

# Madison Dreams Big

Madison stared through the window and watched a puffy white cloud pass over the woods across from the school. A solitary bird glided, wings stretched, across the sky and seemed to pierce the cloud. It must be wonderful to be a bird, she thought. Just fly across the sky without a care in the world. Total freedom. No math class to sit in. She sighed and wondered how warm it was outside. It was late May, her favorite time of the year. Soon, she would be out of school for the summer and her days would be spent on horseback. She thought of her horse, Star. He was already starting to shed his winter coat. She'd have to brush him before riding him this afternoon. Somewhere, someone was saying her name, but it seemed so far away. The bird continued to float through the air.

"Madison. Madison!"

Madison jumped. She turned back toward the class to find everyone laughing.

"Madison. Could you please join us again?" Mrs. Landon said. "I was just asking the class if anyone had any problems with the homework assignment I gave you yesterday."

"Oh." Madison sat straight in her chair. "No. I didn't have any problems."

"Very well. Class, turn in your assignment. Our visitor will be here soon."

Madison swallowed hard and raised her hand.

"Yes, Madison. What is it?"

"I don't have my homework with me," Madison admitted.

"I thought you said you didn't have any problems with it."

"Well, I didn't have any problems doing it, but I had problems remembering to put it in my school bag after I did it." Some giggling spread through the room.

"You should have just folded it and put it inside your book."

"I forgot that too." Now the entire class laughed.

"Madison, I don't know what I am going to do with you. You're such a smart girl but you just don't apply yourself. You're always daydreaming. I may have to have a talk with your parents. Class, clear your desks. Our guest is here."

Madison looked out the window again. The bird and the cloud were both gone. She looked at the clock. One more hour and it would be time to go home.

"Class, welcome Doctor Landon. As you might have guessed by our last names, Dr. Landon is my husband. He is also a veterinarian and he came here today as part of our continued Career Explorations program."

Madison tried to focus as Doctor Landon talked about how important grades were and how he struggled with math when he was a kid. Madison tried to imagine Doctor Landon as a kid. She wondered if he wore glasses then too. She glanced out the window. It was so nice outside. She tried to remember where she left her riding boots. She hoped she didn't leave them in the barn. Doctor Landon was still talking but she lost track of what he was saying. Then a word caught her attention. Horse. Was he talking about horses? She paid attention as he spoke.

"I knew I didn't want to work in an office all day and specializing on horses gave me the ability to be outside all day, moving from place to place. Do any of you have horses?"

Madison raised her hand. "I do!"

"Where do you live?" the doctor asked.

"On Anderson road. Close to Cold Creek" Cold Creek was the name of the creek that ran along the border of their property.

"Is your last name Johnson?"

"Yes," Madison answered, surprised he knew that.

"Oh, I think I've been to your house to give your horse his shots. A big bay Quarter Horse? Star?"

"Yes! That's my horse!" Madison knew the veterinarian sometimes came to their house when her horse needed care, but she was always in school when he visited. She liked it that he knew her horse's name. "So, you just travel around and take care of horses all day long?"

Doctor Landon nodded. "On most days. I have a small office in town and I'm in there Fridays and Saturdays. But the rest of the time I travel with my truck to take care of horses and ponies across the county. It is a lot of work, but I love it."

Madison's mouth fell open. He spent his days with horses. Lots of horses! What a life that must be, she thought. At that moment, sitting in math class, Madison could see her future. She was going to be a veterinarian and she would take care of horses too! Her life suddenly seemed bigger, more important. She almost laughed and had to bite her lip to hold the laughter in. Doctor Johnson! She liked the sound of that!

By the time she got off the bus that afternoon, her plans for the afternoon had changed. She was still going to ride Star, but first she was going to spend an hour studying math. Then tomorrow she'd spend an hour studying science. Even if she didn't have any homework, she'd spend an hour every night studying math and science. Doctor Johnson said those were important subjects to study if you wanted to be a veterinarian.

When she walked into the house, her parents were both sitting at the kitchen table.

"Hi," she called out as she passed the room.

"Where are you going in such a hurry?" her dad asked.

"I'm going to go study math for an hour," she answered with a smile. "Then I'm going to ride Star until dinner is ready." She could hear her parents talking as she walked toward the stairs.

“She is going to study math before she rides her horse?” her mom said in surprise.

Her dad shrugged. “Must have been that talk I had with her last week. I told her she needed to work harder and bring her grades up if she wants to get into a good college. I guess she is taking my advice. If I say so myself, it was a really good talk and I think she got a lot out of it. I am pretty good at talking to kids.”

Madison smiled. She remembered her dad saying something about college last week, but couldn’t remember what. Maybe she would wait until tomorrow to tell them about her new plans. She didn’t want to disappoint Dad.

**Questions**

1. What is Madison looking at through the window?
2. What road does Madison live on?
3. What is the name of Madison's horse?
4. What does Madison want to be when she grows up?