



Kat McGee Saves America
By Kristin Riddick

CHAPTER 1: Summer Bummer

Vocabulary Words: indelible, self-esteem, accomplished, ambassador, responsibility, pretentious, menaced, logical, curmudgeon, regal, tyrannical, sauntered, snide, serendipitous, plethora, reluctantly, betrayed

Discussion Questions:

1. What does Kat McGee love most about summer? _____

2. What is Kat’s unfortunate nickname, and how did she get it? _____

3. How many brothers and sisters does Kat have? _____
4. What made Kat feel like she belonged among her accomplished siblings? _____

5. What does “too big for her britches” mean? _____

6. A lot of kids didn’t believe Kat when she told stories about her adventures. Have you ever been told that you “made something up”, or been called a liar? If so, how did it make you feel? _____

7. "Anjali was a good friend who didn't care what other kids said about Kat." What lesson did Anjali remind Kat of? _____

8. What grade is Kat in? _____

9. What responsibilities would the student ambassador be in charge of? _____

10. Who was the only person standing between Kat and her rightful position as POFF student ambassador? _____

11. Describe Roman Rule. _____

12. Who was Kat's only unconditional ally? _____

13. Emily told Kat not to be a "sore loser." Do you think Kat is being a sore loser? Explain. _____

14. According to Gram, what makes magic? _____

15. Where is Gram taking all of the kids, and why? _____

Activities:

Create a character journal that includes three columns: Character Name, Facts and Characteristics, and Portrait. Each time you meet a new character, add their name to the journal. As you read and get to know each of them, list details about their lives, their families, their physical characteristics, and their personality traits. Then draw a portrait of each character.

Create a flyer, or brochure, advertising the 4th of July Festival. Use the description in this chapter to include as many events and details as possible.

The American Heroine float would carry people dressed as Sacajawea, Susan B. Anthony, and Betsy Ross. Label an index card for each of these American heroines. On one side of the index card paste or draw a picture of the heroine, and on the other side of the index card list 5 interesting facts about her, or reasons why she is an American heroine.

Social Studies connection: The Revolution float would have a Paul Revere impersonator. Dress up as Paul Revere and recite *The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere* by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in front of your class, or family.

Science connection: The Moon Landing Float would display a fake meteor shower made with sparklers. Create your own model of a meteor shower using something other than sparklers, and present it to your class.

CHAPTER 2: Libertyland

Vocabulary Words: quizzically, throng, renovation, mischievous, gravitated, effervescence, threshold, stoic, hence, apparition, inconceivable, orator, expectantly

Discussion Questions:

1. “Everyone was mad at Kat and on a short fuse.” What does “short fuse” mean? _____

2. When Kat realizes that her ticket is different than everyone else’s, what does Gram tell her? _____

3. When Kat inserts her ticket into the mysterious door and is transported into an empty room, who is standing there to meet her? _____

4. What is the All-American Girls Baseball League? _____

5. What is Libertyland? _____

What does *living museum* mean? _____

6. What is wrong in the Revolutionary War room? _____

7. Why is it so important for Kat to help find Thomas Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence? _____

8. Who do you think is to blame for the disappearance of Thomas Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence? _____

Activities:

Kat said that Liberty was “the tallest woman she had ever seen.” How tall is the actual Statue of Liberty? _____

Using mossy, green colored clay, sculpt your own replica of the Statue of Liberty.

“Willie Mays, Jackie Robinson, and Ty Cobb were eating a hot dog on a set of bleachers.” Read some history about each of these baseball players; then, construct a conversation that they would have been having together on the bleachers. Act out the conversation for your class.

Create a guidebook for Libertyland. As Liberty leads Kat through each room of the living museum, write down and describe all of the events, icons, foods, and music that she encounters. For example, your “American Baseball” page would include facts and descriptions about Babe Ruth, Joe DiMaggio, Willie Mays, Ty Cobb, Hank Aaron, Jackie Robinson, and the All-American Girls Baseball League; and your “Wild West” page would include facts and descriptions about Will Rogers, John Wayne, Gene Autry, and Buffalo Bill. Create a page for each room of the museum.

CHAPTER 3: Liberty's Looking Bell

Vocabulary List: luminous, bleak, democracy, snarky, improbable

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the looking bell? _____

2. Who is Rulerwink? _____

3. What does Miss Libby's Spanish name, Libertad, mean in English? _____

4. What are the two things that Kat knows for sure? _____

5. Who does Rulerwink remind Kat of? _____

Activities:

Draw a picture depicting July 4, 2029 in Rulerworld using the description in this chapter.

In this chapter, Kat says that if she “had not helped Dolce because she was nervous or not ridden the sleigh because she was scared, none of those adventures would have happened! She never would have been able to meet Cookie Crocodile in the Swamp of Sorrows. She and Sadie Claus never would have saved Santa from Scoogie sending him to the South Pole!” If you haven't already, read the other books in the Kat McGee series, *Kat McGee and the Halloween Costume Caper* and *Kat McGee and the School of Christmas Spirit*, and learn about Kat's other wildly imaginative adventures.

CHAPTER 4: Through the Chalkboard of Change

Vocabulary List: prevail, stature, angular, spindly, civilized

Discussion Questions:

1. What does *infamy* mean? _____

2. Which date and event did Kat want to know more about? _____

3. Describe what you think “three days of peace and music” would be like. _____

4. What can the *Chalkboards of Change* do? _____

Activities:

Keep a timeline starting from 1492 – present day and fill in all of the important dates and events that are mentioned in the story. Include two interesting facts about each event.

CHAPTER 5: An Enlightened Journey

Vocabulary List: enlightened, ornate, indecent, stern, petticoats, parasols, tailcoats, urgency, contend, gravely, rebellion,

Discussion Questions:

1. Where is Kat at the beginning of this chapter? _____

2. Why hadn't the little boy that Kat met ever shaken a girl's hand before? _____

3. Kat felt like a "fish out of water." What does this saying mean? _____

4. Why did John get in trouble? _____

5. Why does Kat think that it is so cool that the dress John got for her came from Betsy Ross? _____

6. Who is John's father? _____

7. Why does JQ want to help Kat? _____

Activities:

Research John Quincy Adams' life (<http://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/john-quincy-adams>) and create a presentation on his road to the Presidency. Include facts about his early life and his career as a diplomat and politician.

CHAPTER 6: Continental What?

Vocabulary List: diligently, incredulously, wavered, prudent, decipher, culprit, provisions, paraphernalia, distraught, sentimental, inquisitive, dutiful, pertinent,

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the Continental Congress, and why does JQ care so much about it? _____

2. Where had Kat seen Benjamin Franklin's face before? _____

3. What is Rulerwink's plan? _____

4. What do you think Rulerwink's cryptic message means, and where do you think he is hiding Thomas Jefferson? _____

5. Who is JQ's friend that they are going to find, and why do you think he'll be helpful to them? _____

Activities:

Research Benjamin Franklin's many inventions, discoveries, and improvements (<http://www.ushistory.org/franklin/info/inventions.htm>) and create a PowerPoint presentation that includes a slide for each.

CHAPTER 7: The Second Midnight Ride of Paul Revere

Vocabulary List: rustic, commodity, famished, ironic, gruesome, flippantly, dapper, intrigued, furrowed, chutzpah, traitorous, laboriously, toiled, interject, perplexed, convenes, predicament

Discussion Questions:

1. Why does Kat think that summer in 1776 would be boring? _____

Do you agree, or disagree with her? Explain. _____

2. What is the Freedom Fort, and what is it used for? _____

3. Why does JQ believe that Paul Revere is the only adult who will help them? _____

4. How has Paul Revere helped the cause? _____

5. Why does Kat wish that she had asked for an iPhone for Christmas? _____

Activities:

Using a Venn diagram, compare and contrast life in 1776 to life today.

Visit The Paul Revere House (<http://www.paulreverehouse.org/ride/>) to learn more about Paul Revere's famous midnight ride.

CHAPTER 8: A Spell at the State House

Vocabulary List: instinctively, persevere, disintegrated, confronting, fraud, gaunt, stupor, immense,

Discussion Questions:

1. Explain what Thomas Jefferson meant by the following statements.

“Action is what defines us.” _____

“We must persevere, but remain calm. Nothing gives one person so much advantage over another as to remain always cool and unruffled under all circumstances.” _____

“One man, or woman, in this case, with courage is a majority.” _____

Activities:

Research famous quotes made by Thomas Jefferson. Which one is your favorite, and why? _____

Create a poster illustrating the differences between a monarchy and a democracy.

CHAPTER 9: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Romulus

Vocabulary List: combative, tyrant, alchemist, concocted, respect, compromise, dignity

Discussion Questions:

1. Why did Romulus devise this evil plan? _____

2. Kat knew what it felt like to want recognition. Have you ever been in a position, or situation, where you wanted recognition and didn't get it? Explain. _____

3. What does Romulus Rulerwink say in this chapter to prove that he is not a man of strong character or integrity? _____

4. How does JQ define *freedom*? _____

5. As she listened to Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, what did Kat realize about herself and her own behavior? _____

6. What lesson did Kat learn? _____

7. What vision did the Founding Fathers have for this nation? _____

Activities:

Research The Declaration of Independence. Find out who helped draft it, how long it took to draft it, what the five different sections of the draft are called, and what it says and means. Present your findings.

Discussion: Why do you think it is essential for a country to have a document such as the Declaration of Independence that states, in great detail, the intentions of its citizens and governing bodies?

CHAPTER 10: Trapped in Time

Vocabulary List: translucent, spectacle, worrisome, conviction, solidarity, poppycock, admonished, skeptical, presume, dictated, intuitive, emblematic, maturity, principle

Discussion Questions:

1. As Kat is trying to get the magic torch to work, she feels the pressure of everyone looking at her and waiting for her to make something happen. Have you ever been in a situation where you have felt that same kind of nervous pressure? Explain. _____

2. What are the most important values that the Declaration of Independence represents?

3. What finally made the torch work? _____

4. When Thomas Jefferson says, “Miss McGee, our future is in great hands if you are emblematic of the children of your era”, what does he mean? _____

5. What lessons did Kat teach Mr. Jefferson and the others? _____

CHAPTER 11: A New and Improved Living Museum

Vocabulary List: nimbly, reformed, wondrous, nondescript

Discussion Questions:

1. When Kat asks Thomas Jefferson about his wellbeing, he says that he is feeling “fit as a fiddle.” What does this saying mean? _____

2. What did Rulerwink invent years after his encounter with Kat? _____

Why was his reason for inventing it? _____

3. What did Rulerwink learn? _____

Activities:

Pretend that you are Kat McGee and write thank you notes to Gram, Thomas Jefferson, Rulerwink, and JQ, thanking each of them for the lessons they taught to you throughout this great adventure.

As a class, create your own living museum. Each student should choose a historical person or event that was mentioned in the book to represent. Dress up as that person, or a person from that event, and recite dialogue indicative of that person or time. Be sure to include key facts and information to share with your peers. Present your living museum in the school library so that other classes can take a tour, and learn about America!

CHAPTER 12: Fireworks in Totsville

Vocabulary List: subdued, minions, distraught, snidely, composure, nemesis, dispersed,

Discussion Questions:

1. How did Kat McGee and Roman Rule both end up working on the Totsville Parade of Floats and Fireworks? _____

2. Who is Roman Rule's distant relative? _____

3. What is the overall theme of this book? _____

4. What was your favorite part of Kat's adventure? _____

5. What lesson did Kat McGee learn about the 4th of July holiday? _____

Activities:

Kat McGee Fact Checker: Research the following details that the author, Kristin Riddick, included in this story, and decide whether each detail is Fact or Fiction.

1. The American History Museum, where Gram takes Kat McGee and her siblings, is located at the Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia.

2. John Quincy Adams grew up and became the 6th President of the United States.

3. The Freedom Fort, where Rulerwink holds Thomas Jefferson hostage, is a real place located outside of Philadelphia. _____

4. JQ got Kat McGee a dress to wear from Betsy Ross. Betsy Ross worked as a seamstress who mended uniforms. _____

5. JQ and Kat McGee sought out help from Paul Revere. John Quincy Adams and Paul Revere were family friends. _____

6. Romulus Rulerwink was the first to invent glue. _____

7. Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Romulus is a play on the phrase “Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”, which is a famous phrase taken directly from the Declaration of Independence. In 1776, the phrase was meant to give examples of rights that every man had been given upon birth, and lists those rights that should be protected by the government. _____

8. The American Revolution was almost over when the Declaration of Independence was signed. _____

9. Thomas Jefferson and John Adams worked together to draft the Declaration of Independence, but later campaigned against each other for the office of President of the United States. _____

10. The Declaration of Independence was stolen by the British in 1776 two days before it was meant to be signed. _____

Fact Checker Answers:

1. Fiction, the National Museum of American History is in Washington, DC.
2. Fact
3. Fiction, There is no Freedom Fort outside of Philadelphia.
4. Fact, Betsy Ross did work for an upholsterer and was married to one, her husband John Ross. She was also a seamstress who mended uniforms and was a flag maker.
5. Fiction, It is doubtful that Paul Revere ever would have had an occasion to meet John Quincy Adams.
6. Fiction, The first glue patent was issued in 1750 in Britain. It is unclear when it was first brought to the United States.
7. Fiction, at this time period, the intended meaning was for every white man, as all African Americans were not given their freedom until after the Civil War, almost 100 years later, and women were not given the right to vote until 1920.
8. Fiction, The Revolution didn't begin in earnest until after the signing of the Declaration of Independence
9. Fact, In 1800 Thomas Jefferson defeated Adams and became president. This was the first peaceful transfer of authority from one party to another in the history of the young nation.
10. Fiction, thankfully!