

## Down on the Farm

By Anna Von Reitz



When I was a young girl I lived on a farm, but we did not raise goats or sheep. I was a teenager before I formed a friendship with another girl whose family raised both goats and sheep. I immediately noticed the difference in their voices.

Sheep definitely say, "Baaah! Baaah!"  
Goats say something more like, "Beh! Beeeh!"

The overall impression is that sheep are vaguely distressed and bewildered by the world, while goats are judgmental and not impressed.

They both proved to be affectionate and worthy animals in their own ways.

The goats were bumptious and endlessly enterprising and energetic. Even when they were standing perfectly still, contentedly chewing on something with a thoughtful look in their eyes, you knew they were up to something....planning their next move.

Which roof or tree or wall would they climb? Which rope would they chew?  
Which latch would they learn to release?

I was quite fond of the goats, really. Despite the near-constant effort to keep them penned up and on track, they were endlessly amusing and feisty. No matter what life offered, the goats had a comeback.

Not so much the sheep, that lived at a very peaceful and sedate rate compared to the goats. They only got riled when windstorms and loud noises disturbed the flock, and then, suddenly, these woolly critters exploded with astonishing speed and agility.

Sheepdogs, I thought, are like sappers in the Army, forever on alert, enduring long periods of boredom, interspersed with bursts of lightning-speed action, because once sheep move, they move fast and without any certain pattern.

From a distance, they appear to float en masse over entire hillsides and valleys, flowing over every conceivable obstacle without a pause.

The goats, faced with the same storm, split up into singles and small groups and disperse as if denying the storm a target.

It's the same storm, but goats and sheep have entirely different responses and strategies to deal with it.

The sheep fall back on the combined strength of the flock, while the goats hunker down and go it alone or in small groups.

The sheep give up whatever individual judgment they have to the flock. The goats put no faith in group dynamics or decision-making at all.

It's every goat for himself.

I had no doubt from the very start that I was aligned with the goats. For better or worse, I was that kind of knot head, adventurous, willing to go it alone, not convinced of the existence of any greater group wisdom, confident in my own leadership, at least for myself.

One day, my friend's father took a fleece and tied it with wide straps to the back of a goat.

"There's a storm coming," he explained, "and possible flooding. I don't want the sheep going down to the river and drowning. And I don't want to stay up all night worrying, either. So I am making myself an Instant Shepherd."

I gathered that the fleece now tied on the back of the chosen goat, sprayed with some smelly inoculant of Essence of Sheep, would elevate the disgusted goat to Queen Sheep for the duration.

So it was that a fierce storm unleashed in the late afternoon, but by the time it hit, the sheep had already had several hours of following the nonplussed goat-shepherd wherever she went. And she most certainly did not go down to the river to drown in the flash flood that followed.

My friend and I watched the Chosen Goat head up the steep hillside in between flashes of lightning and rolls of thunder. The sheep followed.

In the morning the storm cleared away and the landscape was littered with downed trees and distressed animals and a torrent was roaring where only a small stream had been --- but the sheep were on their hillside, grazing as if nothing happened.

The goat-shepherd had led them to shelter from the storm and in the morning brought them back down to their accustomed pasture, where the other goats eventually also gathered.

My friend's parents were bumping around the kitchen in good spirits, her Father oiling up his chainsaw to deal with the fallen trees, her Mother cheerfully making pancakes. All was right with the world.

We later heard about heroic efforts other farmers had to make and other whole flocks lost to the raging water. My friend's Father shook his head on hearing the news.

"I am glad I found a way to put a goat inside a sheep."

So my friend's Father went on his merry, untroubled way, and seeing that his ruse had worked, he released the goat from her unsavory fleece burden.

The goat stared daggers at the Farmer the entire time he fumbled with the water-logged fleece and buckles on the straps, but by evening all was apparently forgotten and forgiven.

Not a single sheep was lost, while other flocks up and down the valley were decimated.

We all have our strong points. Wise leadership is not common among sheep.

Years later I happened to meet my friend's Father at a social gathering. My friend had long-since grown up and moved away and her Father was a Widower by then. I recalled the Great Storm and flooding afterward. He grinned.

"That was one disgusted goat," he said, "but she was the best sheep I ever had."

My point is that sometimes we get thrown into roles that don't suit us, roles that we question, that we balk against, but always it's for some greater reason and often it involves saving others.

So kneel down and accept the indignities of it. Accept your part in the great scheme of things and do it with honor, for the sake of the happy morning that comes after.

I never fancied myself the leader of anything. I still don't. I am not a groupie, a cheerleader, or politician by nature. Even to myself, I seem entirely ill-suited to the work I find myself engaged in, but here we all are, wearing our own water-logged fleeces.

As we man our Ship of State, and find ourselves restoring our unincorporated government, we are all called to stretch beyond -- sometimes far beyond--our personal Comfort Zones. Know that you aren't alone. Know that this is what it takes to save a nation.

-----  
See this article and over 4500 others on Anna's website here: [www.annavonreitz.com](http://www.annavonreitz.com)

To support this work look for the Donate button on this website.