

CHAPTER 1

The New Shoes Go to School

Emmy Lou stood on the bridge above Yellow Creek and frowned at the water rushing below. Most days the water gurgled slowly around rocks and rippled a soft tune. But today it crashed loudly against the rocks. Water leaped into the air before it hurried away and surged around the bend. “You’d better stay out of the creek,” Mom had said. “The water is too high to wade today.”

Emmy Lou sighed and shifted her blue lunch bucket from one hand to the other. *I wish the water wasn’t so high*, she thought. *Becky likes to play in the creek*. But the creek paid no attention to Emmy Lou. It kept on rushing and crashing and hurrying away.

Emmy Lou’s friend Becky was coming over after school. “Your creek is so pretty!” Becky had said at school yesterday.



“And the water is so cool. I’m so glad I can come to your place tomorrow when my Mom is gone. I wish *we* had a creek.”

But today the creek wasn’t pretty. The cool, clear water had turned into muddy brown so that the sunshine didn’t sparkle on it. And it seemed in such a hurry to get over the rocks and around the bend. *It’s too bad*, Emmy Lou sighed. *Becky will be disappointed*, she thought.

“Come on, Emmy, the bus will soon be here,” called her sister Sarah as she ran past. “And don’t stop to look at your new shoes, either,” she flung back over her shoulder.

Emmy Lou smiled and looked down at her shoes. They were special! Shiny and new and brown, they had buckles instead of shoelaces. She flipped back a blonde braid and ran after her older sister. It was nice to have new shoes! Emmy Lou’s old shoes were tight, and they had broken open on the side. *I waited so long for these new shoes, and they are the nicest shoes I’ve ever had*, she thought. She hurried to catch up with Sarah.

At the end of the lane Emmy Lou bent down to brush the dust from her shoes and polish them all shiny. “I wish we could wade after school,” she said. “Becky wants *so-o-o* much to play in the creek!”

“That creek is full since it rained,” said her brother Mark. “There’s almost twice as much water as usual.”

“All the snow just melted the other week. It’s everything together—the rain and the melted snow. Besides, it would be cold,” added John, who was Mark’s twin. The twins were two years older than Emmy, and they thought it was fun to tell Emmy how much they knew.

“Becky and I wouldn’t care if it was cold!” Emmy Lou declared. “We were going to sit on the rocks in the middle and . . .”

“You won’t find a dry rock to sit on!” Mark said. “Here’s the bus, anyway.”

“You can have fun even if you can’t wade,” added Sarah. The four children stepped aboard the yellow school bus.

At school, Emmy Lou spotted Becky down the hall and hurried to catch up with her friend.

“I’m so excited that you’re coming home with me after school!” Emmy said.

“Yes!” Becky replied. “I can’t wait to go wading!”

“But the water is too high to go wading . . . it’s from all the rain.”

“But that’s why I want to come to your house—to play in the creek!” Becky said.

“I know what. We could sit beside the creek for awhile,” Emmy Lou suggested. “Maybe we could even put our feet in the water!” She smiled at Becky.

