



Sterlington Stairlift Stories For Children

Lopsided Larry

In the mountains of Tibet there once lived a shepherd called Lah-Ree.

His name was usually spelt in funny-looking Tibetan writing but it was pronounced something like lah-ree and if an English person said it quickly it sounded like Larry.

So, to keep things simple let's call him Larry.

He lived on the side of a mountain and each morning he used to leave his hut and walk towards the west to tend to his animals. Larry did look after sheep, but he also had some yaks and other mountain animals as well.

Larry walked west so the sun didn't shine in his eyes. In the evening when he went home again the sun was still behind him, but he used to walk on the other side of the mountain then. By the time he turned the bend to the hut the sun had gone down behind the mountain.

Larry liked seeing his shadow way out in front of him when the sun was behind him and he often made signs with his arms and legs to amuse himself - rather like mountainside shadow pictures!

Because Larry always walked around the mountain one way, his legs had grown to different lengths. When he was on a flat surface, like the floor of his hut, he leaned over to one side; that's why he was called Lopsided Larry.

When Larry tried walking in a straight line he went round in circles, and when everyone else was walking normally he bounced up and down.

Once he went to a town where they had a pavement and he could walk normally with one foot in the road and one foot on the pavement.

At the fair one year, Larry was given a small stilt by one of the midget clowns. He thought that was great. He could actually walk normally just like other people.

The strange thing was, his knees were both at the same level, it was just the lower parts of his legs that were different lengths. Even his feet were the same size.

A friend of Larry's once suggested that he should walk round the mountain the other way for a while so his legs evened out again - but when Larry tried it he fell over. The other thing was that the sun shone in his eyes and he didn't like that one bit.

But he was a very happy soul. Some people said he was as happy as Larry.

Every day he had some cheese made from the milk he got from his animals. He had bread and lovely fresh vegetables that grew in a special plot on the mountainside.

It was an excellent place for growing things, with just the right temperature, just the right amount of oxygen, just the right amount of sunshine, and just the right amount of rain. The soil was superb. The grass on the mountainside was lovely and green and fresh and the animals loved it.

Larry played a pipe, something like a recorder, which one of the villagers gave him. When he was younger he had made himself a pipe out of wood, with a blade of grass used like a reed to make a vibrating sound. The villager had seen it when Larry was at the village market and he was very impressed with the nice tunes that Larry played on it.

So he gave Larry a nice manufactured pipe and showed him how to place his fingers over the holes properly. Larry had a good ear for music and soon picked up the idea of playing music to a proper plan.

He often played to the animals and they liked it. They always knew when Larry was coming because they could see his shadow before they saw him, and sometimes they heard his pipe as well.

On Wednesdays Larry used to sing. He was very good at measuring time and knew it was important to do certain things at the right time. He decided that if he sang on Wednesdays, went to the market on the first Thursday in every second month, timed his walks to the animals correctly and so on, then he would always get everything done on time and know where he was.

There were wolves on the mountains. They were rather grey and hairy, with long white fangs and hungry eyes. Larry carried a long stick which he could swing like a warrior does, and woe betide any wolf who tried to eat his sheep.

An Englishman saw Larry once whilst he was on a mountaineering expedition in Tibet. When the man got home and told his family about Larry, the man's son said perhaps Larry should get a sheepdog and call it Lopsided Lassie!

The animals ran about on the mountainside in all directions and so their legs were the same length. Larry was the only lopsided person there; because he always insisted on walking in one direction.

The Englishman had suggested cutting a path in the side of the mountain, but Larry convinced him that when you are looking after animals you have to walk all over the place and couldn't keep to one path. So Larry carried on as he was.

If you ever go to Tibet you may hear stories about Larry.

They even have pictures of him on postcards.

The End