

Ode to Joy



Chapter Eight – by Kay Hively

For several weeks Grandmother allowed Alice to work on her loom, and Susan came to the trading post for school and piano lessons. Both girls worked very hard.

Now in only a few days, it would be Christmas. Pa had already put many gifts in the trading post for Christmas. Almost every day new things came from the east in big trucks.

Everyone was very excited about the holiday. The Palmers were invited to Christmas Eve midnight Mass at the Indian mission.

Alice was sewing new clothes for Susan's doll. The new clothes would be a Christmas gift for Susan.

Susan was working on a gift for Alice. With her father's help, she was making a new pair of moccasins for Alice. Thomas cut the leather, and Susan was sewing tiny beads onto the shoes. She sewed the beads into a design that looked like a cactus flower.

But there were even bigger surprises ahead for both Susan and Alice. On Christmas Eve morning, everyone awoke to find snow on the ground. Alice and her parents walked out onto the front porch to admire the scenery. The desert floor and the big red buttes dazzled in the sparkling snow. It was the most beautiful morning they had ever seen.

All day the Palmer family worked in the trading post, helping people buy and trade for Christmas gifts. That night they rode in Pa's car to the Indian mission for midnight Mass. Alice sat by Susan on the church bench. Even though the church was small, it was beautiful with all the lighted candles.

The next morning, Alice got up very early to see what was under the Christmas tree. Eagerly she began to open her gifts. She found new clothes for herself and a new baby doll. As the Palmer family opened their gifts, they heard a knock on the back door. Pa opened the door and found Thomas and Susan. Pa invited them inside. The two girls exchanged their Christmas gifts. Alice loved her moccasins and Susan was overjoyed with the new doll clothes.

Then Pa and Thomas offered their big surprises. Pa brought a big box into the apartment and gave it to Susan. When the wrapping was removed and the box was opened, Susan found a little piano just like Alice had. Susan gave Pa and Mrs. Palmer a big thank-you hug.

Then Thomas invited everyone to come outside. Alice could hardly believe her eyes. Sitting by the back door was a loom

– just like Grandmother's. Thomas said it was a gift to Alice from him and Grandmother. This time it was Thomas who got the big hug.

Now both girls could work more and more toward their big goals. Alice wanted to make a beautiful blanket all by herself, and Susan wanted to learn to play "Ode to Joy."



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Things to Think About and Do

- Susan put a cactus flower design on the new moccasins. Draw a picture of the new moccasins and color the beads in the same colors as a cactus flower. In your picture, also include drawings of three kinds of cacti and label each plant with its name.
- Alice and Susan both had a goal and worked to achieve them. What goals do you have? Make a list of some things you would like to achieve. Discuss your list with your parents or your teacher and learn what you can do to reach those goals.

STANDARDS: G1:1; G1:3; G1:8; G2:8; G2:6; G4:8; FA:1; FA:5; S:4;