



Invasion of the Fleece Snatchers

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Cherie Langlois

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Lily with fleece.

A few weeks ago, we celebrated sheep shearing day here on at our farm, a day and an activity I particularly enjoy for the following reasons: Unlike most other farm chores, shearing the sheep only has to be tackled once a year (yay!).

My husband and I get to do the fun part – catch up the ewes – and leave the back-breaking work to our talented shearer.

The sheep look so clean and comfortable free of their thick old fleeces.

Within the span of a few hours, I suddenly have big bags of soft, pretty wool to use for ... er ... something.

Photo by Kelsey Langlois

Maia without fleece. On the other hand, my Jacob sheep seem to find shearing day to be an unfortunate series of humiliating, terrifying, and disturbing events. I can hardly blame them. Just look at the day from our flock's perspective:

Their kindly human parents, who normally spoil the sheep "kids" daily with alfalfa, grain treats, chest scratches, and baby talk (at least on Mom's part), suddenly transform into crazed predators.

Grabbing horns, they haul each sheepish victim from the stall, then turn her over into the fleece-hungry hands of the enemy.

The enemy (actually a really nice teacher who shears as his second job) wrestles each ewe into a variety of outrageously embarrassing positions while running a scary, buzzing metal thing all over her body.

A scary, buzzing metal thing that in fact sounds like a saw wielded by some psycho sheep killer! Disembowelment seems imminent.

But just when the ewe thinks her grazing days are over, the enemy releases his hold.

Photo by Kelsey Langlois

Bare naked Jakob sheep. She jumps up and wanders away – dazed, confused, and a bit chilled without her wool jacket.

Why has the psychotic fleece-stealing sheep killer set her free? What will happen to the others?

She shouts BAA to her friends, and when another ewe eventually trots around the corner of the barn, runs to greet her, relieved to find another survivor.

They give each other a good sniffing over.



But what's this? Neither sheep recognizes the other, because without their familiar fleeces, they're strangers.

Baaaaah! Invasion of the Fleece Snatchers!

Next week: the happy ending of this horror story, plus what to do when you having wool coming out of your ears.

~ Cherie

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