

The Girl and the Little Goat



Aysel Banu YAVUZAL

The Girl and the Little Goat

Aysel Banu YAVUZAL



On a sunny hill at the edge of a small village, a girl named Maya skipped along the grassy path. She wore a bright yellow t-shirt, blue denim overalls, and red sneakers that went tap-tap-tap on the stones. Her curly dark hair bounced in two puffy buns, and her green canvas tool belt swung at her side. Maya loved to explore and fix things, and today the hill was full of surprises.



Near a crooked wooden fence, Maya heard a happy little sound. Jingle, jingle! A small goat with a cream-white coat and brown patches on his ears came bouncing toward her. He had floppy ears, short curved horns, bright amber eyes, and a tiny beard. Around his neck hung a red collar with a small brass bell that rang with every springy step.



"Hello, little goat!" Maya laughed, and the goat wiggled his whole body with joy. He trotted right up and nudged her hand, as friendly as could be. Maya scratched behind his floppy ears, and his amber eyes went soft and happy. "You are full of energy," she said. "I bet you love to play. What is your name, little friend?" The bell jingled as if to answer.



The little goat suddenly spotted the crooked fence and leaped right onto the top rail. He balanced there, wobbling and grinning, then jumped down with a flip of his springy legs. "Wow!" Maya gasped. "You really love to climb!" The goat trotted to a low stone wall and scrambled up it too, his little bell ringing merrily. Climbing was clearly his favorite thing in the whole wide world.



But then the goat tried to climb the tall, smooth side of the old shed. His hooves slipped and slid, and he tumbled softly into the grass. He looked around with a puzzled little bleat. There was nothing else to climb nearby, no rocks, no logs, no safe high places. The little goat pawed the ground and sighed a tiny goat sigh.



Maya sat down beside him and thought hard. "You need fun things to climb," she said, tapping her chin. "Safe things, with good places for your hooves." The goat tilted his head and flicked his floppy ears, as if he understood every word. Maya looked at her green tool belt with the small hammer tucked inside. A big, bright idea began to grow in her mind.



Maya hurried home and found some sturdy wooden planks, a few smooth logs, and a bundle of strong rope. She piled everything into a little red wagon and pulled it back up the hill. The goat trotted beside her the whole way, curious and excited. "We are going to build you a climbing playground," Maya told him. "Every goat needs fun things to do!"



First, Maya leaned a wide plank against a big flat rock to make a gentle ramp. The little goat watched closely, his bell jingling with excitement. Then she stacked three logs side by side to make a low step. She tied the pieces together with rope so everything would stay safe and steady. "There!" she said. "Try it out, little friend!"



The goat took one careful step onto the log, then another. Up the ramp he went, slow and sure, his hooves finding good spots to grip. At the top of the rock, he stood tall and proud, looking out over the whole sunny hill. Maya clapped her hands. "You did it!" she cheered. The goat gave a happy little hop and jingled his bell.



Next, Maya added a taller wooden frame with wide, flat steps going up and up. She hammered and tied and measured until her tongue poked out with concentration. The goat waited patiently, wagging his tiny tail. When the frame was finished, he sprang onto the first step, then the second, then the very top. He looked like a king on a castle!



Maya laughed so hard her gap-toothed smile stretched wide. "You are a climbing champion!" she said. The little goat bounced from step to step, up and down, round and round, his springy legs full of joy. His little brass bell rang and rang like happy music across the hill. For the first time, he had a safe place to do the thing he loved most.



Then Maya had one more idea. She rolled a big log into place and leaned a short plank on top to make a little bridge. The goat trotted across it, his hooves clip-clopping on the wood. He looked back at Maya and bleated happily, then leaped back across to show her again. "You like your playground!" Maya giggled. "And I like playing with you!"



From that day on, Maya and the little goat were the very best of friends. Every morning she walked up the hill with her tool belt, and every morning he came bouncing to meet her, bell jingling. They climbed and jumped and played chase around the logs. Maya even learned to leap from step to step, though not quite as high as her goat friend.



Maya noticed how happy the goat was now. His amber eyes sparkled, his springy legs never stopped, and his little bell sang all day long. He was healthy and busy and full of fun. "You just needed things to do and a friend to play with," Maya said, patting his cream-white coat. The goat leaned against her and let out a soft, contented bleat.



Sometimes other children came up the hill to see the climbing playground. Maya showed them how she had built it with planks and logs and rope. "Animals need exercise and friends," she told them, "just like people do!" The children took turns watching the goat leap and climb and jingle his bell. Everyone laughed and cheered for the happy little goat.



As the sun set gold and pink behind the hill, Maya sat beside her best friend. The goat rested his head on her knee, and his bell gave one last gentle jingle. "We had lots of fun today," Maya whispered. "And we will have fun again tomorrow." She smiled her wide, gap-toothed smile, and the little goat closed his amber eyes, happy and warm and loved.