



*Book 1: Welcome Home*

By Brian Combs

The Homestead Kids Book Series

[www.thehomesteadkidsbooks.com](http://www.thehomesteadkidsbooks.com)

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## Chapter 1: An Animal Circus

“Ahhh!!!” Mom shrieked. And Mom never shrieks. Two of her daughters, nine-year-old Rosie, and seven-year-old Michelle, who had just been about to sit down to breakfast, raced to the window and pushed back the soft yellow and white checkered curtains to see what had happened. The sight that met their eyes was quite the scene to behold. Their typically empty yard, except for the occasional cat, showed a very excited dog



streaking around chasing their farm animals. He ran at break-neck speed towards a cluster of nervous chickens, and when they scattered, he turned and raced towards the goats fence. Mom yelled for Dad. "We need you right now!"

Mom raced to the door, stopping only briefly to shove her feet quickly into her shoes and grab the sturdy stick they kept near the door for emergencies – ones just like this one! – then she took off running out the door. Seconds later, dad popped out of the hallway and said "What's going on girls? Everything ok?"

"Oh Dad! All the animals are out! There's a dog out there chasing them!" Rosie exclaimed wide-eyed.

Dad groaned and rushed to put on his boots and get outside to help Mom. He bounded out the door calling over his

shoulder, "Stay here girls, in case Faith or Adee wake up."

Disappointed to not be outside in the excitement, Rosie and Michelle rushed to the window again to have a front row seat as they watched. Peering out the window they could only gawk at the craziness. Chickens were jumping and squawking, and feathers were flying everywhere. Aggie, the goat, was running crazy, scared of the dog, and had just landed on top of Dad's small pickup truck.

As the girls watched, Dad grabbed a rope from the barn and managed to get it around the dog's neck. He then half pulled half carried him over to a small temporary goat pen that they used when they were cleaning out Aggie's larger regular pen. Dad latched the door securely so the dog couldn't escape. He was certain the dog had come from down the road where a new

neighbor had recently moved in. He would go and visit the neighbor later and make sure the dog got back home. Meanwhile, he put a bowl of water just inside the pen door for him.

Mom was using her stick to help her herd the chickens back towards the coop when all of a sudden Herby the rooster jumped up, wings flapping and squawking at Mom, startling her into falling backwards into a kiddie pool filled with water that they kept for all the animals to drink from as needed on the long hot days. "Oh Herby!" Mom cried, "Look what you've done!"

Dad came over to offer Mom a hand up and out of the pool. As she reached her hand out to grab his mom happened to stop and look at his face, he had a huge grin, and he was biting his lips to keep from bursting into laughter. "Oh you!" Mom



said. At this, Dad couldn't contain his mirth any longer. He leaned forward, hands on his knees laughing. Mom couldn't help laughing along as she shook her head at how crazy the last several minutes had been. She playfully splashed some water at Dad. "Well, are you going to help me up or keep laughing?" she asked, trying her best to sound stern.

Still chuckling, he graciously helped her to her feet.

Seeing the excitement had passed, Rosie and Michelle peeked down the hall to make sure their sisters, five-year-old Adee and baby Faith were still sleeping, then rushed out the door.

"Oh, that was awful!!" Rosie cried. "Are the chickens hurt at all?"

Dad took a minute to look around and started counting the chickens as best he could - no small feat while they ran

anxiously around, still wound up from the excitement of the morning.

“It looks like everyone is still here,” he said.

He turned and looked over at Aggie, still standing on the very top of Dad’s pickup truck. He sighed, wincing as he walked over and saw all the hoof dents in the hood.

“Oh, Aggie,” he said. “Aggie, Aggie, Aggie. Get on down girl.” He waved his arm towards Aggie, and she half slipped, half walked her way over to the edge of the hood, then jumped down and headed towards her pen.

Both girls eyed the dents all over Dad’s truck, then looked up at Dad.

“It’ll be alright girls,” he said. “I’ve got that kit I used last year after that hailstorm. I’ll try it on this and see if it

works on goat storms too.” he added with a wink at them. The girls giggled.

Dad followed Aggie back over to the goat pen, offered her a treat to tempt her back through the gate of her fenced area, and latched it shut with a sigh of relief. Mom had followed him, dripping along the way, trying to dry off some before she went inside the house. “You know,” he said to Mom. “If we had a bigger space and she wasn’t so bored, Aggie wouldn’t jump her fence every time the slightest thing happened. I sure wish we had more land to spread them out on.”

Mom smiled, “One day. It’ll happen one day. We’ll just keep looking and God will show us the perfect place to expand our little farm. And we’ll be able to have a dairy cow, some more pigs, some lambs, maybe even a horse or two! We just have to be patient.”

## Chapter 2: The Nursing Home

PREVIEW

That afternoon, the whole family had taken a break and was sitting on the front porch eating some of Mom's freshly churned homemade strawberry ice cream, when the phone rang. Mom got up and went inside to answer it and returned a few minutes later. "Girls," she said, then stopped short, looking at Faith.

Nine-month-old Faith was sitting in a little highchair they always kept near the





porch for picnics and such. She was too young to eat ice cream, but she'd had a bowl of applesauce which Mom had been spooning to her. In Mom's absence, Faith had dumped most of the applesauce on her head and was sucking on her arm that was also coated in the thick juicy sauce.

"Oh my!" Mom said, shaking her head. "Let me get a rag really quick." She returned with a rag and while she cleaned up Faith she explained to Rosie, Michelle and Adee that one of their Sunday School teachers Mrs. Amy had called to remind them about their trip to the nursing home the next day after church was over.

Several of the church's classes were going to serve as volunteers and to help the residents of the nursing home celebrate that month's birthdays. The kids would be passing out cake, cookies, and punch and before they left the Mrs. Amy

would lead everyone in some hymns and later the “Happy Birthday” song. It was always a fun treat.

The girls especially loved going because they had a favorite resident, Ira Clark. He was a millionaire, but never acted like he was rich, or that his life had been any different from theirs!

He could have lived in a huge house and had nursing workers come in to see him, but instead he said he liked the nursing home because there were so many other people to talk to, play cards with and such. He said he hated eating meals alone, and he’d never have to worry about that with all the friends he’d made at the home.

For the girls, he always had so many fun stories to tell about life. He had grown up on a farm just like the girls. He mostly liked to talk about his late wife Alma, and

the animals they'd raised on their own homestead.

The girls all cheered and Rosie pumped her arms at the reminder that tomorrow was their volunteer day.

"Oh boy!" said Michelle.

"I can't wait!" said Adee.

Faith clapped her pudgy hands together. She didn't know what was going on, but she wasn't about to miss out on celebrating!

The girls finished their ice cream and Dad stood up from his chair, "Well girls - chore time. And don't forget to make sure all the animal's water buckets are full since tomorrow is Sunday."

"Ok Dad!" the girls chorused and hustled to the barn. Dad headed towards the large elm tree where he'd pulled the lawn mower over to work on it under the tree's shade. And Mom picked up Faith and

carried her inside. The girls knew Mom would begin cooking soon, they could not wait to see what was for dinner.

Having reached the barn, the girls split up to each handle their own part of the chores. Adee stood by the faucet handle ready to turn on and off the water as Michelle pulled the water hose from bucket to bucket filling them up. Rosie scattered some specially sprouted seeds and some crickets to the chickens from Michelle's bug jar and took a couple of carrot tops from their composting bin and put them in Aggie's feed trough. Aggie ran over immediately and happily started munching.

Evening chores accomplished; the three girls ran to spend a bit of time playing in their fort before they went in for supper. The fort was simply a shady area under a tree, but they pretended it was a

huge fort with balconies and that the areas between tree branches were really windows looking out on the world. They climbed and jumped, and at one point pretended to be doctors in a hospital tending to sick people. Mostly Adee was the sick person, because as the smallest of the three she was the lightest and the easiest to drag over to the low-lying tree branch that served as their hospital bed, and they would then try to cure her.

They played for as long as they could but then Adee needed to use the restroom. So, the girls ran back to the house together. They ran in the front door, "THWACK!" the screen door banging behind them.

Adee veered towards the restroom while the older girls headed to the kitchen. Dad was holding Faith and standing at the kitchen sink washing his and Faith's hands.

Mom was just pulling a long log of some kind of bread from the oven and the strong aroma of garlic filled the air. There was a pot of some kind of white sauce bubbling on the stove. The girls could see fettuccine noodles piled high in a bowl. Another large bowl held some salad with small cherry tomatoes on top and the salad was sprinkled with dressing already. A bowl of croutons was sitting on the table next to the salad. The croutons were the girls favorite part!

“Just in time,” mom said. “Y’all wash up. Supper’s ready!”

Hungry, the girls quickly washed up and rushed back to the table. Conversation flowed while everyone filled plates, scooped salad, and passed bowls to others. At one point everyone laughed as Adee tried to tear off a piece of garlic bread, but she pulled too hard and as the

bread broke off her hand swung backwards and the bread flew into the hallway. Adee laughed too as she quickly went to pick it up.

Dad made a joke about being extra careful if they go bowling. The girls didn't understand it, but it made mom laugh.

As soon as they finished eating, Michelle and Mom cleared a few dishes off the table while Adee went to get their promise box. Each day - usually after breakfast but sometimes it had to be delayed to another meal - they'd read a promise from their promise box and Mom or Dad almost always had a story of how God's promises had always helped them when they were struggling. Tonight's verse was:

**"The Lord watches over you -  
the Lord is your shade at  
your right hand."**

~ Psalm 121:5 ~



“You know,” said Dad, “this makes me think about that old tree I’ve been using while I work on the mower. I don’t know how long God has been growing that tree, but when He planted it, He knew one day I’d need it and enjoy it’s shade. I like that God watches over us, even years before we know we need something!”

After supper the girls helped finish cleaning off the table, stored the leftovers away and then headed upstairs. They took turns taking showers, and then headed to bed. All three girls shared one room together, the beds lining three of the four walls. It was a little cramped, but for the most part they were happy to share the room as it was comforting to have their sisters close by in the dark.

Mom and Dad came in and gave goodnight hugs, and a quick prayer and the

girls headed to sleep dreaming of the fun they'd have the next day at the nursing home.

Well, almost all of them headed to sleep.

Mom and Dad were in the kitchen going over bills and looking on their computer for other homes with land available when they heard a rustle in the hallway. Mom got up and peeked her head around the cabinet to see down the hallway and there was Michelle, on her hands and knees, jar in hand, catching a cricket. "Becky Michelle! What are you doing?"

"Oh!" cried Michelle, startled. She blushed. "Sorry Mom. I heard a cricket and was just going to grab it really quick. She twisted the cap securely onto the jar. "Going back to bed now!" she said and scampered back to her room.