

FREEDOM'S CIRCUS



Chapter Three – by Kay Hively

When Sarah got home from the berry patch, she did not tell anyone about seeing the monkey again. She was afraid no one would believe her.

After lunch, she climbed the tower steps to watch Poppa clean the storm panes. As they talked, Sarah spotted a big ship passing nearby. Black smoke billowed from its smoke stack. Poppa said some of the ships carried cargo, but many had passengers going to New York. He said most of the passengers were immigrants, coming to America.

Poppa said that Mamma was an immigrant. When she was young, Mamma sailed on a ship from Italy. Poppa said he could not talk to

Mamma when they first met. He could speak only English, and she could speak only Italian.

Sarah asked why people came to America. Poppa said America was a young country with lots of room. He said many people came because they had no work in their own country.

Then Poppa stopped cleaning the window panes and sat down beside Sarah.

In a soft voice, Poppa told her that most immigrants really came to America in search of freedom. He said many people were not free, but America was a country where people could do most anything. A man in America could choose any kind of job he wanted – even be a lighthouse keeper, Poppa laughed.

Poppa said in America everyone could go to church or not go to church. And if they went to church, they could go to any one they liked.

Freedom, Poppa said, was one of the most wonderful things on earth. Then he told Sarah about a big beautiful statue in New York harbor. He said the people on the ship that was passing by their lighthouse right now would soon see the Statue of Liberty.

Sarah asked what the statue looked like. Poppa said it was a woman in a long robe. On her head was a crown and in one arm she held a book. With her other arm she raised a torch which Poppa said was a lighthouse that guided ships coming into New York harbor. He also said the torch did not need oil to keep its light burning because it was an electric light.

There was no electricity on Lighthouse Island, but Sarah had seen electric lights on the mainland. She could not imagine a bulb big enough to light up something as big as a lighthouse.

When Poppa went back to work, Sarah sat on the bench by herself, thinking about what Poppa had told her. She was sad that some people were not free. She knew how wonderful it was to run free on Lighthouse Island without being afraid of anything. As she watched the immigrant ship sail out of sight, Sarah was happy for the people on it. They would soon be free and get to see the Statue of Liberty.



Author Kay Hively and Illustrator Billie Goforth-Stewart are both of Neosho, Missouri. Produced in partnership with this newspaper and the Missouri Press Foundation. Copyright 2005.

Learning Extensions – Things to Think About and Do

A. On the internet or in a reference book, find the quotation that is at the base of the Statue of Liberty. Look up any words or phrases in the quotation that you do not know and then memorize the quotation.

B. Did anyone in your family immigrate from another country? Do some research on your family and create a family tree with information on your family's history.

Next Week: Chapter 4 – A Mystery