

A New Chapter

By Jane McBride

Based on a true story

"These many blessings make me feel so thankful to be me" (Children's Songbook, 11).

Sarah was unpacking a box in her room when Mom walked in.

"Can we paint the walls yellow?" she asked Mom.

They had just moved into a different house. Sarah had been able to pick out a quilt and curtains for her new room!

"I think so," Mom said. "Yellow is a happy color."

Sarah put a few books on a little shelf by her bed. Mom didn't always feel *happy* lately, not since Dad had died in the accident. Sarah carefully put her favorite picture of Dad next to the



books, where she could see it every morning when she woke up.

She heard a snuffle and saw tears in the corners of Mom's eyes.

"I love you, Mom," Sarah said, wrapping her arms around Mom's waist and squeezing tight.

"I love you more."

The Saturday before school started, Mom and Sarah put on old clothes, moved the furniture to the middle of Sarah's room, and carefully pushed paint rollers into trays of yellow paint. After a while, the walls were covered in yellow—and so were their faces and clothes!

"You look like you've got

sunshine splattered all over you," Mom said with a laugh.

Sarah giggled. "And you look like a banana exploded next to you!"

They were still laughing as they cleaned up. But Sarah's smile faded when she thought about going to Primary tomorrow and school the day after that.

"I'm worried about church and my new school," she told Mom as they rinsed paintbrushes in the sink. "I won't know any of the teachers or kids or anybody."

Mom turned off the water and pulled Sarah into a hug.

"You'll make friends. You have a kind heart that will draw others to you. Be your wonderful self, and friends will come."

Sarah felt a little better, but she was still nervous.

"I wish Dad were here to give me a blessing," she said. "Like he always used to before I went back to school."

Mom was quiet for a minute. "What about Uncle Wyatt?" she said. "I'm sure he'd be happy to give you a blessing."

Sarah nodded. Maybe a blessing would help.

That night, Sarah's uncle put his hands on her head to give her a blessing.



"I bless you to know that the Savior is mindful of you as you start this new chapter in life," he said. "He will not leave you alone."

Sarah paid special attention to the words *new chapter*. She loved to read and was always excited to start a new chapter in a book.

The next morning Sarah and Mom went to church. After sacrament meeting Mom helped Sarah find the Primary room. A girl inside smiled at her and said hello.

"You can sit here if you want," she said, patting an empty chair next to her.

"Thanks," Sarah said. "My name's Sarah. I'm new here."

"I'm Melody. And I'm new too! This is only my second week."

Soon Melody and Sarah were talking with the other Primary kids. Their teacher was really nice.

"I hope school goes this well!" Sarah thought as she went to bed that night.

The next day, Sarah rode the bus to her new school. She was excited to see a few kids from Primary in her third-grade class.

"Thank you, Heavenly Father," Sarah prayed silently as she ate lunch with her new friends. "Maybe this will be a good chapter, after all." ●

The author lives in Colorado, USA.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANDY ELKERTON