



Book 7:  
Michelle & Adee: Butter Buds  
By Brian Combs

The Homestead Kids Book Series  
[www.thehomesteadkidsbooks.com](http://www.thehomesteadkidsbooks.com)

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## Chapter 1 – Higher than Expected

With some effort, 9-year-old Michelle positioned her foot on the next branch up and pulled herself up onto the branch. She was higher up than ever before and felt really smart and cool for having made it so high. She could see so much of the farm around her. It was so neat up here!

But how was she going to get down?

Adee, below, was cheering and shouting, “Higher! Higher!”. This whole thing had started when Adee had been talking to her sisters about the nest she could see but couldn’t reach in the big pine

near Rosie's thinking tree. Adee, newly 7 years old thought her older sisters could do anything. Most of the time she thought it nicely, but boy was she jealous sometimes. She could hardly wait to be 9 like Michelle, or better yet, 11 like Rosie. Both girls had recently had birthday's and Adee really wished she were older like them.

Rosie had a completely different idea going through her mind. She nervously kept thinking *What goes up, must come down. And how on earth is she going to get down? Up is so much easier.* She didn't say anything though, she just watched, wondering where all this might lead today. She didn't think 'Chelle would make it to the nest - surely not - it was way too high.

Michelle was thinking the same thing. From down on the ground the nest hadn't seemed too horribly high. But as high up as she'd made it, the nest didn't seem one little bit closer. She examined the limbs above her and considered them. They were so cluttered with branches and pine needles, there was practically no room for her on the next branch up. Plus, closer to the



nest she noticed the branches got smaller around and she wondered if they would even hold her.

She looked down at Adee's hopeful face and shook her head. She loved being a big sister – especially when Adee wanted her to do something strong and crazy like this. How was she going to get out of this mess without Adee thinking she chickened out?

The problem was suddenly solved as the branch under her feet gave a very loud "CRACK!" and with a shriek she went plummeting towards the ground. Her fall was slow and painful though as the branches were so thick she kept hitting against them, slowing her down.

"AAHHHHHHHH!!!"

"CHELLE!"

"NOOOOO!"

Michelle tried to grab some of the branches to catch herself but the bark was so bumpy and coarse, and had so many wispy branches jutting out everywhere that she couldn't get a grip before she was already

passing it. The attempt did slow her down at least a little, but not nearly enough.

Rosie, at the very last moment thought to yell out "Roll! Try to roll when you land!" But, while it was excellent advice, it was given too late.

WHOMP!

Michelle hit the ground hard, nearly flat on her back. She laid there for a moment, not moving, feeling oddly separated from her body. She didn't feel any pain. She should though, shouldn't she?

Rosie leaned over Michelle and asked, "Are you okay?"

Michelle turned her head to look at Rosie and tried to speak. Suddenly, with a panic, she realized she had no air. She couldn't talk because she couldn't breathe. The panic on her face alarmed Rosie more than the fall.

"I don't think she can breathe!" Rosie said to Adee. "I've got to get Mom or Dad...we need help quick! Stay here with her." And with that, Rosie took off with a mad dash towards the house.



Before she even reached the clearing she was calling, screaming, as loud as she could, "MOM! DAD! HELP! HELP! SOMEBODY HELP!"

Dad came running out of the barn dropping some tools behind him as he ran towards the sound. Seeing him, Rosie yelled, "It's Michelle! She fell out of the tree and she can't breathe!" And she immediately took off running back towards Michelle, Dad in hot pursuit behind her. Mom had come out the house door just in time to hear Rosie's last words. She ran back in for her shoes and grabbed a bottle of water, and then she too raced out the door.

Dad and Rosie raced to where they saw Michelle lying flat on the ground; Adee beside her wringing her hands. Dad knelt beside her, her eyes were open and looking at him. He took a moment catching his breath and looking at Michelle intently. As his eyes noted her small chest rising and falling as she breathed, he breathed a sigh of relief himself. Finally, he managed to calmly ask with a smile to help Michelle stay calm also, "You doing okay down there?"

"DAD!" Rosie yelled, "she can't breathe!"

"I can breathe," Michelle said in a very quiet rasp, "I think the fall just knocked out all the air I had anywhere in me, plus some of tomorrows," she added with a small smile. "That was awful."

Dad smiled with even more relief to hear her tone, and shook his head, "It was certainly more excitement than I'd counted on today. Rosie nearly scared the daylights out of us racing in the way she did. One thing is for sure, she'd be a handy person to have around if it really was a life-threatening emergency." He leaned sideways into Rosie where she knelt beside him.

Mom came running up the path just then and slowed down as she neared them and saw the emergency was over. She stopped a short distance away to catch her breath and put one hand on her aching back and another to her slightly swollen belly. She was several months into her pregnancy, and it was amazing that she'd been able to run as she had. Taking a deep breath, she

joined the group surrounding Michelle much more slowly, "Oh good! I was hoping this would be the case." Mom knelt down on the other side of Michelle, "You just got the wind knocked out of you?" she asked, gently running her fingers over Michelle's head, lifting it up and feeling the back of it.

Michelle nodded, "It's coming back, but boy, it knocked it all out of me."

"Hey," Michelle added, "How did you know I'd got the breath knocked out of me?"

Michelle's Mom and Dad laughed, "You're not the first kid to fall from a tree." Mom said, "I may have taken a tumble or two in my younger days," Mom laughed.

"You?!" Adee and Rosie looked shocked

"Yes, me. Dad too. We were young once you know." Mom gave Adee's ponytail a twirl then continued, "What about the rest of you," Mom asked, "anything else hurt?"

Michelle shook her head no. Dad reached out to help her into a sitting position but as he went to take one of her

hands he pulled back, "Whoa! That can't feel too good!" he said. He gently grasped her wrist and held it out for Mom to look at the hand.

'Oh sweetheart, that looks rough.'" Mom said sympathetically, "We'll get it all cleaned up when you get home." She and Dad both helped her sit up and Mom took the lid off the bottle of water and handed it to her.

Michelle took a grateful drink. She hadn't realized how dry her throat was until the moment she noticed the water. She was desperately dry. She'd drunk half the bottle of water before she finally stopped. She tested her voice, "How's that?"

Rosie and Adee smiled at her, "Sounds a lot better than before!" Adee with both concern and relief in her voice. It had been awful watching her sister just lie there so still.

Michelle carefully stood up, stretching and twisting to see if anything else hurt. She figured she'd gotten a few bruises on her back on the way down from

hitting some of the branches, but otherwise she felt okay.

She looked up, up, up to see where she had fallen from on the tree. Hmm, from down here, it didn't seem nearly as high up as it had seemed from up there. She sighed. All this excitement and she didn't even fall from that high up. She looked at her hands, and almost immediately they began to sting from the scrapes and cuts along her arms and hands.

Mom put her arm around her shoulder and walked her towards the house, the rest of the family following along behind, "We'll get those cleaned up at the house. What made you climb that tree of all the trees out here? These pines are not good for climbing at all!"

Adee, having heard the question, chimed in, "Oh Mom, there was a nest up there, but it was such a small nest. I was hoping we could find out what kind of bird was building it, or if there were any eggs in the nest."

"Well then," Dad interjected, "This whole adventure really was a mistake

because you girls know that if humans get around the nest the mommy and daddy birds might not come back to them because they might sense danger in the human smell around the nest. Nature is wonderful to observe, but we don't want to interfere. You all knew better." He turned his head eyeing Rosie and Adee both sternly, and Michelle kept her face forward so she wouldn't see Dad's disappointed look.

Finally, Michelle said, "We know Dad, maybe me falling was God's way of protecting the birds, without any of us getting too hurt?"

Dad chuckled, "I don't know that God would have knocked you out of the tree like that, but while God loves you more than those birds, He does love those birds. He wouldn't put you in real danger from a fall, but perhaps He would bobble you out of the tree to protect them." He and Mom exchanged a look as they both wondered about what Dad was saying.

"Wait," said Adee, "Remember that old rooster that was chasing our baby chicks and pecking at them last week? Was God

mad at him and that's why he disappeared?"

The whole family stopped walking and looked at Adee in surprise. Adee had been having supper at a friend's house last week when Dad, Michelle and Rosie all worked together to butcher and pluck the rooster. They had eaten him for supper and Mom had made him into several jars of chicken soup that she'd canned for later use.

Mom covered her mouth with her hand to hide her laughter. Finally, with a wide grin Dad said, "No. I'm pretty sure that old rooster was just ready to go."

## Chapter 2 – Where is Arizona?

Over the next several days Michelle's hands and arms were a bit stiff with all the cuts. Mom and Grandma Becky had cleaned them all up, but it would be a while before they healed fully.

Today though she was starting to feel better and was outside weeding the garden with Mom, Rosie, Adee and Grandma Becky. Faith was wandering near the edge of the garden playing with the stuffed cat Michelle had given her for her last birthday.

As they worked, Mom just happened to look up and saw their neighbors Mr. and



Mrs. Emerson and their two children, Sarah and Sammy just as they rounded the curve and were walking up the driveway.

They had originally met the Emersons when Mrs. Grace Emerson came by with Sarah to ask permission for Sarah to look for a treasure her dad had buried on the farm. It was an exciting way to meet a new friend, and Rosie and Sarah had been close friends ever since. Grace and Mom had gotten along very well too and enjoyed stopping at each other's place for a for a chat. Both ladies seemed to always have something cool to drink and some cookies on hand during the hot summer.

Mom took the wad of weeds she was holding and put them into the weed bucket they'd put nearby to collect the weeds they'd pulled. They'd take them over to the goats later. The goats always loved the garden weeds. Mom stood up and dusted herself off, waving and calling "Hello!" to the Emersons as they walked up.

Sarah and Sammy at once started running towards the girls. With a look for approval from Mom, the three sisters

dusted themselves off and ran to meet Sarah and Sammy.

The small band of five immediately headed towards the back of the house under the shady shelter of the pines to play. Adee pointed out the nest while Michelle showed off her scratched up arms and dramatically told the story of falling.

"Next time y'all come over for dinner we should play with that slippy slide thing we did for Faith's birthday. That was so much fun." Adee said excitedly referring to tarps Dad had laid out with water and soap on them for the kids to slide all over.

Sarah and Sammy looked at each other. "That's actually why we're here today," Sarah said. At Adee's confused look she rushed on, "Not for the slippy slide, but to tell you guys our news. We won't be able to have many more of those fun visits anymore because we're moving."

"No!" Rosie said, sitting down abruptly. "Moving? Where?"

"A long ways away. At least it feels like it. My Dad got a really great job offer, but it's in Arizona, so we have to move

there. And soon too." Sarah said sadly. "It's a great job. Dad's shown us lots of neat things he'll get to do and there's lots of neat places in Arizona to explore too, which is nice. But I'm sure going to miss being able to just hang out with y'all like we used to." She sat down next to Rosie, and the two girls each put an arm around the other and sat quietly.

"What about all your animals?" Michelle asked. "Can you actually load up all those animals and haul them to Arizona?"

"Nope," Sammy answered. "We might get to take some of them, but Dad said for the first year we might actually be living in a city! Imagine the animals all smushed together in some back yard in the city." The kids all laughed imagining it.

The next several minutes they threw out odd scenarios the animals might be in in the city. Adee suggested horses looking over the neighbor's privacy fences. Sarah offered the idea of the goats escaping and climbing the neighbors' cars. When Rosie described in vivid detail one of the roosters

jumping the fence and chasing the mailman down the road the kids rolled with laughter. The laughter slowly subsided as the sober reality sank in.

It was a simple fact, taking the animals into the city wouldn't be a good idea.

"Maybe your new house will have a pool!" suggested Rosie optimistically.

Just then, the kids heard their moms calling so they hopped up, dusted themselves off, and hurried back to the house.

"What's up Mom?" Michelle asked, as her strong athletic legs had pushed her to the front of the racing pack of friends.

"The Emersons are staying for dinner," Mom answered. She paused as cheers went up among the children. "Y'all set up the picnic table under the shade tree, okay?"

"Can do, Mom!" Rosie responded and led the kids over towards the shade tree.

The "picnic table" was just a large white table that folded up. They would just



unfold it, lock the legs in place and then they used clamps to hold a table cloth down on the corners. It looked like Dad was starting some hamburger meat on the grill.

Inside the house, Mom had Mrs. Emerson slicing some onions and tomatoes, while Mom pulled some homemade hamburger buns from the freezer and began heating them through. Once heated, she'd slice them and put some butter on so Dad could toast them on the grill.

Earlier in the summer when the strawberries were harvested, Mom had canned some concentrated Strawberry Lemonade. All she had to do now, was open 2 of the large quart jars, and add water and ice and it was ready to go.

Adee found herself set to tearing some lettuce, while Rosie opened a jar of cucumbers they'd pickled. She sliced the pickles into rounds and put them in a bowl. She and Michelle hurried all the bowls and plates to the table as moments later Dad was announcing the first burgers were coming off the grill.

Sitting down at the table with the Emersons, Michelle was thrilled with these happy meals they had with friends. It was so much fun when so many people joined at their house and ate and had fun.

Over the meal, the kids listened in as the adults discussed the Emersons' upcoming move, the new job, and the new home that they'd be heading to. Just as the kids were about to get bored, the conversation changed to discussing the different animals they had on their farm and what they'd be needing to do with all of them.

Grace thought that, even in the city, she may be able to keep a few of the hens for eggs, but the large number of hens they had was far more than what they felt they could safely keep in the city. Plus, Grace had extra hens since they regularly sold their eggs at the farmer's market.

"I've been thinking about getting us involved in the farmer's market, but just hadn't looked into it yet," Dad said. The girls' eyes widened in excitement. How awesome would it be if they got to go sell

stuff at the farmer's market! Eyes shining, they took in every word as Mr. Emerson explained how Grace sells her breads, and eggs at the market while he sells his goat butter, and cheese and some of their extra garden produce.

Mr. Emerson explained, "There's no limit hardly, to what you can sell at these farmers markets. If it's homemade or handmade, fresh food or produce, people are really interested in buying things that are fresh and local now days, and not cheap plastic gismos, or super processed foods that have a lot of extra chemicals in them that aren't good for us."

Before the Emersons left for the evening, Mr. Emerson and Dad had made plans for the family to visit the next day and look around and consider any extra animals they might want to take on. The girls could hardly wait for tomorrow.

That night as Rosie and Michelle laid in their bed, waiting for Mom and Dad to come say goodnight, Adee slipped in their door and sat on Michelle's bed. "Are you as



excited about tomorrow as I am?" she asked.

Michelle sat up immediately, "I am! I wonder what animals Mom and Dad might let us take home? Did you hear what he said about the farmers market? I keep thinking what I want to make for the market. Can you imagine making money?" Michelle fell backwards on her bed in a dramatic swoon. "This is so cool!"

"I didn't know bedtime was that exciting to you ladies?" Dad joked as he and Mom came in the door.

"Oh Dad," said Adee, "This is so exciting. We want to sell stuff at the farmer's market!"

"Do you?" said Mom with a smile. "What do you think you might sell?" Mom shook her head just a little, clearly these excited children would not be going to sleep any time too soon.

Rosie piped up, "I was thinking," she hesitated, "well, you know all those chunks of wood left over from when you were working on Grandma Becky's trim? I thought, maybe I could sand them, and

stain them, and then put a pretty picture or something on them and laminate them so the picture stays on and won't get scratched."

"I think you mean to lacquer them," Dad suggested, "Lacquer or varnish is something you can paint across a picture and it will protect the photo so it won't get scratched."

"That's it!" Rosie said, "Do you think I could try to do that?" she looked back and forth between Mom and Dad hopefully and waited.

"I don't see why not, but no promises tonight." Dad answered, "How about tonight you, Mom and I all think about it, and sleep on the idea, and see what we think in the morning eh?"

"Okay!" Rosie beamed, "Oh man, this is so exciting!"

"What about us?" Michelle asked, "What do you think Adee and I could make?"

"I don't know right now," Mom said, "But we can think on that too. Your Grandma Becky always told me that the

easiest way to find something is to look for it. So, if you start looking around with a mind for creating something, I bet you'll find an idea or two."

Michelle looked at Adee, she felt a little excited, but also disappointed she didn't have an idea that she could start planning on already. Adee looked disappointed too.

Before Mom and Dad left, Dad prayed over all of them, that God would give them a creative heart and mind to use the things God has blessed them with to the best of their ability and to show how great God is. He prayed that if they earned extra money, God would also show them opportunities to be generous and helpful to others. By the time he said amen, and goodnight, Michelle was ready to bounce on her bed she was so excited.

The idea that she could do something with God's blessings, and earn money, and actually give and help others? That would be so cool. So grown up. Definitely NOT a little kid thing to do. She snuggled into her warm blanket and closed her eyes, picturing

her and Adee counting their money and then surprising Mom and Dad with a trip to Hawaii, or giving a ton of money to the pastor at church and maybe everyone at church would bring food for a potluck dinner and there'd be a cake saying: "Thanks Michelle and Adee!"

She sighed dreamily.