

CLARA

~~Belle? Elliott Matthews over there
had something he wanted to talk to
you about.~~

BELLE

~~Elliott? Oh, he hasn't been in in
awhile. Of course.~~

Belle crosses the room where a bright, 11 year old boy,
ELLIOTT MATTHEWS is sitting reading a book.

BELLE (CONT'D)

Elliott? Hey buddy. What's up?

Elliott immediately stops what he's doing and turns to Belle
a little shy but resolute.

ELLIOTT

I met Clara. She's really nice. She
asked me how Bedford House has
helped me.

Belle looks up at Clara with apprehension.

BELLE

Oh did she?

Clara gives a knowing smile and nods.

ELLIOTT

Yeah, that was easy. You saw me
having a hard time...
(holding up the book)
And I'm reading chapter books now.
Plus, you introduced me to Jamal
and the mentor program.

BELLE

Jamal's a great guy isn't he?

ELLIOTT

Yeah, he's cool. But...I used to
think I was just bad at stuff, ya
know? Couldn't focus. Couldn't sit
still. My teachers didn't know what
to do with me. I didn't know what
to do with me.

BELLE

That was really hard to carry, huh?
But look at you now. You're doing
great!

ELLIOTT

You knew how to help me. You gave
me the timer, that really helped me
stay focused. And you helped me
meet Jamal and he showed me tricks
too. Now, I want to help people,
like you do. I want to be a doctor,
like Jamal. Like, for real. I
already started memorizing all the
bones in the human body.

He pulls out a wrinkled notecard from his pocket, proudly.

BELLE

(holding back tears)
Elliott, I'm so proud of how hard
you're working.

Behind her, Clara watches quietly. She doesn't interrupt -
just takes in the moment with a small nod of admiration.

Belle gives Elliott a hug, the kind that says she's been in
his corner since the beginning.

ELLIOTT

You should be proud of how hard
you're working too.

Clara touches her shoulder.

CLARA

~~Mind if I borrow him for a second?~~

~~Belle nods, still holding back emotion. Clara kneels down by
Elliott and whispers something in his ear. His eyes light up.~~

~~He whispers to another kid. The whisper chain begins. Within
moments, a handful of kids are scribbling furiously, cutting
out shapes of paper, others waiting their turn.~~

~~Belle watches it all unfold like magic she didn't realize
she'd started.~~

BELLE

(to Clara)
~~What is happening?~~

CLARA

~~Just a little Christmas spirit.~~

~~Elliott runs up and hands Clara a handwritten note in the
shape of an ornament and then looks up at Belle, grins and
runs off to grab his backpack.~~

End

Start