

# Otto's Tales



*Let's Visit*  
**The WHITE HOUSE**  
& WASHINGTON MONUMENT

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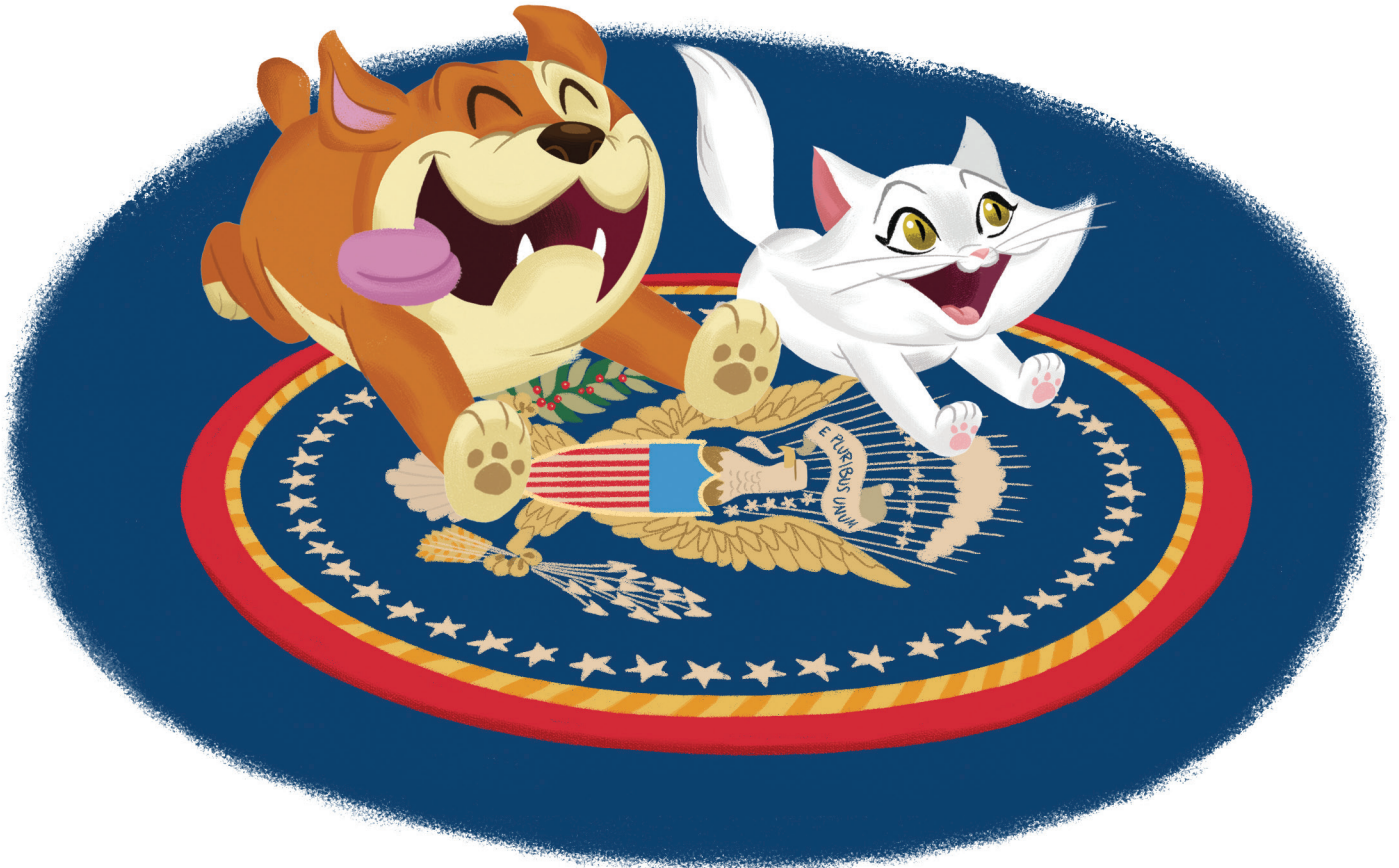
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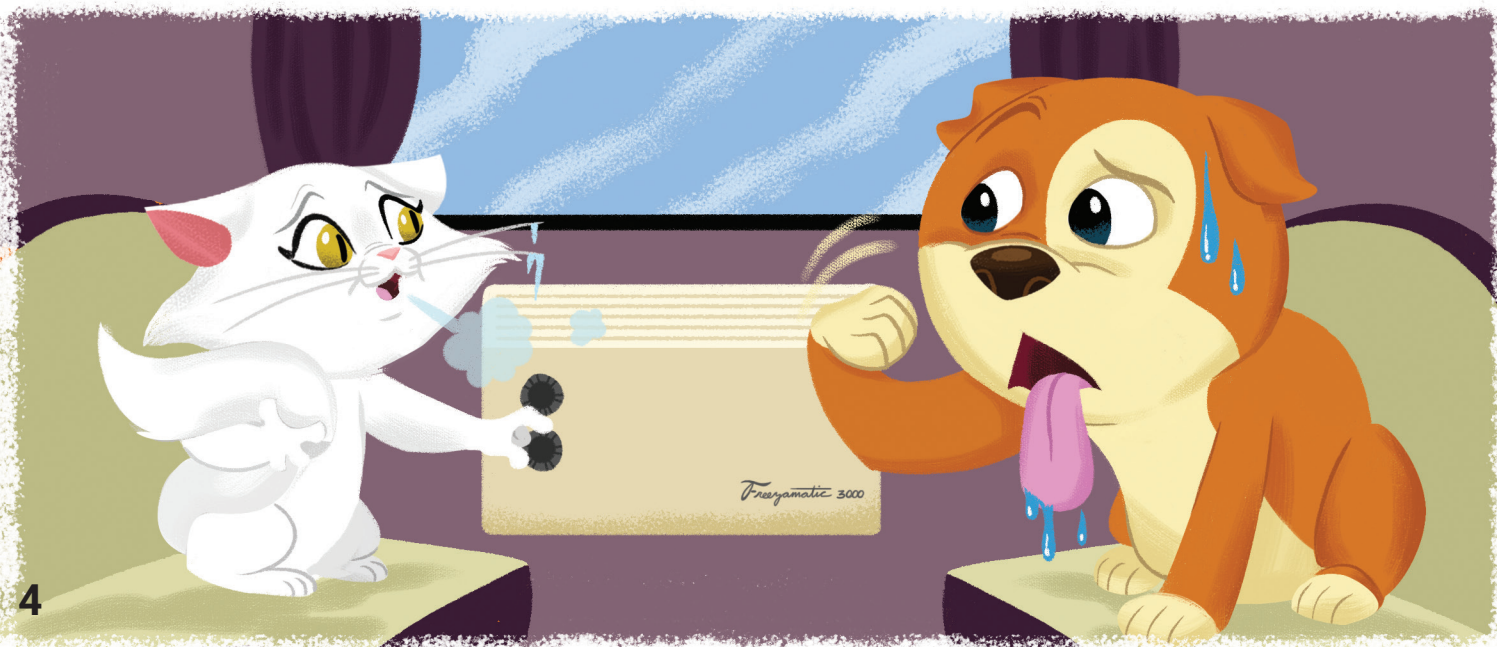
**BEEP BEEP!** Cars honked from all around as the Prager RV sat stuck in Washington, D.C. traffic. Smidge reached for the air conditioning controls.



**“Ruff Ruff!”** Otto barked. “Quit fiddling with the controls, Smidge. I’m sweating!”

The kitten turned the knobs anyway. “I’m cold! As the smallest passenger, I should be in charge of the temperature!”

Otto sighed. “You control the air, the music, our food...what’s left for Dennis and me?”





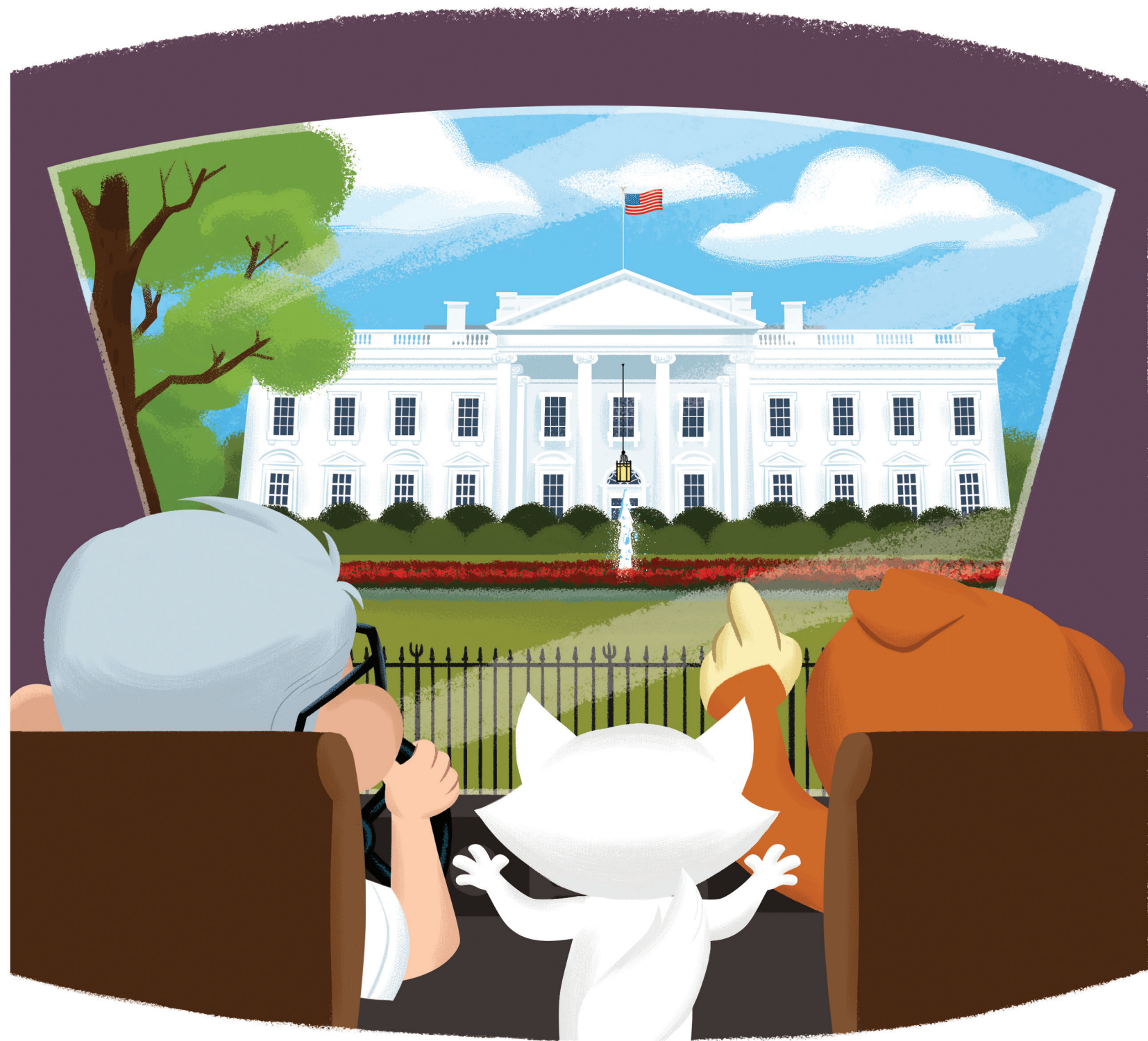
The RV edged forward slowly and Dennis called back, “What’s all the fuss? The **White House** is straight ahead, and we’re only a few minutes late for the tour. Hang in there.”

The bulldog stared glumly out the window. “We’d be there already if Smidge hadn’t made us stop for snacks.”

The kitten’s fur puffed up. “I was thinking of all of us!”



Otto cranked the cold air back up in response. Smidge wrinkled her whiskers, accepting the challenge. Back and forth they went, turning the knobs from cool to warm, until Dennis hit the brakes.



“We made it!” Dennis exhaled.  
The friends’ bickering paused when they noticed the magnificent white mansion behind a tall black fence.

“Let’s hope the White House is big enough for the both of you, because the RV certainly isn’t,” Dennis chuckled.

They all hopped out and headed to the security checkpoint.



“They confiscated my tuna!!”  
The flustered kitten crossed her arms. “Who made this rule? No food??”

“This is the president’s house. We have to be respectful.”  
Dennis calmed her, as they followed signs toward the Residence building.

“Right this way.” A woman in uniform ushered them in to join their tour. “There’s so much to see, so please try not to linger in any one room.”



As people shuffled forward, the woman addressed the group, “This is the ground floor, which boasts the Library, the **China Room**, and the Vermeil Room. The floor above is the state floor, which has other ceremonial rooms, such as the **Blue Room, East Room,** and **State Dining Room**. The second and third floor are unavailable to tour because the First Family lives there.”

Dennis’s eyes lit up. “All those books in the Library!”



The tour guide continued, "The house often hosts distinguished guests, foreign dignitaries, concerts..."

From the corner of his eye, Otto noticed Smidge dart into a different room from the rest of the group. He curiously followed her as the guide's voice faded down the hall.



Otto found Smidge in a room with pretty plates, delicate bowls, and all sorts of fancy china.

"Just imagine tuna on these spectacular plates." Smidge licked her lips. "Fine dining and tons of bedrooms for sleepovers... this house has everything!"



Otto smiled. "I wish I was as powerful as the president. I'd build a theater and bowling alley in my house too. See them on this map?"

"Ooh, let's visit those." The eager kitten reached for Otto's map.

He held it away from her. "I'm in control of the directions. Follow me."

The confident bulldog bounded up a flight of stairs, across the hall, and into the very crowded Blue Room.

"This isn't right," Smidge protested. "I thought we were going where I wanted to."

"We will," Otto said as he wiggled behind a curtain and opened a window. "After a quick detour." The bulldog grinned and pounced outside.





“Where are you going?!” Smidge scrambled after him.

Racing down the stairs to the lawn, the kitten looked around nervously.

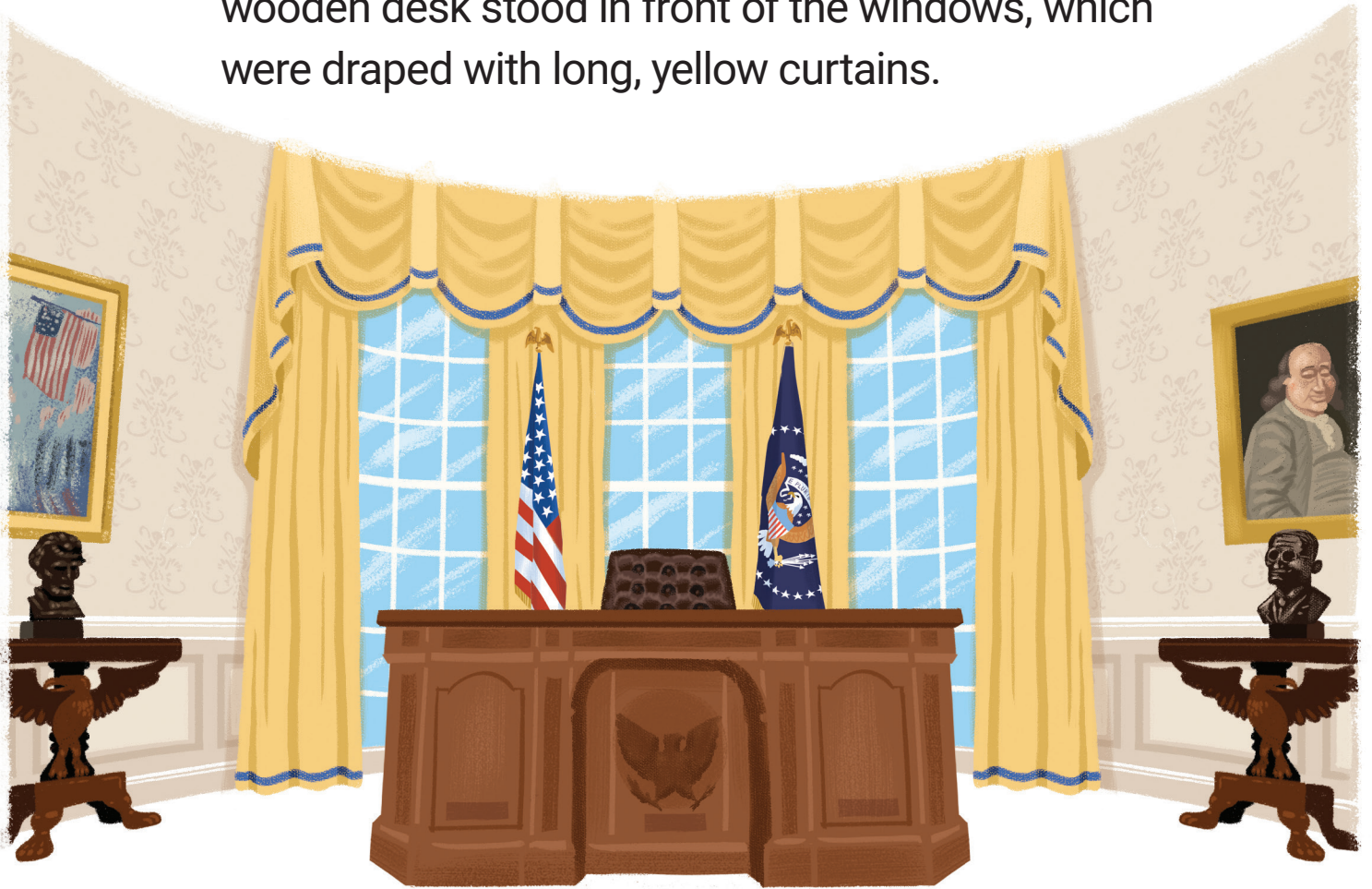
“Otto, are you sure about this?” The West Wing gleamed brightly in the morning sun ahead of them.

“The **Oval Office** is right through those doors.” Otto pointed. “Don’t you want to see where the president works and makes important decisions?”

Smidge paused. “Well, I guess he’s the one with all the power. Maybe I can talk to him about the ‘no food’ rule.”



“Ruff!” Otto leapt to open the door. A large, wooden desk stood in front of the windows, which were draped with long, yellow curtains.



Otto and Smidge raced across the majestic eagle nested in the deep blue carpet to get to the empty desk chair first.





**THUMP!** They tripped. Something was sprawled across the floor.

A big, stern dog rose from his resting place and stood tall over them. "State your name and business here," the dog bellowed. "I'm Teddy, special security for the President of the United States of America."

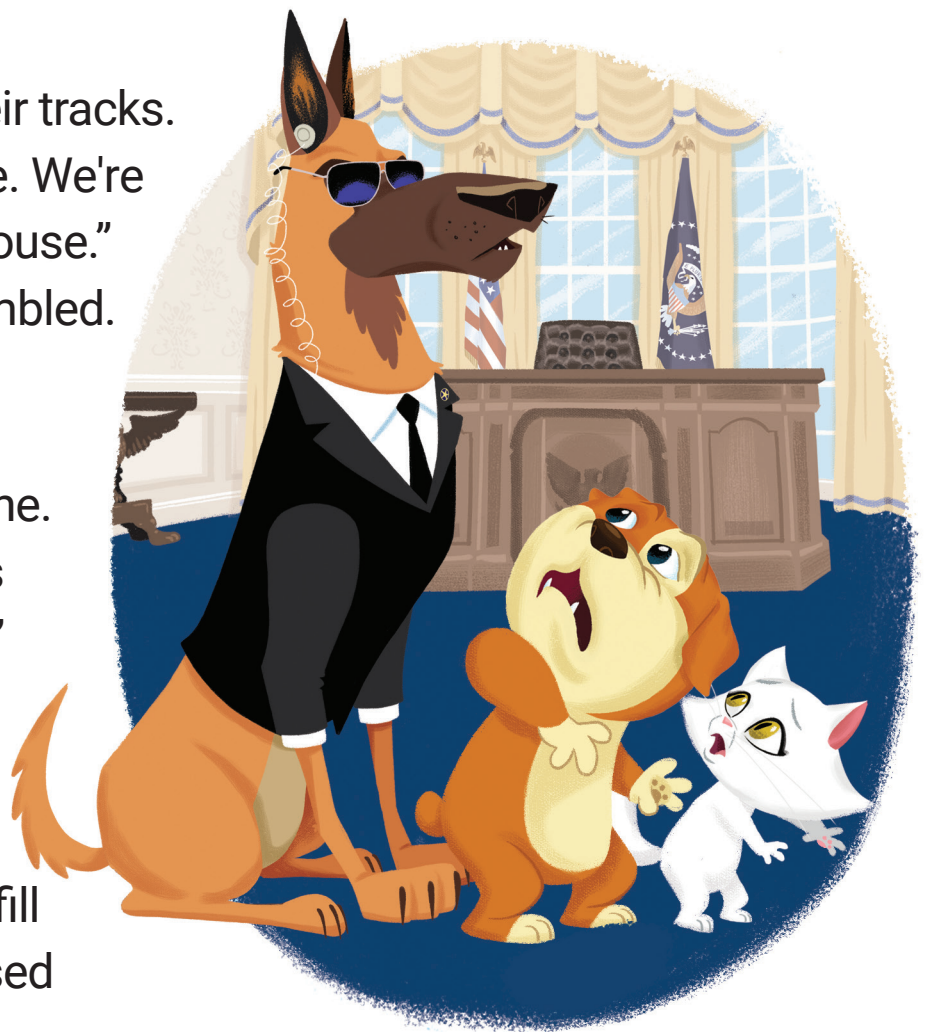
The friends froze in their tracks. "I'm Otto, and this is Smidge. We're visitors touring the White House."

Smidge's whiskers trembled.

Teddy sniffed around them. "You two smell like mischief, but no harm is done. I'll escort you back. Tourists aren't allowed in this office."

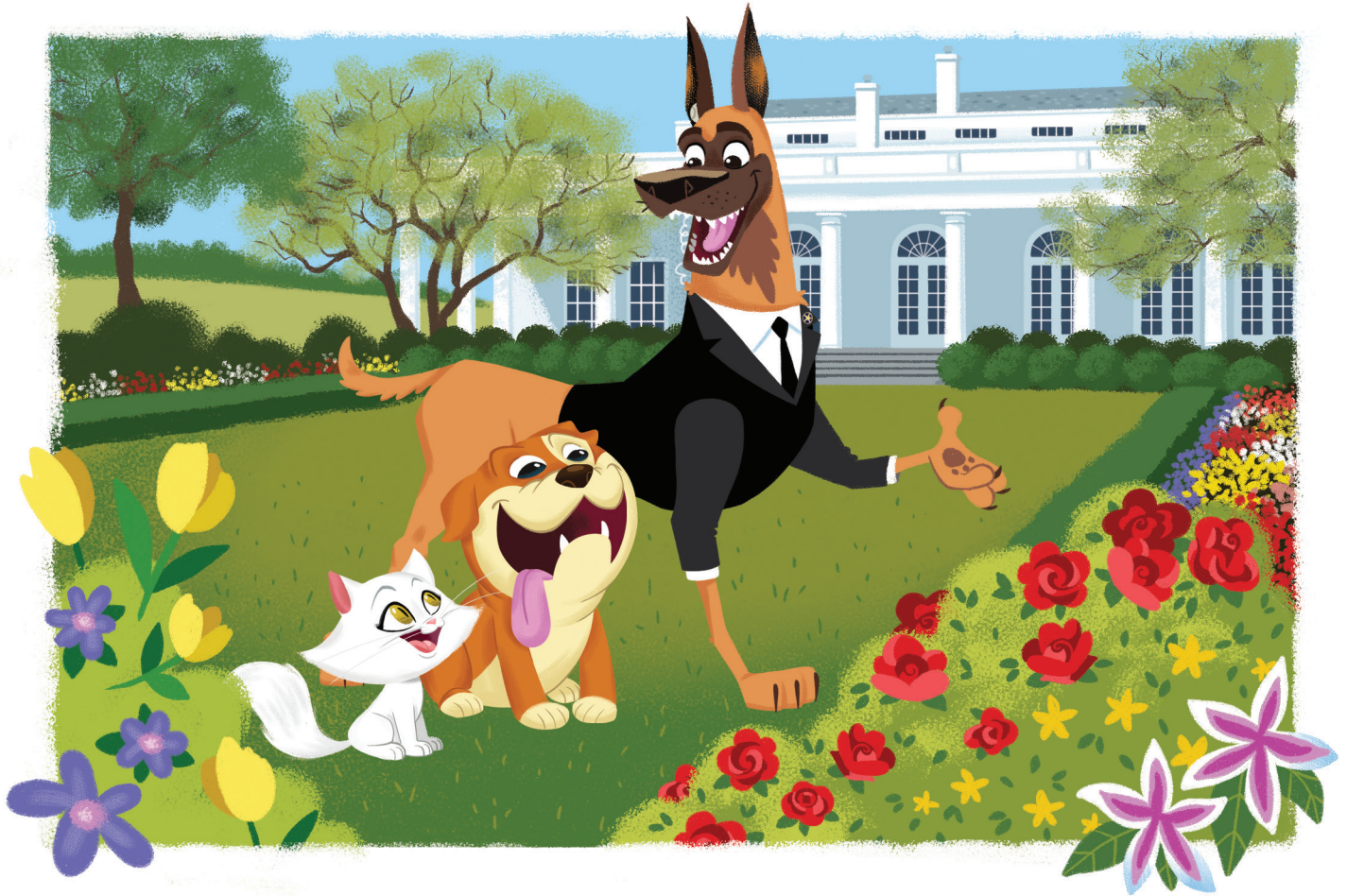
"We understand," Otto replied, disappointed.

"Chin up," Teddy urged, as he led them outside. "I'll fill you in on anything you missed on your tour."



Smidge wriggled her nose. "Something smells good out here, and it's not food!"

"That would be the **Rose Garden**." Teddy pointed towards beautifully blooming flowers. "Many important events, briefings, and ceremonies are held here."



"There's so much space!" Otto exclaimed. "I bet it's great for playing fetch!"

"Yes, but it's not all fun and games," Teddy replied. His tone was serious and his strides were swift. Otto and Smidge struggled to keep up! "This mansion is more than a home," Teddy explained. "It's a workplace and public museum too. The president and his family sacrifice a lot of privacy by living here."

"I didn't think about that," Otto admitted. "I wouldn't like strangers poking around my house."



Smidge nodded. "So, has every president lived here?"

Teddy's ears perked. "Every one starting with John Adams, our second President. George Washington was the one who picked the site for the house in 1791."



"Wow," Otto marveled. "That's a lot of people who have lived here through the years. It must be sad when they leave."

The trio arrived at another garden, and Teddy stopped. "Every president knows their time is limited in this office, so they serve as best they can."

"Don't you mean *rule*?" Smidge asked.

Teddy shook his head. "A president's job is to serve his country and people. Living in a republic means the people elect who they want to lead, and the leader in return serves the people's needs."

"Hmm." Otto thought about this. "A president serves the people. That's a harder job than I realized."

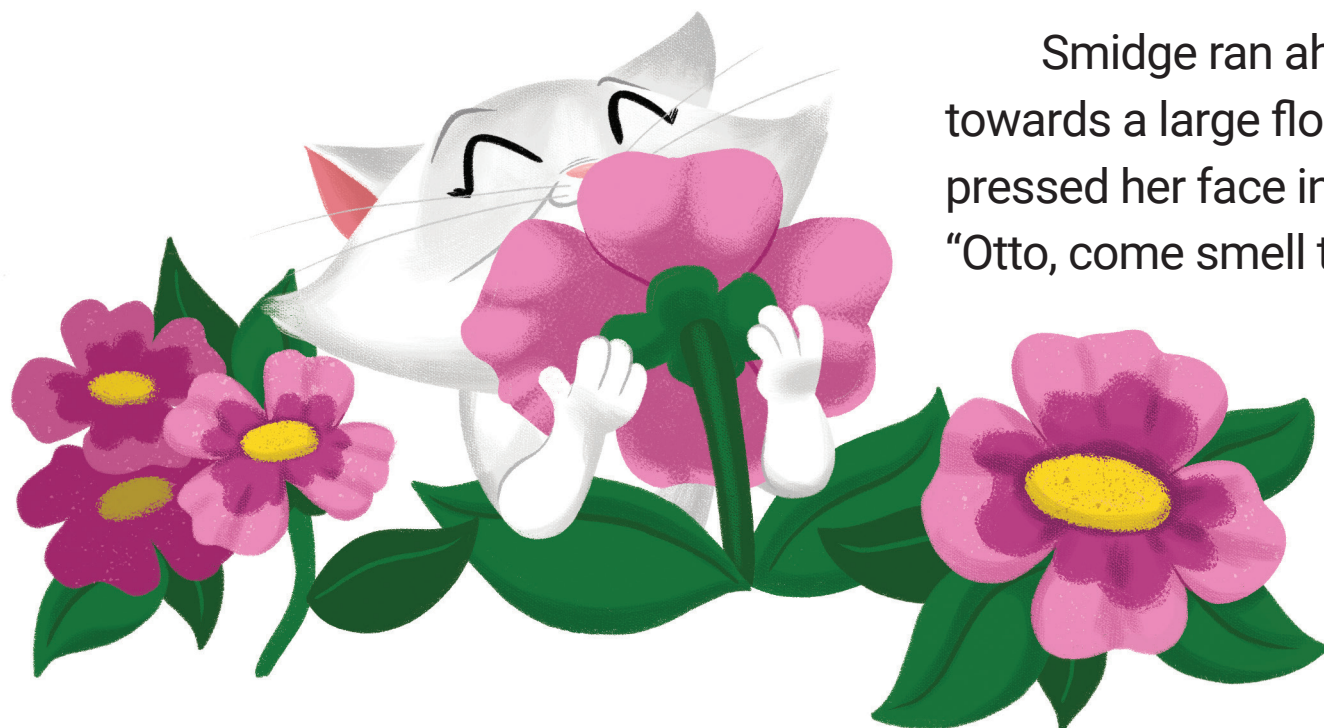




"It is," Teddy agreed. "Now, I should get back to my job too. If you pass through the garden here, you'll get back to your tour in the East Wing."

"Thanks for your help, Teddy!" Smidge bounced.

"Of course! Try to stay out of trouble." The big dog winked.



Smidge ran ahead towards a large flower and pressed her face into it. "Otto, come smell these!"



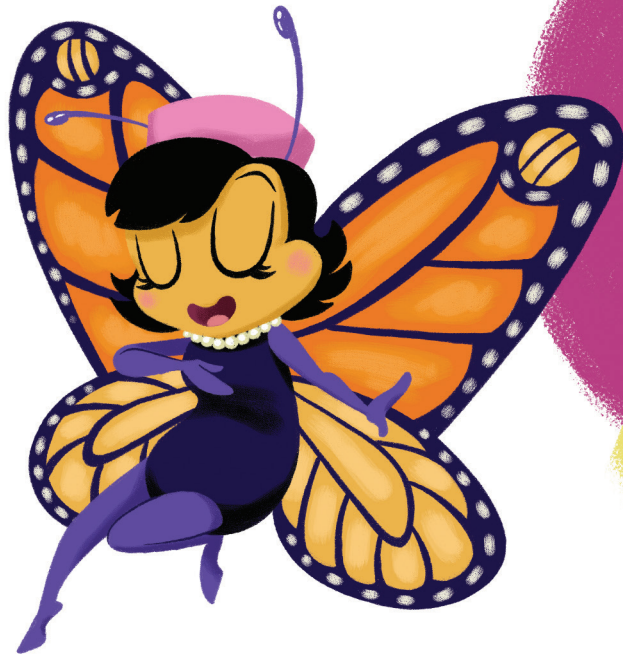
When she pulled away, a monarch butterfly was perched on her nose.

“Hello there,” the fluttering beauty said. “My name is Jackie. Are you enjoying the **Jacqueline Kennedy Garden?**”

“Achoo!” Smidge sneezed, sending Jackie flying. “Sorry!” the kitten cried. “I’m Smidge and this is Otto. We were just passing through. Are you named after this garden?”



Jackie flitted closer. “Yes, I share a name with First Lady Jackie Kennedy, who helped redesign and replant the White House gardens after years of neglect.”



“I’m glad she did.” Smidge admired the colorful greenery. “But weren’t there servants to do that?”

Jackie smiled. “The White House has staff, but first ladies have responsibilities too. They’re not queens to be waited on. They fight for important causes, host events, and lead many efforts around here.”



Otto nodded.  
“She may not run the country, but her job, like the president, includes serving the people.”

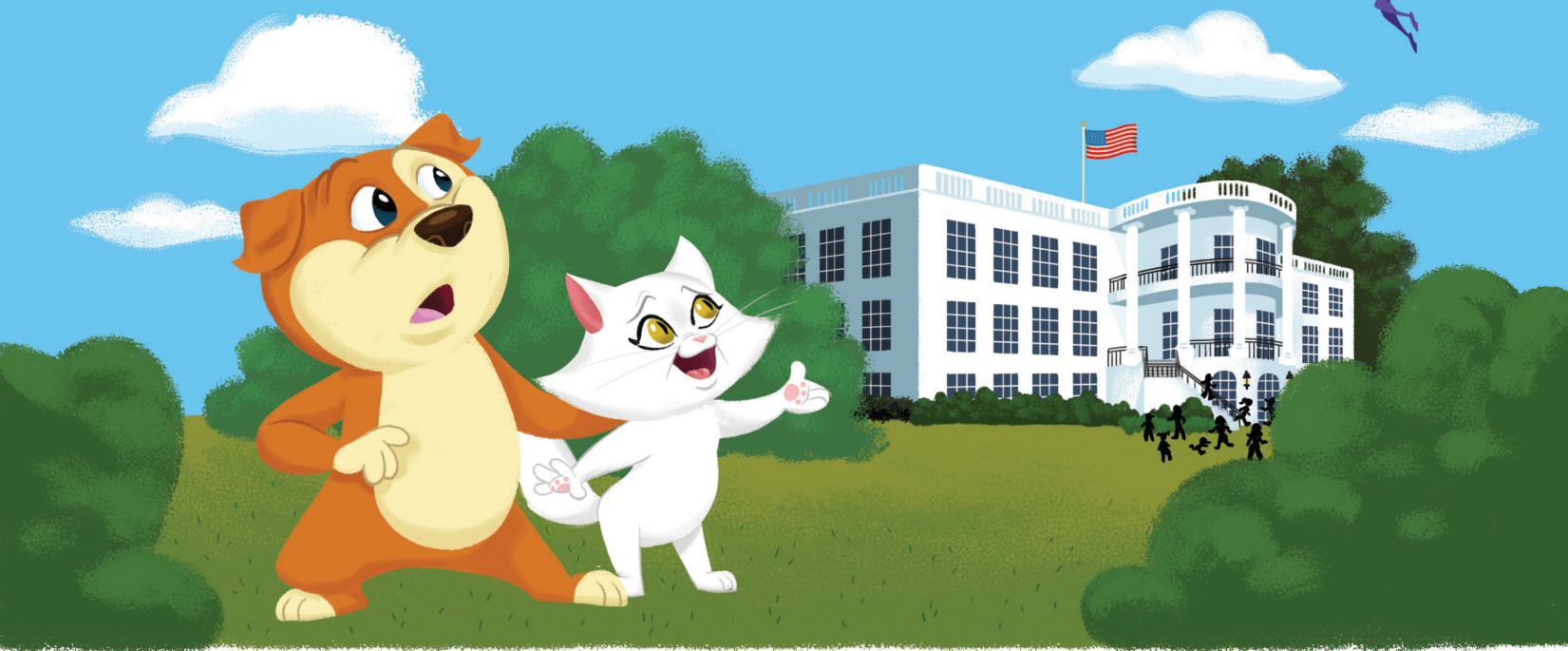
“Exactly!” Jackie agreed.

“Sounds like an exciting job...aaaa...choo!!” Smidge sneezed again.

Otto nudged Smidge. “Let’s get back. We should find Dennis.”

“How will we find him?” Smidge pointed to the sea of people exiting the White House.

“Perhaps you need a better view. I can’t go very high, but wait here.” Jackie lifted away.



As the friends waited for her return, a large shadow loomed over them and blocked the sun, before a giant bald eagle landed on the grass.



“Good afternoon! I’m George,” the eagle proclaimed. “Jackie tells me you need a lift.”

“We do!” Smidge was ecstatic. “We’re looking for our friend in that crowd.”

“Hop on.” George lowered his strong wing. With a powerful launch, George soared into the sky.

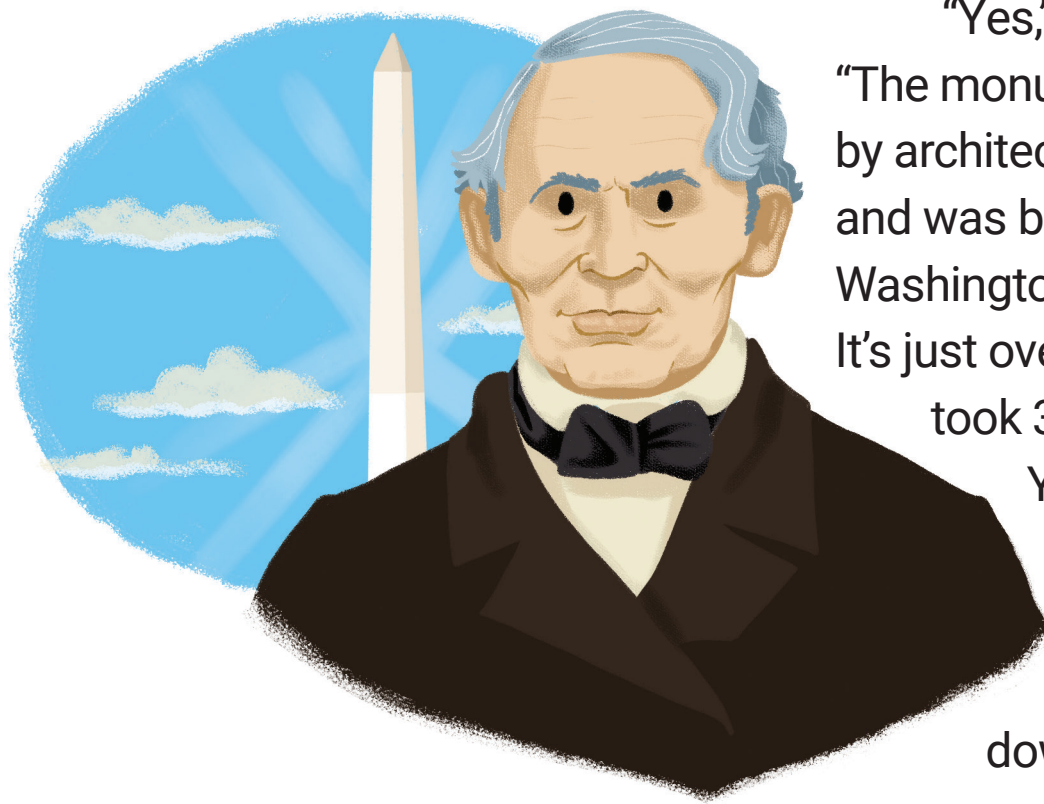


“Wait, why are we flying away?” Otto asked.

“You need a better view to find your friend,” George assured them. “You can see everything from the **Washington Monument!**”

“You mean that tall, pencil-looking structure?” Smidge pointed at the towering **obelisk** ahead.

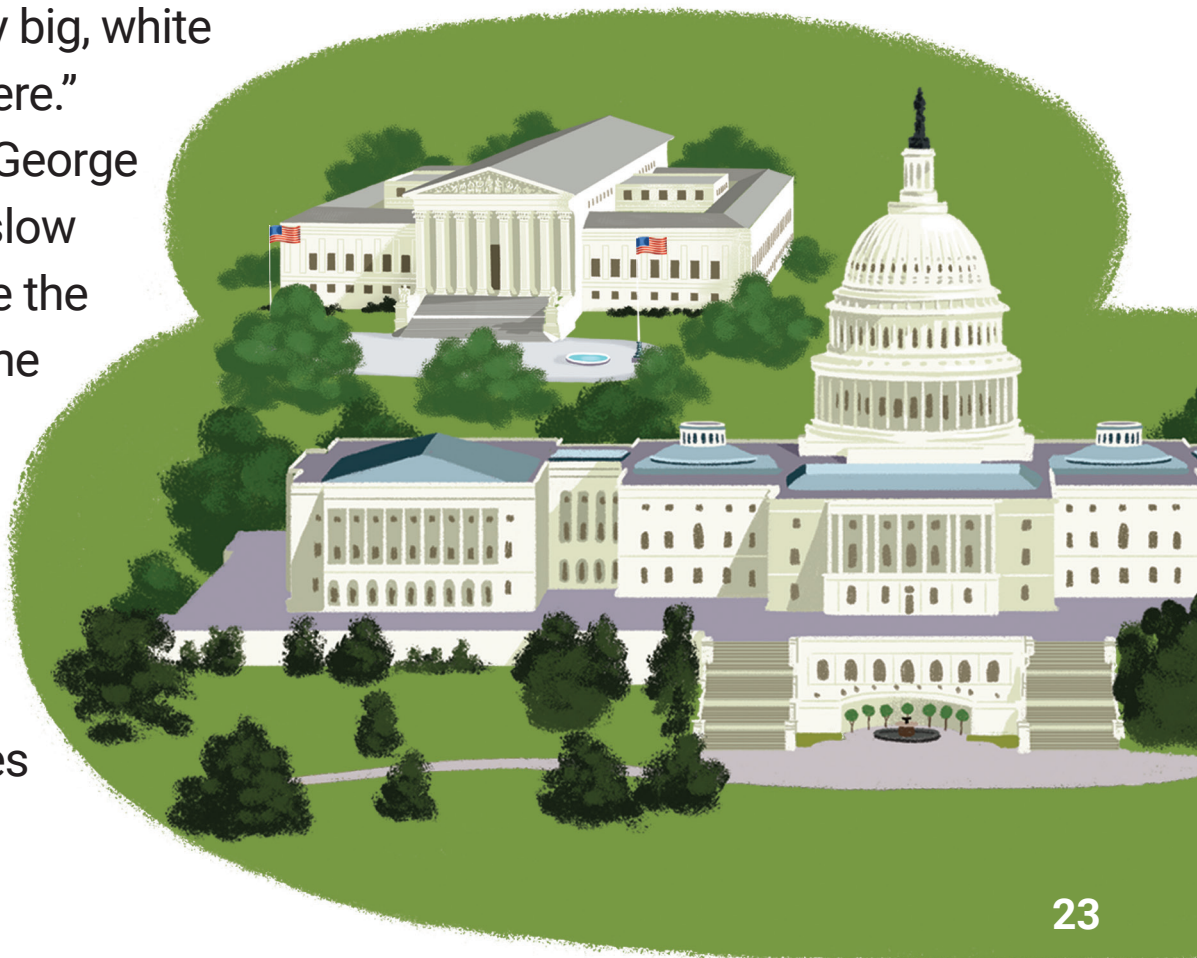




“Yes,” George chuckled.  
“The monument was designed by architect **Robert Mills** and was built to honor George Washington, our first President. It’s just over 555 feet tall and took 36 years to complete. You can tell by the change in color of the stones around the 150 foot mark down there.”

Otto was enjoying the view.  
“There are so many big, white buildings around here.”

“You’re right.” George tilted his wings to slow down. “You can see the Capitol and Supreme Court buildings from here. Those represent the other branches of government that the president shares power with.”



Smidge was curious.  
“Why does he share it?”

“So that no person or group can become too powerful. George Washington set the example for this when he gave up his power after two terms as President of the United States. He could have been the nation’s leader as long as he wished, but he stepped down because he didn’t want the people to trade one king for another.”



“The key to having power is giving it up?” Smidge asked.  
“That doesn’t make sense.”

“I think George means that a good leader is selfless, which we learned at the White House too. The president serves the people, and the people keep him in check,” Otto reasoned.

“Oh, I see.”

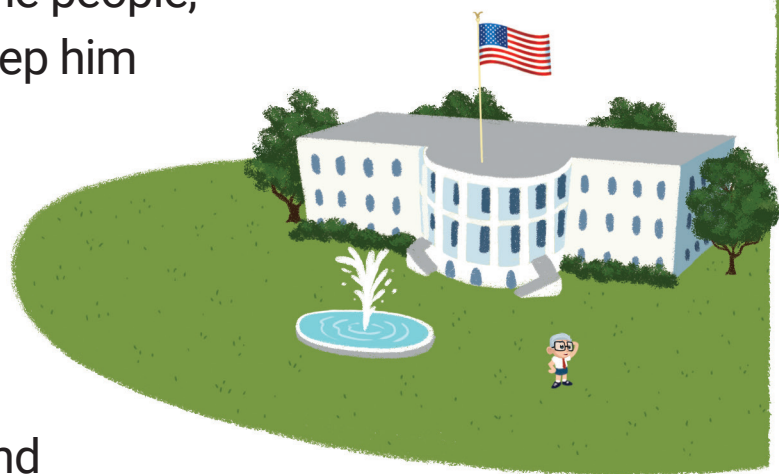
Smidge understood.

George circled the monument and

perched on its pointed tip. Otto and Smidge

peered down toward the White House. On

the lawn, they saw an unmistakable boy with white hair and glasses...looking for his two lost friends.





“Dennis!” Smidge and Otto called as George descended to the White House.

“Where have you been?” Dennis gazed up in shock and shook his head.

“Otto thought it would be a good idea to sneak off to the Oval Office,” Smidge explained. “But a nice security dog brought us back here, and when we didn’t find you, our friend George helped us get a better view from the Washington Monument.”

They thanked George, and he gave a sturdy salute before he swooped off... disappearing behind an American flag atop the White House.



Dennis pushed his glasses up. "You two could have gotten into big trouble! But, that sounds like quite a VIP tour."

"That was my favorite adventure yet!" Otto barked.

"You say that every time, Otto," Smidge replied.

The trio made their way back to the RV and piled in.

“Dennis, I think you should have control of the air conditioning,” Otto confessed.

Dennis couldn't help but laugh. “Are you sure Smidge isn't in charge of that?”

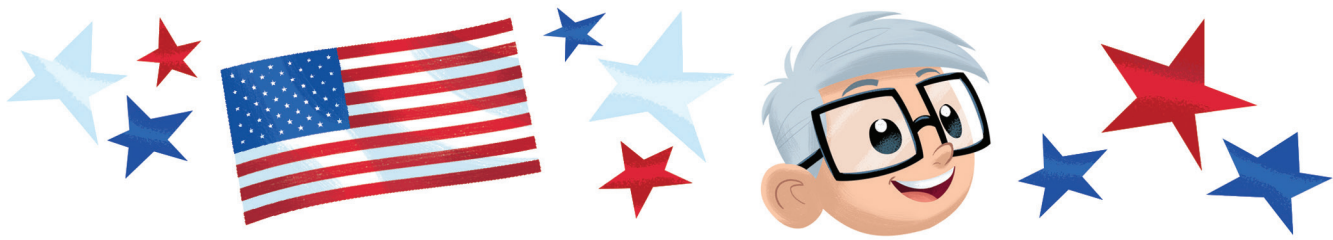
“I'd rather share my power!” the kitten declared.

“**Ruff Ruff!**” Otto agreed.

Dennis smiled and rolled down the windows instead. “Alright you two, let's go home!”

With their heads sticking out the window, Otto and Smidge enjoyed the breeze through their fur...happy that they didn't need to make any more decisions—until Smidge got hungry for a snack again!





# We Love Our History

**The White House:** Also referred to as the “President’s Palace,” the “President’s House,” and the “Executive Mansion” throughout history, it is the official home of the President of the United States and the First Family. It is located in Washington, D.C., and serves as a symbol of the United States government, the president, and the American people. Every president except for George Washington has lived there.

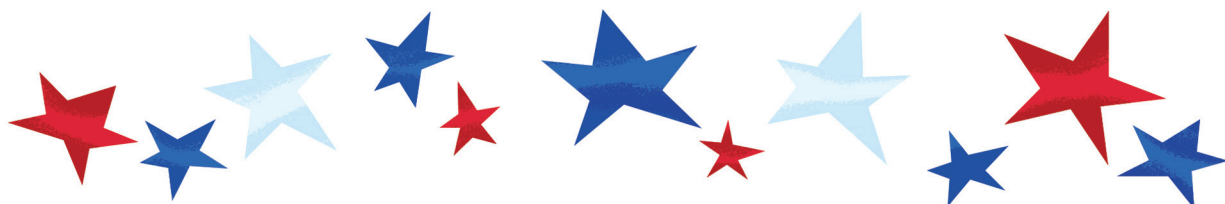
**China Room:** A room on the ground floor of the White House that displays collections of state china. Nearly every administration is represented in the collection, and it began with Mrs. Benjamin Harrison—a china painting enthusiast—after she became first lady in 1889. The room itself is often used by the first lady for teas, meetings, and receptions.

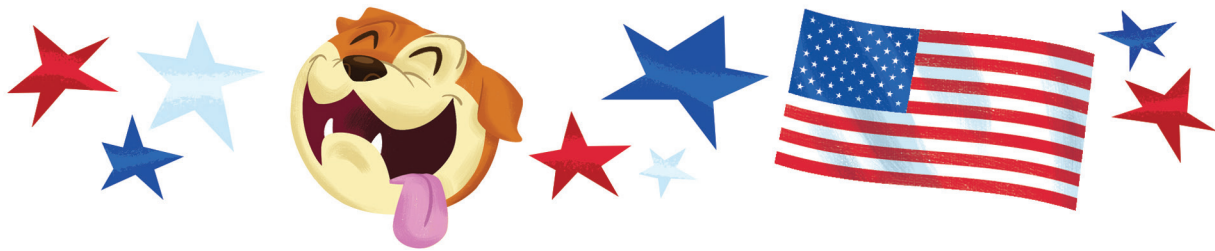
**Blue Room:** Located on the first floor of the White House, the Blue Room is one of three state parlors. It’s known for being decorated in shades of blue and for its distinct oval shape. The room has been used for receptions, receiving lines, and occasionally small dinners. President Grover Cleveland married Frances Folsom in this room in June 1886, the only wedding of a president and first lady in the White House.

**East Room:** The largest room on the state floor of the Executive Residence in the White House. It’s used for receptions, dances, ceremonies, banquets, and more. This was one of the last rooms to be finished and decorated.

**State Dining Room:** The larger of two dining rooms on the state floor of the White House. The room can seat 140 people, and is often used for luncheons, large formal dinners, receptions, and state dinners. It was given its name during James Monroe’s presidency, when it was turned from an office space into a furnished dining room.

**The Oval Office:** The official working space of the President of the United States located in the West Wing of the White House. The oval-shaped room has many distinct features, including the president’s desk, three large windows behind the desk, and a fireplace at the north end. Presidents are allowed to decorate the office according to their own taste, ranging from choosing their own furniture to drapery to artwork for display.





**The Rose Garden:** A garden bordering the Oval Office and West Wing of the White House. It was established in 1913 by Ellen Wilson, wife of President Woodrow Wilson. Prior to 1902, the area was used as a stable for horses and coaches. A conservatory rose house was also there. The garden has undergone various redesigns and renovations throughout the years. It is 125 feet long by 60 feet wide, and the space is often used for receptions and media events.

**The Jacqueline Kennedy Garden:** This garden balances the Rose Garden on the other side of the White House. It was originally called the East Garden, when Ellen Wilson first saw to the creation of the gardens. However, over the years, the grounds fell into disrepair, until First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy decided to redesign and replant both gardens. To honor Mrs. Kennedy, her successor, First Lady Johnson, renamed the garden after her in a ceremony on April 22, 1965.

**The Washington Monument:** A tall, obelisk structure standing at just over 555 feet tall in Washington, D.C. The monument was built to honor George Washington, the “Father of His Country” and the first President of the United States. The cornerstone was laid on July 4, 1848, and despite a stoppage in construction, it was finally completed in 1884, being the tallest man-made structure in the world until the Eiffel Tower was completed. The monument was dedicated on February 21, 1885, just one day before Washington’s birthday.

**Obelisk:** A prominent structure in Egyptian architecture, built as a monument to commemorate an important figure. Obelisks are tall, four-sided, and taper into a pyramid shape at the top.

**Robert Mills:** A South Carolina architect known for designing the Washington Monument. His original plans were for a 600-foot tall obelisk surrounded by 30 columns with a pantheon of 30 prominent figures from the Founding era. The monument was to be crowned with a statue of George Washington in a chariot. The actual monument, much different from his original plans, wasn’t complete until 30 years after his death.



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**See you in  
our *next* adventure!**

- Dennis, Otto,  
*and* Smidge

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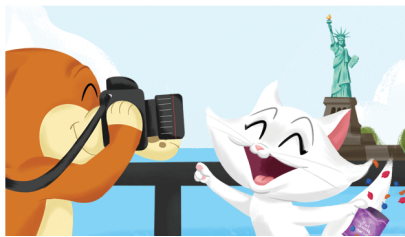
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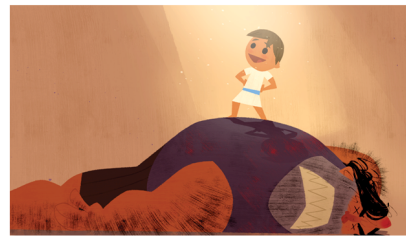
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