

American Mystery Tours

Seconds after Cathy made the call, two security guards arrived. Cathy told them to surround Frederick.

"I am innocent!" Frederick shouted.

"Then why have you been faking all those sneezes?" I asked.

"That's not true!" Frederick said, still pretending to be innocent.

"You said you were sneezing because you're allergic to carpet fibers," I said.

"Well, check out the floor. There is no carpet. It's a tiled floor." I turned to my sister. "Cathy, when you lifted the cover to the case, Frederick faked another sneeze so that we would all close our eyes. When we did, he took the book and hid it in plain sight—right in the middle of his last name on his name tag so his last name SARSENET became SARSE.NET. Get it?"

"How did you know that wasn't a real website?" Gina asked me.

"Thanks to lots of time in the library, I know words," I said. "When I asked Frederick if he sold sarses to sculptors, he said yes. But a sarse is a kind of fiber. It has nothing to do with sculpture."

This was enough for the security guards. They took Frederick by the arms. My sister walked up to him and carefully plucked the book off his name tag with the pair of tweezers. She gently placed it back in its case and closed the lid.

Then my sister looked at me with a relieved smile. "Go ahead, Melinda," she said. "I know you want to say it."

I turned to the security guards and pointed at Frederick. "All right, men," I said, "throw the book at him!"

VOCABULARY

collections: groups of similar things

exclaimed: said in an excited way

fibers: long, thin threads of material

filter: something that cleans liquids and/or gases as they pass through it

inhaled: breathed in

innocent: not having done anything wrong

manuscripts: original pages of a book, poem, music, etc.

miserably: unhappily

name tag: a label with a person's name on it

panic: a sudden feeling of fright or terror

pedestal: a base or stand for a statue or display

pretending: acting as if something were true

sculptors: artists who shape something out of stone, clay, metal, etc.

speck: a small spot

surround: to go on every side of something

tweezers: tool used to pick up small things