

George in the Country
(BASED ON A TRUE STORY)

I had grown up in the suburbs. Not that I was grown up completely, but my point is that I had never really been to the country. Sure, I had seen cows, and a horse had almost trampled me once too. It wasn't my fault; nobody told me not to get in a corral between a mother and her colt.

My grandmother ran a rural mail route through a valley that has three small towns in it, and then goes up into the mountains. It was spring and Mom had taken my little brother, who was just a little over a year old, and I back to her hometown. Now, Baggs, Wyoming, isn't very big, but it's a lot bigger than the three towns that Grandma collects the mail from.

We left Baggs on a bright green spring afternoon. The birds were singing, and the wind in my hair was very exciting. No matter how old I get, I love to have the window rolled down and the wind in my face. Mom and Grandma were talking in the front seat and my brother was nodding off in his car seat next to me. I love spring.

As we drove down the highway, I could see the farmers and ranchers on their big machines, driving in their fields. I could smell the grass and trees. The new little animals, sheep and cows and horses, were all in the fields eating with their mothers. I longed to run through those fields and visit with the animals.

Like I said earlier, I had never really been to the country before, especially not by myself. I guess my folks thought I'd get into trouble or something. Anyway, I don't know what came over me, but when Grandma stopped at the second little post-office, I couldn't stand it anymore. After Mom took my brother in, I slipped out the back window that Grandma had left open after taking the mailbags out.

Oh, sweet freedom. It was like a soothing balm on my suburban soul. The sun was warm, but the air was just right for a long run in the tall green grass. I leaped up the nearest hill and was quickly out of sight of the car, not a care to what lay behind me. Now don't get me wrong, I love my mom, and even my dad most of the time, and my little brother is great too, but on this day I was possessed. I just couldn't stay cooped up in the house or the car. I had to get out and see what the world was like in the country.

As I crested the next big hill, I stopped to rest. The sight was breathtaking. The deep green grass covered the hills around me like a thick wool comforter. The valley was spread out below me like a huge welcome mat, begging me to explore it.

At the bottom of the next hill, I found a small prairie dog town. I don't think they liked me chasing them around, because shortly after I arrived, they all disappeared into their pockets of dirt. A few squeaked at me, but I left in search of better companionship.

I knew better than to hang out around horses, and cows looked just as big, but the little lambs in the field looked at me with their big, funny shaped eyes, blatted so sweetly that I had to go and at least say hi. I hoped their mothers didn't care.

As it turned out, they did care. I got to chase a few lambs around a small pasture before a rather large old ewe decided that I wasn't welcome. Some animals can be really rude, and mean. I wasn't hurting anything.

As it turned out, Mom had become very worried about me almost immediately. She and Grandma had had to finish the mail-route, but had immediately set out looking for me right after. That had bought me enough time to find the sheep. But after the sheep, I started to have a little trouble. You see, I'm used to landmarks, street signs, hedges, hydrants, things like that. Out in the country, there's nothing but wide-open spaces. In other words, I got lost. I didn't even think to stop and look behind me.

When I finally found the highway again, I admit, I was a little distraught. Several trucks had almost run me over, and then people were stopping to try and get me into their cars. I wasn't about to go home with some stranger.

I was in the process of telling someone that very thing, when I smelled, then saw, my mom. She was a very welcomed sight. I don't think she was as happy to see me, or maybe it was because I smelled a little, due to the over powering urge I'd had while I was in with the sheep. Don't get me wrong, I like the shampoo and stuff that they put on me, but there is something in me, almost like instinct, that I can't control sometimes. I had to roll in it. I didn't think I smelled that bad, but apparently Mom thought I did. I had to ride in the back of the pick-up truck all the way home. That was okay though, because, like I said earlier, I like the wind in my face. I wagged my tail and enjoyed the view.

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