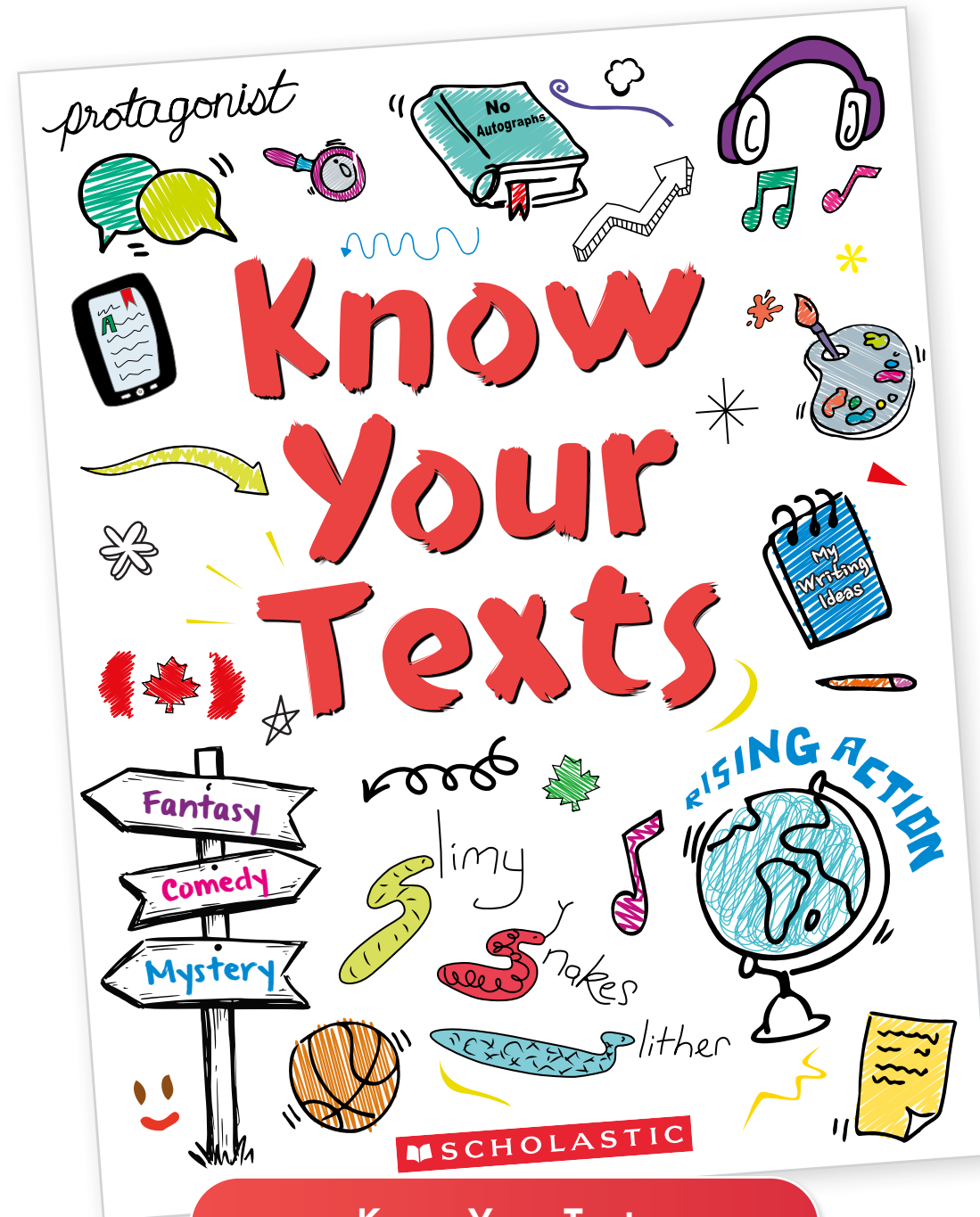


NO Autographs

by Marty Chan



Know Your Texts
Student Book Sample Spreads

Characters

Narrator



Alan Leung



Sarah Lindsay



Mikayla Torres



Bàba



Narrator: Fate often tests the people it encounters. Today, it paid a visit to Alan Leung and his friends, Sarah Lindsay and Mikayla Torres. The sixth-graders clustered around Sarah's phone in her parents' living room, marvelling at the announcement on the screen.

Sarah: Mi Cha is headlining the music festival next month!

Mikayla: We must obtain tickets.

Sarah: But they'll be super expensive. Mi Cha's the most popular K-pop star in the world. I heard that her London concert tickets cost over a thousand dollars—and that was for nosebleed seats.

Alan: What a colossal waste of time and money. Stream her songs, and they'll be just as good; plus, concert crowds mess with my hearing aid.

Sarah: D'von will be performing with Mi Cha.

Alan: What?! Seriously? Give me the phone!
(Alan snatches the phone.)

Alan: D'von is the best rapper in history! Missing him would be a crime.

Sarah: Concerts are a colossal waste of time and money. Sound vaguely familiar?

Alan: Well, that was before I knew the most epic artist ever was coming to our hometown. Now I have to go.

Mikayla: Alan, may I borrow your hearing aid? I couldn't hear what you said with your foot firmly planted in your mouth.

(Alan rolls his eyes.)





Sarah: I can cobble together \$20 and some loose change if I rummage under the couch cushions. How much money do you two have?

Mikayla: My abuela transferred me \$40 for my birthday, and I accumulated an additional \$58 from babysitting jobs.

Alan: I've been bussing tables at my dad's restaurant, and I earned \$40 in tips.

Mikayla: Collectively, we have \$158.

Alan: Mikayla, ask your abuela to give you money for the next 10 birthdays.

Mikayla (looking at phone screen): Make that the next 30 birthdays.

Sarah: Yikes! Maybe there's enough cash hiding under all our couch cushions. I heard a lady once found thousands of dollars that had gathered after years and years.

Mikayla: Unfortunately, I think that's a rare case. Alan, what if your father hires Sarah and me to work at the restaurant for a few weeks?

Alan (shrugging): I suppose it's worth a shot.



Narrator: That evening, Alan emptied a tray of dirty plates into the dishwasher, biding his time for the right opportunity to approach his *bàba*. The towering man toiled in the kitchen of their Chinese restaurant, filling the untold orders flying in from frantic servers. When his father delivered the last plate of sweet and sour pork to a harried server, Alan seized the moment and bounded over to his cooking station.

Alan: *Bàba*, business is booming.

Bàba (nods happily): Yes. The Foodie Feast website ranking us in its top 10 list has been great for business.



Alan: So we might even need extra workers, right? Sarah and Mikayla mentioned they're available.

Bàba: We could use the help. I just accepted a reservation for a big private function next month.

Alan (cries out): No—that's too late!

Bàba: What do you mean?

Alan: We need to earn enough money to buy tickets to see D'von and Mi Cha in concert. They're coming here, to Edmonton.

Bàba (calmly): Yes, I know. They booked a reservation at our restaurant.

(Alan's jaw drops.)

Alan: They're dining here? Here?! Sarah and Mikayla will explode when I tell them. *Bàba*, you have to let them work here that night.

Bàba: It's a closed, private reservation. I only need one more server, so you can choose one friend. But she can't intrude on our guests—no autograph or selfie requests. Devon's and Meera's teams insisted on a nuisance-free experience.

Alan: It's D'von and Mi Cha. And we won't pester them. Promise.

(*Bàba* looks unconvinced as he watches Alan shake with excitement.)



Narrator: The next day, Alan felt much less excited. As he made his way to school, he racked his brain for how to inform Mikayla and Sarah about the situation. He spotted them both near the main entrance.

Sarah: So, did your father agree to hire us?

Alan: Hello to you, too. And... not exactly.

Mikayla: Hmmm. I conclude that means your father vetoed our proposal.

Sarah: Can you say that again, but in English this time?



Mikayla (sighing): Your dad said no to our idea?

Alan: It's complicated. The good news is that we won't need concert tickets. D'von and Mi Cha will be eating at my dad's restaurant the night before the festival.

Mikayla (breathlessly): We have an opportunity to see Mi Cha? I will beseech her for an autograph and a selfie. No, I'll implore her to perform "The Tide Around Jupiter" a cappella.

Sarah: You do that, then I'll sing "The Sun's Moon" with her. It's the best song ever. Al, you can record our duet.

Alan (coughs): Well, there's a no-hassling the stars policy in place. And, um, my dad insisted that only one of you can join me.

Mikayla: What travesty is this? My dreams of befriending Mi Cha are ruined.

Sarah: Your dreams! I've followed her since the very beginning. To be so close to meeting her and miss out is truly terrible.

Alan: Well, I can salvage one of your dreams, but I don't know who to choose.

Mikayla: Alan, we've known each other since second grade, and I'll rely on your judgement as a shrewd and steadfast friend.

Sarah: Of course. You decide, Al. But do you remember that orange juice I shared with you in kindergarten? You said it was the best orange juice you ever had.

Alan (groans): Don't do that. Please don't put me in this position.





Sarah: I have an idea! What if Mikayla and I pose as each other and exchange shifts that night? All we have to do is dress alike. People won't really notice the difference, will they?

Mikayla: Sarah, I'm Latine, three inches shorter than you, and don't wear glasses.

Sarah: If I squint, I can get by without them. As long as I don't actually have to read anything.

Alan: You mean like the food orders you'll have to take?

(Mikayla and Sarah both sigh sadly.)

Narrator: Whatever Alan decided, one of his friends would be disappointed. He recalled *Bàba's* warning—select a friend who would not bother the celebrities. Which of the two could maintain their composure in the presence of Mi Cha? Alan was unsure; worse, he risked alienating one of his friends.

Alan: Okay, why don't you decide between the pair of you? It's too hard for me to decide.

(The girls nod reluctantly.)

Sarah: Well, how do we decide?

Mikayla: Only the time-honoured tradition that resolves every argument—Rock, Paper, Scissors.

(Sarah nods solemnly.)

Mikayla: One round seems inadequate. I recommend that whoever wins two out of three accompanies Alan.

Sarah: I prefer best of three out of five.

Mikayla: Six out of ten.

Narrator: Alan watched helplessly as his best friends haggled over the number of rounds required to win. As their exchanges grew more heated, he realized this wasn't going to end well.

Sarah: The fairest solution is twenty-one out of forty.

Mikayla: This is ridiculous. Let's go back to one round takes all.

Sarah: Suits me. Let's do this. Rock, paper, scissors, go!

Narrator: Sarah's hand formed scissors, while Mikayla displayed a flat hand. As always, scissors defeated paper, which thrilled Sarah, but crushed Mikayla.

Sarah (*cheering with arms in the air*): I win!

Mikayla: You hesitated long enough to see my choice. That's cheating.

Sarah: Don't be a sore loser. I won fair and square.

Narrator: As the girls continued to argue, Alan realized there was one solution that could preserve their friendship, but it would come at a painful cost.



Alan: How about I ask *Bàba* if you can both replace me that evening?

(Mikayla and Sarah abruptly stop and turn to face Alan.)

Mikayla: You'd sacrifice your opportunity to see D'von?

Alan: I would rather keep our friendship. Wouldn't you?

(The girls sheepishly glance at each other and then at their shoes.)

Sarah (*sighs deeply*): That's not fair Al. I've seen Mi Cha in concert. Mikayla's never seen her and you've never seen D'von. Mikayla deserves the chance to go and so do you.

(Mikayla squeals and embraces Sarah and Alan.)

Mikayla: You two are the best friends to ever exist!

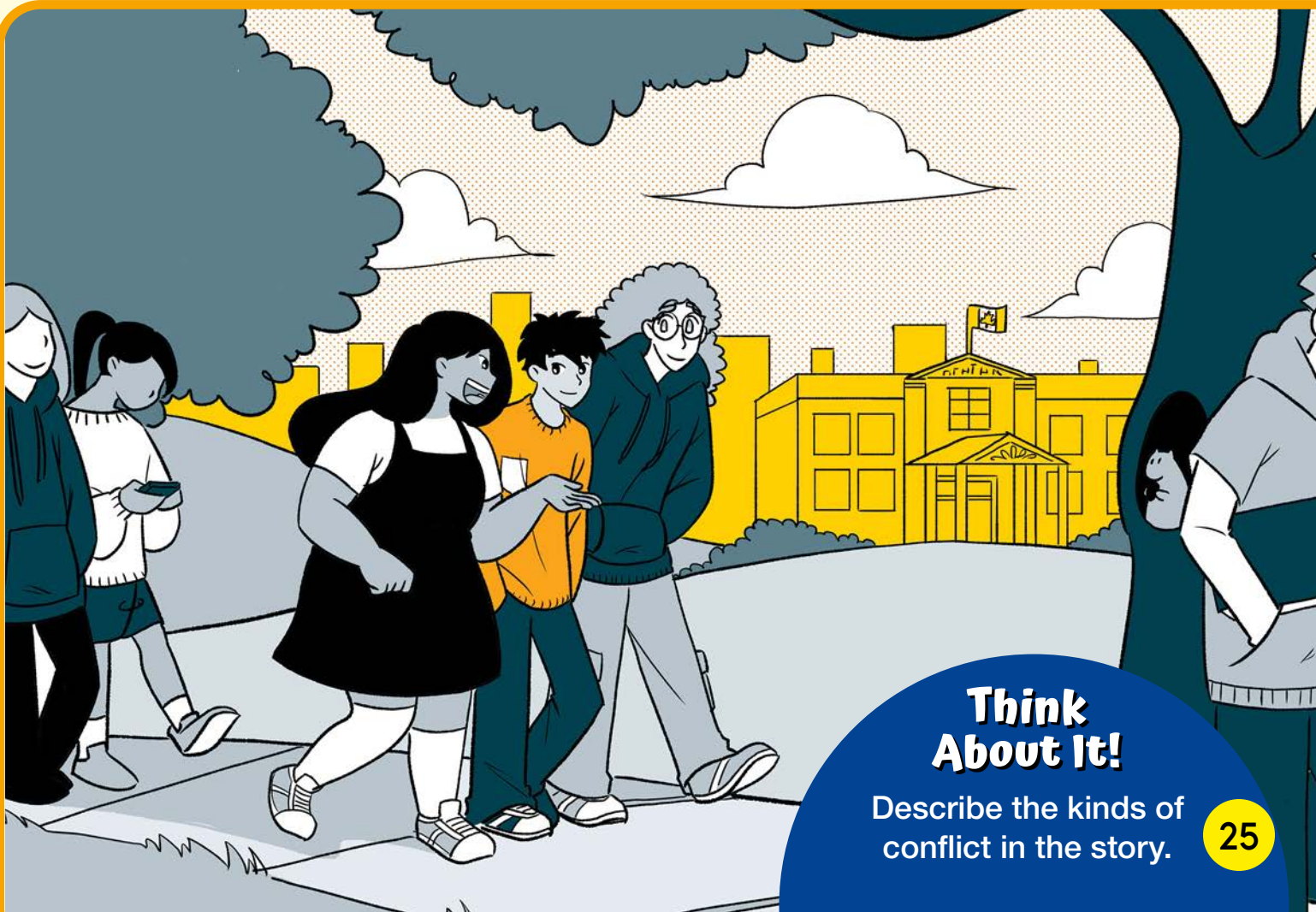
Sarah (*grinning*): I know. I know.

Mikayla: I'll get you an autograph, and I'll send you a selfie. Oh, and a video of us performing a duet.

Alan: Mikayla! My dad's one rule is no one can hassle them.

Mikayla: Relax, Alan. I was teasing. I will be a complete professional... on the outside.

Narrator: Alan, Sarah, and Mikayla marched into the school, excited that two of them would meet their favourite celebrities, but grateful that the three of them would always remain friends. Fate's trial tested the trio's friendship, but they passed.



Think
About It!

Describe the kinds of
conflict in the story.