



# THE SONG OF LAMBERT

MAZO DE LA ROCHE

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*For Alixe and Richmond  
with love*

*THE SONG OF  
LAMBERT*

*by  
Mazo de la Roche*

*Illustrated by  
Eileen A. Soper*

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Lambert was a lamb. He was not only a very pretty lamb but he was different from every other lamb in all the world because he could sing. His twin sister was the first to discover this and the discovery so greatly excited her that she leaped and gambolled for joy. The two of them had wandered a short way from their mother, to a corner of the meadow where there was a hawthorn tree in bloom and some briar rose bushes in bud. Their mother did not like this part of the field because the rose thorns got into her wool and tore it. She had given the twins strict orders to keep away from this corner and now, when she raised her yellow eyes from the tender grass she was munching and saw her twins sporting in the forbidden corner, she gave a loud 'baa' of annoyance. She bundled herself to where she saw her best friend, another fat woolly ewe, and said to her,—'Just look at those twins of mine! Three times I have told them to keep away from those briars and there they are—playing right among them! They will come back to me in a pretty state. There are not only thorns in that part of the field but there are burrs too. I have a good mind to punish them.' And she gave another baa, even more annoyed than the first.

The way she punished the twins was this. She would trot towards them, with a very angry look in her yellow eyes, and when she reached them she would bunt first one and then the other with the top of her hard head. But she bunted them so gently and their wool was so thick that they were not at all hurt. Still they knew they were being punished, and so their feelings were hurt. They would both begin to bleat,—'Maa-Maa!' and snuggle up to her, and as her heart was just as tender as her skull was hard, she would fondle them gently with her woolly nose and end by giving them a suck from her warm pink udder.

But now she was very much annoyed, and she said to her friend, Clara,—'Never, never, have I had such disobedient lambs. There is scarcely an hour in the day but they are doing something naughty. I have a good mind to punish them severely.'

'Now, Bertha,' said her friend, in a soothing voice, 'you must not worry too much about your lambs. Have you ever before had twins?'

'No, indeed,' bleated Bertha, 'and I hope I never shall again. They are too troublesome.'

'Bah,' said her friend. 'Twins are no more trouble than other lambs. In fact, that little black lamb of mine is quite a handful. They tell me he will grow up to be a Black Sheep but I don't believe a word of it. I'm very fond of him.' And she trotted off, in search of her little black lamb.

The twins were having a joyful time in the corner of the meadow where the hawthorn tree was in flower and the briar bushes in bud. They did not even notice the dry burrs clinging to the burdocks. They did not even hear the bleat of their mother as she searched for them. They could see horses in the field beyond and longed to go in and play with them. They saw a crow sitting on the fence and kicked up their heels at him. Then Lambert discovered that dandelions were good to eat. No sooner had he eaten a dandelion than he nibbled a rosebud. A feeling of joy went through all his white woolly body. On that spring morning the sky was very blue, and there were round white clouds moving across it, rather like a flock of sheep. Lambert could not understand why he felt so full of joy. He did not try to understand. He just lifted up his voice and sang. It was a small song but so pleasing to the ear that an old grey mare in the field beyond the fence came and looked over it, just to see who the singer was. She had a wisp of grass in her mouth, so that she mumbled as she said:

‘That’s a very pretty song, little fellow.’ Lambert did not reply. Indeed he was so full of joy in his song that he did not even hear what was said to him. But his twin spoke up proudly. ‘He is my brother,’ she said. ‘We are twins. His name is Lambert and mine is Ethel.’

‘And where did you get such odd names?’ asked the mare.

‘The farmer’s boy,’ answered Ethel. ‘He has named us all—every lamb and ewe in the meadow. Have you a name?’

‘My name is Bessie,’ said the mare, but she did not speak proudly because she had had this name for thirty years and had quite forgotten how she came by it.

She munched the wisp of grass, then swallowed it. She said,—‘Thirty years, off and on, have I been in this field, yet never before have I heard a lamb sing. I have heard birds sing. I have heard the brook sing. I have heard human beings do what they call singing, but never a lamb. And I will say that it is the prettiest song I ever have heard.’

All this while Lambert went on singing. He stood firmly on his four woolly legs and raised his woolly little face to heaven as he sang. He looked exactly like a lamb in a stained glass window in a cathedral. But to his mother, who at that moment discovered him, he looked no more than her naughty disobedient son.

‘Lambert, come here, this instant minute,’ she bleated. She always said *this instant minute* when she was particularly annoyed. ‘Lambert, stop

making that silly noise, and come to Mother, this instant minute.’

Lambert went right on singing but Ethel ran to her mother and said, —‘Ma-ma, just listen! Lambert is singing. That old mare in the next field says that Lambert is singing and she ought to know.’

‘Nonsense,’ bleated the ewe. ‘I say he is very naughty. He has got burrs in his best little suit and I dare say has been eating things that will make him sick.’

She hurried to where Lambert stood singing beneath the hawthorn tree.

‘You are a naughty lamb,’ she bleated and she bunted him so hard that he fell. But he was so woolly and the grass was so soft that he was not at all hurt. And she did not intend that he should be hurt. She simply wanted him to know that he was being punished.

Then she set to work to pull the burrs out of his soft fleece. When she had finished with him she attended to Ethel with the same care. At last, with the twin lambs on either side of her, she ambled back to the flock where they rested in the shade.

‘Goodness, how hot it is!’ she bleated to her friend Clara. ‘I am tired out between heat and worry. Surely it is enough to be the mother of twin lambs without them getting into mischief every hour in the day.’

With a loud ba-a she lay down beside Clara, and Lambert and Ethel lay down also.

‘How pretty your twins are!’ Clara exclaimed. ‘I only wish my little black lamb were half so pretty. However, he is very affectionate, so I should not complain—though they do tell me that he will grow up to be the Black Sheep of the family.’

The twins and the little black lamb, whose name was Willy, were great friends and before long Ethel had confided to Willy that Lambert could sing. They were nibbling the tender green leaves of the clover, with here and there a buttercup to improve the flavour, when Ethel whispered right into Willy’s ear:

‘Do you know what?’

Willy stared at her. ‘No’, he said. ‘What?’

‘My brother can sing,’ whispered Ethel and gave a little skip of joy.

‘I can sing too,’ boasted Willy. To prove it he gave three baas, all on the same note, and waggled his little woolly black tail.



‘That’s nothing,’ said Ethel. ‘You just wait till you hear my brother sing.’

Before long the three lambs might have been seen gambolling in the direction of that quiet corner where grew the hawthorn tree and briar rose. When they were hidden from the rest of the flock Ethel said:

‘Go ahead, Lambert. Show Willy how you can sing.’

But Lambert, like many another performer, wanted to be coaxed.

‘No,’ he said. ‘I’m too busy. Besides I’ve forgotten how.’

‘Please, please,’ urged Ethel. ‘Just one little tune.’

Just then the old grey mare came to the fence corner and looked down at them. She gave a little whinny of pleasure and exclaimed,—

‘Why, here is the lamb who can sing! Go ahead, little fellow. Do it again.’

‘Please do it again,’ chimed in Ethel.

‘I don’t believe he can sing,’ scoffed Willy.

Lambert nibbled a rosebud and tried to look shy, but the joy within him was so great that he simply had to sing. He raised his head, and out of his mouth came the sweetest sort of song. The mare and Ethel and Willy listened in delight. Because of the sweetness of Lambert’s song, the grass looked fresher and more dewy, the hawthorn rosier, the daisies more proper, the violets and buttercups more gay. The birds stopped singing to listen, and the fish in the brook leaped out of the water and hung a moment in the air.

‘I declare to goodness,’ whinnied the grey mare, ‘it’s the best song I’ve ever heard. It makes me feel young and happy just to hear it.’ She gave a joyful neigh and began to caper and gallop round the field. The other horses soon joined her and very soon all were galloping and kicking up their heels. As for the lambs, they gambolled and jumped for gladness, till their mothers came running and took them into the shade of a great beech tree and gave them their lunch.

From this time on Willy and the twins were seldom apart. The secret of Lambert’s singing was shared by none but those three. At least once a day they would escape to that corner of the meadow where the hawthorn tree and the briar rose grew. Then Lambert would fill the air with his strange sweet song, and the grey mare would gallop close to them and listen.

The strange thing was that none of the grown-up sheep took the slightest interest in Lambert's song, excepting, of course, Lambert's mother. If she happened to catch a few notes of it, she thought it was just a silly noise he was making. She was then rather ashamed of Lambert, instead of being proud of him, as she should have been—because he could do what no lamb before or since has been able to do.

The spring was gone at last and summer came. All the blossoms of the hawthorn tree lay on the grass beneath it. The briar rose bloomed and its petals fell. The three lambs grew larger and stronger, so that their mothers allowed them to wander further across the meadow, even to the stream's edge.

Then one night Lambert was woken by a wonderful bright light. Usually he slept right through the night till daybreak, but this light was so wondrous that it woke him wide awake. He looked up into the sky and saw a great yellow ball hanging there. Now Lambert was quite used to the sun. He knew that he could not look at it without blinking. He knew that its rays made him very hot, so that he was glad to escape from it, into the shade of the beech tree.

But this was quite different. It was a magical light which made everything on which it shone mysterious and beautiful. Beneath its brightness the brook shone like fire. The flock of sheep looked very white and still. All but little Willy who looked very black and who was staring at Lambert across the woolly mountain that was Bertha.

'Hello,' Willy called out softly, 'why are you awake?'

'I want to sing,' answered Lambert.

'But you can't. This is night-time and you must sleep.'

'Why?'

'So that we shall grow up and be sheep.'

'But I don't want to be a sheep. I want to sing.'

Willy gave a sudden agile leap, right over Bertha, and stood beside Lambert.

'I dare you to sing,' he said.

'What is that light in the sky?' asked Lambert.

'That is the moon,' answered Willy. 'My mother told me so. She told me one night when I couldn't sleep because I'd nibbled a weed that gave me a

pain. She told me that all creatures sleep at night excepting owls that peck your eyes out, or bad fairies that turn you into toads.'

'I'm not afraid,' said Lambert, and he began to skip about in the moonlight.

By this time Ethel had waked and the three gambolled together to the far side of the meadow where they had never been before. The night was full of magic.

The brook sang as it rippled over the pebbles. The crickets sang deep down in the grass. A night bird sang from the top of a cedar. But when Lambert began to sing, all the other singers became quiet and listened. Never before had he sung so sweetly. Into the still moonlight his voice rang out, high and clear. Even the little fish came to the surface of the brook to listen.

The old grey mare, who had been cropping the grass near the fence which divided the fields, came close to listen. As she dozed in the shade for a great part of the day, she was wakeful at night and would wander about enjoying the cool quietness, with no flies to annoy her.

When Lambert's song was finished the three lambs gambolled close to her and Willy began to show off. He tried to stand on his head. He leaped quite a yard into the air, while Ethel and Lambert looked on admiring him. But the old mare made a chuckling sound deep in her breast.

'You think you can jump,' she chuckled, 'but let me tell you that it is nothing compared to what I can do—if I choose.'

The twins stared at her in wonder but Willy whispered to them,—'Silly old thing! I'll bet she can't jump as high as I can.'

'Please, how high can you jump?' Ethel asked the grey mare.

Lambert was much too shy to speak.

The grey mare came closer. She put her head over the fence to look down at them.

'Let me tell you, little lambs,' she said, 'I was once a famous Show Horse.'

They did not even know what she meant.

'A Show Horse,' repeated Ethel. 'Please, what is that?'

‘It is a wonderful thing to be,’ said the mare. ‘You get the very best of care and you never have to work.’

‘Did you never work?’ asked Ethel.

‘I work!’ whinnied the mare scornfully. ‘Not I. Let me tell you, little lambs, I was a famous High Jumper. My name was Silver Meteor and I won prizes at all the great horse shows.’

‘I thought you said your name is Bessie,’ said Ethel.

‘Bessie is my name at home in the stable but Silver Meteor was my Show name.’

‘Could a lamb be a High Jumper?’ asked Willy.

Silver Meteor shook with scornful neighs.

‘Neigh—neigh—neigh!’ she said. ‘A lamb could never be a High Jumper. In the first place he is too little. In the second place he has not the muscle. In the third place he is a lamb.’

‘But I shall not always be a lamb,’ said Willy. ‘I shall grow to be a sheep.’

‘And silly creatures sheep are,’ she replied, ‘always living in flocks and following one after another—wherever their leader goes. Follow the Leader. That is their game.’

‘I think I shall grow to be a ram,’ said Willy. ‘A ram with long curly horns.’

The twins gave a ba-a of delight at the very thought of this. Then Ethel spoke up boldly.

‘I wish,’ she said to the mare, ‘that we could see you jump. Will you please jump for us, Bessie?’

‘Call me Silver Meteor and I’ll jump for you.’ answered Bessie.

‘Where will you jump?’

‘Right over this fence—so get out of the way.’

The three little lambs gambolled out of the way. Lambert was so excited that he sang as he went, and the sound of his singing put new life into the mare. She tossed her head so that her mane shone silver in the moonlight. Each hair of her mane and tail shone like silver as she trotted away from the

fence, then wheeled and came back at full gallop. She cleared the fence in a splendid jump, while the three lambs stood in wonder.

They capered about her shouting—‘Do it again! Do it again!’

The great full moon shone down on this remarkable scene—the mare jumping back and forth over the fence—the lambs gambolling about her. She taught them new ways of jumping, so that there never were lambs which could jump like these.

The night passed and the moon sank and there were black shadows in the meadow. At last the old mare, rather tired from all this jumping, took a last leap over the fence into her own pasture and lay down to rest. The three lambs, suddenly very sleepy, sought out their mothers and curled up beside them.

From that night onward the four friends made a point of meeting in the moonlight. All through the day the lambs thought about the fun they would have that night. They were so good, so well-behaved that their mothers wondered about it.

‘I can’t think what has come over the twins,’ said their mother to her friend Clara. ‘They lie on the grass beside me for hours at a time. They are positively angelic.’

‘I’m afraid my Willy is not well.’ Clara looked anxiously at her little black lamb. ‘He sleeps for hours every morning. It is not natural for lambs to be so quiet.’

Little did the poor ewes guess what went on in the moonlight.

A day came when the farmer and his boy and another man appeared at the gate of the meadow. The other man wore city clothes. He had come to buy a lamb, he said, and his reason for buying it was this. A certain millionaire, named van Grunt, had chronic indigestion. That is to say he had indigestion all the time. He was hungry for his meals but they did not make him happy. They gave him a pain—not a little pain which he might forget but a great big pain which made him miserable. He lived in a penthouse in New York, with all sorts of beautiful things about him, but he could not enjoy them because he felt so miserable.

His doctor told him that he needed a change—not a little change but the greatest change he could imagine. Now Mr. van Grunt knew an explorer who was about to set off on an Antarctic Expedition. This would take several months. The explorers would travel, first by ship, then by dog sledge, right to the Pole or as near to it as they could manage. Mr. van Grunt

decided to go with them. He could do anything he wanted to do except digest his meals.

There were many preparations to be made—warmer clothing to be bought and a supply of tinned food. The trouble was that Mr. van Grunt could not digest tinned meat. Neither could he digest frozen meat. He must have fresh meat, and above all other meats he liked lamb best.

Lambert was chosen to be the lamb.

Mr. van Grunt simply told his butcher to go out and buy the nicest lamb he could find. It was to be taken on the Expedition and, when Mr. van Grunt wanted roast lamb to eat, it was to be killed.

The butcher went straight to the farm where Lambert lived and told the farmer what he wanted.

‘I have some very nice lambs,’ said the farmer. ‘Come along with me and I will show them to you. I promise you that they are plump and tender.’

‘They’d better be,’ grinned the butcher, ‘for that there millionaire is a pretty sick man.’

The farmer took the butcher to the field where the flock of sheep were grazing with their lambs about them. It was a pretty sight just to see them there, so happy and so peaceful.

‘There’s a nice lamb,’ said the butcher, pointing to Ethel.

‘That’s a ewe lamb,’ said the farmer. ‘She’s not for sale.’

‘What about the lamb beside her? It looks like a good one.’

‘You couldn’t make a better choice,’ said the farmer. ‘I promise you he’s fat and tender.’

The farmer named a fancy price, for he knew the millionaire was a millionaire. The butcher agreed and the farmer called to his boy.

‘Tom, come and carry this lamb to Mr. Blood’s truck. He’s been sold.’

‘Where’s he going?’ asked Tom.

‘He’s going on an Antarctic Expedition,’ answered the farmer, with a wink at the butcher.

‘But I don’t want him sold,’ cried Tom. ‘He’s my pet lamb. Please don’t sell him, Father.’

‘There are other lambs. You can make a pet out of one of those.’

‘It won’t be the same.’ Now there were tears in Tom’s eyes. ‘This lamb can sing.’

‘I’ve never heard such nonsense. Go straight and put the lamb in Mr. Blood’s truck,’ ordered the farmer.

There was nothing for Tom to do but obey. He went to Lambert and took him in his arms. He hugged him as he carried him to the butcher’s truck. ‘Good-bye, Lambert,’ he whispered in the little woolly ear. ‘I know I shall never see you again but I never shall forget you.’

‘Ba-a,’ bleated Lambert and snuggled close to Tom.

There was straw at the bottom of the truck and Lambert stood trying to keep his balance as, with joltings and bumpings, the truck rattled away. Lambert did not in the least understand what all this meant. He looked back at the meadow where he could see his mother and Ethel and Willy and he wished they might have come with him. Soon he lost his balance and fell. He lay quietly on the bottom of the truck, now and again uttering a plaintive ba-a-a.

After some days in a shed on the pier Lambert was taken to the ship which was fitted out for the Expedition. Mr. van Grunt had brought his doctor with him and, when the ship had moved out of the harbour, the two men went below to inspect Lambert.

‘It’s a fine lamb,’ said the doctor, after poking Lambert with his fingers. ‘He’s plump and should be tender. By the time you’ve eaten him you will be a well man—I hope.’

‘How pretty he is!’ exclaimed the millionaire, ‘and how young and tender!’ He turned away with a sigh. He bent at the knees when he walked.

Life on board this ship was very different from anything Lambert had known. In his short life he had never been outside the meadow where the flock so happily lived. Often when he slept he dreamed of it and of how he and his twin and Willy gambolled together. He dreamed of singing but now he never sang. He just lay curled up in the little pen the sailors had made him and made no sound excepting a wistful ba-a-a!

One of the sailors had been given a present from his sweetheart and it had been tied up with a blue ribbon. Now he tied the ribbon round Lambert’s neck, so when the ship could go no farther because of the ice and all the explorers disembarked, Lambert looked just as though he were going to a party, instead of going to be eaten by a sick millionaire.

But the sea voyage had done Mr. van Grunt good. He no longer bent at the knees when he walked. In fact, he grew stronger every day. He no longer had the stomach-ache. He was glad that Lambert was thriving and thought what tender cutlets he would make.

The dogs which drew the sledges across the ice toward the South Pole would have made short work of Lambert had not Mr. van Grunt protected him. He took Lambert on the same sledge as himself and it gave him the nicest coziest feeling to hug the little woolly lamb close to him. It reminded him of when he was a tiny boy and took a toy lamb to bed with him.

As for Lambert, he became quite fond of the millionaire. Of course, he was not much fun to be with. He could not gambol like Ethel or Willy. He was rather stiff in the legs and he wore so many clothes that he was clumsy. Lambert wore only his own snow-white fleece.

On and on they travelled over the ice till food began to be scarce. Then the doctor said to Mr. van Grunt:

‘Your lamb cutlets are finished. It is high time we turned this fellow over to the butcher.’ And he looked hard at Lambert who did not know what they were talking about.

‘I think I shall wait for a day or two,’ said Mr. van Grunt. His heart was heavy within him at the thought of eating Lambert.

‘Very well,’ answered the doctor sternly, ‘but you do it at your own risk.’

Every time the doctor spoke of slaughtering Lambert, Mr. van Grunt said he was tired of roast lamb or broiled cutlets. Yet sometimes he thought he would die of hunger. The doctor told him he would die if he did not eat Lambert.

At last they reached the Pole. It was tall and white, with a red neon sign with the words ‘South Pole’. It was a relief to the explorers, because they knew exactly where they were and they wanted to go home to their wives and children and tell them about the discovery.

On the night before they turned homeward Lambert could not sleep. He stole out of the tent which he shared with Mr. van Grunt and stared at the strange world about him. All about there was snow and ice, and rising above the ice a great full moon. The red neon sign bearing the words ‘South Pole’ was the only bit of colour, for Lambert was white as the snow.

He dimly remembered something that had happened long ago. Then it came quite clearly into his mind. He remembered the flowery meadow



where he had played with his twin sister and with Willy. He remembered Bessie, the grey mare. He remembered how he had sung in the moonlight. And, remembering those joyful things, he was suddenly very happy and he lifted up his voice and sang—for the first time since leaving home.

Mr. van Grunt, wakeful in his tent, heard those sweet sounds and crept to the door of the tent to peer out. What he saw astonished him. He had had many surprises in his life but nothing ever had surprised him so much as to see Lambert singing in the moonlight.

He fairly held his breath till the song was finished.

Then he stole out and said to Lambert:

‘You are the sweetest lamb I have ever known and I would rather die than harm you.’

Lambert did not know what he meant, for they spoke a different language, but he liked the way Mr. van Grunt looked and he began to gambol about him. Before Mr. van Grunt knew it he was gambolling with Lambert. They had a glorious time. They leaped—they skipped—they arched their necks and cavorted! Lambert showed Mr. van Grunt how to jump the way Bessie, the old Show Horse, had taught him. Mr. van Grunt had not had such fun since he was a boy. In fact, he never had had so much fun, for he had been a very serious boy. Even then he had thought more about making money than about play. All he thought about now was having a good time.

All the penguins came and stood in a circle to watch the woolly lamb and the millionaire at play. Lambert actually butted his head, on which two tiny horns were appearing, right against the Pole. Mr. van Grunt shinned right up to the top of the Pole, while the penguins did a square dance down below.

Next day the Expedition began the journey back to the ship. Food was very scarce and the doctor again told Mr. van Grunt that he would die if he did not eat Lambert. But Lambert only sang.

The strange thing was that Mr. van Grunt became stronger and stronger. His cheeks were so red and his eyes so bright, everyone thought he was in a fever. When they reached the ship he marched up the gangway with Lambert at his side. He marched straight to the table where the Captain and crew were eating dinner. He sat down and demanded,—‘Pork and Beans!’ When he had swept the plate clean he shouted: ‘More!’

Just then the doctor came in. When he saw what Mr. van Grunt was eating he almost fainted. He thought the millionaire had gone mad and that perhaps they had better put him in irons. But Mr. van Grunt gave the doctor a hearty slap on the back and shouted:

‘Never felt better in my life!’

It was a marvellous cure.

On the voyage homeward he and Lambert were happy in just being together. They grew stronger every day. Because of the Antarctic cold Lambert had grown the most beautiful thick woolly fleece that ever was seen. The pink curve of his little horns peeped through.

As the ship steamed into New York harbour Mr. van Grunt and Lambert sat together in the bow. Mr. van Grunt’s arm was about Lambert and he thought with great satisfaction how the two things he had lacked were now his—a good digestion and a loving friend.

But he knew that the great city was no place for a lamb, so he decided that Lambert must go to the country.

Now Mr. van Grunt owned a skyscraper in New York with a penthouse on the top.

A salmon river in New Brunswick where the fish fairly shouldered each other out of the water.

A moor in Scotland with a baronial hall attached.

He also owned a farm, and it was on this farm that the old Show Horse called Bessie lived. To this farm he sent Lambert.

When Lambert found himself in a grassy field, with green trees for shade and a warm sun above, his joy knew no bounds. He leaped and gambolled. Then he lifted up his voice and sang. At the sound of that sweet song, the grey mare came galloping across the field to him.

‘Bless my soul!’ she neighed, ‘here is the singing lamb! I thought you had gone to the butcher. Wherever have you been? And how you have grown!’

Then Lambert told her of his adventures and of how he had discovered the South Pole.

‘And you can still sing,’ she said admiringly, ‘even better than ever.’

‘Thank you.’ Lambert made a bow and tried to look modest. But he was really becoming a little vain—and no wonder!

‘I hope you have been keeping well,’ he said politely.

‘Oh, as well as can be expected. I have no aches or pains and my appetite is good.’

Off gambolled Lambert to the other side of the field. He saw a hawthorn tree covered with red berries and standing beneath it was a pretty ewe lamb. Lambert had quite forgotten what lambs looked like. It was so long since he had seen one. He had quite forgotten that he himself was a lamb. He thought of himself as a large powerful beast, rather like a tiger. Besides, Ethel had grown quite a bit during his absence.

Now, peering through the fence, Ethel saw Lambert. Although Lambert could sing, she was really cleverer than he and she recognized him at once.

‘Oh, hello, Lambert,’ she called out, filled with gladness to see her twin again.

He gave a loud ba-a of astonishment and then fairly flew to her side. They kissed between the bars of the fence.

‘I’ve been so lonely,’ said Ethel. ‘I’ve missed you terribly. Do come in here and play.’ Lambert found a break in the fence and pushed his plump body through it. They were once more together. They skipped and romped, as though they never would tire. But the sun was warm and their coats were woolly, so presently they lay down to rest.

Then Lambert remembered their friend Willy.

‘Where is Willy?’ he asked.

‘He was growing to be the Black Sheep of the Flock,’ answered Ethel, ‘so they took him away.’ And she looked quite sad.

Then suddenly Lambert remembered his mother.

‘Where is Ma?’ he asked.

Ethel looked still more sad. ‘I don’t know what has happened to Ma,’ said she, ‘but you’ll never know her—she’s so changed.’

Just then their mother discovered them and hurried toward them.

It was as Ethel had said—Lambert would not have recognized her. She had been a great woolly ewe, slow in her movements, clumsy in her gait. Now, as she skipped towards them, she was slim and white.

‘That’s not Ma!’ bleated Lambert in terror and ran, as fast as he could, away from her.

Ethel did the same.

When the grey mare saw the twins fleeing from their mother she became greatly excited. She neighed at them over the fence:

‘Hi—don’t run away! That’s your own dear mother. She looks different because she’s been shorn.’

The twins stopped in their flight. Lambert heard his mother’s voice calling him and he turned and ran to her.

‘Ma-a-a!’ he bleated.

Then Ethel did the same.

What a happy reunion!

After the first joy they lay down in the shade of the great beech tree. Lambert tried to tell his mother about all his adventures but she only said:

‘Now do be a good boy and settle down.’

‘But Ma-a,’ he bleated, ‘I want to tell you how I discovered the South Pole.’

‘You cannot expect me to believe such fairy tales.’

‘Then let me tell you about my millionaire friend, Mr. van Grunt.’

‘I knew a very nice pig once,’ said Lambert’s mother. ‘His name was van Grunt. I wonder if they were related.’

‘They couldn’t be,’ said Lambert. ‘*My* Mr. van Grunt is a gentleman.’

‘So was *my* Mr. van Grunt a gentleman,’ said Lambert’s mother, ‘a perfect gentleman—even though a pig. But if you want to hear of a strange adventure I’ll tell you how I visited the hair-dresser and had my wool cut.’

So she told the twins all about it and very exciting it was.

Lambert was so happy to be home in his own meadow that he burst into song. He sang more sweetly than ever before. His mother endured it for a time, then she spoke quite sternly.

‘Lambert, stop making that silly noise and go to sleep. It is getting late.’

So they all snuggled happily together and slept.

After a while the great golden moon rose and Lambert, in his secret dreams, sang a little song.

—THE END—

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## TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

Because of copyright considerations, the illustrations by Eileen Soper (1905-1990) have been omitted from this etext.

Illustrations have been relocated due to using a non-page layout.

[The end of *The Song of Lambert* by Mazo de la Roche]