

Chapter 1: Gala and Kiss

Two dogs were playing in the spring sunshine. They were frisky, young German shepherds. They lived in a place called Fortunate Fields. It was in the mountains known as the Swiss Alps.

Many German shepherd dogs lived at Fortunate Fields. They were trained for important work. Some became police dogs, and some learned to deliver messages. Some were taught to find people who were lost.

A woman came walking up the hill. "Gala! Kiss!" she called. The dogs raced over to the woman. She was their owner, Dorothy Eustis. Dorothy was an American, but she had come to live and work in the Swiss Alps. She raised and trained the dogs at Fortunate Fields.

Gala and Kiss were almost old enough to begin their training. But they would not become police dogs or rescue dogs. They would not be like any other dogs born at Fortunate Field. Something new was about to happen.

Chapter 2: Dog Guides

Over the years, Dorothy Eustis had come to admire German shepherd dogs above all other breeds. They were smart and loyal. They could be trained to help people in many ways. Dorothy had even seen pictures of a shepherd dog in Germany leading its blind master safely across a busy city street.

At first, Dorothy thought the pictures must have been faked. For hundreds of years blind people had depended on dogs to be their "ears." But how could a dog - even a smart one - be trained to act as a blind person's eyes? Then Dorothy found out that there really was a school in Germany where shepherd dogs were trained as guides for soldiers blinded in battle. Dorothy had to see this for herself.

In the summer of 1927, she went to visit the school in Germany. There she followed a blind man and his dog as they took a walk along the wide city streets.

The dog had a special harness with a long, stiff handle. As the man held on to the handle, the dog steered him around lampposts, baby carriages, and other people in the street. They walked along so fast that Dorothy had a hard time keeping up.

When Dorothy got back to Fortunate Fields, she could not stop thinking about what she had seen in Germany. If only every blind person could have a dog like the ones she had seen! Blind people would no longer have to depend on others to get around. They could go to and from work on their own and not be afraid of crowds or traffic. Best of all, they would never again have to face the darkness alone.

Questions to Ask:

What kind of work were Gala and Kiss going to be trained to do?
(synthesis)

Why were German shepherds a good choice to be the "eyes" for blind soldiers? (knowledge)

Describe how the shepherd boy guided the blind man through the city.
(comprehension)