

Good Morning, Mr. President

Chapter One – by Kay Hively

It was nearly midnight and very dark. Peggy Ann stared through the windshield of the old car as it rolled down the narrow road. The Jansen family had been traveling from Nebraska for two days.

Peggy was tired. Her little brother was asleep beside her in the back seat. And, even though she was sleepy, Peggy was determined to stay awake.

Her father had promised they would reach their new home in the Black Hills tonight. She was anxious to see where the family would live all summer. She wondered what the Black Hills would look like. Were they really black?

Just when Peggy thought she could no longer stay awake, the car slowed down. Through half-shut eyes, she read the big sign beside a driveway. It said “Welcome – Cabins.”

Mr. Jansen turned the car into the driveway and drove down a dirt trail.



Peggy could see two or three cabins. All of them had a light in a window.

Finally, the car stopped in front of a cabin that was dark. The headlights of the car showed the number 5 on the door. Mr. Jansen opened the car door and got out. Taking just a few strides he stepped upon the little porch.

Peggy saw him knock on the door and then go inside. As Peggy and her mother watched, a light came on in a window. Peggy could see her father standing by the lamp with a lighted match in his hand.

A moment later Mr. Jansen was back, telling everyone to get out and carry their things inside. Peggy jumped out of the car, eager to see her new home. Reaching into the back seat, she poked a finger into her brother's ribs and told him to wake up.

Mike didn't move. He was sound asleep. Ignoring him, Peggy pulled the old suitcase and two quilts out of the back seat. Then, following her mother, she walked through the front door of what would be her summer home.

By the dim light of the lamp, Peggy could see a large rustic room with a stone fireplace. At one end was a small kitchen and a table. Around the fireplace were two chairs and a wooden couch with fat pillows.

As Peggy looked around, her father came through the door with Mike in his arms. Mrs. Jansen carried the lamp through a side door, looking for a place to put her son.

Soon the sleeping arrangements were settled. Peggy and Mike would share bunk beds in one of the bedrooms. Mike would have the bottom bed and she would sleep up high.

Peggy's father said they were lucky to have two bedrooms. That had been promised when he agreed to come work on the mountain.

Once her brother was tucked into his bunk and covered with a quilt, Peggy was ready for bed. It had been a long day. She went to sleep still wondering if the Black Hills were really black. Maybe tomorrow she would find out.

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Classroom Extensions

Things to Think About and Do –

- On a map, find South Dakota. On a South Dakota map, find the Black Hills. In what part of the state are the Black Hills?
- What state did the Jansen family come from? What do you think Peggy's father is going to do in South Dakota?

STANDARDS – CA2; G1:8; G4:1; SS5

Next Week: Chapter Two – A BIG Surprise