

Grandfather's Wish



Chapter Two by Kay Hively

When Miguel finished breakfast, he put on his poncho and his sombrero and ran to the little barn. Most ewes had their lambs in the fields, but Miguel wanted his lambs to be born indoors so they had a better chance of surviving.

Senor Sanchez had agreed to let Miguel's ewe stay inside until the babies came. But he said that Miguel would be responsible for taking care of the mother and her lambs.

When Miguel reached the barn, his ewe blatted a welcome. Miguel looked in the pen, but there were no lambs. The ewe's sides still bulged from the lambs she carried. Miguel poured fresh water into a small trough and put fresh hay in the pen.

With one final pat on the ewe's back, Miguel left the barn to go with his father. Today they would graze the sheep close to home and bring them back before dark.

Miguel's father had already opened the gate of the pen where the sheep stayed at night. Hector and Gogo, the two dogs, were moving the sheep out of the corral. As they made their way through the gate, the ewes with lambs encouraged their little ones to stay close.

Gogo raced out of the pen and moved to the front of the flock while Hector stayed in the corral to keep the flock moving. Miguel held the gate open while Senor Sanchez took his place at the head of the flock. Going to the pasture, Miguel's father always led the way.

When the last sheep was out of the pen, Miguel pushed the gate shut and hooked the latch. Taking the shepherd's staff that he kept by the pen, he moved in behind the flock.

Classroom Extensions Things to Think About and Do -

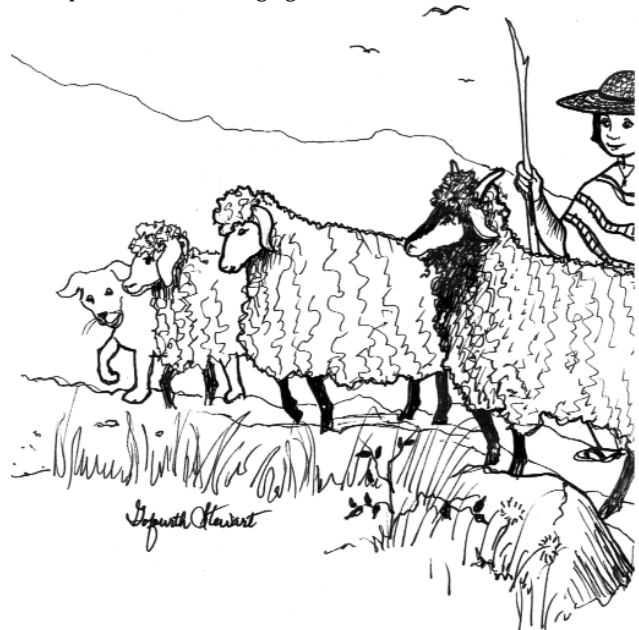
- A. Find a picture of a poncho, then draw and color one for yourself. Choose your favorite design and colors.
- B. Which breeds of dogs are best for herding animals? Name three other jobs that a dog can do for its master.

Next Week: Chapter Three - Danger in the Meadow

As the sheep were herded to pasture, there was very little for Miguel to do except keep up with the flock and watch the dogs. His father gave commands to Gogo and Hector. The two dogs kept the sheep bunched together. Any member of the flock that strayed would be rounded up by one of the dogs and brought back to the fold. The sheep always obeyed Hector and Gogo. The two dogs and the two shepherds kept the little procession moving at a quick pace over a well-worn trail.

Miguel was never bored when he was with the sheep. His greatest entertainment was watching watching Hector and Gogo.

Although the dogs worked hard, they were happiest when they had something to do. Their instinct was to herd animals. The only reward the dogs wanted was something to eat and the pleasure of working again tomorrow.



Miguel thought the dogs looked sad when things were quiet and all they had to do was rest.

Miguel admired the loyalty of the dogs. He knew that if a shepherd or his sheep were in trouble, the dogs were there to help. Hector and Gogo were very brave. They would fight a coyote or even a mountain lion to protect Miguel and his father and the sheep.

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.