

The Boy and the Goat



Jane MEADOW

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Charlie lived on a farm with a big red barn and a field of yellow flowers. He had warm brown skin, short curly black hair, and a smile with a missing tooth. Every morning, he pulled on his yellow rubber boots and ran outside to play. His favorite friend was Biscuit, a cream-white goat with tan patches and a green collar that jingled when she jumped.



Biscuit had floppy ears, small curved horns, and a scruffy little beard. She loved to nibble apples and chase butterflies around the farm. Charlie laughed as she leaped and twirled, her brass bell ringing like a tiny drum. 'You're the best goat in the whole world,' Charlie said, scratching her chin. Biscuit bleated happily and bumped her head gently against his hand.



But Biscuit was also very mischievous. She loved to explore, and she was always looking for a way out of her pen. The old wooden fence had a loose board, just wide enough for a curious goat to squeeze through. Charlie didn't think much about it. He just liked playing with Biscuit whenever she was around.



One sunny afternoon, Biscuit slipped through the loose fence and trotted toward the vegetable garden. Charlie saw her go and ran after her, his boots squelching in the mud. 'Biscuit, come back!' he called. But Biscuit just flicked her tail and kept going. She nibbled a row of carrots and looked very pleased with herself.



Charlie grabbed Biscuit's rope lead and gently pulled her back to the pen. 'You can't keep running away,' he said. But Biscuit didn't listen. The next day, she escaped again and ended up in the neighbor's flower bed. Charlie felt worried. What if Biscuit got lost or hurt? He knew something had to change.



That evening, Charlie sat on the porch with his grandpa. 'Biscuit keeps escaping,' Charlie sighed. 'I love playing with her, but I can't always chase her.' Grandpa nodded. 'A pet is a friend, but a friend needs care,' he said. 'Maybe the fence needs fixing, and maybe Biscuit needs something fun to do right here.'



The next morning, Charlie walked to the pen and looked at the loose board. He wiggled it, and it came right off in his hand. 'This is the problem,' he said. 'Biscuit isn't naughty—she's just bored and curious.' He decided to fix the fence and make the pen a place Biscuit would love to stay.



Charlie found some strong wooden boards in the barn. He carried them to the pen and laid them out. Then he hammered and screwed and tightened every loose nail. His straw hat bobbed as he worked, and sweat dripped from his curly hair. Biscuit watched from inside the pen, chewing on a piece of hay and blinking her amber eyes.



After the fence was solid, Charlie still felt something was missing. Biscuit needed more fun. So he built a small climbing ramp with old crates and a sturdy box. He added a wooden platform for jumping and a hanging rope for swinging. Biscuit sniffed the new toys and tilted her head. Then she hopped onto the ramp and bleated with joy.



Charlie laughed as Biscuit climbed and jumped and swung. Her bell jingled merrily. 'You like it!' he said. Biscuit nuzzled his shoulder and nibbled his straw hat. Charlie didn't mind. He was just happy to see her playing safely inside the pen. Now she had plenty to do and no reason to escape.



The next day, Charlie's friend Maya came to visit. She saw the new fence and the climbing toys. 'Wow, did you build all this?' she asked. Charlie nodded proudly. 'Biscuit kept escaping, so I fixed the fence and gave her things to do,' he explained. 'Taking care of a friend means keeping them safe.' Maya smiled. 'That's really responsible,' she said.



Biscuit didn't try to escape anymore. She was too busy playing on her ramp and swinging on her rope. Charlie visited her every day, and they played hide-and-seek around the hay bales. Sometimes Biscuit still tried to nibble Charlie's hat, but that was just for fun. Charlie knew she was happy and safe, and that made him happy too.



Charlie learned that friendship and responsibility go hand in hand. He loved Biscuit, and because he loved her, he took care of her. He fixed the fence and built her toys, not because he had to, but because he wanted her to be safe and happy. Biscuit seemed to understand. She gave him extra goat hugs and followed him everywhere.



The farm became a happier place for everyone. Biscuit's pen was cozy and full of fun, and Charlie was proud of his work. His grandpa said, 'You did a good job, Charlie. A good friend is someone who takes care of what they love.' Charlie smiled his missing-tooth smile and hugged Biscuit tight. He knew he would always take care of his best friend.



From that day on, Charlie and Biscuit were inseparable. They played from morning until sunset, and Biscuit never escaped again. Charlie learned that real care means responsibility, and that responsibility can be fun when you do it for someone you love. Biscuit jingled her bell and bleated happily, as if to say, 'You're the best friend ever.'



And so, on the farm with the big red barn and the yellow flowers, a boy and a goat shared a special friendship. Charlie wore his red shirt and overalls, and Biscuit wore her green collar and brass bell. They discovered that when you take responsibility for a friend, your friendship grows stronger and the whole world becomes a little brighter.