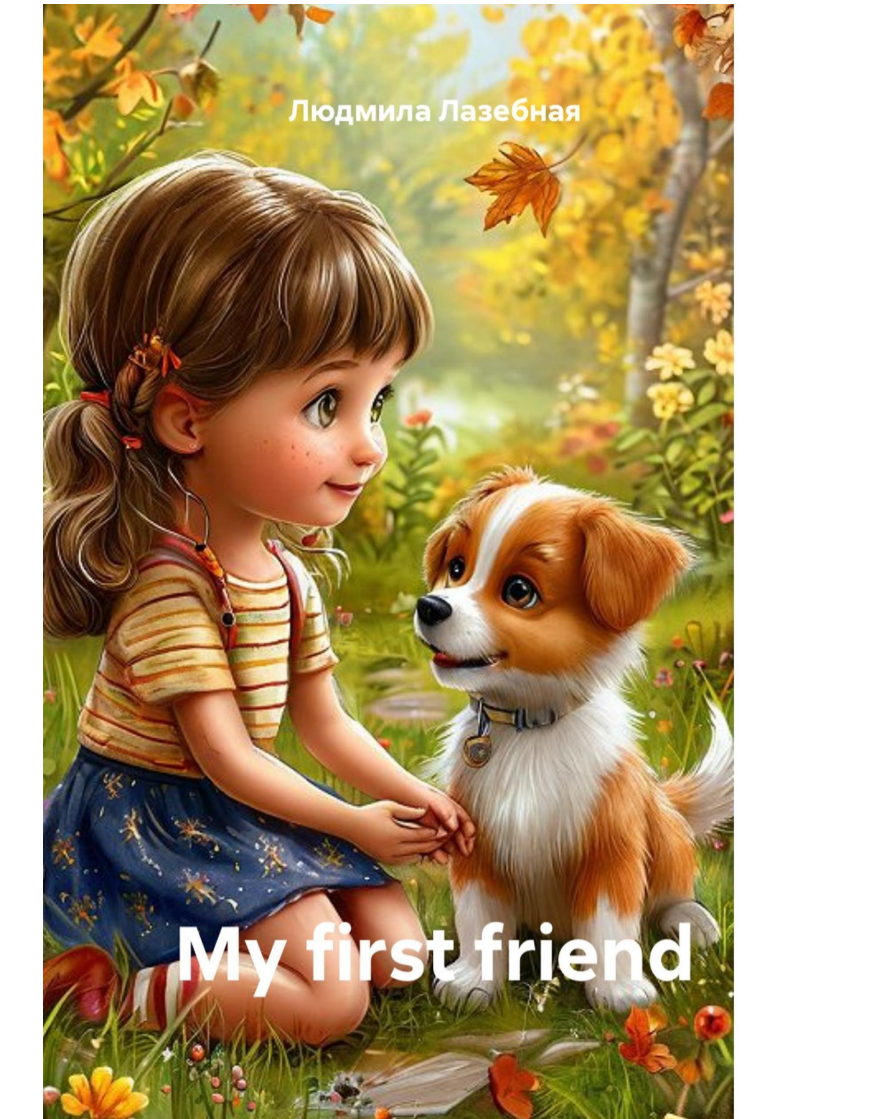




Людмила Лазебная

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Аннотация

У шестилетней девочки появляется первый в жизни щенок, который становится ее верным другом. Приключения рассказаны автором о своем детстве от первого лица. Рекомендовано для изучающих английский язык. Перевод осуществления автором произведения.

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True Friend Needs No Orders

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Some recollections of my childhood and my dog.

Chapter 1

Pop Visit

Charlik came to us at the dead of autumn that very year when I was five and supposed that I was old enough to study. Why should I stay home? It's time for school! Mom, without thinking twice, gave me a present of a school primer. I would tell you about this gift another time, though.

So, one morning, when my Granny and I were at home alone, someone climbed up our porch. Granny went on drinking her tea, smacking her toothless mouth, sighing, and paid no notice to the intruder. I approached her and whispered:

‘Gran, oh, Gran! Do you here someone walking and making

noise out there?’

Granny sipped her tea loudly from the saucer, looking up at me, and said:

‘It’s just wind.’

‘Can the wind growl?’

‘It can howl, love.’

Suddenly ‘the wind’ started roaring.

I was scared and crawled quickly under the bed to boggle there. But Granny rose fast, grabbed a rake and went to the terrace. I heard her fearlessly opening the door. ‘Such a brave Granny I have!’ I thought.

‘Mila, come on, get out and come along! Look, what a ‘pop visit’ we have here!’ she said in a loud voice.

I left my ‘sanctuary’ and, having looked around the door pane, saw a tiny puppy, completely soaked, trembling from hunger and cold. He looked at me with his large grey eyes and whimpered from time to time. I approached Granny boldly.

‘Has he come to me? Let’s keep him!’

Granny loved dogs, but Mom forbade my brothers and me bringing home either kittens, or puppies. She loved order and cared for our health a lot. But Granny looked at the puppy and me and said: ‘Come on, Chaplin!’

Later I learned why she had called him such name. The puppy had a funny innocent muzzle, thin, crooked paws and a black spot under the nose, looking like moustache.

Granny wiped puppy’s fur and muzzle with a piece of cloth, poured him some warm milk and added a small loaf of bread. The puppy had his meal, stretched, yawned and rested himself on the rug at the doorway. Granny was petting him and smiling and I was waiting patiently for the permission to play with him after his nap. I was sitting on the sofa among the cushions and had a chat in whisper with my dolls, also waiting for a new friend. While Granny was clicking her knitting needles making something and smiling, watching him above her spectacle frames.

Charlik soon lay beside Granny’s arm-chair and I was allowed to play with him. I remember him sniffing me moving his little nose and spitting funnily.

‘He likes you,’ Granny said. ‘Look how he spits! Dogs show affection this way. You’ll make great friends!’

And so we did...

First Stride

A dog and a girl, whose life became much more exciting since then, became friends. Wherever I went, Charlik followed my steps, wagging his tail with joy. I wondered how it happened that he had been recently so small while I was big, but then the New Year came and he changed while I remained the same.

‘Why has he grown so fast?’ I asked Granny and got another answer each time. Once she said, that he had been eating porridge quickly and licking his bowl until it shined, and another time the answer was that he drinks cod-liver oil without disgust. And once the answer was the following:

‘He’s a dog, a true human friend. He hurries to grow up to help with the household, return favor and play with you without fear that you may hurt him.’

I was happy to get any answer and felt delighted and cozy

hearing Granny's words. I wanted to hug Charlik tight and bring to my room, as I used to do a couple of month before, pet him and dress in jackets and hats.

No way! Charlik resisted hard and did not let hug him. He would twist out of my arms and sprang, sticking his tongue out, wagging his tail like a huge feather, cheerfully and lively.

Granny once told me a story, that Dog was the first animal that came to serve Human, swore allegiance and promised to help him hunting, defend from enemies and warm up from cold. I listened to her with great attention and wondered how Charlik and I would hunt together and after whom.

Long-expected spring came and it became sunny and warm outside. The snow grew darker melting in the Sun, turning into puddles. Thaw holes shone up. Charlik and I decided to have a stride while Granny was busy and parents and brothers were out. I quickly put on my fashionable red rubber boots, a cap and a coat and we went to the river. Huge ice-plates we passing in a rush hitting one another with a loud crash, while the water did not bicker but roared, coming out through narrow holes under the ice, as if someone had opened a thousand of taps at a time.

I was standing at the bank watching the roaring waters and could not take my eyes away. At least, I thought so.

The flow was so strong that if someone would like to sing, as I would sing from time to time, pretending myself a stage actress, no sound might be heard. But I thought I was singing wonderfully, because I was doing it very loudly. So loud I was, that Granny used to say:

- Azokhn vey! Af ale soynim guezukt!

And she used to smile, wiping her eyes watching me. Only later I found out that she used to say: "I really wish that all enemies would serve!" However, I'll tell you about my beloved Granny another time, and that moment my loyal friend and I went for a walk for the first time, so to say, we went 'hunting'.

So, the water roared and seethed. Suddenly a snow plate under my feet cracked so loud, as if someone hit it with a large axe from beneath. I failed to realize anything, but Charlik grabbed me with his teeth by the coat and dragged fiercely from the water. Having fallen on the hard snow, covered with black ice, and I hurt my cheek and both hands.

'Are you crazy?!' I shouted. 'Don't you see that a person is in deep thinking?! How dared you to grab me like this? I scratched my hands! And my cheek hurts!'

But Charlik just snarled in his doggish language, licking my face and making fuss around, insisting on going away from the dangerous spot as soon as possible. After pottering and grizzling for a while I rose. Frankly speaking, I was not a cry-baby at all. What's the use crying if not a single soul except myself and my dog hears me? I cleaned my trousers from snow and ice flakes with a last-year sage and rushed up the path. Suddenly something crushed and grumbled behind me. Having turned round, I noticed a large part of a snow bank where I had recently stood, crashed into the river and rapidly went down the stream, slipping on the side.

‘Well, float then!’ I said to the ice and stepped out after my canine friend.

It was our first real adventure, which could have been kept secret, if not for Aksinia, a good-natured friendly old lady, who used to be our neighbor and kept sitting by the window due to her illness. She watched the whole scene from her ‘observation point’ and informed my parents later. Certainly, Mom told me off and forbade leaving home alone, without Granny or brothers, until the young grass appeared. But since Charlik received a title of ‘handy and necessary creature’ in my Mom’s mind. It seemed to me, he would share this with his ‘comrades’, other dogs in the neighborhood. Each sunny day they would gather on the clearing before our house, stretch on the ground, while Charlik watched

them from his favorite spot, which was a huge pile of sand.

Chapter 2

When a Goat is Your Bosom Friend

Sometimes it happens that days do not resemble one another, yet, time passes in its stride and there is nothing memorable left. However, every once in a while some recollection pops up and one smiles or becomes sad and start to unravel a mystery, being excited by the recollections of dear people and places.

So many wonders a human memory keeps! Curious, but I am going to tell you quite another story, which corresponds to the saying: ‘A person is known by his friends’. And I could not help smiling. That is to say, however, people keep saying that we do not choose friends; I myself think quite the opposite. Not only people seek for a more comfortable, interesting and helpful company, but also animals do.

When I was in the second form, I made a lot of friends. Mom did not appreciate that much, worrying they could distract me from studies, while Dad backed me, being sure that respect and popularity among peers was a good sign of a personal all-round

development. So my popularity grew. Extra activities took place at school every day, such as helping the fallen behind or hobby clubs, and I had lots of hobbies. My dog took my enthusiasm to 'socially useful work' with patience and killed the time on his own choice.

Not far from the school yard, where Charlik used to lie or sit up with his favorite bone treat, which he used to hide skillfully and smartly each time in another place, there was a clearing, where two cheerful goats, Tosya and Rose, were feeding from spring to autumn. They both belonged to an elderly teacher and each year they had little goatlings. I have to admit, these little ones, as all kids all over the world, were funny, cheerful and curious.

That time was not of exception. A young goatling, called Shurik, had been running around and playing there since the beginning of May. That Shurik was a real enfant terrible so his mother goat would always worry and shouted at him, ordering to obey. However, Shurik was self-sure and bold beyond his years. The long and short of it, he was a goat.

May was always a month of fun for the school children, but also a month of bid duties. We had too many things to do! It was the end of the school year, everyone wanted to improve their marks, but the sun was tempting to have a walk in the street. The

spring had come and everything was growing, so all last year's grass and flowers must have been taken away to let new sprouts take a start and refresh the eye. So much there was to do, not only at school, but also at home. Should the old leaves before in the school yard and garden be cleared out? Yes, they should. Also flowers should be planted in the school yard, the paths should be swept, dead limbs, broken by the last year wind, should be picked up and piled up, as they would be burnt in a parting camp fire after the Farewell Bell party. Such was the life those days. I would tell you about this another time, and this time I would like to say, that I was so busy at school, that my poor Charlik was about to get upset, but then decided to find a friend and his choice fell on Shurik.

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