Mary's Little Lamb

by andlat

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The Costume Box
2023

Chapter 1

Mary's Little Lamb - Chapter 1

"Mary had a little lamb, little lamb, little lamb" Conner groaned and folded his pillow over his head. Not again. Thankfully, the thick pillow blocked out the sound of his sister's favorite song, but he was only at peace for a moment before realizing it was now, like always, stuck in his head. "With fleece as white as snow." He heard as he admitted defeat and got out of bed.

"Where even is she?" He asked as he emerged from his room and trudged to the bathroom. He would pee and then maybe go downstairs to beg Mom and Dad for earplugs. How did they stand it? Mary listened to this song like a million times a day. There were at least a bajillion other songs that mentioned her name, so why this one?

"There you are, lazybones." Dad said as Conner appeared downstairs. He wore his work uniform and was clearly about to leave. Lucky, Conner thought as that stupid song kept playing from the living room. "Haven't seen you all week."

"Want cereal?" Mom asked. Conner nodded. "Don't forget you're grounded today."

"How could I?" Conner muttered. At least with the music playing, he could get away with soft snide comments.

"You can always play with Mary." He pushed a large spoonful of cereal in his mouth to avoid answering. "In fact,"

Mom patted a cardboard box. "Once you're done eating, we can unpack this."

"What is"

"Don't talk with your mouth full." Conner swallowed.

"What is it?"

"Finish eating." Conner could not fight his own curiosity, wolfing down his cereal. "Bowl in the sink. And rinse it." Mom instructed. He tried to hide the fact he was rushing. What was in the box?

"I am not wearing that." He stared at the sheep costume and the smiling boy on its packaging. Mom ripped open the plastic bag.

"Think of it as the terms of your grounding. You can't play video games or go play with your friends, so this is what you'll do." She held the faux wool pants out to him.

"Fine, I'll go put it on."

"Nope. You're doing it right here."

"What? Why?" He glared at his sister, who was happily humming along to Mary Had A Little Lamb, as if it was her idea.

"Because I know your tricks." Mom said wryly. "Go on. Strip." Conner groaned and stripped, wincing as Mary sang about 'fleece as white as snow' as he stood there shivering in just his underwear. "Step." Mom instructed. The pants had

little black hooves attached to them and in no time flat, Conner looked like a cute little faun, all woolly and white from the waist down. He wobbled for a second, trying to find his balance with the hooves forcing him onto the balls of his feet. "Arms." Mom instructed. Conner begrudgingly uncrossed his arms for the shirt with its attached hood and another pair of hooves to come down over them. "Ooh, it's a little snug." Mom said as she tugged the shirt down.

"Ow!" A little snug? They might have to cut it off of him!

"Oh, it's not that bad. We just" she grunted. "Need to get it to... budge!" Conner's head popped free just as one version of Mary ended and another one began. For the briefest second, he saw annoyance cross his mom's face. She hated it just as much as him. "Once we get your lamb dressed," she said, almost having to yell to be heard over the cheery music. "You two should go play outside."

"What? Like this?"

"No one will see in the backyard. Mary! Stop jumping on the furniture." She descended from the couch and looked over her brother appraisingly.

"Aw! You're a cute little lamb!" She gushed. "This will be fun."

"What will?"

"We're gonna play all day long." She said with a grin. "Everywhere that Mary went" she pointed to herself. "Her lamb was sure to go." She pointed to him before squealing

and giving him such a strong hug, he nearly fell off of his hooves.

"That's adorable." Mom said, seizing the opportunity to snap a photo. Mary stepped back and looked at him.

"Come on, little lamb."

"I'm a sheep." It felt at least a little more dignified.

"Mary had a little sheep? Nope." Mary laughed.

"Uh, what if..." She grabbed his hand and pulled him wobbling along.

"See? You're wobbling like a little baby lamb." Mary said. "And your hooves are so cute the way they click and clack." Cute? Conner had another word for it.

"What if you're Bo Peep and I'm your lost sheep."

"My name's Mary. And now I have a little lamb!" She grinned at him. "And you're going to follow me everywhere, okay?"

"Sure." Follow the Leader at least sounded normal.

"Okay, let's see." She began to walk, stopping every few steps to look back and make sure he was following her. "What should we do first?"

"I dunno." Mary laughed.

"Well, you're a lamb. You're not supposed to know. Or talk." Conner rolled his eyes.

"It's just pretend."

"Still." She began to walk toward the small plastic playground Dad had built them a few years ago. "Come on, little lamb." She delighted in making him follow her all over the playground and the backyard, giggling at how he wobbled on the uneven ground in his hooves. With the sun out on Mary in her sundress and him in his sheep costume, he expected to start boiling, but he found that he was surprisingly comfortable. In a way, there was something almost relaxing about the day, following Mary around the backyard.

"Isn't she tired of making me follow her?" He started to wonder, but Mary never seemed to get bored. Now that she was living like the Mary in the song, she was on cloud nine. And I look like a freaking cloud.

"Let's skip!" She began to skip along and Conner found himself immediately following suit, even waving his hands around like her. He self-consciously brought his hands down to his sides, but they soon returned to their raised position. I look like a dork, he said, suddenly grateful for the high fences.

"Conner was a little lamb, little lamb, little lamb!" Mary sang. "Conner was a little lamb, his fleece was white as snow!"

"Baa." Conner muttered. Mary giggled and sat down under the shade of a big tree.

"Ooh, daisies!" She began to pick some. Conner took the

opportunity to plop down beside her and just watch the sky. "Some of those clouds look like you, little lamb." She said with a smile, tying the daisies' stems together. "I'm going to make you a nice daisy chain crown. Won't that be fun?"

"Baa."

"Y'know, one of my storybooks shows Mary feeding her little lamb a bottle. Should we ask Mommy for one of those?" Conner glared at her. "I'm just teasing. I know this is just pretend." She leaned over and patted his wool head. "I really like that we're playing together." She pulled away and Conner realized she had planted the daisy chain crown atop his head.

"Baa!" He said. His eyes widened as he realized he had not just told her to take it off his head. "Baa? Baa!" Mary giggled.

"You're really getting into this, aren't you?" He tried to get her attention, waving a hoof, but she jumped up and took off running. He found himself having to follow after her with an annoyed bleat. They were his own voice, but why was it the only thing he could say? I can still think words, but…

Mary led him around and around, giggling as her brother had no choice but to follow her. Finally, she stopped and turned back to watch him catch up.

"Y'know what? Conner isn't a good name for my lamb."

"Baa."

"I'm glad you agree." She smiled. "Hey, uh, is baa all you can say?"

"Baa. Baa." Mary grinned.

"Yeah, Conner definitely isn't a good name."

"Baa!"

"But what to call you?" She tapped her chin. "I know, Lilybelle!" She giggled. "Lilybelle the little lamb." Conner tried to tell her his name was Conner and always would be, but all he could do was baa. What was going on? He had to get help. With a growl, he stormed toward the house, ignoring Mary's calls after him. "Lilybelle!" She said sternly. He stopped. "That's a good lamb. Come back over here." He tried to fight it, but he turned back toward her. "We'll go back inside for lunch, but it's nice out here."

"What are we going to do then?" He asked, hoping that his baa got the point across.

"Are you asking what we should play next?" He nodded and Mary smiled.

"We could do hopscotch?" She pointed down at his hooves. "Your cute widdle lamby feet will probably give you an advantage, don't you think?"

"Baa." It was hard to sound angry when all you could do was bleat.

"I mean, you're my little lamb, so if I go over to the sidewalk to play hopscotch, so do you." She smiled sweetly. "Come along, Lilybelle!" She began to skip over and Conner found himself following along, skipping just as merrily, waving his

hooves to and fro. She better drop the Lilybelle thing, he thought. She did not, grabbing chalk and deciding to keep score for their hopscotch game, writing Mary and then Lilybelle beneath it, even drawing a little white sheep. "What do you think?"

"Baa."

"Yeah, it's not quite as pretty as you." She stared up at him. "Can you really not talk or is this your way of like protesting?"

"Baa."

"Hmm... if you say something other than baa, I'll leave you alone." Conner's heart raced. His face twisted as he summoned up all his focus. Here. I. Go.

"Baaaaa!"

"Wow! That was impressive." Mary shrugged. "I guess it makes sense for a little lamb to only be able to baa, right, Lilybelle?" Conner glared at her, but she pretended not to notice.

By lunchtime, Conner had grown tired of hopscotch. The whole point of the game was to throw and retrieve a pebble, which proved impossible with hooves. All he could do was hop back and forth, listening to Mary go on and on about what a pretty little lamb he was. Between games, she would even randomly go running off or even skipping, giggling with delight as he had no choice but to follow her, often doing so before he even realized it.

Finally, however, Mom called them in for lunch. She quickly dashed across the kitchen to retrieve her phone in time to record her daughter skipping in to the house with her son close behind, skipping just as merrily, even if his face made it look like he was being forced to do so.

"Looks like you two have been having fun. I've got PB and J for you Mary and for Conner"

"Lilybelle."

"Huh?"

"Since I'm Mary and this is my little lamb, I named him Lilybelle." She looked Conner over. "At least, I think you're a boy lamb." Conner frowned. If Lilybelle was her name for a boy lamb, do I even want to know what she'd name me if I was a girl?

"And you're ok with this, Conner? Um, Lilybelle?"

"Baa" was all Conner could say.

"Lilybelle's really committed to being a good little lamby." Mom's astonishment was written all over her face.

"Alright, well, since Lilybelle doesn't have hands, I made a smoothie."

"Oh, wonderful. Doesn't that look good? I bet it has everything a little lamb needs."

"Let your brother enjoy his smoothie." Mom said, shaking her head in disbelief.

Lunch passed uneventfully other than Mary insisting on wiping his face after he finished his smoothie.

"We wouldn't want to stain your fleece." She said. "Oh! Stay right here." She ran out of the room.

"You've been very patient with your sister." Mom said, smiling down at him. "That name? Where does she come up with this stuff> Tell you what. Are you ready to stop playing?"

"Baa!" Conner nodded eagerly.

"Oh. I'll take that as a no." Mom said in surprise. She walked away, seeming to not hear his desperate bleats. He tried to give chase, but his butt seemed glued to the seat and his hooves scraped ineffectually on the floor. What? Mary had told him to stay and now he couldn't move?

"Lilybelle!" Mary called, running back into the room with a bell in her hand. "Look what I've got! A little lamb needs a bell!" Try as he might to bleat and push her away, she got it around his neck. "Oh, perfect. Mommy! Come look!"

"Oh, isn't that lovely. Now you'll always know where Lilybelle is."

"As if you're ever far away." Mary said, giving him a fond pat on the head. "Let's go back outside. I can read my book and you, my little lamby, can graze."

"He just ate lunch." Mom laughed as the pair headed for the backyard. It was so interesting how Conner started out

shuffling, but then ended up skipping along just like his sister in a matter of steps. How he was doing that on hooves, she had no idea. "Lilybelle. Huh."

Conner had hoped that Mary had meant it when she said she was just going to read her book. Instead, he had to follow her as she skipped around the backyard, singing Mary Had a Little Lamb twice in a row, the bell around his neck jingling just as merrily as they skipped. Finally, she flopped down at the base of the tree and smiled at him.

"Feel free to graze, but don't go too far." She looked him up and down. "And really, shouldn't a lamb be on all fours?" He took the hint and dropped down to his haunches. "Good Lilybelle." She giggled. "You should probably practice being on all fours."

"Baa!?"

"I'm just joking. Geez. Even as a widdle lamby, you overreact." She shrugged." I think Mommy and Daddy will let you stop at dinner, right? Pretty sure." She opened her book and Conner sat there, waiting. This could be his chance. Once she got invested in her book, he could try to get this lamb costume off. He soon realized that the hooves made it impossible. He crawled a short distance away, but every time he came close to hooking a hoof under the hem of his shirt to at least try, Mary would call him over and stroke his ears.

"Baa." He said, hoping she understood that he meant to say 'can't we be done yet?'. She only smiled at him and went back to her book. What was she even reading? He peered down at

the pages and immediately lost interest. Did Mom plan to make him do this every time he was grounded? Cling-cling went the bell around his neck as Mary played with it.

"Lovely Lilybelle my little lamb." She said.

"Baa." He muttered. She laughed.

"It's really funny that that's all you can say, y'know?"

"Baa."

"I know you don't think it's funny, but" she grinned. "Mommy didn't even notice. Maybe you can be my lamb for forever." No way, Conner thought. But would he have a choice? What if he kept bleating even after the costume came off?

"Mary! Lilybelle! Come inside for dinner."

"Did you hear that? She used your name, lamby!" Mary giggled even as Conner felt like he might be sick. "Let's skip inside!" Conner groaned as he got to his feet, wondering if it was actually a groan or some sort of stretched-out bleat.

Mary led him all over the backyard and even up the playground and down the slide before they came skipping inside. Dad sat at the dining room table, chuckling as they came skipping in, Conner's bell tinkling musically with every motion.

"It'll be bath time after this. You've got school in the morning." Mom said as she set food in front of Mary and another smoothie in front of Conner. So much for getting to change.

"Can Lilybelle join me?"

"Lambs don't go in the tub. It's only for humans." Mom said. I'll almost be thankful for a shower after today, Conner thought. "Lilybelle can wait outside." Outside outside? Conner thought in a panic. It turned out that instead, he sat on the carpeted floor outside the bathroom while Mary took a bath, her favorite song playing at top volume. He tried again to slip his hoof under the hem of the shirt and even into the hood he wore, but it was no use. The plastic hoof or whatever it was made of just slid over his faux wool. Mom and Dad just smiled as they passed him in the hall, not even stopping when he bleated pleadingly at them. This was getting scary.

"Lilybelle!" Mary exclaimed as she emerged in a white robe with strawberries on it. "Let's go get ready for bed!" She walked along, not even having to check if Conner was following as his hooves clicked and his bell jangled.

She closed her bedroom door behind them and Conner wondered just what would happen next. He looked away as she dressed in her pajamas, wondering if he could open the door with his mouth somehow. Stupid hooves.

"Alright," Mary said with a sigh. "Oh, Lilybelle!" He turned toward her.

"Baa." He said in resignation. She must be planning something.

"I'm going to bed," Mary said, emphasizing 'going' in what had to be the most annoying tone possible. "Which means my

lamb needs to too!" She said it in sing-song, but he recognized a command when he heard one. He wanted so bad to say the game was over and he was not doing that, that going to sleep was not even the same thing as actually going some place, but all he could was utter a whiny bleat as he joined her in bed. She placed an arm over him and closed her eyes. How long was this going to go on? It was Monday tomorrow. As if to answer him, Mary began to sing in a dreamy half-awake voice.

"He followed me to school one day, school one day, school one day..." she began to snore.

The End

Chapter 2

Mary's Little Lamb: He Followed Her to School One Day - Chapter 2

Chapter one: https://andlatscaptions.blogspot.com/2023/07/marys-little-lamb.html

Connor woke up the next morning to Mary's alarm, one of the few things in her life that was not that stupid song. He rubbed at his eyes before remembering his hooves.

"Good morning, Lilybelle!" Connor hoped his bleat in reply conveyed exactly how annoyed he was that he had gone to bed at her super early little kid bedtime and was now stuck playing lamb for another day. Do you really want to go to school though? A small voice inside asked. Really, though, that was just his luck. His only escape from being a lamb was going to school. "Come on, LIlybelle! Let's go eat breakfast." Connor clambered off of the bed, landing with grace that surprised him on his hooves. His surprise was soon replaced by further irritation as he automatically skipped after Mary, who took just as much delight as yesterday in leading him on a circuitous route, his bell jangling. It's way too early for this Connor thought, but his bleats of protest were hardly audible over Mary singing and his bell tinkling.

Finally, they reached the breakfast table. Connor sat in his spot, rolling his eyes as Mary patted him on the head between his ears.

"Mary, no lambs at the breakfast table."

"Baa!"

"See? Lilybelle agrees." Mom said. "Go put him outside in his pen. His breakfast is waiting for him there."

"Ok!" Mary took this latest revelation in stride, grinning as she hurried to the door, turning to watch Lilybelle skip along after her. She knew that, technically, that was her brother there, but it was so much more fun to think of him as Lilybelle. All he had done was bleat since yesterday afternoon and he acted so much like the lamb from the storybook version she had. In fact, it felt almost right. Like he was meant to be Lilybelle. And she, of course, was Mary. The idea of a lamb of her own as a constant companion made her so happy, she kissed Connor right on the nose. "I love you, Lilybelle."

"Baa." She could not be sure what Connor had tried to say back. It did not really matter, did it? Deciding that he should get used to baaing and other sheep noises, she just shrugged and resumed leading him outside to where a white fence stood. This must be Lilybelle's pen! Mary smiled and walked inside it. Even when she walked normally, Lilybelle skipped so merrily! What a perfect little lamb he was! She knew he was trying to make it seem like he wasn't doing it by choice, but she suspected he was enjoying it more than he was letting on. Why else would he skip so much without complaining? The Connor she knew before yesterday never missed a chance to complain. And loudly! Oh, well. She had Lilybelle

now.

Mary quickly stepped back outside the pen and closed the gate, smiling sweetly at her very own little lamb.

"Bye-bye, Lilybelle. I'll be inside eating my girl breakfast while you eat your lamb breakfast." Lilybelle looked at her, confused. "Sheep eat grass and clover and stuff. Graze, Lilybelle!"

"I'm a human!" Connor bleated after her, but he knew she could not understand a word. "At least I'm alone." Connor said. He looked around the pen before he realized what had just happened. "I can talk!" He grinned from ear to ear. "Now if only I could get this thing off. I need to pee." He pawed at his outfit, but could make no more progress than he had the night before. This was getting bad! "What am I supposed to do?" He wondered out loud. Did this mean he did not have to go to school? He liked the idea of that, but he knew Mary would just make him play lamb with her this afternoon. He had to figure out a way out of this and soon. “But first I gotta pee.” Should he wet himself? That would sure show Mom, but... "I'm not that desperate." He muttered. A better idea came to mind; he would climb over the stupid fence, march inside, and demand that Mom get him out of this thing, even if it meant going to school. "Better do it soon." He muttered. "If anyone walking to school sees me dressed as some sissy sheep, I'll never live it down." Part of him longed for someone to acknowledge him as a human again, but not like that! He eyed the fence and made up his mind. It was now or never.

He took a step forward, wobbling a bit on his hooves. How did it make any sense that he could skip on them all day without an issue but walking was so hard? As he reached the fence, he realized he did not need to pee anymore. Had… had he gone? Sheep weren't potty trained…

“I am not a sheep though!”

The fence was low enough that he could swing a raised leg over it without much issue. He pawed once again at the woolly hood covering his head, but it still would not budge. He groaned, but knew it was fine. He would march inside and insist, demand, maybe even beg for Mom to let this game finally end.

“Bye, Mommy!” Mary said, coming out the front door at that exact moment.

“Baa.” Connor said, the bleat taking the place of a plethora of inappropriate words.

“Lilybelle!” Mary exclaimed. “Do you want to come to school with me?” Any idiot could tell that his bleat was a firm no, but Mary just smiled. “Hooray!” She walked right past him with a knowing smile, not even having to look back to see Connor pivot on his hooves and begin to skip along behind her, getting farther and farther from the house with every step.

“Baa!” Connor bleated, hoping that somehow, Mary would realize this was too far.

“We're almost there, Lilybelle!” Mary said cheerfully. This

could not be happening! He was still in bed. That had to be it. He was having a nightmare. That was the only way he could possibly be skipping along, waving his mittened hands, dressed as a sheep.

“Hi, Mary.” A little girl smiled at Mary before looking at Connor behind her. “Is… is that-”

“My very own little lamb.” Mary said proudly.

“Wow!” The little girl said. “What's his name?” Connor braced himself.

“Lillybelle!” Mary exclaimed.

“Can I pet him?”

“Sure, but you also gotta help me.”

“With what?” The little girl came over and ran her hand along Connor's side, seemingly unaware of his attempts to bat her away. “He's sooooo soft!”

“He is.” Mary agreed. “But we gotta get him into school somehow.”

“Why?”

“Cuz it's the song.” Mary said as if that made perfect sense. I've been stuck as a sheep for like twenty-four hours. How does any of this make sense? “Any ideas, Cassie?”

“I think so.” Cassie said after a moment. She leaned over and whispered to Mary.

“Oh! Perfect!” She turned and, holding her hands around her mouth, bellowed across the schoolyard. “Jessica, Marie, Sammy.”

“And Olivia.”

“Olivia!” Added Mary. The girls all came over and Connor grimaced as they all were told he was a lamb named Lillybelle and they were allowed to pet him all they wanted. Some of these girls had been over to their house. How did none of them question that he was Mary's brother?

“So, here's the plan.” Mary said. “Lilybelle, you need to get down on all fours.” She waited as Connor, bleating in irritation, complied. “Now, we all form a ring around Lilybelle and then we'll go into class.”

“What happens once we're in there?”

“Once we're in there?” Mary shrugged. “Mrs. Hale has to let him stay, right?”

“Baa.” Connor said, which meant 'this is a stupid plan', but he crawled along in the middle of the circle of girls. Somehow, they made it into the classroom and Mary ordered Connor to sit on the floor beside her desk.

“Is that a sheep?” The boy next to Connor said.

“Duh, Derek.” Mary said. “He's my little lamb, Lilybelle.”

“His name is Lilybelle!?” Connor looked at the boy, silently saying that he could not believe it either. Mary should've turned you into a sheep.

“He looks like a Lilybelle.” Olivia said. “And he's really soft.”

“You can pet him, if you're nice.”

“No way.” Derek said, even if he did look a little curious. “What's a dumb lamb even do?”

“He baas and he follows me everywhere.” Mary said. Derek only scoffed. “And he cavorts.”

“What's that even mean?” Mary had gotten it from one of her storybooks, so she wasn't one hundred percent certain herself.

“Go on, Lilybelle. Cavort.”

“Baa!” Connor replied. A chorus of girls exclaimed at how adorable it sounded. He sighed and got to his hooves.

“Cavort.” Mary repeated. Connor wanted to say he was working on it, but instead, he began to skip around the room, his mittens waving to and fro. The room erupted in laughter, but he found himself unable to stop.

Around and around the room he went, the laughter continuing, but on his third merry lap, something new happened. Derek got to his feet and began to skip along after Connor in a fair approximation of how he looked. Then another boy joined, then another. A few girls joined and soon, Connor had half the class skipping along after him, none of them seeming to be able to stop anymore than he could. Those who weren't skipping laughed and laughed.

“What is going on here?” Mrs. Hale asked, walking in. The skipping stopped and the laughter died down.

“a lamb, at school.” One of the kids explained as if it was obvious. Mrs. Hale gave Connor a cold stare.

“And why is there a sheep in here?”

“He's mine, Mrs. Hale.” Mary said.

“Hmm.” The teacher frowned. “Mary, can I see you and your lamb out in the hall?” Even chastised as they were, a few kids snickered as Mary shuffled out of the classroom and Connor skipped merrily after her.

“I'm really sorry, Mrs. Hale.”

“I know you love your lamb, but” she sighed. “School is no place for a lamb, Mary.” Mrs. Hale said. “I think it would be best if you take your lamb to the front office while I call your parents.”

“Yes, Mrs. Hale.” Mary shuffled along, her spirits only slightly lifted when she saw Lilybelle skipping along behind her. “You really do follow me wherever I go, huh?” She rubbed her eyes to rid them of tears. “I guess this is how the song ends.” She gave Connor's ear a little rub. He felt a little bad for Mary. Had he made the kids laugh and play? That's what the song said, but that didn't make any sense! Either way, was it really fair for her to get in trouble?

Mary and Connor sat in the office until Mom and Dad showed up. Connor expected them to see him as a sheep, so he was startled when Dad pulled him up off of his place on the floor at Mary's feet.

“Daddy! You're hurting Lilybelle!” Mary exclaimed as Dad tugged on Connor's hood. “Connor?” Mary blinked and rubbed at her eyes as if she did not believe it.

“I don't know whose idea this was.” Mom said. “But you two are grounded.”

“Out to the car.” Dad said gruffly. Connor wobbled his way out, tumbling into the backseat and yanking at his hooves until they came off. He wiggled his toes and almost stripped to his underwear right then and there. He was free!

“That was a fun game.” Mary murmured to him. “I'll have to find a new favorite song for us to play, huh?”