

ENGLISH LANGUAGE SERVICES

The Russells of Hollytree Circle



Collier-Macmillan International
A Division of The Macmillan Company

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PREFACE

The increasing study of English as a second language throughout the world has resulted in a great demand for supplementary reading material that is relatively simple in structure and vocabulary, but which deals with subject matter that will hold the adult student's interest. *Hollytree Circle* is one of a series of readers that have been prepared to help fill this need.

A secondary demand, particularly on the part of those who plan to study in the United States, is for books that will familiarize readers with everyday ways of life in the United States. Much of the available material deals with romantic periods of the past, or with the lives of famous citizens of the United States. Although these books are interesting, they do not prepare the stranger for actual life in the country today. It is present-day customs that interest the foreign visitor most, after all, since it is in present-day society that he will be taking part.

Hollytree Circle was planned to help fill that need. It describes a year in the life of a typical North American family. The father is a lawyer, and the family lives a comfortable but unpretentious suburban life familiar to millions of American families with fathers who work in business or the professions in the larger cities of the United States. A companion book in this series, *The Mitchell Family*, describes the life of a skilled manual worker and his family in a small town. Together, these two books describe the living patterns of a large proportion of the now predominantly urban population of the United States. Farmers are a minority now, and it is only in movies and on the television screen that most Americans see cowboys and Indians.

Hollytree Circle has been written in a straightforward way with a vocabulary held, as far as practicable, to the 3,000-word level. Words beyond this level that are necessary to the story have been marked with an asterisk (*) on their first appearance, and defined in the glossary. The Glossary and Notes also include definitions of idiomatic phrases and of unusual meaning for common words from the word list. Cultural notes are included whenever they are required. Besides the glossary, word-study exercises have been provided to reinforce the student's familiarity with new terms. Comprehension questions have also been included for each chapter. All the didactic material is in the back of the book, where it will not interfere with the enjoyment of the reading, but may be referred to when it is needed. Thus, the book is suitable for either recreational or supplementary reading, or for use as a classroom text.

The 3,000-word list used in preparing *Hollytree Circle* and the rest of this series of readers was selected by the following method. Michael West's *General Service List of English Words* was used as a base. To these 2,000 words were added such words as were needed to complete sets of terms commonly used in discussing everyday subjects like food, health, travel, home, family, the weather, school, and so on. Then all words of a frequency of 25 occurrences per million words according to the Thorndike-Lorge *Teacher's Word Book of 30,000 Words* were added. In order to adapt the resulting list to American usage in the 1960's, expressions that are out of date or not generally used in the United States were eliminated. Proper nouns, inflected forms and derived words were also eliminated. For example, *kind* is listed, but *kindly*, *kindness*, *unkind*, etc., are not. Such regular derivatives, formed by adding common prefixes and suffixes to a base word, which are not listed as separate items, are assumed to be understood by the student, and allowable according to the restrictions in use in this book. Common function words (about 250 articles, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, prepositions, numerals, days of the week, etc.) were removed to a separate list.

Thus, the 3,000-word list consists of basic content-words, and taking into consideration the possible derivatives of these, plus the function words, the total working vocabulary at this level includes a minimum of 5,000 items.

Hollytree Circle is one of the COLLIER-MACMILLAN ENGLISH READERS, which, together with other types of teaching materials, have been prepared for the Collier-Macmillan English Program by the Materials Development Staff of English Language Services, Inc., under the direction of Edwin T. Cornelius, Jr., and Willard D. Sheeler. *Hollytree Circle* was written by Joan Heidemann. The simplification, glossary, and exercises were done by the textbook staff, with Earle W. Brockman as consulting editor.

Illustrated by Raymond Burns.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCING THE RUSSELLS OF HOLLYTREE CIRCLE

It was the Saturday after *Christmas. All the children all over the United States were having school holidays. Most of them on that cold, sunny holiday afternoon, seemed to be out in front of their houses, playing with Christmas toys. Fathers were home from work, and mothers were resting after all their busy days of shopping and cooking for the holiday. Downtown, the shops and department stores were very quiet after the rush of Christmas business. The clerks were having a well-deserved rest. The few people who were moving about in city or country were on their way to visit relatives or going to holiday parties with their friends.

It was like that in Hollytree Circle. Neighbors who drove by waved to ten-year-old Tom Russell, who was out riding his new bicycle, and letting the boy next door try it out. The dog was dashing after them and barking at the wheels. Tom's big sister Ann was in the house. She had shut herself upstairs in her room to play some noisy new *phonograph records to some of her girl friends. Downstairs, her parents had closed the door of the living room to shut out the noise. They preferred to hear the quieter sound made by the cat curled up by the fire, and the *tinkle of their tea cups and of the *Christmas tree ornaments.

Jim Russell put some more wood on the fire and stroked the cat. Then he straightened up again and lit his pipe. His wife Mary liked the smell of tobacco smoke almost as much as the smell of the wood fire, and the delicious pine

smell of the Christmas tree. This was her favorite part of the whole holiday. She liked sharing a quiet afternoon with Jim, after all the Christmas excitement, and before the New Year plunged them back into their busy everyday world. She glanced around the warm room and at the shining Christmas tree. Then she looked up affectionately at Jim, who was still standing by the fireplace, smiling down at her. "What a lucky woman I am," she thought, "to have such a good husband, two wonderful children, and this sun-filled house to call home." The art book Jim had given her for Christmas still lay open on her knees. "It's beautiful, Jim," she said. "Thank you, dear. Thank you very much."

The Russells' house stood halfway round Hollytree Circle, which was not a real circle, but a short half-circle of a street, opening at each end onto Roxbury Road. There were nine houses along the outer side of this half-circle, and the Russells' was the middle one. The street was named for the *holly trees that grew on the half-circle of land which it enclosed. They were very pretty, especially in winter. When cold weather comes and other trees are bare, holly trees keep their shiny dark green leaves and red *berries. Many people think they are most beautiful when there is snow on the green branches.

Hollytree Circle was in a neighborhood of single-family houses in the outlying part of a city that lies near the east coast of the United States. You could find similar neighborhoods, similar streets, similar houses, and even similar families, in most cities in the United States. The fathers might be lawyers, like Jim Russell, or doctors or teachers or business men or government officials or labor union officials or skilled workers or salespeople. But the story of their lives is more likely than not to be similar to the story of the Russells.

When the Russells were first married, they had an apartment in the center of the city. It was near a bus route and close to the center of town so that it was convenient for shopping, work, and entertainment. The apartment was

small, however, and when Ann was born, the Russells began to think of moving to a house. Apartment walls are thin, and people in other apartments can hear the noise made by babies and young children too easily. Also, the Russells' apartment building was right on the street, with no garden space, and Mary had to take Ann to the park every afternoon so that she could have fresh air and a place to play. Mary had often thought how nice it would be to have a house with a yard where Ann could play safely out-of-doors without having to leave home.

Mary and Jim began to study the newspaper advertisements more carefully than they had ever done before. Their parents had given them a few thousand dollars when they were married, and they had saved some more themselves, so that they had enough money to pay about one-third of the cost of the kind of house they wanted. They could get a loan from a bank to pay the rest.

Now, on Saturdays and Sundays, they began to drive around the city looking at houses for sale. They quickly decided they did not like the new *suburbs where many new houses were being built just outside the city. The houses were very modern, but each one looked like the house next to it and none of them had trees growing nearby. The Russells found a few new houses that had trees around them, but either these houses were very far from the city or they cost more than the young couple could afford.

They finally decided, after much searching, that they would not be able to find a new house that suited their needs. A house twenty or thirty years old would probably have tall trees around it and not be too far from the center of the city. They had also noticed that old houses often have bigger rooms than new houses do.

Jim and Mary had some friends who lived in a part of the city called Oak Hill. These friends urged the Russells to buy a house in their neighborhood. "The schools are very good," they said. "Jim can get to his office in twenty minutes, and Mary will be close to several good shopping areas. And there's plenty of room for children." And so

the Russells went to a *real estate office and asked to see some houses in the Oak Hill area.

The salesman showed them one house that was quite large, but it had a very small yard. He showed them another, which had a pretty garden, but only three bedrooms. Finally, he took them to a house that had four bedrooms and a rather large yard with several big trees. However, the kitchen was dark and did not have modern equipment. "That's the trouble with these old houses," said Jim. "They never have the equipment you want. This house must be thirty years old."

The agent smiled. "It's true this isn't a new house, Mr. Russell, but it's in good condition. Where I come from in *New England, we wouldn't call this an old house. We don't begin to think of a house as really old until it has lasted for a hundred and fifty years."

That evening the Russells discussed the houses they had seen. "We'll never find everything we want in one house," said Jim. "It's just a question of which house has the greatest number of the things we want."

"Well," said Mary, "I do think we need four bedrooms, and I really would like a big yard for Ann."

"You're thinking of the last house we saw, aren't you? I liked it too, but the kitchen is pretty awful, and so I didn't like to suggest it. After all, you're the one who will be spending the most time in the kitchen, and so I feel it's *up to you to decide if you're willing to work in such an old-fashioned place."

Mary thought again of the shining kitchens, filled with all the most modern equipment, that they had seen in the newer houses. Then she thought of the last house, with its big rooms and its pleasant, tree-shaded yard.

"I think we ought to take the last one we saw," she said. "It's near our friends, it's not too far from your office, and there's a good school for Ann nearby. Besides, I like the rest of the houses on the street. Maybe the kitchen will look better if we paint it a bright color."

"O.K., dear," said Jim. "I think the house is the *best

buy of all the ones we've seen. It's got enough room for us, and its location is good. Maybe later on we can afford to have the kitchen modernized."

"Besides," said Mary, "I like all those pretty holly trees in the circle across the street."

The Russells moved into their house on Hollytree Circle when Ann was a little over a year old. Tom was born during the first year they lived there. They never found the money to modernize the kitchen completely, but they did paint it yellow, and Mary had a new stove and a dishwasher. The holly trees were still across the street, with their shiny green leaves and red berries.

Chapter 2

JANUARY: THE WEEK'S ACTIVITIES

Mary Russell bent down and picked up a toy soldier, a library book, two pencils, and then two more toy soldiers from the floor in Tom's room. "I wonder why I don't have the smallest waist in town," she thought. "I certainly get plenty of exercise bending down and straightening up." It was a Monday morning in January. The Christmas tree had been taken down and its decorations had been stored for another year, and the Russell family was back to its usual weekday *routine. The house seemed very calm to Mary Russell as she went about her housekeeping *chores, after the usual *turmoil of getting her family off in the morning.

Every workingday morning the family got up to the sound of alarm clocks at seven. The children hurried into their school clothes, and then ate breakfast. They shouted to their mother for missing gloves and schoolbooks while she was trying to get her sleepy husband his breakfast and

plan the affairs of the day. By a quarter past eight, Jim would throw on his hat and coat, snatch up his *briefcase, give his wife and daughter a hasty kiss, and hurry out. On Mondays, he took the car and left a little early to pick up the other members of his *car pool. On other days of the week, he had to be sure to be at the corner of Roxbury Road by half past eight, so that he wouldn't keep the other men waiting. By doing this, four of the five men were able to leave their cars for their wives to use each day. Besides, they saved a lot of money that otherwise they would have spent in parking five cars in parking lots downtown, instead of one.

By twenty minutes to nine, the children finally gathered together their books and *homework, wrapped themselves in warm coats and scarves, pulled on their boots, and kissed their mother good-bye. Mary Russell saw them out the door, reminding them of plans for the afternoon, and then returned for a last cup of tea in the suddenly quiet kitchen. She would have the house to herself now until three-thirty, when the children always came bursting in, full of eager reports of the day's happenings at school, and hungry for *cocoa and *cookies.

On Mondays, Mary Russell stayed home all day. The house always needed tidying up after the weekend. It seemed that toys and clothes and books and magazines and phonograph records never got put away on Saturdays and Sundays. Monday was also *laundry day. Mary sent her husband's shirts to a commercial laundry in town, but there were still plenty of sheets and towels and clothes to keep her busy with the washing machine at home. It was usually the middle, or even the end, of the afternoon before Mary had put the final lot of washing into the washer, taken it out again after it had been washed and rinsed, put it in the *dryer, and finally folded the hot, clean, dry linen and put it all away. The clothes she put aside for Mrs. Evans to iron when she came to clean on Wednesdays. On laundry days, Mary often thought of the time when she and Jim had just been married and were living in a small

apartment in town. Then, she used to collect their dirty clothes in a bag and carry them down the street to a nearby *laundromat. She paid fifty cents to use the washer and dryer there, and sat looking at a magazine until the wash was done, and she could carry it back to the apartment.

On Tuesdays, Mrs. Russell helped in the small library at the public school to which Ann and Tom went. The county school system does not have enough money from school taxes to pay professional librarians to take care of the library all the time, and so mothers who have some spare time, and know something about librarian work, work there regularly without pay.

On Wednesdays, Mrs. Evans, the cleaning woman, came. She cleaned the carpets and the floors with a *vacuum cleaner, *scrubbed the kitchen and the bathrooms, and ironed the clothes that had been washed on Monday. It was a great convenience for Mrs. Russell to know that Mrs. Evans would be in the house all day. Whenever a repairman had to come and fix the telephone or the *television set, or anything else that was broken, Mrs. Russell tried to get him to come on Wednesday. Deliverymen and repairmen rarely can say exactly what time they will come—"some time on Wednesday" is about as exact as they can be, and so busy housewives waste a lot of time waiting for them.

Mrs. Russell always tried to make appointments with the doctor, the dentist, or the hairdresser on Wednesdays, too, partly because she knew that she would have the time, and partly because she knew that it was easier for Mrs. Evans to work if everyone was out of the way (even though Mrs. Evans was too polite to say so). Mrs. Russell really felt that Wednesday was her *day off. That was the day she went shopping and spent as long as she liked in the public library looking for interesting books. She often had lunch in town with some friend or other on that day. Sometimes they ate in a restaurant and went to an art exhibit or a concert afterwards. She found these expeditions were refreshing, and gave her something to tell her

family about after hearing from them what happened at school and at the office.

Mrs. Russell kept Thursdays for any special *errands that needed to be done: taking clothes to the *dry cleaner, taking the dog or cat to the *veterinarian, or catching up with housework that had to be put off because of some emergency. If she was not busy with special chores, she might take the opportunity to invite one of her women friends to lunch.

On Fridays, Mrs. Russell went to the *supermarket and tried to buy all the groceries she would need for the next week. There were three big markets in the neighborhood, and each had different special foods *on sale for the weekend. Mrs. Russell went to the one where the things she needed were cheapest. That was why she studied the food advertisements so carefully in the Friday morning newspaper.

Saturdays and Sundays, the whole family was home and everybody was busy. Jim Russell often did repairs around the house. In summer, he and Tom often washed and polished the car, and of course there was always weeding to be done on the grounds. Because of the handsome big trees, the yard was very shady, and so not very good for cultivating flowers. So the Russells did not attempt to have a garden, but worked to keep the lawn green and weeded. It was Tom's responsibility to cut it with the lawn mower during the summer. There were bushes which grew well in shady places, and which kept the yard green and pleasant in winter. So the Russells had a pleasant yard which they enjoyed without working quite as hard as the more ambitious gardeners in the neighborhood.

There were lots of other things to do on the weekend. The children might go to the local movie theater, for there was always a special children's program on Saturday afternoon. Sometimes one of their friends might have a birthday party, or they would just go to a friend's house to play. Or the other children would come to the Russells' house. *Once in a while, the whole family would go *bowling, or

go together to a movie that they all wanted to see.

Jim Russell, who had been a good tennis player in his college days, still liked to play when the weather was good. And then the dog always expected a long walk on the weekend, even if the weather wasn't good. Occasionally, Mr. and Mrs. Russell were invited out to dinner, and sometimes they invited friends to dinner at home.

On Sundays everything started late because the Sunday paper was so big, and the Russells liked to read it all while they finished breakfast. Ann and Tom had to be sure that their homework for Monday was finished. Usually there were good television programs that they wanted to watch on Sunday evening, and so they had to finish their homework ahead of time.

Sometimes their father made *spaghetti sauce for Sunday night supper. This was the only thing he could cook, and he cooked spaghetti much better than his wife did. Jim Russell's spaghetti dinner was always a special event.

Then suddenly the weekend was over. The next day, Jim Russell went back to the office, the children returned to school, and their mother began tidying up the house all over again.

Chapter 3

JANUARY: A SNOWSTORM

It was a grey Friday morning in January about two weeks after Christmas. The ground outside was covered with snow; the leafless trees were black, and you could not see the sky—only dark, grey clouds. Indoors, Mary Russell was cleaning the house and listening to the radio. She herself played the piano very well, and enjoyed listening to music while working around the house.

She was so busy cleaning and humming along with the music on the radio that she did not notice that it was getting darker and darker outside. The house was delightfully peaceful with the children back in school. Even the cat and dog were quiet.

The music ended, and the ten o'clock news came over the radio. "The weather bureau reports a storm to the west," the announcer said. "Heavy snow is *forecast. It is already snowing in Hartfield sixty miles away, and the storm is expected to reach here by twelve o'clock. As much as fourteen inches of snow is *predicted."

"Oh, dear, I have hardly anything to eat in the house," Mrs. Russell thought. "I was going to the store this afternoon to buy the food for next week. I'd certainly better go right away—then I won't have to worry about driving on snowy roads."

Then she had another thought. "Mr. Hopkins next door took their car to work this morning. I wonder whether Lucille Hopkins needs anything." She picked up the telephone and *dialed the Hopkins' telephone number.

"Lucille? This is Mary Russell. The radio says there is going to be a snowstorm, and I'm going to the store now. Would you like to go with me? . . . Yes, I'll be glad to get that for you. Just bread and eggs. Is that all you need? . . . No, no; it's no trouble at all. I'll see you later, then. Good-bye." Mrs. Russell quickly put on her coat and gloves, picked up some money, a book, and the car keys, and left the house. The cat and dog still slept without moving.

The supermarket was already crowded when she arrived there, and more and more people came in as the radio repeated announcements about the storm. It always took Mrs. Russell at least an hour to do her weekly shopping, and she expected it to take even longer that day because there were so many people in the store. As she pushed her *shopping cart up and down the aisles of the store, she put in extra cocoa and milk. The children would probably want cocoa to drink. She bought *popcorn