The Film Crew

by Sabrina Adams • illustrated by David Shephard



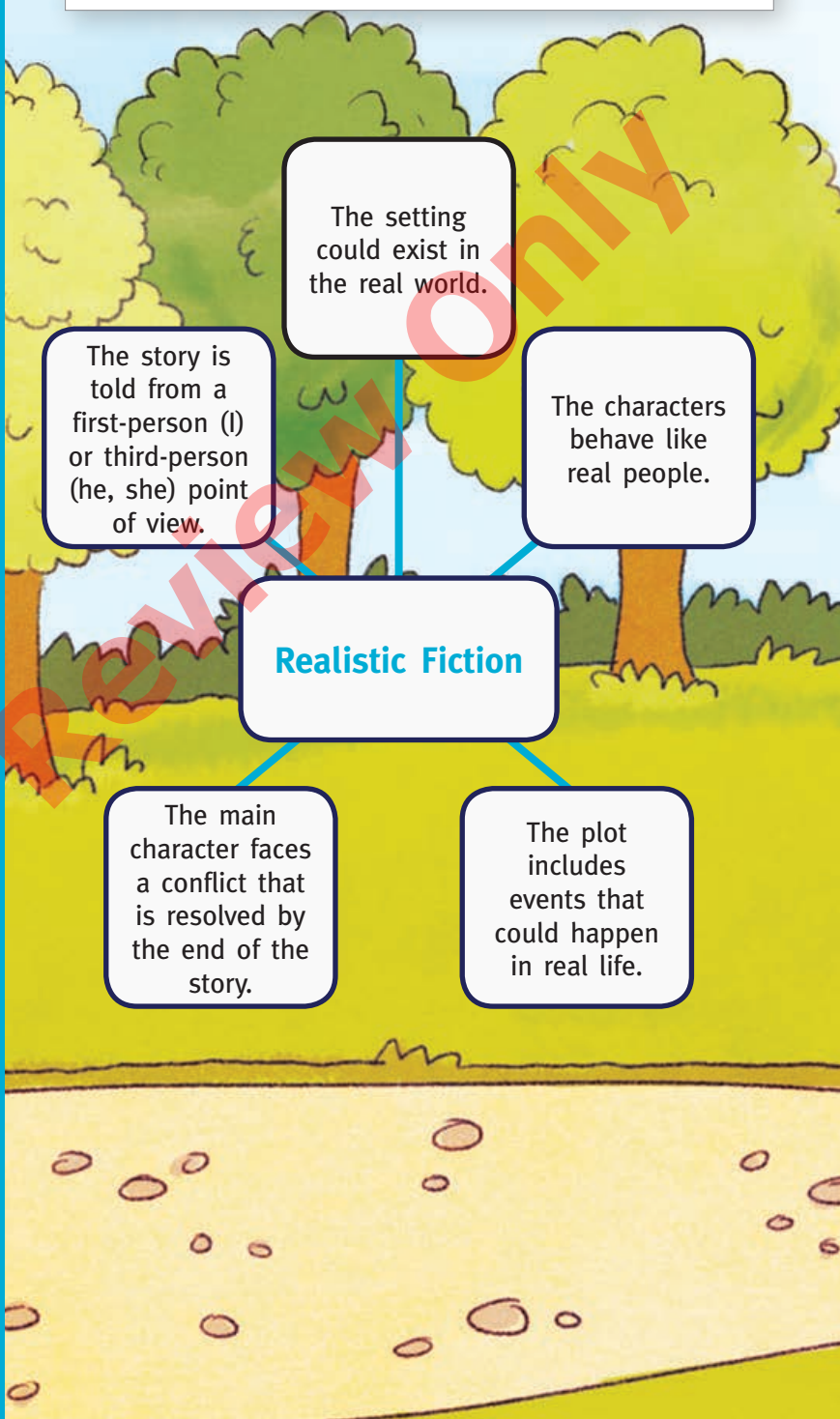
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Shh! The Movie Is About to Start

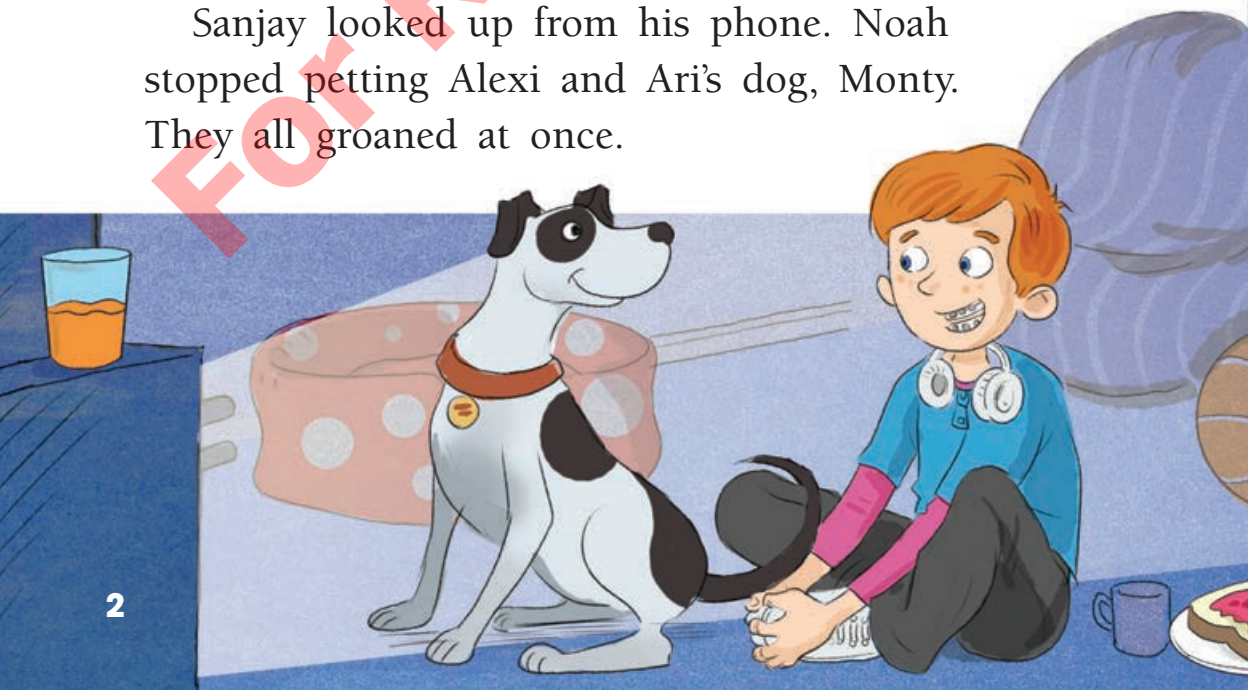
The first week of summer was almost over. Twins Alexi and Ari were hanging out in their basement with all their friends.

"Let's watch *Supercats!* again," said Jen, Alexi's best friend. "That movie was so funny."

"We just watched that one," said Noah, Jen's older brother. "How about *Attack of the Giant Octopus*"? Noah put the movie disc into the player, but it wouldn't play.

"Ugh," Noah said. "The disc has too many scratches. It won't work."

Sanjay looked up from his phone. Noah stopped petting Alexi and Ari's dog, Monty. They all groaned at once.



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"No, it's that disc player. It's so old," said Ari. "And we don't have another one."

"Let me see if I can fix it," Mandy said. She took out the disc, carefully cleaned it, and put it back into the disc player. She pressed "play" a few times, and finally the player began to work.

"Yay," said Jen. All the kids got comfortable as the movie started.



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"Okay, so I know that octopus **prop** is fake," Sanjay said. "Its legs could be made of old vacuum hoses. But somehow, the **filmmakers** made it look like a real octopus."

Jen nodded. "It's great, right? And the goop on the rocks is probably just hair gel, but it totally looks like slime."

"You know, we could make our own science-fiction movie," said Noah. "We could work on it all summer long if we wanted."



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Everyone perked up. Noah was onto something.

"That's a great idea," said Ari. "We can each do a different job. We need camerapeople and actors. We also need people to sew costumes and build props."

"And don't forget, we need a story," Mandy piped in. "I can help with that." She took her laptop out of her bag and turned it on.

"We can use the camera on my smartphone," said Ari. Noah shrugged. He didn't have a phone with a camera.

"I've got one, too," said Jen. "So we can both work to film the movie. We could even shoot from different angles."



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"We can ask my parents for permission to use this house and yard for filming," said Alexi, leading the group into the yard. "I'm sure they'll say yes. Also, I bet we could make our garden look like an alien planet if we film it right."

"I can bring over my dollhouse," said Mandy. "It's perfect for filming the outside of a house."

"And I read that laundry detergent glows in the dark. So we could use that to make something weird-looking," said Sanjay. "We have a lot of great props. Let's make a list."



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The kids went back inside. They listed the garden and dollhouse. They listed mops to make an alien's wavy hair. They listed Noah's old slime-green-colored raincoat that no longer fit him. They planned to use it to make alien skin.



"I can be in charge of props," said Jen.

"And don't forget that I want to write the story," added Mandy.

"I would love to be the one who films everything using one of our cameras," piped in Noah.

"Can I be an actor?" wondered Sanjay. "I've always wanted to do that."

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"So, who is going to be the director?" asked Alexi, staring at Ari.

"We can work it out," Ari shot back. Everyone could tell that both of the twins wanted to be the director. They often fought about who was the one in charge or whose idea was better when the friends were together.

"You two can argue about that later. We need a **script**," said Mandy.

"How about an alien crash-lands on Earth. Then it tries to fit in like a human kid. She can go to school and even try out for the basketball team," said Jen. She was fiddling with some old jump ropes she'd found in the basement. Monty was grabbing and tugging them out of her hands.

"What?" said Alexi. "We're making a movie about an alien who joins a basketball team?"

"Sure, why not?" said Jen. "The alien wants to fit in and be on the team. Maybe she has four legs and needs to hide them from everyone."

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"This whole idea is silly," said Noah. "I'd rather make a movie about Monty here than about an alien." Monty came right over when he heard Noah say his name.

Ari and Mandy's eyes widened. "What a great idea!" said Ari. "Monty is such a good dog. He'd be a great actor."

"No way," shot back Alexi. "We have to all agree on one idea for the movie—we're all doing an alien movie, okay?"



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