Reader of the Rocks
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Julie Codispoti loves mysteries. But she doesn’t read stories. Instead, she reads rocks.

Julie works at a place called the United States Polar Rock Repository. It is a place that stores rocks from the Arctic and Antarctica. It is a library of rocks! Julie takes pictures of the rocks that are sent there. She writes descriptions of them. She labels each rock so it can be stored. But what she likes the most is sharing the rocks with other people.

This black, crumbly rock from the continent of Antarctica is coal. Coal is a fossil fuel. It is formed from trees and plants that died and fell to the ground. Over millions of years, the plants broke down and became packed together. Over time, the tightly packed plants became coal.

But wait! Why is there coal in Antarctica? There are no trees and not many plants there. Most of Antarctica is a cold, frozen desert.

Julie knows that rocks can tell a story. The coal tells us that Antarctica was very different long ago. There was no ice or snow. Antarctica was warm and covered by swamps and forests.

As a kid, Julie didn’t like science. She wasn’t good at it. But she liked being outdoors. In college, she started to learn about rocks and decided that maybe she could be a scientist, after all.

Julie still has to work hard. Understanding rocks isn’t easy. However, she knows that if she works hard, she will learn the secrets of the rocks.
Glossary

continent – a large piece of land
desert – a place where there is very little rain or snow
fossil fuel - fuel formed from the remains of once-living plants and animals
swamp – a place with wet, soggy soil and many plants