

The Boy and the Lamb



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On a bright spring morning, Ben pulled on his yellow rubber boots and his straw hat with the frayed brim. He loved helping on his family farm. The sun was warm, the grass was green, and the birds were singing. "Time to check the animals," Ben said with a happy smile. Today was going to be a special day, but Ben did not know it yet.



Ben walked past the big red barn and the sleepy cows. His blue overalls swished as he skipped along. Then he heard a tiny sound coming from the sheep pen. It was a small, soft cry. "Maa? Maa?" Ben stopped and listened. He had never heard a sound quite like that before.



Ben peeked over the wooden fence. There, beside the mother sheep, stood a newborn lamb. It was small and wobbly, with creamy-white wool and long floppy ears. Its dark brown eyes blinked in the sunlight. Its thin legs shook just a little. "Hello, little one," Ben whispered softly. The lamb looked up at him and let out a tiny, shaky bleat.



Ben ran to find his mother. "There is a new lamb!" he said, out of breath. His mother smiled and came to see. "It was born during the night," she said. "It needs help staying warm and fed." Ben nodded. He had freckles across his nose and warm brown eyes. "Can I help care for it?" he asked. His mother said yes.



Ben filled a bottle with warm milk. The little lamb sniffed it, unsure. Ben sat very still and patient. "It's all right," he whispered. "Just try a little." The lamb took one sip, then another. Soon it was drinking happily. Ben grinned so wide his gap-toothed smile showed. The lamb drank and drank until the bottle was empty.



Next, Ben found a soft blanket. He wrapped the lamb up gently. "You need to stay warm," he said. The lamb snuggled close. Ben tied a red ribbon collar with a tiny brass bell around its neck. When the lamb moved, the bell went tinkle, tinkle. "I will call you Pip," Ben said. Pip blinked his dark brown eyes and snuggled closer.



Every morning, Ben got up early to feed Pip. Every evening, he checked that Pip was warm. Some days were chilly, so Ben brought extra straw for the lamb to snuggle in. Some days were sunny, so he carried Pip out to the warm grass. "You are growing," Ben told the lamb. Pip just wiggled his floppy ears and bleated softly.



Then one sunny day, Pip stood up on his wobbly legs. He took one step, then another. Ben laughed. "You can walk!" he cheered. Pip wobbled toward him and bumped into his yellow boot. Tinkle went the little bell. Ben was so proud. He felt like he had helped make something wonderful happen.



Soon Pip was not wobbly anymore. He ran across the field on his thin legs. Ben ran after him, his straw hat bouncing. "Wait for me!" Ben called, laughing. Pip bounced and kicked and hopped. The tall grass swished around them. The little bell tinkled as Pip ran. Ben's round face was red and happy.



Ben began to teach Pip things. He showed him the softest grass to eat. He showed him where the water was cool and clean. Pip watched Ben with his dark brown eyes and learned. When Ben called, Pip came running. When Ben sat down, Pip sat beside him. The little lamb learned to trust Ben more and more.



One day a gust of wind blew Ben's straw hat right off his head. It rolled across the field, far away. Ben ran after it, but the wind was fast. Pip watched. Then, with a brave little bleat, Pip ran too. He darted past Ben, scooped the hat with his nose, and trotted back. Ben laughed and hugged him.



"You found my hat!" Ben said, so happy. Pip's little bell jingled. Ben put the hat back on his sandy-blond head. From that day on, Pip followed Ben everywhere. He followed him to the barn. He followed him to the garden. If Ben walked, Pip walked too. The bell tinkled all around the farm.



The weeks flew by. Pip grew bigger and stronger. His wool was thicker now, and he stood tall and confident. Pip was not a tiny lamb anymore. He was a happy young sheep. Ben looked at him and felt proud. "You grew so much," Ben said. Pip bleated a big, happy bleat, and his bell went tinkle, tinkle, tinkle.



Pip still came running whenever Ben called. He still sat beside Ben in the soft grass. Some things never change, even when a lamb grows into a sheep. "You will always be my friend," Ben said. Pip bumped his head gently against Ben's arm. That was Pip's way of saying, I know. It was a warm, happy moment in the sunny field.



Ben's mother smiled as she watched them. "Do you see how much you did?" she asked. "You fed him and kept him warm. You were patient and gentle. That is how trust grows." Ben thought about it. He had helped Pip grow, and Pip had helped him too. They had grown together, side by side.



So if you ever visit the family farm, you may see a boy in a straw hat and blue overalls. Beside him walks a happy young sheep with a red ribbon collar and tinkling bell. They are the best of friends. Gentle care and kindness made that happen. It helped a little lamb grow big and strong. And it can help friendship grow too.