

LEVELED BOOK • M

Rent a Llama



MULTI
level
J•M•P

Written by Susan Lennox • Illustrated by David Miles

Rent a Llama



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Focus Question

How do Marcos's feelings about his new home change during the story? Why?

Words to Know

abuelo

care

raise

ranch

squinted

stalls

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Correlation

LEVEL M	
Fountas & Pinnell	L
Reading Recovery	19
DRA	24



When Marcos slept, he dreamed.
His dreams were always the same.
He was back in Ecuador with his
abuelo. They rode on horseback
among sheep and llamas.



Then Marcos would wake from his dreams and worry. His worries were always the same. Life was so different now. How would he ever fit in here in America?



Marcos's mother worried, too. She wanted her son to be happy.

One Monday, she reminded him that it was a special day at school.

"Marcos, today your class is visiting a **ranch**, remember?" she said gently.



Marcos nodded. He had remembered.

“We used to live on a ranch, Mamá,” he said sadly.

“That was in Ecuador, Marcos. I am sure an American ranch will be different,” she said.

“Yes,” Marcos sighed, “just like everything else here.”



At school, the other students were very excited. To them, the trip was a great adventure. Marcos watched his classmates choose partners for the trip to the ranch.

Mr. Perkins noticed Marcos standing alone. “I think Marcos needs a partner,” he said.

A smiling boy named Ben stepped forward. “He can sit with me,” Ben said.



“Have you ever been to a ranch, Marcos?” asked Ben.

“Only in Ecuador,” Marcos replied.

“I go to this ranch every week to care for my cow,” said Ben.

“You have a cow?” Marcos asked in surprise.

Ben laughed. “I don’t really own her. I just take care of her.”

Marcos was confused.

“You will see,” Ben said.



Soon the bus arrived and opened its doors. Marcos smelled the familiar smells of hay and animals.

“Hello, everyone,” said Ms. Vega.
“Hello there, Ben.”

The rest of the class looked at Ben, surprised that Ms. Vega knew him.



“Ben is part of the Animals for Rent program with City to Farm,” said Ms. Vega. “He takes care of Mabel, one of our cows.”

“What’s City to Farm?” asked a girl.

“Maybe Ben can explain it to the rest of the class,” said Mr. Perkins.



“City to Farm is an organization for young people,” Ben told them. “Grownups show city kids what life is like on a farm. I want to learn about cows, but I live in an apartment. I can’t keep a cow there!”

The class laughed. “So,” Ben said, “Ms. Vega ‘rents’ Mabel to me. I don’t pay to rent her. We just sign an agreement. My mom brings me here three times a week to care for my cow.”

“Why don’t we go meet Mabel?” said Ms. Vega.



Ben led the class into a large barn with many **stalls**. Marcos squinted to see in the barn’s dim light. What he saw made him stop short.

There, in the second stall, was a llama.

Llamas

Llamas are related to camels. Llamas are native to South America. They live in herds in the highlands of the Andes Mountains. People in Ecuador, Peru, and Chile raise llamas.

Llamas are pack animals. People use them to carry loads up and down steep mountain paths. Llama wool is woven to make cloth.





Marcos began speaking softly to the animal in Spanish. As if it understood, the llama bent its long neck toward him. Marcos reached up and stroked the gentle animal's fur.



Ms. Vega watched Marcos. “Do you like llamas?” she asked.

Marcos nodded. “Sí. I mean, yes,” he replied shyly. “My grandfather had llamas in Ecuador.”

“Paco here came from Ecuador, too,” said Ms. Vega. “We are going to try to **raise** llamas for wool.”

A Real City to Farm

A real program like City to Farm is available to students all over the world. The 4-H clubs started in Ohio in 1902. The four *h*'s stand for *head, heart, hands, and health*.

The 4-H clubs offer different experiences, such as the animal-leasing program. Young people from ages eight to eighteen who live in cities and towns learn about raising farm animals.



Ms. Vega said to Marcos, “Maybe you could help us. I could rent Paco to you just as I rent Mabel to Ben.”

Marcos’s eyes got big. “And I could take care of Paco?” he asked.

Ms. Vega smiled. “Sí,” she said.

Marcos’s heart soared. His mother had been right. Ranches were different in the United States, but llamas were the same!

Glossary

abuelo (n.)	the Spanish word for “grandfather” (p. 3)
care (v.)	to help keep something healthy or in a good condition (p. 8)
raise (v.)	to help a child, animal, or plant to grow (p. 14)
ranch (n.)	a large area of land usually used for raising livestock such as horses, cattle, or sheep (p. 5)
squinted (v.)	partly closed one’s eyes, often to block out bright light (p. 12)
stalls (n.)	spaces in a stable or barn, used for animals such as horses or cows (p. 12)

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A *Reading A-Z Level M Leveled Book*

Word Count: 589

Connections

Writing

Pretend you are Marcos. Write a postcard to your family in Ecuador to tell them about your field trip to the ranch. Include details about how the trip changed your feelings about your new home.

Social Studies and Art

Draw a picture to show three kinds of communities: rural, suburban, and urban. Which type of community do you live in? Share your answer with a partner.

The logo for Reading A-Z features the word "Reading" in a large, bold, red sans-serif font. The letter "R" is stylized with a small sun-like icon above it, having rays extending from the top right. To the right of "Reading" is the letters "A-Z" in a smaller, red, bold, sans-serif font.

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