

Animal Tales

The Lazy Loppin Goat

Fiction by Artie Knapp
A Serial Story, Chapter 1

The grass was tall — very, very, tall — but it shouldn't have been.

Alfred Lambert had the worst luck with lawnmowers, you see, and no matter how many new lawnmowers Alfred bought none ever worked for him.

Alfred's luck was so bad that the store he bought lawnmowers from made sure to have a new one waiting for him every day; they just knew he would be coming back for another.

At first, Alfred's neighbors were mad at the way his yard made the whole neighborhood look. Many folks in town were so fed up that they offered to cut Alfred's grass for free, but Alfred refused any help. He was determined to cut his own lawn.

As Alfred's grass grew to historic heights, the whole town of Belvar eventually embraced the jungle known as Alfred's yard.

The Mayor of Belvar even declared Alfred's yard a town landmark. Next to the clouds in the sky, Alfred's yard was the tallest thing in town.

Alfred didn't like all of the attention his yard was receiving though, and he felt embarrassed at how tall his grass had become.

One evening, after yet another failed attempt to buy a working lawnmower, Alfred was ready to give up on finding a way to mow his jungle-of-a-yard. Then out of nowhere a faint little bleat from a goat could be heard in the distance.

Alfred's face lit up like a Christmas tree upon hearing the goat's bleat. Alfred felt he had found the solution to cutting his lawn, because goats love to eat grass, and any goat



would be thrilled to feast in Alfred's yard.

After climbing up the grass in his yard and looking down at the telephone poles, Alfred worked his way out of his yard and darted to a nearby farm.

The Cline family lived down the road from Alfred, and they had several kinds of animals on their farm.

In addition to chickens, cattle and hogs, the Clines had one little, caramel-colored goat with dark stockings.

She was a friendly little goat, but the Cline family seldom paid her much attention. The little goat felt lonely and spent most of her days walking aimlessly in the green pasture.

When Alfred approached the Cline family about his idea, Mr. Cline and his entire family started to laugh hysterically.

And it didn't stop there! The chickens, cattle and hogs all laughed, too.

"That's one lazy loppin goat," declared Mr. Cline. "You can have her for free."

"May I ask why you feel the goat is lazy?" asked Alfred.

"It doesn't want to work. It doesn't want to do much of anything," said Mr. Cline.

"Well, since you're offering her for free, I don't have anything to lose," said Alfred.

"Very well," said Mr. Cline. "She's all yours."

As Alfred walked across the Clines' farm in search of the little goat, several of the farm animals were still laughing.

"Good luck with that goat," said one of the chickens.

"You're going to need it."

The chicken's comment made all the other animals laugh even harder.

Alfred ignored the animals' laughter and spotted the little goat down on the meadow. As Alfred approached the little goat, she lifted her head out of the creek she was drinking from to see what he wanted.

"Excuse me, my name is Alfred, and I live down the road from here."

"How do you do?" asked the little goat.

"I am fine, thanks. Do you have a name?" asked Alfred.

"Yes," replied the little goat. "My name is Irene."

"Well, very nice to meet you, Irene. I just spoke with Mr. Cline, and he said that I could be your new owner."

"What do you mean?" asked the little goat. "What did he get in return?"

"Nothing. He gave you to me for free. Mr. Cline said you're lazy and don't like to work. Is that true?"

"No, sir, it's not," replied the little goat.

"I love to work, but nobody on this farm understands that."

"Well, I've got a situation I was hoping you could help me with," said Alfred. "Come with me and we'll discuss it along the way."

Next Week: Irene Hatches a Plan

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

On October 11, 1884, future First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt was born in New York City. As wife of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, she became a leader in the movement for civil rights for African Americans.

On October 12, 1492, sea explorer Christopher Columbus landed in present-day Bahamas in the "New World" east of what is now Florida in the United States.

On October 13, 1792, the cornerstone of the White House was laid, starting construction of the president's home in Washington, D.C.

On October 14, 1964, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was awarded the world's Nobel Peace Prize for his work in civil rights. He was 35 years old.

On October 15, 1924, businessman and auto leader Lee Iacocca was born in Allentown, Pennsylvania. He later led both Ford Motor Company and the Chrysler Corp.

On October 16, 1995, hundreds of thousands of African American men gathered in Washington, D.C., for the "Million Man March."

On October 17, 1956, U.S. astronaut Mae C. Jemison was born in Decatur, Alabama. In 1992 she became the first African American woman to fly in space.



Mae C. Jemison