

## Chapter 7: Saying goodbye

Clarence and Agnes spent many days in the niche in the heart of Mount Horrible. The thorn bush grew stronger every day. The mountain spring steadily watered the area below the niche, and grass was abundant. Our hero had much grass to savor, and the water was better than any he had tried in the valley. Agnes started to grow another coat of feathers, dark black and shiny, but was not able to fly for some time.

The lamb and bird passed their time chatting about clouds, thunderstorms, where the best grass was, how to use the desert wind to fly higher, and all kinds of things. Sometimes they argued and ignored each other for a while, but by and large, they became fast friends.

One morning, Clarence was sleeping deeply when he was startled awake by the sound of whooping and cackling buzzing in and out around his head.

“I’m back! Woohoo! Ha ha, oh yeah!”

Opening one eye, the lamb noticed a black streak, zipping in and out of the niche and then disappearing into the early morning sky. Sitting up and stretching, he was nearly bowled over by Agnes, flying past him.

“Check this out, Rence,” she creaked and flew a figure eight around him and the thorn bush. “My feathers have never felt this good before!”

Clarence spent the day watching his crow friend dart up and around the mountain, diving and kiting high on the upper winds. He was happy for her, but something tugged at his heart. He would never be able to fly.

By the time Agnes had landed, short of breath and laughing, the Far-outer had made up his mind.

“Aggy...”

“Ha, ha, ha, you should have seen how close I came to Eagleman up on the peak... he nearly had a heart attack.”

“That’s great... but I was thinking.”

“Oh yeah, that could be dangerous,” joked the crow, pruning her feathers.

“Yeah, I know,” smiled the sheep feebly “but now that you’re able to fly again, I should be getting back to the flock.”

The crow stopped her feather work and looked up. “Oh, do you really have to?” Her voice sounded serious.

“Well, you know,” mumbled Clarence, “once part of the flock, always part of the flock. Even a Far-outer has to check in once in a while.”

“That’s too bad, Rence. We were just starting to have a good time.”

“I’ll come back and visit as soon as I can. You’ll keep an eye on the place, won’t you?”

“Sure, but I won’t cut the grass. Blah, that’s your job.”

They both smiled and spent the night telling stories.

The next morning, just when the sun was peeking out from behind Mount Horrible, Clarence waved goodbye to Agnes, smiled at the thorn bush, and then started off on his way back to the valley of the Far-outers.

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**The Christ Child is waiting to be born again in us. What sacrifice can you make for him today?**

TASK: Add the sun just rising above with streaks of yellow, orange, and red above it.