



Goat Quotes & Proverbs

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“In the silence, I could hear the distinct sound of goats maa-ing in the barn. Lying there listening to them made me smile, too. I'd always loved goats - every one of them different from every other one, and all of them goofy and playful.”

- Steve Watkins in *What Comes After*



"I love you more than I love goats, and you know how I feel about goats", Gaby said.

- James Patterson in *The Christmas Wedding*



"From sunrise to sunset, I was in the forest, sometimes far from the house, with my goat who watched me as a mother does a child. All the animals in the forest became my friends, even dangerous and poisonous ones. Thanks to my goat-mother and my Indian nurse, I have always enjoyed the trust of animals--a precious gift. I still love animals infinitely more than human beings."

- Diego Rivera in *My Art, My Life*



"She found that life in the cottage wasn't entirely straightforward. There was the matter of the goats' names, for example.

'But they've got to have names!' she said. 'Everything's got a name.'

Granny looked at her around the pear-shaped flanks of the head nanny, while the milk squirted into the low bucket.

'I daresay they've got names in Goat,' she said vaguely. 'What do they want names in Human for?'

'Well,' said Esk, and stopped. She thought for a bit. 'How do you make them do what you want, then?'

'They just do, and when they want me they holler.'

Esk gravely gave the head goat a wisp of hay. Granny watched her thoughtfully. Goats did have names for themselves, she well knew: there was 'goat who is my kid', 'goat who is my mother,' 'goat who is herd leader,' and half a dozen other names not least of which was 'goat who is this goat.' They had a complicated herd system and four stomachs and a digestive system that sounded very busy on still nights, and Granny had always felt that calling all this Buttercup was an insult to a noble animal."

- Terry Pratchett in *Equal Rites*



"I'm a goat, I'm a goat, with a kid by my side,
The common's my pasture, and its long and wide ;
Up up with my tail, let it wag o'er the lea,
I'm a goat, I'm a goat, and like to be free ;
I fear none of your dogs, I heed not their claw,
I'm a stunner at jumping, a beggar at jaw,
And ne'er like a coward or slave will I kneel
While there's spring in my legs and a jerk in my tail ;
Up, up with my tail, let it wag o'er the lea,
I'm a goat, I'm a goat, and the devil take me.
I think nought of a fence, I can top a good wall.
And walk into greens, their flowers and all;
But oft an old dame, who can handle the broom,
Were she smart enough would soon settle our doom :
While stones like hail around us may fall,
They may strike, they may bruise, but they cannot appall ;
With clear sky above us, and a footing below.
Like devils bewitch'd right onward we go;
Hurrah! my dear friends, ye may watch, ye may sleep.

Yet into your gardens we always will creep;
Our tail of defiance still wags o'er the lea,
I'm a goat, I'm a goat, and a devil I be."
- Australian folk song (1873)



"But...that doesn't make any sense...!"
'It does if you're a goat.'"
- Linda Medley in *Castle Waiting, Volume 2*



"If goats had a word for delicious, it would have two meanings. The first would be: I like this. The second would be: This is what my body needs. For goats, they are the same thing."
- Mark Schatzker in *The Dorito Effect*



"'I saw goats. A party can't be all bad when you have goats,' Lucy said."
- Mary Jane Hathaway in *Persuasion, Captain Wentworth and Cracklin' Cornbread*



"All goats are mischievous thieves, gate-crashers, and trespassers. Also they possess individual character, intelligence, and capacity for affection which can only be matched by the dog. Having once become acquainted with them I would

as soon farm without a dog as without a goat."

- David Mackenzie in *Farmer in the Western Isles*



"It was one thing to get used slowly to Melmoth's strange scent, admiring him for his adventures and his courage. Letting him teach them things was something else again. After all, Melmoth talked almost like a goat, and every suckling lamb knows that goats are crazy."

- Leonie Swann in *Three Bags Full; a Sheep Detective Story*



"Do you know many gods?"

'I've seen the thundergods a few times', said Granny. 'And Hoki, of course.'

'Hoki?'

Granny chewed a crustless sandwich. 'Oh, he's a nature god,' she said.

'Sometimes he manifests himself as an oak tree, or half a man and half a goat, but mainly I see him in his aspect as a bloody nuisance. You only find him in the deep woods, of course. He plays the flute. Very badly, if you must know.'

- Terry Pratchett in *Equal Rights*



"That late have skipt and wanton'd rapidly
Upon the craggy cliffs, ere they had ta'en
Their supper on the herb, now silent lie

And ruminates beneath the umbrage brown,
Upon his staff, and leaning watches them:
And as the swain, that lodges out all night
In quiet by his flock, lest beast of prey
Disperse them: even so all three abode,
I as a goat, and as the shepherds they,
Close pent on either side by shelving rock."
- Dante Alighieri in *The Divine Comedy*



"The Cyclops' isle, nor yet far off doth lie.
Men's want it suffer'd, but the men's supplies
The goats made with their inarticulate cries.
Goats beyond number this small island breeds,
So tame, that no access disturbs their feeds,
No hunters, that the tops of mountains scale,
And rub through woods with toil, seek them at all."
- Homer in *The Odyssey*



"Leading a jet-black goat white-horned, white-hooved."
- Tennyson in *OEnone*



"There is, indeed, a fine independence of character about the goat which separates it by many parasangs from the sheep. The latter lives placidly by faith, and seems assured of redemption; the former is possessed by the restless

genius of unbelief. You cannot keep goats on the level road, even though you take the greatest possible pains to show them the farmyard and the fold at the end of it. They detest the commonplace. Rather than plod safely home by the regular way, they prefer to travel adventurously by paths of their own. By choice, they take the ups and downs of life; and when they do not find them ready made for them, they make them for themselves. If there is a heap of stones by the roadside, they get up on it—their spirits at once rise and find themselves on an eminence: and till the herdsman comes up they snatch a precious half-minute in playing 'Tom Tiddler's Ground.' If there is a ditch it is just the same. As many goats as possible get down into it and pretend it was in their way. They get among the sheep, and deliberately disorder the woolly procession. They jump over the sheep's backs to show their indifference to orthodoxy."

- Phil Robinson in *The Poet's Beasts*



"And MacTavish was there when Geoffrey found Mephistopheles. One of the old nanny goats had given birth, and while she had two healthy kids, there was a third kid hidden in the straw, a little runt that its mother had rejected.

'I'm going to try to save this little goat,' Geoffrey declared. And he spent all night laboring to keep the newborn alive, squeezing milk from its mother and letting the little kid lick it off his finger until it slept peacefully beside him in a broken-up bale of hay, which kept them both warm.

He is such a small thing, Geoffrey thought, looking into the kid's letter-box eyes. I must give him a chance.

And the kid responded, and grew into a strong young goat with a devilish kick. He would follow Geoffrey everywhere, and lower his head and prepare to charge anyone he thought threatened his young master. Since this often meant anyone

within reach, many a servant or visitor found themselves skipping rather smartly out of the way when faced with the goat's lowered horns.

'Why did thee call that hell-goat Mephistopheles?' asked MavTavish one day.

'I read it in a book. You can tell it's a very good name for a goat,' Geoffrey replied."

- Terry Pratchett in *The Shepherd's Crown*



"Can I take Mephistopheles with me?' Geoffrey asked.

Nanny spun on her heels. 'Mephiswhat?' she said slowly.

'My goat,' Geoffrey said, pointing toward the paddock, where Mephistopheles was investigating the remains of the dandelion patch. 'Or rather, he is his own goat, but we travel together. He is a very clever companion.'

Nanny snorted.

'See,' Geoffrey added proudly as they watched Mephistopheles daintily cross the paddock and nose open the door of the little shed by the beech tree. 'He has even learned to use the privy.'

And Nanny—for once in her life—was speechless."

- Terry Pratchett in *The Shepherd's Crown*



“When Geoffrey was away, the goat often took himself off. He had soon got the goats at Granny’s cottage doing his bidding, and Nanny Ogg said once that she had seen what she called ‘that devil goat’ sitting in the middle of a circle of feral goats up in the hills. She named him ‘The Mince of Darkness’ because of his small and twinkling hooves, and added, ‘Not that I don’t like him, stinky as he is. I’ve always been one for the horns, as you might say. Goats is clever. Sheep ain’t. No offence, my dear.’”

– Terry Pratchett in *The Shepherd’s Crown*



"I walked around him in a circle three times to the left, walked around him three times in a circle to the right, then three leaps in the air, like the wild goats of Wicklow when a wise goat among their numbers falls silent."

- Leonie Swann in *Three Bags Full; a Sheep Detective Story*



The Pleiades is a high-visibility, seven-star cluster in the constellation Taurus. In Greek mythology it was known as the Seven Sisters, in Norse myth the stars were Freya’s hens. But in Spain the Pleiades were once called the Seven She-Goats; Sancho Panza spoke of them in the classic tale of Don Quixote:

“And so it fell out that we passed close by where the seven she-goats are kept; and truly, having been a goatherd in my youth, I no sooner saw them but I longed to play with them awhile; and had I not done so, I verily think that I should have died; so what does I but, without saying a word, softly slide down from Clavileno, and play with the sweet little creatures, which are like so many violets, for almost three-quarters of an hour.”

- Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra's *Don Quixote de la Mancha*



"Tiffany wasn't alone in thinking that the breath of a cow, warm and smelling of grass, was a kind of medicine in itself.

The goats in the dungeon were nearly as good, though. They sat placidly chewing their supper over and over again, while never taking their solemn gaze off her, as if they expected her to start juggling or doing some kind of song-and-dance act."

- Terry Pratchett in *I Shall Wear Midnight*



"[Goats] have long hair hanging down from the chin, which is called by us aruncus. If any one of the flock is taken hold of and dragged by this hair, all the rest gaze on in stupid astonishment...madness in he-goats, they say, may be effectually calmed by stroking the beard; and if the beard is cut off, the goat will never stray to another flock."

- Pliny the Elder (AD 23 – AD 79)



"A he-goat is suitable for breeding when he is seven months old, since his passion knows no bounds: even while sucking he will try to mount his mother. So it is inevitable that he ages rapidly before the age of six, having exhausted himself with premature lust while still in the prime of youth, and by the time he is five is considered less than suitable for impregnating she-goats."

- Columella in *De Re Rustica* (1st century AD)



“The goat is superior to the sheep both in sentiment and dexterity. He approaches man spontaneously, and is easily familiarized. He is sensible of caresses, and capable of a considerable degree of attachment. He is stronger, lighter, more agile, and less timid than the sheep. He is a sprightly, capricious, wandering, lascivious animal. It is with difficulty that he can be confined to a flock.”

- Georges-Louis Leclerc the Comte de Buffon (1707-1788) in *Buffon's Natural History: General and Particular*



“You will have a warmer bed in amongst the goats than among the sheep, because the goats will be quieter and will creep up towards you; for the goat is more impatient of cold than the sheep.”

- Aristotle in *History of Animals*, written around 343 B.C



"There is a remarkable thing about these animals, and even Archelaus is authority for the statement: some shepherds who have watched quite closely claim that goats do not breathe, as other animals do, through the nostrils, but through the ears.”

- Varro (116 B.C. - 27 B.C.) in *De Rustica, Book II*



"Mister Patrick McGuinty

An Irishman of note,
Came into a fortune and
Bought himself a goat.
Said he, "Sure of goat milk,
I aim to have my fill."
But when he got his nanny home,
He found it was a Bill.

Now Pat McGinty's goat
Had a wondrous appetite,
And often for breakfast
He'd eat some dynamite.
A box full of sparklers
He'd swallow with a grin
And when he'd had his fill of that
He drank some paraffin.

He sat down by the fireside,
He didn't give a hang.
He swallowed a spark
And exploded with a bang.
So when you get to heaven
You can bet your dollar note
That the angel with the whiskers on
Is Pat McGinty's goat."

- *Paddy McGinty's Goat* (American folk song)



"There was a small flock of goats, technically led by Stinky Sam, who had a shed of his own and was kept on a chain, but really led by Black Meg, the senior

nanny who patiently allowed Tiffany to milk her and then, carefully and deliberately, put a hoof in the milk bucket.

That's a goat's idea of getting to know you. A goat is a worrying thing if you're used to sheep, because a goat is a sheep with *brains*. But Tiffany had met goats before, because a few people in the village kept them for their milk, which was very nourishing. And she knew that with goats you had to use persicology. If you got excited, and shouted, and hit them (hurting your hand, because it's like slapping a sack full of coat hangers), then they had Won and sniggered at you in goat language, which is almost all sniggering anyway."

- Terry Pratchett in *A Hat Full of Sky*



Goat Proverbs and Sayings

If you put a silk dress on a goat she is still a goat.

~ Irish

Look for the black goat while it's still daylight.

~ Nigerian

Beware of the goat that is in the lion's lair.

~ Bambara

The goat that climbs up the rock also has to go down.

~ Creole (Southern U.S.)

Goats cannot live in a herd of leopards.

~ African

The quarrel of the sheep doesn't concern the goats.

~ African

When the big tree falls, the goat eats its leaves.

~ African

The wolf and the dog agree about the goat -- which together they eat.

~ Basque

Do not cook the goat's young in the goat's milk.

~ Chadian

If the goat had a longer tail he could wipe the stars clean.

~ Czech

If the beard meant everything, the goat would preach.

~ Danish

Better a goat that gives milk than a cow that does not.

~ Estonian

A prudent man does not make the goat his gardener.

~ Hungarian

If you go into a goat stable, bleat; if you go into a water buffalo stable, bellow.

~ Indonesian

Do not mistake a goat's beard for a fine stallion's tail.

~ Irish

When the goat goes to church, he does not stop till he gets to the altar.

~ Irish

Don't approach a goat from the front, a horse from the back, or a fool from any side.

~ Yiddish

Just because he harmed your goat, do not kill his bull.

~ Kenyan

Nobody gathers firewood to roast a thin goat.

~ Kenyan

The older the goat the tighter the tether.

~ Lithuanian

Blow your horn in a herd of elephants, crow in the company of cockerels, bleat in a flock of goats.

~ Malawian

The sheep drinks but it's the goat that gets drunk.

~ Martiniquais

If the owner of the goat is not afraid to travel by night, the owner of a hyena certainly will not be.

~ Nigerien

The cry of the hyena and the loss of the goat are one.

~ Nigerien

One goat cannot carry another goat's tail.

~ Nigerian

When you are sick you promise a goat, but when you are well again make do
with a chicken.

~ Nigerian

Even goats will jump on a slanted tree.

~ Polish

The goat must browse where she is tied.

~ Romanian

The heart is like a goat that has to be tied up.

~ South African

Where there are no sheep, they call the goat princess.

~ Turkish

The more the buck goat stinks, the more the nanny goat loves him.

~ Walloon

It's no use going to the goat's house to look for wool

~ Irish

If you're short of trouble, take a goat.

~ Finnish

He who lets the goat be laid on his shoulders is soon after forced to carry the
cow.

~ Italian

The goat becomes the professor whenever teachers can't be found.

~ Turkish

A he-goat is known by his horns.

~ Hungarian

A lame goat will not sleep by day.

~ Spanish

By candlelight a goat looks like a lady.

~ French

Every kid is a gazelle in the eyes of its mother."

~ Moorish

In time, even a goat can be taught to dance.

~ Yiddish

A noisy goat gives little milk.

~ Polish

A goat with long horns, even if he does not butt, will be accused of butting.

~ Malay

If being well bearded brings happiness, a he-goat must be happier than any of us.

~ Italian

They who don't keep goats and yet sell kids, where do they get them?

~ Spanish

What sweet nanny goat a go run him belly
(What tastes good to a goat will ruin his belly)

~ Jamaican

Wherever a goat goes, her kid follows.

~ Mzab

Judge not the goat by his horns.

~ Chinese

The goat that stayed with a deer learned farting.

~ Ethiopian

An old goat will never learn to dance.

~ Moroccan

In a goat's eyes all things belong to goats.

~ Cornish

Horns are not heavy for a goat.

~ Ethiopian Proverb

The goat feeds where he is tied.

~ Jamaican

Even the humblest goat is useful.

~ Haitian

If you want milk, feed the goat.

~ Jamaican

It's no use going to the goat's house to buy wool.

~ Irish

The little billy goat has a beard, the big one has none.

(Don't judge a book by its cover).

~ Jamaican

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