

Grandfather's Wish



Chapter Six by Kay Hively

When his father's sheep were safely in the pen, Miguel ran to see his ewe. Before he even got inside the barn, he could hear the bleating of lambs. From all the noise, it sounded for sure like the ewe had delivered twins. As Miguel leaned over the pen, the ewe looked at him and issued a soft warning for him to stay away. Miguel reached over the top board and softly patted his ewe. As he did, he could see one of the lambs hiding behind its mother.

Patiently he waited and soon a second lamb raised its head. Miguel was delighted. These two would be the start of his own flock. He couldn't wait to get in the pen and hold them, but he knew it would be better to leave them alone for now. After supper, he would come back and get acquainted.

With another pat on the ewe's woolly back, Miguel left the barn and went to the house where his family was waiting. His mother had a plate full of tortillas and little bowls of beans. Miguel washed his hands in the big clay bowl by the back door, then sat down with his parents and his two little brothers.

As the family ate, Miguel told them about his lambs. He was so excited he could hardly eat or listen to anyone else talk.

Finally Miguel quieted down enough for his mother to speak. She said the Padre had come by the ranch in the afternoon. Father Sebastian had told her that in another week there would be a special mass in the little mission town not far

away. The mass would be the Blessing of the Animals. On the same day, the town would have a big fiesta. Everyone would be invited to attend mass and celebrate the coming of spring.

This was thrilling news to Miguel. He had been to only one fiesta. There had been much food and lots of fun. He remembered a pinata and even fireworks.

Miguel's father reminded the family that before they could go to the mass and the fiesta, the sheep had to be shorn. He said everyone had to work hard for the next week.

After the family had eaten, Miguel returned to the barn. He was eager to see his lambs again.

Before going inside, Miguel went to the well and filled a clay pot with water. Then he stopped by the haystack and got an armful of fresh hay.

This time the ewe seemed happy to see Miguel. Perhaps it was because he brought fresh water and hay.

Miguel reached over the side of the pen to fill the water trough. As he did, he discovered something that almost made him fall headfirst into the pen. There were THREE lambs standing on wobbly legs beside their mother.

Miguel was so happy. He had never even thought about three lambs, but that's what he got! He knew that his grandfather would have been happy to see the beginning of a new flock.



Classroom Extensions

Things to Think About and Do -

- Learn how to make a pinata. Plan a party at home or at school and have a pinata as part of the fun.
- What is a Padre? What is a "mass?" What is the "Blessing of the Animals?"

STANDARDS – G2:1; G2:5; G1:9; FA1; SS6; CA7

Next Week: Chapter Seven – Clipping the Wool

Author Kay Hively and Illustrator Billie Gofourth-Stewart are both of Neosho, Missouri. Produced in partnership with this newspaper and the Missouri Press Foundation with support from Verizon Foundation. Copyright 2002.