

The First Two Pages of *What's in a Name?*

by Alice Wootson

Here are the first two pages of *What's in a Name?* Comments will follow.

Chapter 1

It was a typical Friday night in the Howe University's library. The building was quiet as only a nearly empty library would be, but it could have been as noisy as a schoolyard at recess, and still the young man huddled over a book on the table wouldn't have noticed.

Hours had passed and he looked as if he could spend many more hours in the same position.

He never heard the sound of footsteps coming his way. A voice finally caught his attention.

"Okay, Takeem. Time to stop for the night."

Startled, he looked at the librarian standing beside the table, then glanced at the empty tables around him and smiled sheepishly. As usual, he was the last student in the building.

"Okay, Mrs. Taylor." He closed the large reference book and moved it to the center of the table with three others. "Are you going to leave these here for me for tomorrow?" He grinned at her.

"I should." She smiled back. "It would save me from having to shelve them again. You've been with these same books for two days, now. Something giving you trouble?" She watched him stand and stretch.

"No, I just want my project to be perfect."

"Don't you always?" She shook her head. "You know there is no such thing as perfection."

"No, but it is something we should all strive for," he answered as he gathered his things.

They both laughed at the exchange they made many times. Neither noticed a man pause outside the large front window, stare in, then continue down the street.

My Comments:

I started with Takeem in an almost empty university library for several reasons. I wanted to show that he was a serious student who probably didn't have much of a social life. He's in the library on a Friday night and that's not unusual for him. From the interaction with the librarian, we know she knows him well. Things appear uneventful. Then I put a man looking in the window. Since he pauses rather than just glance in and keep walking, this tells us that this is significant.

Hopefully this excerpt brings up questions of why. Why is it usual for Takeem to be here on a Friday night instead of with friends? Why is he satisfied with this? Why is a man interested in what he sees? Is he interested in Takeem? If so, why?



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