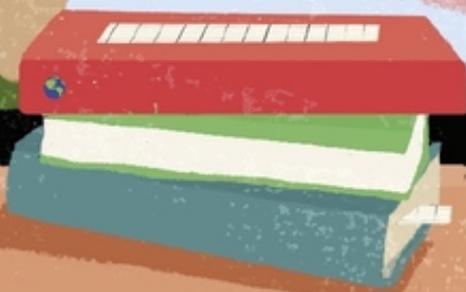


Penguin



Readers

**What
you are
looking
for
is in
the
library**



Michiko Aoyama

Note about the story

What You Are Looking For Is In The Library is by the Japanese writer Michiko Aoyama. In her story, the **librarian*** Sayuri Komachi is a very interesting and strange person who **recommends** books to help people find what they are *really* looking for in life. The books are special for each person. They show them life is not always how you want it to be, but it is still good. The librarian also gives each person a **felted** gift that she has made. The felted gifts all mean something to the visitors, but they don't understand why until later. Both the books and the felted gifts help each person understand their place in the world.

Michiko Aoyama visited libraries to escape real life. She wanted to show that we don't always choose books but that sometimes they choose us. She loves reading and, like Hiroya in the book, she is interested in Japanese **manga**. Manga is Japanese drawing that is used for telling stories to children, young people and adults. It is used in many Japanese **magazines**.

Before-reading questions

- 1 Why do people go to libraries, do you think?
- 2 This story happens in Japan. Are you from Japan?
Have you visited Japan?
- 3 In the story, librarian Sayuri Komachi makes people gifts. Have you ever made someone a gift? What was it and why?

*Definitions of words in **bold** can be found in the glossary on pages 77–79.

CHAPTER ONE
Tomoka Fujiki, 21, shop worker

Saya sends me a message telling me that she has a new boyfriend.

What's he like? I write back.

He's a doctor, she replies.

She doesn't tell me what he looks like or give any more information about his job. I know what a doctor is, and a job tells you a little about someone's **personality**—but only a little. Then I start thinking about my own job. What does it say about *my* personality?

I've known Saya since high school. When I left home and moved to Tokyo, we stayed friends. She messages me again and asks me how I am.

Great! I write.

I really mean *bored*.

I work at a big store called Eden. Every morning, I put on my black skirt and orange shirt. Then I spend the day standing around and helping **customers**. I started this job six months ago after finishing college.

“Miss Fujiki,” says Mrs. Numauchi, “I've had my lunch. You can go next.”

Mrs. Numauchi also works at Eden. She's worked here for a long time. Last month was her birthday, and I think she is about my mother's age. Mrs. Numauchi tells me what to do a lot of the time, but she is usually right.

I walk toward the **staff** restaurant. The woman who

works there doesn't like me because one time she made a mistake with my order. So, I don't buy my lunch from the restaurant any more—I buy a sandwich from the store on the way to work and eat it there. I don't know how to cook, so I usually buy cheap food that is ready to eat.

I can hear some of my **colleagues** in the restaurant talking about their husbands and children. To a customer, I am just like my colleagues, wearing the same orange shirt. But I'm not like them, and I usually try to stay away from them. I don't like working here but it was the only place that gave me a job. Eden is also in Tokyo, and I don't want to go back to the countryside where there is just rice field after rice field and only one store. Tokyo has always been my dream city, and I still love it, but what about the future?

When I lived in the countryside, people thought it was wonderful that I was moving to Tokyo. They thought that I was great. Saya still thinks it's good that I live here and that I have a great job. I won't tell her that I only work in a clothes shop. I'm **embarrassed**. I'm not great, and I have no **ambition** to *be* great. I don't even have a boyfriend. I worry that I'll be at Eden until I'm my mother's age, like Mrs. Numauchi.

"Hey, Tomoka," calls Kiriya. He works at the glasses shop. He is around the same age as me and the only person I can talk to. "Is it OK if I join you for lunch?" he asks while carrying some food.

"Sure," I say.

Kiriya sits down in front of me. He is wearing a nice



pair of glasses that look really good on his face. You can see that he is great at his job. “Hey, what did you do before working here?” I ask.

“I worked for a **magazine**,” he says.

“Really? I didn’t know you worked in **publishing**,” I say.

“Are you surprised?” he asks.

“You had a great job but then you came here,” I say.

Kiriyama smiles. “Working in a glasses shop is also great.”

“I will work for Eden until I die,” I say, sadly.

“Do you want to change jobs?”

“Yeah,” I say.

“Do you still want to work with customers?” he asks.

“Yeah. But I would prefer to work in an office. I also want to wear what I like and go outside to a café for lunch with my colleagues. How did you find this job?” I ask.

“I looked on a website for people who want to change jobs,” he said.

Kiriyama pulls out his smartphone and shows me the website.

“You complete the information about your **skills** and then they find you a job that needs the same ones. Look, here are some of the skills that people want,” he says, pointing at the website.

I don’t have all the computer skills that are on the website—I can use Word but not Excel or PowerPoint. I have a laptop, but I never use it.

“If you want to work in an office, you need to know Excel,” Kiriyama says. “Why don’t you take a class to learn how to use it?”

“Computer classes are expensive,” I say.

“Libraries often have cheap classes,” Kiriyama tells me.

“Really? I didn’t know,” I say.

When I get home, I look on my phone for the nearest

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR IS IN THE LIBRARY



and I look tired. My apartment is so dirty, and there are clothes everywhere.

Like Kiriyama, I have forgotten how to look after myself, so I clean the apartment while the cake cooks. It smells so nice. When I'm finished, I check on the cake, but the bottom is burned. What did I do wrong? I suddenly start laughing. I won't quit! I *can* learn how to make this cake.

Every day after work, I try to make the same cake. I look **online** for new recipes, but I keep getting it wrong. Then, one day I get it right.

"Wow, this is great!" Kiriyama says the next day when he tries it.

I spend so much time in the kitchen, I begin to cook dinner as well. It's amazing how much more energy I have and how much healthier I feel after only a few days.

When I return the books to Nozomi, I go and see Ms. Komachi. As I stand in front of her, she stops and looks up at me.

"Thank you," I say. "For *Guri and Gura*, and the frying pan. I learned something important."

"I did nothing," Ms. Komachi replies. "You took what you needed and did it yourself."

I still don't know what I want to do, or what I can do. But it's OK. Now I know that I don't have to worry. I'm just happy learning some new skills and living my life. Because I never know when I might find my own huge egg.