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Round Robin

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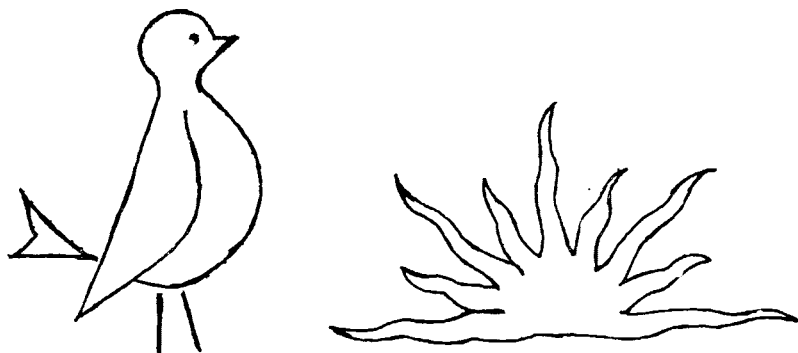
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ROUND ROBIN

Dorothy E. Smith, Editor

Dear Readers,

Below are two letters which tell us of some important aspects of reading—and they do it much more vividly than chapters in a text-book can.

Dear Editor,

Have you ever been curled up in a comfortable chair for the evening for an arm chair tour through England after a trying day at school, only to have a shrill, small voice penetrate the air?

“Why did you do that, Dad?”

You realized that Johnnie and Dad were in the basement assembling the big red wagon that four year old Johnnie had received for Christmas. You turned again to the changing of the Guards at Buckingham Palace only to have another interruption.

“Dad, why can’t I ride around the living room in my wagon when it’s snowing outside?”

Would the *why* questions never cease? You thought you would at least get to Westminster Abbey that night.

Last night I was reminded of the above incident when our class was locked out of the classroom on the second floor at Kellogg Community College and had to meet on the first floor.

I stood guard in the entrance hall and told each student as he came in that we were meeting in a different place. Upon learning of this, I again heard the old familiar refrain from each and every one.

“Why are we meeting down here?”

There are thirty-six students in the class ranging in age from

twenty-two to sixty-five years of age. Each and every one had asked the same question.

I had the answer to my question, "Will the *why* questions never cease?"

No! At least let us hope they won't, for that is the way we learn about ourselves and the world around us, and build up mental content and the ability to think critically, qualities which are essential to reading proficiency.

Now I am perplexed!

Why were they all so concerned about *why* we were meeting in a different place?

It must be that lingering, insatiable curiosity of youth which we, as teachers, must foster and nourish until the bud becomes a flower with its own identity capable of identifying, interpreting and evaluating the written symbol.

Ruth W. Andrews
Coldwater, Michigan

Dear Editor,

Oh boy! Teacher's going to read to us from the "Tom Sawyer" book. I love to have our teacher read aloud to our class. Some kids don't have it so good. Do you know why? I'll tell you why. Their teachers don't read to them. They say they just don't have the time to read. Boy, not our teacher! She reads aloud to our class each day. She picks books that are interesting to all of us, books like "Tom Sawyer," "Jungle Book," "Silver for General Washington," and many others. We kids think that our teacher is just the greatest.

I guess I should tell you more about me. It might help you to know why I love to have our teacher read to us.

I am a fifth grader. I can't read. Teachers and college professors call me a non-reader. I've got a friend who can read, well at least some, but he doesn't remember what he has read. I hear that teachers call him a disabled reader. We can't read library books, even if we did want to. We can't read them because they are just too hard for us.

We've got a large family, so Mom says that she doesn't have time to read to me. I sure wish she had the time. Dad says that he has to work a lot to earn a living. When he is home he'd rather sit down and watch television. Dad says that reading is just a big waste of time. I guess one of the reasons is that he needs an excuse. You see, Dad only went through the eighth grade. He doesn't say so, but I know that reading is hard for Dad too. He never seems to read a newspaper.

Jeepers! Where would I be if our teacher thought that reading to her class was kid stuff? I wouldn't know anything about these great stories that she reads to us. I like to pretend that I am the main character in the story. I sure do get excited sometimes. I'm not the only one that gets excited though. Even the smart ones in my class get real excited. We sit real real still. Why, you could even hear a pin drop. Just the other day our principal came in to the room during the time that our teacher was reading aloud to us. We were so interested in the story that we didn't even hear him come in. I guess that he liked the story too, because he sat down and listened to the teacher as she read.

Now you know why I feel pretty lucky. I've got a great teacher, one who thinks that reading aloud to her class is not kid stuff. She believes that everyone deserves a chance to enjoy library books. If they are like me, they wouldn't have that chance if they had some uninterested teachers. Yes, even the non-reader, like me, can enjoy books. If it wasn't for my teacher, I'd miss out on a lot. Oh, one more thing. If you are a teacher and you are reading my story, please give your kids a break, a big treat. Reading aloud isn't kid stuff. Who says? My teacher does, and she knows!

Vergeleen E. Leonard
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