

# Elise the ENGINEER

By Lucy Stevenson Ewell

(Based on a true story)

*This story happened in Kenya.*

"Elise, wake up," Mum said. Elise groaned and rolled over. She wanted to keep sleeping!

She squeezed her eyes shut for a minute longer. Then she thought of her friends at school and the things she would learn there.

Finally she crawled out of bed to say her prayers.

"Dear Heavenly Father," she prayed, "thank Thee for a new day. Please help me get to school on time. Help me to learn and be kind to others. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen."

It was 4:00 in the morning, and it was still dark outside. Elise's school was far away. That's why she had to wake up so early. But she knew learning was important. Besides, she had to go to school if she wanted to be an engineer someday!

Before she left, Elise grabbed her book bag and some chapati for breakfast. She finished eating the flatbread while she waited for the bus.

When the bus got there, the sun was just peeking over the buildings in the distance. Elise stepped on and found her seat. She looked out the window and thought about

being an engineer. Someday, she would build machines to help people.

When she got off the bus, Elise still had a few blocks to walk to get to school. She checked the time and started running. She couldn't be late!

"Welcome, class," Auntie Claudia said. "Auntie" was what they called their teacher. "Today we are learning about fractions."

Elise sat up straighter in her seat. She loved mathematics!

But as Auntie Claudia wrote the equation on the board, Elise felt confused. She looked back at her maths book, then at her notes. The numbers didn't make sense.

"Please finish the assignment on page 42 by tomorrow," Auntie Claudia said. "You can use the rest of the hour to work on it."

Elise wrote down the first problem. She started to solve it, but then she got stuck. She sighed. Maybe her friend Jessie could help.

"Jessie," Elise whispered. "Can you help me do the first problem?"

Jessie shook her head. "I'm trying to finish my work before class is over."

Elise frowned. She turned to her friend Miguel. "Do you know how to do the first one?" she asked.

But Miguel was also too busy. "Sorry," he said, and kept working.

Elise felt sick to her stomach. She was usually so good at maths!

When Elise got home, it was dark again. She was tired. And she still needed to finish her homework.

*Maybe I'm not smart enough,*  
Elise thought.

Elise started the problem again. But she still couldn't solve it. The numbers made her head hurt! Maybe she couldn't be an engineer after all.

Just then, Elise's older sister Emma sat down next to her. "Are you OK?" she asked.

Elise groaned. "I don't know how to do these problems! Everyone else in class does. I'm just not smart enough."

Emma laughed. "You *are* smart!" she said. "When something is hard, that doesn't mean you aren't smart. It just means you need more practice. Here, show me what you're working on. I can teach you."

Elise showed her the equation, and Emma started writing the numbers. After a few minutes, everything started to make sense.

Elise took the pencil from Emma's hand and finished the problem.

"You did it!" Emma said. "Keep practicing. If you get stuck again, I can help you."

Elise felt warm inside as she started working on the next problem. Heavenly Father had answered her morning prayer and helped her learn! She was grateful He had given her a patient older sister to explain the problems to her. With Heavenly Father's help and some hard work, she really could be an engineer someday! ●

