

# House by the Seaside

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## House by the Seaside

Once there lived a house near the ocean. It was painted a lovely, buttercream yellow and its windows were trimmed in white. Tall pillars held its stacked balconies, which saw every sunset, and decks, which had full view of the sunrise in all its splendid colors. Inside were rooms and furniture, enough to welcome many guests at a time - and welcome it did.

Week after week, the yellow house welcomed people who wanted to see both the bay and the gulf, for you see, the house lived on a narrow peninsula and could see both at once.

‘My, what characters come to stay in my house,’ said the yellow house to its neighbor, Gray.

‘Hmph,’ grunted Gray, ‘that’s nothing, wait till you get to be my age. Nothing will surprise you then.’ Gray was old and in the habit of closing his shutters whenever he didn’t want to be bothered.

‘What characters, indeed,’ said Bungalow, the yellow house’s other neighbor. ‘Why, you’d think by the way some people live that we’re nothing more than giant trash receptacles!’

‘Oh, I do agree,’ One-House-Over chimed in. ‘I do, I do agree. And what’s more, nothing but snacks for munching. Would you believe it, just last week, a naughty dog chomped the sills clear off my windows!’

A collective gasp arose.

‘It certainly did. And it ate two spindles clean off my staircase,’ One-House-Over confirmed, relishing the reaction she was receiving at her dreadful news. ‘Yes, yes, it most certainly did.’

The salty breeze that the yellow house loved so much blew across his porches, rustling nearby palm branches and stirring up a chorus of cicadas. How brilliantly the sea sparkled today! Even more so because of the guests who had just come last night and filled his rooms with gifts,

his refrigerator with food, and his entire being with singing and light-hearted chatter. This very morning, though they'd gone to bed late, they'd ambled onto his breezy balcony to watch the sun rise, and talk of the Creator.

For their sakes, he was happy the Northern Star shone so brightly.

'Eleven... moms, you say?' Gray asked, opening a shutter. 'In one house? I've never heard such a thing. I'm very surprised.' He paused. 'You have surprised me!' His remaining shutters flew open and he let out a rickety laugh. 'Goodness, I thought it would never happen. Now I'm in need of a long nap, for I've had quite the shock today. Imagine that, a surprise after all these years.'

'Eleven moms, who I'm absolutely, positively certain must keep things nice and clean,' Bungalow muttered. 'It's no wonder you smell like flowers and coffee creamer and I smell like downright garbage.'

Leave it to Bungalow to see things from a bright and sunny perspective.

One-House-Over said she had heard the music from 'all the way over here' and it had been the loveliest singing she'd ever witnessed. 'Did you, did you ever in your life hear such? In my life I never have. Well, I declare, I never have.'

Right now the eleven moms were gathering around a piano to sing again. And they had Bibles. And flags. And sometimes the yellow house could even smell the fragrance of the anointing oil they anointed each other with. As they sang and prayed and spoke to one another, there were other visitors that came - tall, bright beings the moms didn't see, but somehow knew were there. Then there were the tears.

The Yellow house tried his best to count each one as it fell, but they flowed too quickly - and there were ever so many of them. Tears as they sang, tears as they wrote, tears as they faced the wind on his porches.

But there was laughter too.

‘You’re not kidding,’ Bungalow said. ‘I’m worn half slap to a frazzle wondering what those women could be cackling and cawing about every ever-living second of the day.’

‘What are they laughing at?’ asked One-House-Over. ‘I can hear them clean over here, I can.’

‘Everything, it seems,’ the yellow house said. As if on cue, a mom belted with laughter and was joined by a hearty chorus of the others’.

‘Hmph,’ Gray chimed in, ‘must be the coffee. Didn’t you say they had a machine ‘could turn out 60 cups of coffee an hour?’

‘Sixty cups of coffee?’ bellowed Bungalow. ‘It’s a wonder they sleep at all!’ She turned to Gray and said, speaking of, wasn’t he supposed to be taking a nap, to which Gray grumbled that he already had.

‘I think it’s something else that makes them laugh, but I can’t figure out what it is,’ said the yellow house.

‘Well please hurry up for heaven’s sake before our paint peels,’ said Bungalow.

‘Aw Bungalow, all you ever do is complain,’ complained Gray.

The grand, sunshine-yellow and white house leaned in closer to observe what made these mothers laugh so freely, and that’s when he saw Him: the Builder and Maker of these women, the cornerstone each was built upon individually and together, the Creator, walk into the living room! He was dressed in white, with a vessel of oil called, ‘The oil of gladness’. And though the women didn’t see Him, they knew He was there, and allowed Him to pour the rich, golden oil over their heads.

It flowed deep into each heart and soul. The oil of His love healed the broken places, and brought rivers of clean water to the dry places, until suddenly fountains of joy were created.

‘It’s Him!’ the yellow house proclaimed.

‘Who?’ asked Bungalow.

‘The Lord,’ said the Yellow house.

All conversation hushed then, and only the balmy breeze in the palms and the singing of the mothers could be heard.

He was there with them. The Creator of every ocean, and each glorious sunrise and sunset. He was the reason for their joy.

Tears hung in the eyes of each house, for the One Who had fashioned these mothers was there with them.

‘How can this be?’ One-House-Over exclaimed. ‘I declare, how can it, how can it? The Lord is visiting your house, Yellow. The Lord!’

Gray’s reverie was interrupted, and he noted reverentially that the Lord of heaven and earth dwells with the humble and contrite.

‘He’s close to the brokenhearted and those who are crushed in spirit,’ Yellow said. All the tears had drawn Jesus close.

‘He’s wiping their tears away,’ Yellow said.

Sobbing was heard, and One-House-Over waved a white hankie flag saying, ‘Oh stop, oh stop, it’s too wonderful, I declare it’s just too wonderful!’

Even Gray gave a little smile then.

‘Imagine being cared for in such a way,’ said Bungalow.

When the day came for the mothers to leave, each house waved goodbye in silent gratitude, for the ladies’ visit had made the sun seem brighter, the sea’s sparkle more brilliant, and a hopeful contentment reside within them as they stood and welcomed others by the seaside.