

A Familiar Face

Chapter One - by Kay Hively

Scotty Brown wiggled the strap on his backpack. The pack was heavy because it was loaded with books. He always brought books home from school, but today Scotty had extra homework so his load was heavy. Being weighed down with books made his walk up the alley seem longer than usual.

By the time he reached the back porch, Scotty was ready to sit down and rest. He removed the backpack and laid it on the porch. Then he noticed a familiar smell coming from the kitchen. The aroma of chocolate cake made Scotty forget his aching shoulder. He bounded into the house, leaving his backpack behind.

Sure enough, there on the kitchen table was a two-layer chocolate cake. A plate and fork were also on the table, and Scotty's mother was pouring milk into a glass.

On his mother's orders, Scotty washed his hands at the kitchen sink. Then he slid into a chair, ready for his after-school treat. Scotty was always hungry when he got home from school. Usually there were cookies or fruit to eat, but sometimes the snack would be his favorite - chocolate cake with chocolate frosting. And every day when he had his snack, he and his mother talked about school.

Almost forgetting his manners, Scotty dived into the cake and soon had his mouth full and his lips covered with creamy dark frosting.

After two big bites, the hunger pangs in Scotty's stomach went away, and he slowed down to enjoy the rest of his cake. Finally, his mother asked about school. That's when he told her about a special homework project he had to do on the weekend. And it was already Thursday.

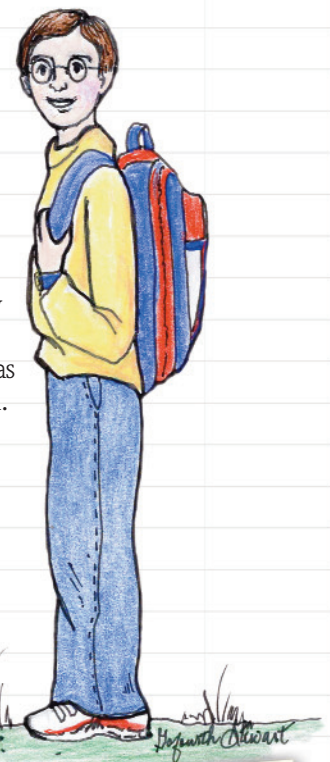
Mrs. Brown listened as Scotty talked about writing a research paper. He said he had brought home extra books from the library. He also asked if he could use his mother's computer if he needed more information.

Scotty's mother asked him what subject he would be researching. Scotty frowned. Then he said he had to write about President Harry Truman. He said he would rather write about baseball or airplanes or even another president like George Washington or Abraham Lincoln.

Mrs. Brown smiled and told her son that he would just have to do his best, even if he didn't like the subject his teacher had assigned. Then, as Mrs. Brown picked up the empty plate and the dirty fork, she smiled again and told Scotty that he might be surprised. President Truman, she said, might be more exciting than Scotty thought.

Scotty didn't think his mother was right, but he didn't say anything. He just rose from his chair and went out to get his backpack off the back porch.

Reading about a boring president was not going to be any fun, Scotty thought as he picked up his pack full of books. He was just sure it was going to be a long, boring weekend.



Author Kay Hively and Illustrator Billie Gofourth-Stewart are both of Neosho, Missouri. Truman photo by Harry Barth. Produced by the Missouri Press Foundation. Copyright 2007.

Things to Think About and Do

- Three Presidents are named in this chapter. Where was each of them born? What is unusual about President Truman's middle name?
- Using math skills, calculate how many days each man served as President of the United States. Make a list of all the men who served as the Vice President under these three Presidents. How many of these Vice Presidents also served as President?
- Look through the newspaper to find somebody in the news you think would make an interesting topic for a research paper. Write a list of all the things you learn about the person in the story.

Next Week: Chapter Two - A Familiar Face

Visit the Truman Presidential Museum & Library at www.trumanlibrary.org