



The Best Book
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Let's  Read

 The Asia Foundation



Ary opened the creaky door of the quiet, empty library. She headed straight for the books about animals. She had read them so often she had even thought of ways to make them better!

Would there be anything new? No, not today.



Mr. Chann, the librarian, waved hello.

“Any new books today?” Ary asked.

Mr. Chann explained that books were expensive. He did not have enough money for new ones this year.

“What if we made our own?” Ary asked. “That wouldn’t cost as much!”

Mr. Chann considered the idea. “That might work. But do you know how books are made?”



Ary shook her head. Mr. Chann explained that Ary would need to find writers, artists, and an editor. "Ary, if you can find people to write and illustrate the books, I may have a friend who can help us edit them."

Ary smiled and shook hands with Mr. Chann.



That afternoon, Ary told everyone about their plan. Three kids in her class wanted to try writing, and another wanted to draw pictures. On the way home, she stopped for a snack and learned that the market vendor was a writer, too! That night, her father, who was a wonderful artist, promised to illustrate some of the books.



The next day, Ary brought everyone to the library. Mr. Chann was waiting with a tall lady carrying a notebook, a laptop computer, and several colored pencils. “Ary, come here. I’d like you to meet our editor!” he said.

“Hi Ary, I’m Dara. I’m a book editor. I understand you would like to make some books for your library.”

“Yes! We need a LOT more books. Especially about animals. But how can you help us? I already found people to write and illustrate

them.”



Dara explained that an editor's job is to help writers to make their stories the best they can possibly be. Editors make stories more interesting, funny, or scary, with characters kids will want to read about again and again. Other kinds of editors, called copyeditors, make sure that the words are spelled correctly, and the language is right. Then, the editor works with a designer and illustrator to bring the story to life with pictures.

"You can't see my work in the finished book

—it is sort of invisible. But it is still important! None of these books could have been made without an editor.”

“That’s so cool!” Ary said. “I never knew it took so many people to make a book.”

“Ary, would you be my assistant editor? You can help me select the best stories and then edit them. I’ll give you this red pencil to work with.”



Ary couldn't wait to get started. Some of the stories she read were funny or made her feel happy. But others were a little boring. Some didn't even have animals in them!

Dara reminded Ary that her job was to make those books better. And although she liked animals, other kids liked different things.

These books weren't just for her, but for all the children.

Ary used her pencil wisely to make suggestions. Dara added other ideas in blue

pencil. Then they gave the manuscripts back to the writers to revise.

Finally, the stories were perfect!



Now the books needed to be illustrated. Dara explained that the words and pictures would be put together in a computer by a designer. The editor would study the designs carefully to make sure they were just right, with no mistakes.

Ary loved watching her father sketch ideas for his book, then turn those sketches into beautiful paintings. A different one for each page!



“NOW are the stories ready to be made into books?” Ary asked once the designs had been finished. This had taken a lot longer than she expected. And it was a lot of work!

“It’s time, Ary!” Dara said with a smile. “Today we are going to send the computer files to the printer. In a few weeks, the books will arrive!”



Ary waited anxiously. She wondered if they would be good enough. Would people want to read them?

At long last, she saw a truck drive up the road.

“The books are coming!” Ary shouted.



Everyone gathered at the library. Dara opened the first box and handed a book to Ary. “Congratulations, editor. You did it!” Ary sat right down and started to read. Soon, everyone else joined her.



Now whenever Ary pulled open the creaky library door, the room was never empty. She wandered through stacks of books toward her new favorite section and picked up a book she couldn't wait to read for the first time.



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Original Story

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