

Hana on Stage

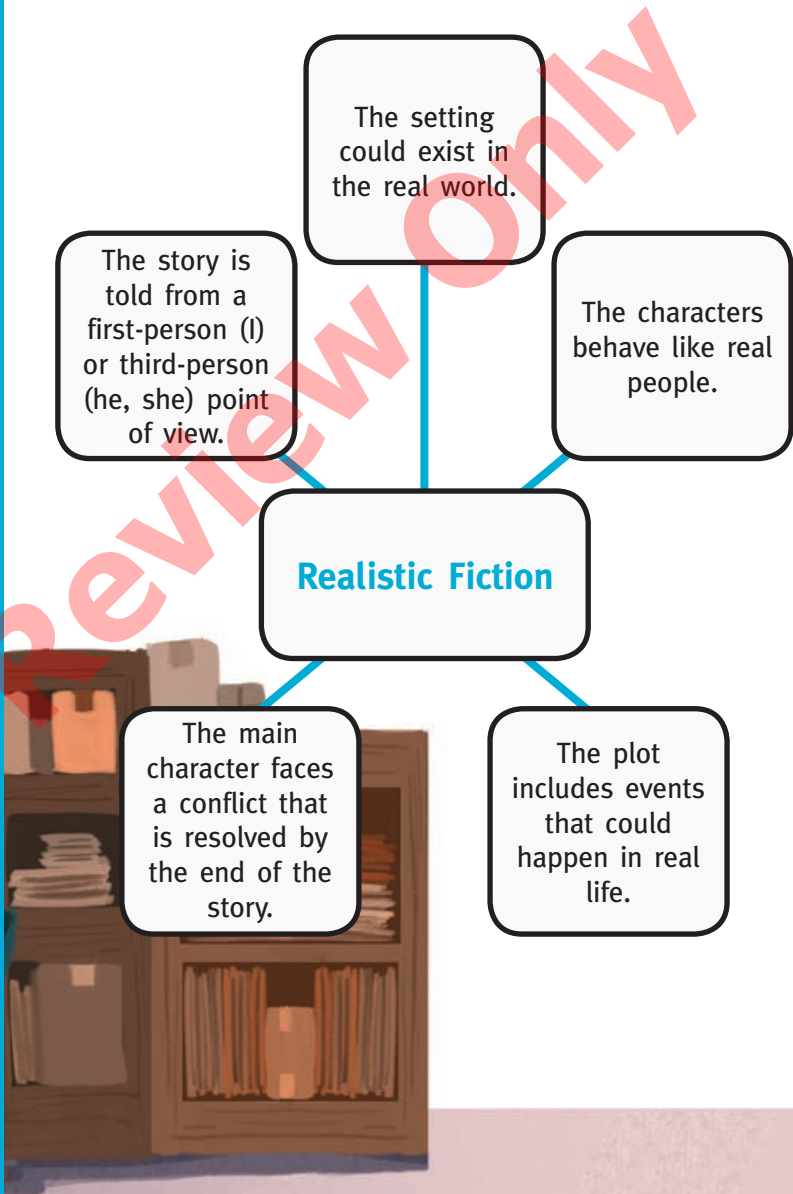


REALISTIC FICTION
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Meet Hana

“Breakfast, Hana,” Dad calls from the kitchen.

“Be right there,” she yells. *I just need to fix my machine first*, she thinks. Hana places a blueberry in her catapult and launches it.

“MEEEEOOOOW!”

“Sorry, Purple,” Hana says to her pet cat, who now has a blueberry stain on her paw.

Hana looks at her new invention and thinks about the other stuff she has made: a ladder for the tree house Dad built, a kitty obstacle course for Purple to navigate, and now a blueberry catapult.



In the kitchen, Hana finds Dad packing her lunch.

“What are you making in there?” Dad asks. He is always interested in what Hana is working on.

“A blueberry catapult,” Hana says, as she eats her breakfast. “I can show you my designs when I come by the shop after school.”

Every day after school, Hana can't wait to visit her dad. She remembers that, when she was little, he would buy old-fashioned letterpresses and restore them to as good as new. Eventually, his hobby became a business—Victor Domínguez's Printing and Stationery Shop.

“You know, you can't find many letterpresses anymore,” Dad would say, holding up a poster or fancy invitation he had just made. Hana would run her hand across it so she could feel the letters.

Some of the time, Hana loves to watch him work. Other times, she works on her own inventions.



After school, Hana heads to Dad's shop. He is working on his old letterpress. Hana settles down to do her homework, but she can't stop thinking about what her next project could be.

"I think I'll build a stage so Purple can perform. She'll be the coolest cat on Everly Street," she says. "Don't you think so, Dad?"

"I think it's a great idea," he says. "When you finish your homework, I'd love to see your design."



As soon as her homework is done, Hana sketches plans for Purple's stage. "Do you think this pulley system would work to hold up the curtains?"

But now Dad is busy with a screwdriver at one of his letterpresses. He says, "Hang on there, Hana, let me just finish these invitations."

A few minutes later, he holds out an invitation to Hana. Hana runs her hands across it. She feels the bumps along the smooth paper where the elegant script is embossed.



“This one is so pretty,” says Hana. “I bet every bride in town will want one for her wedding.”

Dad responds, “I hope so, Hana. I really, really hope so.”

As they work, Dad turns on the jazz station and Hana sings along with the jazz singers of the 1950s.

“Hana, have I told you lately that you have a beautiful voice?” Dad says.

“All the time,” Hana says, laughing.

Hmm, Hana thinks, maybe I should build a stage for myself.



Hana's Big Idea

One rainy afternoon, Hana is tinkering with the radio. She notices her father frowning. Hana turns the dial to the jazz station, hoping to cheer him up.

Just then, they hear an advertisement for a show at the Wolf Theater downtown. It's for a live musical version of *The Wizard of Oz*. *This is perfect!* Hana thinks. *Dad always likes when I sing, and these people are professionals. Maybe this will make him smile.*

"Dad, did you hear that ad for the musical?" she asks.

"What, Hana?" He isn't paying attention at all. He is fumbling with a letterpress, though it doesn't look like he is fixing anything.

She tries again. "*The Wizard of Oz* is being performed downtown. Let's do something different for a change! Let's go tomorrow night."

Dad scratches his head and mumbles, "I'll think about it."

But Hana takes matters into her own hands. The next day, she uses her birthday money to buy tickets after school. She hurries back to the shop and presents the tickets to her dad in a small lavender box. He smiles.

Two hours later, Hana and Dad are taking their seats in the small theater. The lights fade low, and it feels like only seconds until Dorothy travels to the end of the Yellow Brick Road.

“That was so amazing!” Hana says as they walk up the aisle. “Who knew that people could have so much fun singing songs, wearing tights, and dancing in funny shoes?” Dad can’t stop smiling.



As they are leaving, Hana sees a sign for a community musical revue coming up.

“Oh, my gosh, the Wolf Theater wants performers of all ages to sing and dance!” Hana says. “I want to do this! I can sing okay, but I’m not much of a dancer—unlike Dorothy. Do you think I could get lessons, Dad?”

“I can’t afford to pay for lessons right now, Hana. I wish I could.”

“What if I ask the actress who played Dorothy to help me? Maybe we could trade. I bet if you made some posters for the theater, I could get a few lessons,” Hana says.

“Well, I guess the worst thing she can say is no. Let’s go find out,” he says.

