

Too Much of a Good Thing

The background illustration is a rich, textured scene. In the foreground, a large, dark wooden pipe with a long, curved stem is held by a hand. The pipe is surrounded by various patterned blankets and textiles in shades of brown, tan, and blue. In the background, a Native American man wearing a traditional feathered headdress and a patterned tunic is visible. The overall style is reminiscent of traditional Native American art, with intricate geometric and organic patterns.

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Chapter One

Too Many Gifts

Eva half-heartedly opened the box that had just been delivered by the mail carrier.

“It’s another sweater from Nana,” she groaned. She pushed the box aside. “I adore Nana, but I already have seven sweaters, four hats, and five scarves. Then there’s all the stuff she knitted for Mom and Dad. She even knitted doggie sweaters for Max. Maybe I should say something when I see her next week.”

Eva looked forward to her visits to Nana’s farm because she always had wonderful trips planned. The farm was so different from the city where Eva lived, so relaxing. However, the idea of asking Nana to stop sending the knitted gifts made her feel somewhat worried about the trip.



Chapter Two

Nana's Surprise

The trip to Nana's was a winding journey on rugged terrain. It always ended with Nana's bounding out of the house at the sound of the car to hug Eva. They affectionately held one another until Nana wrestled free.

"Time to hurry along!" Nana said with twinkling eyes.

She motioned Eva to get into her trusty, rusty pickup truck, explaining, "There's something I'm excited to show you."

Nana's vehicle bumped along the dusty, unpaved farm road, turned sharply around some trees, and then stopped abruptly. Eva gasped as she saw what was in a paddock in front of her.

"What are those animals? They're so funny-looking!"



"They're llamas. South Americans call them Camels of the Clouds because they live high in the mountains," Nana explained. "I learned about them when I went to Peru to see our ancestral village. I bought several llamas there and have been raising them on the farm."

"Are they good for anything?" Eva asked.

"Their hair makes wonderful yarn for knitting," Nana said. "Peruvians make beautiful blankets and clothing from llama wool."

"That's why you keep sending me knitted clothing. You are making them from llama wool!" Eva exclaimed.

Chapter Three

Gathering Wool

Eva watched, hypnotized, as the llamas chewed their cud in slow motion. Then Nana's voice broke her trance.

"Now, we're going to harvest some wool!" proclaimed Nana excitedly. "First, we need to clean the llamas."

Eva was surprised when Nana took a leaf blower out of the truck and used it to blow the dust off the llamas. Then Nana handed Eva a dog-grooming brush and asked her to brush the animals. Eva was hesitant at first. She quickly realized that llamas are very gentle.

"Now, we'll cut off the hair with shears," Nana told Eva. Nana demonstrated the technique and then handed the shears to her. At first, Eva used the tools awkwardly. As she got the *clip-clip* rhythm, Eva could see why her grandmother loved these odd, friendly animals.

Eva helped her grandmother bundle the tufts of wool and load them in the truck. As they drove back to the farmhouse, Eva worried how she would talk to Nana about the number of knitting gifts. Nana loved making things from her llama wool, but it was pointless to have so many sweaters, socks, blankets, and scarves if they just sat in drawers.



Chapter Four

Talking About a Problem

When they returned to the farmhouse, Nana took Eva to her weaving room. She demonstrated how she used a long paddle with short metal teeth to stretch the wool out in strands. Then she showed Eva the spinning wheel that she used to spin the wool into yarn. She welcomed Eva to try it.

I would like to learn to spin and knit, but I know that the last thing our family needs is someone else knitting! Eva thought.

The afternoon slipped away so rapidly that Nana and Eva were surprised when their stomachs started to grumble. Together, they made an omelet of farm eggs and vegetables that Nana had gathered that morning.

As they relaxed on the porch after dinner, Nana knitted. "I'm making you another sweater," she beamed.

Eva knew she should take this opportunity to talk to Nana.

Maybe after dessert, Eva thought.



Chapter Five

A Great Solution

Eva finished the last of her apple pie, taking time to sweep up every crumb. Then she took a deep breath.

“Nana, I’ve been thinking about all the beautiful clothing you’ve been making and all the other things you’ll make with the wool we harvested today,” she started. “I know some people who could use warm clothing.”

She told Nana about the soup kitchen where she volunteered. Eva explained that many people who come to the kitchen need clothing as well as food.

“Your handmade sweaters, hats, gloves, and socks could keep them warm in the cold weather.”

Nana kept knitting, saying nothing.

Oh, I hurt her feelings, worried Eva.

Nana looked up.

“Eva, I’m proud of you for thinking about others. I love knitting for the family, but I too was worried that you might have more than you need. I didn’t want to hurt your feelings, so I just kept sending them. Your idea is splendid and generous!”

Eva smiled.

“Nana, can you teach me to knit, so I can also help make things for donation?”

“We’ll start bright and early in the morning!” Nana promised.

