

Silver and Gold



Chapter Four – by Kay Hively

When Molly woke up the next morning she found a thin layer of snow on her quilt. It had sifted in between the logs in the family's cabin. She also found Lulu under the covers with her.

Molly always liked the first snowfall so she bounced out of bed, eager to see what the fort looked like in the snow. As she dressed, Molly smelled food cooking. To her surprise, she found her mother and father having breakfast at the little table by the fireplace.

Captain Hankins rose from his chair, picked up his daughter and gave her a kiss on the cheek. Then he sat her down in her place at the table. Mrs. Hankins filled her bowl with oatmeal. As the family ate, Captain Hankins told them about searching for the kidnapped family. Molly was happy when he said the family had been found and were now safe at the fort.

Captain Hankins said the Indians had carried their captives about 20 miles away then let them go free. Molly's father said he and his men reached the family just as it started to snow. By riding hard, they were able to make it back to the fort before the snow got very deep.

After breakfast, Molly went back to her little room and dressed for school. She put on her coat and took her books with her. She could see the little school from her porch. It was just across the parade ground. Already some of the soldiers had been shoveling snow. They had made trails from place to place at the fort. All Molly had to do was walk down one of the snow paths to school.

Author Kay Hively and Illustrator Billie Gofourth-Stewart both live in Neosho, Mo. Produced by the Missouri Press Foundation. Copyright 2007.



The air was cold, but the snow had stopped falling and the sun was shining. As she walked across the parade ground to school, Molly looked out across the plains. The countryside was beautiful under a cover of fresh snow. But looking up, she could see that a mass of clouds surrounded the mountain peaks.

When her father came to Fort Russell last year, there were no buildings for the soldiers, only tents for their quarters. But new log buildings were put up last winter and one of the cabins was set aside as a school. The school was not very big, but there were not many students. Only a few of the soldiers had families, but children who lived near the fort were allowed to attend the school. The army children and four children from nearby farms made an enrollment of 11 students.

Sergeant Nelson's wife was the school teacher. She was a wonderful teacher. She even had a small piano that she had bought in Cheyenne. Molly loved music, so she was happy when the students got to sing. Mrs. Nelson promised they could have a Christmas musical. She said the children could invite their families and friends to the program.

Molly's eyes sparkled as she thought about the musical. It would be like a big Christmas party.

Things to Think About and Do

- Molly had oatmeal for breakfast. Do you eat breakfast every day? Make a breakfast menu with your favorite breakfast foods and drinks.
- The soldiers made snow paths. Have you ever made a snow path or a snow angel or a snow cave? Write a poem about a snowflake.
- Molly admired the beauty around her as she walked to school after the first snow. Look in your newspaper for pictures and stories about things in your community that you find beautiful or that you can admire. Make a collage of these pictures.

STANDARDS: G3:3; G2:1; CA4; H/PE2; H/PE4