

Rebecca's REWARD

Written by
Valerie Miller

Illustrated by
Charity Miller





Two bright eyes looked out from under a bush at the edge of the porch. The eyes were watching a little girl as she stepped outside and looked around, searching for something. She stood still for a bit. Then she saw those bright, eager eyes looking at her.

“Come, Sheba, let’s go get the cows!” Rebecca exclaimed, and the black and white dog scrambled out of its shady napping spot under the bush. The dog’s brown eyes looked enthusiastic about fetching the cows.

Rebecca slipped out the lane behind the barn. Bringing the cows in from the pasture at four o’clock every afternoon was her own special chore. Often her younger brother Daniel helped, and Sheba always helped.

Sheba was such a good dog. She was gentle with little children. Whenever a car came into the driveway, she would bark a little to announce that somebody was coming. Then she wagged her tail to welcome the visitors.

Sheba helped Daddy by hunting woodchucks in the fields and

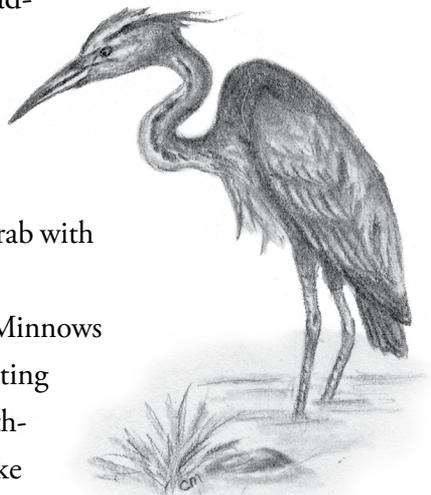
woods. Woodchucks dug holes in the fields, and sometimes the hay mower would hit one of their holes and break. Daddy was always glad to hear that Sheba had caught a woodchuck.

Rebecca saw the cows at the far end of the pasture, in the nice shade beside the stream. She rounded up the cows farthest away, flapping her barn apron to get them moving.

“Don’t loiter,” Mom had told her before she left the house. “Daddy is in a hurry to milk, and I need your help as soon as you come back.”

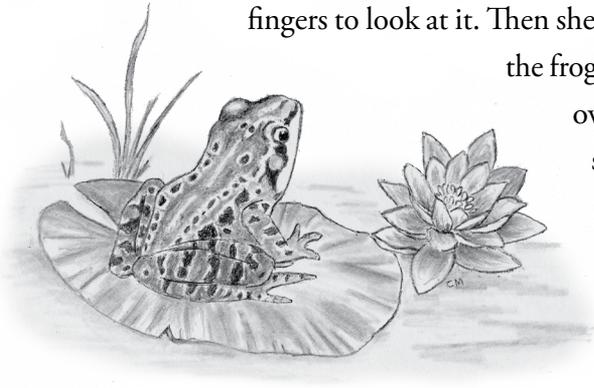
The cows all headed to the stream for a drink. The stream came from a big pond along one side of the cow pasture, flowing out of a narrow place under some trees. Then it leaped and splashed down a waterfall, around some rocks, and into a little pond. Wild ducks often paddled among the cattails in the little pond, and blue herons stood stock still on tall legs, waiting for fish to come close enough to grab with their long, pointed beaks.

Rebecca loved to play here. Minnows hid in the little pools, just waiting to be caught and put into another pool. The waterfall was like a slippery stair to climb up and down, and there were plenty of



stones to make dams and walkways.

Quietly, Rebecca waded across the stream to the other side. There she spied a frog in a clump of grass and grabbed it with both hands. It wriggled and squirmed, and she peeked between her fingers to look at it. Then she slowly uncovered



the frog and held him out over the water. He sat there for just a second before making a flying leap and a delightful splash!

Suddenly Rebecca remembered the cows. They had all finished drinking and were spread out across the meadow.

“Get up, cows,” she called, splashing out of the stream. They’d better hurry now! “Move along there, Muffin, Creamy! Get up, Bessie!” The cows started walking along the narrow cow paths and tramped single file toward the barn, Rebecca behind them. Up ahead she saw her favorite apple tree amid the row of old, crooked apple trees. Were the apples ripening? She would quickly climb one branch of the split trunk and see. Mmm . . . how good the sugar-sweet apples would taste! But they weren’t ripe yet.

Remembering the cows, she jumped down and ran to catch up with them. Suddenly she felt a painful sting on her toe. She sat down with a bump. She had stepped on a bee! Pulling up

her foot, she scratched where she had been stung. Then she hurried the cows to the barn. She deserved the bee sting, she knew. Mom had told her not to loiter.

As Mom mixed vinegar and baking soda in a cup and spread it over the bee sting, she reminded Rebecca that God always sees when we do wrong. “Do you think God sent the bee to remind you to obey my instructions?” Mom asked.

Rebecca was ashamed. A seven-year-old girl is old enough to remember to do as her mother says. She determined to try harder to obey.

