

FREEDOM'S CIRCUS



Chapter One – by Kay Hively

Eleven-year-old Sarah Callaway turned her face into the wind and drew a deep breath. A soft sea breeze tossed her dark hair over her shoulders.

It was the first day of summer in the year 1889. Sarah and her brother would now have time to explore the island all day, every day. Sarah liked playing on the big rocks by the water and watching for ships to pass by. But best of all, she liked going to the top of the lighthouse.

Sarah lived on an island. It had a real name, but Sarah called it Lighthouse Island. Her father was the lighthouse keeper, and no one but the Callaway family lived on their island. For many days at a time, the only people she saw were Poppa, Mamma, and her brother, Gabriel.



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

A big tomcat lived in the boathouse. Sarah called him “Admiral,” but he was not very friendly. Admiral had come as a stowaway on the mail boat. Gabe had a dog named Prince, but there were no other animals on the island except for seagulls that flew overhead looking for food.

For many weeks, Sarah had been on the mainland going to school. This was her first day back on the island. It was a beautiful day and she was eager to climb the lighthouse. Taking the narrow winding tower stairs, she made her way up the lighthouse. Sarah felt close to heaven up there. Even on a cold day, it was warm in the lantern room.

Because Poppa kept the storm panes very clean, Sarah could see for miles and miles. The storm panes had to be clean so the lamp light could shine far out to sea. Ship captains used the light to guide their ships to safety.

Around the top of the lighthouse was a gallery with an iron railing. Standing on the gallery, Poppa could clean the outside of the storm panes. Sometimes, Sarah and Gabe were allowed out on the gallery, but only in nice weather, and only if one of their parents went with them.

The lantern room was like a circle. In one direction Sarah could see all the way to the other side of the island. She could even see a bit of the mainland. Walking around to the other side of the room, she looked out to sea. Sometimes she could see ships coming very close. But most of the time, they were only little dots on the ocean far away.

Sarah strained her eyes, looking for a ship. Suddenly, out of the corner of her eye, she saw movement. Sarah turned her head, expecting to see a seagull floating by. But it was not a seagull. It was something Sarah had never seen in all her life.

Right there, perched on the gallery rail, was a monkey!

Sarah squealed in surprise and stared hard at the monkey. The monkey, with a grin on its face, stared right back at her. It seemed as surprised to see Sarah as she was to see the monkey.

Learning Extensions – Things to Think About and Do

A. Look up these words in a dictionary and learn their meanings and their spellings: STOWAWAY, GALLERY, MAINLAND, ISLAND, LANTERN.

B. This story begins on the first day of summer. Using a calendar, list the exact dates of the first day of summer, autumn, winter, and spring.

Next Week: Chapter 2 – Stolen berries