

FRODE BURDAL KLEVSTUL

Bill Goats and the Forest

Mpathic publishing

Bill Goats and the Forest

Author: Frode Burdal Klevstul

Illustrator: Frode Burdal Klevstul

Proof reader: Thomas Freitag, The Bookmarker

Designer: Miriam Ekelund

Published by: Mpathic publishing (Mpathic DA)

First edition, 2022

Print: Nova Gráfica, São Miguel, Açores

Depósito legal: 496220/22

ISBN: 978-82-692819-0-3

www.billgoats.com

Foreword

This story came to me one Christmas morning in 2020. As I stood in the forest near my home, with snow covering the trees and the sun radiating just enough heat for me to avoid freezing, the story about Bill Goats and the Forest formed suddenly in my mind. As soon as I came home I jotted the first version down. Since then I have worked hard trying to make this story as good as possible.

Two people have been crucial in the making of this book. First, my dear Miriam, who has helped me to open my heart and who has supported me in this project from day one. Thank you, Miriam! Then, proof reader Thomas, who embraced this story as his own, and lifted it to another level. With his help the words started to flow in a new way, something that was hard to achieve for someone who does not have English as their first language. Thank you, Thomas!

These words are being written one Christmas morning in 2021. It has taken me a year to complete the story of Bill Goats and the Forest. A year that has been very different. A year that will not be forgotten.

Frode Burdal Klevstul

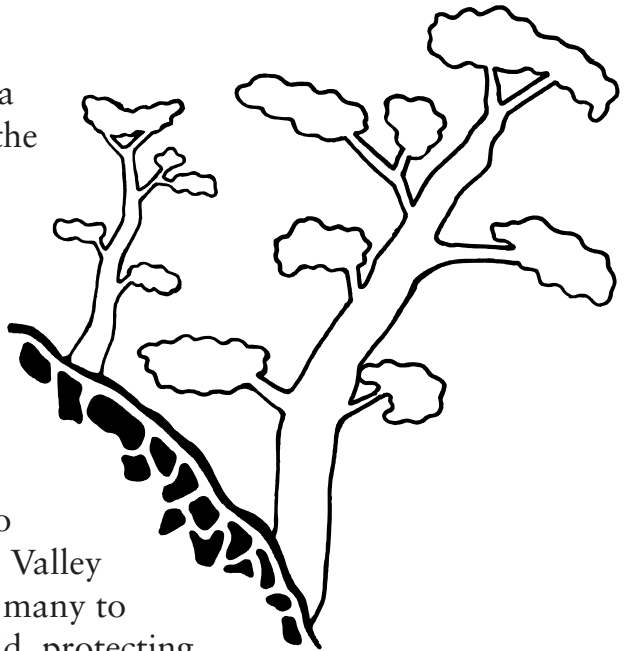
The Forest

There once was a forest that covered a valley that stretched all the way from the mountains to the sea.

The Forest was a special place, being described by those who knew it as tranquil and safe; those who knew the Forest well described it as majestic and wise. But words were inadequate to describe the Forest, since the only way to know the Forest was to experience the Forest.

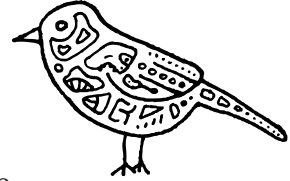
There was an old saying, that a day in the Forest would clear the mind of stress, a week would relieve the body of pain, a month would free the heart of its sorrow, and a year would heal the soul of its burdens. This is what the Forest did.

Yet what the Forest did was no more important than what the Valley did, providing a safe place for many to live, or what the Mountains did, protecting



the Valley from the strong north Winds, or what the Sea did, providing the Valley with moisture and rain, or what the Sun did, providing warmth to the Valley and light to the Forest so that trees could grow, or what the Moon did, watching over the Valley and the Forest at night, or what the Winds did, making the Forest strong – or what any other part did, for that matter. Every part was as important as any other part, and all the parts worked together to create a wonderful thing called Balance. If something ever went out of Balance, it would find its way back to Balance, eventually. This was the way things were and the way things always would be.

The Balance



The Mountains knew the Balance, the Sea knew the Balance, the Sun and Moon knew the Balance, and the Forest knew the Balance. Most of the trees in the Forest knew the Balance, though the older trees knew the Balance best. The younger trees did not know the Balance, though most of them would, in time.

The trees stood densely together in the Forest. The older trees reached high above the other trees and found it easy to reach the warmth and light of the Sun. The younger trees, not being as tall, had to push their way through the branches of their older sister and brother trees. When they did, they were rewarded with the light. The trees that didn't quite make it to the top found other ways to reach the light, around and through and beside the other trees. Trees were clever in finding ways.

In the middle of the Forest was the Lake, where the waters gathered. The Lake was deep, dark, and cold. Many curious creatures lived in the Lake, but their story must wait for another time.

In the middle of the Lake was the Islet, a small island on which a small forest of trees grew. Like the trees in the Forest, some of the trees on the Islet were old and majestic while others were young and over-confident.

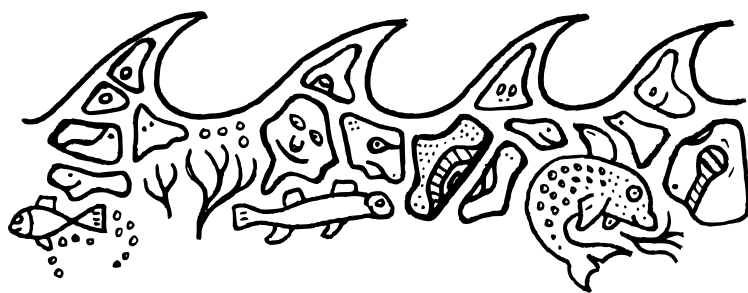
Life in the Forest was in Balance, and Balance brought rhythm to life in

the Forest. First came spring and then summer and then autumn and then winter and then spring again. The rhythm was predictable, and this made the trees feel safe.

Spring was a wonderful and happy time in the Forest. The light of the Sun shone bright and clear in the spring, making everything turn vibrant and green. It was a time when the younger trees took root and then thrived and flourished, especially when they had plenty of water. The older trees utilised the warmth of the spring days to stretch their roots deep into the soil below them. Their wisdom and length of days taught them that trials always arrived, and deep roots helped a tree to withstand whatever may come its way. Both young and old trees alike knew that there was no point in shooting upwards before expanding downwards, since a tree without roots was a vulnerable tree, and a vulnerable tree was a dead tree, they all knew. Trees enjoyed being alive, so all the trees strove to establish deep, strong roots during the spring.

The Balance made it so that summer always followed spring. The Sun stood high in the sky in the summer, giving great light and warmth to the Forest. It could become very warm in the summer, so warm that water could vanish from the surface of the ground. But the trees could always find the water they needed underground with their roots. Summer was a

wonderful and happy time in the Forest.

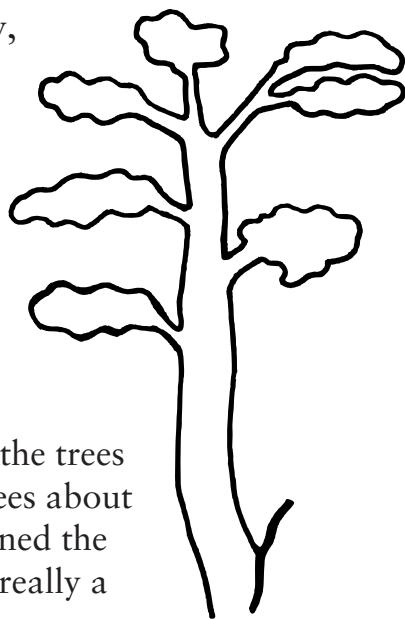


Autumn always followed summer, thanks to the rhythm of the Balance. Autumn was

a time when the Sun shone less intensely while the rains fell more steadily and the Winds blew more mischievously among the trees. The Winds would test the strength and resiliency of the trees in the autumn. Trees had many skills, flexibility being one of them, and they would bow and bend when the Winds were strong. Yet if the trees didn't do their work to establish deep roots in the spring, they could easily be pulled out of the ground and fly away with the Winds like a bird in the autumn. This might seem exciting at first, but trees were not birds, and this would have dire consequences for the life and health of the trees and everything around them. Autumn's cool air and rain and Winds caused the trees to lose their leaves, turning the Forest's floor into a soft carpet in hues of rust and gold and crimson. Autumn was a wonderful and happy time in the Forest.

After autumn the Balance brought winter. During winter snow would fall upon the Forest, at times lightly, dressing the trees in fluffy white sweaters, at other times heavily, depositing a thick white blanket that could make the trees bend or break or bow to the ground. If the trees stood tall and confident and proud, they would withstand whatever the winter snows may bring them. Winter was a wonderful and happy time, when the quiet Forest rested for the work awaiting them in the spring.

As you can see, life was full of challenges for the trees in the Forest, but the challenges taught the trees about the Balance, so life was good. Some trees learned the Balance more slowly than others; this wasn't really a



problem, since all the trees supported all the other trees, knowing that each tree was just as important as every other tree. They all knew that without their brother and sister trees they would not be a Forest but only a tree.

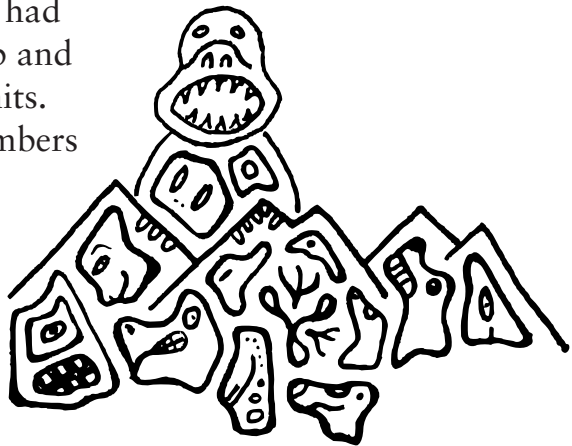
There were always a few trees in the Forest that never quite grasped what the Balance was all about. It was particularly hard for some of them to appreciate that the Balance would ultimately bring them to their deaths. That, over time, every tree would become weak and brittle and even the strongest and tallest of the trees would fall in the end. Death was always part of life in the Balance, it had always been so and so it would always be, for the Forest and the Valley and the Mountains, for the Sun and the Moon, even for the curious Creatures that lived in the waters of the Lake and whose story must wait for another time. You see, death was not meant to be sad, nor was it the end, though those who did not learn the Balance had trouble understanding this. Death was simply the beginning of something new.

The Mountain Goats

North of the Forest rested the Mountains. The Mountains were no place for trees. The soil was so shallow and compact in the Mountains that trees struggled to grow deep roots, and so it was hard for trees to stand up to the strong Winds that blew down from the mountaintops. Any tree who tried to grow tall in the Mountains quickly learned that this was not a good idea at all. The Mountains were instead a place for bushes, heather and moss, making the Mountains an ideal place for mountain goats.

The mountain goats had lived in the Mountains for as long as they could remember; since mountain goats could remember well, it must have been for a very long time indeed. Mountain goats did not have roots, of course, they had hoofs, which they used to climb up and down the steepest mountain summits. Mountain goats were excellent climbers and almost no peak was unconquerable for them.

All the mountain goats were happy with their lives in the Mountains. All but one mountain goat, that is.



One mountain goat had dreams and desires that were far beyond the ordinary dreams and desires of the ordinary mountain goat. This mountain goat did not simply want to live life, he wanted to control life. He wanted to control life to such an extent that he wanted to control the lives of others, even regarding who would live and who would die. He wanted to be God. His name was Bill Goats.