Miranda's New Home

Miranda remembered how surprised she was last summer, the first time she saw the island. It was just a rock, miles and miles from shore. A huge gray rock, splashed by ocean waves. And perched on top were the lighthouse and a small stone cottage – their new home now that Father had become the keeper of the light.

As Father sailed the dory closer, Mother and Miranda could see that nothing grew on the rocky island. Not a tree. Not a bush. Not a flower.

Miranda could hardly believe it. She had packets of seeds in her skirt pocket, for bellflowers, sweet peas, and bouncing Bet. But where could she plant them?

Father lowered the sails and grabbed the oars. Then he rowed the boat in on the top of a wave. It scraped bottom. Miranda's pet chickens fluttered and squawked in their crate. Father leaped onto the rocks and brought the boat to safety. Then Mother and Miranda stepped on shore.

"We'll unload the rest later," he said.

They avoided the pools and puddles by the water's edge and followed the rocky path to the top. A fresh sea breeze pulled at their clothes. Gulls called overhead, and puffins waddled about. The summer sun shined on the waves.

Miranda watched for bits of greenery along the path to the lighthouse, but there was nothing there, not even a blade of grass. When they left Grandma's farm that morning, pink roses had been in bloom. Would this barren island ever seem like home?

"Look," said Father. "Here's an old coop for your chickens." It was made of odds and ends. Not fancy, Miranda thought, but it would keep the hens safe.

They climbed the stone steps to the cottage and pulled open the heavy door. Miranda walked quickly through the kitchen and peeked in the parlor. Then she ran upstairs to see her bedroom. It looked sunny and cheerful. She took an old cushion from the chair by the bed and put it on the wide stone windowsill. This is where I'll read, she decided, where I can look up and see the waves. Then Miranda hurried downstairs. She could hardly wait to explore the lighthouse.