

A Letter to Lincoln

Characters: *Narrators 1-4 Grace Mother Levant Father*

Jennie Abraham Lincoln Mr. Mann

Narrator 1: A long time ago in the United States of America, life was very different. People used to own slaves. Women weren't allowed to vote, and railroad travel was the fastest way of getting around.

Narrator 2: Our story takes place in the fall of 1860. A man named Abraham Lincoln was running for president. Grace Bedell and her brother Levant wait with their mother for their father to return from a nearby fair. They are at their home in Westfield, New York.

Grace: Mother, mother! When will Father be home from the fair?

Mother: He'll be home soon, Grace. Your father is doing important work. He's busy rallying support for Abraham Lincoln.

Grace: I know, but Father said he would bring me a surprise!

Mother: Grace! Can't you think of anything other than presents?

Levant: If Lincoln is elected president, our country might be split in two.

Grace: Why would that happen? I think Lincoln is a good man.

Mother: Lincoln wants to stop slavery. Some people agree with him, but others want to keep their slaves.

Grace: It can't be right for one person to own another person.

Mother: No, it isn't. That's why your father is voting for Lincoln.

Father: I'm back! Is anyone home?

Grace: Father!

Father: I've brought presents for everyone!

Mother: Come sit down; dinner's almost ready.

Father: All right, but first let me give Grace her present. Here it is, Grace. I brought you one of Lincoln's campaign posters!

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Grace Bedell Readers Theatre

Grace: Oh, Father, thank you! I love it!

Narrator 3: The family was excited to hear Father's stories about the fair. They talked about it over dinner.

Levant: What did you see at the fair, Father?

Father: There were many politicians giving speeches, and people shouting about who they wanted to become president.

Grace: How many people are trying to be president?

Mother: There are four candidates: Abraham Lincoln, John Bell, Stephen Douglas, and John Breckinridge.

Levant: Yes, funny-looking old Abraham Lincoln! He doesn't look like a president to me.

Grace: I think he's very handsome! He's just thin.

Levant: Well, you're a girl! It's not like you can actually vote!

Grace: Levant is so mean! Lincoln isn't funny looking, but his face is so thin! Maybe if he grew a beard. Wait, that's it. He should grow a beard! Then he'd be even more handsome! I'll write a letter to tell him.

Narrator 4: Grace walked to school the next morning. She was excited. She couldn't wait to tell her friend Jennie about the poster and the letter she would write.

Jennie: Hi, Grace! What's that you're carrying?

Grace: It's Mr. Lincoln's campaign poster. Look.

Jennie: My father says he's voting for Mr. Lincoln.

Grace: So does mine. I wish I could vote!

Jennie: Mr. Lincoln's trying to end slavery so everyone will have equal rights. Maybe someday women will be able to vote!

Grace: I hope so. Jennie, I had an idea last night! My brother was teasing me and saying that Lincoln was funny looking.

Jennie: Well, he is awfully skinny.

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Grace: I know. I think he'd look much better if he had a beard!

Jennie: Hmm... You're right! His face wouldn't look so thin.

Grace: I'm going to write to him and tell him!

Jennie: What? You can't do that! He's too important. He doesn't have time to read letters from girls like us.

Grace: I hope he'll read it! I'm going to write it today after school. He might even write back.

Narrator 1: After school, Grace sat down and wrote the letter. Then she and Levant ran to the post office. Mr. Mann, the postmaster, would mail it for her. She hoped Lincoln would reply quickly.

Mr. Mann: Well, hello, Miss Grace.

Grace: Hello, Mr. Mann. Will you mail this letter, please?

Mr. Mann: "Mr. Abraham Lincoln?"

Grace: Yes, I've written a letter to Mr. Lincoln.

Levant: He's too busy campaigning; he'll never even get it. Don't bother him with such a silly thing.

Grace: It's not silly!

Mr. Mann: I'll be happy to mail the letter for you, Grace.

Grace: Thank you, Mr. Mann!

Narrator 2: The next day, Grace went back to the post office.

Grace: Hello, Mr. Mann. Is there any mail for me?

Mr. Mann: Not yet, Grace.

Narrator 3: Grace visited the post office every day to see if Mr. Lincoln had replied to her letter. Meanwhile, at Lincoln's house, the mail has just arrived.

Abraham Lincoln: Hmm, what's this? A letter from a Miss Grace Bedell?

Narrator 4: "Honorable A. B. Lincoln, Dear Sir, My father has just come home from the fair and brought home your picture. I am a little girl only

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eleven years old. If you will let your whiskers grow, I will try and get everyone to vote for you. I must not write any more. Answer this letter right off. Good bye, Grace Bedell."

Lincoln: Why, how kind. I will reply to it right away.

Narrator 1: Back in Westfield, Grace returned to the post office every day for a week, but there was no reply. Until...

Mr. Mann: Grace! He wrote back! Lincoln replied!

Grace: Really? That's wonderful!

Levant: What did he say, Grace? Read it to us!

Grace: I must take it home!

Narrator 2: Grace took the letter and ran home. It was snowing. Big snowflakes fell on the paper, but she just brushed them right off. She ran into the house to show her mother the letter.

Grace: Mother, look! Mr. Lincoln wrote to me.

Mother: You wrote a letter to Abraham Lincoln?

Grace: Yes, I told him that he should grow a beard and that he would look more handsome and more people would vote for him! He wrote back! Listen to this: "My dear little Miss. Your very agreeable letter is received... As to the whiskers, having never worn any, do you not think people would call it a piece of silly affectation if I were to begin it now? Your very sincere well-wisher, A. Lincoln."

Mother: Imagine that. Well, it sure was nice of him to write back to you.

Grace: Isn't it amazing?

Narrator 3: Grace brought the letter to school the next day and showed it to all her classmates. Soon, everyone was talking about how Grace had received a letter from Mr. Lincoln.

Narrator 4: Months went by and the excitement died down. Grace kept the letter on her desk. She waited eagerly to hear news of the election.

Father: it looks like Mr. Lincoln is winning the election!

Name: _____

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Grace: Hurray! Lincoln will be our next president!

Narrator 1: Abraham Lincoln won the presidential election. One month later, he began his trip to Washington, D.C. The family heard that Lincoln's train was going to pass through Westfield. Grace was very excited.

Grace: Mother, please! I want to go to the train station to see Mr. Lincoln!

Mother: Well, you did write to him. I suppose it's all right.

Narrator 2: At the train station, a huge crowd of people watched the train steam towards them. They were cheering and waving. Grace stood as tall as she was able, but she still couldn't see over all the people.

Grace: I can't see anything! Is he speaking?

Abraham Lincoln: A few months ago, I received a letter from a lovely young lady by the name of Grace Bedell. I believe she lives in this town. Is she here today?

Narrator 3: Grace's father cleared a path to the platform for her.

Abraham Lincoln: Hello, Grace. As you can see, I took your advice about my appearance. How does my beard look?

Grace: Oh, you really did! It looks great! I'm so glad you are the president, Mr. Lincoln!

Narrator 4: Lincoln left Westfield for Washington D.C. a few minutes later. But Grace never forgot that day—the day that she met President Abraham Lincoln.

The End