

Bookworm Babies

By Kanika G



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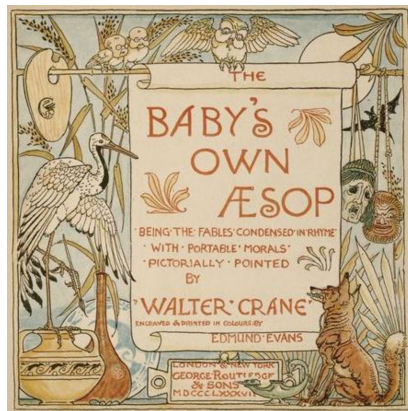
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Bookworm Babies

Tania had grown very fond of reading. Knowing her love for animals, Mama got her a hardbound copy of the Aesop's fables with fantastic illustrations. This book really captured Tania's imagination.



Initially, Mama would read it to her. Tania loved the stories, since they usually featured various animal characters. Her favorite story was the "Thirsty Crow", also known as "[The Crow and the Pitcher](#)". Tania admired the smart and resourceful

crow. In time she learned to read by herself.



Tania was also very fond of Noddy books and the bedtime stories by Enid Blyton.

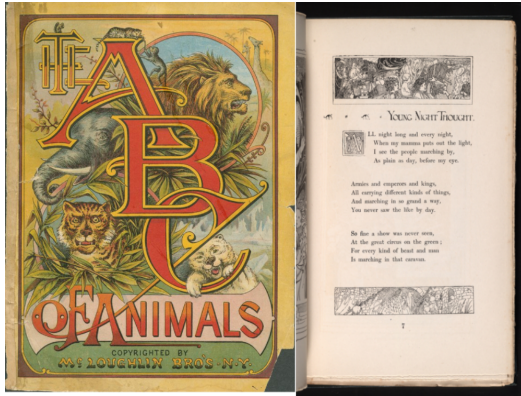
One Sunday morning, Mama took Tania to a children's library. It had 2 large rooms, one for little children and the other for young adults. Mama took Tania to the room with books for little children. The walls were lined with shelves filled with colorful children's books.



There were some comfortable little stools and mats to sit on. Tania loved the place as soon as she saw it. She browsed the shelves, selected three or four books and made herself comfortable on a mat. Soon she was engrossed in reading. Mama realized Tania was not going to need her, so she went to the next room and picked out a book to read.



When Mama came back a couple of hours later, Tania had her nose buried in a short story book. She was surrounded by six more books, three of which she had already finished. One was a book of rhymes, another was a short book about animals, and the third was a short story from the Noddy series. Mama waited till Tania finished the story that she was reading and then told her they had to go home, since it was almost lunch time.



Tania was very reluctant to leave the library. On the way home she asked, "Mama can we come back to the library tomorrow?"

Mama shook her head. "Baby you have school tomorrow morning."

"Okay, then in the afternoon after school?" Tania persisted.

Mama bit her lip. "Tania, this library is quite far away from home and because of traffic it takes a long time to get here. I am glad you had such a good time and I can bring you here once a month but not more often than that. Unfortunately, there

is no children's library near where we live," Mama explained.

Tania looked disappointed. "Tania I always buy you the books you want. Why are you so sad?" Mama asked, trying to cheer her up.



"This place is so lovely. As soon as I entered, I felt like reading and reading and never leaving. There are so many books to choose from." Tania waved her hand to point at the many shelves. "It is nice to just browse through the books, and then decide which to read, and it is so cosy."

That evening during dinner Tania said, "Mama, I have an idea. What do you think about me starting a reading club?"

"A reading club? Where would you do that? How would it work?" Mama was intrigued.

"Here in the society club house. I'll make a flyer and post it on the notice board to spread the word. Every one will have to bring some books. That way each of us will get to choose from a large collection of books. We can do this every Saturday and Sunday afternoon for a couple of hours."



"That sounds like a great idea Tania. Why don't you talk to Tanisha and see if you can get it to work."

The next day, Tania discussed the idea with Tanisha. Tanisha loved reading, so she thought it was an awesome idea. They were trying to think of a catchy name for the club when Tania remembered the bookworm costume Tanisha wore to Karishma's costume party. They played around with the idea and came up with the name *Bookworm Babies*. Tania got her art supplies out and they made the flyer together.



Mama talked to the society chairman and got permission to post the flyers

on the noticeboards. Throughout the week Tania got calls from mothers and kids living in the society.



Mama found an old book case that Tania could use. She also gave her a rug and a stool. Tanisha's mother also contributed a bookcase. There was a storage closet in the clubhouse where they stored the book cases, stools, chairs and rugs, so they could easily take them out when the reading club was in session.

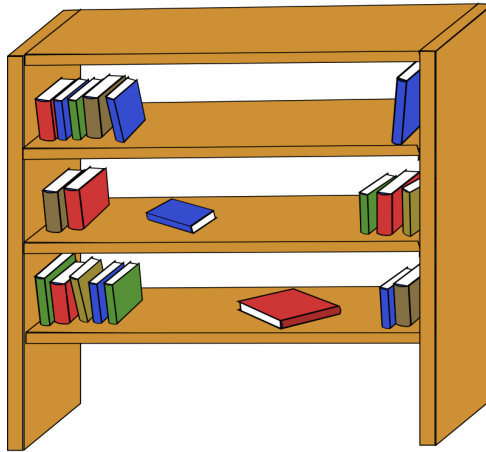


Saturday finally arrived. Tania was excited. She helped Mama make cookies for the inaugural meeting of the *Bookworm Babies*. Mama packed some lemonade with the cookies. Mama knew reading would be even more fun, if there was something to munch and sip.

At about half past one Tania skipped off to the clubhouse with a back pack full of books. Mama had already dropped off the lemonade and cookies. Tanisha arrived next carrying books and a stack of plastic cups for the lemonade.



The watchman helped them get the bookcases out of storage and they arranged the twenty five odd books they had between them on the shelves.



Soon Karishma, Sonali, Nikhil and Rajiv arrived. They now had about seventy odd books. It was a good thing there was a second book case. Nikhil's mother had sent a rug and Rajiv's mother had sent a chair. Karishma and Sonali had helped the boys bring them in. The clubhouse also had a few plastic chairs.



The kids all picked out some books and made themselves comfortable on one or the other of the available seats. There was still room to seat a couple more people. They helped themselves to lemonade and cookies and had a grand time reading, munching and sipping.



Nikhil was reading a book that Tania brought in, and they stopped for a while to discuss a funny bit in the Noddy story.

Vivek joined them at 3:00 p.m. He was on his way back from piano classes. He had brought along some Asterix comics. Tanisha pounced on them. She loved reading those, and he had some that she had not yet read.



The seven of them had a delightful afternoon with so many books to choose from. They were looking forward to the next session.

Tania got back home and told Mama all about the wonderful time she had. She said, "Mama, it was just like the *Secret Seven* in the Enid Blyton stories, except that we read about mysteries instead of solving them." Mama smiled. She was proud that Tania was reading enough to make references to fictional characters in conversation.

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