

**SUSANNAH LICKED** her fingers.

She sat in her usual spot next to Papa at the long breakfast table. One of her favorite things was Mama's zwieback,<sup>1</sup> fresh and light, dripping with sweet watermelon jelly.

Susannah's *most* favorite thing was her cloth doll, Little Mary.

The talk around the table was, as usual, about the move to Canada.



<sup>1</sup>Zwieback (ZWEE bak): Double buns made from two balls of yeast dough. The smaller ball of dough is pressed on top of the larger one so the two pieces stick together when baked.

For months and months, Mennonite villagers of South Russia had been preparing to migrate to Canada. The voice of change was whispering in Russia. The Mennonites feared the government would take away their freedom to live for God the way they believed they should.

To preserve their people and their faith, they needed to resettle in a new land. They would travel by boat and train and ship.

Papa said, "Today we will finish packing. Remember, we can take along only our most needed things."

Susannah hugged Little Mary tightly.

"All I need to take along is my doll," she said.

"Dear little sister," Aganetha said. "Its dress is worn and stained."

"It is old and shabby!" Greta said.

"Isn't one arm nearly torn off?"

Franz asked around a mouthful of zwieback.

Susannah hid her doll behind her back.





AT THE lunch table, Papa said in a worried voice, “Our trunks and chests are packed full. Yet I must find room to bring all the wheat that is in the grain bin. We need every kernel to grow wheat in the new land.”

Susannah sat a little straighter. She made her voice a little louder. “All I need is my doll,” she said.

“Ach,<sup>2</sup> Susannah,” tsked Aganetha. “You will need your clothes.”

“You will need your pillow and quilt,” Greta said in an amused voice.

“You will need food,” said Franz as he slurped his borscht.<sup>3</sup>

After clearing the table, Susannah escaped to the barn and crouched behind the grain bin.

“I cannot leave you behind, dear Little Mary,” she whispered. Her tears dripped onto the tangled yarn braids. “I must find a way to bring you along.”

“Susannah!” Mama called in her busy voice. “Time to tend the chickens.”

Quickly Susannah reached into the grain bin and dug a hole deep into the wheat. “You will be safe here,” she whispered. “Papa said he will take along all of the wheat.” She tucked Little Mary inside and covered her with wheat kernels.

2. Ach (ahkh): Guttural sound of mild disapproval or surprise. Pronounced by not quite closing the throat on the “k” sound.

3. Borscht (bawrsht): A hearty red soup made with beets and meat broth. It may also contain cabbage, carrots, onions, potatoes, and tomatoes. It is often served with sour cream.





**SUSANNAH** FED the chickens and collected the eggs.

Then she almost dropped her basket.

Papa was standing beside the grain bin, his long fingers sifting through the wheat kernels. Then he held up her doll.

“Why is Susannah’s doll here?” Papa asked in a puzzled voice.

“Please, Papa!” she begged, tugging at his overalls. “I must bring my doll along to Canada. Just like you want to bring your wheat, I want to bring my doll!”

Papa looked at Susannah, and Susannah looked at Papa.

Suddenly Papa smiled. “We will fill your doll with wheat, and then both your doll and the wheat can come to the new land,” he said.

“But, Papa,” Susannah said, “not all the wheat will fit into my doll!”

“No,” said Papa, “but I know where it will fit. Come.”

Together they went to the house.

