

Night at the Capitol



Chapter Thirteen

Written by—
Carolyn Mueller

Illustrated by—
Christopher Grant

“Why don’t you hold this,” Mr. Priddy said to Charlie.

“Me?” Charlie said.

“You.”

Charlie reached up and took the small, bronze Seal of the State of Missouri from the old man’s hands.

“Come on now, kiddo, we’ll take it back to where it belongs.”

Charlie, Mr. Priddy, Machk and the four soldiers quietly paraded through the halls of the Missouri Capitol to the Secretary of State’s office, where the seal was kept. After an eventful night of thievery and adventure, it was time to return the seal to its rightful place.

Mr. Priddy swung the door to the Secretary’s office open and illuminated the room with his flashlight. The six men stood in the doorway, as Charlie entered. He carried the seal to its special place behind the desk and returned it gently to its home.

“The Secretary of State is known as the keeper of the Great Seal,” Mr. Priddy told him. “He can use it to authenticate official acts of the governor.”

“Always the tour guide,” Charlie said, grinning at the man.

“Always,” Mr. Priddy answered.

The group made their way down the stairs and into the rotunda. They stood beneath the giant chandelier. Mr. Priddy turned to Machk and the soldiers.

“It’s about that time, boys,” he said.

The men all nodded.

“Charlie, you are a fine Missourian,” Machk told him.

“Thank you for all of your help,” Charlie said.

The warrior moved toward the staircase to return to his painting.

“Charlie, thank you for your service to this great state,” Tom said, with a sharp salute.

“Sure it will, Jeb,” Charlie answered. “I’m sure it will.”

Will rolled his eyes toward Jeb and turned to the boy. “Charlie, you’ve shown great bravery and fortitude here tonight. You have my utmost respect.”

“And you have mine, Will,” Charlie said.

The Union soldier gave the school boy a hug before parting

light poured through the Capitol windows and into the rotunda. The sunlight sparkled off of the gold lining on the ceiling, making the murals glow. As the light hit them, the people within the paintings ceased moving and struck their daytime poses. The soldiers stiffened and no longer moved or spoke. Their eyes, noses and mouths disappeared, leaving them blank faced once

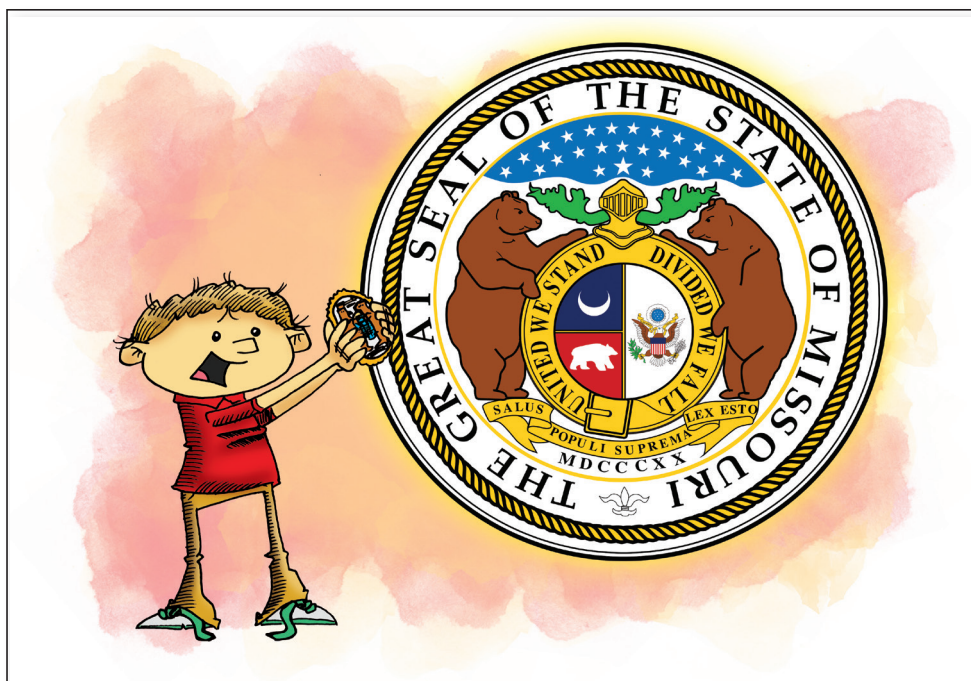
Then suddenly, a door cracked open. Cool morning air spilled in, and with it came the Capitol workers. They hustled their way across the marble floor, all briefcases and cell phones, lattes and newspapers. Mr. Priddy and Charlie were caught up in a sea of them, letting them flow around them like water near a rock.

Charlie watched these important people come into the Capitol, all here to work for the state of Missouri. He looked up at Mr. Priddy.

“You know,” Charlie said.

“Missouri is pretty exciting after all.”

Charlie and Mr. Priddy smiled at one another. And this time even Charlie had a magic, little twinkle in his eye.



“It’s been a pleasure,” Phil added, saluting as well.

Charlie saluted them back and gave them both a smile. “Thank you both! I had, er, a lot of fun.”

“Charlie, just remember,” Jeb told him. “The South will rise again.”

ways. All four soldiers returned to their rightful posts within the museum — Tom and Phil to their glass cases in the World Wars wing and Jeb and Will back to the Civil War area. As Phil snapped his glass door shut behind him, the sun crested over the horizon and golden

again. The tiny people and horses within the dioramas stopped their dramas. It was a new day.

Mr. Priddy and Charlie were the only living people left in the Capitol and for a moment, pure silence echoed through the dawn.

Capitol Ideas



Now that you have read about all the excitement that the Missouri Capitol building has to offer, create a newspaper ad that encourages readers to visit the Capitol. Study ads in your newspaper. Which ads stand out? Consider size, color, word choice, font, etc.

Learning Standards: I can read historical fiction to develop fluency and to make text-to-world connections. I can identify vocabulary in context. I can comprehend main idea and supporting details. I can analyze literary techniques and make predictions.