

中学生英汉对照小读物

埃玛的故事

本书编委会编

ENGLISH
CHINESE



民主与建设出版社

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人民教育出版社

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

埃玛的故事:英汉对照/《中学生英汉对照小读物》编委会编. —北京:民主与建设出版社,1995.8

(中学生英汉对照小读物)

学校图书馆装备用书

ISBN 7-80112-035-3

I. 埃… II. 中… III. ①英语—语言读物,文学②中学英语课—课外读物 IV. H319.4

民主与建设出版社出版发行

(地址:北京市东城区王府井大街22号 邮编:100006)

河北保定西城胶印厂印刷

开本:787×1092 1/32 印张:3.625

1995年8月第1版 1995年8月第1次印刷

字数:73千字 印数:0001—5000

(每套30本)总定价:105.00元

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The Story of Emma and I

Early Days

"Please, Miss. I can't see the blackboard!"

"Neither can I. Can you move her, 'Miss?"

"No." said my English teacher. "Sheila can't see the blackboard very well. Her eyesight is bad. She has to get close to the board."

It was true. At the age of eleven my eyesight was very poor. There were schools for those who couldn't see. But my Parents didn't want me to go away to a school for blind children.

We lived in a big city in the centre of England. Nottingham. Neither my father nor my mother could see well. But they managed to get about. We lived quite happily. my father and mother and my older brother Graham. Graham's sight was poor. But he could see better than I could. He read stories to me.

When I left school, I learned to be a telephonist. Then I got my first job in a big shop. But as the months passed, my sight got worse. At seventeen I couldn't see my way about the house or the street. I was now unable to read at all. Blind peo-

ple can read by touching and feeling the points on braille paper. So I had to learn braille *.

I didn't want to use a white stick. I wouldn't ask for help. I was a girl of seventeen and I wanted to be like other people. But I was a great danger to motorists when I walked among the cars.

One evening changed my life. I was going home from work as usual. I had to take two buses. I got off the first one, and walked slowly towards the stop for the second bus. But I fell against something hard. "I'm sorry." I said. I stepped forward again. But again I met the hard thing. Then I realised. I was saying sorry to a tall street light. I laughed and went on, and found the right bus stop.

But at this stop the bus didn't always wait. You had to make a sign to the driver, and of course you had to know it was the right bus. That evening there was no one there to ask.

So I walked to the next stop. Here again there was no one to ask. I went on to the next stop, and the same thing happened. By this time I was quite lost.

In the end I walked back to the city centre, which was about eight kilometres. I knew I could catch the right bus there! At last I got home—three hours later than usual. I was tired and unhappy.

But we had a visitor at home. He was Mr Brown, my home teacher. Home teachers visit the blind to talk to them.

and they bring braille paper and other helpful things. Mr Brown visited our family quite often. because none of us could see well.

“Oh, Sheila. you’re very late. I’ve been waiting a long time to see you.” he said. I told him what happened. He asked at once. “Why don’t you have a guide dog?”

They were the seven most important words in my life up to that time. A guide dog takes blind people about the streets, and guides them through the traffic. The dog sees for the blind person. and becomes the eyes of the blind. I liked animals very much. But I never thought of a guide dog. I believed I could manage myself.

Mr Brown continued. “You need a guide dog. Sheila. and you’re just the right age for one.”

My world seemed to be changing. What a wonderful idea. I asked quickly. “How can I get a guide dog? What do I have to do?”

“Don’t worry.” he said. “I’ll get you the papers and write the answers for you.”

2. First Day at the Centre

Mr Brown came back a few days later with the papers. full of questions. How tall was I? What work did I do? What sort of house did I live in? We sent the papers back and I waited.

Guide dogs were first used in Germany during the 1914—18 war. A doctor found that an Alsatian dog could look after blind soldiers. The idea travelled to the United States of America. and came back to England. Guide Dogs for the Blind was started in 1934. There are five centres in Britain where the dogs learn their job. They're trained to help the blind.

At last an answer came from the Centre in the town of Leamington Spa in the middle of England. They sent a guide dog trainer to see me and talk to me. He came to work with me. and he watched the way I walked. He looked at our house. which had a very small back garden. "Oh, that's good! The dog can't get out of this garden. / he said. He told me I might have to wait for nearly a year for my dog.

The waiting time was a great trouble to me. Every time a letter came I asked someone to read it to me quickly. I wondered sometimes if I would get a dog. Some people didn't get one.

But at last the great day came. In July. only eight months later, I was asked to go to the training centre at Leamington Spa.

Geoffrey, a man working in my office. drove me there in his car. When we arrived. he told me it was a large old house with trees all round it. We waited in the hall. I suddenly felt afraid. Perhaps I was not good enough for a guide dog. I might not do well at the Centre. They might not give me one. Then a kind girl's voice said. "Hello. Sheila. We're waiting for

you. If you'd like to take my arm. I'll show you to your room."

Geoffrey said goodbye and left. and the girl took me through the big building. She explained where the different rooms were. Then she stopped and said. "Here we are. This is your room—it's number ten. / She told me to put my hand up to the door. I could feel number ten in braille. "All the doors are marked in braille. / she said. "You won't have any trouble, and you'll find your way about very well."

I felt my way into the room and found a chair, a table with a radio and my bed. And one more thing, the most important. Next to the table was a dog bed. I felt it. It was big and comfortable.

"Well, that it. Sheila." said the girl. "I'll leave you now. Lunch will be in half an hour."

I heard the door close behind her, and I started taking my things out of my cases. I stopped and felt the dog bed again. What sort of dog would soon be there?

Then a man's voice called through the door. "Hello, Sheila. can I speak to you?" I opened the door and he continued. "I'm your trainer. Brian Peel. I train the dogs and teach people how to use them."

He shook my hand, and his handshake felt strong and friendly. I was sure we would get on well.

"If you'd like to come with me, / he said, "I'll take you to the dining room."

As we went to the dining room, I began to worry. I hated eating meals with people who could see. I couldn't find the food on my plate.

But there was no difficulty here. I found. Brian sat next to me and put the plate in front of me. "Here we are." he said. Fish. potatoes and greens. Potatoes at twelve o'clock. greens at three o'clock. and fish between nine and six. "So I not only knew the food—I also knew where to find it.

During the meal we talked. "Are there any other people here for training?" I asked.

"You're the first to arrive." answered Brian. "Three more are coming this afternoon."

Then I asked the question which was burning in my mind. "When do we get our dogs?"

"You get them in a day or two. Then we'll know a little more about you. and you'll know more about the dogs. And we teach you how to look after your guide dog.

"Have you chosen the dog for me?"

"I think I have." said Brian. "But I have to be quite sure. I know the dogs but I don't know all the students yet. A young owner wants a dog that can move quickly. If the owner is older. we want a dog that will move more slowly. We try to find the right dog for the right owner."

After the meal. we went into the sitting room and met the other students. One of them. Dorothy. was about thirty-four. and wanted her second guide dog. And there was Harry.

a man of forty-nine who was blinded in the war. He came for his third guide dog.

During the afternoon, Brian told us about our month's training. He explained how he trained the dogs, and how we would be trained to use them.

3. Emma Arrives

Next morning at half past seven, I was woken by the sound of dogs. It was like music in my ears. I lay there half awake. Which one is going to be mine. I wondered. I hurried through my breakfast.

After breakfast, Brian said, "Now, your guide dog has to wear a harness. And you hold the harness, and the dog guides you."

He gave a white harness to each of us. And we had to put the harness on a wooden dog. "He's called Fred," said Brian. "He won't mind your mistakes!"

We each found the right end of Fred and put the harness on him. Then Brian told us how to stand with the dog always on the left.

"When you want to turn," he said, "with your right arm, you show the dog the direction you want."

In our next lesson we learned how to stay with the dog. Brian acted as the dog. He held a large harness, and we had to walk with him and stop with him.

The lessons went on all day. The next day after breakfast Brian gave us another talk. and then asked us to go back to our rooms.

“You’ll get to know your dog much better in a quiet place. he said.

I went up to my room and sat on the edge of the bed. with the door open. Then I heard Brian’s footsteps coming towards the door. And with them I heard the sound of a dog’s feet.

“Here we are. Sheila.” he said as he came in to the room. “Here’s your dog. She’s called Emma. She’s a Labrador. And she’s the colour of chocol te. chocolate brown.” Then I heard Brian leaving. closing the door behind him.

“Emma.” I called. At once she came running across the room. I was nearly pushed off the bed. Then I felt her wet tongue on my face.

“Hello. Emma.” I said. “Hello!” I couldn’t believe it. She was pushing her cold nose into my hands. I knew then we were going to be friends. “She likes me.” I thought. “She likes me!” I wanted to dance round the room.

I tried to feel the shape of her head. But she wouldn’t stop jumping up and down in front of me. Sometimes I got a wet nose in my face. But at last she sat down by my feet. and I was able to feel her body. Her coat was very thick and rough. She wasn’t very big but she was strong. She had very soft ears. And she was so alive.

Emma didn't sit there for long. She started to bring me things. First she brought me my shoes. One after the other. She was saying quite clearly. "Here I am. I'm Emma. I'm your new dog. And I've brought this shoe for you."

I could not remember being as happy as this. And from those first few moments. Emma's love has never changed. From then on. she never left my side. And I have looked after her in every way.

4. Walking with Emma

I had my first walk with Emma that afternoon. And I realised why we had to have a month's lessons with the dogs. Emma and I liked each other, but at first she would not do what I told her. She would only do what Brian told her.

I put Emma's harness on her. We started off down a quiet road near to the Centre. "Forward!" he cried. And Emma started off very fast. I was running along, holding on to the harness.

"I'll never keep up with her!" I cried.

"Oh, you'll soon be able to do it," said Brian. "You've been walking too slowly." A guide dog, I discovered, goes at about 6 kilometres an hour.

So I walked faster. Then suddenly Emma stopped at the edge of the road. I was out on the road before I could stop. I heard Brian laughing.

“You have to follow your dog. When she stops, you stop.”

“Then Brian showed me how to cross a busy road with Emma. My job was to listen, and Emma’s job was to look. First I made sure that nothing was coming. Then I gave her the command to cross. But if I was wrong, and she could see something coming, she would wait.

Guide dogs are taught to stop and sit down at the edge of every road. There they wait for the next command. The four most important commands are “Right”. “Left”. “Back”. and “Forward”.

I’ve always hated railway stations. I’m afraid of the noise. And I never know where I am. But Brian said I should go to a station. “You may want to go by train one day, or meet someone at the station. You’ve got Emma now. She knows her way around.”

He drove me to the station with Emma. I put Emma’s harness on. “Right.” said Brian. “I’ll park the car. You go in. Emma knows the way. I’ll be with you soon.

Emma took me through the doors. She went down some stairs, and then we went in and out between people in the station. Then she stopped and sat down. I had no idea where I was. I stood and waited for Brian.

He was there in two minutes. “Right.” he said. “Emma’s sitting close to the railway line on the edge. In front of you, two metres down is the railway line. Now tell her to go for-

ward.

I was afraid. "You must be joking." I said.

"No. go on. Tell her to go forward."

I stood there. Dare I do it? I felt sick with fear. But I heard myself saying, "Forward." At once. Emma got up and pushed herself in front of my legs. Then she started pushing me back away from the edge and that drop two metres down.

I felt very small.

Brian said, "I told you Emma would look after you. It doesn't matter what you tell her. If there's any danger in front of you, she'll push you away."

From then on I felt free. I knew Emma would look after me. That afternoon. I walked with her through the busy streets of the town of Leamington. And I had a big smile on my face as I moved in and out of all those people. I thought, "I don't care now if you know that I'm blind. I can see, too. I've got Emma, and she's all I need."

5. Life with Emma

After the month's training, Emma and I left the Centre in Leamington and went home. Inside the house, I took the harness off Emma. She went wild. She ran all over the place, through every room, round and round.

All my family liked her. Emma knew this was her new home. And I soon found that Emma had two sides. She was

quiet and thoughtful when she was in her harness with me. And she was wild and full of fun when she was not.

The first night at home. Emma slept at the bottom of my bed. She decided that no other place was good enough for her.

I had to go back to my work. and Emma and I made the journey together. I had to catch two buses, and I had to walk across the Market Square in the middle of Nottingham to get to the second bus.

As we walked down the road to the bus stop, I felt through Emma's harness how she was moving. I knew if her ears were up or down. And I knew if she was turning her head left or right.

On the bus Emma soon made friends. She liked to be near the heater in the winter. If the bus was crowded she soon got us a seat. She pulled me down the bus and looked hard at a sitting passenger. This unlucky person soon got up and gave us the seat.

My first day back at work as a telephonist went very well. I was so glad to have Emma, and everyone liked her. In the lunch hour I sat in the park while Emma ran across the grass. She came back to me often to say, "I'm here and I haven't forgotten you."

About the middle of the second week, we started off for work as usual. But that morning Emma took me to work a different way. I was worried, but there was no need. When Emma knew one way, she liked to change it. She found several