

MAMA TRIED by Kathy Des Jardins

EXCERPT

Joy couldn't wait till Paul saw their place, a wonderland in yellow, beige, and brown, clunky with color-coordinated yard bric-a-brac and aswarm with pets—several dogs, assorted ducks. Joy even had a horse, though he was pastured five miles away. In other words, Paul was about to behold what every cent and all the credit an occasionally contrite if genetically combative E-Seven could scrape together.

“But when we pulled up to Joy's place...” Boo- Boo began.

“Something was missing,” she said.

“There was the fence, the dogs, the ostriches, and so forth,” Boo-Boo said.

“They were ducks,” Joy told WildDog. Boo-Boo hunched his shoulders and shook his head, as if ducks made any more sense than ostriches.

“Anyway,” she continued, “in addition to the ducks, there was the cinderblock storage shed, freshly painted yellow and brown to match the brown fence posts and yellow bird bath.”

“I think there were even some yellow plastic flamingos still standing in the yard,” Boo-Boo recalled.

“Yellow?” WildDog wrinkled his forehead.

“My mother thought pink clashed with her yellow-and- brown color scheme,” Joy explained, as if that made sense.

“Everything was just the way it used to be,” Boo-Boo said.

“Except for one thing,” Joy noted, memory flitting once more across the unsettling what's-different-about-this-picture sensation that gripped her as Boo-Boo pulled up to the driveway, Paul idling behind them. After studying the scene a few seconds and adjusting her depth perception by several degrees, it finally hit her. That wasn't her trailer she was looking at. It was

the one parked behind her trailer.

“Her trailer was gone,” Boo-Boo said.

“Gone?” WildDog exclaimed.

“Poof,” Joy replied. “If you can imagine anything fourteen feet wide and seventy-two feet long disappearing into thin air.”