

Good Morning, Mr. President

Chapter Four – by Kay Hively

On Monday morning when Peggy woke up she knew where she was. Looking out the window at the face on the mountain, she smiled and said, “Good morning, Mr. President.”

Getting no answer, Peggy leaned over the edge of her bed to look at her brother below. But the lower bunk bed was empty. Quickly, Peggy jumped out of her bed, pulled on her overalls and went looking for her family. Her brother Mike was eating breakfast and her mother was peeling potatoes on the little kitchen table.

Peggy’s father had already gone to work. She would not see him until evening.

Eager to explore, Peggy washed her hands and then sat down to eat. While Peggy and Mike ate, Mrs. Jansen suggested they take a walk together. She said neither of the children should go off alone. Until they knew their way around, they could only go as far as the well house or to the outhouse.

With breakfast finished, Peggy’s mother shut the cabin door and the three explorers set off on their walk. Their neighbor, Mrs. Foster, was sitting on her porch. Peggy’s mother invited her to go with them.

Laying down her knitting needles, Mrs. Foster joined the hiking party. She was a wonderful guide, telling the newcomers how to get down to the main road and where each trail led into the woods. She said that hiking in the woods was safe. There were no bears, mostly deer or rabbits – or maybe a goat. She even showed them paint marks on the trees. The marks were there to help anyone who did become lost. The marks were shaped like little arrows, and they all pointed to the road that went by the cabins.

Peggy’s mother felt better when she learned about the red marks.

Several times, Mrs. Foster pointed out the faces of Washington and Jefferson. From each spot the faces looked different. Mrs. Foster said the mountain was called Mount Rushmore. The men who worked up there were called Keystone Boys.

As they walked through a meadow, Peggy looked at the hillsides. They did look black. Mrs. Foster said that was because most of the trees were Ponderosa pine or Black Hills spruce. The bark of young pines is black and all the pine needles are dark, Mrs. Foster said. She also pointed out that the spruce trees are dark, too.

All the dark trees growing together gave the hills their name, she said.

At last Peggy had the answer to her question.

Just as the hikers came within sight of their cabins, Mrs. Foster pointed to a little road that led down to the old Potter place. Mrs. Foster said that old Mrs. Potter was a strange kind of person. She never bothered anyone. In fact, she was very good to people. She just liked keeping to herself.

Peggy didn’t think that was so strange. Some people liked being alone.

Peggy even liked being alone once in a while. If she ever got to meet that old lady, Peggy was sure they would get along just fine.

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Classroom Extensions

Things to Think About and Do –

- Peggy learned how the Black Hills got their name. How did Mount Rushmore get its name?
- Draw a picture of a Ponderosa pine tree and a picture of a Black Hills spruce. Which tree grows taller? Name three other species of pine or spruce trees?

Next Week: Chapter Five – Gathering Flowers