



Read-Aloud My Name Is Harper

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My name is Harper and for as long as I can remember, I've felt different.

My classmates were always playing the same games, watching the same shows, laughing at the same kind of jokes...

But me? I was happiest by myself.

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

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During recess, I'd stand alone in the yard, watching ants or beetles crawling along the ground.

I loved bugs—things with six eyes, or eight legs, or little wiggly antennas. I loved thinking about their little worlds.

But any time I tried to explain that to my classmates, they'd say my interests were weird.

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For a long time, I felt like I was the only person in the whole world that loved these "weird" things. But one day, my mom took me to my local library.

When we walked in, I was amazed.

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There were so many books—laid out in piles, stacked in bins, and rolled around in carts. There were dozens of bookcases, going as far as the eye could see. And on each of the bookcases were shelves, each arranged with their own neat rows of books.

I wandered around for so long, I ended up getting lost! I couldn't tell one part of the library from the next. And just when I was about to cry, I looked up. That's when I met Mrs. Park.

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

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Mrs. Park was the head librarian. She asked me my name and about the kinds of things I was interested in.

When I told her about the bugs, she didn't laugh. Instead she took me around and showed me how the sections were arranged. Non-fiction. Science. Biology. Insects and Arachnids.

I couldn't believe it! There were shelves upon shelves dedicated to books about different bugs. I had no idea there were so many people interested in the same things I was.

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After that, the library became a second home to me.

The more time I spent there, the more I realized there were other people just like me. I don't mean people who love spiders and termites. I mean people who were passionate about what they were interested in. Some of them were even from my class!

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

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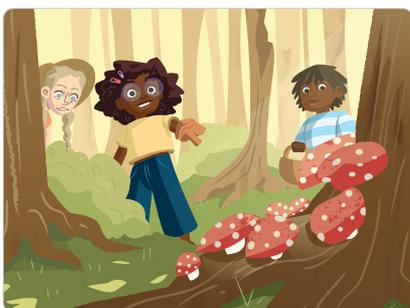
Like Sam who loved books on dancing.

Or Bethany who loved to read about airplanes.

Or Franklin who couldn't get enough stories about mushrooms.

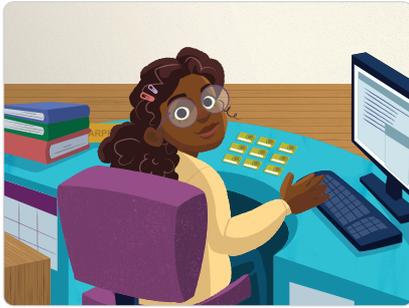
Sometimes, we'd get together and talk about what we were reading.

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That's when I began to realize it didn't matter what people thought of the things I cared about. What's important is to always be curious. After all, the world is full of exciting people, places, and things. It would be a shame if we didn't try to explore and understand it.

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That was many years ago. These days, I'm the head librarian at my town's library, just like Mrs. Park was.

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My favorite part of the job is helping all the different people who come in. I get to hear them talk about their passions and their interests.

If I can, I help them find what they're looking for. It's a powerful thing.

With just the right book, you can change someone's life forever.

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