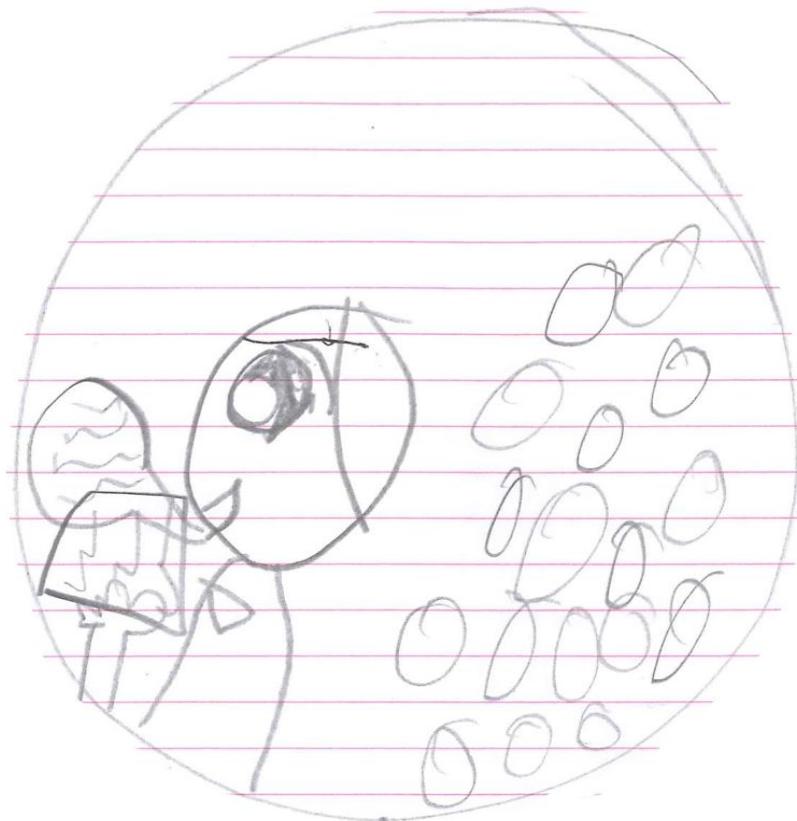


Following in the Footsteps to Freedom



A Magic Tree House story about the Freedom March

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Dedicated to:

Mom – for helping me along the journey of writing

Dad – for inspiring me to write this story

Justice – for All

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Chapter 1: A New Journey

It was a stuffy August night, and Jack was working late in the night on his assignment for writing camp.

“I don’t know what history story to write for my assignment,” groaned Jack.

“You could go to the house we saw yesterday with the free library with Mom’s permission,” Annie suggested. “Or you could just go outside. It always helps me.”

Jack went outside with his notebook in hand. He heard a noise above him. He looked up and saw an eagle circling the sky above him. The eagle was looking towards the muddy pond near their house. Jack looked to what the eagle might have been looking at and he saw two newly made footprints in the mud, along with the letters “K” and “T.” As soon as he saw them, he looked up to thank the eagle, but the eagle was already gone.

Jack sprinted back to tell Annie the news. When Annie heard this, she said, “Do you know what this means?”

Jack answered, “The magic tree house is finally back!”

Annie replied, “Not only that, but do you know what else it means?”

“It means that Kathleen and Teddy are waiting for us in the tree house!” answered Jack in delight.

Jack told their mom that they were going to the library together. Annie asked if they could get ice cream after going to the library.

“Sure honey,” replied their mom handing them some money. And with that, they took off running towards the Frog Creek woods.

When they got to the woods, they quickly found the tallest tree in the woods. In the window, Kathleen & Teddy were waving at them from the treehouse.

Kathleen said, “Come on up! We’re going to tell you about your next mission!”

Teddy said, “Today, you will go to New York, take the bus to Washington D.C., and experience one of the most important historical events in the struggle for civil rights in America.”

“What’s that?” asked Annie.

“Do you mean we’re going back in time to the March on Washington on August 28, 1963, when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his speech?” asked Jack.

“Indeed you are,” said Teddy. “Today, you will learn about how segregation can prevent many things such as friendship and happiness, and how civil rights have changed over the centuries,” said Kathleen.

“And here is your book,” Kathleen handed Annie a book called *Washington, D.C.: A Historic Walking Tour.*

“Interesting,” said Jack. He wrote in his notebook:

Historic important event in Civil Rights movement = Dr. King's speech

“Come on, let’s go!” said Annie. “Okay,” said Jack. Annie looked at the book and said, “I wish that we could go there.”

The wind started to blow.

The tree house started to spin.

It spun faster and faster.

Then everything was still.

Absolutely still.

Chapter 2: New Friends

Jack looked around and saw that the treehouse had landed in a grassy area under some trees. He was wearing a short-sleeved shirt with denim jeans. Annie was wearing a collared shirt, pleated plaid skirt, and a headband in her hair.

They looked around to see lush trees and gardens and tall buildings past that.

“I think we’re in Central Park!” said Jack, looking around. “That means we’re in New York City.”

“Yippee! I always wanted to visit New York City,” said Annie.

Jack and Annie gazed in wonder, and then they climbed down into the park. They were still looking up when Jack happened to bump into a black girl who looked about ten years old.

“Hey! Watch where you’re going!” scolded the girl.

“Sorry,” said Jack.

She said, “It’s okay, I’m fine. I’m Jessica. You can call me Jess if you would like to. And this is my younger brother:” Jessica said, pointing to a smaller black boy hiding behind her legs.

“My name is Johnny,” he said quietly.

They smiled and Jessica added, “You can call him John. What are your names?”

“My name is Annie, and this is my older brother, Jack.”

“Where are you going?” asked Jessica.

“We are going to the freedom march,” answered Jack.

“That’s where we are going!” squealed Johnny in delight.

“Yeah,” said Jessica. “Would you like to come with us?”

“Sure!” said Annie. “But, what is the Freedom March for?”

“The freedom march is for negroes to have the same rights as whites to be able to get jobs. It is to bring hope to negroes that one day they will have the same rights as whites,” replied Jessica.

“What does negroes mean?” asked Jack.

“Negroes are people with black skin,” said Jessica.

“We’ve never heard that word before. What do negroes want freedom from?” asked Annie.

“You’ve never heard the word ‘Negroes’?” said Jessica, surprised and confused.

“Oh, well, long ago, Negroes were slaves. We got freed, but we are still not treated fairly — negroes aren’t considered equal to white people. Negroes do not have the freedom to get the same jobs, eat at the same restaurants and go to the same schools as whites.”

“Oh,” said Annie sadly, “I feel bad for black peo- I mean, negroes.”

Jack whispered to Annie, “Negro is considered a bad word in our time.” and wrote,

Negro=bad word! Means African Americans.

“So let’s go fight for their freedom,” interrupted Annie.

“The march is in Washington, D.C., the capital of the United States, where we make all big governmental changes,” said Jessica. “And we’re going to take the bus there.”

“I have a couple more questions, but I can ask it once we are on the bus,” said Annie.

“Okay,” Jessica accepted.

Chapter 3: Bus Ride to D.C

When they got to the New York City bus terminal, Jessica checked her pockets and muttered, “Oh no! I can’t find my money. How am I going to buy tickets to DC?”

Annie overheard Jessica and remembered the money she had for her ice cream. “I might have some money,” she said. She pulled out four \$10 notes and handed it to Jessica. “Here you go. I think this is enough to buy four tickets, right?” she said.

“That’s a lot,” said Jessica, surprised. She took one \$10 note from Annie, bought four tickets and returned the change. “Thanks so much for buying our tickets, I’ll pay you back somehow, I promise,” she said handing Annie the change.

“Oh, no need,” Annie said quickly.

When they got on the bus, Johnny gave the tickets to the driver and pointed to four seats in the front row. “Let’s sit there!” he said.

“Great choice, Johnny,” said Jessica. “Good thing we’re not in the South,” she said under her breath.

“What did you say?” asked Annie.

“Oh, I said I’m thankful we are not in the South,” Jessica repeated. “There we would have to sit in the back.”

“Why?” said Jack.

“Well, that is because of Jim Crow Laws. These laws prevent black people from sitting in the front of the bus with white people. We also cannot swim in the same pool, drink from the same water fountain, eat at the same restaurants, and other things like that. In other words, we are segregated from white people.”

“What does *se-gru-gae-ted* mean?” questioned Annie.

“It means that there are different limitations depending on your skin color,” answered Jessica, “If your skin is of dark color, you are treated badly. Jack wrote:

Segregated= treated depending on the color of skin

“What is the Freedom March about?” asked Annie.

“It’s about being free and treated fairly so we won’t have to be separated anymore,” answered Jessica.

“I can’t wait,” said Annie.

“Oh, look, look! It’s the Statue of Liberty!” shouted Johnny. They all turned and saw the Statue of Liberty rising proudly above the water.

Later, all were silent as they listened to the lullaby made by the rain going pitter-patter, pitter-patter, pitter-patter, and they were all filled with wonder.

They wondered how long will it take to get to DC, how many people would be at the March, and what it was going to be like. They drifted off to sleep and were all lost in

their dreams except for Johnny, who was fidgeting with a “lucky” penny he had picked up near the bus terminal in New York.

Chapter 4: An Old Hero

Suddenly they work up to Johnny yelling, “We’re here!!! We’re here!!!”

“We’re where?” asked Annie in a sleepy voice.

“We’re finally in Washington DC! Hooray!” shouted Johnny.

“John, calm down,” whispered Jessica.

“What are we waiting for? I can’t wait to get to the march!” said Johnny. “Wake up, Jack and Annie! We have to get off the bus.”

“Okay, okay,” said Jack. And they all got off the bus at Union Station.

The station had a great domed ceiling and benches everywhere. It was a great bustling station and everyone seemed in a hurry to get to the door.

But after they got outside, they quickly realized they didn’t know how to get to the March. They decided to ask the two girls walking next to them for directions.

“Just come with us, we are going to the Freedom March too. And, by the way, my name is Maya, and this is my younger sister Zara. Who are you?” Maya asked in a curious tone of voice.

“I’m Annie, Jack, that’s Jessica, and that’s Johnny.”

Johnny asked, “Where are you from?”

“Our dad is from the land of Mahatma Gandhi and our mom is from Washington DC. So we live here,” Zara answered proudly.

“What is the land of Mahatma Gandhi?” asked Johnny.

Annie chimed in, “Who is he?”

“He was a small but powerful man in Indian history. He appeared very *ahimsa*,” said Zara.¹

“What does *ahimsa* mean?” Jack, Annie, Johnny and Jessica all wanted to know.

“*Ahimsa* means something-violence.” replied Zara shyly.

“Close, but no, that’s not what it means. It means *non-violence*,” said Maya.

Jack jotted down in his notebook:

Ahimsa= nonviolence

“What does nonviolence mean?” said Johnny.

“It means ...,” Jack thought for a couple moments. “Not hurting or killing people,” said Jack.

“That’s a nice way to put it,” complimented Maya.

“Thanks,” said Jack, blushing.

¹ Pronounced (*aw-him-saw*)

Chapter 5: A Long Story

While they were walking, Johnny and Zara starting entertaining each other with stories. Jessica overheard them and asked Jack, Annie, and Maya if they wanted to hear a story.

“A real story?” asked Annie, surprised.

“No, just one I have been thinking about writing,” replied Jessica, digging in.
“Here we go.”

Once upon a time in Mississippi, there was a group of clever black friends named Althea, Bernadette, William, and James. It was a warm day in early spring and they decided to go for a walk in the woods behind their neighborhood. While they were talking and walking, two pairs of eyes were spying on them from the bushes. As they talked, two figures slowly emerged from the bushes, and grabbed the friends by their arms.

“Come on, Henry, let’s get these people out of here,” one of them laughed evilly.
“You’re breaking the law,” they said together.

“But how?” Althea asked, scared.

“Because you are black and you are on a white person’s property,” Henry replied.

“We didn’t know that,” said William.

“Oh well!” doing a bad imitation of William’s voice. “Oh well! Now come with us, or you will be sorry,” growled Harry. Nervously, the four children followed the two policemen.

They were handcuffed and pushed into a car. They drove for a long time. When they stopped, they were in front of a humongous palace, or at least it looked like a palace to them. Once they got into the palace, they looked around. All around them were black people in cells with metal bars. They were shaking the bars in front of them wildly, and yelling, shouting, and crying.

“Are we going to prison?” asked Bernadette.

“P-p-p-p prison?” repeated William in a very frightened voice.

“You’re right!” replied Harry.

James heard that and started gagging.

“He’s going to throw up! He’s going to throw up!” shouted William as he rushed towards James.

“Oh no!” someone else screamed.

In the commotion, Henry dropped the ring of keys to the cells. Bernadette grabbed the ring and hid it in the pocket of her skirt.

Later, Bernadette took out the ring with the “keys to freedom” and showed it to Althea, William and James. She stuck her hands through the bars of the cell, found a key that fits the lock of their prison cell and unlocked it. Next they started unlocking the other cells with keys from the ring. Slowly, all the black people came out of their prison cell praising Bernadette for her cleverness. They tip-toed out of prison. Every time a guard would walk in, they would hide behind plants, poles, and even lamps.

They got to the door of the prison. A young woman, Julia Parks, was the one who was on the lookout for the guards. Unfortunately, she saw two tough-looking guards. There were Henry and Harry, standing guard.

“What should we do?” asked Julia in a concerned voice.

“Don’t worry, we’ll think of something,” replied Bernadette. All deep in thought, they made no sound, no sound at all. Suddenly, Althea and William started whispering something to the rest of the crowd. They nodded and started looking around. Then Julia picked up a rock and handed it to James. “Here!” she exclaimed quietly.

“Great,” said William excitedly.

Then, they put their plan into action. William threw the rock towards the back of the prison to distract Harry, Henry, and any other guards. It bounced off the wall and sailed past Harry’s ear. But, because he was very sensitive, he said, “Ouch, that hurts,” as he tumbled into Henry.

“The rock came from the prison gate.” said Harry. “Let’s go investigate. Are the prisoners trying to escape?”

“They are trying to escape. Let’s go get them!” Henry told Harry.

They found everyone running out. Another guard heard Henry and looked up to see the last of the prisoners running away.”

“What happened next?,” asked Jack anxiously.

“That’s as far as I have gotten,” replied Jessica with a laugh.

Chapter 6: Meeting the Others

To pass time as they were walking, Jessica started singing songs about freedom. As they were singing, they heard other voices joining in on singing “*Free at last, free at last / almighty justice to the world*”. Wondering who they were, she looked around and saw several groups of black people walking towards them.

When the groups met up, Jessica asked, “Where are you headed?”

“We are going to the march,” came the reply.

They all started walking towards Lincoln memorial. After a minute, Johnny got curious and asked six people in one of the groups to tell their names and stories. The first one said, “My name is Faith Walker. I’m 11 and I’m from Virginia. I want to be an artist when I grow up. And these are my friends from school: Chakaia Lawrence, Ellen Pindell, Hazel Bey, Lorna Pippen and Joshua Jones.”

“Hi,” said Chakaia. “I am 12 and my favorite thing is dancing.”

“Hello,” said Lorna. “I am 13 and I like to sing.”

“Heya,” said Joshua. “I am 16 and I like to play. I have a puppy at home.”

“How are you doing?” asked Ellen cheerfully. “I’m Ellen and I am 15. My favorite thing to do is knitting.”

“Hello,” asked Hazel happily. “I am 14 and I like to do math. Except I don't like school.”

Then there was a long silence and Johnny spoke up. “Well, why are you going to the March?”.

“Oh, hmm... we are going to the March on Washington because we want to fight for our freedom,” said Ellen.

“We saw a group of teenageers in Farmville, Prince Edward County, being arrested because they were protesting against school segregation,” said Joshua.

“We want to fight and be brave like them. We're willing to be put in jail because we're protesting.” Hazel replied bravely.

“Oh,” said Zara, who was nervous around teenagers.

As they continued walking, their throats felt dry and their legs got so sore that they almost tumbled, but they kept on walking. They all wished they were at the march already. Suddenly one of them shouted “Look, look!” Jack and Annie turned and saw one temporary fountain attached to a fire hydrant. This was good news for the group. The second they heard that, they all ran to the water fountain. They formed a straight line (a little curvy, actually) and, one by one, they took a turn.

When their throats felt better, they set out again. Excited, but not knowing what to expect, they kept walking together.

Breaking the silence, a kid in the crowd yelled, “Look, look, over there! There’s a crowd of folks eating lunch!”

Maya said thoughtfully, “I am *really* hungry...”.

“But where can we find food?” said Annie.

“We bought bagged lunches in New York for 50¢, didn’t you?” said Jessica.

“No, we didn’t,” said Annie, “but maybe we can ask those black people over there where they got food?”

Annie walked up to the crowd and asked a boy where he got his lunch

“You can buy a bagged lunch over at that stand,” said the boy.

“Cool,” said Annie, digging into her pocket. “I have some money. Jack, do you have money in your pocket?”

Putting his hand in his pocket, Jack said, “Yeah, I have some money, too.”

They went to the stand and bought bagged lunches. Each lunch had a cheese sandwich, mustard, marble cake and an apple. They enjoyed their lunches and continued marching.

Chapter 7: He Thinks

Elsewhere, there was a young man who was scheduled to speak at the March with several other important people. His name was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

He was an important figure in civil rights history who led nonviolent protests to fight for the rights of blacks and all people. Racism was so destructive and common that one of King's earliest memories was his ending his friendship with his best friend when his friend's mother announced, "Whites cannot play with blacks."

When he grew up, he got a Ph.D. (highest degree) in Theology, the study of religion. After that, he became a preacher in the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church of Montgomery, Alabama. During this time, Rosa Parks inspired Dr. King to become an activist. On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks refused to move to the back of the bus to let white people sit in her seat. The bus driver called the police and they arrested Rosa Parks.

Community leaders called upon everyone to not use buses (also called a *boycott*) on December 5. It worked so well that the community decided to form the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) and chose Dr. King to become its leader.

In his first speech as the group's president, King declared, "We have no alternative but to protest. For many years we have shown amazing patience. We have sometimes given our white brothers the feeling that we liked the way we were being treated. But we come here tonight to be saved from that patience that makes us patient with anything less than freedom and justice."

They decide to continue the boycott. On February 1, 1956, they also filed a complaint, called a lawsuit, in the U.S. District Court. Though the court agreed with the MIA, the city of Montgomery did not like the result and went to the highest court in the US, called the Supreme Court, to make the final decision. On December 20, 1956, the US Supreme Court ruled that segregation on buses was wrong, called illegal, and blacks could ride buses and sit anywhere.

With this success, Dr. King continued to march against segregation. Seven years later, in 1963, they still did not have justice. He knew that an important way to fight segregation was to use his powerful voice. So he wrote a speech for the March on Washington on August 28th, 1963. His speech was about how equality and justice, word and speech were important in changing the ways of the nation; and how segregation and fear, guns and weapons harmed the nation. He thought that all of the founding fathers of America had signed a promise to the present and future citizens of America that all men, no matter the color of skin, were to have the right to a happy, free, and fair life. He knew that America did not keep its promise to its black citizens.

He had a dream — which was not part of his speech at the time.

He knew it was time to act now. Not tomorrow, not next week, or next month. Today was the day to act. He wanted blacks to change the ways of America so that they were just as free and as fairly treated as whites. He wanted them to go to the same hotels as whites without being told to get out. He wanted the police to stop hurting them. He wanted blacks all across America to speak up and vote. He wanted them to not worry about things that whites didn't have to worry about. He wanted blacks to be proud, not afraid, of living in America.

This was his dream.

Chapter 8: Marching Adventures

On the way to the march, the group got split up at an intersection. Most of the men and boys walked on Pennsylvania Avenue not noticing that Jack, Johnny, and all of the women and girls were going down Independence Avenue. By the time they realized that most of the group was gone, the group that went down Independence Avenue was far away from the intersection.

As they continued walking down Independence Avenue they saw a group of women marchers who Jack and Annie did not recognize yet.

Suddenly one black child exclaimed, “Is that Rosa Parks?” pointing to a black woman in the crowd. When Rosa Parks heard her name, she turned around and saw Jack, Annie, Jessica, Jonny, Myra, Zara, Peter and the others.

She said, “You’re right, I’m Rosa Parks and these are my friends - Josephine Baker, Dorothy Height, Mahalia Jackson. What are your names? Where are you from?” Jack and Annie and friends introduced themselves and they all marched together.

Jack and Annie started marching next to Rosa Parks, and started up a conversation with her. “Why did that kid recognize you?” asked Annie.

“Annie, that was rude!” Jack whispered, although he himself had the same question.

Rosa smiled warmly and said, “That’s okay, children. I asked a lot of things that were considered rude when I was a kid. And now your question—”.

The person marching on the other side of them cut her off, by saying, “Do you really not know who Rosa Parks is? She’s the one who refused to give up her seat in the “colored” section to a white passenger after the “whites only” section of the bus was filled up with passengers.”

“Oh, wow!” said Annie, and she and Jack continued walking. Jack scribbled down:

Rosa Parks= Brave and persevering

Chapter 9: The Speeches

Jack, Annie, Maya, Zara and their black friends finally joined the marchers at the Washington Monument. They saw an ocean of people walking to the Lincoln Memorial from the Washington Monument. They were black and white, young and old. Many were holding signs, some of which said 'We march for first class citizenship now!', 'We demand equal rights now!', 'End segregated rules in public schools!' and 'We demand an end to police brutality!'

As they got closer to the Lincoln Memorial, they were greeted by the familiar beginning notes of the national anthem. They saw that the national anthem was sung by the famous singer, Marian Anderson. They were also greeted by waves of heat. They saw sweat running down the faces of the unfamiliar crowd and noticed that there were smiles and nervous looks on some faces.

The opening remarks were done by A. Philip Randolph, head of the march. "I will work to make sure that my voice and those of my brothers ring clear and determined from every corner of our land." Philip Randolph held the microphone as he spoke the pledge. He saw the black children in the crowd, and that encouraged him to speak louder. As Jack and Annie listened, they heard some pretty interesting speeches. One speech they found interesting was called 'Tribute to the Negro Women Fighters for Freedom' by Daisy Bates, who helped Little Rock integrate an Arkansas High School.

Her 142-word speech was about how women should speak up to get the rights that they wanted.

The last speech was the most famous of all, by Martin Luther King, Jr. It was famous because Dr. King took Mahalia Jackson's advice and told the crowd about his dream.

His dream was about how he wanted to have a future in which "people would not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character". He wanted to live in a world where people did not have to worry about being beaten up and chased by dogs. He wanted to live in a peaceful place where everybody (including blacks) would be able to walk down a street without finding somebody waiting to beat them up. He wanted to live in a place where everybody had equal rights. He wanted to live where nobody would have to live in fear and everybody would choose their own destiny.

He wanted to be able to see "the sons of former slaves and sons of former slave owners sit down together at a table of brotherhood." But he knew that this would only happen if everyone would stand together and act, not with violence but with peace.

Jack's favorite part was how he talked about the Emancipation Proclamation. Jack thought that was important because Dr. King was educating people about the importance of equal rights. Jack's other favorite part was how Dr. King talked about what America still has to do to honor its promises. He thought that was important because Dr. King was educating people about how you can make a promise, but that is

different from keeping a promise. He shared how blacks had still not been freed from oppression, and how the people could change that. Jack wrote in his notebook:

Importance of equal rights = make AND keep a promise

Dr. King said, “Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.”

Chapter 10: Meeting with Martin

After the speech was finished, everyone started making their way home. In the crowd, Jack and Annie lost sight of their friends.

“I wonder where our friends went?” said Annie.

Jack and Annie were weaving in and out of the crowds towards the bus station. When they arrived there, there was a long line at the ticket booth. When Jack and Annie got to the front of the line, they handed three \$1 notes to the ticket agent. The agent handed Jack two tickets and the change. There were a lot of buses waiting to go to cities across the country. Jack and Annie chose two empty seats in the front row on bus #37 going to New York, and sat down.

“Hello, children, what brought you to Washington DC?” asked a voice on the other side of the aisle.

“Dr. King? Jack, are you seeing what I am seeing?” Annie asked, surprised.

Jack stammered, “Yes, I do.”

“Why, yes, I’m Dr. King,” he said with a smile. “And who might you be?”

“I’m Jack and over there, that’s my sister, Annie,” stuttered Jack, stunned that he was having a conversation with the impressive Dr. King.

“Well, Jack and Annie, nice to meet you. Where do you come from? And what brings you here?”

“We came here for the March,” said Annie.

“Wonderful,” said Dr. King. “What did you learn?”

Jack said, “Even though they are free, blacks are not equal yet. 100 years ago, the Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln declared that all slaves were free but that didn’t say they were to be treated fairly. Later, blacks could not share community property with whites. For example, they could not drink from the same water fountains as whites. Until recently they could not sit in the same section of the bus as whites, or could not go to the same schools as whites. Even though the laws have changed to allow black and white people to share, they are still not treated fairly and—”.

Annie broke in, “Fairly and freely are very different things.”

Jack continued, “At the March, we heard that blacks want to be treated equally so they can get jobs and have better lives. Also, it is better to fight with words than fists. But sometimes it is hard to control tempers, when our family members or friends are treated badly. Think about what would happen to society if you got into a fight, before you get into a fight, so you can make a good decision.”

“And what was your favorite part of the day, young lady?” Dr. King said with a twinkle in his eye.

Annie said, “I liked your speech a lot.”

“What was your favorite part of that speech?” asked Dr. King.

Jack jumped in. “I liked how it was informational and emotional.”

Dr. King asked Annie, “But what was your favorite part of the speech?”

Annie said, “I liked how it was made to give black people hope.”

“What was the part that you considered the most hopeful?” asked Dr. King.

“I think I really liked the part where you talked about the promise Americans haven’t kept yet,” said Annie. “You were so confident and really showed that you believe you can change the laws that segregate blacks from whites.”

“I am glad that the march changed your point of view. Where are you from, Jack and Annie?” says Dr. King.

“Umm... Well, a long time ago, we were playing in the woods when ...” and Jack stopped talking.

After a long period of silence, Dr. King smiled and said, “Sometimes there are things that are best left unexplained. Those are the most exquisite things in life.”

After their conversation with Dr. King and a long day, Jack and Annie dozed off. They woke up to the bus driver yelling, “Last stop, New York Bus Terminal.”

“Thanks,” said Jack to the bus driver. He looked over to where Dr. King had been sitting, but the seat was empty. *Did we just have a conversation with Dr. King? he wondered silently. Or was it all just a dream?*

Chapter 11: Home, Please

Annie hailed a taxi and asked, “How much to Central Park?”

“Dollar fifty,” was the cab driver’s reply. Jack and Annie hopped aboard and closed the door behind them. The cab engine started with a hum and the cab raced towards Central Park. Once they got to Central Park, Jack looked up and saw the treehouse.

“Right here,” said Jack, and paid the cab driver. They got out of the cab, waited until he was gone, and then climbed up into the treehouse.

Annie picked up the Frog Creek Wood book and said, “I dream of going home to a time without segregation.”

Then the wind began to blow.

The treehouse started to spin.

It spun faster and faster.

Then everything was still.

Absolutely still.

Jack and Annie walked home silently. Finally, Annie broke the silence. “I’m glad that we live in a time without segregation.”

Jack replied, “Yeah. We’re really lucky.”

Annie said, “I wonder if black people finally became equal with white people.”

“I wonder how. I’ll get some books from the library and research that when we get home.” Jack thought for a moment. “Hey, that’s what I can base my writing camp assignment on!”

“Great idea, Jack!” said Annie.

And together, they took off running towards the library.