

LEVELED Book • O

The Loser

MULTI
level
I-L-O

Written by Keith and Sarah Kortemartin
Illustrated by Alan Brown

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Focus Question

How does Jae react when he loses things? What does this say about his character?

Words to Know

examine

lost

responsibility

rummaged

signed

umpire

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Correlation

LEVEL O	
Fountas & Pinnell	M
Reading Recovery	20
DRA	28



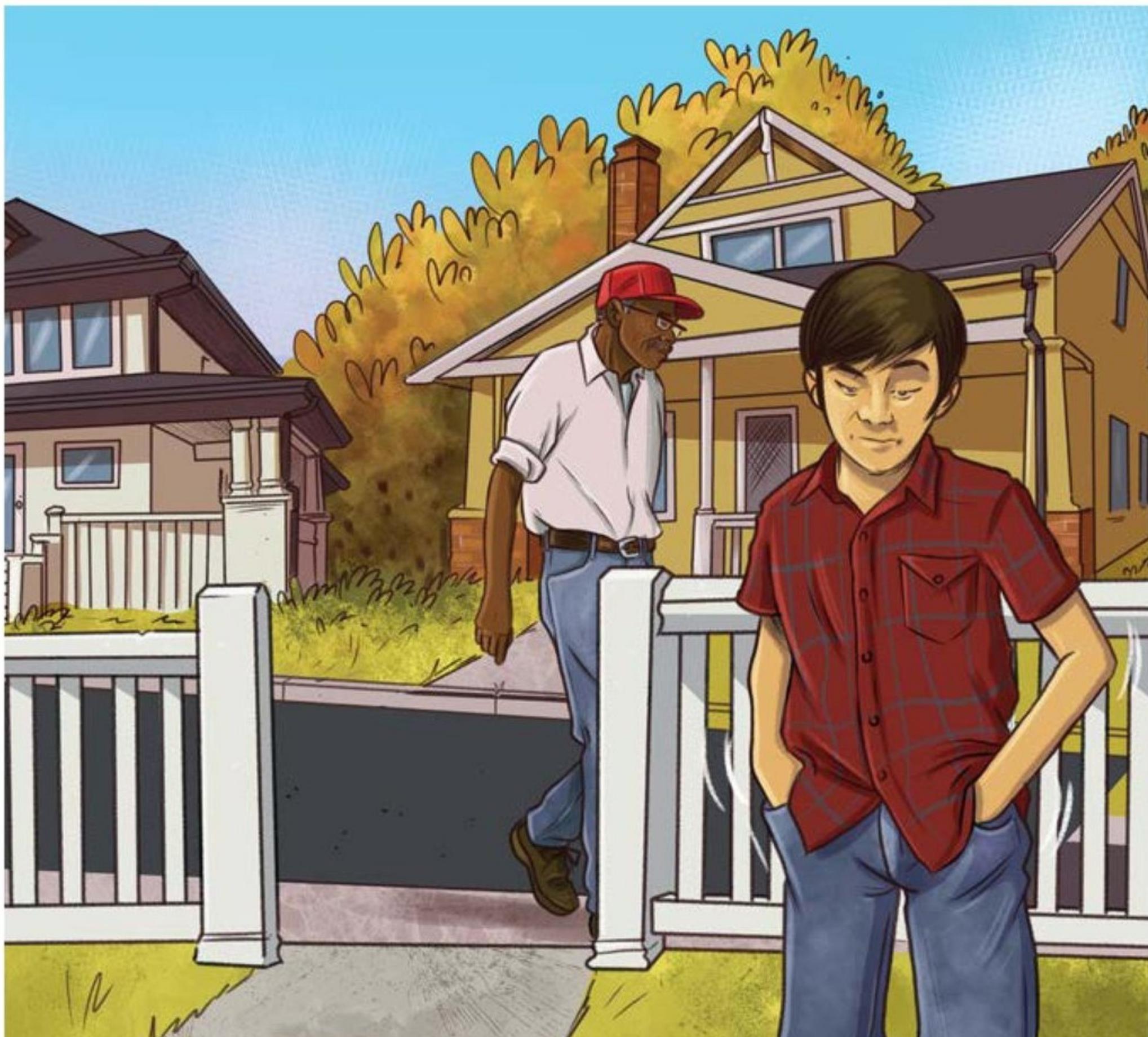
Jae needed to be at school in half an hour, and he couldn't find his homework. He searched the kitchen table, his backpack, under his bed. Nothing.

Frustrated, he yanked open the refrigerator to get breakfast. There, leaning against a quart of milk, was his science report.

I must have left it there when I was making a snack yesterday, Jae thought. Why can't I keep track of my stuff?

Over breakfast, Jae finished up his homework. He scribbled a sentence about his favorite dinosaur, *Microraptor*, and rushed to school.





After school, Jae stood at his front door and patted his pockets. *Where are my keys?* he wondered.

He carefully searched his backpack. They weren't there. *What now?* Jae thought. His parents wouldn't be home for another hour.

Just then, Ron, the man who lived next door, walked past and nodded to Jae.



Jae had never really talked to Ron, who seemed kind of quiet. *But he's a good friend of Dad's*, Jae thought to himself. He remembered the many times he had quietly watched Dad and Ron playing cards together. *And I can't just wait out here for an hour*, Jae thought.

Jae marched to Ron's door and knocked.



When it opened, Jae said, “Hi, Ron. I’ve **lost** my keys, and my parents aren’t home. Could I wait here with you?”

“Sure,” Ron said.

Inside, Jae noticed a baseball on a shelf and went over to **examine** it.

Ron smiled when he saw Jae peering at it. “That one was **signed** by the ‘87 Minnesota Twins, right after the World Series,” he said.



“Dad takes me to their games sometimes,” Jae said. “Where did you get this?”

“I got it during my final year before I retired,” Ron answered. “I was a professional **umpire** for thirty years.”

Jae’s eyes widened as he asked, “An ump? In the ‘80s? Did you ever meet . . . ?” He began to pepper Ron with questions. Grinning, Ron answered them.



He told Jae funny stories about famous players, the things they said, and their good-luck charms.

When it was time for Jae to return home, he asked Ron, “Can I come again sometime?”

“Sure can,” Ron said, smiling.

Wow, losing my keys turned out okay,
Jae thought as he walked home.



The next day at school, as everyone else headed to recess, Jae **rummaged** through his desk.

“Oh, no. Not again!” he groaned.

“Need help?” said a voice. Jae looked up to see Martina, the new girl in school, standing beside him.

“I might,” Jae said. “I’ve lost my dinosaur book.”



“Sorry, I haven’t seen it,” said Martina.

“I have a really good one here, though, if you want to borrow mine.” She pulled out an illustrated dinosaur encyclopedia.

“That’s the same one I use!” Jae exclaimed.

“Are you into dinosaurs, too?”

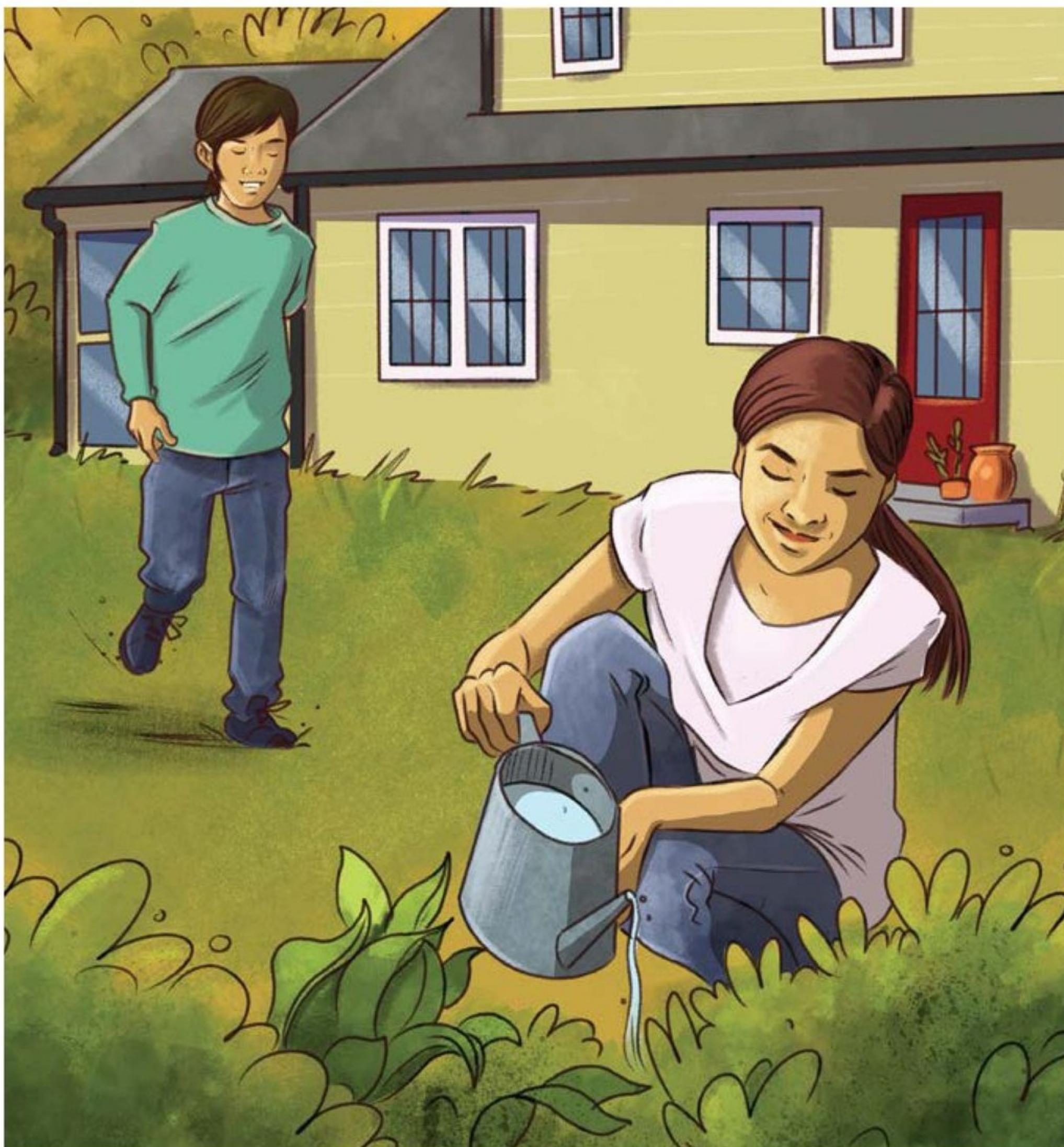
“Yeah,” said Martina, smiling. “This was my birthday present this year. What’s your favorite dinosaur?”

"Have you heard of *Microraptor*?" asked Jae. "They're tiny, but speedy . . ."

Chattering together, they went outside to recess. "Do you want to hang out at the park after school?" Jae asked her. Martina agreed. After school, they spent several hours at the park talking about dinosaurs and tossing Jae's favorite baseball around.

Martina's pretty cool, Jae thought as he went home. And it's pretty cool that she likes the same book that I lost.





The next morning was Saturday, and Jae wanted to do some throwing drills. When he looked for his baseball, he had a familiar sinking feeling. He couldn't find it.

"Can we go to the park to look for my baseball?" Jae asked his mom.



At the park, they heard a rustling sound coming from behind a bush. Curious, Jae peered over it and saw a thin-looking puppy without a collar or tags. The stray puppy was chewing hungrily on something round. Jae looked closer. It was his baseball!

“Mom, look!” Jae said, picking up the puppy very gently. “Doesn’t he look like he needs a home?”

His mother smiled, watching them. “Yes, he does,” she said. “He’ll be your **responsibility**, though.” Jae nodded excitedly and hugged the puppy closer.



What a week! Jae thought to himself, walking home with the puppy in his arms. *I've lost homework, my keys, my book, my baseball . . .* He paused as he realized something. Almost every time he had lost something, he had gained a friend. He thought about Ron and Martina, and he patted the puppy's head.

"Well, maybe I should lose stuff more often," he told the puppy. "Why don't we go see if Ron and Martina want to meet up and play a game of catch?"

Glossary

examine (<i>v.</i>)	to look at something carefully to learn more about it (p. 7)
lost (<i>v.</i>)	the past tense of <i>lose</i> ; to fail to keep or hold; to be unable to find (p. 7)
responsibility (<i>n.</i>)	something a person is supposed or expected to take care of (p. 14)
rummaged (<i>v.</i>)	searched for something in a disorderly or undirected way (p. 10)
signed (<i>v.</i>)	marked one's name on something; autographed (p. 7)
umpire (<i>n.</i>)	an official who rules on plays at a sports game (p. 8)

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A Reading A-Z Level O Leveled Book

Word Count: 779

Connections

Writing

Continue the story. Write about something else Jae loses and what he finds when he goes looking for it.

Social Studies

Write about a time when you lost something. What did you lose? How did you react? Would you do anything different next time?

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