Kindness First.
Compassion First.
Empathy First.

I don't know how much longer it might have taken me to develop that empathy if I hadn't read that book. It still took me years to realize I was queer and genderqueer, but in the meantime, I learned how to put my money where my mouth is, so to speak, and start treating people like I valued them. Empathy and compassion are the highest part of the human experience.

Read books.

Drink water.

Vote in elections.

Use your library.

Be kind.

My Empathy-Building List:

Against White Feminism
by Reza Bakhari

Queerly Beloved
by Susie Dumond

Fat Chance, Charlie Vega
by Crystal Maldonado

Six Crimson Cranes
by Elizabeth Lim

The Downstairs Girl
by Stacy Lee

Flygirl
by Sheri L. Smith

I was a senior in high school in 2013 when I picked up the book "Millionaire, Million Dollar" by John Green and read it. At that time, I was "accounting in order to live my kind of life."

I don't think it's a coincidence that the book I picked up at that time was a book that was written by someone who, like me, was queer. And I think that's something that's really important to remember: that our experiences and our stories are valuable, and that we should be encouraged to share them with others.

I also think that it's important to remember that empathy and compassion are not just important for individuals, but are also important for society as a whole. By fostering empathy and compassion within ourselves, we can create a more just and equitable world for all.

Books gave me empathy (and other reasons we should read freely and widely).

By Arlo