



A Field Trip to Remember

By Lois Lewis

NARRATOR 1:

It's almost 9 a.m. The students in Mr. Canvas's class have just boarded a school bus for a field trip to the local art museum. Allie is sitting next to her classmate and friend Scott.

ALLIE: (groaning)

Ugh! Here we go on another boring field trip.

SCOTT:

Yeah. We'll spend the whole day looking at a bunch of old pictures

ALLIE:

I wish just once we could go to a place where something exciting or unusual happens.

SCOTT:

Look on the bright side -- at least we have a day away from schoolwork!

NARRATOR 2:

A half hour later, the bus arrives at the museum. After leaving the vehicle, the class stops at the main desk to meet the museum guide.

MR. CANVAS:

Students, please greet our guide for today, Ms. Watercolor.

STUDENTS (in unison):

Good morning, Ms. Watercolor.

MS. WATERCOLOR:

Hello everyone! Welcome to the museum. We're going to see many types of art today, so let's get started! If you'll follow me, we'll go to our first exhibit, which features oil paintings from the 19th century.

NARRATOR 1:

Allie and Scott look at each other and roll their eyes. As the class sets off to view the first exhibit, the two friends linger at the back of group, whispering to each other.

NARRATOR 2:

Allie and Scott are so distracted by their conversation, however, they don't realize they have turned in the opposite direction from the rest of the class. Suddenly, they hear a voice they think is Ms. Watercolor's.

VOICE:

This way please.

NARRATOR 1:

As Allie and Scott turn toward the voice, a door shuts behind them, frightening them.

SCOTT: (voice shaking)

Allie, wh-where are we? Where's the rest of our class?

NARRATOR 2:

Suddenly a dog and a pony appear.

MILLIE THE SPRINGER SPANIEL:

Don't be afraid. I'm Millie, the Springer Spaniel, and this Macaroni, the Pony. We're the guides for the Presidential Pets Portrait Gallery.

ALLIE: (puzzled)

Huh? What's the Presidential Pets Portrait Gallery?

MACARONI THE PONY:

In this hall, you will see pictures of all the pets that lived in the White House. For example, here's Millie's portrait. She was one of the George Herbert Walker Bush's dogs.

MILLIE THE SPRINGER SPANIEL:

And here's Macaroni's portrait. He was the pony who belonged to Caroline Kennedy, the daughter of John F. Kennedy. Come along with us and we'll show you more of our friends.

NARRATOR 1:

Allie and Scott's fear quickly turns to curiosity.

SCOTT: (to Allie)

Hey, what have we got to lose? Let's go.

MILLIE THE SPRINGER SPANIEL: (pointing to the next picture)

These pictures show Socks the Cat and Buddy the Labrador Retriever. They were Bill Clinton's pets.

SOCKS THE CAT:

I was the President's favorite pet.

BUDDY LABRADOR THE RETRIEVER:

No, he liked me best!

MILLIE THE SPRINGER SPANIEL:

Stop it! Those two -- they're always arguing.

MACARONI THE PONY:

Here's Liberty, Gerald Ford's Golden Retriever.

LIBERTY THE GOLDEN RETRIEVER: (extending her paw)

Delighted to meet you! I hope you enjoy our exhibit.

MACARONI THE PONY:

That Liberty! She's such a friendly member of our gallery.

MILLIE THE SPRINGER SPANIEL:

This is Fala, the Scottish Terrier. He was one of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's dogs. Fala was so popular he had a secretary to answer his mail!

FALA THE SCOTTISH TERRIER:

A movie was made about me too!

MILLIE THE SPRINGER SPANIEL:

That's right, Fala. He was quite famous in his time.

NARRATOR 2:

As the group continues down the hall, Allie notices two sections with many portraits grouped together.

ALLIE:

Those two presidents must have had their own zoos!

MACARONI THE PONY:

You might say that. Calvin Coolidge and Theodore Roosevelt each had many pets. Coolidge's pets included dogs, cats, birds, raccoons, a bobcat, and lion cubs. Roosevelt's animals included horses, snakes, bears, lizards, and rats!

SCOTT:

Wow!

ALLIE: (pointing to another picture)

There were sheep at the White House?

MILLIE THE SPRINGER SPANIEL:

Yes! Woodrow Wilson reduced the cost of maintaining the grounds by using sheep to cut the grass.

GROUP OF SHEEP:

BAA!

ALLIE:

How about that! Sheep as lawnmowers!

SCOTT:

Were there any Presidents who didn't have pets?

MACARONI THE PONY:

Yes, there were a few, including Chester A. Arthur, Franklin Pierce, and Millard Fillmore.

ALLIE:

Scott, check out this alligator.

MILLIE THE SPRINGER SPANIEL:

That alligator belonged to John Quincy Adams. His wife, Louisa, had silkworms.

NARRATOR 1:

Suddenly the alligator in the picture snaps at Allie and Scott.

MACARONI THE PONY: (whispering)

Don't get too close to that guy. He's not very sociable. Let's move on.

MILLIE THE SPRINGER SPANIEL:

Here are the last pictures, which show the pets of George Washington.

SCOTT:

The first president had pets too?

MACARONI THE PONY:

Sure! Washington had many horses, a parrot, and dogs, including five French hounds.

FIVE FRENCH HOUNDS:

Bonjour! That's French for "hello."

MACARONI THE PONY:

Well, that concludes our tour.

MILLIE THE SPRINGER SPANIEL:

We hoped you enjoyed your visit to our gallery.

ALLIE and SCOTT: (together)

We did! We did! Thank you so much!

NARRATOR 2:

A door slides open and Allie and Scott find themselves back with their class at the main desk.

SCOTT:

That was a neat exhibit!

ALLIE:

Yeah, I . . .

NARRATOR 1:

Allie turns around as she begins to speak. She grabs Scott's arm and points. The pet gallery is gone! Their jaws drop in disbelief.

ALLIE: (to Scott)

Well, I can't say that nothing unusual ever happens on field trips!

NARRATOR 2:

Allie and Scott board the bus with their classmates. Mr. Canvas talks to the class during the trip back to school.

MR. CANVAS:

I hope everyone had a great time! It certainly was a fascinating museum.

SCOTT: (whispering to Allie)

If he only knew.

MR. CANVAS:

Tomorrow, we'll begin our unit on U.S. Presidents. Does anyone know an interesting fact about a President?

NARRATOR 1:

Allie and Scott raise their hands.

ALLIE:

Woodrow Wilson kept sheep to eat the grass at the White House.

SCOTT:

And John Quincy Adams had a pet alligator.

MR. CANVAS:

That's right! How did you two become such Presidential experts?

ALLIE:

We . . . we saw a special program about the Presidents' pets.

NARRATOR 2:

They both smile as the bus arrives at the school building.

