

Ben and Meg

by Bonnie Williams



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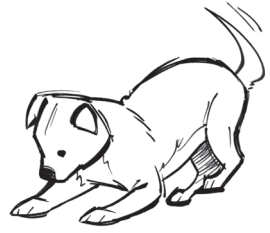
Contents

Chapter 1: The Swing Family	1
Chapter 2: Acorns	7
Chapter 3: Bedtime	15
Chapter 4: Fall in Vermont	19
Chapter 5: The Pumpkin Patch	25
Chapter 6: Grandma’s House	31
Chapter 7: Snow Day!	39
Chapter 8: The Snowman	45
Chapter 9: Ice Skating	51
Chapter 10: Maple Syrup	57
Chapter 11: A Day at the Pond	63
Chapter 12: Afternoon Treat	69

Chapter

1

The Swing Family



Ben and Meg Swing lived in Putney, Vermont, with their parents and their dog, Chip. Meg was five years old and in kindergarten, and Ben was seven years old and in second grade. Ben had been homeschooling for two years, and Meg was about to begin her first day of kindergarten.

Meg jumped out of bed early, eager to begin homeschooling. Meg looked around for her shoes, but only one could be found.

“Chip! Chip!” she called. “What have you done with my shoe?”

Chip was a puppy, and the Swing family was trying to teach him manners.

He had run off with Meg's shoe. Meg was afraid to find out what Chip had done with her shoe.

Mama joined in the hunt. Finally, Meg found her shoe under the table, and she saw that Chip had chewed the shoelace.

"What are we going to do with him?" asked Meg.

Mama said they would have to try very hard to teach him what he was allowed to chew and what he was not, and they would have to be patient while he learned.

"It is not easy to teach a puppy manners," Mama said. "It takes time."

Meg dressed quickly, happy to have both of her shoes. She asked Mama, “What songs are we going to sing this morning?” She knew the school day always began with circle time.

“Which one would you like to begin with, Meg?” Mama asked.

Meg said her favorite was “Silver and Gold,” which was about making new friends and keeping the old.

“Okay, wake up your brother, and we will begin as soon as we have breakfast,” said Mama.

Chip followed Meg into the bedroom. The dog grabbed hold of Ben’s blanket and started to pull.

“Chip, stop!” shouted Meg.

Ben was not very happy to be

wakened this way. But Chip wagged his tail. He was happy to see Ben.

After breakfast, it was time for school, which began with reciting a verse and singing songs. Ben, Meg, and Mama spoke the verse together:

The sun is in my heart.

It warms me with its power.

It wakens life and love

In bird and beast and flower.

After singing “Silver and Gold,” they decided to sing “Here We Go ’Round the Mulberry Bush.” Mama, Ben, and Meg joined hands and sang as they danced around in a circle. Chip danced with them, running around and around.

Next, it was time to begin their lessons.

Mama asked, “Do you remember the story Papa told you at bedtime last night?”

“Sure,” said Ben. He explained what the story was about.

Mama said she would like Ben to write about the story in his main lesson book while Meg colored a picture of the story in her main lesson book. As she gave them their books, she said, “These are very special books. Do your work in them very carefully. And keep them up on the table so Chip doesn’t chew them.”

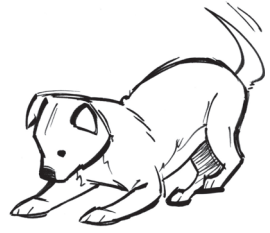
Mama sat down beside Ben and wrote out a few sentences for him to copy. Together they read the sentences aloud and Ben copied them into his main lesson book with

his colored pencils. Meg drew with her block crayons. Mama drew a picture as well.

After Meg, Ben, and Mama completed their lesson, Mama told them to go play while she did her work. Off they ran. Chip went with them, wagging his tail.

Chapter

2



Acorns

Meg and Ben pulled some dress-up clothes out of the big box. Ben put on Papa's old pants and shirt while Meg put on one of Mama's old dresses. Meg found a blanket and threw it over a table. Now they had their very own house.

Ben and Meg got some of their toys and put them under the table. They got under the table and pulled the blanket down around them. They felt very cozy under there.

All of a sudden, Chip poked his head into their playhouse!

Meg said, “Why don’t we let him come in? Maybe he will be good.”

Ben said, “Meg, you know he won’t!”

Mama said she would put Chip outside to run around.

Pretty soon, Papa came home for lunch. He called, “Meg, Ben, where are you?”

“Come and find us,” said Meg.

Papa looked everywhere, but he could not find them.

Finally, Ben jumped out and said, “Boo!” Papa was very surprised.

They all helped make lunch. Papa and Meg set the table while Ben helped Mama cook.

“What have you two done

today?” Papa asked when they sat down to eat.

Ben told him about the house they had made and Meg told him how cozy it felt. Papa told them how he used to play house when he was a child. Mama smiled and said she did too.

After lunch, Meg and Ben played in their house until it was time for school.

Mama called, “Ben, Meg, it is reading time.”

Meg had her very own picture book and Ben had a short chapter book. Mama sat down on the floor with Meg on one side and Ben on the other. Ben began to read to Mama. Sometimes Mama had to help him sound out the words.

Ben read two whole pages by himself.

Mama said that was very good. “Let’s stop here, and we will read some more tomorrow. Now let’s go outside to find some acorns.”

“Why?” asked Ben.

“I want to show you how the squirrels gather acorns for the winter,” said Mama.

There were two big oak trees in their backyard. The oak trees dropped a lot of acorns. Acorns grow into oak trees. Ben and Meg often saw squirrels and chipmunks racing up and down the tree trunks, gathering the nuts. Meg and Chip ran out the door and found the first acorn. Soon Ben found some too.



Mama had a bag, and Ben and Meg gathered many acorns. They ran back and forth with Chip chasing them, giving Mama the acorns. Soon the bag was full.

“Let’s sit down here and play a game,” said Mama.

“What kind of game?” asked Meg.

Mama gave Meg a handful of acorns and asked her to put them in two piles.

“Now,” said Mama, “I want you to count the acorns in this pile, Ben.”

Ben counted: 1, 2, 3, 4.

Mama said, “Now count the acorns in this pile.”

Ben counted: 1, 2.

Mama asked, “How many acorns are in both piles?”

Ben counted: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

“Good,” said Mama. “If you add four acorns and two acorns, you have six acorns. When we go inside, I will write this on paper for you.”

Ben was very excited. They played for a long time, with Meg making piles of acorns and Ben counting and adding them together.

Soon it was time to go inside.

Mama brought out Ben’s main lesson book and colored pencils and wrote five addition problems in his

book. Then it was his turn to write the answers. Mama gave him the bag of acorns so he could use them if he needed to. When Ben finished his math problems, he drew a border of acorns around the page. He was very pleased with his work.