

A South Carolina Mystery



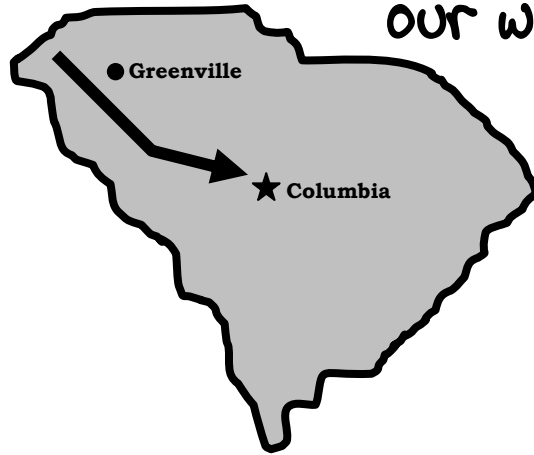
The story of a 9 year-old
boy's adventure across the
state of South Carolina.

written by **Ellyn Bache**

Homecourt  Publishers

■ Greenville, SC

We stopped by Greenville on
our way to
Columbia.



4 — On the Road

One of the great things about driving down out of the mountains in April is that it feels like going from winter to spring. The trees were just beginning to leaf out near our house, but by the time we got to Greenville, almost everything was green.

It was sunny and warm, a perfect day for tennis, but considering that we were on a

mission, I didn't care. There was no time for tennis today.

The School of the Arts sits on a hill close to downtown Greenville, looking down on Falls Park, which got its name from the place where the Reedy River falls over a series of big rocks. Dad loves telling me these little factoids whenever we go someplace new.

There's a neat suspension bridge that serves as an overlook, and dozens of walking paths you can follow for miles. You can take them all of the way down to the zoo, which Dad says is not a bad zoo for a city the size of Greenville, though the one in Columbia is bigger.

Mom had packed a picnic lunch. We met Lauren after her music theory class, and then waited for her friend Kenya, who's studying creative writing. We found a picnic table close to the falls. You would have thought neither girl had eaten for days. Now I know why Mom made the chocolate cake and the extra cookies for them to have later.

At Governor's School, Lauren
was playing the clarinet
and taking classes
like "Music Theory."



I told the story about the bed and the mystery we were going to solve. Dad said, "Well, it may or may not be a mystery, and it may or may not be something we can solve."

He was trying to play it down, but you could see he was excited. You could also see that Lauren wasn't. She listened politely, then jabbered about how she was either going to play solo concerts all over the country someday, or else audition for the Marine Corps band.

My sister wanted to be a
famous South Carolina
musician,
like Dizzy
Gillespie.



“If I get in,” she said, “I’ll get to play for the President of the United States.”

I wasn’t too thrilled about either of those two options, but it was clear that Lauren was. “I’ll be the most famous musician in South Carolina,” she said.

“There are already lots of famous musicians from South Carolina,” Kenya teased.

“Like who?” I asked.

“Dizzy Gillespie, the trumpet player who helped invent modern jazz. James Brown, the godfather of soul.”

I'd never heard of either one of them.

"Chubby Checker!" Lauren shouted.

Then she began to sing about doing the twist again, like they did last summer. Lauren is a great clarinet player, but you do *not* want to have to listen to her sing.

Despite her terrible performance, I remembered the song. Grandma sang it when she showed us the dance she and Grandpa used to do a long time ago. The Twist.

"What about Hootie and the Blowfish!" Kenya asked. "They met when they were in college together in Columbia."

Mom liked Hootie and the Blowfish because the members of the band had met at "her" school, the University of South Carolina.

Dad, the Clemson graduate, frowned. "Well girls, this is fun, but Adam and I have to move on. We have an appointment with our state legislator."

He made it sound really important. I was anxious to go, but it was nice to see Lauren. I missed her, although I wouldn't want to tell her that because her head was already getting

too big imagining herself as the “most famous musician in South Carolina.” Instead, I just gave her a quick hug and waved good-bye.

Once you leave Greenville and head toward Columbia on the Interstate, even though you’re not in the mountains anymore, you feel like you’re going downhill the whole way. I mentioned this to Dad, who smiled. “Maybe that’s why they call this area the Upstate,” he said.

I guess I hadn’t thought of that before.

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