

Samantha could hardly wait for the bus to stop. She and her friends were all packed in tightly, heading out for the biggest adventure of their lives. They were about to experience a white water rafting trip on the South Fork of the American River. It was something they had been talking about almost non-stop for five months. The trip had originally been suggested by their science teacher when they were studying water systems, and as soon as the idea had been planted, the seventh graders knew it was something they just had to do!

Samantha had been responsible for recruiting the chaperones for the trip, and both her father and Aunt Lily had agreed to help. She had organized the fundraising, and in less than half a year, her classmates had earned enough money to make the dream become a reality. They had held car washes and sold magazine subscriptions, door to door. Today, they were finally going to strap their life jackets on and head into the river for nine hours of excitement, challenge, and thrills. Samantha was proud of the role she had played in making the trip happen.

When the bus finally stopped, all the kids piled off. They ran down to the river's edge where several massive yellow rafts were waiting, each grabbing a paddle and a life vest on the way, as their river guide had instructed them. Then, they listened carefully as the guide gave them instructions about what to do if they fell out of the raft, how to pull each other back in, and how to steer the craft when they were on the water. Once it was clear that everyone knew what to do, they all helped push the boat into the river and hopped in for a day they would never forget.