

Lunch Bag Surprise

by RV Staff Writer J.C.

The bell rang. Jacob smiled. It had been a busy morning, and he was glad his math class was finished. He grabbed his lunch bag out of his backpack. He unzipped it and looked inside. He blinked. He looked again. Beside his usual salami sandwich and juice box, there was an envelope marked only with a “?” on it.

Jacob opened the envelope and slid out a photograph. It was of a suitcase. That was all. Jacob wondered what it meant, but soon the bell rang, and he had to put his lunch away. He forgot about the envelope until he got home. Then he showed his mother.

“I got this in my lunch today,” he said.

His mother smiled. “Interesting. What do you think it means?”

“I don’t know. Are we going on a trip?” Jacob asked.

His mother shrugged. “I guess it’s a mystery.”

The next day at lunchtime Jacob opened his bag. A new envelope peeked out. He looked around to see if any of his friends knew anything, but they were crowded around Megan’s new comic book and not paying him any attention. Jacob opened the envelope and found a tiny toy airplane. Now he was curious! He put the toy in his pocket and ate his lunch, thinking about what it could mean.

When he got home, he showed his mother. “Are we taking a plane somewhere?”

She just smiled at him. “Are we?” Jacob tried getting more information from her, but his mother laughed, her eyes sparkling. “I guess it’s a mystery,” was the only answer she gave him.

“Mom!” Jacob was frustrated. A suitcase and an airplane? Could that mean they were going on a trip somewhere far enough away they had to fly there? That could be anywhere in the world!

Over the next few days, Jacob eagerly opened his lunch bag to see what new clue was waiting there for him. First, he found a small pin of the American flag. The next day there was a leaf from a palm tree rolled up in his bag. The day after that Jacob found a juicy orange.

His mother wasn’t being any help and refused to answer his questions, so he tried to put all the clues together. The suitcase. A plane. The American flag. A palm leaf and an orange. He thought he had some idea, but he wasn’t sure what the orange meant. Maybe it was just a snack? He peeled it and took a bite; the sweet juice tasted like sunshine and dribbled down his chin. Jacob whooped in excitement. He had a feeling he knew where his mystery destination might be!

The next day, Jacob couldn't wait for the lunch bell to ring. When he finally got to unzip his lunch bag, there was nothing in it except for his usual sandwich and juice box. His heart sank. Maybe he had been wrong after all. Maybe there was no trip. He was very confused. Even Megan tried to cheer him up by sharing her latest comic book with him.

Just before the end of the day, his class was interrupted by a visit from the school secretary. Uh-oh, was he in trouble? The kindly lady handed Jacob a small box. "This for you. Your mother said to put it on now, please, and meet her outside."

That was weird, thought Jacob. All his friends were staring at him curiously. What could it be? He opened the box. A smile slid across his face. He reached in and pulled out a small black hat with two round mouse ears attached to it. "Yes!" the boy said, and held it up, showing his friends.

The students knew exactly what it meant, and everybody cheered! Jacob put the mouse ears on, and waved to his friends as he hurried from the classroom down to the main school doors where his mother and father were waiting, with suitcases. They both were wearing similar mouse ear hats, too! Jacob jumped into his father's arms, and his parents laughed.

"We're going to Disney World, right?" Jacob couldn't contain his excitement.

"Mystery solved," laughed his mother. "Come on, we're headed to the airport!"

Questions

1. Why wouldn't Jacob's mother answer his questions?
2. Did you guess the surprise vacation? Which clue made you think of your answer?
3. In your own words, describe what the clues meant.
4. What does *destination* mean here: "He had a feeling he knew where his mystery destination might be"?