

## DEAR READER,

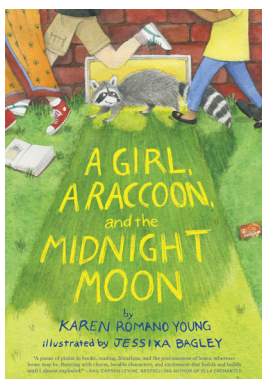
As a child I went to a local library that sometimes woke up to a kerfuffle—the head of its garden statue had been stolen again! Shocking, yes—and the eventual return of the robbed head (of Dante), usually in some bizarre place, only added to my sense that, in the middle of the night, while I slept, the world was up to something. I longed to stay awake and watch it all unfold.

I grew up going to the children’s library in Fairfield, Connecticut and would have spent the night there if I could have figured out how. I was sure the experience would be magical. So when I set out to write a story about a girl who pretty much lives in a library, I knew I wanted nocturnal magic of some sort. It came in the form of a literate raccoon I drew one day as the proprietor of a New York City newsstand. Why would a raccoon run a newsstand and what might she have to do with the local library?

*A Girl, A Raccoon, and the Midnight Moon* tells the story these idle ravelings knitted themselves into. The characters are original, though many are named for librarians I loved. And the setting? It’s a conglomeration of New York’s enchanting pocket branch libraries, many built in the Carnegie era, as well as libraries in Syracuse, and my own Fairfield Public Library—the place I loved.

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