

A Season of Happiness Presents



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Story Nine – A PRESENT FOR RAINBOW

By Dave Hawkins

Pronto was pedalling his cart past Granny Crow's nest when he heard a strange sound: "Hee-hee-hee, ho-ho, hee-hee-haw!" Two of Granny Crow's grandchildren were playing on the ground under her tree and Pronto asked them about the sound.

"That's Granny Crow laughing," said one of the young crows.

"She must be very happy," suggested Pronto.

"Oh, no-o," said the other youngster, "She is oh-so sa-aad."

Pronto couldn't understand this until an older crow came along and explained that crows sounded sad when they were actually being happy. So, if Granny Crow was laughing, that meant she was really very sad. Pronto was now quite confused and concerned. "Why is she sad?" he asked.

One of the little crows explained. It seemed that many years ago, Granny had bought lots of wool to knit Rainbow a scarf of purple, blue, green, yellow, orange and red which were the same colours as Rainbow. The scarf was meant as a present to keep Rainbow warm in winter. Although it was now very long, Granny wanted to make it even longer, but she had just discovered she was running out of wool.

"That's no problem," declared Pronto, and he began to pedal his little cart off, calling back over his shoulder: "I'll just go and get some more wool from my shop, then Granny can be happy again."

The idea might have been a good one, except that he found there wasn't any wool at all in his shop. Scratching his head seemed to help his memory, and eventually he recalled selling the last of the wool to Wombat for him to mend the holes in his socks. There was nothing else for it but to see if Wombat would sell the wool back to him so that he could give it to Granny Crow.

Pedalling his cart from the shop to Wombat's hole, he went to ask the question of his friend. "Sorry, Pronto," said Wombat. "I had so many holes in my socks that I used all the wool you sold me. Anyway, I don't see why Rainbow needs a scarf."

Pronto sighed. "It's not about needing, Wombat; and even if it was, Granny Crow has needs. She had set her heart on knitting a scarf for Rainbow as a present. That's a very kind thought and Granny deserves to be happy; but she can't be if she isn't able to finish the scarf. Surely you can see that?"

Wombat supposed he could. "But that's not going to happen, is it? You should have kept more wool in your shop, Pronto, so it's your fault Granny Crow's sad." He peered sternly over his spectacles at his friend. "You'll just have to get some more wool."

"But where from, Wombat?" Pronto pleaded, "The place I buy it from has none left in stock. How can I get more wool if there isn't any?"

"Don't ask me," said Wombat grumpily, "How should I know?"

"Maybe you don't," said Pronto, starting to cheer up a little, "But the Drumlins might. Let's go and find them."

Once he knew of the problem, Red had the Drumlins line up before him. "Right, Drumlins," he bellowed loudly, "This is going to be a hard one. Where can we find some wool?"

"Sheep have wool," said Green, "That's where it comes from in the first place."

"But isn't sheep's wool mainly white?" put in Orange in a whisper, "And Granny Crow needs lots of different-coloured wool."

"Easy," chirped Purple, and she started bouncing around. "All we have to do is find some coloured sheep."

"You silly Drumlin," said Yellow. "Sheep don't come in colours. Weren't you listening to Orange?"

Unable to argue the point, the Drumlins all went quiet. Pronto, however, had been thinking and said: "Although sheep are usually white, to make it different colours their wool is dyed."

"I wouldn't fancy taking wool from a sheep that had died," muttered Wombat.

"Pronto didn't mean that kind of dyed," said Green, and he went on to explain: "The white wool from the sheep is soaked in water of a different colour, and then it becomes the colour of the dye in the water; so it's called *dyed*, it hasn't actually died, not at all at all. For the moment, however, what we need are some sheep which are very much alive and are willing to come and live under Granny Crow's tree."

Blue frowned, raised his hat, then put it back on his head. "How will that, er, help?" he asked with a puzzled look on his face, "The sheep will, er, still be white."

"Maybe not," said Green, and he started walking off. "I have an idea how we can change their colour; but first let's find some sheep."

Without really knowing what the idea was, Red lined up the Drumlins and ordered them to follow Green. They marched around the paddocks where sheep were eating the grass; but that was all most of them were interested in, and none seemed to want to go and live somewhere else. Eventually they were lucky enough to find six sheep in a small field that had practically no grass because it had already been eaten; and they were glad to be told that they would be taken to a place where there was plenty of food. "But first," said Green to the sheep, "We have to take you down to the creek."

Still no-one knew what Green had in mind, but before anyone asked questions, Red ordered: "Don't ask why, just do what Green says. He is, after all, the best Drumlin thinker."

Everyone knew that, and Green was soon to prove he was a really good thinker. Once they were by the creek, he pointed to six puddles and had each of the Drumlins lie down in a separate puddle; then he also lay down in one. When he decided they had been in the puddles long enough, Green told the Drumlins to stand up. "You see," explained Green, "If you look at the puddles you will notice that the water in them has changed to the same colour as you."

"Oh, my," said Orange in a trembling whisper, "We must have leaked."

"Not at all," said Green. "Some of the dye has come out of your clothes."

"So that's the reason," said Wombat. "I always wondered why my nightshirt comes out all different colours when I put it in the washing machine with my socks." Then he had another thought: "And I think I know what Green's going to say next. He'll have each of the sheep roll around in a different puddle so that the coloured water will dye their wool. Isn't that right, Green?"

It certainly was. Once the six sheep had been dyed six different colours, they went with Pronto, Wombat and the Drumlins to Granny Crow's. As soon as she saw the coloured sheep she was truly happy. "O-oh, oh," she crowed, "A wool factory of my very ow-oh-own. I am so happy I could almo-ost cry-aye." But Granny Crow didn't cry. In fact, it was likely she would be laughing the way crows do for a very long time.

Back at home, Pronto was saying: "Thank you Drumlins for making Granny Crow happy again. And well done Green for your brilliant idea of dyeing the sheep."

"I've been wondering about that," said Wombat to Green, "I don't suppose, by any chance, you have an idea for getting the colour of my socks un-dyed from my white nightshirt?" Green shook his head. "That figures," said Wombat dismally.

"You could always buy a new white nightshirt and some white socks," suggested Pronto.

"You've got to be joking," grumbled Wombat, "Aside from the fact that anything white is shocking to keep clean, why would I want to look like a sheep?"