

BOOK

1



Kimika & Kalynn SISTERS

Home Is Where the
Heart Smiles

Moving to a New Home

H.V. LYONS

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters “Moving to a New home”



Book 1

Home is where the Heart Smiles

Moving to a new home

By

H.V. LYONS

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MOVING DAY: A HOUSE FULL OF BOXES

The morning sunlight spilled through the half-open blinds of Kimika and Kalynn’s bedroom.

The walls that once sparkled with pictures, posters, cartoon characters, and drawings now looked bare. There were now pale outlines marking where art used to hang. Cardboard boxes stood like tiny towers, each one labeled in Dad’s neat handwriting: *Books, Toys, Shoes, Clothes, Art Stuff*.

Kimika sat cross-legged on the floor beside one half-packed box, clutching her worn sketchbook against her chest. Her fingers brushed over the painted stickers she had placed there years ago. “I don’t want to go,” she whispered, almost to herself. “Everything’s going to be different there. What if we don’t like it?”

Kalynn popped her head out from behind another stack of boxes, her curly ponytail bobbing. She was wearing her favorite explorer’s vest, the one with pockets stuffed with pebbles, rubber bands, and a mysterious feather. “Stop being silly. It’s just a house, Kimika. It’s not like we’re moving to the moon.”

Kimika frowned. “Maybe we should move to the moon. At least I’d have some peace and quiet.”

Kalynn rolled her eyes dramatically. “I doubt it. You’d still find something to

complain about. Even up there.” She giggled and tried to balance a shoebox on her head.

Dad walked in carrying another box marked Kitchen Stuff. His T-shirt was smudged with tape and dust, and he looked halfway between tired and amused. “Alright, ladies, let’s keep the peace. We’ve got one more van load to go before we hit the road.”

“Do we *have* to go?” Kimika asked, her voice small. “Can’t we just visit the new house and come back here?”

Dad crouched beside her and smiled. “I’m sorry, Sunshine. But it doesn’t work that way. Trust me, you’ll love the new house. It’s bigger and better. Just think of all the new walls waiting for you to hang your art on. I bet you’ll paint something new when you get there, maybe your biggest piece of art yet.”

Kimika looked down at her sketchbook, her lips curving slightly. “Bigger, huh?”

Kalynn leaned against a box, rocking on her heels. “And what about *me*, Daddy? Does the new place have trees? Bugs? A yard? A pond?”

Mom entered just in time to hear that. She was wearing her “Moving Day” T-shirt. It read ‘**Keep Calm and Carry Boxes**’. She chuckled. “Well, we wanted to keep it a secret, but I guess I could tell you this. It does have a backyard and a big oak tree, a swing, and there’s even room for a garden if we wanted to plant one.”

Kalynn’s eyes widened. “A *swing*? Can we make a treehouse too? And can I plant sunflowers and carrots and maybe ...”

“Slow down, slow down, little scientist,” Dad laughed. “Let’s get there and unpack first before you start farming. Okay?”

“Okay, Daddy,” replied Kalynn.

Kimika sighed and taped up her last box, pressing the tape down slowly as if she were sealing up a memory. She glanced at the empty walls of her old room one last time.

“This is where I learned to play the piano,” she said softly. “And where I drew my first picture good enough for Mom to hang up.”

Mom’s expression softened. “Don’t worry, we’ll make new memories, sweetie.”

"Moving doesn't erase the old ones; it just adds more pages to your story. You'll see."

Kalynn reached out and squeezed her sister's hand. "And I'll be on *all* your pages, even if I'm the one making a mess in them."

Kimika couldn't help but laugh. "You silly billy, you're already part of my story."

Outside, the rumble of the moving truck started up. Dad stood and brushed his hands off. "Alright, team, it's that time. Let's go start our next adventure."

Kimika took a deep breath and looked around the room again. The light caught her old sticker-covered dresser, and the faded paint on the doorframe where Mom had marked their heights every birthday.

She whispered, "Goodbye, old room," then turned toward the door.

Kalynn ran ahead, skipping down the hallway. "Race you to the car!"

Kimika groaned but smiled. "You always say that!"

"Because I always win!" Kalynn shouted back.

As they left, the sunlight followed them out the door, stretching across the floor like one last wave goodbye.



THE CAR RIDE

The moving truck rumbled ahead on the highway, stacked high with everything the family owned: sofas, boxes, and the piano that had once filled the house with music.

In the family car behind it, Kimika leaned her cheek against the window, watching the only neighborhood she'd ever known slowly disappear behind them. The trees blurred together, and so did the faces of the houses, the ones she had passed every morning on her way to school.

"Goodbye, Mr. Peterson's garden," she whispered as they rolled by. "Goodbye, corner store. Goodbye, bus stop bench."

Kalynn stretched her neck to look out the window on the other side. "Hello, *new adventure!*" She said with a grin. "Goodbye, boring old street!"

Kimika shot a sideways look past their older sister, Kimoy, who was sitting between them with her eyes closed, listening to music with her earbuds.

"It's not boring," shouted Kimika, "You just liked climbing people's fences."

"I was exploring," Kalynn said proudly, crossing her arms. "Scientists explore. That's what we do."

Dad chuckled from the driver's seat. "Well, Miss Scientist, let's try exploring from *inside* the

car today, okay?”



Mom, sitting in the front passenger seat, turned around with a gentle smile. “Kimika, why don’t you draw what you think our new house will look like? It might help you picture something good.”

Kimika opened her sketchbook on her lap and sighed. “I don’t even know what it looks like yet.”

“That’s the fun part,” Mom said. “You get to imagine it.”

Kimika thought for a moment, tapping her pencil on her chin. Then, slowly, her hand began to move across the page. She drew a house with a big porch, a garden full of flowers, and a window where she could see herself playing her piano.

Kalynn peeked over. “Make sure you draw me, too! And my frogs!”

“You don’t have any frogs,” Kimika said flatly.

“Not yet,” Kalynn said, wiggling her eyebrows. “But I *will*.”

Mom and Dad laughed softly.

As they continued their journey, the car smelled faintly of cardboard and peanut butter sandwiches. A half-empty juice box rolled across the floor as they turned a corner. From the radio, soft R&B music played, the kind Dad always listened to when he wanted everyone to relax.

Kimika’s pencil slowed. She stared at the small doodle she’d made of their old house in the corner of the page, next to the new one she was drawing. “I just wish I could bring my old friends,” she murmured.

Mom reached back and squeezed her hand. “You’ll make new ones, sweetheart. And you can always call your old friends or visit them online.”

Kalynn tilted her head. “Maybe you can draw them a picture and email it to them! That’s what artists do—they *share* their art.”

Kimika looked at her sister, surprised. “You know something, Kalynn? That’s actually... a really good idea.”

Kalynn grinned. “See? You’re lucky to have a smart little sister.”

Kimika smirked. “Smart and *annoying*.”

Kalynn stuck out her tongue.

Dad sighed but smiled in the rearview mirror. “I love this sound,” he said softly.

“What sound?” Mom asked.

“The sound of our girls being themselves. It means we’re home no matter where we go.”

Kimika looked back out the window. The sky was opening wide now, the city behind them fading into open roads and rolling hills. For the first time that day, she felt a small flutter of excitement in her chest.

“Maybe,” she whispered, “the new house won’t be *that* bad.”

Kalynn reached across Kimoy and nudged Kimika’s shoulder. “Told you. It’s going to be awesome. I bet there’s even a secret hiding spot in the attic!”

Kimika smiled faintly and added a tiny attic window to her drawing. “We’ll see.”

The car continued down the highway, sunlight flickering through the trees as if the world was waving them forward.



ARRIVING AT THE NEW HOUSE

After nearly two hours on the road, the car turned down a quiet street lined with tall, leafy trees. The sunlight shimmered through their branches, painting the pavement with golden spots. The moving truck pulled in front of a two-story tan-colored house with brown shutters and a wide porch that seemed to smile.

Kalynn pressed her face against the window.

“Whoa... It’s *huge!*” she gasped. “And look at that tree! It’s perfect for climbing, and there’s a swing!”

She unbuckled her seat belt before the car even stopped.

“Hey, hold on there, explorer!” Dad called out, braking gently. “You know better than that. Let’s park before you start your expedition.”

“Sorry, Dad,” said Kalynn, barely able to hold her excitement in.

Kimika sat quietly, staring at the house. It looked... different. Too bright. Too neat. The

flowers in the front garden stood in tidy rows, not wild and colorful like the ones she used to draw in her old yard.

“It doesn’t feel like home yet,” she murmured.

Mom turned in her seat and smiled softly. “Give it a little time, sweetheart. Homes don’t happen in one day; they grow with you over time.”

Dad hopped out first and opened the trunk. “Alright, team! Let’s start Operation Unpack.”

Kalynn leaped from the car, sneakers hitting the driveway with a slap. She ran straight to the oak tree in the front yard and tugged on the rope swing. It squeaked and swayed gently. “Kimika, come see!” she shouted.

Kimika stepped out more slowly, still clutching her sketchbook. The air smelled like freshly cut grass and lilacs. Birds chirped from the branches above, and somewhere nearby, a neighbor’s wind chime tinkled softly.

“It’s... quiet here,” she said.

“Quiet is good,” Mom said, carrying a box labeled **Kitchen**. “That means we can fill it with our special noise.”

Kalynn was already peeking under the porch. “Hey, maybe a raccoon lives down here!”

Dad laughed. “Let’s hope not. But maybe you’ll find a lucky old coin instead.”

Kimika walked up the porch steps and ran her hand along the railing. The paint was smooth under her fingertips. She could imagine painting flowers along it someday, maybe even vines that wrapped around the columns.

Inside, the house smelled faintly of fresh paint and new beginnings. Boxes filled every corner like puzzle pieces waiting to fit into place. Sunlight filtered through the living room window, making patterns on the bare floor.

Mom set down her box and clapped her hands. “Alright! Let’s make this place ours. Kimoy, start moving your things into your room. Kimika, you can set up your art supplies once we get your desk inside.”

Kalynn dashed up the stairs. “I call the side by the window!”

Kimika sighed but smiled faintly. “That’s fine. I’ll take the side with more wall space.”

Dad winked. “Always thinking like an artist.”

Mom glanced at both of them. “Remember, girls, this is our adventure together. We’ll

unpack our memories one box at a time."

Kimika looked around, imagining where her paintings would go and how her piano would sound in this new, empty space.

"It's still strange," she said softly. "But maybe... it could be nice."

From upstairs, Kalynn shouted, "Come see my window! I can see the swing!"

Kimika took a deep breath, set down her sketchbook, and climbed the stairs to join her sister. The floor creaked softly under her feet, as if the house was whispering, *Welcome home.*



THE FIRST ARGUMENT

By the afternoon, the new house was buzzing with the sounds of settling in — tape ripping, boxes sliding across the floor, and Dad’s old R&B music drifting faintly from the living room. Mom called from the kitchen, “Girls, why don’t you unpack your room next? That way, you can start decorating before dinner.”

Upstairs, the girls’ shared bedroom was a maze of boxes and bubble wrap. Kimika had already arranged her desk by the wall with the best light. “Artist’s lighting,” she called it. She spread her pencils and paints neatly across the surface, arranging every brush in a perfect rainbow.

Kalynn’s half of the room looked like a tiny tornado had blown through. An empty box was now her “science lab,” filled with rocks, magnifying glasses, and a half-eaten granola bar she’d forgotten to finish.

“Be careful with your stuff,” Kimika warned, watching her sister crawl under the bed. “What are you doing? If you’re not careful, you’re going to knock over my stuff!”



Kalynn’s muffled voice came from the shadows. “Oh, relax. I won’t knock over anything ... wait a minute! I found something!”

Kimika looked up just in time to see Kalynn wiggle backward from under the bed, clutching something small and slimy in her hands.

“Look!” Kalynn squealed. “A frog!”



Kimika’s eyes went wide. She jumped back. “WHAT?!”

Kalynn grinned proudly, holding it up like a trophy. The tiny green frog blinked, completely unaware of the chaos it had just caused.

“Get that thing away from me!” Kimika yelled, backing toward the wall.

Kalynn giggled. “Stop being so dramatic. He’s harmless! He must’ve been hiding from the moving truck. Maybe he’s the *guardian of the new house!*”

“Or maybe he’s *gross!*” Kimika grabbed a paintbrush and pointed it like a sword. “Kalynn, I mean it — keep that thing away from me and my art stuff! I mean it!”

But Kalynn, laughing too hard to listen, leaned closer. “Come on, just touch him once! His skin is so ...”

Before she could finish, the frog leaped out of her hands ... *boing!* ... right onto Kimika’s desk.

“NOOOO!” Kimika shouted, lunging forward.

The frog skidded across her palette, leaving a streak of green paint behind it. Then, with one perfect jump, it landed smack in the middle of Kimika’s open sketchbook.

For a split second, everything froze. Then both girls screamed.

“Mom!” they yelled at the same time.

Footsteps thundered up the stairs. Mom appeared in the doorway, her eyes wide. “What on earth—?”



Kimika held up her sketchbook, now smeared with paint and one perfect little frog footprint. “Look what she did!”

Kalynn gasped, her lower lip trembling. “I didn’t mean to! I was just trying to show her something cool!”

Mom tried not to laugh but failed — a soft chuckle escaped before she caught herself. “Okay, okay. Everybody breathe.”

Dad soon appeared at the door behind her, still holding a screwdriver. “What’s all this racket?”

“There was a *frog incident*,” Mom said, shaking her head.

Kimika crossed her arms tightly. “It’s ruined.”

Kalynn frowned. “I’m sorry. I’ll fix it. I’ll draw a frog right next to the footprint, and it’ll look like it’s hopping!”

Kimika’s glare softened, but only a little. “You can’t just turn every accident into an experiment.”

“Yes, I can!” Kalynn said brightly. “That’s how discoveries happen!”

Mom crouched between them, one arm around each shoulder. “Girls, you know moving is stressful for everyone — even frogs, apparently. Maybe this is our new house’s way of saying, ‘Welcome.’”

Dad grinned. “Yeah, he’s probably the neighborhood frog inspector. Making sure everyone’s unpacking properly.”

Kalynn giggled. Kimika tried to stay mad, but a tiny smile tugged at her lips.

“Fine,” she said. “But next time you find a frog, keep it outside. Preferably on another planet.”

Kalynn held up her pinky. “Okay, I promise.”

They linked fingers, sealing the truce, but the frog, sitting proudly on the window sill, looked like he wasn’t done causing trouble just yet.



CALMING DOWN

The little frog just sat on the windowsill, blinking as if nothing had happened. The room, however, looked like a tiny disaster zone — open boxes were still everywhere, there was a trail of muddy footprints straight across the floor, and a streak of green paint on the wall that somehow looked like an accidental leaf.

Mom sighed, hands on her hips, again trying not to laugh. “Well, I guess the house officially has character now. You girls really know how to leave your mark on a place.”

Kimika groaned, dropping onto her bed. “I just wanted *one* corner of the room to be perfect.”

Kalynn shuffled her feet. “I didn’t mean to mess it up. I just thought you’d think the frog was cool.” Her voice was small, and for once, she wasn’t smiling.

Kimika glanced up, her anger fading as she saw her little sister’s frown. “I know you didn’t mean to. But you should’ve listened when I said to stay away from my desk.”

Kalynn nodded. “I know. I guess I got too excited. You know I always do.”



Mom sat down between them, her arms wrapped around them both. “You two are a lot alike, you know.”

Kimika looked offended. “What? No, we’re not!”

Mom chuckled. “You both see the world in your own special way. Kimika, you see beauty and color in everything. And Kalynn, you see discovery and adventure in everything. Sometimes, those things get tangled up, and that’s okay. Just remember that when they do, you just need to slow down and see what the *other* person sees.”

Kalynn tilted her head. “So... like looking through Kimika’s eyes?”

“Exactly,” Mom said with a smile. “And Kimika, maybe try looking through Kalynn’s eyes once in a while. You might find something beautiful in her world of chaos.”

Kimika thought about it for a moment. She glanced at her sketchbook, still open on her desk. The frog’s little footprint wasn’t as bad as she’d first thought. The green smear looked almost like a brush stroke, accidentally, but full of life.

“Maybe...” she said slowly, “maybe I can turn it into something. Like a painting about new beginnings.”

Mom smiled. “Now that’s the spirit.”

Kalynn perked up. “Can I help? I can paint the frog!”

Kimika hesitated, then nodded. “Okay — but *you* keep the real one away from my desk.”



Just then, Dad poked his head into the room. “Does this mean that peace is restored?” he asked.

Kimika nodded. “Mostly.”

“Good,” Dad said, pretending to inspect the frog on the window. “Because there’s pizza downstairs and this little guy just told me he wants a slice.”

Kalynn burst out laughing. “He probably wants the pepperoni!”

Even Kimika laughed, shaking her head. “Dad, you’re so weird.”

“Yep,” Dad said proudly. “That’s my job.”

Mom stood and stretched. “Alright, artists and scientists, wash up for dinner. We’ll finish unpacking tomorrow.”

As she left the room, the sisters exchanged a quiet smile. The air felt lighter now; the tension had melted away, replaced by the warm buzz of laughter and pizza smells drifting up from downstairs.

Kalynn looked at the frog, which was still sitting calmly on the sill. “I’m going to have to find a place for him to live. Wait, a minute! I could make him a little house of his own. So, he won’t mess up your stuff again.”

"Now that sounds like a great idea," said Kimika.

Kalynn gently picked up the little frog. "All this yelling, and he never jumped away. I guess he likes it here, too."

Kimika smiled and picked up her pencil. "Yeah. Maybe we all will."



WORKING TOGETHER

The next morning, sunlight poured through the curtains, waking the girls with its golden glow. The air felt different — lighter, warmer, full of possibility. The chaos of yesterday had quieted into soft rustling and the hum of family life downstairs.

Kimika stretched and looked over at Kalynn, who was already awake, sitting cross-legged on the floor with a notebook and a magnifying glass. “What are you doing?” Kimika asked sleepily.

“Counting ants,” Kalynn said, pointing at the corner of the window sill. “There’s a tiny trail outside. I think they live near the tree.”

Kimika yawned. “You and your bugs.”

Kalynn grinned. “Hey, they’re part of the neighborhood too!”

Kimika rolled her eyes but smiled. “Okay, Dr. Kalynn. Just don’t bring any inside this time.”

Downstairs, Mom called out, “Breakfast is ready! Pancakes and fruit!”

“Race you!” Kalynn shouted, jumping up.

“Not fair!” Kimika laughed, chasing her out of the room.

After breakfast, Mom said, “Why don’t you girls finish unpacking your room today? Make it your own.”

Kimika’s eyes sparkled. “Can we decorate?”

“Of course,” Dad replied. “That’s how you make a house feel like home.”

The sisters dashed upstairs, full of ideas.



Kimika opened a box of art supplies, arranging colored pencils and paintbrushes in jars along the windowsill. She taped up her favorite drawings — flowers, dancers, and a bright yellow sun — across the wall above her desk.



Kalynn, meanwhile, built a “science corner” near the window, setting up her magnifying glass, rock collection, and a little glass jar for the frog, which she’d decided to name *Hopper*.

When Kimika noticed, she frowned. “You’re not keeping him inside, are you?”

“No,” Kalynn said proudly. “Just visiting. He’s my assistant for the day.”

Kimika shook her head, amused. “Fine. But make sure he gets a promotion — outside.”

Kalynn giggled.

By afternoon, their room had transformed. Kimika’s half was bright and tidy, filled with color and soft light. Kalynn’s side buzzed with life — books stacked high, a poster of the solar system, and a handmade “Do Not Disturb: Experiments in Progress” sign on her desk.

But something was missing in the middle. The wall between their spaces was empty.

Kimika studied it thoughtfully. “It needs something... something we both made.”

Kalynn’s eyes lit up. “Like what?”

Kimika rummaged through her art box and pulled out her sketchbook — the one with the frog’s footprint. “How about we paint *this* together?”

Kalynn gasped. “The frog print? Really?”

Kimika nodded. “Yeah. I thought it was ruined, but now I think it’s kind of perfect. It’s like our first adventure in this house.”

Kalynn clapped her hands. “Let’s do it!”

They spread newspaper on the floor and mixed paints — Kimika blending soft blues and greens while Kalynn added splashes of orange and gold. Together, they painted a big mural of the oak tree outside their window, its branches stretching wide, full of colorful leaves and tiny creatures hidden in the bark.

Kalynn painted Hopper near the roots. Kimika added two smiling girls under the tree — one holding a paintbrush, the other with a magnifying glass.

When they finished, they stepped back and admired their work.

“It’s us,” Kimika said softly.

Kalynn nodded proudly. “Yep. Sisters forever.”

They gave each other a high-five, leaving a little smudge of blue paint on each other’s hands.

Mom peeked into the room just then. Her eyes widened. “Wow, girls ... this looks amazing.”

Dad appeared behind her, smiling. “Looks like home to me.”

Kimika looked around, breathing in the warm, paint-scented air. “It does, doesn’t it?”

Kalynn nodded. “Told you this place would be awesome.”

They both laughed, and for the first time, the new house didn’t feel new anymore — it felt like *theirs*.



THE BACKYARD DISCOVERY

The afternoon sun stretched lazily across the sky, turning everything in the backyard a soft, golden color. The oak tree's leaves shimmered in the breeze, and the air smelled like grass and adventure.

After cleaning their paintbrushes, the girls ran outside, still speckled with tiny dots of color from their mural project.

"Race you to the swing!" Kalynn shouted, darting ahead.

"Not again. You always say that!" Kimika laughed, chasing her across the yard.

Kalynn reached the swing first, spinning herself around until the rope twisted tight. "Ready for launch!" she yelled, letting go and spinning back the other way until she was dizzy and giggling.

Kimika flopped onto the grass beneath the oak tree, catching her breath. "You're going to make yourself sick."

"Worth it," Kalynn said, stumbling and laughing.

The two sisters lay side by side, staring up through the tree's branches. Sunlight flickered through the leaves like glitter.

“I like this place,” Kalynn said after a while. “It’s not like our old yard, but... it feels like it has stories.”

Kimika turned her head toward her sister. “What do you mean?”

Kalynn pointed toward the tree’s roots. “Like that! See that little patch of dirt? It looks like something’s buried there.”

Kimika sat up. “You mean like treasure?”

Kalynn grinned mischievously. “Only one way to find out.”

Before Kimika could stop her, Kalynn was already on her knees, digging with her hands. “Kalynn, you can’t just—ugh, fine, at least use a stick!”

A few scoops later, Kalynn gasped. “I found something!”

She held up a small, round, silver object covered in dirt.

Kimika brushed it off carefully. “It’s... a button,” she said. The edges were engraved with tiny letters, worn smooth from age.

“Whoa,” Kalynn whispered. “Do you think it belonged to someone who lived here before us?”

“Maybe,” Kimika said, studying it closely. “It could be from an old jacket or maybe a uniform.”

Kalynn’s eyes widened. “What if it was from a kid like us? Someone who used to play in this yard and buried it as a secret!”

Kimika smiled. “Or maybe it fell off while they were playing, and they never found it again.”

Kalynn held the button in her palm and whispered, “Well, whoever they were, they can share this place with us now.”

Kimika nodded. “Yeah. We’ll keep it safe.”

She ran inside to grab her sketchbook, the same one with the frog print, and drew a tiny picture of the silver button on a new page. Beneath it, she wrote:

“The Button from Before us.”

Kalynn peeked over her shoulder. “You should add a frog and two explorers next to it.”

Kimika grinned. “Already on it.”

When she finished the drawing, they pressed the real button between the pages and closed the book gently, as if tucking in a secret.

“Let’s make a rule,” Kalynn said firmly. “Every time we find something special, we keep it in your sketchbook. It’ll be like our family treasure book.”

Kimika smiled, her eyes warm. “Deal.”

They sat under the oak tree, watching the sunlight fade into pink. Somewhere in the distance, Dad’s voice called out, “Girls, time to come in for dinner!”

Kalynn tucked the button back into Kimika’s hand. “See? Told you this place had stories.”

Kimika looked around the yard — at the tree, the swing, the soft light — and for the first time since moving, her heart felt completely still.

“It does,” she said softly. “And I think we just started ours.”



THE LESSON

That night, the house was quiet except for the soft hum of crickets outside and the gentle creak of the oak tree in the breeze. Moonlight streamed through the window, glowing across the girls' freshly decorated room.

On one wall, their mural of the oak tree shimmered softly in the pale light. The frog, the roots, the two sisters — it all looked alive, like it was breathing with them.

Kalynn lay in bed, her hands behind her head, staring at the ceiling. “Hey, Kimika,” she whispered. “Do you still miss our old house?”

Kimika thought for a moment. The memory of their old street flickered in her mind — the swing set, the sound of the ice cream truck, her best friend's laughter. But now, she also saw the mural, the button, and Kalynn's bright, smiling face beside her.

“Maybe a little,” she said honestly. “But not as much as before.”

“Me too,” Kalynn said. “This house is starting to feel like... ours.”

Kimika turned toward her sister. “You know, I didn't think I'd like it here. I thought I'd lose all the things that made me happy. But I think what really makes me happy isn't the house or the old street.”

Kalynn blinked. “Then what is it?”

Kimika smiled softly. “It’s the people in it.”

Kalynn grinned. “You mean *me*?”

Kimika laughed quietly. “Yes, you — and Mom, and Dad, and even your frog.”

“Hopper,” Kalynn corrected sleepily.

“Hopper,” Kimika agreed, chuckling.

There was a long, peaceful pause.

“Do you think we’ll find more treasures?” Kalynn asked, her eyes already drooping.

“I’m sure we will,” Kimika said. “Every day is kind of like a little treasure hunt.”

Kalynn yawned. “Even when we’re just brushing our teeth?”

Kimika giggled. “Especially then.”

They both laughed softly until their eyes grew heavy.

Just outside their door, Mom peeked into their room. She smiled at the sight — two sisters fast asleep under the same blanket, their sketchbook resting open on the nightstand. Inside, the pages showed the silver button, a painted frog, and the words “***The Button from Before us.***”

Mom whispered, “Goodnight, my girls,” and turned off the light.

In the darkness, the mural seemed to glow faintly — a reminder that new places, like new beginnings, always shine a little brighter when filled with love.

Kimika stirred and mumbled softly in her sleep, “Home is where our hearts smile.”

Kalynn, half-dreaming, whispered back, “And where frogs jump on sketchbooks.”

They both giggled in their dreams, the laughter echoing softly through their new home.

THE LESSON OF THE STORY

Moving to a new home can feel strange at first. You might miss your old friends, your favorite park, or even the way your room used to look. Sometimes, change feels big, almost *too* big. And that’s okay. Everyone feels that way sometimes.

But every new place has something wonderful waiting to be found. Maybe it’s a tree to climb, a new friend to meet, or a secret spot that becomes your own.

Kimika and Kalynn learned that a home isn’t just a building.

It’s made of giggles, hugs, bedtime stories, and the people who love you most.

Home is where you can be yourself, whether you’re painting, exploring, or just being silly. It’s where you feel safe, where you learn, grow, and make memories that last forever.

So, when you have to start somewhere new, remember:

- You can always carry your favorite memories with you.
- You can make brand-new ones too.
- And as long as you have love and kindness, you are never really lost — you will always be *home*.

“WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?”

- What helped Kimika and Kalynn feel at home in their new house?
- What special things do you do to make your space feel like your own?
- What’s something new that once felt scary to you but turned out to be fun?

Teacher Guide

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Standards

1. Lesson Overview

- **Book Number:** 1
- **Book Title:** *Home is where the Heart Smiles*
- **Grade Level(s):** 2–5
- **Estimated Instructional Time:** 45–60 minutes
- **Lesson Focus: Literacy Skill:** Identifying central theme and using text evidence to support character analysis.
- **SEL Focus:** Navigating transitions, managing anxiety, and building social awareness during change.
- **Workbook Activities:**
 - 1-1A - 1-1D
 - 1-2A - 1-2D
 - 1-3A - 1-3D
 - 1-4A - 1-4H
 - 1-5A - 1-5F
 - 1-6A - 1-6F
 - Assessment 1A - 1B

2. Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to define and apply Tier 2 vocabulary (e.g., *Anxious*, *Transition*, *Perspective*) to describe the characters' experiences.
- Students will identify the central message of the story—that “home” is carried within through love and memories—using specific evidence from the text.
- Students will describe how Kimika and Kalynn manage their emotions during the challenge of moving to a new house.

3. Standards Alignment

- **NYS ELA Standards:**
 - **Reading (RL.1):** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and make logical inferences; cite specific textual evidence.
 - **Reading (RL.2):** Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development.
 - **Language (L.6):** Acquire and accurately use general academic (Tier 2) words and phrases.
- **NYS SEL Benchmarks:**
 - **Goal 1:** Self-awareness to nurture a sense of identity and agency during change.
 - **Goal 3:** Demonstrate intentional decision-making skills and behaviors that consider social and emotional needs.

4. Pre-Reading Activity (Activate Prior Knowledge)

- **Discussion Prompt:** “Have you ever moved to a new place or had to start something brand new, like a new school year? How did your body feel?”
- **Visual Aid:** Display a picture of a moving box. Ask students to brainstorm words that describe how someone might feel when they see their room packed into boxes.
- **Vocabulary Preview:** Introduce the word ‘Anxious’ (feeling worried/nervous) and ‘Transition’ (the process of changing) as they relate to moving.

5. Vocabulary & Key Concepts (Tier 2 Words)

1. **Anxious** (*adjective*) – Feeling worried, nervous, or uneasy about something that might happen.
 2. **Ambition** (*noun*) – A strong desire to achieve a goal or succeed at something important to you.
 3. **Tension** (*noun*) – A feeling of stress or tightness caused by worry, fear, or conflict.
 4. **Discovery** (*noun*) – The act of finding or learning something new for the first time.
 5. **Commotion** (*noun*) – A noisy or confusing situation where many people are moving or talking at once.
 6. **Transition** (*noun*) – A change from one place, stage, or situation to another.
 7. **Perspective** (*noun*) – A way of thinking about or understanding something based on your own experiences.
 8. **Compassion** (*noun*) – A feeling of care and concern for someone who is hurting or in need.
 9. **Adventure** (*noun*) – An exciting or unusual experience that may involve challenges or risks.
 10. **Harmony** (*noun*) – A peaceful and friendly relationship where people work well together.
- **Instructional Strategy:** Use “Emotion Charades.” Have students act out *Tension* (stiff shoulders, frowning) versus *Harmony* (relaxed, smiling) to differentiate the feelings Kimika experiences at the start versus the end of the book.

6. Read-Aloud / Shared Reading

- **Teacher Action:** Read with expression, specifically changing tone for Kimika’s small, worried voice (“Do we have to go?”) versus Dad’s warm, encouraging tone.
- **Think-Aloud:** “I notice Kimika is clutching her sketchbook very tightly. That tells me she might be feeling tension because she isn’t ready to let go of her old room.”

7. Guided Reading Questions (During Reading)

- **Literal:** What are Kimika and Kalynn doing at the beginning of the story? (Packing boxes/getting ready to move).
- **Inferential:** Why does Kimika say she wants to move to the moon? (She wants peace and quiet and is feeling overwhelmed by the move).
- **Emotional:** How does Kimika’s Perspective on the new house change after she discovers the backyard?

8. Post-Reading Discussion

- **Theme:** What does the author mean when he says, “You can always carry your favorite memories with you”?
- **Character Growth:** How did Kimika move from feeling Anxious to finding Harmony in her new home?
- **Problem-Solving:** What did Dad do to help the girls handle the Commotion of moving day?

9. SEL Focus Activity

- **“Memory Suitcase”:** Ask students to draw or write about one “memory” they would carry with them if they had to move. This practices Self-Awareness by identifying what is personally meaningful.
- **Role-Play:** In pairs, have one student act as the “Anxious” Kimika and the other as the “Encouraging” Dad. Practice using Compassion to help a friend feel better about a big change.

10. Writing Extension

- **Narrative/Reflection:** Write a journal entry from Kimika’s perspective on her first night in the new house. Use at least three Tier 2 vocabulary words.
- **Differentiation:** Provide sentence starters: “At first, I felt _____ because of the Transition. But then, I had a Discovery in the backyard...”.

11. Independent or Small-Group Practice

- **Literacy Center:** Students match the 10 Tier 2 vocabulary words to specific scenes in the book (e.g., matching *Commotion* to the “House Full of Boxes” chapter).
- **Art Connection:** Draw a “Heart Smiles” map—a map of a place where you feel safest and happiest.

12. Assessment & Check for Understanding

- **Exit Ticket:** Identify one piece of text evidence that shows Kimika was feeling Anxious at the beginning of the story.
- **Discussion Observation:** Can the student explain the “lesson” of the story in their own words?

13. Reflection & Closure

- **Prompt:** “What is something new that once felt scary to you (like moving) but turned out to be a fun Adventure?”
- **Closing Thought:** Remind students that change is a natural Transition and they have the strength to find Harmony in new places.

14. Extension & Enrichment Activities

- **Home-School Connection:** Have students interview a family member about a time they moved or started a new job. How did they handle the Tension?
- **Creative Project:** Build a “New House” diorama using recycled cardboard boxes.

15. Differentiation & Support Strategies

- **Special Education Support:** Provide a “Visual Vocabulary” board with emojis representing the 10 Tier 2 words (e.g., a worried face for *Anxious*).
- **Modified Prompts:** For the writing extension, allow students to draw their response and dictate the “Tier 2” words to a teacher.

Workbook Activities

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

Book 1: Home is where the Heart Smiles

Word Bank

Before starting the chapters, review these ten words found in the story

1. **Anxious (adjective):** Feeling worried, nervous, or uneasy about something that might happen.
2. **Ambition (noun):** A strong desire to achieve a goal or succeed at something important to you.
3. **Tension (noun):** A feeling of stress or tightness caused by worry, fear, or conflict.
4. **Discovery (noun):** The act of finding or learning something new for the first time.
5. **Commotion (noun):** A noisy or confusing situation where many people are moving or talking at once.
6. **Transition (noun):** A change from one place, stage, or situation to another.
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8. **Compassion (noun):** A feeling of care and concern for someone who is hurting or in need.
9. **Adventure (noun):** An exciting or unusual experience that may involve challenges or risks.
10. **Harmony (noun):** A peaceful and friendly relationship where people work well together.

ACTIVITY: 1-1A

Chapter 1: Moving Day: A House Full of Boxes

(Answer in complete sentences using evidence from the text)

1. How does Kimika feel about leaving her old room?

2. What does Kalynn have in her explorer's vest, and what does this tell us about her?

3. According to Dad, why should Kimika be excited about the new house?

4. What memory does Kimika share about her old room before she leaves?

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

ACTIVITY: 1-1B

Feelings Check-In:

Identify two emotions felt by Kimika or Kalynn in this chapter. Explain why you believe they feel that way.

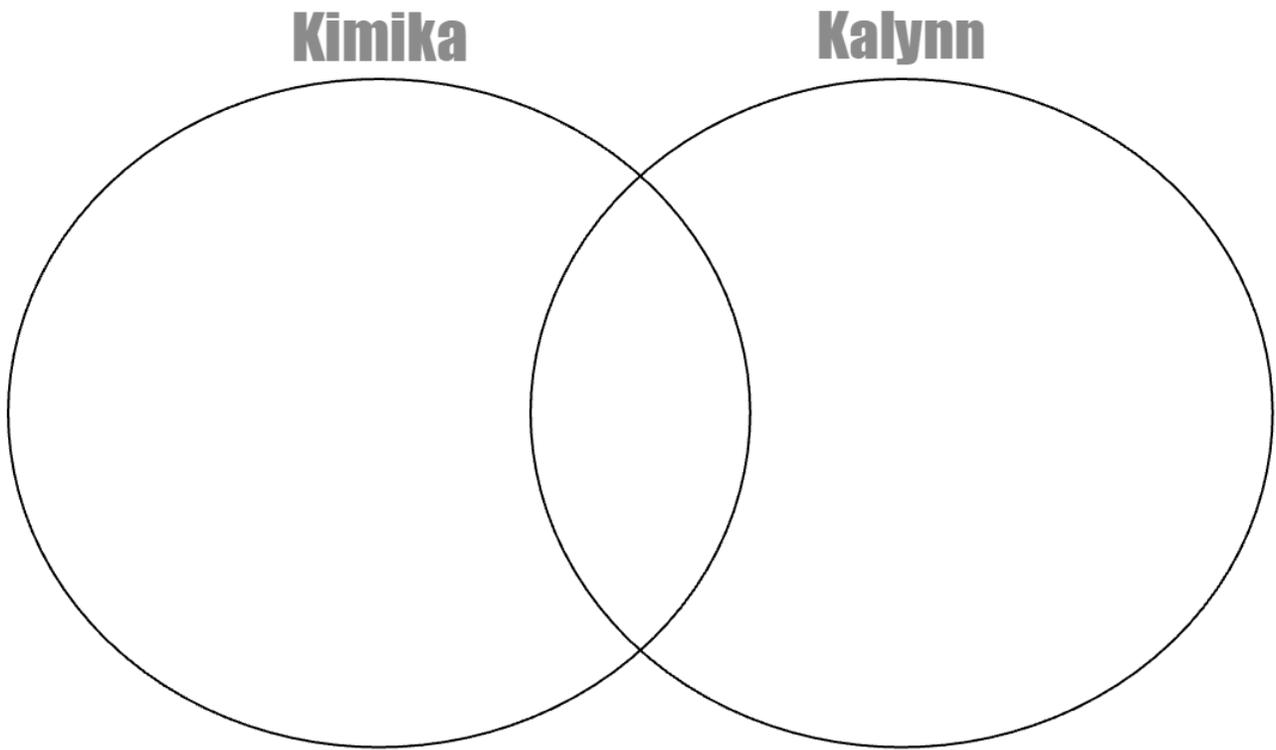
Adjective Hunt:

Find three adjectives used to describe the bedroom or the boxes. Explain what they help you visualize.

ACTIVITY: 1-1C

Character Study

Create a Venn diagram comparing Kimika and Kalynn's reactions to moving day.



Sensory Details

List one thing a character hears and one thing a character touches in this chapter.

In your own words, describe the feeling you think they experienced.

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ACTIVITY: 1-2A

Chapter 2: The Car Ride

(Answer in complete sentences using evidence from the text)

1. What specific things in the neighborhood does Kimika say goodbye to?

2. Why does Kimika get upset with Kalynn during the car ride?

3. What does Mom suggest Kimika do to feel better about the new house?

4. What “sound” does Dad say he loves hearing in the car?

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

ACTIVITY: 1-2B

Feelings Check-In:

Explain the emotion Kimika feels when she looks at her old house doodle versus the new house drawing.

Perspective-Taking:

Rewrite the car ride scene from the older sister Kimoy's perspective.

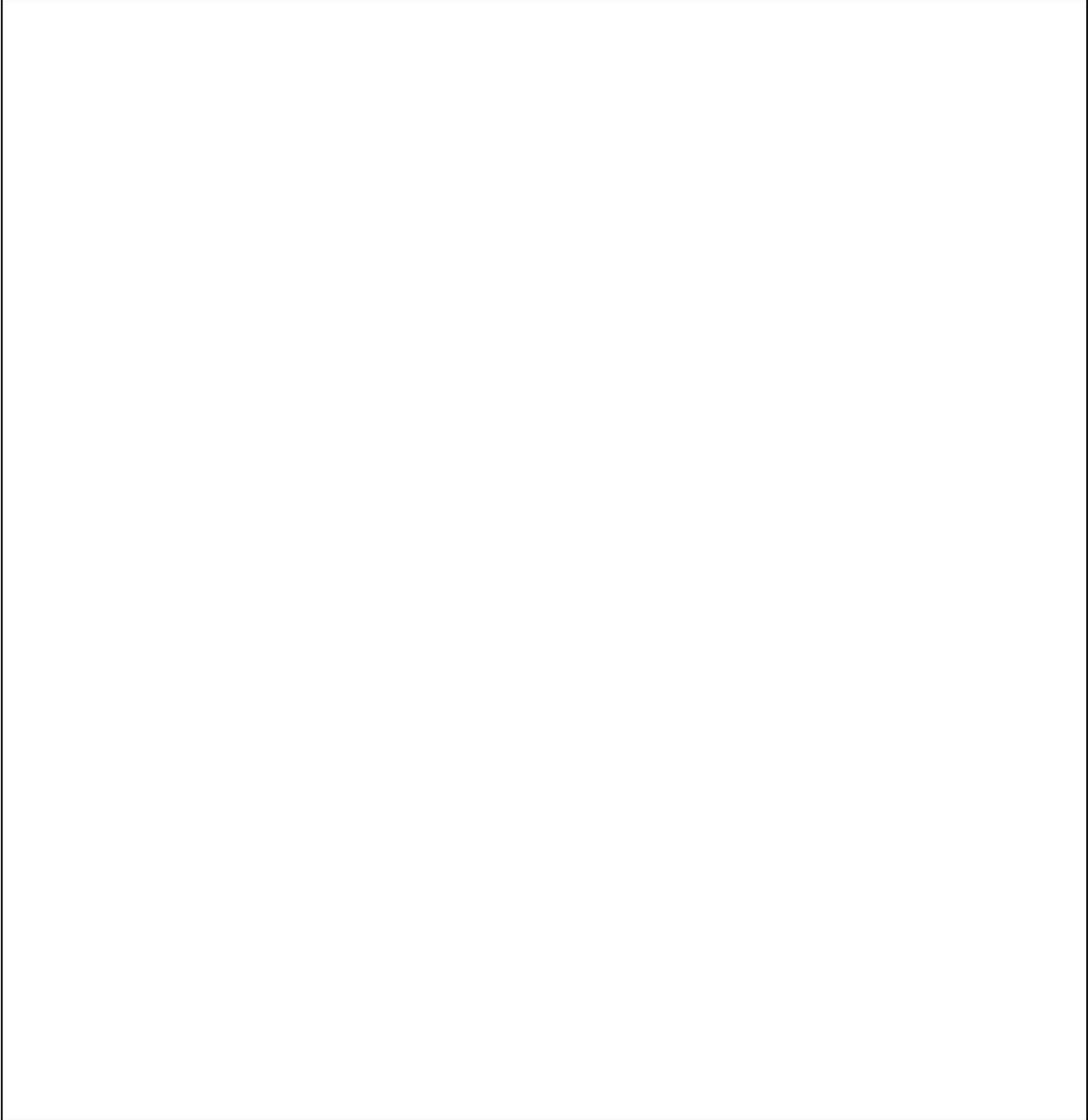
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Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

ACTIVITY: 1-2C

Art

Draw the house that Kimika imagined in her sketchbook.



Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

ACTIVITY: 1-2D

Vocabulary Detective

Find the word “adventure” in this chapter. How does Kalynn’s use of the word differ from Kimika’s feelings?

ACTIVITY: 1-3A

Chapter 3: Arriving at the New House

(Answer in complete sentences using evidence from the text)

1. Describe the physical appearance of the new house.

2. What is Kalynn's first "expedition" when they arrive?

3. How does the air smell at the new house?

4. Why does Kimika think the new house doesn't feel like "home" yet?

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Feelings Check-In:

Identify the “complex emotion” Kimika feels as she walks up the porch steps.

Sensory Details:

List three things the characters smell or hear in this new environment.

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ACTIVITY: 1-3B

Storyboard

Create a 4-frame comic strip showing the family arriving and entering the house.

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ACTIVITY: 1-3C

Reading Scavenger Hunt

Find an example of personification (where the house or an object acts like a person).

Explain what effect this has on the story.

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ACTIVITY: 1-4A

Chapter 4: The First Argument

(Answer in complete sentences using evidence from the text)

1. How is Kimika's side of the room different from Kalynn's side?

2. What "discovery" does Kalynn make under the bed?

3. What happens to Kimika's sketchbook during the commotion?

4. How does the argument end?

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ACTIVITY: 1-4B

Character Study (Feelings Map)

Directions:

Read Chapter 4 carefully. As you read, track how Kimika’s feelings change. Fill in the chart using evidence from the story.

Story Moment	What Happens in the Story	What were Kimika’s Feelings	Text Evidence from the Story
“Artist’s lighting”	Kimika carefully sets up her desk by the window, so she has perfect lighting for her art.		
Watching Kalynn crawl under the bed	Kimika sees Kalynn digging around under the bed while unpacking.		
Kalynn finds the frog	Kalynn crawls out holding a slimy frog and shows it to Kimika.		
Kalynn brings the frog closer	Kalynn laughs and tries to get Kimika to touch the frog.		
The frog jumps	The frog suddenly leaps out of Kalynn’s hands toward Kimika’s desk.		
“The frog skidded...”	The frog slides across Kimika’s paint palette and lands in her sketchbook.		

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ACTIVITY: 1-4C

(Grades 2-3)

Visual Emotion Timeline Worksheet

Directions:

Look at the moments from this chapter below. Draw an *emoji* face that shows how Kimika might be feeling. Then write one word that describes her feeling.

Story Moment	Draw Kimika's emoji Face	Feeling Words
Kimika sets up her art desk with "Artist's lighting."		
Kalynn starts digging under the bed.		
Kalynn shows Kimika the frog.		
The frog jumps toward Kimika's art supplies.		
The frog skids across the paint palette and sketchbook.		

1. Why did Kimika feel upset, and what could Kalynn have done differently?

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ACTIVITY: 1-4D (Part 1)

Character Emotion Graph Activity

(Grades 4–5 – ELA RL.3 Alignment)

Directions:

Characters' feelings change during a story. Plot Kimika's emotions on the graph below based on events from Chapter 4.

Emotion Scale:

1 = Calm / Happy

2 = Slightly Concerned

3 = Surprised

4 = Nervous / Frustrated

5 = Very Upset / Angry

Event #	Story Event	Emotion Level (1–5)	Why Did Kimika Feel This Way?
1	Kimika creates "Artist's lighting."		
2	Kalynn crawls under the bed.		
3	Kalynn shows the frog.		
4	The frog jumps toward the art desk.		
5	The frog skids across the paint palette.		

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ACTIVITY: 1-4D (Part 3)
Text Evidence Character Analysis
Character Study: Kimika

Directions:

Read the section from Chapter 4 carefully. Answer the questions using complete sentences and evidence from the story.

1. What was Kimika doing when the scene began?

Text Evidence:

2. How did Kimika react when she first saw the frog?

Text Evidence:

3. Why was Kimika especially upset when the frog landed on her art supplies?

Text Evidence:

Continued on next page...

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4. What does this moment teach us about Kimika's personality?

- She cares deeply about her artwork
- She enjoys surprises
- She likes frogs near her supplies
- She values organization and creativity

Explain your answer with evidence:

Reflection

1. How do you feel when something important to you gets ruined or damaged?

2. What is a calm way someone could handle that feeling?

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ACTIVITY: 1-4E
Conflict Resolution Activity
Fixing the Problem

What Happened?

In this chapter, Kimika was working carefully on her artwork when Kalynn found a frog. When the frog jumped and skidded across Kimika’s paint palette and sketchbook, Kimika became very upset, and an argument began between the sisters.

Sometimes, when people feel surprised, angry, or frustrated, they argue rather than talk calmly.

But problems can be solved!

Step 1: Identify the Problem

What caused the argument between Kimika and Kalynn?

Step 2: Understand the Feelings

How do you think each character felt?

Character	Feeling	Why did they feel this way?
Kimika		
Kalynn		

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Step 3: Think of Possible Solutions

What are some ways the sisters could solve their problem?

Mark the solutions that would help.

- Kalynn apologizes for bringing the frog near the art supplies.
- Kimika explains calmly why her artwork is important to her.
- The sisters shout at each other.
- Kalynn helps clean the paint and fix the mess.
- They talk about what to do differently next time.

Step 4: Write a Better Conversation

Write what Kimika and Kalynn could say to solve the problem peacefully.

Kimika:

Kalynn:

Step 5: What Would You Do?

If something important to you was accidentally ruined, how would you handle the situation?

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ACTIVITY: 1-4F

Vocabulary Quiz

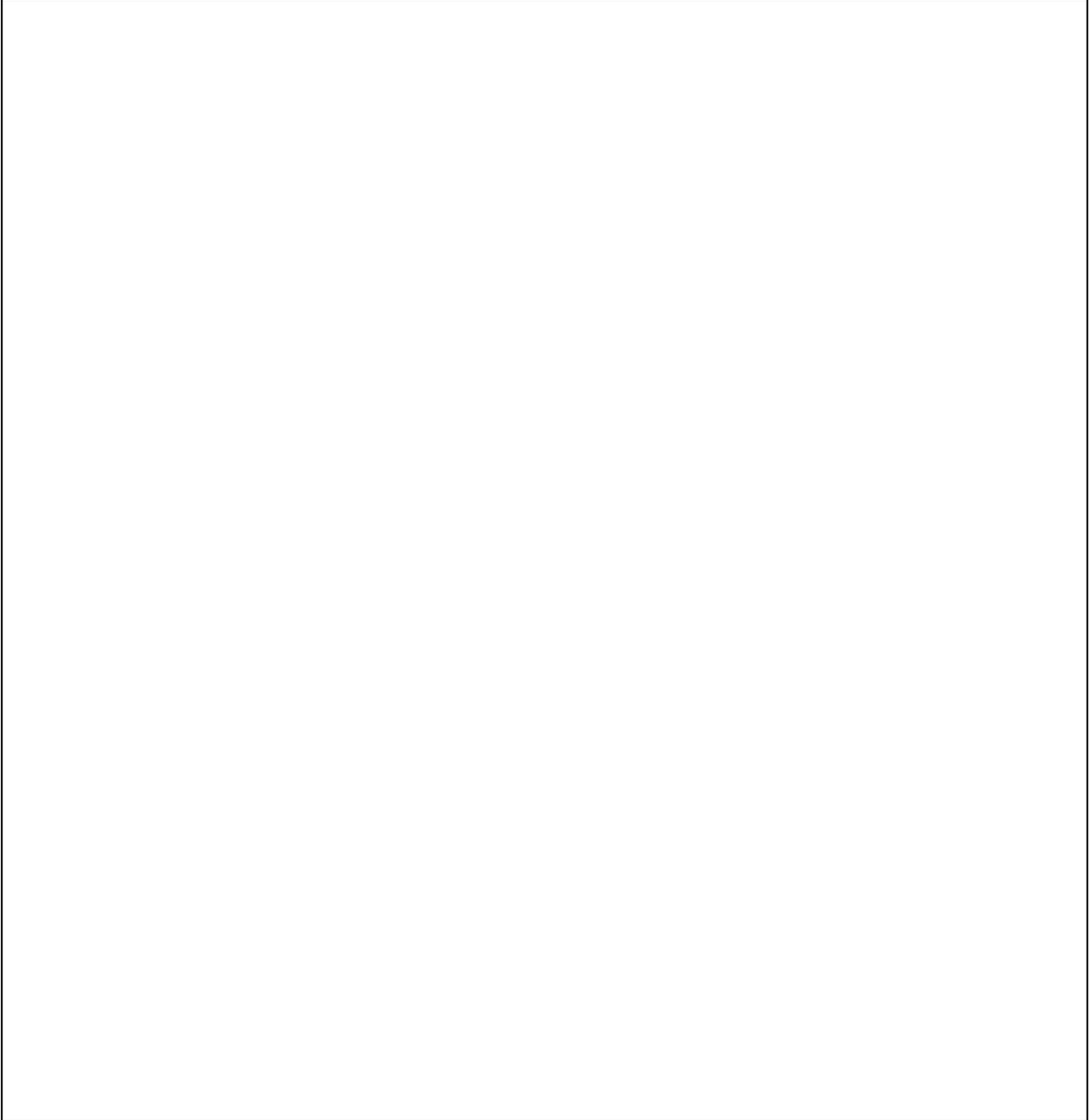
Use the words 'commotion' and 'tension' to describe this chapter.

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ACTIVITY: 1-4H

Art

Draw the “perfect little frog footprint”.



Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

ACTIVITY: 1-5A

Chapter 5: Calming Down

(Answer in complete sentences using evidence from the text)

1. What does the room look like after the argument?

2. What advice does Mom give the girls about seeing the world?

3. How does Kimika decide to use the frog footprint in her art?

4. What “sound” or “smell” signals that the tension has melted away?

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

ACTIVITY: 1-5B

Feelings Check-In:

Identify the moment the “tension” breaks. What emotion do you think it would replace?

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ACTIVITY: 1-5C

Perspective-Taking

Rewrite the “mom’s advice” scene from the perspective of the frog on the windowsill.

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ACTIVITY: 1-5D

Adjective Hunt

Find adjectives that describe the “new house’s character.”

Note: Adjectives are words that describe nouns or pronouns, adding tone and interest to sentences

For example: “*red ball*,” “*big house*,” or “*happy dog*.” They add details about how something looks, feels, tastes, or sounds, as well as its size, color, shape, and number.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

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ACTIVITY: 1-6A

Chapter 6: Calming Down

(Answer in complete sentences using evidence from the text)

1. What is Kalynn doing when Kimika wakes up the next morning?

2. What does Kimika put on her walls to make the room her own?

3. What is the “science corner” and what is in it?

4. Describe the mural the sisters paint together.

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

ACTIVITY: 1-6B

Feelings Check-In:

Describe the feeling of “Harmony” as the girls paint the mural.

Sensory Details: What does the air smell like while they are painting?

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

ACTIVITY: 1-6C

Character Study

(Venn Diagram): Compare the “Artist’s side” (Kimika) and the “Scientist’s side” (Kalynn) of the room.

Kimika

Kalynn

