

THE LOST GOAT

BY MATTHEW B. PEARSON

From a young boy in Chile who herded goats, I learned a lot about the Savior's love for each of us.



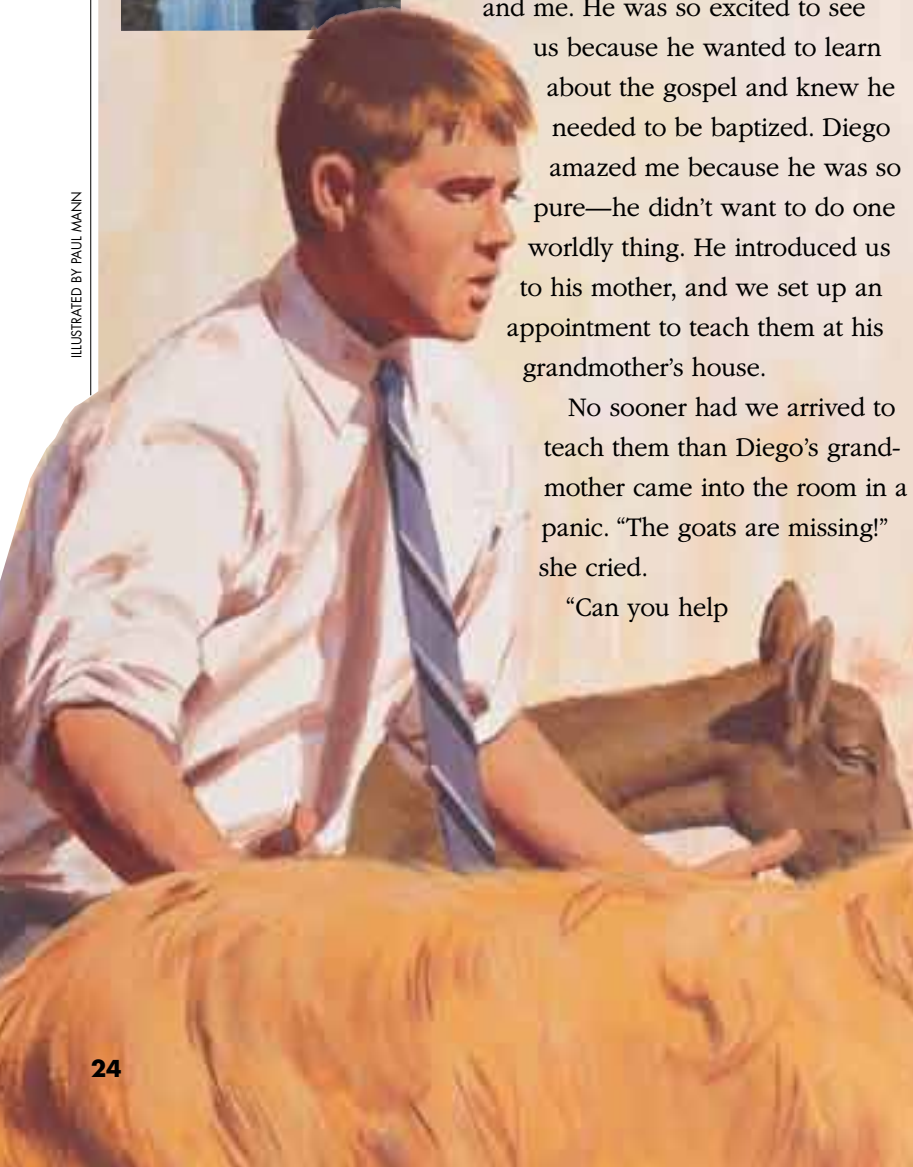
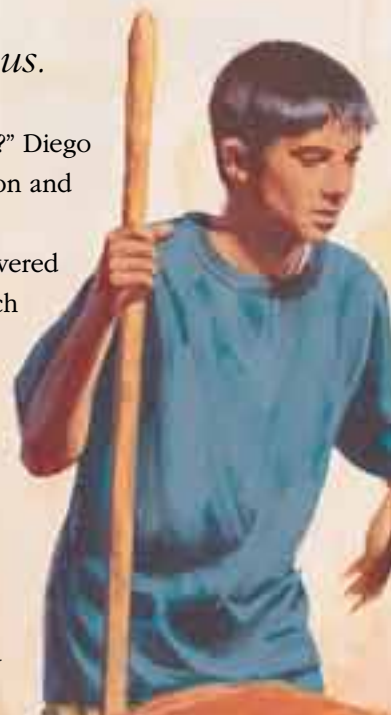
I'll never forget the day I met Diego. I was serving my mission in Chile when he approached my companion and me. He was so excited to see us because he wanted to learn about the gospel and knew he needed to be baptized. Diego amazed me because he was so pure—he didn't want to do one worldly thing. He introduced us to his mother, and we set up an appointment to teach them at his grandmother's house.

No sooner had we arrived to teach them than Diego's grandmother came into the room in a panic. "The goats are missing!" she cried.

"Can you help

me search for them?" Diego asked my companion and me, so we did.

The area was covered in rolling hills, which were rockier than I had thought. Diego explained that he was worried because the goats could hurt themselves on the treacherous terrain or be stolen by thieves. We had



ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL WANN

searched for a while when Diego finally yelled, "I see them!"

I turned my head and could not see anything. I asked, "Diego, where are they?"

He replied, "They are on top of that hill."

As I tried to focus my eyes, I could see dots moving around on the hilltop. I couldn't believe Diego had spotted the flock of goats from that far away. He told us to wait at the bottom while he went up to get them.

I then witnessed something I had never seen before. As Diego climbed the steep hill, he began a distinct combination of clapping and yelling. The goats, recognizing the signal, perked up. Within five minutes, they grouped together and came galloping down the hill.

"This is too easy!" I thought.

I was right.

As we turned to herd the flock back home, I heard the distant cry of another goat. We looked back and saw one little goat bleating on top of the hill. Realizing it was alone, it started trotting toward us. I was feeling relieved to see that this goat was coming toward us when Diego began to race up the hill.

"What are you doing?" I called.

"It's a baby goat," he replied. "It could easily fall and get injured."

My companion and I quickly followed him.

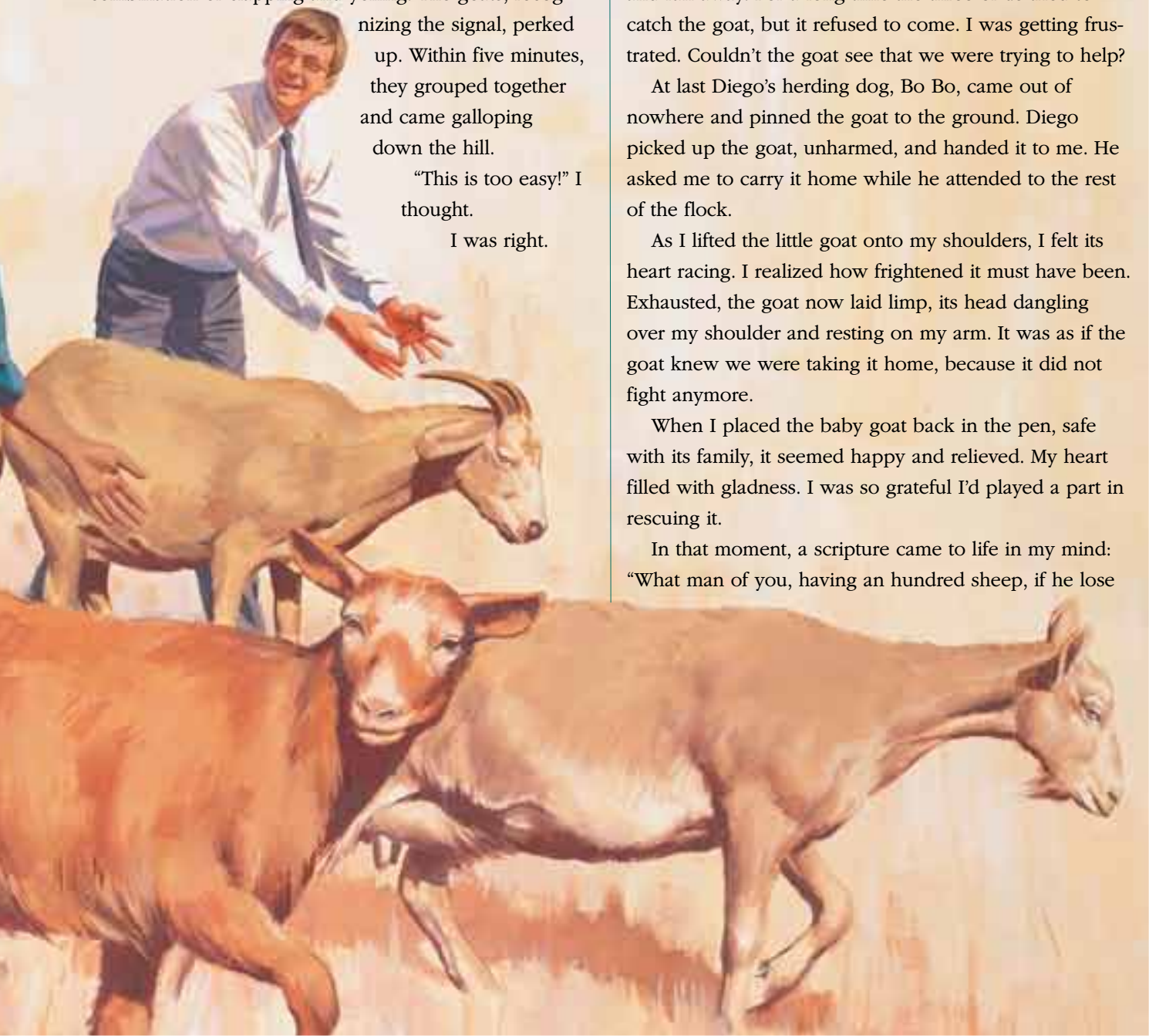
As Diego bent to pick up the baby goat, it dodged and ran away. For a long time the three of us tried to catch the goat, but it refused to come. I was getting frustrated. Couldn't the goat see that we were trying to help?

At last Diego's herding dog, Bo Bo, came out of nowhere and pinned the goat to the ground. Diego picked up the goat, unharmed, and handed it to me. He asked me to carry it home while he attended to the rest of the flock.

As I lifted the little goat onto my shoulders, I felt its heart racing. I realized how frightened it must have been. Exhausted, the goat now laid limp, its head dangling over my shoulder and resting on my arm. It was as if the goat knew we were taking it home, because it did not fight anymore.

When I placed the baby goat back in the pen, safe with its family, it seemed happy and relieved. My heart filled with gladness. I was so grateful I'd played a part in rescuing it.

In that moment, a scripture came to life in my mind: "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose



joined in the rescue of one small goat that brought to life some familiar scriptures (see Luke 15:4–5, 7).

one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

“And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. . . .

“ . . . Likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth” (Luke 15:4–5, 7).

Diego taught me something about the Savior that day. Diego loved each member of his flock individually. He could see the dangers they faced and wanted to save each one. How much more the Savior loves each of us.

The little goat taught me a lot too. How often had I run away

from the Savior’s help? How many lost souls were shutting Him out of their lives because they were afraid?

As a missionary, I was privileged to serve others the way the Savior would if He were here. At first I had agreed to help Diego because I cared about him, but as I carried that goat, I came to feel I cared for it too. How much more I loved the Savior and wanted to seek for His children. As I did, love grew in my heart for the Chilean people. I could not always carry them safely on my shoulders, but I could teach them and the Holy Ghost could guide them to the One who can. I know I’ll feel joy seeing them safely at home with their eternal families someday. **NE**

Do you have a good missionary story to share? Send it to newera@ldschurch.org.

