



# Library Dreams

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I grew up in the '70s and '80s, so when I wasn't pretending I was Kelly on *Charlie's Angels* or Dale on *Flash Gordon*, I was daydreaming in the library. I would dream about reading every single book on the shelves, spending the night in the library, or even—*gasp!*—working at the library.

I was lucky growing up: my parents are both readers, and they would take me regularly to our local library. I still remember the smell of the downtown branch in Battle Creek, Michigan. I remember the spiral staircase that led up to the second floor, and all the Stephen King books I read in high school. I don't know how many times I applied to work at the public library in my hometown before I gave up, but I still remember desperately wanting to work there even as a teenager. Because I never got hired, I thought it was impossible to become a librarian.

Luckily, I didn't think it was impossible to become a reader. I have always loved both reading and listening to books. My parents had books at home and read to me and my sister, Tammy. My teachers also read aloud to me. Even as I remember less and less about my childhood, I'll never forget my third-grade teacher, Mrs. Van Winkle, reading *James and the Giant Peach*. It's my first memory of visualizing while someone was reading. I could just see myself as James inside that sweet, sticky peach, surrounded by insects. From that moment, I was officially hooked. My other favorite read-aloud memory is of my fourth-grade teacher, Miss Luke, reading *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*. I had never laughed so hard at a character as I did over that crazy Fudge.

My childhood memories led me to become a teacher and share some of my favorite books, like *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*, with my students. And, three years ago, my childhood dream of becoming a librarian finally came true. Now I get to share my love of reading with over 800 students. Now I daydream in a library full time.