

Animal Rescue Club

by

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Chapter 1 News time

It was news time at school.

Harriet and Henrietta, the twins, marched up to the front of the class to give their news together.

“We found a stray dog in our garden last night,” Harriet informed the class proudly.

“We fed him and made him a bed out of old blankets in the garage,” added Henrietta. “We are keeping him until Mummy and Daddy find a new home for him.”

“And we’re starting an Animal Rescue Club,” announced Harriet.

“What a good idea!” beamed Miss Barry, the teacher.

The twins went to sit down feeling very pleased with themselves.

At break time, everyone crowded round Harriet and Henrietta.

“Can I join your club?” asked Susan Feeney.

“Please, please, me too!” begged someone else.

“And me!” That was Emma Gallagher. This was Emma’s first week at the school. Her family had just moved to the village. Emma was finding it hard to make friends as everybody already knew everybody else.

Harriet waited till everyone was quiet.

“To join our club,” she announced, “you have to rescue an animal, like we did.”

“Oh,” sighed all the children. Now that would be a problem.

Everyone lost interest and went off to play games instead. Everyone, that is, except Emma. She was determined to join the Animal Rescue Club.

Chapter 2 Emma goes searching

As soon as she’d had her tea, Emma asked Mum if they could go for a walk.

“What a lovely idea!” said Mum, surprised. Emma wasn’t usually very keen on going for walks. “Where shall we go?”

Emma thought for a moment. Where would she be most likely to find a stray animal? The park, of course! There were always loads of dogs there. One of them was sure to be a stray.

“The park, please!” Emma smiled.

“OK,” said Mum. “I’ll go and get Simon up.”

Simon was Emma’s baby brother. Soon he was in his pram and they set off. Mum chatted away but Emma didn’t listen. She was busy scanning the street for animals in need of rescue.

But there were none to be seen. And none in the park either. All the dogs she saw were on leads – just as the sign in the park said they were meant to be. Emma sighed. She would not be joining the Animal Rescue Club just yet.

Chapter 3 Shopping

Emma was nearly in tears at school next day when she found out that the Animal Rescue Club had two new members. Tommy Doherty had rescued a rolled-up hedgehog from the middle of the road and put it safely in his garden. Joshua Webb had found a blackbird all tangled up in the strawberry net and he and his Dad had cut it carefully free.

“Yes, you can be members of our club,” Harriet told them. “You helped to rescue some animals. Mind you,” she added, “helping stray dogs is better.”

Emma was grumpy for the rest of the day. How come other people were managing to find animals to help and she wasn’t? It wasn’t fair.

The next day was Saturday. Dad took Emma shopping in town. Mum stayed at home with Simon.

“Let’s go to the bookshop first,” said Dad, after they’d parked the car. “I want to get Mum a book for her birthday next week. And I’ll get you one too, if you like.”

Emma beamed. She would love a new book. But even more than that, she would love to rescue an animal.

As they turned the corner into the road where the bookshop was, Emma’s eyes lit up. For there, tied up to a bit of fencing across the road with a piece of rope, was a dog!

“Wow!” she thought. “An abandoned dog! What luck!”

Chapter 4 The rescue

“Go and look in the children’s section,” Dad told her when they got inside the shop. “I’ll come and find you there when I’ve chosen a book for Mum.”

“OK!” nodded Emma. She headed towards the children’s books but when she was sure Dad wasn’t looking, she nipped back to the door and darted outside. She looked across the road. Good! The dog was still there.

Emma just had to cross the road now. She’d never crossed a busy road like this on her own before but she knew what to do. She hurried to the crossing and pressed the button to make the lights stop the traffic. Several other people joined her. After a few seconds, the green man lit up and Emma walked quickly over.

Then she went to inspect the dog.

The dog wagged his tail happily when he saw Emma coming. He was very shaggy and a bit on the skinny side, Emma thought. He had a battered black collar on but there wasn’t a name tag on it.

“Definitely a stray!” decided Emma.

“Here, doggy!” she said, stretching out her hand for the dog to sniff. “I’ve come to rescue you!” The dog wagged his tail happily. He seemed pleased at the news.

“I’ll just untie you and then we must go back to my Dad,” Emma explained. She began to fumble with the knot that held the rope to the railings. Emma wasn’t very good with knots. “Bother!” she said crossly.

The dog carried on wagging his tail. Emma carried on struggling with the knot. She was concentrating on it so hard that she didn’t hear someone come up behind her.

“Thief! Leave my dog alone, you hooligan!” came a screech in her ear.

Emma nearly jumped out of her skin. She whirled round to see the furious face of an old lady, not much bigger than herself.

Emma was too horrified to speak.

“You kids are all the same!” shrieked the woman. “Fancy trying to steal a lonely old woman’s only friend in the whole world.”

Emma found her voice at last. “I’m sorry!” she cried. “I thought he was a stray! I was going to rescue him!”

“A stray? Does he look like a stray?” yelled the old lady.

“Well, yes,” admitted Emma. “He’s a bit scruffy looking.”

The woman’s face went purple with rage. Emma realised she’d said the wrong thing. She turned and fled, tears streaming down her cheeks.

Chapter 5 Trouble

As Emma was hurrying back into the shop, she met Dad hurrying out of it. He'd discovered that Emma was missing and was anxiously trying to find her.

Dad was very, very angry indeed when he found out what Emma had been up to.

“You can't go taking people's dogs, Emma!” he scolded. “You shouldn't even go near dogs that you don't know. They might bite.”

“Sorry!” mumbled Emma.

“And you must never, ever cross the main road again on your own, do you hear?”

Emma nodded in misery.

Dad was cross the rest of the morning. And then Mum was cross when they got back home and Dad told her what Emma had done.

Emma went to sulk in the garden, away from her cross parents.

Chapter 6 The apple tree

The new house had a big garden with some old apple trees at the bottom. There was a swing hanging from one of the branches which Emma hadn't noticed before. She climbed on and began to swing. She swung higher and higher and soon began to cheer up. She began to sing.

Emma was a terrible singer. She wasn't at all musical and she knew that when she sang she sounded a bit like a cat yowling. Today, though, her singing was so bad that she sounded like two cats yowling.

At last the yowling cat that was Emma stopped – but the other one didn't!

Emma listened in surprise.

“Golly, so it wasn't just me making that racket!” she said to herself. “I wonder who else it was?”

She looked around as she slowed down on her swing, trying to track down where the sound was coming from. Suddenly she caught sight of a bundle of stripy fur in the branches up above her. The bundle of fur was making the noise!

“It's a cat!” Emma thought. “And I think it's stuck. Poor thing.”

Emma jumped off the swing, and at once began to climb the tree. It was an easy tree to climb with its thick, strong branches.

The cat was very near the top. But Emma soon reached her and carefully picked the frightened animal up. It snuggled into her arms.

Chapter 7 Animal rescuer

Emma was now so high that she could see over the tall hedge into the garden next door. Mr Barry lived there. Emma glanced down and was astonished to see Mr Barry looking up at her – together with her teacher!

“Goodness, is that you, Emma?” exclaimed her teacher. “Oh, you clever girl! You've rescued my new cat! I brought her with me to show my father but she ran off! We looked everywhere!”

“Yes,” went on Mr Barry. “Then we heard this dreadful screeching coming from your tree! We guessed it must be Rascal.”

“Actually that was me,” admitted Emma. “At least to start with. Then Rascal joined in and that's how I found her too. I'll bring her straight round.”

Emma shinned quickly back down the tree. She rushed into the house with Rascal to tell Mum and Dad what had happened and ask if she could go next door.

Mum said “yes”, so in no time Emma was handing Rascal back to her teacher.

Miss Barry was very pleased indeed.

“Thanks Emma. I shall tell the whole class on Monday how you rescued my cat for me! I guess that makes you a member of the twins' Animal Rescue Club, doesn't it!” she smiled.

It certainly did! Emma gasped with surprise and delight at the realisation. And without doubt, she would be the Club's star member – after all, you couldn't do much better than rescue the teacher's pet, now could you!

A note from the author

I hope you enjoyed this story and it made you smile!

I've always loved writing. I wrote my first stories when I was about 7, all about Apple and Carrot! English was my favourite subject at school and I went on to study it at Oxford University. I did a postgrad degree in Publishing Studies and Stirling University and then began working as a desk editor. I took a few years out to be an accountant, but when we moved to Ireland from England in 1992, I set myself up as a freelance editor and indexer, and I've been doing that ever since. I'm married to Chris, have three children - Benjamin, Caitlin and Ruadhri - and since 2006 we've all lived in France on a 75 acre farm. We run a gite and carp and farm llamas, and also [edit ebooks](#).

My first books were published in 1996. I have around 30 to my name now and I'm moving into adult fiction and non-fiction, as well as carrying on writing for children and young adults.

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