



Chapter Three by Russ and Kay Hively

Violet immediately knew what her mother meant by, "Now it's your turn." Her mother was standing in front of a spinning wheel feeding wool into the hungry machine. Violet walked over to her mother and took the wool from her hand and began spinning wool into yarn.

The wool used for spinning had already been cleaned. During the cleaning process the fibers had been pulled straight using a comb, which also removed all the burs, seeds and dirt. The wool had also been soaked to remove the oils produced by the animals.

Once these steps were completed the wool was ready for spinning. The wool fibers were fed to the spinning wheel to produce yarn. The spinning wheel being used by her mother was called a walking wheel. Violet had heard others call it a great wheel or a wool wheel, but her mother always called it a walking wheel. She said it was called walking wheel because a person had to walk miles and miles to spin the wool.

Violet held the wool in one hand and used her other hand to turn the wheel, which fed the machine. To get the wool spun into nice even tight yarn, she had to walk in a small triangular pattern to turn the big wheel at the right speed and apply the correct tension to the wool as it was twisted into yarn. The machine was nearly to five feet tall, and the small girl felt tiny standing next to it.

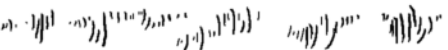
Violet's mother smiled and asked her how she liked the new sheep. Words burst out of Violet's mouth as she told her mother all about watching for the herd from the hilltop, running down the hill and helping close the gate to the pen. She also told her mother about the sheep coming from Portugal.

As Violet talked, her mother stood near the fireplace looking at the stew. The stew was in an iron kettle hanging from a hook over the fire. In the coals of the fire sat a Dutch oven where bread was baking. Her mother checked the bread.

Finding it ready, she picked up the Dutch oven and set it on the wooded plank table using a metal hook.

Violet's mother went to the door and called the men to come and eat. When Violet's father came through the door, he hugged his wife and the two of them whispered for a few seconds. As they came to the table for supper, Violet could see worry on her mother's face.

As everyone ate supper, Thomas told his mother and sister about the trip. This was the biggest adventure the boy had ever had, and he was wound up about all the places he had been and seen. When he finished telling the story, his father added a few details that his son had left out, and then calmly made a startling announcement to the family.



Learn More

- Draw a set of pictures showing the steps it takes to turn wool into yarn. You may need to do some research to find all the steps.
- Mrs. Howard cooked supper in the fireplace. Find out how food preparation and storage has changed since Violet's time. Explain how the changes have improved food safety.
- Pretend you are a visitor to your community. Using your newspaper, write a description you could share with your family "back home" about the town and what happens there.

NEXT WEEK: Chapter 4 – A new adventure.

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