Amari's Adventure

By Rollins Center for Language & Literacy at the Atlanta Speech School
Illustrated by Maurice W. Jackson, Jr.

Author's Note

Amari's Adventure is more than the story of a trip to the zoo. It's also the story of a young child realizing her own ability to impact the lives of others, regardless of her age or size. Amari is a fearless child who is finding her voice and the power of that voice. By encouraging her curiosity and having meaningful conversations with Amari, Mama plays a tremendous role in helping Amari find her voice.

At the Rollins Center for Language & Literacy at the Atlanta Speech School, we want all children to be like Amari and to find their voices for a lifetime. And, we know the game changing impact parents have in making this possible. That's why we created the READ strategy, a research-based approach parents can use to read books with their children. By using the READ strategy, parents can engage children in conversation, nurture critical thinking, build language and vocabulary, and help children realize the power of their own voices.

The ultimate goal of the READ strategy is for children to become the storytellers. In other words, as we read the story with children over and over again, they develop the tools to talk about what's happening in the story, to use the same vocabulary from the book, and to make important connections. Having these key skills will also benefit children as they continue on in school and will provide them a strong foundation for learning to read and, later, reading to learn. The transition to reading to learn, which happens during the 3rd grade year, is an important milestone for children. When children enter 3rd grade, they're expected to read more complex books and they'll need a strong foundation in literacy to accomplish this goal. So, using the READ strategy now to build language, vocabulary, and critical thinking skills will help put your child on the pathway to reading to learn, not just in 3rd grade, but for a lifetime.

On the next page, we'll share details about the READ strategy and suggestions for using this book. You may wish to practice before reading this book with your child for the first time. We've prepared some videos to help demonstrate the READ strategy for you:

1 - Events Read

2 - Thoughts & Emotions Read

3 – Child Tells the Story

Videos are also available at:
www.atlantaspeechschool.org/amarilinks

We hope you'll enjoy reading *Amari's Adventure* with your child and that you'll find delight in using the READ strategy to help your child find his or her voice for a lifetime.

Sincerely,

Rollins Center for Language & Literacy
at the Atlanta Speech School

How to Use this Book

R – Repeat the Book Researchers tell us that repeating books with young children is important for getting them ready to read to learn (Wasik et al., 2006). We encourage you to read this book at least 3 times with your child, focusing on events first, thoughts and emotions next, and finally, letting your child tell the story to you. Throughout the book, we encourage you to think out loud to help your child make connections from one page to another. Thinking out loud just means that you can talk with your child about what the characters might be feeling or why they made certain decisions. When we think out loud, we say things like, "I noticed…," "I think...," or "I wonder…" Throughout the book, you'll notice we've written in some ideas of things to say. When you see speech bubbles, those are places where we've suggested ways you can think out loud after you read that part of the story. These are only suggestions of things you might want to discuss with your child as you're reading. We hope you'll come up with other ideas based on your child's interests.

E – Engage and Enjoy Be silly! Have fun! Try using different voices for each character. Researchers tell us that most families read books with their children because it is fun, so make this a fun time in your home, too (van Kleeck et al., 1997). This is a good time to teach your child new words. A strong vocabulary is important for later reading (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998; NRP, 2000). Throughout this book, you will see words underlined with suggestions below them. If you see this, it means that these are important words in the story, and you can PAT this vocabulary to help your child learn the word. To PAT vocabulary, you just:

PAT the Vocabulary (adapted from Lea McGee)

P: point to the picture of the word
A: act out the word and encourage your child to act it out too
T: tell a child-friendly definition of the word

You can also PAT words that don't appear in the story, but are related to what's happening. In this book, you'll find some extra words that you can teach your child and suggestions for how to PAT those words, too. Look in the speech bubbles for ideas for teaching these additional words. There are lots of great vocabulary words in this book, so you may choose to PAT words besides those we've chosen. Use your own judgment and choose words based on your child's needs. The important thing is to teach your child the words s/he needs to know to understand the story and to have fun while doing it!

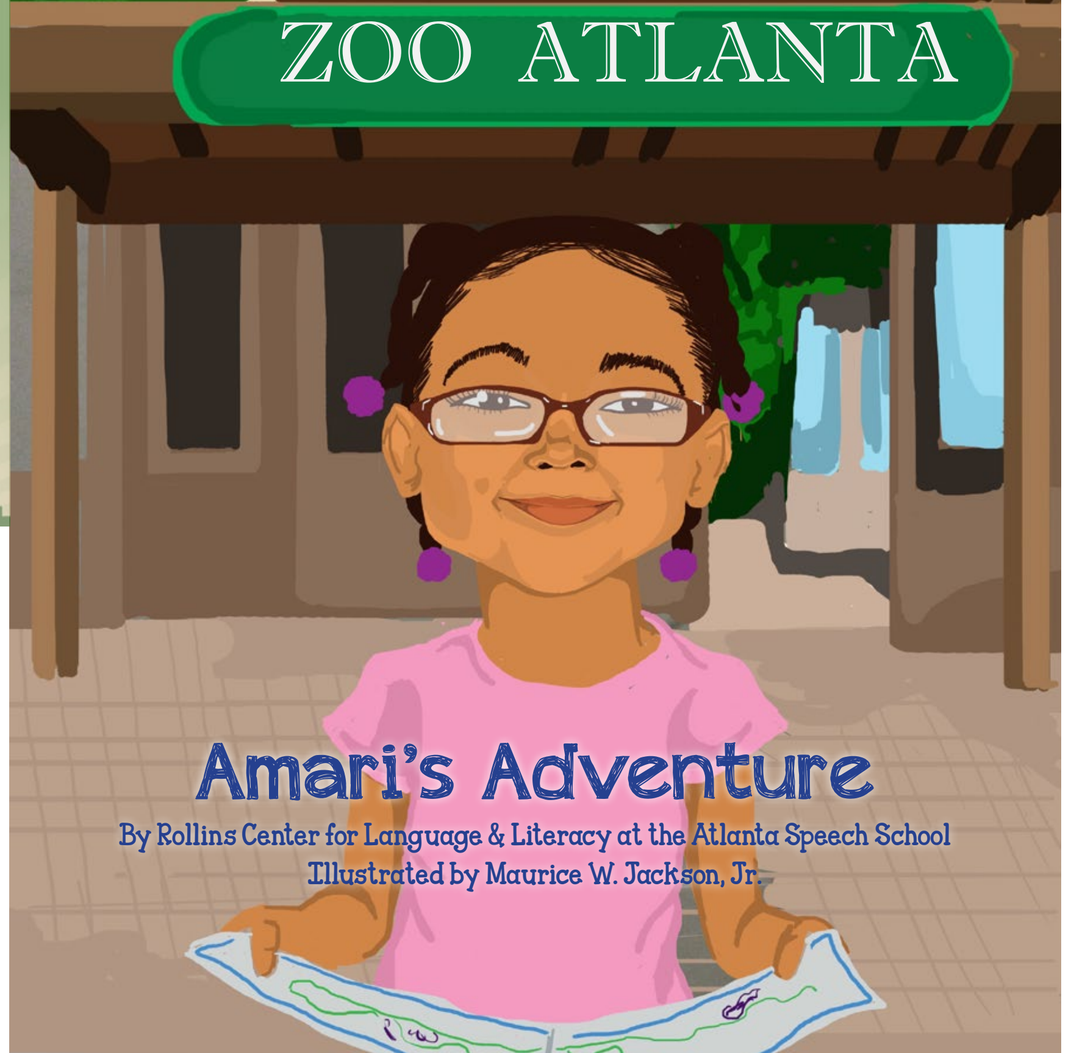
A – Ask Questions We provide questions at the end of the story that you can use to help your child learn to be a critical thinker about stories you read. Researchers tell us that, when we ask a variety of questions to children and help them learn to answer those questions, we are preparing them to think about books and stories in a way that will be very helpful for their school success (van Kleeck, et al., 2006; Yoder & Davies, 1990). You will likely need to help your child come to the correct answer by giving just enough help, but not too much.

D – Do More with the Book Children learn new vocabulary best when they are exposed to it in a variety of different situations and activities (McKeown, et al., 2002). We provide a list of ideas at the end of the book that you can use to make the words in this book come alive for your child.

To learn more about the READ strategy, visit www.atlantaspeechschool.org/read

ATLANTA SPEECH SCHOOL
75th Anniversary

The Rollins Center for Language & Literacy at the Atlanta Speech School created *Amari's Adventure* and the accompanying learning guide for parents and teachers as a gift to the City of Atlanta in celebration of the School's founding 75 years ago by Katherine Hamm and the Junior League of Atlanta. The Atlanta Speech School dedicates this book to all of Atlanta's children. We are committed to joining with others across the city to help each and every one of you to read on grade level by third grade and to live your life and all its adventures to your fullest potential. We are honored that our book has been chosen to be distributed as part of the Mayor's Summer Reading Club led by the Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students. The Rollins Center thanks our colleague, TJ Ragan, for her work on this book and for her unfailing dedication to Georgia's children.



After you read this title, say:

"I wonder what this little girl is doing at the zoo. Let's read and find out."

1

After you read this title, say:

"Remember how at the end of the day, Amari was so talkative? I wonder why she was so talkative. Let's read and find out."

2

After you ask your child what the title is, say:

"Yes, Amari's Adventure! I remember at the end of the story, Amari said she felt big. I wonder why she felt big. Let's talk about it and find out."

3

"Amari," called Dad from downstairs,
"Wake up. It's your special day with Mama & Will!"

But Amari was already awake. She sat up in bed, hugged Tiger, and whispered,

Act Out: hugging yourself Point to tiger

"Today's the day!"

After you read this page, say:

"Amari seems excited, or really happy. Can you make your face look excited?"

1

To help your child tell the story, throughout the book, after you turn the page, ask:

"What happened here?..... And how did they feel about it?"

3

Amari and Will <u>followed</u> Mama toward the bus stop. Amari studied the <u>reflections</u> in the windows. Her brother's head bobbed tall above hers.

Tell: "or went behind." *Act Out:* walk your fingers one hand behind the other

Tell: "Reflections are what you see when you look in the mirror" ***Point to Amari's reflection in the window.***

Will and Mama walked faster than she did, so Amari skipped her feet every few steps to keep up.

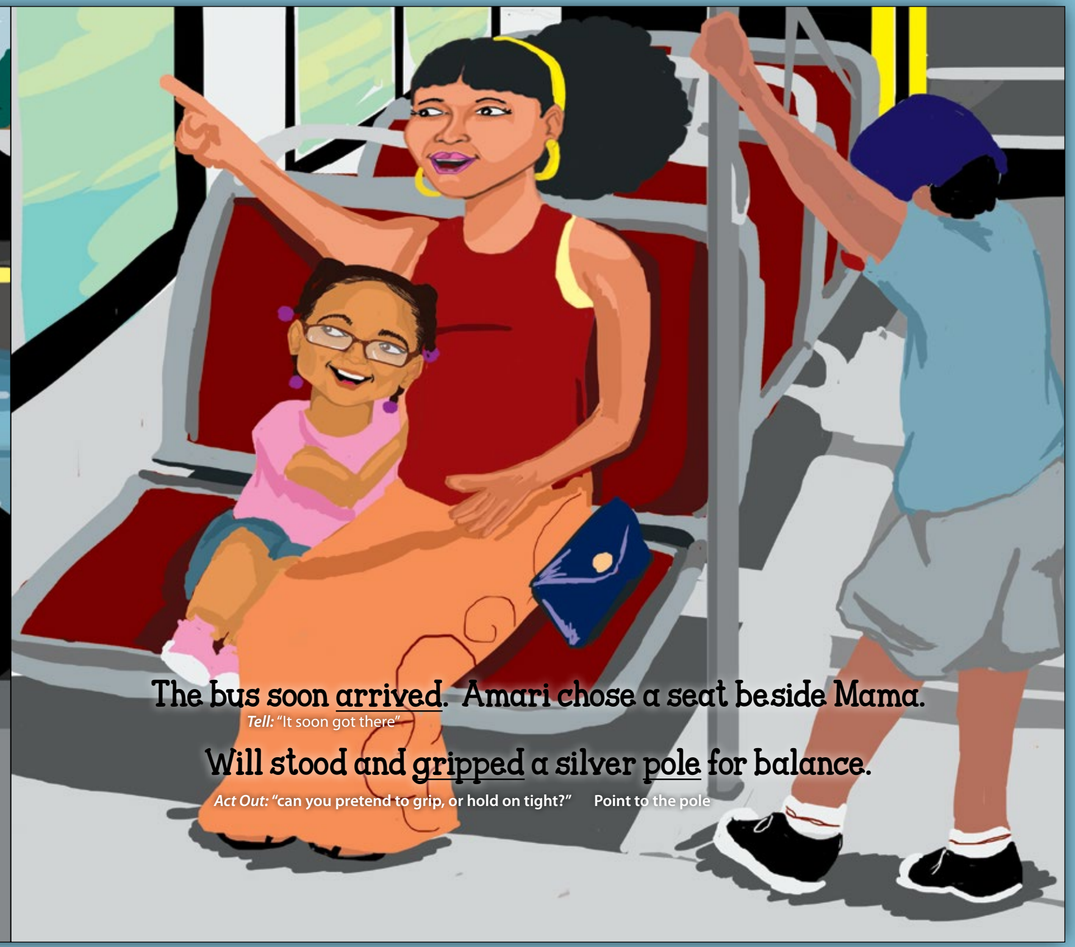
After you read this page, say:

"I notice there's a statue of Martin Luther King, Jr. He was a great leader who helped people."

1

At the bus stop, cars whirred by. Mama squeezed Amari's hand and leaned in close. "Are you ready for our big adventure?" she asked.

Tell Meaning of the word: "An adventure is an exciting time."



The bus soon arrived. Amari chose a seat beside Mama.

Tell: "It soon got there"

Will stood and gripped a silver pole for balance.

Act Out: "can you pretend to grip, or hold on tight?" Point to the pole

After you read this page, say:

"I think Amari is excited, really happy, to be at the zoo, but I think she really wanted to see the tigers first."

2

The Zoo was a busy place. Amari and Will bumped their heads together looking at the map.

Act Out: Point to the map in Amari's hand.

"Where are the tigers?" asked Amari.

"We'll see them after the parakeet house," answered Mama. Amari sighed.

Act Out: breathe in & out slowly.
Ask Child: "Can you sigh, too?"

There was a sturdy log fence at the elephant exhibit.

Tell meaning: "An exhibit is a place to see interesting things."

Will barely noticed the fence, but Amari had to stand tall on her tiptoes to see over it.

"Know what?" said Will, "I read at school that elephants can eat up to 600 pounds of food a day-things like honeydew melon, celery, lettuce, and sweet potatoes."

"Just like we dig up in the community garden!" laughed Amari. "So, they eat their fruits and veggies, just like us," she giggled.

After you read this page, say:

"I wonder if Amari is comparing herself to Will, and thinking about how they are different."

1

After you read this page, say:

"I bet she is thinking, "I'm so much smaller than Will! Hmmph!""

2

The parakeet house was next.

Act Out: Point to parakeets.

Amari and Will each got a little seed stick covered in birdseed.

Will held his stick near a tree full of hungry parakeets.

But no matter how far she stretched,

Act Out: stretching arm (Ask child, "Can you stretch your arm, too?")

Amari's arm was too short to reach the tree.

Finally, she reached under the fence and held out her stick to a teal parakeet on the ground. He gobbled the seeds greedily.

Tell meaning: "He ate the seeds fast." ***Act out:*** ask child "Can you pretend to gobble with me? Yum, yum, yum."

After you read this page, say:

"I'm wondering if Amari is feeling frustrated—feeling upset that she keeps trying to reach the parakeets, but it doesn't work."

2

After you read this page, say:

"I bet Amari is thinking, "Oh, hooray! The tigers are my favorite! I'm so excited! I'm really happy!""

2

Make a connection: ***After you read this page, flip back to the 1st page of the book, and say:***

"I remember that Amari has been looking forward to seeing the tigers all day! So this crowd being in her way is a real problem!"

1

After you read this page, say:

"I bet Amari is thinking, "Oh, no! This is awful! How am I ever going to see the tigers now?""

2

After you read this page, say:

"I think Amari is getting an idea of how to solve or fix her problem!"

1

After your child tells you about this page, say:

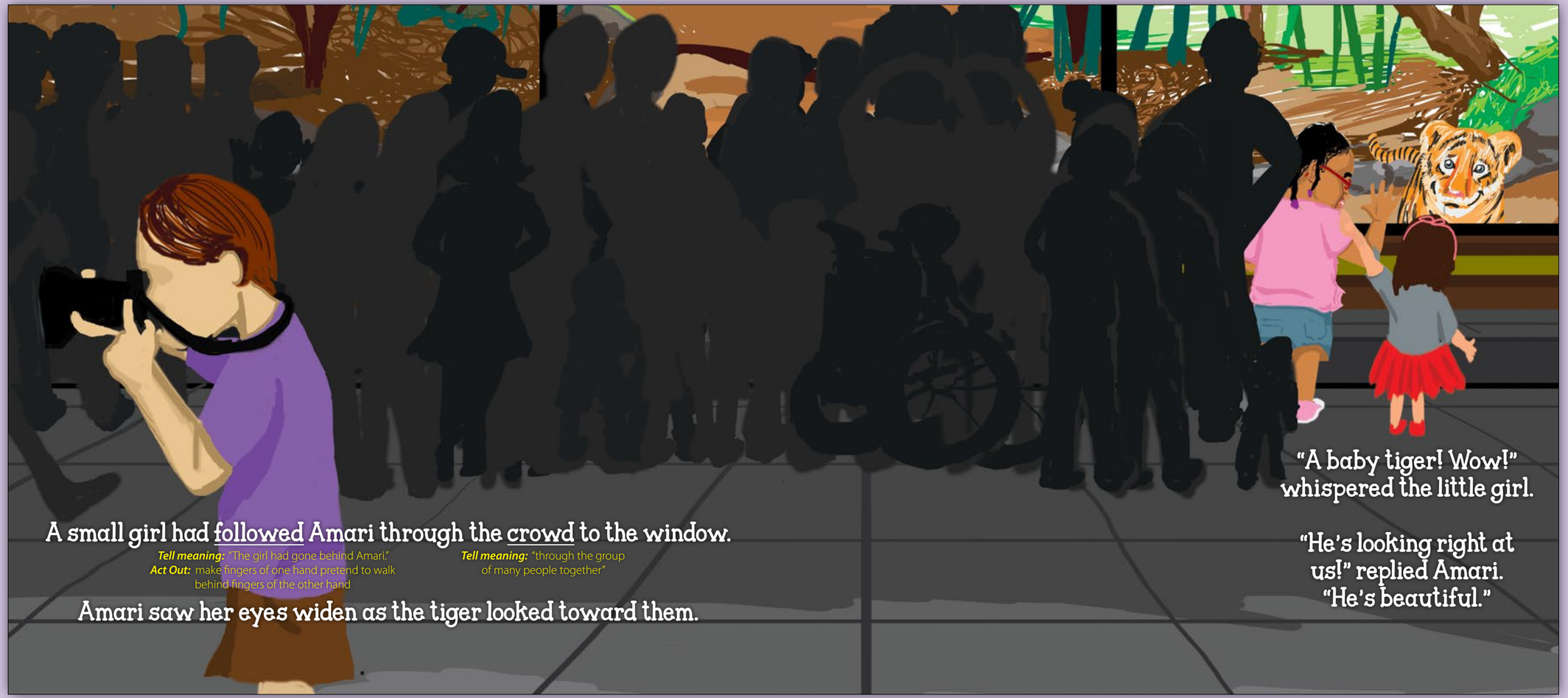
"All day, Amari has been comparing herself to her brother, thinking how she is different than he is because she is small, but now, her being small is helping her solve her problem."

3

After you read this page, say:

"Amari is determined to see those tigers. She is working hard at it until she gets to see them."

1



Tell meaning: "The girl had gone behind Amari."
Act Out: make fingers of one hand pretend to walk behind fingers of the other hand

Tell meaning: "through the group of many people together"

After you read this page, say:

"Amari is bigger than the little girl. She was the leader here, and I wonder if she feels proud of that, or happy that she did something good."

2

After you read this page, say:

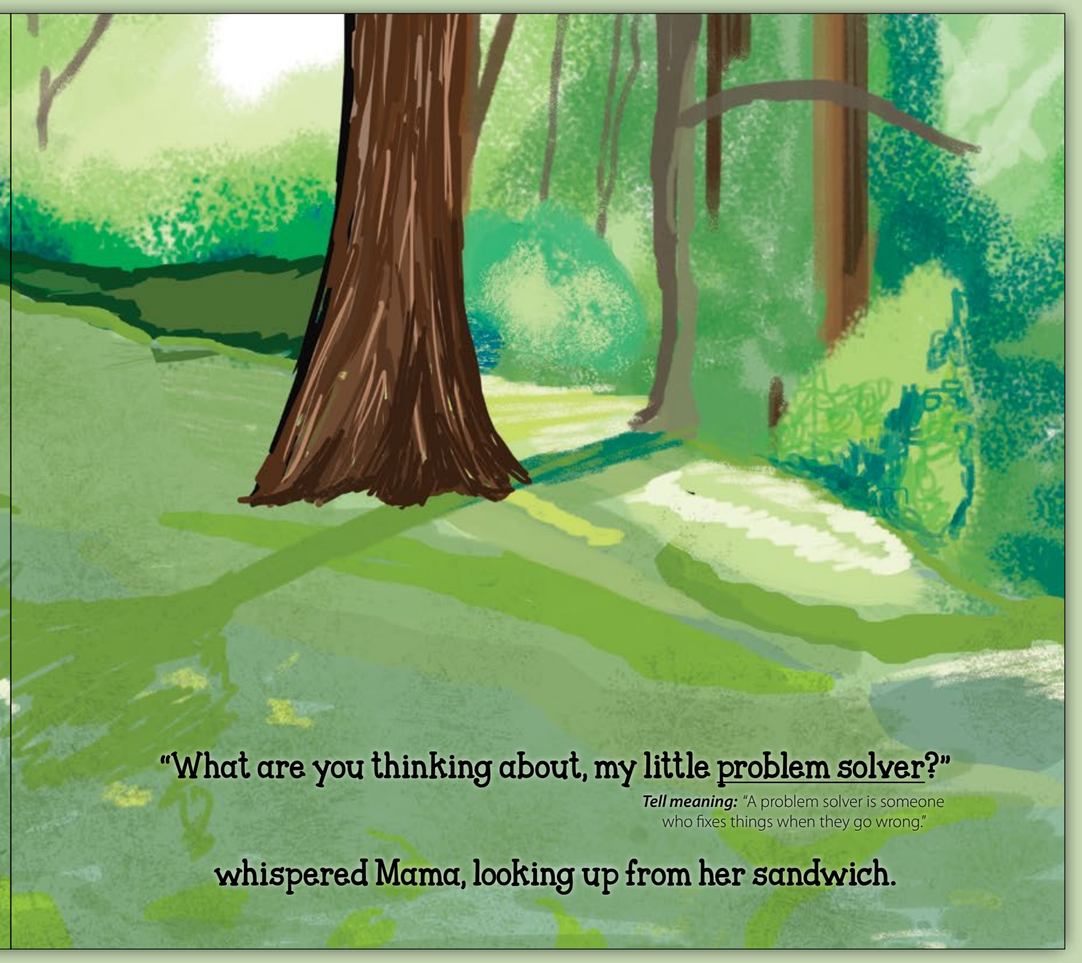
"Amari is so excited—she's really happy to see the tiger!"

1

After your child tells you about this page, say:

"I wonder if it makes Amari feel big to help that little girl get to see the tigers. Sometimes when we are proud , or feel good about something we have done, it makes us feel big."

3



Make a connection:
After you read this page, flip back to the page where Amari got to see the tigers, and say:

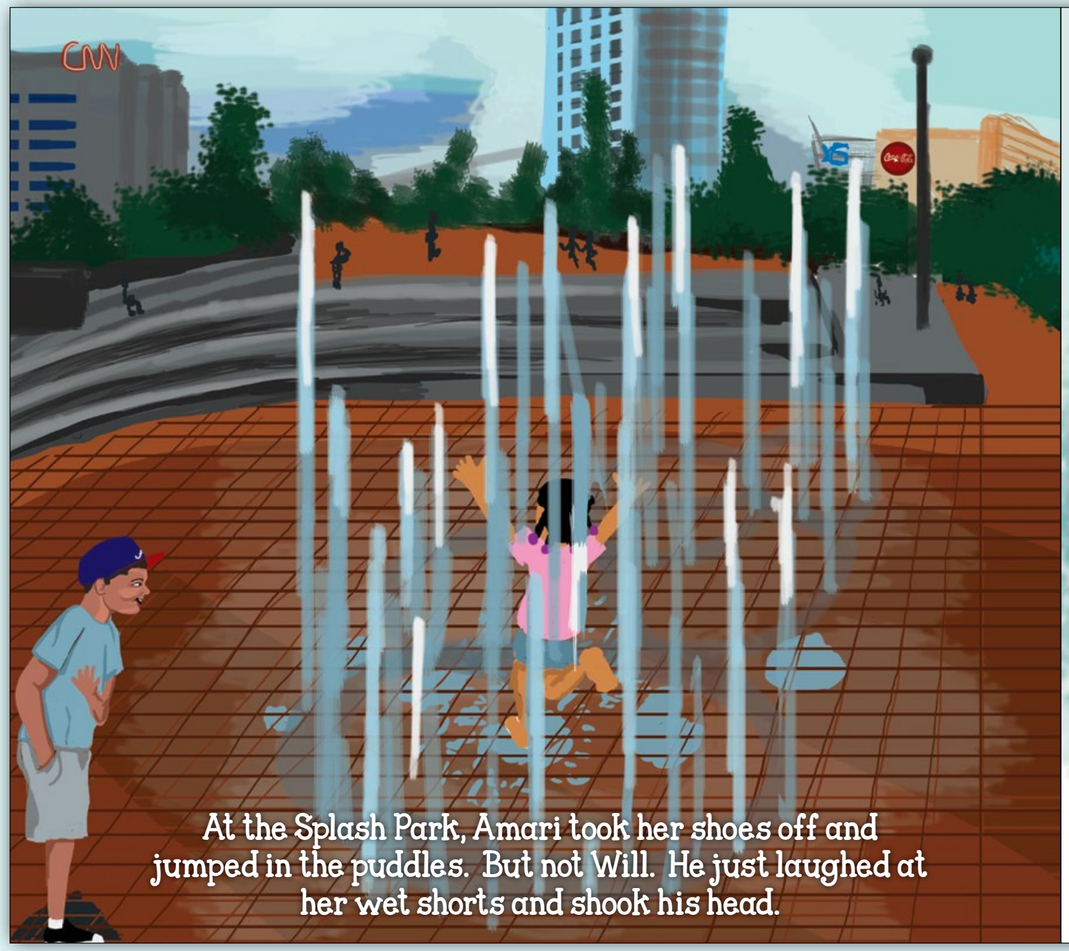
"I'm wondering if maybe Mama is remembering, or thinking back, to when Amari found a way to see the tigers, even when the crowd was in her way. That was a problem, but Amari solved, or fixed, it."

1

After you read this page, say:

"I think Mama must be so proud of how Amari solved that problem. She must feel like Amari did something good."

2



After you read this page, say:

"I wonder if Will thinks he is too big to splash and play in the puddles."

1

Make a connection:
After you read this page, flip back to the page where mom is drying Amari off with a towel, and say:

"I notice that Amari used the word "adventure" here. I remember that her mom used that word several times today. I'm thinking that Amari learned that word, "adventure," from her mom today!

1

Make a connection:
After you read this page, flip back to the picnic page, and say:

"I'm remembering, or thinking back to, when Amari's mom asked her a question earlier during their picnic. Amari didn't respond to her mom then—she was quiet. But at the end of the day, she was so talkative and excited to remember their adventure! They had such an exciting time!"

2

After you read this page, say:

"I'm thinking that Mama is proud of Amari. She feels like Amari has done something good."

3

After you read this page, ask:

"So, why did Mama call Amari a problem solver?"

Then give just enough help (but not too much) to help your child answer:

- Because Amari found a way to solve or fix her problem when the crowd was blocking her view of the tigers.
- She found a small empty spot at the corner of the window where she could fit.
- She fixed or solved her problem on her own.

1

After you read this page, ask:

"So, why was Amari so excited and talkative at the end of the day?

Then give just enough help (but not too much) to help your child answer:

- Because she had such a fun adventure that day;
- Because she had been so excited to see the tigers and she was able to see them;
- Because she had done so many wonderful things that day and had a real adventure

2

After you read this page, ask:

"So, why did Amari say she felt big today?"

Then give just enough help (but not too much) to help your child answer:

- Because she solved a problem on her own, which made her feel grown up;
- She led another little girl to see, too, which made Amari feel big and special
- When you are proud of yourself, it can make you feel big.

3

Do More with the Book!

Here are some ideas of things you can do to make this book come alive for your child:

1. Point out city buses as you see them and discuss how Amari and her family rode a bus to Zoo Atlanta.
2. Visit Zoo Atlanta and talk about how you are doing the same thing Amari did in the book.
3. Have a picnic outside (on the front steps, in the yard, at a park) and talk about how Amari and her family had a picnic too.
4. Measure how tall your child is using a measuring tape, and talk about whether your child is taller or smaller than siblings, cousins, or friends.
5. Watch birds outside and see if any of them look like the birds in the story. Talk about how they are different.
6. Sprinkle birdseed outside and see if any birds gobble it up like the parakeet in the story. Talk about how birds eat different things than we do.
7. Visit the public library and check out information books about tigers. Talk about where tigers live in nature, how Zoo Atlanta works to protect tigers, what tigers eat, how big tigers are compared to humans.
8. Visit a splash park, set up a sprinkler outside, or let your child play with water in the bathtub or sink. Talk about how much fun it is to splash in water just like Amari did.
9. If you notice your child becoming frustrated about something, point out how hard it can be to work hard at something and still have it not work. Talk about a time you were frustrated but determined, and eventually solved a problem.
10. Look at photo albums or old photos of your child as a baby, and talk about how much bigger your child is now compared to a few years ago. Talk about how proud you are of how your child is growing up.
11. At dinner, ask each person at the table to tell something that they were proud of and frustrated by that day. Talk about how doing our best is something to be proud of, even if we don't solve every problem.
12. When shopping, point out reflections in windows or mirrors. Talk about how reflections are mirror images, and how we only see reflections in shiny things like puddles, windows, and mirrors.
13. In the car or bus, talk about what you have planned to do that day, and call it an adventure. Talk about how even a normal day can be an adventure if we make it fun and exciting.
14. When you are brushing teeth and getting ready for the morning, encourage your child to tell you what he/she is excited about for that day. Talk about how being excited means being very happy about something.
15. At bedtime, point out your child's favorite stuffed animal, and talk about how our favorite things make us happy because we love them best. Talk about how Amari's favorite thing was probably her stuffed animal ,Tiger, and how excited she was to see the tigers at Zoo Atlanta.
16. Visit a community garden or just go outside at a playground or park and dig in the dirt, just like Will and Amari talked about digging in a garden.
17. Check out other books related to this book from the library, such as: *Goodnight Gorilla* by Peggy Rathmann, *Dear Zoo* by Rod Campbell, *We Eat Food that's Fresh* by Angela Russ-Ayon, etc.
18. The possibilities are endless… Let us know what YOU chose to do to make this book come alive for your child! Contact us at rollinsinfo@atlantaspeechschool.org

Information

www.atlantaspeechschool.org

www.geears.org

Founding Partners – Mayor's Reading Club 2013

Alliance Theater at the Woodruff
www.alliancetheater.org

The Annie E. Casey Foundation
www.aecf.org

Atlanta Campaign for Grade Level Reading
www.gradelevelreading.net

Atlanta Speech School
www.atlspsch.org

Boys and Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta
www.bgcma.org

City of Atlanta
www.atlantaga.gov

Educare Atlanta
www.shelteringarmsforkids.com

Fernbank Museum of Natural History
www.fernbank.edu

Ferst Foundation for Childhood Literacy
www.ferstfoundation.org

GEEARS: The Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students
www.geears.org

Imagine It! The Children's Museum of Atlanta
www.childrensmuseumatlanta.org

Jumpstart
www.jstart.org

The Junior League of Atlanta
www.jlatlanta.org

Little Shop of Stories
www.littleshopofstories.com

Midtown Atlanta Rotary Club
www.midtownrotary.org

Reach Out & Read
www.reachoutandread.org

Sheltering Arms
www.shelteringarmsforkids.org

United Way of Greater Atlanta
www.unitedwayatlanta.org

Whitefoord, Inc.
www.whitefoord.org

Wylde Center
www.wyldecenter.org

Young Audiences
www.yawac.org

Zoo Atlanta
www.zooatlanta.org

**As of May 13, 2013*

MAYOR'S SUMMER READING CLUB

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Amari is excited to go to the zoo with her mom and brother. But will she be able to see her favorite exhibit—the tigers?

Amari's curiosity and spirit will delight and inspire readers both big and small. Amari's Adventure also includes ideas for adults to use while reading, to build their children's language and vocabulary skills and to prepare them to be on a path to "read to learn" by 3rd grade.

US $3.99

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