

Love is Blind

After moving to a new country, Deshi's life seems miserable. But maybe it's not all bad ... Hi Lang I'm writing in English because I know we both need to practise. Thanks for your last email. I'm sorry I didn't write back sooner. I started school the day after we arrived in Boston and I'm very busy with extra work. I hate it here. I can't understand what anyone says to me. Their accents are very strange.

I miss Shanghai and I miss playing in the band with you. CRASH! were the best! I don't know anyone who plays rock music here. I try to practise the guitar, but the neighbour who lives opposite complained yesterday. He was very angry. His daughter plays the violin and he said that my 'horrible noise' disturbed her. Later, I saw her staring out of the window at me. I think she hates me too. She's really beautiful ...

I've got to stop now. Mum is home from work and I haven't finished my homework.

Please write back soon. I want to hear more about what you're doing in London. Have you found anyone to play music with? Can you understand the accent yet?

Deshi

PS: I think I'm in love!

Deshi turned off the computer and opened his English book. He had lots of homework but it was difficult to concentrate on irregular verbs. He couldn't stop thinking about the girl in the building opposite and her beautiful eyes. He opened his bedroom window and looked across the street. Her window was open too and he could hear her practising a piece of classical music. It sounded sad. 'She's really good,' thought Deshi, 'and she probably hates rock music!' 'Have you finished your homework?' Deshi's mum opened the door. 'Hurry up, dinner will be ready in half an hour, and please tidy your room!' Suddenly, Deshi didn't feel hungry.

Deshi couldn't sleep that night and he got up late the next morning. He ran out of the house in time to see the bus leaving. Oh no! He was going to be late again. He looked around and there she was! She was sitting in her dad's car with the window open. He dropped his schoolbag and she turned to look at him. He couldn't move. Her eyes were green. He'd never seen anyone with green eyes

before. He smiled at her but she just stared at him as if he didn't exist. Deshi could feel his face turning red. He picked up his bag and ran off.

He had a terrible day at school. He failed another maths test and the English teacher shouted at him for not concentrating in class. At lunch time, he couldn't eat. The food in the cafeteria was horrible, it just made him feel sick. And then, finally, he had to stay late after school for extra English, so he missed the bus again. He decided to walk home. He was crossing the park near his street, thinking about how he missed his school back in Shanghai and all his friends. He thought about his dad, who had died three years ago, and that made him sad. Then he saw her. She was sitting on a bench with her dog. 'Oh no, she's seen me,' he thought. He didn't know what to do, so he smiled and waved at her but she just ignored him again. 'Idiot!' he said to himself. 'Why did I wave? Now she really hates me.'

Later that evening, Deshi was in his room, practising his guitar with the headphones on. His friends in Shanghai thought he was very good. He had started a band with his friend Lang and they had played a concert at school. But now he didn't want anyone to hear him playing, especially her. He was thinking about getting a classical guitar when his mum came into the room. She was holding a letter. 'The postman delivered this to the wrong building,' she said. 'It's for the building opposite. Can you take it across while I'm making dinner? And please, tidy your room!' 'OK, Mum!' he said. Deshi felt bad. Mum worked hard all day and then she had to look after him too. Maybe he should do more to help.

Deshi went down to the street feeling really unhappy. Life was difficult since Dad died. Mum was always working. School was really difficult and he had no friends in Boston. He was outside the opposite building when suddenly the door opened. 'Oh no, it's her again,' he thought. The girl was coming down the steps when she dropped something. It bounced down the steps and stopped at Deshi's feet.

Without thinking, he picked it up. 'Hello?' she said, sounding frightened. 'Who's there?' Deshi was confused. 'Er, I live across the street. Are you OK?' 'Oh, are you the boy who plays the guitar?' she said. 'Hi, I'm Helen. I wanted to tell you I really like your music and I'm sorry my dad complained. He worries about me too much.' Deshi looked at what he was holding. It was a white stick. She was blind.

Brendan Dunne for British Council LearnEnglish Teens

1. Write a number (1–10) on the left to put these sentences in order.

..... He writes an email to his friend from Shanghai.

..... He sees Helen in the park.

..... He takes the letter across the street.

..... He picks up Helen's white stick.

..... He can't sleep and gets up late.

..... He hears Helen practising a classical piece.

..... He tries to study irregular verbs.

..... He practises the guitar with the headphones on.

..... He doesn't want lunch in the cafeteria.

..... He drops his schoolbag

2. Circle True or False for these sentences.

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| 1. Lang lives in Berlin. | True | False |
| 2. Helen doesn't like dogs. | True | False |
| 3. Helen plays classical music. | True | False |
| 4. Deshi fails a geography test. | True | False |
| 5. Helen's dad complains about Deshi's music. | True | False |
| 6. Helen goes to school by car. | True | False |
| 7. Deshi's dad died last year. | True | False |
| 8. Deshi's band played a concert at his old school. | True | False |