

## Chapter 2: A pebble shower

One day, while Clarence was still waiting for his wool to grow back, as he wandered around, he saw a cleft in the rocks that he had never seen before. He approached slowly, using his stubby legs to bounce from rock to rock. The closer he came, the larger the cleft became until he discovered it was actually a canyon of dark grey granite and impossible to see unless you came up close to it. The sun was already climbing high in the heavens, and it was getting hot. The shade of the canyon looked inviting, and his curiosity got the best of him.

Step by step our little friend, cowlick and all, wandered into the canyon. Where he found a wisp of tumble weeds, he wrapped his teeth around it and ate it with pleasure.

“Ah, nothing like good desert cuisine” he mumbled to himself.

Not too far into the canyon, it made an abrupt turn into the mountains, and the ground rose sharply. It would be a tough climb.

“Something to do tomorrow” he said lazily.

But then Clarence stopped short. His ears stretched out, straining to hear.

“Ah ha!” he exclaimed.

A tiny gurgle, a faint bubbling told him what he wanted to hear... “Water!” he shouted, and with a bound he started up the slope.

As he galloped, he crooned to himself, “Dinner time, Clarence old chum!” His steady Far-outer balance helped him to hop up the loose stones, which would have brought them all down on any other sheep, turning them into a lamb-chop in the process. But, born a Far-outer, die a Far-outer, without a moment’s thought, he was up the slope into the sunlight and a wide expanse of the walled, hidden canyon.

As he stopped to catch his breath, his ears strained, listening.

“There!” He said, jumping as his Echo shouted, “There! There! Ere! Ere!”

On the far wall, twinkling in the sunlight, there fell a thin bead of water. On the edge of the rocky pool was the sight he wanted to see... grass! Clarence clattered and skipped across the rocks. In a flash, he arrived at the pool. It was beautiful! Nice brown water—in the desert, any water that’s not oily and slimy is beautiful—and best of all was the grass there and for him alone!

So, Clarence got to work, munching and crunching until he was full. And he did get full, something that does not happen too often for a sheep, let alone a growing lamb. So, he finished and took a swig of water and sighed.

“A little nap in the sun would be the perfect way to round off this afternoon,” he mused happily. Stretching himself out, using his cowlick as a pillow, Clarence fell asleep.

About when Clarence was snoring through his third dream, this one where cowlicks were the latest fad on the desert’s edge, he was awakened by something clunking him on the head. “Hey...” he exclaimed as something else hit him on the nose. He tried to stand up when a third thing that felt like a pebble bonked him right between the eyes. “What in the world?” he exclaimed and looked around to see who was throwing these things at him.

As he scanned the canyon and everything above him, absolutely nothing moved there. Up on the high rocky walls, a breeze lifted some of the dust, but down on the canyon floor, there was no movement. He “bahhahhed” angrily, but only his echo replied. Everything was quiet, except for the water falling softly behind him. Straight above him was an overhang, so high that it seemed to stretch on forever.

“Perhaps a gust of wind had blown the pebbles off that ledge?” he reasoned, but nothing moved, and there seemed to be no good way to understand it.

This mystery was soon forgotten when Clarence looked down at the pebbles. He could not believe his eyes. At his feet were three, round, smooth-shelled seeds... he couldn’t believe it! They were ACORNS! Clarence nearly fainted. What luck! Even though he had missed out on his ration at Acorn Fest, three had dropped in on him from above. They made him so happy that he decided he could go home. He would have these seeds to enjoy when the right moment came along. Tucking the seeds into his wool, right under his chin, he set out for home humming.

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Now that you’ve met Clarence, it’s time to invite him into your home for Advent.

TASK: Cut out a figure of Clarence from cardboard. If you have a bit of cotton, you can make his coat nice and fleecy. Don’t forget his black cowlick!

Now, how do you think that the Christ Child has received Clarence? Do we have cowlicks that embarrass us?

TASK: Bring three pebbles to tomorrow’s reading.