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*Dramatic Publishing*

# LINCOLN VACATION

By

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# LINCOLN VACATION

## CHARACTERS

MARK. . . . .	male, teenager
SARAH. . . . .	female, teenager
GINGER. . . . .	female, teenager
JOHN . . . . .	male, teenager
LILY. . . . .	female, teenager
NANCY . . . . .	female, teenager
DR. THOMAS . . . . .	female, professor
RANGER. . . . .	male
STAN [PILGRIM] . . . . .	male
FARMER/LINCOLN ACTOR. . . . .	male
RANGER/FARMER WIFE . . . . .	female
WAITRESS. . . . .	female, teenager

TIME: Now.

STAGING: Area staging, multiple locations. The play can be performed on a bare stage, or slides may be projected to indicate the following locations: Abraham Lincoln Birthplace in Kentucky; Abraham Lincoln Boyhood Home in Indiana; Lincoln Home in Illinois; Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., etc.

# LINCOLN VACATION

*(In darkness, we hear DR. THOMAS' voice, either on a megaphone offstage or a voiceover:)*

DR. THOMAS. Everyone, please stay in the van. I'll be right back.

*(LIGHTS UP on the group sitting in chairs in a van formation: 3 rows of chairs, 2 by 2: MARK, SARAH, GINGER, JOHN, NANCY and LILY. They scramble out of the chairs quickly. EVERYONE pulls out a cell phone from his or her backpack.)*

MARK *(on phone)*. She's at the front desk, checking us in.

Can you come get me, Dad? We're at the first stop on the itinerary sheet, somewhere in Kentucky. Come now.

SARAH *(into the phone)*. I so don't want to be on this field trip for losers. It's sooooo boring riding in a van, looking at cows, and listening to Dr. Thomas lecture on and on about Illinois, Kentucky, Indiana, blah, blah, blah.

GINGER *(making a podcast)*. Mom, what did I do to deserve this? I don't know anything about Abraham Lincoln and I'd like to keep it that way.

JOHN (*into the phone*). First of all, you know I don't want to be away from the team...

NANCY (*into phone*). Help!

GINGER (*podcast*). Last year, Max, when his parents forced him to go on one of these lecture trip punishment thingies, he went overseas. Yeah. On a plane. To England. As in Europe. And studied a real historical figure of world importance. Churchill or something. But me, you send me to a cheap Lincoln American field trip on a van. We're in the middle of nowhere. See? (*She does a panorama shot.*)

MARK (*phone*). And we're stuck in the middle of nowhere. You want me to send you some pictures?

SARAH (*phone*). I can't really get much signal out here, so I hope you can hear me. I don't feel connected.

JOHN (*phone*). Yeah, well, and second of all, the team. I was gonna practice with them every week this summer.

NANCY (*phone*). SOS!

SARAH (*phone*). Did I mention I don't want to be away from my friends? And no, none of these people are my friends. We just met.

GINGER (*podcast*). Here's the deal. Why don't you let me worry about my own GPA? GPAs are so over, anyway.

LILY (*on the phone*). Hi, Mom. Hi, Dad. Everything's fine. Thought I'd check in. I think it's so cool we're getting college credit for this. It's amazing. I'm learning so much already. Dr. Thomas is great. (*EVERYONE ELSE turns to glare at her. LILY steps away from the group.*) No, I don't know anyone yet...I ate lunch by myself. No biggie.

MARK (*looks up*). Oh, shoot. She's coming back. (*To the group.*) Warning. Heads up. Dr. Thomas is on the el-move-oh.

GINGER, MARK, LILY, JOHN, NANCY & SARAH (*at varying speeds—not in unison*). Bye! Gotta go. Later.

(*EVERYONE frantically puts away his or her phones/equipment and jumps back onto the chairs.*)

SARAH (*whispering to MARK*). Is your dad coming to get you?

MARK. No. My parents are going through—never mind.

SARAH (*loudly to the group*). Listen, if anyone, ANYONE gets to leave this place, I will pay you to take me back home with you. Name your price.

GINGER. Sshhhh. She's here.

(*DR. THOMAS ENTERS, carrying her megaphone. EVERYONE acts "normal." They focus attention on DR. THOMAS and give various reactions.*)

DR. THOMAS. Everyone ready to go to dinner at the Lincoln Tastee Freeze?

NANCY, SARAH, MARK, GINGER, JOHN (*unenthused*).  
Yes.

LILY. Yes, Dr. Thomas! (*The other five glare at LILY.*)

DR. THOMAS. Right after dinner, we're going to see an old movie, *Young Mr. Lincoln*. I will narrate throughout, separating the facts from fiction. First quiz, tomorrow morning.

ALL (*ad libs, groaning*). No way. Already? Arghh.



DR. THOMAS. So be sure to take notes and then get to bed early. Oh, and I know it all feels new and strange right now, but by the end of our two weeks together, not only will you have learned a lot about American history, but each other, too.

LILY. Question. Do we get to order a special Lincoln birthplace meal, like a hot dog on a log or something uniquely Lincolnesque at the Lincoln Tastee Freeze?

*(EVERYONE groans again, except LILY and DR. THOMAS, who smiles. Then, all EXIT except for MARK.*

*LIGHTS SHIFT/TIME SHIFT. BRIGHT DAYTIME. MARK grabs a digital camera from his backpack, and sets it down on a tripod, and steps back a few feet. MARK begins a podcast, clicking a remote. There's a table in the background.)*

MARK. Testing. *(Clears his throat.)* Testing. *(Clicks remote again.)* So, Official Podcast Second Day. Two weeks' worth of these and then I get an allowance bonus, right? That was the deal, since you're refusing to come get me. *(Looks around.)* We had a quiz this morning. Now we're at the Abraham Lincoln birthplace, near Hodgenville, Kentucky. Hodgenville is the kind of town where everything is about Lincoln, like the main town square with statues and all the stores. Lincoln Tastee Freeze, there might be a Lincoln Laundromat. You get the picture. They're proud of Lincoln being born here. I'm in the bookstore in the lobby of the Lincoln Birthplace park. Random Prediction: Some girl on our field

trip is going to run through here any second, looking for the restroom.

*(A RANGER walks in, dressed in a khaki/brown uniform, carrying books. He puts the books down on the table and arranges them; now, it looks like a bookstore display. Then NANCY and SARAH come running in.)*

SARAH *(to RANGER)*. Excuse me. Which way to the restroom?

RANGER. Back that way. *(He points to the left.)*

NANCY *(to RANGER)*. Thanks. *(SARAH and NANCY exit.)*

MARK *(into podcast)*. Okay. Was I right about the bathroom thing or not? Back to the regularly scheduled podcast, um—first of all, Dr. Thomas is outside sobbing.

RANGER *(looks at MARK)*. Excuse me. Is she okay? Why's someone crying?

MARK. With joy or something. Because she loves Abraham Lincoln so much. Personally, I don't get it. What's the big deal?

RANGER. This your first time to Lincoln's birthplace?

MARK. Yes.

RANGER. I see. Well, most people start with the short film through there. It acclimates you. And there's an indoor replica of what his birth house probably looked like...right behind you.

*(MARK picks up the camera off of the tripod and aims to where the RANGER is pointing.)*

MARK. Would you mind saying a little bit more? I have to send this podcast to my parents. Well, my dad, I mean.

RANGER. See how small that replica log cabin is? Abraham Lincoln was born into one just like it. The family all lived in one room, with a dirt floor. The traditional size was 16 by 18 feet.

MARK. Thanks. One room. Dirt floor. Got it.

*(SARAH and NANCY RE-ENTER. They both look toward the cabin offstage.)*

SARAH. Ew. One room? No privacy. A dirt floor?

NANCY. Bugs.

RANGER. Sure. If you were poor back then, and his family was, you were lucky to have a roof over your head. That's one reason it's so amazing that Lincoln went on from such humble beginnings to become our sixteenth president. Have you seen the Sinking Spring? That's how they got their water, and the farm was named after it.

SARAH. No. We'll check it out.

MARK *(to RANGER, still filming)*. So if you had to name two surprising things about Abraham Lincoln right off the top of your head that most people don't know, what would they be?

RANGER. He was the president who "officially sanctioned" the tradition that we celebrate Thanksgiving every year in this country.

SARAH. Really?

NANCY. Poor poor turkeys.

RANGER. And that tall stovepipe hat you've seen that he always wore? He kept his important papers stored up

there. Would pull 'em down whenever he needed 'em, like when he was going to give a speech or something. It was his secret paper stash.

MARK. Got it. Thanks. *(Stops filming.)*

RANGER. Oh, and here's a third thing. Abraham Lincoln and scientist Charles Darwin were born on the same day in the same year. February 12, 1809. Oh, and a fourth thing. He was named after his paternal grandfather who was also named Abraham Lincoln. Oh, and a fifth thing—

MARK. That's great.

SARAH. Thanks a lot.

NANCY. Thanks.

*(LILY ENTERS. STAN FOLLOWS BEHIND HER, wearing a baseball cap, a sports shirt of some kind and jeans. MARK starts filming again.)*

LILY. Hey, you guys seen Dr. Thomas?

MARK. Isn't she still outside sobbing or something?

LILY. No. I guess she went up to the birth temple.

MARK *(indicates the camera)*. Whatever. I'm in the middle of this podcast...

SARAH *(to LILY)*. We don't know where Dr. Thomas is.

STAN *(clears throat)*. She said others in the class might want to meet us.

LILY *(nudging MARK)*. Guys, manners...

*(MARK, slightly irritated, puts the camera back on the tripod, and turns to STAN. He nudges SARAH.)*

MARK. Hi.

SARAH. Nice to meet you.

NANCY. Hello.

STAN. Howdy. Yep, kids, I make my annual trek to Hodgenville, where Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks Lincoln named their baby Abraham. I'm what they call a birthplace pilgrim.

*(The RANGER EXITS.)*

LILY. Why do you all visit every year?

STAN. It reassures us to know it's here. You haven't been up to the shrine yet, have you? It's special. Once you get up there, you'll find more unusual stuff. Like, for example, did you know the cabin in the shrine is not the real cabin that Lincoln was born into?

NANCY. What?

SARAH. Then why's this a national park?

MARK. That ranger just told me they farmed here and used the Sinking Spring for their water—

STAN. Sure, the real cabin was near here, but someone tore it up, most likely in the mid-1800s, and so they're only guessin' the exact spot where ole Honest Abe was born, and that's where they put up the symbolic cabin in a temple. My wife sure likes those Greek columns. She sits on a bench up there, so peaceful. She says it always makes her think of what being an American really means. To start with almost nothing, and then to live a life in which you go so far.

MARK. Can we go up to there now?

LILY *(motions to SARAH, NANCY & MARK, checks her watch)*. Yikes. I think we're supposed to be there already. Come on.

*(MARK crosses to the camera and starts to film again.)*

STAN. Oh, and don't forget to check out the Knob Creek Boyhood Home and the blab school site, while you're in the area. Amazing story about the Knob Creek farm. One day, after a big rain, Abe fell in Knob Creek, and his good friend Austin Gollaher reached for him with a tree branch, and pulled him out of the water. Lil' Austin saved young Abe from drowning. Abe never forgot. It was on the front road to their Knob Creek house that young Lincoln first saw slaves forced to travel. Well, see you later.

LILY. Bye. Thanks!

*(STAN EXITS. SARAH, NANCY and MARK look at LILY. MARK aims the camera at the three girls.)*

SARAH *(to LILY)*. Did you have to find a Lincoln wacko the first nanosecond we got here?

MARK. Yeah, and I got it all on the podcast. *(Turns off the camera.)* Brilliant. If seeing this dude doesn't make one of my parents come and get me, nothing will. I'm sending it to them now, and then I hope I'll be leaving this Lincoln crash course.

SARAH. When your folks come, take me with you. Please? Deal, Mark? My parents are forcing me to stick it out because... Well, anyway, I can't believe we have twelve more days.

LILY. Hey, look through the back windows. There's Dr. Thomas, coming in that way.

NANCY. Uh-oh.

*(DR. THOMAS ENTERS with JOHN and GINGER.)*

DR. THOMAS. Sarah, Mark, Lily. Nancy. There you are. You missed some of the lecture at the temple about Lincoln, his sister Sarah, and the blab school.

SARAH. He had a sister named Sarah?

JOHN. Yeah. Even I knew that.

LILY. Dr. Thomas, in his whole life, Abe Lincoln only got to go to school for about a year, right? When you add it all up? Because their family moved a lot and the kids had to help with all the farm chores.

DR. THOMAS. Right. Very good, Lily. Okay, in five, meet me outside. We're loading up again.

*(LILY, MARK, NANCY and SARAH nod. DR. THOMAS EXITS with JOHN and GINGER. The RANGER RE-ENTERS.)*

LILY. Oh, great. Now we've missed some of the next quiz material.

RANGER. Hey, let me help you out. A blab school was a one-room schoolhouse, all grades mixed in together, and the way you proved you learned something was to memorize it. And then your big test: you had to recite what you learned in front of the teacher and the class. You "blabbed" everything you learned. If you couldn't, you failed. Lincoln and his sister walked two miles to go to the school.

NANCY. Cool.

LILY. Thanks.