

Llevo the Llama

“Antonio, please bring that last bag over here, we need to get Llevo our llama loaded and ready. Your brother and I have a long trek down the steep mountain trail.”

Antonio did just as his father asked, and then continued playing with his sister, Anita. He was to watch over her well, while his parents and older brother made the last preparations.

His father and older brother were going down the mountain trail to trade some of their goods.

They brought things had grown and made, and would trade them for some supplies that they needed that were available in the village below.

Llevo their llama had done well these years that they had him. He was dependable and strong. Of course, Llevo would probably have preferred to just eat grass, rest, and just look around or explore new areas with the other llamas, most of the time. And often this is what he could do. But when it was time to work, then work needed to be done.

The weather was starting to change and take on more of a winter chill. This mountain dwelling family needed to stock up with supplies, and make the exchanges of goods in the village, while travel wasn't too difficult.

Llevo their llama wasn't at all in the mood, on this morning, to go on a long hike, that would probably last for most of the day. But it wasn't a time for giving in to whines and wishes.

Pablo, the father decided to have a chat with him. Perhaps he understood, perhaps he didn't; but at least he would show that he cared.

“Yes, my good hard-working friend, it is going to be a difficult day, in many ways, for us all. But it won't only be hard work. We'll get to see areas of the mountain that we haven't been to in a while, and you'll get to sip water from the mountain stream.

“Perhaps you will see some friends too as we go along. I'll take a supply of your favourite grains to give you for special treats.

“Here, have a bite to eat now, and let it show you that we really appreciate you.”

After that well-meaning chat, Pablo continued getting the last things ready.

At last he and his oldest son Guillermo, were heading down the windy mountain trail, while Mama Esperanza, Antonio and Anita were waving and wishing them a safe journey.

Mama Esperanza and her children went to the back yard to check on and care for the rest of the animals.

There was a mama llama sitting under the tree, with her little one by her side. Some chickens were clucking around the garden patch.

The dog who was ever on watch, was barking and wagging his tail as he dug about in the back yard, hoping to find some hidden and forgotten bone to chew on.

Mama Esperanza and the children made sure all the animals were fed and had fresh water to drink.

Mama then got to work on creating yarn out of llama hair she'd saved up, along with some wool they'd gotten from the village months before.

First she had to wash and clean it, then brush it this way and that, until it was ready to be twisted and twisted and shaped into long strands. These strands could be rolled up into balls of yarn.

This could be used to knit into socks and sweaters and hats. Some could be woven into cloth. Some that was woven into cloth could then have patterns sewn on it with other coloured yarn that had been made.

This was work that took a long time, but with a family to keep warm in the coming months, she had to work on it.

Sometimes Antonio and even Anita helped their mother with making clothes. She showed them the skills they would need to have if they were to care for some of their own clothing needs one day.

Mama Esperanza was glad for her hardworking and strong llamas. These animals designed to be a help were really depended on.

They lived out in nature, and away from the hubbub of a city; living instead where some supplies and other forms of transportation weren't as available.

Five days later Antonio was having his llama riding lesson with Mama Esperanza, and the llama was learning to be patient and tolerant and obedient.

Antonio looked over to where the trail led down the mountain,

and imagined that one day he might ride down there.

Unexpectedly, as he looked over, he spotted a welcome sight in the distance.

“Papa! Papa’s home! Papa and Guillermo! ... And someone else I see. Mama, someone else is on another llama.” Antonio exclaimed.

Mama looked over and sure enough it was as he described.

Mama helped Antonio to get off the llama, and let him run to greet his father.

She and Anita would set out something for everyone to eat. They were most likely hungry and cold and tired.

“Come in!” Mama Esperanza, holding Anita, greeted the team.

“Come we have some bread and beans, along with fresh garden veggies, and a warm drink. When you are comfortable you can tell us all about your trip.”

Mama Esperanza greeted Emily, her youngest sister, who was now an adult and came to spend the cold winter months with this family. This was the woman who had been riding another llama.

She knew how to care for animals, how make yarn and clothing, how to prepare food, as well as teach children.

She would be a great help. Mama Esperanza was very grateful to have her company.

That night Mama Esperanza spent a long time talking and chatting with her husband, Papa Pablo, and older son Guillermo; while Aunty Emily told the younger children stories.

She told them all about the journey, and about llamas—what

they like, what they don't like, and interesting things about them.

Anita fell asleep in her Aunty's arms, while Antonio drifted off to sleep on his little bed, dreaming of the long journey on a llama that he hoped to take one day.

Meanwhile, in the stable, mama and papa and baby llama were glad to be together again. If you could have understood them speaking, you might have heard the stories.

Llevo llama might have wanted to say,

"At first I didn't want to leave you behind. I wished we could have gone together. But even our master had to leave his own wife and young children behind as well. What must be done, must be done.

"However, when I saw the steep trails, and even some that my steady feet slipped on a bit, I was glad then to know that you and our little one were safe here and getting well cared for."

If he could have said that, perhaps Mama Llama would have replied,

"I was able to have a riding lesson with the boy. Perhaps when he is a bit older, yet still young enough to need a ride on one of us while on longer journeys, we'll be able to go out together.

"Papa Pablo might wish to take both his sons on a journey sometime, and then we can travel together."

If the little one had heard this and could speak, there's a good chance the young growing llama would have wished to go on such a trip as well. He probably would have thought of a reason to do so, like,

“And I could carry the littlest one on my back, or maybe a few snacks for the children!”

However, since llamas are llamas, instead of a long, verbal conversation, these dependable animals just curled up nice and snug and rested.

I think Llevo and Mama Llama were glad to be needed, and glad to be cared for. To be needed meant they had to do what was best for others; and do as they were told to do.

And each member of the family was needed, and depended on, as well. The children were needed by their parents, too. And there was lots they could learn. One day they might be in charge of a farm that grew food and raised some animals.

The only way they would be prepared for it is if they learned now all that they could, and were a help to their family, listened to and obeyed their parents and older loved ones, and did their best to make things easy for others. —Just like their faithful llamas each helped in the ways they could.