

THIS IS THE STORY OF TWO SISTER HENS WHO ARE PURCHASED BY A COUPLE WHO DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT RAISING CHICKENS AND THE HENS ARRIVE AT THE NEW FARM WHERE THERE ARE NOT ANY OTHER CHICKENS. THE NEW COOP IS BEAUTIFUL AND THEY DON'T HAVE TO SHARE THEIR FOOD. THE TWO SISTER HENS BELIEVE THEY HAVE GONE TO THEIR FOREVER HOME WITHOUT HAVING TO GO FEET FIRST.

MORNING GLORY LANE

by Barbara Merigis

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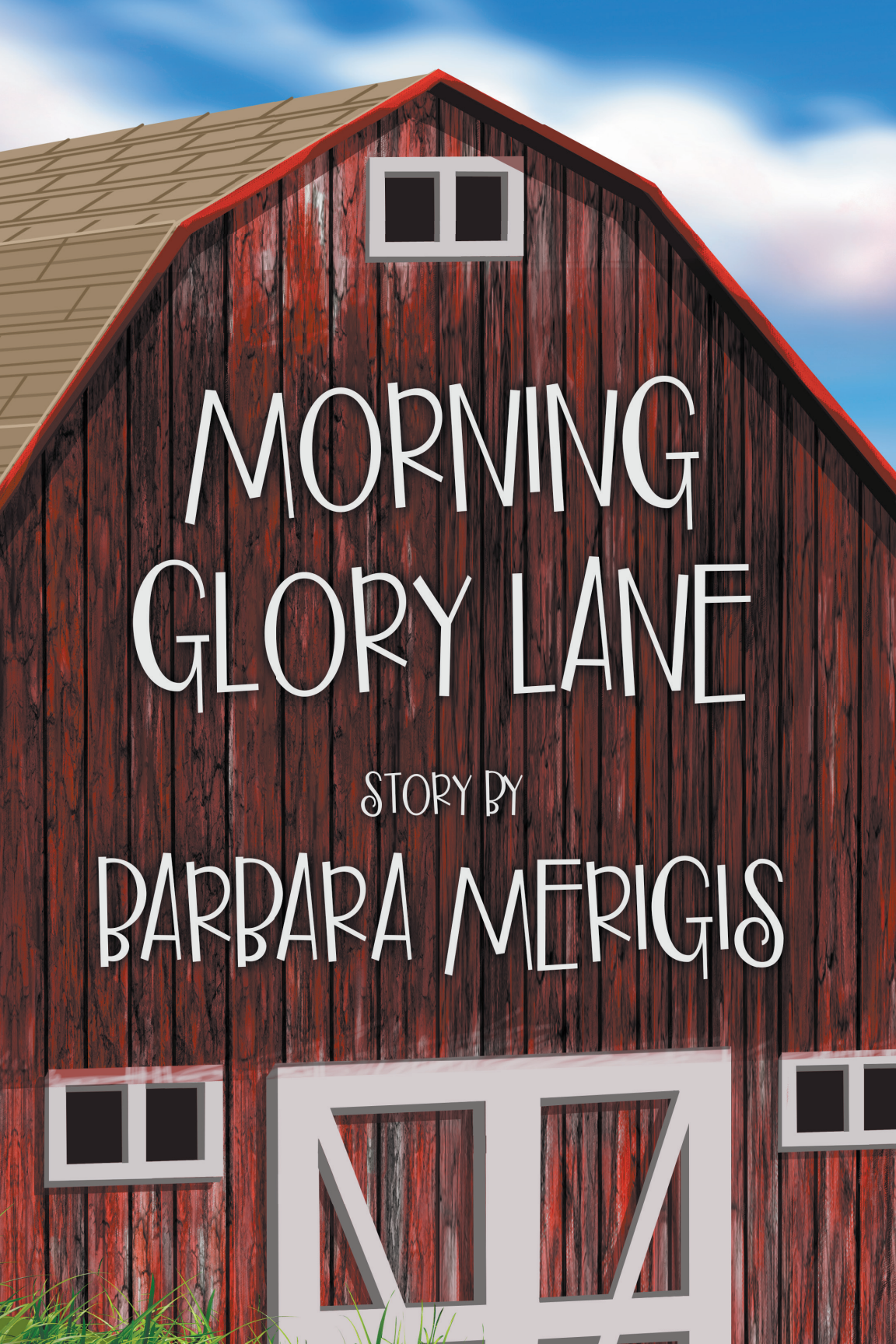
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CHAPTER ONE

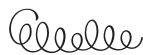
FARM LIFE BENEATH THE SUN

Once upon a time, not too long ago, there were two young orphan hens that were birds of a feather. They grew up with other orphaned family members who had lived on an old country farm. Most were cousins, and there was an old aunt, Bertha. Aunt Bertha no longer laid eggs or raised chicks anymore. Aunt Bertha would cackle that she longed to go feet first and be greeted by family members that had long gone feet first to their forever home, as she scratched and pecked along side of her orphan nephews and nieces.

The only male chicken was a cocky, beautiful red, gold, and green feathered Uncle Jack. Besides waking the barnyard animals and the farmers in the early morning hours with his loud crowing, he would strut across the farmyard and puff his chest feathers, flap his wings out then proceed loudly to cock a doodle do throughout the day. Uncle Jack and Aunt Bertha are the only farm animals on the farm that have names. All the other farm fowl were called chickens or chick, chicky or duck, ducky or turkey. Some days on the farm, the fowl were tricked to go back into the chicken pen by the farmer loudly saying “Here chicky, chicky, here chicky” either into the coop or pen or out of them, usually

throwing some grain or food scraps to coax them in one direction or another. Every time the hens and rooster would fall for this trick, either into the pen or out of the pen. No matter how they tried to jump the fence or scratch their way under the fencing, it would prevent them from joining the rest of the farm animal and the fun of pecking and scratching for food in the fields with the rest of the farm orphans. There were some distant Musgrove duck cousins and some seasonal visiting turkey relatives. Young turkey cousins arrive at the farm in the spring and gobble up the best bugs and grain until the leaves of the trees fall when they too would be tricked by their gluttony into their pen and taken away feet first to their forever and ever home.

Life on the old farm was routinely peaceful during the day. The chickens would quietly roost in the coop at night and be safe from glowing eyes of the hoot owls, yellow-eyed coyotes, wild cats, and other four-legged creatures of the night. Forest animals could be heard howling and hissing in the night. "It's an inner knowing," said, Aunt Bertha. "All smart chickens go into the coop in the evening, safe from all the forest creatures of the night that might do us harm. "



The sun was starting to rise. The hen sister's yawn as rooster Jack crowed "It's morning! It's morning! The grubs and the bugs are up and crawling. Farmer and fowl and brown-eyed cows wake up! Wake up! It's time for the show!" Then unceremoniously, fowl of all feathers, with smiles on their beaks and gleams of anticipation scurry out of the coop to seek the fine cuisine hiding in the grass or beneath a bush or an overturned board.

Daily the farmer's brood would bring oats, cracked corn or sometimes something yummy from their coop to the chicken coop. Several of the older hens who no longer laid eggs or brood would gossip with a cra-ahh, cra-ahh while they scratched and pecked for food scattered in the barnyard by the two-legged human family. The boys grabbed them and carried them away by their feet. They must be going to their forever home. "Feet first, that's how you go to your forever home," said,

Aunt Bertha.” Once you go feet first, you’re never seen again scratching or pecking until you are cooped together again with the chickens that went feet first before you”.

The chickens would cackle loudly when an egg was laid or when family members went feet first. The chickens, including the two hen sisters, would continue to seek their fair share of flying, hopping and crawling bugs. More than once the two sister hens would fight and peck each other for the same yummy morsel. One of the hen sisters was pleasingly plump and had light red feathers and the other sister was lean and had red-orange feathers. The red-orange sister would usually win the bug. She could take away what the other sister spied first by keeping her eagle eyes on her sister.

The plump sister would tilt her head, fluff her rotund body and point herself in the direction of insect cuisine. The lean sister would quickly scurry and peck the bug treasure out her sister’s beak. Chickens are like that, swooping in and grabbing what had been scratched up from the grass or woodpile by another, eating the prize for which they didn’t work for. The two sister hens often chased and pecked each other for swooping in and stealing a prized grub, worm, or even a bread-crumbs thrown out to the coop.

The hen sisters didn’t hold a grudge or even a memory of this outrageous behavior. All fowl steal grubs, bugs or anything that was thought to be good to eat. It is, after all, life under the sun on the farm, where farm fowl will all go feet first to their forever home, whether they eat a fat grub of their efforts or another’s.





CHAPTER TWO

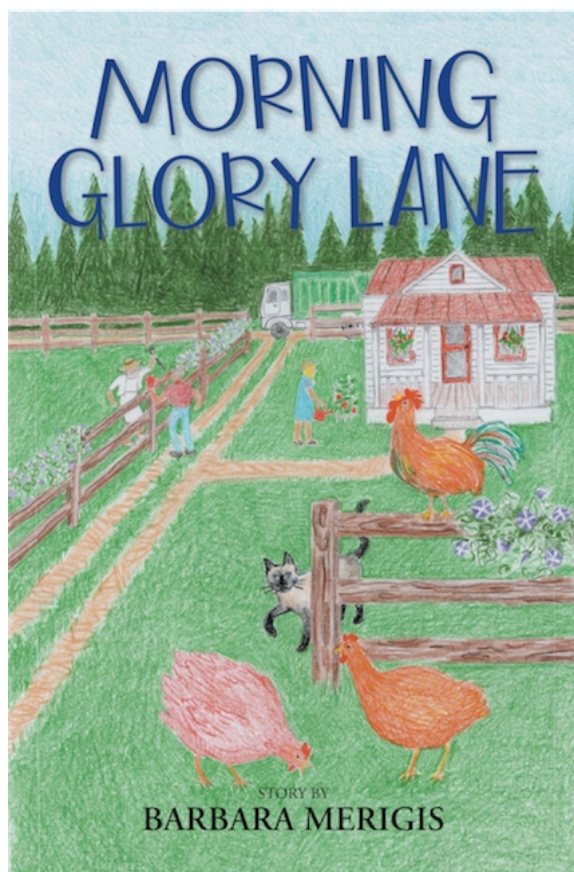
MOVING DAY

There was nothing unusual about the day, until mid-afternoon. The two hen sisters were scratching near a pile of rotted wood when they noticed a new human person. She was talking with the farmer's wife. The two hen sisters overheard the visitor with a round face and freckles across her nose. Her bright yellow hair pointed out from under her straw hat shined like the sun. The visitor said she'd leave the picking of which chickens to take to the farmer's wife because she didn't know much about chickens except they lay eggs. The tall boy of the farmer's brood said the ones with the reddest combs are the best layers. Then the boy proceeded to grab the two sister hens up in his arms and stuffed them in a dark cardboard box and placed the cardboard box in the trunk of the visitor's car. Before the visitor drove off with her chickens, the farmer arrived on his tractor, and without introducing himself, he gave a warning. "Do not name the chickens! Once you name the chickens, they will become pets, and you will not be able to take them to the block!"

The hens jostled so violently inside the box in the trunk of the car that they doodled in the box and proceeded to step and fall into their doodle. Just when they thought the swaying and jostling was going to stop, the jostling continued again. Finally, the car stopped, the trunk opened, and the box with the now dizzy chickens was placed gently inside a brand

new brightly painted red and white chicken coop. Immediately, the hens became aware that the lid of the box was open and they burst out of the box. To their surprise and delight, they discovered sweet smelling straw, fresh oats and clean, clear water from a clean dispensing dish. There were nesting boxes never nested in and also a ladder to reach the top of the roosting area without a doodle. The two hen sisters looked intently at each other and arrived at the same conclusion that they must have come to their forever home. And they're the very first birds of a feather to enter their forever home without going feet first.





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