



# Read-Aloud Just Stick With It, Sasha

2



My name is Sasha and this squawking whirlwind of soap and feathers is Evelyn. Now, you might be wondering how I got into this mess.

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It started when my Aunt Jo took me to the county fair. Our neighbor Mrs. Wilson was up on stage, getting a blue ribbon. Next to her was a beautiful chicken with a shiny beak and the fluffiest white feathers I'd ever seen.

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

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Showing chickens is Mrs. Wilson's favorite thing to do. She spends all year getting ready, making sure her chickens are healthy and clean. Then, when it's time for the show, they can wow the judges with their strong bodies, bright eyes, and smooth, glossy feathers.

At that moment, there was nothing I wanted to do more than show chickens.

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When I told Mrs. Wilson, she let me choose a chick from her coop. That way, maybe I could show a chicken myself at the next fair.

It was the best day of my life!

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But fast forward a month later, and everything was different.

Taking care of Evelyn was so much work. She had to be fed, given water, and her coop needed to be cleaned nearly everyday.

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What was worse, Evelyn hated being picked up. She'd squawk and flap her wings like a tornado. It made weighing her totally impossible!

I thought about the contest. The judges would inspect the way I handled her. Teaching Evelyn to stay calm was really important!

Mrs. Wilson's chickens were relaxed when she held them.

What was I doing wrong?

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

8



When we visited Mrs. Wilson, I asked her why I was so bad at raising a chicken.

“Sasha, you’re not bad at it. You’re just learning,” she said.

“But Evelyn won’t even let me hold her,” I said.

Mrs. Wilson smiled. “Caring for a living animal takes patience. Just stick with it, Sasha, and be gentle and consistent with her.”

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I was still worried I’d never tame Evelyn enough to be a show chicken, but I listened to Mrs. Wilson. No matter how hard things got, I stuck to it.

I made sure that I gave Evelyn the same amount of food and water every day. After school, I’d practice handling her so she got used to me. Once a week, I measured her weight and her feathers and her dangly wattles hanging from her beak.

It was hard at first but it got better. Soon, Evelyn hardly squawked or fluttered around when I held her. But if she did get upset, I took a deep breath. “Just stick with it, Sasha,” I’d tell myself.

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Mrs. Wilson persuaded me to sign Evelyn up for the next fair. When the day came, I was so nervous.

As the vet approached, I wondered if I’d made a huge mistake. What would happen if Evelyn panicked and squirmed out of my arms? Suddenly my heart started racing. I wanted to pack up and run home.

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

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But then I heard a cluck. I looked up. Evelyn looked back at me. This time, I was the one who needed calming! Evelyn stepped out of her cage and fluttered onto my lap. She was warm and soft. I stroked her feathers and she kept cooing

12



That's when I knew that everything would be all right. Evelyn and I were in this together.