

Ode to Joy



Chapter Five – by Kay Hively

Helen Blackhorse stepped upon the porch and took the blanket off her arm. She draped it around Alice's shoulders and told her she looked beautiful. As Alice put her arms around the old woman, she saw a familiar face. Susan, the little girl with the doll, was standing behind her grandmother.

Thomas had brought them to the trading post. Grandmother had a new blanket to trade, and Susan had come just to see Alice.

Alice asked if Susan could stay all day. Thomas nodded yes. He said he would take Grandmother home soon, and then take his daughter, Sitsi, home in late afternoon.

The two girls said goodbye to Grandmother and hurried into the apartment where the Palmer family lived. Mother was happy to see Susan. She promised the girls a tea party in the afternoon.

Susan had brought her wooden doll, so Alice got into her little trunk and took out the rag doll her mother had made for her. She also had some extra clothes. The girls had fun dressing the dolls in different clothes. All morning the two girls laughed and played.

After the girls had eaten their lunch, Susan noticed the piano. Alice asked Susan if she would like to hear music. The little Navajo girl nodded her head yes.

Alice sat on the bench and began to play "Ode to Joy." Susan's eyes became very wide, and she never quit smiling all the time Alice was playing. Mother asked Susan if she would like to try. At first, Susan said no, but then she took a seat on the bench beside Alice. When Susan touched a key and a note sounded, she jumped in surprise. That made her and Alice laugh very hard.

Mother took Susan's hands and moved them over the keys to show that each key made a different sound. Susan loved the piano and Mother said she had natural talent. Then Mrs. Palmer asked Susan if she would like to learn to play the piano and make real music.

Susan said she wanted to play like Alice.

After their tea party in mid-afternoon, the girls returned to play with their dolls. Soon, however, Thomas knocked on the door. It was time for Susan to go home. The two girls hugged goodbye and Susan left with her father.

A few minutes later, Alice went to her room and found Susan's wooden doll. Alice knew her friend would miss her doll. So quickly, Alice slipped out of the trading post and started down the trail toward Grandmother's hogan. But in only a few moments,

Alice realized it was getting dark and she wasn't sure this was the right trail.

Changing her mind, she took another trail, but nothing looked familiar. The sky was getting darker and darker and Alice realized that she was lost and alone in the desert.



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Things to Think About and Do

- Alice had a rag doll that her mother had made. Ask someone to help you make a doll. You may use cloth or wood, or even paper. Organize a doll show in your school and ask friends to bring dolls for display.
- Alice has gotten lost in the desert. If you could advise Alice, what would you tell her to do before she left the trading post to find Susan. Have you ever been on a hike? How did you find your way to safety?

STANDARDS: G2:1; G2:5; G4:6; S:8; S:7;

Next Week: Chapter Six – Singing in the Dark