

*A novel about a family of five caught in a crisis, caused by drought and job loss. They meet a stern and unforgiving Grandmother, who is waiting for them in the Midwest.*

## **Family Planting**

By Elizabeth Ross

**Order the book from the publisher [BookLocker.com](http://BookLocker.com)**

**<https://www.booklocker.com/p/books/12827.html?s=pdf>**

**or from your favorite neighborhood  
or online bookstore.**



# FAMILY PLANTING

Helen sobbed, "Me fall in fishpond, dwess ugly,  
Gamma Issa no like me!"

ELIZABETH ROSS

Copyright © 2023 Elizabeth Ross

Print ISBN: 978-1-958877-85-2

Ebook ISBN: 979-8-88531-350-6

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., Trenton, Georgia.

Printed on acid-free paper.

The characters and events in this book are fictitious. Any similarity to real persons, living or dead, is coincidental and not intended by the author.

BookLocker.com, Inc.  
2023

First Edition

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data  
Ross, Elizabeth  
Family Planting by Elizabeth Ross  
Library of Congress Control Number: 2022918061

## **Chapter 1**

### **No Turning Back**

The glowing headlights burst through the dusty mist, like the moon coming out of a cloud-filled sky, but not a breath of wind was blowing. A huge lump hanging from the bumper of the black Plymouth sedan looked like a tumbleweed, stuck to the front of the car, instead of a canvas bag, holding life-sustaining water. The little sedan was sputtering from the dust as it crossed the state line from Wyoming into Nebraska. The windshield wipers, on the front windows of the dust covered car, screeched in protest. Bay needed to see through the dust, to keep the car steady on the road, and the noise was an irritating distraction until the dust was settled. It was a hot, dry, day in early spring, as the family was headed for a new life in Iowa. The drought that had invaded the western states was growing worse day-by-day. The wheels of the moving car kept stirring the falling dust, causing a strange scene. Left behind were family, friends and most of their meager belongings, except for clothes and a few personal possessions. It was 1934; the country was in the middle of a depression. Ranchers were selling herds of beef cattle, as there was no grass left for them to graze on for miles. Ranch hands were being let go with no livestock left to manage. Irene's father had cut loose most of his part time ranch hands. Not enough work was left to provide for Bay and his family. They made the decision to return to Iowa, where the drought had not been as severe, and where Bay's mother lived. It was hard for Irene to leave her childhood

home and travel to an unknown part of the country, as she was expecting her fourth child. She longed for the experience and comfort of being delivered by someone she loved and trusted. Irene knew there was no turning back, as she prepared herself for what she would face in Iowa.

## Chapter 2

### Memories of Home

The three tow-headed children in the back seat were sound asleep, to the relief of both parents. Sleeping until the dust was far behind them would be a blessing for the road weary couple. It was the second day of travel to their new home and had worn thin on both parents and children. The children, Mel, Phil, and Helen, were used to the wide-open spaces of Wyoming. There they could run, play, and get as dirty as they wanted, without fear of reprimand. Their hair and clothing blew freely in the Wyoming wind. They played cowboys and Indians, using small sticks for guns or knives, played round up, with an old broomstick for a bucking bronco, or a roping pony. All these thoughts filled Irene's mind as she wondered how her children would adjust to their new home. Her mental amblings were interrupted by a hard kick to her ribs, as the child she was carrying reminded her, that he or she was also going to meet new challenges in the coming months.

I haven't forgotten you, little one, Irene said silently, rubbing the mound of her swollen belly.

Bay, seeing the movement of his wife's hand, whispered, "Are you okay, Hon?" He was careful to keep his voice low so the sleeping children were not awakened. She nodded her head and continued the caress of her tummy, as if she were indeed soothing a fussy child. She smiled at her husband, reassuring him, as well as herself, that this move would turn out for the best. She was not at all sure about it, but felt she had no

alternative. She had to try to think positively. She thought back to the day she had first met Bay. Irene was a girl of fourteen when he appeared at the home of his cousin Fred. Bay was twenty and suffered from a weak heart and lungs. His mother had sent him to Wyoming, at the insistence of his father, who was a physician, for the hot, dry, climate, hoping to improve his health. He was a fragile looking young man, with beautiful curly black hair, dimples in both cheeks, and eyes that looked as if he could read her most private thoughts. Bay had come to the ranch of Irene's father, with Fred, his cousin, to watch the spring roundup. They would be branding calves, breaking horses to ride, and sorting stock, for breeding and selling. It was hard, tedious, work, for all of them. They were alone for much of the year, this was a time to renew old acquaintances and help each other. The ranchers depended on everyone to come together in the spring and fall. Extra help would mean the difference between success and failure. The women fixed meals for the group, and discussed everything from new babies to the latest news from Cheyenne or Denver. There was beef on the fire pit, sending out a delicious aroma associated with roundups. Irene's mother had died when she was small, so any chance of female companionship was always a welcome occurrence. Carrie, her sister-in-law, was her closest friend, teacher, and confidant. Irene was the youngest of fourteen children, the apple of her father's eye, and a total tomboy. She could ride a horse, rope, and brand with the best of the cowboys her age.

## **Chapter 3**

### **You Are Named After a Horse**

When Irene spotted Bay and Fred on the far side of the corral, her heart jumped in her chest. Bay was different from the usual young men who came to the roundups. He seemed quiet and withdrawn, lonely even.

Irene jumped on her horse and rode over to Fred saying, “Hi Fred, haven’t seen you since last fall. How have you been? Who’s your friend?” The words came tumbling out like a swollen stream falling down a mountainside.

Fred replied, “Hi Irene, this is my cousin, Bay Stevens. He’s from Iowa, gonna stay with us for the summer, gotta get some meat on his bones and some muscle in his arms.”

Irene looked at him, replying, “Well he’s come to the right place for that. There is plenty of beef cooking and the work will definitely build muscles or break backs. By the way, what kind of a name is Bay? We call horses, bays, and roans, or pie-balds, not men.” Bay decided this fresh young girl needed to learn some manners.

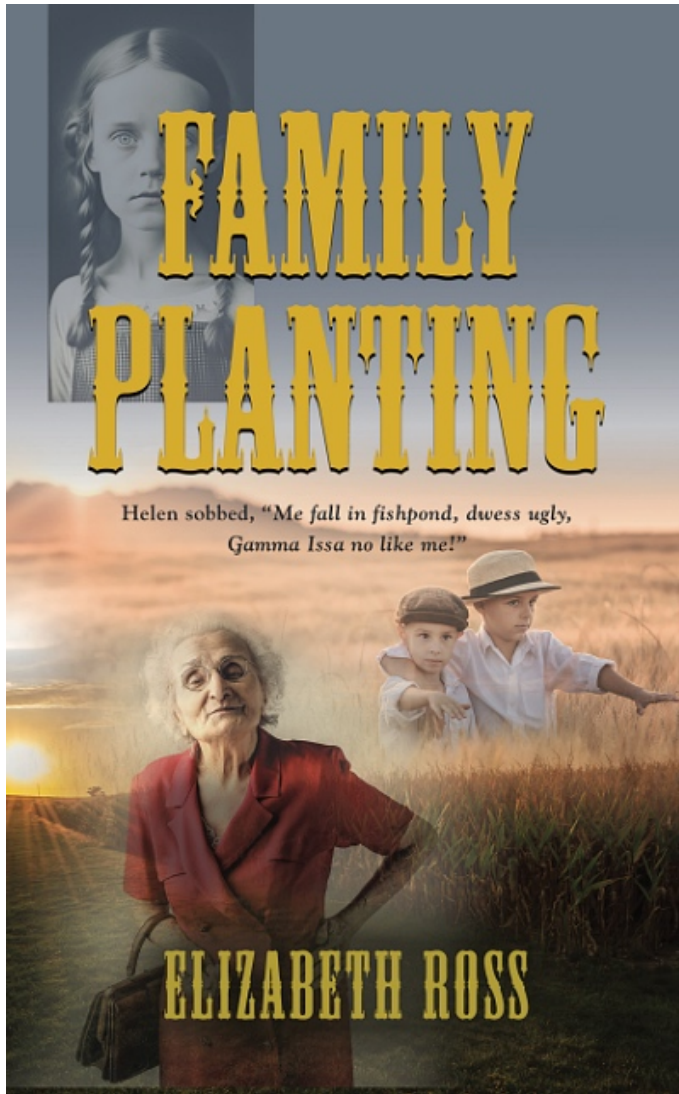
Bay replied, “That name has been in my family for generations. I am the fourth generation to proudly carry it and I don’t really care if you like it or not!” His eyes were shining brightly, and Irene thought she could see a slight smile starting at the corner of his mouth.

Irene gave a small sigh saying, “Hey, I didn’t mean to rile you, only curious about your name. Do you ride?” Bay nodded as he explained that Fred was giving him riding lessons. Irene,



anxious to learn more about Bay, asked if he would like to go for a ride now. Her father had a corral of horses available for everyone's use. He would be welcome to join her on a ranch tour, still Bay was not sure this snout-nosed girl was worth his trouble, but he could use the time on horseback, so he accepted her offer.

As they were putting a saddle and bridle on the horse Bay would ride, he looked at Irene saying, "I think maybe I am going to enjoy my time in Wyoming. I didn't want to come, didn't think I would make any friends or meet any young people here. Looks like I might have been wrong." Irene smiled, thinking what a good summer she could have with this nice young man. If only he were not so white and thin. Maybe the Wyoming air would heal his lungs, as the food and sun would heal his heart and body. Her mind was full of possibilities as they started their tour of the ranch.



*A novel about a family of five caught in a crisis, caused by drought and job loss. They meet a stern and unforgiving Grandmother, who is waiting for them in the Midwest.*

## **Family Planting**

By Elizabeth Ross

**Order the book from the publisher [BookLocker.com](http://BookLocker.com)**

**<https://www.booklocker.com/p/books/12827.html?s=pdf>**

**or from your favorite neighborhood  
or online bookstore.**