

Name _____ Date _____

Argyle

Once, somewhere in Scotland, there was a white ram named Argyle. Argyle was like all the other sheep. He liked to do the same things other sheep did. He wasn't one bit different from any of them. When MacDougal the shepherd herded his sheep into the pen to shear their wool for market, he couldn't tell Argyle from the rest of the sheep. That was all right with Argyle.

All day, with the rest of the sheep, Argyle roamed the highlands and the lowlands and the middlelands. It was quiet. It was just the way he wanted it. All sheep like to go round in flocks, so did Argyle. Once in a while a sheep likes to wander away from the rest, so did Argyle. One day he wandered off and came to a place behind some tall rocks. The grass there tasted pretty good, so did some strange little flowers. They had red, blue, white, green, purple and yellow petals.

Argyle told no one about them, but the next day he went back. He went back many times after that. He ate hundreds of the bright little flowers. One day MacDougal's wife, Katherine said, "Why didn't you tell me about the sheep with the bright wool?" "We do not have such a sheep," said MacDougal. "Look again," said Katherine.

MacDougal looked again and saw that they did. One sheep had red, blue, white, green, purple and yellow wool. That sheep was Argyle. MacDougal ran for his shears and started clipping. After he and Katherine had made the wool into yarn, Katherine started knitting. Then they showed all their friends the socks Katherine had knit. They were a beautiful plaid. Well! You can imagine the excitement in Scotland. When people learned of the sheep who grew wool that knit into plaid socks, Argyle became famous.

Soon MacDougal put Argyle in a pen by himself. Argyle was all alone, but hundreds of people paid a lot of money to come and see him and buy some of his wool. Soon MacDougal and Katherine grew very rich. Mayor Loch of Lomond came out and gave Argyle a medal. Argyle felt as if he weren't a sheep anymore. He hated that. It was never quiet. He couldn't roam any longer, and of course he couldn't go where the pretty bright little flowers grew.

His wool started to turn white again. MacDougal was worried. He fed Argyle all kinds of medicines and food that tasted terrible. Argyle was unhappy. Pretty soon he not only stopped feeling like a sheep; he stopped looking like one too. All his wool fell out. Well! Soon people stopped coming around, except for Mayor Loch of Lomond. He came to take away the medal. Fortunately, he couldn't take away the money, so MacDougal and Katherine stayed rich the rest of their days.

Katherine found a new way to make plaid socks. She used different bits of dyed wool. She called them Argyle socks, of course. You may have heard of them. MacDougal sent Argyle out with the rest of the sheep. Argyle's coat grew back. Pretty soon you couldn't tell him from the rest of the sheep. As for the place with the pretty bright flowers, if Argyle ever went back there he told no one. His coat stayed white, so you can be sure he was eating only the grass.

He just roamed the highlands, the lowlands and the middlelands with the rest of the sheep. It was quiet. It was just the way he wanted it.