

# **The Rabbit and the Goat**



**Jane MEADOW**

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In a wide green meadow, a small rabbit with soft warm-brown fur and a cream belly hopped through the clover. His long upright ears twitched at every sound, and his bright amber eyes sparkled with curiosity. He wore a little leaf-green scarf tied at his neck, and his fluffy round tail bounced as he ran. "What a fine day for an adventure!" he said to no one at all.



Not far away, a sturdy goat with a shaggy grey-white coat and a long soft beard chewed his breakfast slowly. His short curved horns caught the morning sun, and a small brass bell jingled on his woven brown harness. He was calm and steady, and he liked to take his time. "Good morning, little rabbit," he said in a gentle voice. "Where are you off to so fast?"



The rabbit stopped and looked up at the goat. "I'm exploring!" he said. "There's so much to see!" The goat smiled and nodded. "Then I'll come along," he said. "I'm good at walking slowly and noticing things." So the two became meadow companions, the rabbit hopping ahead and the goat following with steady steps. They did not know yet what they would find together.



As they wandered past a tall hedge, the rabbit's nose twitched. "I smell apples!" he cried, and darted through a gap in the leaves. The goat pushed the branches aside with his strong legs and followed. There, hidden and quiet, lay a forgotten orchard. Old trees stretched their branches high, and the grass grew long and wild beneath them.



But the pathways were covered in weeds and fallen branches. Brambles tangled across the ground, and dry sticks lay everywhere. "Oh no," said the rabbit. "We can't even walk through!" The goat looked at the mess with calm brown eyes. "It's a big job," he said. "But a big job can still be done." The rabbit's ears stood straight up. "Then let's do it!" he said.



The rabbit tried first. He hopped quickly along the path, pulling small twigs and tossing them aside. His little paws worked fast, and his leaf-green scarf fluttered as he darted about. But the heavy branches would not budge. He pulled and tugged and puffed, but they stayed right where they were. "This is too big for me alone!" he said, flopping down to rest.



The goat tried next. He leaned against a fallen branch and pushed with all his steady strength. It moved a little, then a lot. But while he pushed, weeds grew behind him, and small twigs still blocked the way. The rabbit watched from a distance. "You're strong," he said, "but you can't do it all by yourself either." The goat sighed and nodded. "You're right," he said.



The rabbit's bright amber eyes lit up. "I have an idea!" he said. "I'm quick, so I can hop ahead and clear the light twigs. You're strong, so you can push the heavy loads. We can work together!" The goat's long soft beard bobbed as he nodded. "That sounds like a fine plan," he said. "Let's try it." So they began again, side by side this time.



The rabbit hopped ahead, clearing small twigs and weeds from the path. His quick paws flew, and his long ears swiveled to spot every obstacle. Behind him, the goat pushed the heavy branches with steady, patient steps. The brass bell on his harness jingled softly as he worked. Together they opened the first pathway, and the orchard seemed to breathe a happy sigh.



Day by day, the two friends cleared more paths. The rabbit learned to slow down and wait when the goat needed help. The goat learned to trust the rabbit's quick ideas. "You spot things I would miss," said the goat. "And you move things I never could!" said the rabbit. They laughed and kept working, and the orchard grew tidier and brighter with every passing hour.



Then one morning, the rabbit hopped to the top of a clear path and gasped. "Look!" he cried. The old trees were covered in blossoms, and tiny green fruits were starting to grow. The goat came to stand beside him, his gentle brown eyes wide. "We did it," he said softly. "The orchard is waking up because of us." The rabbit's tail wagged with joy.



Weeks passed, and the blossoms turned into apples, pears, and plums. The orchard was full of fruit, red and gold and purple, shining in the sun. The rabbit danced among the trees, and the goat stood calm and proud. "We cleared the paths," said the rabbit, "but we couldn't have done it alone." The goat nodded. "That's the best part," he said.



When the fruit was ripe, the two friends gathered it in baskets. The rabbit picked the high, light ones, and the goat carried the heavy loads. They shared the harvest happily, eating sweet apples and juicy pears. "Your quickness and my steadiness," said the goat, "make a good team." The rabbit smiled. "And our different ways make friendship interesting!"



Other animals came to visit the orchard. The rabbit and the goat shared their fruit with everyone. Birds sang in the branches, and the pathways were bright and clear. "This place was forgotten," said the rabbit, "but now it's full of friends." The goat jingled his bell and smiled. "It just needed a little teamwork," he said.



From that day on, the rabbit and the goat were the best of friends. They still explored the meadow together, the rabbit hopping ahead and the goat following steadily. They knew that being different was a gift, and that working together made everything better. And whenever they passed the orchard, they remembered the day they turned a tangled place into a happy home.



So if you ever see a quick little rabbit in a leaf-green scarf and a calm goat with a brass bell, you'll know they are friends who share and help each other. They learned that a fast friend and a steady friend can do great things side by side. And that is the story of the rabbit and the goat.