

Chapter 5: A finely feathered Friend

As our not-so-little lamb Clarence sat on a big reddish boulder, lost somewhere on Mount Horrible, not knowing what to do. As he sat there perplexed, a cackling and complaining voice interrupted his thoughts. “Confounded wings! You’d think that they’d make the feathers stick a little better!” exclaimed a high, gravelly voice.

From over a rock jumped a little black creature... what should be called a crow, except it was missing most of its feathers.

Clarence stared at it.

Hopping to the ground, grumbling all the while, the crow looked up at the lamb, rolling its eyes. “That’s great!” exclaimed the crow, slapping its forehead, sending more feathers fluttering. “Just what I needed. I’m having a bad feather day and the lamb a buffy wool whirl that’s out of sight! I guess we both should have stayed in bed today!”

Clarence felt his face heat up. Did they always have to pick on his cowlick?

“And just who do you think you are, bird?”

“None of your business, Bahhh-boy.”

Retorted the crow meanly.

“Yeah, right. I’m here minding my own business, and you, without ‘hi’ or ‘hello’ hop down and start making fun of me!”

“Great, not only is he lost, but he also has an attitude!” said the bird.

“What?” exclaimed Clarence, indignant. “What makes you think I’m lost?”

“It doesn’t take a genius to figure out that a fuzzy wool-bearer, just hanging out in this forsaken place, is lost. Come on, you guys are always hungry and looking for food. If you haven’t noticed, there’s nothing to eat for miles around here,” said the bird smugly.

Clarence was about to say something nasty when a tremendous growl came from his stomach. He lowered his head and mumbled, “I guess you’re right.”

“Oh, I know I’m right, amigo,” said the bird. “That’s why I dropped in!”

Clarence looked up in disbelief. “What do you mean?”

“Well, you know, I was flying around up there when I saw you wandering around, and then, like, this big gust of wind came and knocked half my feathers off... man, I hate it when that happens!”

“But you came looking for me?” said Clarence, still not believing his ears. “Yeah, you looked lost, so I came to help. But I guess you don’t need any.”

The bird tossed its head (and a few more feathers with it) and started walking solemnly away. “Adios, cotton ball!”

Clarence suddenly felt sorry for having gotten angry with the crow. “Ah, Miss... ah Blackfeather, er, Ms. Crow, I mean...” stuttered the repentant sheep. “Yes?” said the crow, swinging around suddenly and looking at Clarence with big expectant eyes. “Yes? Well, spit it out!”

“Er, well, Miss... madame...”

“Call me Agnes. Now hurry up!” said the crow.

“No... it just... well, I’m a little sensitive to the cowlick issue, you know...”

“Great! That’s solved. Agnes Crow Rescue Agency, at your service! Where do you need to go? I’ll get you out of here.”

“Well,” said Clarence, looking a bit bewildered at the crow’s sudden friendliness, “I was looking for this little spring, about halfway up the mountain...”

“Little or real little?”

“Ah... pretty small.”

“Halfway up or halfway down the mountain?”

“Uh... halfway up, I believe.”

Agnes scratched her now featherless head. Talking to herself, “No, that one’s too big, and the other one is halfway down. Hmmm... Maybe the tiny one? Yep, it has to be! Okay, this way. Follow me.” And off they went. At first, Clarence was a little hesitant about his guide, who grumbled every time one of her feathers fell off or when she had to climb up a rock that normally she could have flown up. But between grumbling and cackling, he learned that Agnes had lived many years in a nest high up on Mount Horrible and that it was not so horrible after all. More than all her knowledge, he was grateful to have someone to chat with.

Who has the Christ Child sent you to play and work with today? Your brothers and sisters, friends, mom and dad, these are all gifts from the Baby Jesus.

TASK: Make an Agnes figure to accompany Clarence next to the mountain. Remember, she’s missing a lot of feathers.