

EYES ON THE STARS

By

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Based on

Eyes on the Stars (by Ron McNair)

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FADE IN

EXT. SOUTH CAROLINA FIELD - DAY

Tall summer grass ripples in humid sunlight. Cicadas drone. A BOY, RON McNAIR (9 year old in the 1950s), lies on his back, a worn notebook propped on his knees. He sketches a rocket with surprising precision, especially for a child.

Above him, an airplane cuts a thin white line through the blue sky. Ron lifts a hand toward it - measuring distance, imagining beyond it.

His older brother, CARL (15 years old), stands at the fence.

CARL

Ron! Mama said hurry up now. She needs you to grab sugar from the store.

Ron closes the notebook with care, tucks a pencil behind his ear, and jogs over.

Carl pauses, watching him.

CARL

What you always lookin' up at?

RON

Someday...

(smiles)

Up there's where I'm gonna work.

Carl laughs softly, shaking his head.

EXT. SMALL SOUTHERN TOWN - DAY

RON walks alone, a coin in his hand, passing church-goers, workers, dusty storefronts.

He slows as he approaches the red-brick building with columns:

PUBLIC LIBRARY

Below it, in rigid lettering:

WHITE ONLY.

Ron stares at the sign, then at the door - weighing something.

He steps closer. Takes a breath.

And enters.

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

A hush falls around him.

Rows of books stretch high, dust floating like tiny galaxies in fluorescent light.

Behind the counter sits MRS. HENDERSON (50s), the librarian. Immaculate hair. Controlled posture.

She barely glances up.

Ron moves through the stacks, slowly, reverently. His fingertips skim spines as if reading by touch.

He stops at a shelf labeled:

SCIENCE.

He reaches toward a bright blue book:

"The Universe and You."

He opens it. A splash of glossy illustrations – planets, rockets, nebulae. His eyes widen.

A soft gasp escapes him.

Ron approaches the counter, book held like something sacred.

RON

Good afternoon, ma'am. I'd like to check this out please.

Mrs. Henderson finally looks at him – and freezes.

MRS. HENDERSON

(icy calm)

Where are your parents?

RON

My mother's at work. But I can bring the book back on time.

She stands, flustered.

MRS. HENDERSON
This library...
(struggling for words)
This library isn't for you.

Ron doesn't understand – or refuses to.

RON
I can sit here and read it then.

Mrs. Henderson stiffens. Upset, embarrassed, threatened – but mostly rigidly trained.

MRS. HENDERSON
No. You cannot.

Ron meets her gaze, unblinking.

INT. LIBRARY – CONTINUOUS

MRS. HENDERSON reaches for the phone. PATRONS start to overhear the interaction between the librarian and RON.

MRS. HENDERSON
(into phone)
Yes, Officer? I need you at the
library. A boy is trespassing.

Ron holds the book tighter.

An older white patron peeks from a table, lowering their newspaper.

PATRON
(softly)
It's just a book, for heaven's sake...

Mrs. Henderson glares them into silence.

Outside, the blue flicker of police lights begins to paint the window.

Ron breathes deeply, steadying himself.

INT. LIBRARY – MOMENTS LATER

Two POLICE OFFICERS enter. Their footsteps echo As they approach MRS. HENDERSON and RON.

OFFICER #1
Alright son... what's the trouble here?

Ron lifts the book slightly.

RON

I was just reading, sir.

The officers look from Ron to the librarian, confused.

They expected a crime. They found a child with a book.

MRS. HENDERSON

He knows he's not allowed in here.

Ron swallows, but stands tall.

The officers shift, uncomfortable. One rubs the back of his neck.

The library doors swing open again—

RON'S MOTHER (30s) bursts in, breathless from running, fear in her eyes until she sees him unharmed.

MOTHER

Ronald!

(she kneels, hands on his arms)

Baby, what happened?

Ron holds up the book.

RON

I just... wanted to learn about space.

His mother closes her eyes for a moment — heartbreak, pride, frustration all fighting inside her.

She rises slowly, facing the officers and librarian.

MOTHER

(slow, controlled)

If my boy wants to read... you let him read.

Silence thickens like smoke.

The officers look at each other — unwilling to escalate.

Mrs. Henderson hesitates. She senses the room turning.

Something in her posture softens, grudgingly.

She takes the checkout card, stamps it with an echoing THUMP.

She pushes the book toward Ron without meeting his eyes.

MRS. HENDERSON
(returning to routine)
Due back in two weeks.

Ron grins – small but shining.

EXT. SOUTH CAROLINA FIELD - NIGHT

Fireflies blink around RON as he sits in the grass with the library book open. The stars shine sharp and clear overhead.

Each page turn illuminates his face with childlike wonder.

His MOTHER stands on the porch, watching him quietly – proud, worried, hopeful.

Ron gazes at the sky, whispering:

RON
Someday...

He lifts the book toward the heavens.

SUPERIMPOSE:

"Ronald McNair faced adversity to become a great physicist, pilot, and an astronaut aboard the Space Shuttle Challenger."

FADE OUT.