

Ode to Joy



Chapter Six – by Kay Hively

Not only was Alice lost in the desert, she was cold. When the sun goes down in the desert, the air usually becomes very cold. Alice had no sweater or jacket to keep her warm. All she had was the little wooden doll that belonged to Susan.

Alice was becoming more and more afraid. She did not know what to do. She could not walk along the trail because she could not see. She remember there were cliffs where she might fall.

Finally, Alice began to shout for help. She cried out several times but got no answer back. Over and over, Alice cried for help. No one could hear her calls.

Taking the little doll in her arms, Alice sat down on a big rock. As she sat in the cold darkness, she thought about animals that live in the desert. She knew about rattlesnakes and cougars. Pa and Thomas had told her to be careful because there were snakes and spiders and other animals that could harm her.

Alice tried to think of nicer things. She thought about her parents and about her new friends. She thought about how much she liked living at the trading post. And she thought about her little piano.

Suddenly the wind began to blow and the air became even colder. Alice pressed the little doll closer to her heart and talked to it, telling it not to be afraid and to go to sleep. Then she began singing to the little doll. She knew two songs her mother used to sing to her at bedtime.

Singing the songs made Alice feel better.

Then Alice remembered her favorite piano piece, and she began to hum “Ode to Joy.” Over and over she hummed the tune until she fell asleep with the little doll in her arms.

But, in only a few moments, Alice was awakened by a loud noise. Then she thought she saw something move in some nearby rocks. Could it be a cougar or a hungry coyote? Thinking it might be a wild animal, Alice could no longer hold back her tears. She clutched the doll tighter and tighter to her body and sobbed, thinking she would never see her parents again. Finally Alice stopped crying and began to hum “Ode to Joy” one more time. And that was when she heard someone call her name. When she recognized her father’s voice, Alice scrambled to her feet and called back. In only a moment, Pa and Thomas found Alice standing beside the big rock.

Pa lifted his daughter up in his arms and kissed her many times. Alice hugged her father’s neck and cried for joy.

Thomas was happy to see Alice, too. He said he had heard her voice making the same music that had come from the piano. That is how he was able to find her in the dark.

Pa said it was that music that allowed him to get his daughter back safely. That little song truly was an ode to joy, Pa said.



Author Kay Hively and Illustrator Billie Gofourth-Stewart are both of Neosho, Missouri.
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Things to Think About and Do

- The desert is very hot so why does it often get cold at night?
What is the largest desert in the world? How big is it?
What is the largest desert in the United States? How big is it?
- List five animals that live in the Arizona desert.
Tell what each of them eats.

STANDARDS: G1:1; G1:2; G1:3; SS:5; SS:7; S:3; S:5; S:7;

Next Week: Chapter Seven – Learning to Weave