



Chapter 1. January, 1941 Part I

The Upsetting Move

“No! No! I won’t go!”

“Katherine, Honey, we don’t have a choice,” Mama’s reasonable voice chided. “This farm doesn’t belong to us. The landlord needs it now for his son.”

“But that’s mean! He shouldn’t move us off our farm! I’ve lived here for ten years now. We’ve worked and worked and improved the whole farm. Now he wants it back again. It’s not fair!”

“Child, I know this is the only home you’ve known. It’s the only farm your father and I have had since our marriage, fourteen years ago. But you will see. We can make a home of another farm, too. We will!”

“But it’ll mean going to a whole new school! I love my school! I love Miss Sands . . . and all my friends,” Katherine sobbed. “Especially Jessie.”

“Honey, life is life. We have to do what we have to do.

“And remember,” Mama added, “God is in control. Nothing happens by chance. He will turn it for our good. Believe that.”

Katherine knew it was useless to say more. The owner really was a nice man. His son was getting married and he simply needed his farm back now.

She was still heartbroken. She loved every cranny on this farm . . .

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Carol Brands

The farm Papa had found to move onto was an adjacent farm, just north of the farm they had lived on for ten years. Although the farm was next to the first one, the houses were nearly two miles apart because of their locations.

The new farm would have cheaper rent than the first farm, since it was run down. That meant more work fixing things up but it was worth it due to cheaper rent.

It was a bad time of year to be moving. Usually, moving time in Iowa was in March. Lots of rentals ended then. This was January of 1941, a blustery winter month. Things had never warmed up much since the Armistice Day Blizzard of 1940, only two months ago. There were snow banks everywhere. Who would choose to move in frigid January?

At least the car in the garage wasn't snowed-in anymore!

And at least all the buildings were now shoveled out.

Katherine was old enough to understand some things. She counted them:

Finger One: it took money to buy a farm. Papa never owned his own farm.

Finger Two: Mama was going to have another baby in February. After five years without a baby, Mama had to be very careful with this pregnancy.

Finger Three: Papa and Mama wanted to move before the baby was born.

Finger Four: this would mean even more work than usual. Both before and after school, they would be busy, busy, busy . . .

And why? So things would improve? No way!

But it had to be. So Katherine choked back her tears and decided she wouldn't cry again. She must help Mama all she could to make it easier.

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As Papa drove up to the "new" house with Mama and her, Katherine sat on the front seat, straining to see.

The new house was a drab yellow. Yellow! Houses were supposed to be white, not yellow. Every other house in the neighborhood was white. Yuck!

Some things about the houses were similar, Katherine decided. Both houses had two porches — on both houses, the front porch was enclosed. In both houses, from the front porch you walked into the kitchen and the kitchen was the width of the house, a main room to be lived in. And both houses had just three small rooms for the downstairs with a fixed-up attic for an upstairs. Small. Both houses were small.

Very small! Far too small for a family soon to have five children!



Little Yellow Farm House in Iowa

Mama wanted things done in the new house. *Before* moving, it must be cleaned. *After* moving, it must be wall-papered.

"We will be having visitors after the baby is born," Mama had said. "We must have everything ready for company."

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Housecleaning was hard work for a ten-year-old girl. Katherine was used to hard work but this used new muscles. It was a challenge.

"Mama," Katherine asked as she scrubbed the baseboards, "where will you put things in this kitchen?"

"Well, see by the outside wall? This kitchen has a well — a cistern — right outside the kitchen, under the enclosed porch. That should make it easier to wash dishes, yes? The dishpan is on the corner cupboard near the porch.

"Across from the dishpan counter, in the other corner, is the stairway to upstairs. Next to that is the food pantry. We never had a pantry in the old house.

"The table and chairs, of course, will be in the center.

"On the wall, left of the dishpan counter, will be the corn cob stove.

"On the opposite side of the kitchen, by the door to the open porch, will be two things: a cupboard for dishes and the small table with the radio."

"Oh!" exclaimed Katherine, her face lighting up. "We'll still have the radio in the kitchen? I'm glad of that!"

Katherine recalled when Papa had installed the radio. It had changed their home. Ever since its purchase, there had been music and programs to listen to in spare time or when working in the kitchen.

"Yes," agreed Papa, who was listening as he washed walls for Mama. "We are all thankful for that radio, right? It has cheered up many a dreary day!"

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"This house has another thing that you will appreciate in the summer, Katherine," Papa now said. "It has a summer kitchen."

"What's a summer kitchen?" Katherine questioned.

"Look through the kitchen door, past the porch. Do you see that small building to the left? That's a summer kitchen."

"So, in the summer we won't use this kitchen?"

Mama laughed, almost gleefully.

"That's the idea! Won't it be wonderful to keep the heat of cooking out of the house? We'll butcher, cook, render lard, and even do laundry



Carol Brands

out there, so the house doesn't get so roasting hot. Doesn't that make you happy?"

Katherine still didn't want to move. But the summer kitchen would be nice, very nice, in the heat of summer.

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Papa worked while the children were in school. Katherine was surprised how quickly he cleaned the ceilings and woodwork. It felt funny, though, running through an empty house. Everything echoed — like a ghost house.

Papa spent one whole afternoon fixing a broken window between the kitchen and the enclosed porch. Even though the porch was enclosed it was not heated, so if the window wasn't fixed the whole house would freeze.

The dining room was no larger than their old dining room. A wall from the stairway and from the kitchen pantry jutted into it on the left. Next to that was the coal burning stove. Papa's bookcase-desk was near the bedroom doorway. In the center of the room was the large, round, oak, company table. The room contained only the stove, desk, and round table.

Later Papa would buy a couch and another surprise for that room. The surprise will be another chapter, a story all by itself.

There were three doorways in the dining room. The first came from the kitchen. To the right was a doorway to the open porch. Across from the kitchen doorway was the bedroom doorway.

"More doorways than space in the room," thought Katherine.

Katherine loved the dining room's oak table. It had four sturdy, swirled legs under it. Although her parents bought it secondhand before she was born, it was a well-built, solid table. Katherine later inherited that table, used it until she sold her final home, and then sold it to a niece.

The third room downstairs was her parents' bedroom. It held only necessary things. At its left end was a curtained closet, Papa and Mama's bed . . . and a chamber pot, of course. Under the single window in the center was the mirrored dresser. On the right would be the baby's crib and wardrobe.

Only one word would describe this room: crowded!

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Within one week the yellow house was cleaned and the window fixed. Now it was time to move.

Time to leave the little white house . . .

The only home Katherine had ever known.



*“Be strong and of good courage . . .
The LORD thy God doth go with thee!”*

