

**Directions**  
Read this story. Then answer questions 15 through 21.

## Excerpt from *Gregor and the Sheep*

by Toby Rosenstrauch

- 1 In a valley in the highlands of Scotland, there once lived a young tenant farmer, Gregor, and his widowed mother. Although they worked hard, they could never accumulate enough money to buy the flock of sheep they longed to have, for their small parcel of land produced only modest amounts of oats and barley. To make matters worse, MacTavish, the owner of this and many other crofts, always found reasons not to pay the farmers all they had earned. . . .

crofts = small farms

- 2 When he opened the door each morning and looked out, he saw MacTavish’s house on top of a mountain, a magnificent stone mansion surrounded by red, pink, and violet rhododendrons. Gregor often climbed the slope and stood outside the iron gates, wondering what fine furnishings and delicious foods lay within. Neighbors claimed that MacTavish owned many houses and even kept a chest of gems under his bed. As Gregor, his mother, and their neighbors grew gaunt and pale with hard work and not enough food, they railed against MacTavish, who had swindled all of them at one time or another.

swindled = cheated or tricked

- 3 One day, as Gregor listened to the bagpipe music that drifted from the open windows of MacTavish’s mansion, he had an idea. That night, when his mother was asleep, he emptied the jug that held their money and counted it. After putting back a few coins for food, he put the rest in his pocket. The next morning, he hurried to the market, where he went from farmer to farmer, asking the prices of sheep for sale. Gregor found many handsome animals, but they were all too expensive. When he reached a stall with scrawny and sickly sheep, the owner beckoned to him. . . .
- 4 Gregor shook his head and began to walk away. The man grabbed his sleeve and whispered in his ear, “This one will make her owner rich!” Gregor examined the old

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sheep with spindly legs and dirty, unkempt wool—the worst of the lot. “If she will make me rich,” said Gregor, “how is it that she has not done so for you?”

5 The man paused, thinking. “I have not had her long enough!”

6 “Nonsense,” said Gregor, but he gave the man his money and led the pitiful animal home.

7 When his mother saw what he had bought with their money, she burst into tears. “My foolish son, what have you done? Now we will starve, and no one will help us!”

8 “Do as I say, Mother, and we will be rich. I promise.”

9 She wanted to believe him. Wiping her eyes with her ragged sleeve, she asked what he wanted her to do.

10 “Go to market and tell everyone that your son has a sheep that will make whoever owns her rich,” said Gregor. . . .

11 One morning, a carriage arrived. Two servants opened the door and a stout, well-dressed gentleman emerged. His Tartan kilt was made of the finest wool, his ascot was pure silk, and his shoes had silver buckles. On his fat fingers were eight gold rings, and his pomaded hair glistened in the sun. It was MacTavish!

Tartan kilt = traditional clothing worn by Scottish Highlanders

ascot = a type of necktie

12 Gregor bowed as if to royalty. MacTavish looked at him sternly. “I have come to rid you of the unfortunate sheep that everyone is talking about,” said MacTavish, opening his sporran. “I can pay your price and I will have her, even though she has done nothing for you, I see.” MacTavish sneered at Gregor.

sporran = a small bag worn at the waist for holding personal items

13 Gregor hugged Dear One. “I will not sell her to you!”

14 At that, MacTavish, whose servants were helping him into his carriage, turned and marched back. “I will pay anything,” he said. “Name the price.”

15 Gregor was ready. “That,” he said, pointing up to the mansion above them. “I will have the dwelling and everything in it—furniture, utensils, even the chest of gems under your bed.”

16 “Done,” said MacTavish.

17 The next day, Gregor and his mother moved into the mansion that had once belonged to MacTavish, and MacTavish brought Dear One to the market so that all might see he could indeed own anything he wanted. Then MacTavish and the sheep rode away in his carriage to another of his houses in a valley beyond the mountains.

18 After months had passed and the sheep had done nothing to increase MacTavish’s riches, he realized he had been swindled. Furious beyond speech, he returned to the mansion, but Gregor would not open the gates.

19 “I have been cheated!” shouted MacTavish.

20 “You have not been cheated,” said Gregor. “I was the owner of the sheep, and she has made me rich, hasn’t she?”

21 “Yes, but . . .,” sputtered MacTavish.

22 “Then you got what you paid for.” Gregor turned and walked away.

23 Soon afterward, Gregor sold the chest of gems and bought the huge flock of sheep he and his mother had always wanted. He shared the rest of his fortune with the other poor families of the valley who had been cheated by MacTavish.

- 15** How do paragraphs 1 and 23 relate to each other?
- A** They show the change in Gregor’s life during the story.
  - B** They show what Gregor has learned in the story.
  - C** They show how MacTavish changes in the story.
  - D** They show the growth of MacTavish’s fortune during the story.
- 16** What does the phrase “marched back” in paragraph 14 suggest about MacTavish?
- A** He is confused.
  - B** He is worried.
  - C** He is determined.
  - D** He is excited.
- 17** How are Gregor and the man who sold the sheep to him similar?
- A** They are both unskilled at selling things to people.
  - B** They both try to trick someone in order to make money.
  - C** They are both concerned with helping their family and neighbors.
  - D** They both believe that animals can have special qualities.

**18** Which of Gregor's actions shows how he is different from MacTavish?

- A** Gregor cheats another person.
- B** Gregor buys a sickly sheep.
- C** Gregor shares his wealth.
- D** Gregor moves to a big house.

**19** Which sentence is true about Gregor and MacTavish?

- A** MacTavish has a plan for how the sheep will make him rich, but Gregor does not.
- B** MacTavish wants to own big houses and many jewels, but Gregor does not.
- C** Gregor wants to move away to another land, but MacTavish does not.
- D** Gregor is generous with his family and his neighbors, but MacTavish is not.

**20** Which sentence expresses a theme of the story?

- A** Big loss can come from being greedy.
- B** Family can make hard times seem easier.
- C** Wealth may come from hard work.
- D** Appreciating others can lead to happiness.

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21

Which detail would be **most** important to include in a summary of the story?

- A Gregor goes to the market and talks to many farmers about their sheep.
- B Gregor's mother is asleep when Gregor takes money to buy the sheep.
- C MacTavish lives at another one of his houses after he buys the sheep from Gregor.
- D MacTavish goes to buy Gregor's sheep after he hears rumors about the animal.