the kitchen with the broom held high over her head, exclaiming, “Come along, Stubby and Button, and help me drive out that cross old cow that is always coming into our yard and eating up our flowers!”



The cow was standing in the middle of the flower bed making havoc of it, and Bridget charged on her with the broom, but instead of stopping eating, the cow lowered her head and made for Bridget on the run. Bridget turned and fled toward the porch, the cow close at her heels. She was just ready to hook the woman when she herself had a surprise for she found herself facing two angry eyes and a pair of horns twice as sharp as her own. And before she could hook whatever this was before her, she felt two sharp horns running into her side and pushing her sideways. She came to the conclusion that it was about time for her to make a hasty departure. As she turned toward the gate she found herself hurried through it by a little dog barking and snapping at her heels and then hanging to her tail. Though she tried again and again to kick him, she could not succeed,

for when she kicked out with one foot, he was always snapping at the other leg. He chased her down the road for a mile and then with a parting warning not to come into that yard again, he let her go.

For the rest of the day the Chums wandered around the farm to see what improvements had been made and to meet the new animals that had been bought by Mr. Watson while they had been away. And when they went to bed that night, all three declared there was no place in all the whole wide world like the dear old farm.



**WHY DID THE KING LOOK SO DIFFERENT? THIS  
WAS NOT THE NEPTUNE  
THEY HAD EXPECTED TO SEE.**

## CHAPTER II

### SAL SCRUGS MAKES TROUBLE

EARLY the next morning from far and near came pigeons, blackbirds, swallows, robins and every other kind of bird that makes its home in Wisconsin in the summer. They had heard the news that the Chums had returned and now hastened to extend them a welcome on their own account as well as to deliver greetings from the animals on the different farms round about who were unable to get away, as most of them were either fenced in their pastures or shut up in their stables.

One homely, raw-boned, cross-eyed cow named Sal Scrugs whom no one liked and at whom everyone threw stones because she was always in mischief of some kind, said she was not going to send her message but was going to deliver it in person as these three were the only animals that had ever been nice to her. *They* understood and knew that the reason she behaved so badly was that everyone had always been so mean to her and never given her a kind word because she was so homely. She could not help being homely, and it had only soured her disposition to be treated so and called horrid names when it was no fault of her own. She said, "Very well, if people treat me badly, I will be more tricky and disagreeable than they ever thought of being." So from calthood she had *tried* to be mean. She would jump all the fences she could, trample people's gardens and eat their early vegetables. Then too she would

milk herself so when they wanted to milk her she would be dry. Another trick was to break down the fence and let all the other stock out. Consequently when she said she was going to see Billy, all the animals where she lived knew she would do it by jumping the fence in the pasture and running off.



“Listen, friends,” she said. “I want to ask you a question. How many of you would like to go to see Billy Whiskers, Stubby and Button if you had the chance?”

“We all would, I know,” spoke up an old brindle cow.

“Surely we would!” piped up all the others.

“Very well, then. When I am down in the pasture away from the house where no one can see me, I will break down the fence and you can all get out and run down the road and

see the Chums before anyone knows you have left the pasture.”

“Oh, that will be fine!” said one of the young heifers. “I would just love a lark like that! Anything to cause a little excitement! We lead such a quiet life here with no change from day to day, month in and month out.”

“Yes, but how will you like it if, after we are out, Mr. Watson’s hired man sics Shep on us and he bites your legs and hangs on your tail? I tell you that dog has sharp teeth and gives a vicious bite for he has snapped at me more than once when I have not walked fast enough to suit him. You must remember I was born on the Watson farm and lived there until I was four years old, when I was sold to Mr. Jones.”

“I don’t care! I am willing to take the chance and the bite too for a little fun.”

“Here comes the hired man to drive us to pasture,” said Sal Scrugs.

Very sedately all the cows walked down the road to the pasture and after the man had shut them in, they lingered around the gate until he disappeared from sight over the brow of the hill. Then with a merry Ha! Ha! bellow in her throat, Sal Scrugs said, “Follow me along the fence until we come to the weak place in it. There are two loose posts that with a good hard push will fall right over into the road and then we can all pass through the opening and be free. Free! Oh, it is glorious to feel free!”



Sal was about to throw her weight against the weak section of the fence when one of the cows said:

“Hold on a minute! I think I hear a wagon coming down the road. We must wait until it passes or we will be caught.”

So they patiently waited until a big lumbering wagon had passed and disappeared over the hill. Then with a rush Sal ran to the fence and threw herself against it with all her might. Down it went with a crash and over toppled the posts as well. This made a great wide place for them to go through. They were in such a hurry to get out before any more wagons came along to stop them that two or three of the cows fell down in their mad haste to be on the way to see Billy, Stubby and Button. One cow hurt herself badly as she rushed over the fallen rails and she had to walk with a limp all the way to the Watson farm.

Billy and Nannie were on top of the old straw stack, their favorite resting place, for from there they could see all that went on in the barnyard directly under them and for two miles all around them.

Billy had just finished telling Nannie of one of his narrow escapes when, looking down the road, what should he see but all of Farmer Jones' small herd of cattle coming on the run down the road. Indeed, before he could tell Nannie to look, they were turning in at the Watson lane.

“I wonder who is chasing them. It must be some stray dog for their own dog Nig knows cows should never be made to run,” said Billy.

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