## REDESIGN BY DISASTER

Sometimes bad things turn out well.

IT HAPPENS. YOUR HOUSE, BRAND new when purchased, has begun to show its age. That was the case with a vacation house in Hood River, Ore., that my husband and I purchased in 1995. Last fall, it became clear that a little refreshing and replacing was in order. The dishwasher was broken. The oven's temperature gauge was so off that it was impossible to use. The carpet was worn, and the paint was dingy.

So last November, we looked around and decided we'd had enough. We'd repaint, get new appliances and then decide what to do with the kitchen and bathroom floors, which were covered in a horrible faux-linoleum product. When a fairy godmother failed to appear and wave her magical home-improvement wand, we knew we'd have to do the work ourselves.

We began with the upper level, where we spend most of our time. To take advantage of our lot's view of the Columbia River, the living area is upstairs; the bedrooms are below. To cover the Arctic White walls, we chose Enchanting Ginger for the kitchen area and Sand for the rest of the upstairs. Before we left for our annual holiday vacation in New Mexico, my husband, daughter and I had spent hour after hour painting the kitchen and most of the walls.

Five years ago, my parents moved to Hood River, and when we're out of town, my father checks on our house. However, my parents also left town for the holidays. From mid-December to mid-January, our house was unwatched. The day after my parents returned, I received a call. "Margaret, this is your dad," my father said ominously. "I'm standing in your kitchen in 3/4 of an inch of water."

A loose valve under the kitchen sink, combined with freezing and thawing weather, created a small leak, which ran amok under our floorboards for five weeks and into the rooms below the kitchen.

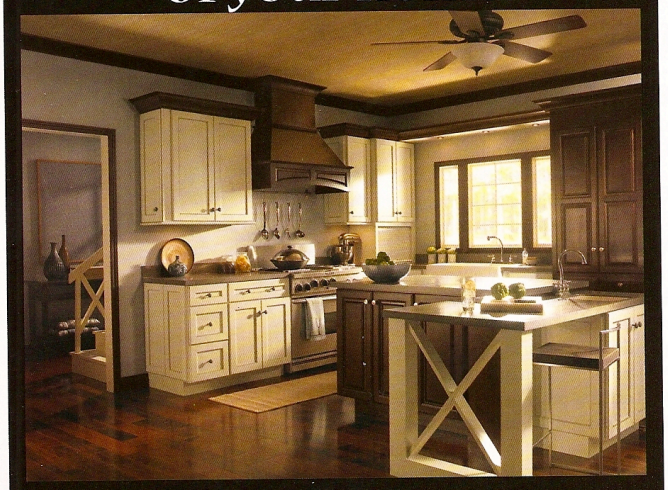
The house was uninhabitable for the foreseeable future. The kitchen was ruined, and we'd have to replace a majority of the floors. Our recently completed paint job? We'd have to repaint.

As we worked through the insurance claim, my mood turned giddy. Our house would have a happily-ever-after ending without us doing the work or paying for it. Soon, our oak kitchen cabinets would be maple. The bathrooms and utility hall would be covered in blue tile. And the hardwood floor upstairs would extend into the kitchen and gleam like the new appliances. Best of all, someone *else* would be doing the painting.

We had a fairy godmother after all. Instead of unleashing the power of magic, she unleashed the forces of nature.

*—Margaret Foley*


Your Kitchen is the ♥ of your home.



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