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*A long time ago, long before you were born, there lived a little shepherd girl and her name was Germaine Cousin. She lived in a small village in the country of France — far away across the ocean.*



*Germaine was born with a crippled arm and hand, and was quite unpleasant to look at. Because of this, Germaine was not well liked by many grownups, but most especially by her wicked stepmother.*



*Germaine tried to please her stepmother by working hard at all her tasks, dutifully tending the sheep in the fields, even in the cold snowy winter and doing extra chores unasked.*



*But nothing pleased that terrible stepmother. She only grew angry at Germaine's kindness and treated her more cruelly everyday. Finally, one day, Germaine's stepmother would not allow her to come into the house, not even to eat.*



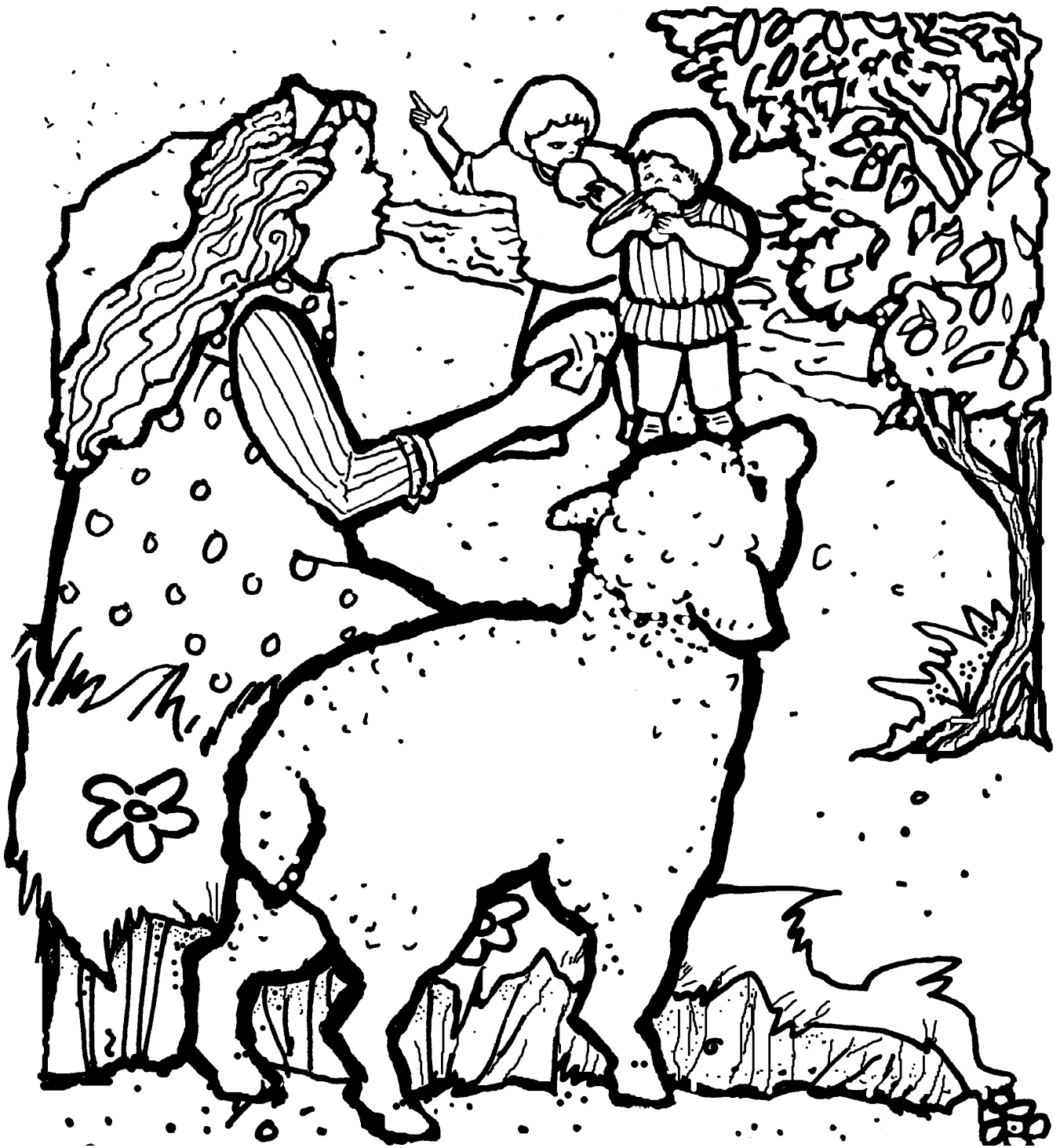
*Germaine had to sleep in the barn with only the sheep for company and a few stale crusts of moldy bread for food.*



*Now you might ask, "What did poor Germaine do?"  
Well, I will tell you. Every day she went about her chores  
just as cheerfully as she always did.*



*What made little Germaine so happy even when she suffered so? Why Jesus, of course. Germaine loved Jesus. And every time she had the chance she eagerly went to visit Him at church. And after every Sunday Mass, she listened very carefully to her catechism to learn all she could about Him.*



*Germaine wanted to show Jesus how much she loved Him. So she tried very hard to be just like Him. She was kind, patient, helpful, and always cheerful. She often shared the best of what little food she had with those in the village who had no food at all. But most of all, she never, never complained. No matter what.*



*Now, do you think Jesus loved Germaine and was pleased by all the good things she did? Yes, of course He was. And Jesus often showed His Love in many wonderful ways.*



*One time when Germaine was taking a basket of her poor scraps to a hungry old woman, her awful stepmother caught her. Germaine's kindness made her even more angry than usual because she didn't like to share anything with anyone, not even scraps.*



*She took the basket from Germaine and dumped it out on the ground to ruin the food. But what do you think happened? The bread had turned into beautiful flowers.*



*Another time when Germaine was going to Mass she had to cross a river filled with rushing water from a heavy rain the night before.*



*As soon as she stepped into the water, it parted and made a little path so she could cross without getting her feet wet.*



*But best of all, whenever Germaine wanted to go to Mass or just visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, all she had to do was push her staff into the ground and all the sheep would stand in a circle around it patiently waiting for Germaine to come back. Not one sheep wandered away or got lost. Not even once.*



*And in this way, the little shepherdess lived her life tending her sheep, smiling while suffering, praying and listening to the quiet voice of her beloved Jesus deep within her heart. Until one starlit summer night, a group of beautiful heavenly maidens came to fetch Germaine home to heaven. And what do you think she saw when she got there? Why Jesus of course, waiting with open arms. And was Germaine happy? Of course she was.*