

A Familiar Face

Chapter Eight - by Kay Hively

The rain stopped just as Scotty finished his library books. He opened the window by his bed. A light breeze passed through the opening. The night smelled fresh and clean. He could see the moon behind some thin clouds. Looking at the moon, Scotty thought about President Truman.

The books said President Truman had been a soldier and had led a group of men. But, as President, he was the Commander-in-Chief. That made him the leader of every American soldier and sailor.

When Mr. Truman became President, a war was raging. Thousands of soldiers had been killed, and many people had died where fighting took place. All this worried President Truman. He finally decided the only way to prevent more deaths was to defeat the enemy quickly. That meant using a new weapon - an atomic bomb.

Another big decision President Truman made was to end segregation in the military. Until this was done, black soldiers were not allowed to serve with white soldiers.

Ending segregation in the military was just part of Mr. Truman's plan to end segregation everywhere. In America, blacks were second-class citizens. They could sit only in the balcony at movie theaters. They had to ride in the back of buses and trains. They went to all-black schools, and were not allowed to play on professional sports teams.

But President Truman knew that black people could do anything that white people could. Since Mr. Truman believed that the buck stopped with the President, it was his job to make things right.

Scotty thought about his friend Jimmy, who was black. Jimmy could do anything. Sometimes he could do things better than anyone else - like hitting a baseball.

Again, Scotty looked out into the night. President Truman did many good things. Scotty was glad that he had been assigned to write about him.

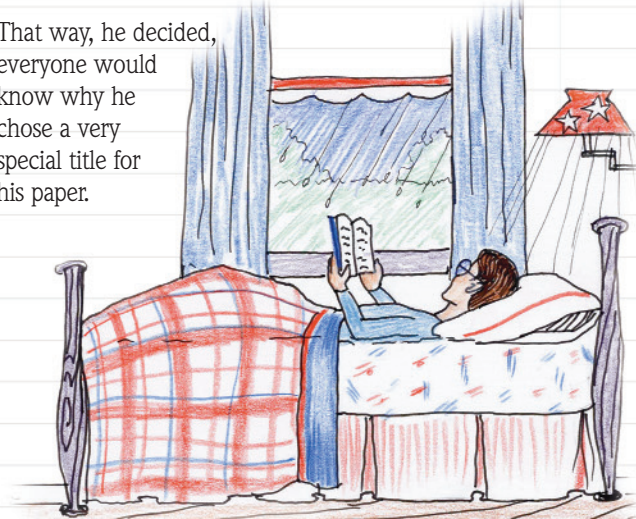
The next morning, Scotty gathered up all his books and filled his backpack. He was eager to get to school and to start writing his paper. He had decided what he would write about, and he had chosen a title for his research paper. After breakfast, Scotty put on his backpack. Funny, he thought, it didn't seem as heavy as it was when he brought it home on Friday.

Scotty opened the door to his mother's office to say good-bye.

Mrs. Brown asked if he was ready to write his paper. Scotty smiled, nodded his head and said he was going to call his research paper, "The President Who Looks Like Me."

As Scotty hurried down the alley toward school, he was happy. He couldn't wait to start writing his paper. And, using his mother's computer, he planned to include a picture of President Truman. In fact, Scotty thought the picture of President Truman when he was 12 years old would look really good on the cover sheet of his research paper.

That way, he decided, everyone would know why he chose a very special title for his paper.



Author Kay Hively and Illustrator Billie Goforth-Stewart are both of Neosho, Missouri. Truman photo by Harry Barth. Produced by the Missouri Press Foundation. Copyright 2007.

Edward Hickey

Things to Think About and Do

- Why do you think Scotty's backpack was lighter when he started back to school? What does "taking a load off your mind" mean?
- When black people couldn't play professional baseball, they had black baseball teams. On the internet, research the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City. Look at the uniforms worn by the players. If you could start a baseball team, what name would you use? Design a uniform for your "pretend" team.
- Find a picture of someone in the newspaper who is about the same age as Scotty. Using your imagination, create a story that has him or her growing up to be a famous person from your state.

STANDARDS: G3:4; G3:5; G1:4; S:7; H/PE:2; SS:6; FA:1; SS:7

Visit the Truman Presidential Museum & Library at www.trumanlibrary.org