

FREEDOM'S CIRCUS



Chapter Eight – by Kay Hively

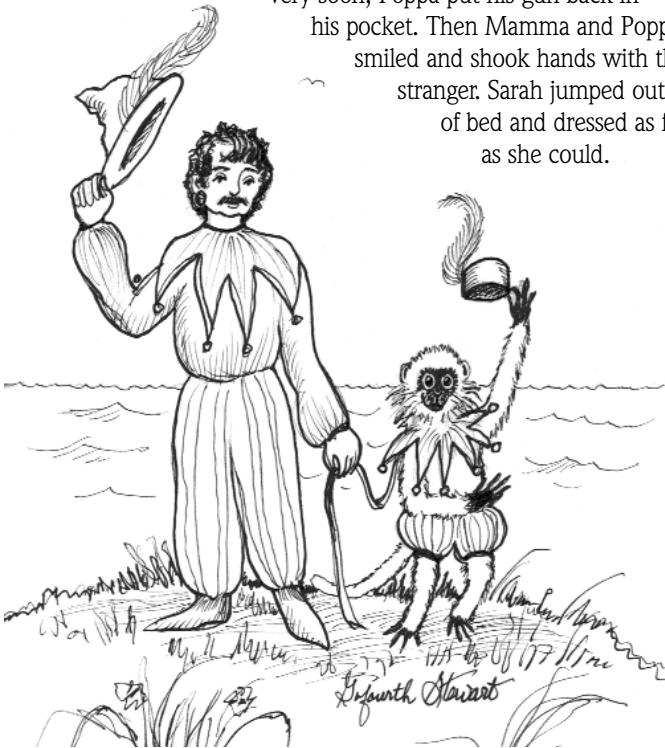
Everyone slept soundly in the lighthouse that night. Even Happy slept all night in his little bed in the wooden crate. Sarah was still snuggled deep under her blankets when she heard Poppa outside her window. He was yelling very loud.

Sarah sat up to look out the window by her bed. She could see a little man in ragged clothes. He was holding Mamma's rugs!

Poppa was holding his pistol and yelling at the little man. The stranger dropped Mamma's rugs and raised his arms above his head. In a shaky voice, the stranger talked to Poppa, but Poppa could not understand.

Suddenly, Sarah saw Mamma come out of the house and stand by Poppa. She and the stranger then began to talk. They spoke to each other in Italian!

Very soon, Poppa put his gun back in his pocket. Then Mamma and Poppa smiled and shook hands with the stranger. Sarah jumped out of bed and dressed as fast as she could.



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.

When she came into the parlor she saw the stranger sitting on a chair with Happy on his shoulder.

Mamma explained that Mr. Cardanelli had been a stowaway on a cargo ship. He stowed away because he wanted to come to America to live with his brother. Mamma said Mr. Cardanelli and his monkey, Toni, left the cargo ship in the dinghy and landed on Lighthouse Island. The little monkey ran away to explore the island and Mr. Cardanelli had been trying for three days to catch Toni.

Mamma also said Mr. Cardanelli had borrowed her rugs because he got cold at night, sleeping in the boathouse. Poppa caught him bringing the rugs back home.

Serving as an interpreter, Mamma said Mr. Cardanelli dreamed of a new free life in a big new country. In Italy he had worked in a circus and Toni was his partner.

Poppa promised to help Mr. Cardanelli make it to the mainland. Poppa also invited him to have breakfast with the Callaway family.

After breakfast, Mr. Cardanelli helped Poppa paint the lighthouse. While the men worked, Sarah and Gabe played with Toni, who was now wearing a leather strap on his collar.

At noon everyone had lunch together. Then Mr. Cardanelli asked if he and Toni could put on a show for the children. Poppa agreed to the offer. While Mr. Cardanelli and Toni dressed in their circus costumes, Poppa brought chairs out into the yard.

All the Callaway family took a seat and watched the show. Mr. Cardanelli sang funny songs and made silly faces. Toni, who was dressed in a colorful suit, did many tricks. When the show ended, the two performers took big bows, and both of them tipped their hats and blew kisses to Sarah and her family. Sarah had never seen such a wonderful show. It was a command performance.

After the show, Mamma translated as Mr. Cardanelli shared his dream of performing in America. Sarah hoped that one day Mr. Cardanelli could have a circus of his own. Maybe, she thought, Mr. Cardanelli could have an immigrant circus. He could call it Freedom's Circus.

Learning Extensions – Things to Think About and Do

A. Have you ever been to a circus? Make a poster about a circus. On the poster, put pictures of animals and performers you would see at a circus.

B. Do you know anyone who was born in another country? Are they bilingual? Ask them to teach you some simple words in their other language.