

North York Central Library Blog

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Whenever I Go to the Library, My Friend From Iran is There

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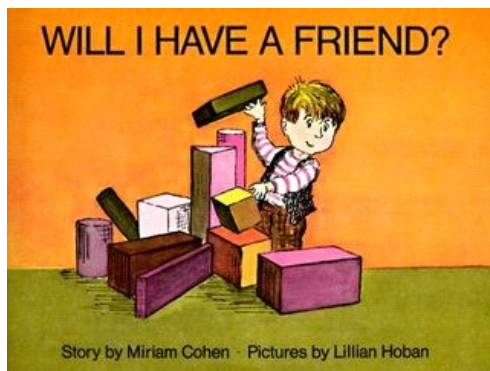


Hello Everyone,

I'm **Not Quite Miss Rumphius** and this is the blog for the Children's Department at North York Central Library. Welcome back.

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My good friend, Laleh, is from Iran and every time I go to the library I see someone who reminds me of Laleh -- someone with dark wavy hair and olive skin that never looks pale or washed out even in the middle of a sun-deprived Canadian winter, someone with a gracious manner and a ready smile. It's easy to want to be more like someone else, and all I can say is that's true for me with Laleh.



Laleh and I first met over a dozen years ago at the daycare our sons both attended. Back then, our little boys looked so similar that we joked we could swap photos of them, pass off the other one as our own, and no one would be the wiser.

Much has changed since those days. For one thing, our boys have grown ... and grown ... and grown. They no longer look alike and they now tower over us, something they're always

quick to point out.

There have been other changes too. Like everyone else around us, our families have faced difficult situations, the kind that come out of nowhere and suddenly -- starkly -- divide life into Before and After. We've been up in the mountains; we've been down in the valleys too.

Welcome to [North York Central Library](#). We're one of the City's most welcoming spaces, open to all for study, research, relaxation and fun.

Our extensive digital and print collections, programs and services are yours to use, borrow and explore. Expert staff are always on hand to help. Meet us in person or join us online.

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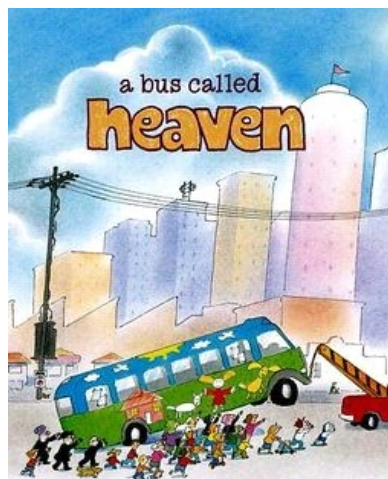
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Through it all, together and apart, Laleh and I have been consoled, entertained, distracted, and uplifted by books and reading. We've had food, too -- especially the wonderful meals that Laleh prepares and shares with a wide circle of family and friends, people I already know and people I'd like to know better.

* * * * *

When I first came to work in the Children's Department at North York Central Library, I was pleased to be in such a warm, friendly place -- not my real home, and yet *home*.



BOB GRAHAM

Was it the books and children and families -- all the great bustle and good cheer around me -- that made this place feel so right?

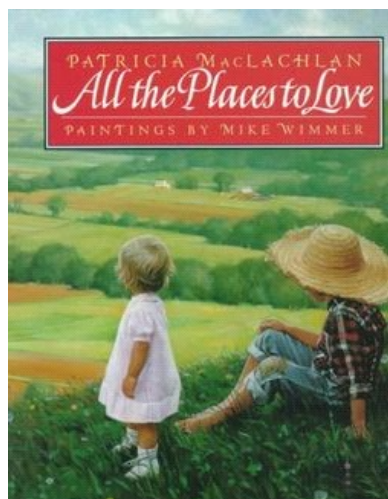
Yes, but it was more than that. And it had to do with my friend.

The first people I met in the library were a mother, a father and a young daughter who had come here, like Laleh's family, from Iran. The two older women who asked me for a Farsi-English dictionary reminded me of Laleh's older aunt. And at a Family Time program I led, I spoke with a young Iranian woman who looked so much like Laleh that I swore they had to be sisters, separated at birth.

Then there was the language -- the same language I'd heard spoken at the memorial service for Laleh's father. I couldn't understand this

language, but that didn't matter. It was both foreign and familiar, and it was here too.

* * * * *



We are all, I think, looking for our tribe, our flock -- the group and place that accepts us for who we are, nurtures us, and brings out the best in us.

We get a lot from our flocks -- but we also get to give something back too. I've learned that with the people I know, including Laleh. And I found it out all over again, in the place where some of the things that matter most to me are.

I found it with the people who come to this place every day: the Iranian families, the South Asian grandparents, the Korean preschoolers, and the tiny Chinese babies.

I found my tribe at the library.

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