

Grandfather's Wish



Chapter Five by Kay Hively

Miguel and his father ran to the stream. The water was not very deep, but the lamb had become frightened and refused to move. Miguel waded into the current, picked up the lamb and brought it to safety.

The nervous mother moved quickly to its side and urged her baby away from the water.

After the rescue, the shepherds returned to the big rock. All afternoon Miguel thought about the lamb in the water and Thunderbirds flying overhead. He realized how important it was to be a good shepherd. Even if the Thunderbird was harmless, hawks and eagles were not. Only the alertness of the shepherds and the dogs could keep the sheep safe.

The afternoon passed quickly and shadows grew long. Senor Sanchez signaled for the dogs to gather the sheep into a flock and start for home. Miguel and his father picked up their ponchos and their packs. They wanted to be home before dark.

On their way home, Miguel and his father walked together. Senor Sanchez said there would be no trip to the meadow tomorrow. The wool buyer was coming to the village soon so it was time to shear the sheep. Most of the ewes had delivered their lambs so their wool could be taken. Also, the weather was getting warmer and the sheep did not need their big woolly coats.

Shearing sheep was a big job. Neighbors in the valley always came to help.

Classroom Extensions Things to Think About and Do -

- A. Get a map of California and choose a place where you think Miguel may have lived in 1875. Where do you find foothills and meadows?
- B. What do you think will happen to the wool when the sheep are sheared? Make a list of several things that can be made of wool.

STANDARDS – G1:9; G1:4; SS7; SS6; S1; S8

Next Week: Chapter Six - Babies in the barn

Miguel's father said it would take several days of hard work. He explained that wool was what gave the family most of its money for the entire year.

As his father talked about the ewes having their lambs, Miguel thought about his own ewe, safely penned in the barn. Thinking about that, Miguel walked faster, hoping the lambs had come today. He didn't know if he dared hope for twins. But two would make his flock grow faster.

It was 1875 and there were now many breeds of sheep. Like most of the other ranchers, Miguel's father was mixing his Navajo-Churro flock with other breeds. To keep his flock pure, Miguel knew he would have to pasture his sheep away from his father's mixed-breed rams. Miguel was learning there was much to think about when you are becoming a sheep rancher.

On the way back to the ranch, the flock seemed eager to get home. They moved swiftly along the trail. The shepherds and their dogs had very little work to do since the sheep were well behaved.



Soon Miguel could see the ranch house and the little barn where his ewe was waiting. He knew that his mother would have food ready, but first there was work to do. Miguel had to help get the sheep in the corral. Then he could check on his ewe in the little barn.

Miguel wondered what he would find. Would there be just one sheep, or two? He could hardly wait to see.

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