



**YWCA**  
EDMONTON

A TURNING POINT  
FOR WOMEN

## **Green Acres** (or “do not let the city girl milk your goat”)

*Stanya Kresta*

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One day my husband came home from work and announced that he needed one week to finish translating a book for his work and that we will spend it at his cousin's place. Vaclav had beautiful childhood memories from summer vacations in the country.

Immediately I had visions of myself chasing butterflies in golden fields of wheat sprinkled with red poppies and blue flowers of flax. Perfect time to explore nature for my two little boys. Peter was almost two years old and Jim was three.

When we got married, my husband never promised me a rose garden, but I didn't listen .....oh boy, was he right.

What a big surprise when we arrived at his cousin's place. I discovered that they had 3 pigs, one goat, luckily without horns. Chickens, rabbits and geese, I never got to the end of counting how many there were supposed to be.

The morning after our arrival, my husband's cousin got a call that his father was in a farm accident and was in serious condition in hospital. The whole family immediately left and I was put in charge of two little boys, and all the animals. I am sure that the boys got many times the same food as the pigs.

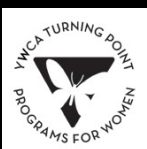
The routine was supposed to be..... in the morning to collect greens from a huge garden for the goat and rabbits and geese. Then milk the goat and feed the milk with boiled potatoes and leftovers from the kitchen, including dish water to the pigs. At that time they didn't use detergents for washing the dishes, so washing them was an adventure in grease and yucky tepid water toward the end of the wash.

First, I dressed and fed the boys, then we went to the garden where I found the goat already having breakfast in the vegetable garden. We chased her away.

It was obvious that the goat didn't like that, because she went and knocked Peter down with her forehead. He didn't cry, he just stuck his lower lip out and went in search...of what? I had no idea, when he came back he was holding a stick and beat the goat with it. The excitement got him tired and before I noticed ...he was gone. I searched the whole property, and luckily it was fenced in. But no Peter.

General alert was put up, my husband abandoned the book. My older son and I went again and again around the whole garden. No Peter. By this time major panic took over. Then, Jim being the smallest one, discovered a small butt clothed only in a diaper sticking out from under a grape bush. Peter was on his hands and knees and fast asleep. He obviously decided that after good work a nap was in order.

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OK, time to milk the goat, but how you do it when you never saw it done? Just use your imagination. There was this little cute three-legged stool, and a bucket, what else do I need? The goat stepped in the bucket just when I was proudly finishing ripping the udder from under her belly ....a trip to the local corner store to buy milk ...for the kids, pigs and us. I bought a lot of bread too, to feed the geese, the rabbits and everybody else no time for cooking.

Laundry had to be done too; we were running out of everything. No laundry machine? No big deal. The washboard will do as well. Buckets and buckets of water from the well, just to make sure, that the kids are entertained where there will be no harm to them while I attacked the pile of dirty clothing .A big part of this pile was Peter's clothes because when nobody was watching he *just fell* into a puddle of pigs manure. What a smell!!!

Later I found the boys busily filling all the rubber boots with water so they can help mother to rinse the laundry. It is amazing how many rubber boots there are in the family with 3 kids, plus two visiting cousins, and 4 adults, I am not sure that these people had only two feet each. There were many, many rubber boots, standing in line by the size and being very diligently filled with water.

The best "slim fast spa" I can recommend is spending some quiet time in the country.

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