



Emily's Trip to the Aquarium

By Juliana Carter



On the day of her school field trip to the aquarium, Emily was so excited that she woke extra early. She could hardly eat her breakfast.

"Emily, just eat something," her mom urged.

Emily poked at the cereal rings floating in her bowl and tried to make a face. Two for the eyes, one for the nose, and three for the smile. Emily happily surveyed her work.

"Emily!" Mom was starting to get impatient.

Emily fidgeted as her mother combed out her hair and put in a new barrette. She could barely contain her excitement as they walked the two short blocks to her elementary school. Amanda, her very best friend in the world, ran over to meet her. The two girls squealed with glee and began instantly chatting about their trip.

"I can't wait to ride the bus!"

"I wonder what we'll see first?"

"Do you think we'll be able to sit together?"

Their teacher, Mrs. Little, tried to keep her excited classroom quiet, to no avail.

After managing to organize her class into one almost neat line, Mrs. Little walked her group to the row of buses. Waiting at the curb were the bus drivers and the long yellow school buses. They were shiny and looked like they had been washed just for the trip. Emily had never ridden on a bus before!

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The children clambered onto the bus. Emily's seat partner, Andrew, decided it was best to take little hops up the steps, all the way to the back of the bus. Emily followed, walking as quickly as it was possible to do without being scolded. Mrs. Little had partnered the children up before they left their classroom, so there was no sitting next to her best friend. Emily and Andrew got along pretty well, so that was okay, except when Andrew was shoving bugs at Emily. Andrew loved bugs.

Emily looked out the window and watched the billboards that they passed, seeing all of the interesting advertisements. One of them showed a crab talking to an automobile. Emily wasn't sure what it meant but thought it was very funny.

Mrs. Little sang songs with the class and told them to behave themselves in the aquarium and to be sure to stay together. Mrs. Little had to run quickly to Steven's seat. He had just gotten carsick all over the parent volunteer sitting next to him. Emily was very glad Steven wasn't her seat mate.

After taking care of Steven, who was fine now, the class made their way inside the aquarium. The lady taking tickets had a hairstyle just like Emily's grandma's and smelled like cinnamon. She was very nice.

"Good morning, Children. Have a wonderful day," she told the class.

Emily's teacher divided the children into groups of five, each headed by a parent whose job it was to keep them all together. The children all wore red shirts that day so they could be kept track of more easily.

Now to explore the aquarium!

Emily watched the puffins, the funny little seabirds with white bellies and black wings, as they dove down into the water. They looked as though they were flying as they swam down to the bottom of the rocks and then back up to the top again.

Emily saw orange seahorses with their tails wound tightly around yellow coral that anchored them in place. There were five of them and Emily wondered if they were a seahorse family, and if they were a family, how did the mom and dad tell their children apart?

Emily's group ran to a giant tank. There was a scuba diver inside cleaning the tank! Around him swam giant tuna fish, gleaming silver. There were fish of all shapes, vividly colored, darting in between the rocks. Emily had never seen such brilliant color combinations. There were friendly-looking blue parrotfish with their yellow and pink dots. The orange and white clownfish smiled at the children. At least that's what Emily thought. Fish of every shape and size swam together in the giant tank.

Next were the otters. The class sat on benches to watch their antics. One otter rolled around and around on a log, never seeming to tire of this trick. There were two otters

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holding each other's paws, and there were otters floating on their backs happily munching seaweed. Emily and her friends laughed as they watched them shimmy and wiggle across the logs and then chase each other into the water.

Finally, the seals! Seals were Emily's absolute, all-time favorite. The harbor seals with their brown spots glided effortlessly through the water. Emily thought that one of them looked right at her as he passed by. They moved through the water so quickly, and then, all of a sudden, would come up to the surface and slide across the floor. What fun!

Lunchtime was peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, carrot sticks, and chocolate milk from Emily's thermos. Emily saw that the aquarium cafeteria sold fish sandwiches and wondered, "Why would people want to eat fish at the aquarium?"

When it was time to go home, the children reluctantly said goodbye to the aquarium. Back on the bus, and feeling a little sleepy, Emily thought about her first school field trip. She couldn't wait to return and visit her new sea friends.

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