



Read-Aloud Andrea

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I'm Gil and my cousin Andrea has a unique way of thinking about things. Sometimes it's like she's off in her own little world.

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She'd just moved here from Chicago. On the first day of school, I invited her to sit with me and my friends during lunch.

My friend Monica had spent the whole summer at the ocean. She brought back a box of saltwater taffy to share with us.

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Andrea took a piece and started chewing it. Then, she took a wad out of her mouth and pulled it with her fingers. "Pretty stretchy," she said.

I was horrified. "What are you doing?"

But Andrea was too absorbed with her own thoughts to hear me. "You ever wonder how far a piece of taffy can stretch?"

5



"Like how much taffy do you think you'd need to cover the entire school?" she wondered.

Monica stared at her, unsure of what to say. But Andrea didn't seem to notice. She just kept looking at the taffy.

 **Ask:** "What do you notice? What do you wonder?"

6



After school we took the bus home. On the bus I like to relax and listen to music. I was drifting away when suddenly I felt a tap on my shoulder.

It was Andrea.

7



“What are you listening to, Gil?”

I handed her my headphones.

“Not bad,” she said. “Hey, what if we started a band and made up new instruments?”

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“Like a trombone made of bones or a drum with pudding inside so that every time you hit it, it would go splat! Or a bunch of guitars, one on top of the other so that the long part—”

I could barely keep up with her. “The neck?”

Andrea nodded. “Yeah, the neck. What if the neck were super tall? Like Willis Tower tall.”

Ask: “What do you notice? What do you wonder?”

9



I sighed. Covering the school in taffy! Stacking up guitars to the size of a skyscraper! Who thinks like that?

I signaled for the bus to stop. “Come on,” I told her. “Let’s walk the rest of the way.”

10



I hoped a walk through the park would clear my head. As we passed by the fountain, we suddenly heard a noise.

11



There was a duck standing by a grate, flapping her wings in a panic. At the bottom of the grate I saw a duckling. It was trapped down there!

I got on my knees and tried to get it out. "I can't reach," I said.

12



I looked around for help, but there was no one else there. I didn't know what to do!

But Andrea was calm. "Come with me," she said. She went to the trash can nearby. She pulled out an old drink cup and gave it to me. Then she found a used soup container.

13



It wasn't until she started filling the containers with water from the fountain that I understood what she was planning.

Together we poured the water into the grate. It was genius! If the water level rose, we'd be able to just reach in and pick up the duckling!

Ask: "What do you notice? What do you wonder?"

14



We kept making trips back and forth to the fountain. Soon, others saw us and started helping. They grabbed whatever they could to fill with water—buckets, bowls, cans, even an old boot!

Eventually, the water rose high enough for me to stick my hand through the grate and let the duckling hop onto my cup.

The mother quacked happily. As the two of them scurried off, I realized that we had all pitched in, but it was Andrea who saved the day. Andrea, with her unique way of thinking.