

“Emily, wake up! It is the first day of school!” Emily Collins opened her eyes to find her mother holding a tray of pancakes, eggs, and bacon with a glass of orange juice.

“Breakfast in bed for good luck!” she said. Emily rolled her eyes as her mom left the room but ate her breakfast rather quickly. After dressing in a blue and white sundress, she brushed her teeth and grabbed her backpack. Emily put on her new Converse high-tops and ran out the door.

Outside, Emily’s friends, Kim and Sarah, were waiting. Kim was a short girl with short black hair who had emigrated from China the year before. She wasn’t very smart, but was very pretty. Practically her opposite, Sarah was tall with dark skin and long black-brown hair. She was smart, but not very pretty.

They all got on their scooters and started off towards school. They were not in the same class that year, so they headed off in different directions once they arrived at school.

7 hours later: “Brrrring!” the school bell rang. The whole class got up and ran out the door of the classroom. There was a flood of kids in the hallway, and Emily was swept with them. After finally getting out of the rush, she stood on the steps, waiting for Kim and Sarah. Emily saw Sarah squeeze out about 5 feet below her, and they ran at each other and embraced.

“You’re here! I thought I lost you!” Sarah panted, “Kim made a bunch of new friends and they are now the ‘popular girls’ but I met a new girl named Rachel and she is really cool!”

“Great! I can’t wait to meet her!” said a completely bewildered Emily. Seconds later, a girl stepped out of the now thinning rush. She had long brown hair and deep blue eyes.

“I’m Rachel. I am new to the school, so will you be my friend?” she said. Emily happily obliged. As they were scooting home they came across a yard sale. Emily started looking around; unaware that Sarah and Rachel had already left. Under a table there was a box with

the words: “Free puppy”. A yellow lab puppy was tied up in the box. Emily gasped. She had to give the puppy a home! She untied the puppy, which leapt onto her face. Thinking quickly, Emily made a makeshift leash with the sash of her dress. The puppy strained and pulled, but Emily held tight all the way home.

“Emily Collins! Why did you bring that puppy into the house?” said her mother after discovering the young canine prancing about.

“Mom, it was tied up at a yard sale. It needs a forever home,” Emily calmly explained.

“Fine, you can keep the puppy if you take full responsibility for it,” said her mother. Emily pumped her arm in the air and began to train the puppy. She bought it a real leash and a collar. She bought it treats and toys and food. She trained it. She named it Cookie. It was a very good dog.

One fateful Saturday, Emily’s life changed drastically. She, Sarah, and Rachel (who had turned out to be a really good friend) went ice

skating on Freeman Lake. Emily brought Cookie along for company and tied her up against a bench. The girls laced their skates and started out onto the ice.

“Race you to the other side!” Emily yelled. The girls all picked up their pace. Emily came out front by a far after Rachel helped Sarah up after a fall. Emily was almost to the center of the lake when the ice cracked loudly.

“Emily! Go back!” Sarah screamed. Emily was going really fast, but she was able to stop just at the edge of the ice. Rachel carefully got down on her knees and tried to get to Emily, but the ice groaned and splashed into the murky water, taking Emily along with it. Rachel shakily got to her knees and backed away slowly.

Back at the bench, Cookie thrashed and strained until her collar slipped free. She took off running across the ice, past Sarah and Rachel, who had almost reached shore.

“Cookie, come!” they yelled in unison. Cookie either didn’t hear or didn’t listen, because she kept running. When the ice began to get thin, Cookie slowed. She crept up to the edge and stuck out her head. Emily weakly grasped it. Cookie pulled back as hard as she could until a gasping, panting Emily was back on thick ice. Then the world, Emily’s world, went black. She awoke with a sharp pain.

“It’s okay sweetie. Go back to sleep,” Mrs. Collins was sitting by the side of the hospital bed. Emily took her advice. Emily stayed in this same condition for 5 days, fitfully drifting in and out of sleep. Finally, she was in good enough shape to go home.

When Emily entered her house, Cookie was waiting for her at the door. Emily hugged her dog tightly.

“Oh Cookie,” she whispered, “You’re my free hero.”