

# **White House Mystery**

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*All aboard Juan; Mike, their van driver; Justin; Miss Lake, their teacher; Amy; and Lisa smile for the camera before taking off on their trip.*

When Miss Lake's seventh grade class entered the President's *See America the Beautiful* contest, they didn't think they had a chance to win. It was fun thinking they might, so everyone wrote and sent in a short essay on "What Do You Like Best About Being an American?"

They could hardly believe it when the letter came. It said: "The essays sent in by four members of your class were outstanding. These students have won a three-week trip across the United States with their teacher. All expenses will be paid."

The class clapped when Miss Lake finished reading the letter and Lisa, Amy, Justin, and Juan went home to pack their bags.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Hello, Washington!**

Mike stopped the van in front of a tall white pointed tower.

"Wow! How tall is that?" Justin asked.

"It is 555 feet high," Mike said. "The Washington Monument is the highest stone building in the world."

"It's named for George Washington, our first President. This city is named for him, too," said Miss Lake, their teacher and leader on the trip.

"I'm sure glad were here," Lisa said.

"It was a long ride in the van," said Justin.

"Can we go clear to the top?" Amy asked.

"Yes. There's and elevator. Let's go get in line," Miss Lake told the kids.

Everybody said goodbye to Mike. It felt good to get off the van. They had been riding all day.

"Look!" Lisa said. She pointed to a ring of flags. The flags were all around the monument.

"There are fifty of them. One for each state in our United States," Miss Lake said. "Follow me."

She and the kids lined up for the elevator.

"How old is the Washington Monument?"

Justin wanted to know.

"It was started in 1848," Miss Lake said.

"But money ran out. They had to stop building. It wasn't finished until 1884."

"That must have looked funny. Half a tower sitting there," Jaun laughed.

"Look, there's the Capitol down there." Miss Lake pointed to a large building. It had a high round top. It was at the far end of a long green lawn.

"Can we go in the Capitol building, too?" Juan asked.

"Yes. The Capitol has two parts. We will see them both. They are the House and the Senate. Many of our country's laws are made

there," said Miss Lake

Lisa was looking up at the tower. "I  
sometimes get sick in high places," she said.

"Just don't look down, Lisa," Amy said.

"And don't stand near me," Juan laughed.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **High Places**

"Look. Here's the elevator. Let's get in,"  
Justin said

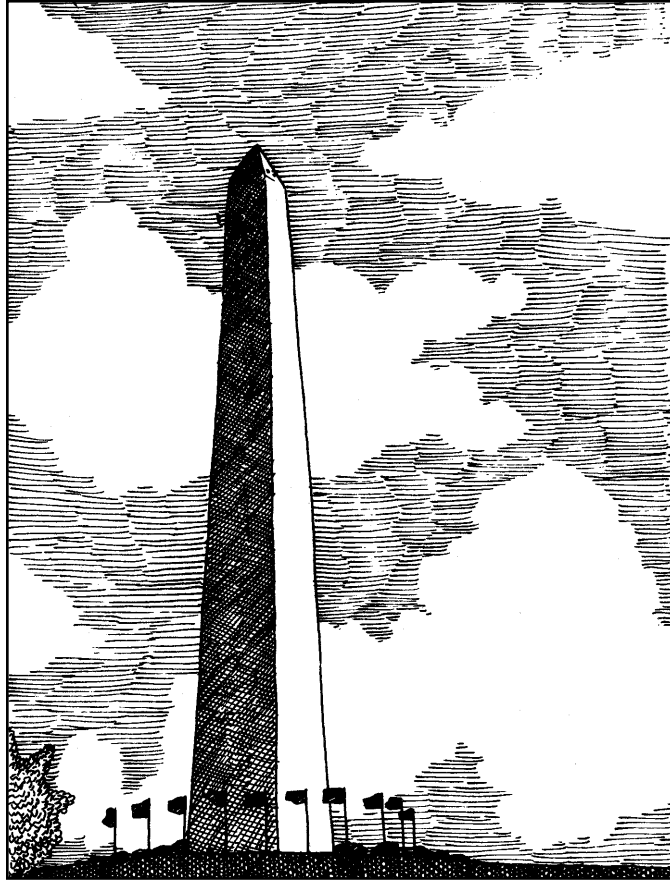
The elevator went up fast. The kids watched  
Lisa. She didn't look sick—yet.

Then they were at the top. Everybody got out  
of the elevator. There were windows all around  
them.

"Look how far you can see!" Justin said.

"I see the White House," Amy said

"And there's the Lincoln Memorial, too,"



*The Washington Monument—  
A Famous Landmark*

Miss Lake said. "We can walk there next."

Lisa stayed away from the windows. "I can see fine standing back here," she said.

"What's that building?" Justin asked Miss Lake.

"The one with the round top? That's the Jefferson Memorial," she said. "It is named for Thomas Jefferson. He wrote the Declaration of Independence in 1776. He also was President of our country later on."

"Washington is a beautiful place," said Amy. "I'm glad we came up here. Now we can see where everything is."

"Juan, do you feel OK? You look a little sick," said Miss Lake.

"Stand away from the windows," Amy said.

Juan didn't say anything. He went to stand beside Lisa.

"Let's start down now," Miss Lake said.

"We'll see the Lincoln Memorial next. Lisa and Juan, don't worry. No more high places today! I promise."

Lisa and Juan were the first ones to get on the down elevator.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **A Great Man**

"Why is Abraham Lincoln famous?" Miss Lake asked the kids.

"He freed the slaves," Lisa said. She was glad to be back on the ground.

"That's right. He said that one person cannot own another person. That was in 1865. He was a great President. People wanted to honor him. So they built this beautiful building." Miss Lake pointed to the Lincoln Memorial.



*"Four score and seven years ago . . ."*

"Is Lincoln buried inside there?" asked Lisa.

"No, he is buried in Springfield, Illinois. That is where he lived before he became President," said Miss Lake.

"Can we go up the stairs now?" Juan asked.

"Yes. Let's go," Miss Lake told the kids.

They all started up the stone stairs.

"I can see his statue inside," Justin said. "It's really big."

They stopped in front of Lincoln's statue. Everybody was quiet. They just looked up at it. The statue was of Lincoln sitting in a chair. He was looking out over the city.

"I bet that statue took a long time to carve,"  
Lisa said.

"It did. Six years," said Miss Lake.

"What kind of stone is it? Juan asked.

"It is white marble," Miss Lake said.

"Lincoln looks like he was really a kind  
man," Justin said.

"He almost looks alive," said Amy.

"Come and see this," Miss Lake said. She  
pointed to words carved into the walls.

"Did Lincoln say these words?" Justin  
asked.

"Yes. These words are from a speech he  
gave," Miss Lake said. "They say good things  
about freedom for all people."

"It's my turn to write the postcard back to school," Juan said. "I want to find one of the Lincoln Memorial."

"Good idea," said Miss Lake.

"Lincoln would be happy today," Juan said. "People have a lot more freedom."

"That's right, Juan. Lincoln helped people to get that freedom. You have heard of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He gave his famous speech right here," Miss Lake said. "I remember. I was here with my parents then."

"Was that speech call 'I have a dream'?" Justin asked.

"Yes," said Miss Lake. "He talked about more freedom for African-Americans. He picked

a good place for his speech, didn't he?"

"That's for sure," Juan said.

"I feel like whispering," Amy said. "It's as if Lincoln were really here."

"I feel the same way. Now I want to see Lincoln's bedroom in the White House," said Lisa.

"I don't think it's open," Miss Lake said.

"Why not?" Lisa asked.

"Some rooms are closed. Like the rooms for the President's family," said Miss Lake.

"But I want to see Lincoln's bed!" Lisa looked sad. "I heard it's very big."

"Buy a postcard of it," Justin said.

"Very funny. Who knows? Lincoln's room

might be open today after all!" Lisa smiled a secret smile.

"Come on, kids. There's our van," said Miss Lake.