It is Monday morning at Rockytop Elementary school. Class has been in session for an hour and Billy is sitting at his desk listening to his 5th grade teacher and classmates talk about some historical figures and their impact on history. Billy flips his pencil between his fingers and stares out the window. “What do I care about a bunch of people that lived a long time ago?” he thought to himself. He kept staring and staring and not listening to anything anyone was saying. He sighed and thought, “I need to get out of here, this is boring.” Then a thought came to him. He raised his hand. “Yes Billy?” the teacher asked. “Can I go to the bathroom?” Billy asked. “Can you wait Billy? We are having a great discussion here” his teacher said. Billy started to squirm and said, “I don’t think I can.” “Very well, but hurry back” said his teacher. Billy got up and rushed out of the room. On his way down the hall he played with his sweatshirt, tapped the walls and drank from as many water fountains as he could. He smiled and whispered to himself, “I am a genius!” He kept on walking looking at the floor and walked up to a door. The sign on the door read “Boys Room Out of Order” but Billy didn’t see the sign because he was still looking at his shoes. He pushed open the door and strolled inside.

Inside the bathroom Billy played with all the sink faucets. He turned them on and off, and on and off. Billy decided to take all the paper towels out of the towel dispenser one by one. When he pulled the first towel the ground began to shake. Billy lost his footing and fell to the ground. “What is happening?” he thought. He looked around the room. It started to spin. Billy shut his eyes. When the ground stopped shaking he opened his eyes. “I’m getting out of here!” he yelled. He got up and ran out of the door. When he pushed the door open, he stopped and stared. His school was gone. “Where are the halls, water fountains and lockers?” he said. He stepped through the door and he saw he was in a whole new place. He walked around to try and figure out where he was. A man walked up to him and said “May I help you little boy?” “ Yes sir” said Billy. “Where am I?” The man looked at Billy strangely and said, “You are in Italy.” “Italy?!” Billy exclaimed. “Yes, I am Benito Mussolini. I am the Prime Minister of Italy” said the man. “You are?” asked Billy. “ I was born in 1883. I am the head of the Facist Party. My country sided with the Axis Powers and Germany during WWII.” said Mussolini. “Wow! I think my teacher was just talking about you in class!” said Billy. “What do you mean young man?” said Mussolini. “Ummmm… Nothing. I better go” said Billy. He ran back to the door he came from. He walked in and he was in the bathroom again. He played with the faucets. The room didn’t change. He tried to figure out what he did to make the room move. Finally he pulled the paper towels and the room started to shake. He closed his eyes and hoped he would go back to his school.

When the room stopped shaking Billy held his breath and walked out the door. He wasn’t in his school, he was in what looked kind of like Washington D.C.. “Oh great” Billy sighed. He started walking around and saw a man standing with a group of other men. “Excuse me” Billy said. “Can one of you please tell me where I am?” The man turned around and Billy couldn’t believe his eyes. He was looking at Franklin Roosevelt. “WOW!” exclaimed Billy. “You are Franklin Roosevelt.” “Yes I am young man” replied Roosevelt. “I just met Mussolini. What was your role in WWII?” asked Billy. Roosevelt looked at Billy and calmly explained that the role of the US was for the Allied Powers, Great Britain, the USA and Russia. Japan had bombed and attacked Pearl Harbor and that caused the US to officially enter the war. Billy sat and listened with great interest. He was beginning to think that maybe history wasn’t so bad after all. Still, he would like to go home. He thanked President Roosevelt and walked back into the bathroom.

“Ok.” Billy said to himself. “I get it, I need to go home now. He pulled a paper towel from the dispenser and hoped this time he would be back at his school. The room shook and spun again and when it stopped Billy took a deep breath and stepped out of the bathroom.

He wasn’t at his school but he knew where he was. Although he didn’t pay much attention during history lessons, he knew exactly who the person in front of him was. He was looking right at Adolph Hitler. Billy knew that Hitler had started the Second World War but he was not sure how or why. He took a deep breath and slowly walked up to Hitler. “Excuse me” he said very softly. “I was wondering why you started the Second World War in Europe.” Hitler looked very puzzled by the little boy’s question. “I invaded Poland to gain more lands for Germany and the Allies didn’t like that” said Hitler. “I was the dictator of Germany and I wanted more lands and more power.” Billy gulped in a breath of air and spoke again. “So you were part of the Axis Powers during the war. Who did you form an alliance with?” Billy asked. “I formed an alliance with Japan and Italy and the three of us were the Axis Powers” replied Hitler. Billy didn’t think he could stay there anymore. He was starting to feel the weight of World War II and it’s impact on his life today. He said thank you to Hitler and walked back to his bathroom.

Billy really wanted to home now. He was thinking about the three men he had just met and why the three of them were so important. No matter what he did, he couldn’t help but wonder about how everyone must have felt when the war started. All these people fighting across Europe and some were for great reasons and some were not. Billy knew he needed to find out more but he really wanted to find out from his teacher instead of leaders of that time. He pulled the paper towel and squeezed his eyes shut. “Home, home, home” he thought to himself. The room stopped shaking and he opened the door to the bathroom.

When he stepped out of the bathroom he was disappointed. He was not back in school. He was somewhere else again and he rolled his eyes. He kicked a rock on the ground and started to walk around. He was looking for someone to talk to. This country was strange. He had never seen buildings like this. They looked very different from the buildings around his town. He finally saw a man sitting on a bench looking at a fountain. He walked over to the man and sat down on the bench. The man looked at the little boy and then turned and looked at the fountain again. “I’ve been waiting for you” said the man. Billy looked at him surprised. “How did you know I was coming?” Billy asked. “I just did. I am Hirohito, the leader of Japan during the Second World War. We bombed Pearl Harbor because we were at odds with United States. I agreed with Hitler and Facism so we went to war with the Allies” replied Hirohito. “Thank you. I’m going to go now” said Billy and he got up and left.

Back in the bathroom Billy sat down and thought about the leaders he had met. He thought that all of this was amazing. He pulled the paper towel and he was off to somewhere new. When he opened the door he was back at school. He hesitated to walk back down the hall to the classroom. He wondered why he hadn’t met the other two leaders during the time of the war. He decided he was going to ask his teacher. He ran down the hall and back into the class. He sat down and his teacher was talking about Hirohito. Billy listened with anticipation now. He wanted to know about Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin. He raised his hand. The teacher stopped and looked at Billy. “Yes Billy?” she said. “What about Joseph Stalin and Winston Churchill?” Billy asked. “I was just about to talk about them” the teacher replied with a smile. Billy listened very intently as the teacher explained that Winston Churchill and Stalin were on the side of the Allied Powers during the war and that Great Britain, Russia and the United States were known as the Big Three.

When class was over, Billy spoke with his teacher and explained what he had learned. The teacher was impressed with the interest that Billy had with the Second World War. Billy asked if he could stay in the media center during recess and look up more about the powers and the roles that each country had played in the war. He wanted to see pictures of Churchill and Stalin. The teacher allowed Billy to stay in. He didn’t go to the media center, instead he ran to the bathroom and pulled the paper towel. He hoped that this time he would be in Great Britain or Russia to talk to those leaders.