

A HUNTER'S HEART



CHAPTER FIVE ~ BY KAY HIVELY

All morning Sam and his father worked around the farm. Sam and his father had plenty to do. Winter was coming and there were fences to fix, barns and sheds to clean, and animals to care for. After dinner, Mr. Pittman went to work cleaning a horse stall in the barn.

The Pittman family had more sheep than anything else. Sam liked sheep, especially during lambing time. Often he would sleep all night in the barn waiting for the ewes to give birth to their lambs. Sometimes a new mother would reject her lamb. When that happened, Sam became the lamb's mother. He used a bottle to feed the lambs that were abandoned.

Today Sam's job was to continue working on the fence around the sheep pen. While he was wrapping wire around a post, he spotted a man on a mule coming down the road. It was Charles Burden, Old Drum's master.

When the mule loped into the yard, Sam's father came out of the barn to speak to his neighbor. Sam heard Mr. Burden say that more sheep had been killed. He said this time the sheep were taken in the middle of the day, not at night. Mr. Burden said he was riding around telling farmers to keep an extra watch on their animals.

Leaving his job at the fence, Sam stood listening to the men talk. Mr. Pittman introduced Sam to Charles Burden. Mr. Pittman said that Sam admired Old Drum. Mr. Burden smiled and said that Old Drum was a great hunter and a very good watch dog. He said if a stray animal came onto his farm, Drum would give it a rough welcome.

Sam said he hoped to get a dog some day, and he would like to have one just like Drum. Mr. Burden told Sam that a dog like Drum was hard to find. He said he didn't think there was another dog anywhere like Drum.

Mr. Burden tapped Sam on his shoulder and wished him luck, then the two men shook hands. Mr. Burden mounted his mule.

He said he had to move along because there were other neighbors to tell about the sheep killer that was running the countryside.

Mr. Pittman told Sam to finish his work on the fence and then put the sheep away for the night. Although it was still early, Sam's father was determined to protect his sheep. Sam knew they would have to be more watchful, now that something was killing animals during the day.

As he worked on the broken fence rail, Sam thought to himself that if he had a dog, it could help watch and care for the sheep. The more he thought about a dog, the more Sam wanted one.

There just had to be some way to get a dog! But for now Sam just didn't know how he could make it happen.



Author Kay Hively and Illustrator Billie Gofourth-Stewart are both of Neosho, Missouri. Produced in partnership with this newspaper and the Missouri Press Foundation. Copyright 2005.

LEARNING EXTENSIONS

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT AND DO ~

- Old Drum is a hunting dog. Do some research and make a list of 10 different breeds of dogs that are used for hunting. Which of these dogs do you think is the best looking?
- Do you think Sam will get a dog? Write a short paper telling what you would do to get a dog if you were Sam. Tell what you would name your dog.