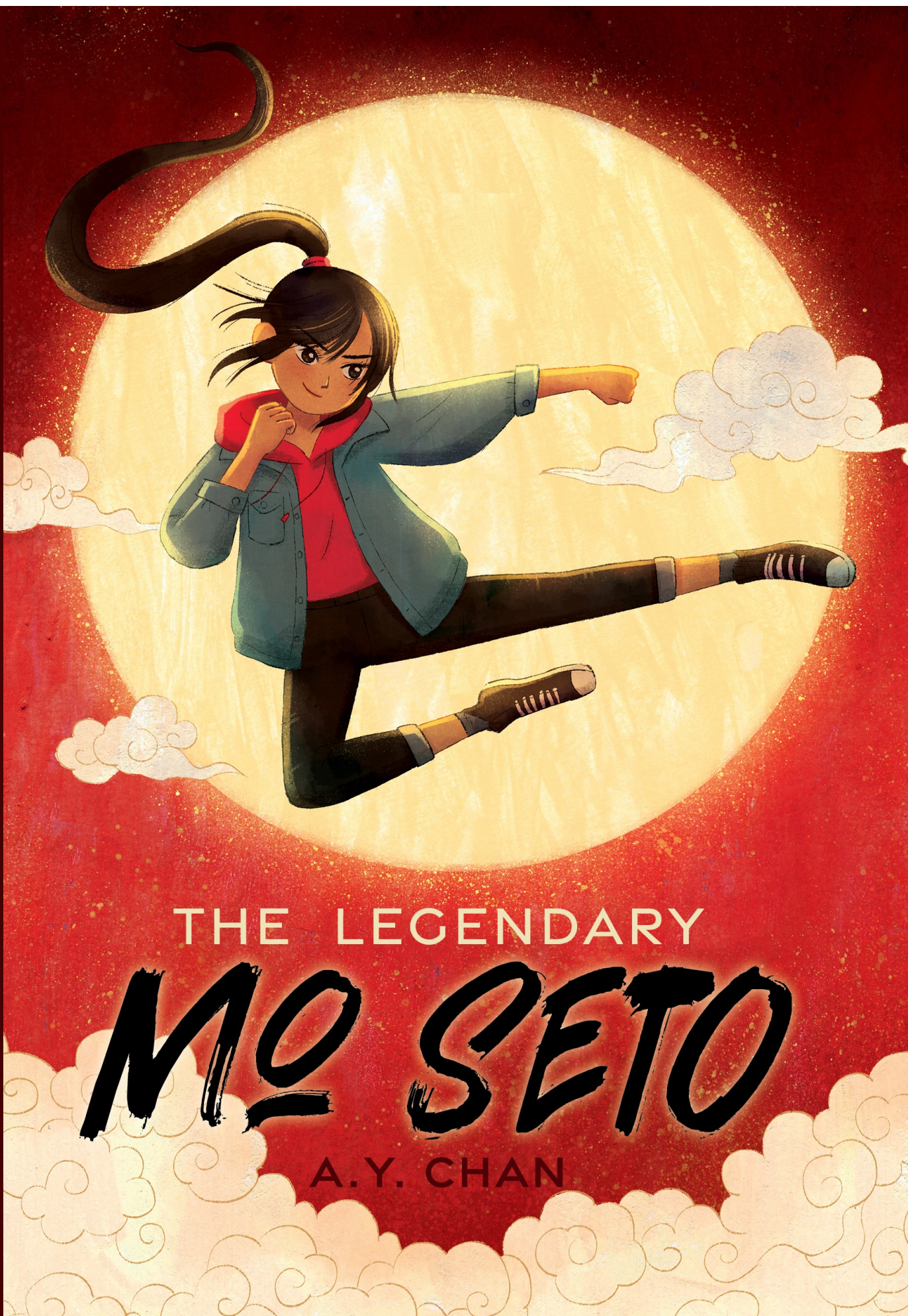


TEACHER'S GUIDE



THE LEGENDARY

**MO SETO**

A.Y. CHAN



# THE LEGENDARY MO SETO



**Movies! Martial arts! Mayhem! Oh my!**

**Author:** A.Y. Chan

**Genre:** Middle Grade Fiction

**Publisher:** Aladdin, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division

**ISBN:** 978-1-6659-3732-0

**Themes:** Friendship, Courage, Perseverance, Setting Goals, Sports



## About the Book

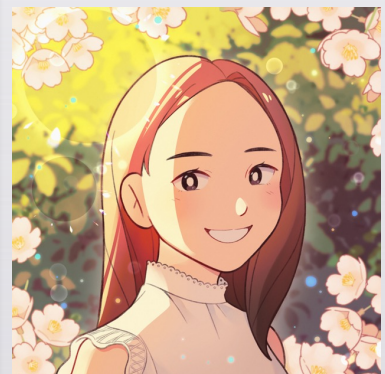
Mo Seto, martial arts movie star! Has a nice ring to it doesn't it? If only there wasn't a height restriction to audition. But 12-year-old Mo has never let her height get in the way before, not when she became a black belt, or when she fought the meanest boy in her class, and she's not going to let it stop her this time! Now to figure out a way to grow five inches and fool everyone at the auditions...

Join Mo on an adventure (and audition) of a lifetime and find out if powerful things really do come in small packages!

## About the Author

A.Y. Chan grew up in Canada's Greater Toronto Area reading all the middle grade and young adult books she could get her hands on. To this day, those remain her favorite genres. After achieving her black belt in Taekwondo, she explored a range of other types of martial arts, and she draws upon her experiences in learning new techniques and philosophies to inspire her writing.

For news & updates: [aychanwrites.com](http://aychanwrites.com) | Instagram/X (@aychanwrites)



# A LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR



Dear Friends,

I started taekwondo when I was six years old. Does anyone know what that is? Yep! It is a form of martial arts. In Korean, "tae" means "to kick" and "kwon" means "to punch" so taekwondo means "the art of kicking and punching."

I loved it! Eventually, I earned my black belt. But to do so, I spent many hours training and faced many challenges—some which made me want to quit taekwondo forever! Let me tell you about one of those challenges.

When I was about your age, I attended a big tournament for sparring (this means controlled fighting). Kids were paired based on age and belt level. I won my matches and advanced to the final, where I faced off against a taller, stronger boy. I ended up losing. I remember feeling so crushed by my second-place finish, and I kept replaying that fight in my head and wondering what I could have done differently. I kept wishing I were just a little bit stronger, just a little bit taller...

I never did become super tall or super strong, and that's okay because I became super determined. I learned to keep trying, to keep setting new goals, and to never give up. That is how I got my black belt, and that is how I wrote this book.

Friends, I hope that you, like Mo, our main character, can discover just how brave and strong and fierce you are. Don't ever stop believing in yourself. You can make your dreams come true.

Now, let's dive into our story. Will Mo achieve *her* dream of becoming a martial arts movie star, or will she become discouraged by all the challenges and give up? I'm not going to give any spoilers, but I have a feeling you're in for a fun adventure!

All my very best,

**a.y. Chan**



(Yes, this is me – yikes!)

# DISCUSSION



## Before Reading

Before starting *THE LEGENDARY MO SETO*, allow students to examine the cover and read the book synopsis on the flap.

- **The Cover**

- What do you think legendary means?
  - Legendary means having the characteristics of being in a legend; being admired, famous, spoken about, celebrated.
- Who is the girl on the cover and what is she doing?
- Can you make a prediction about what this story might be about? Why do you think that?

- **Book Synopsis**

- Based on this synopsis, was your earlier prediction about the story correct?
- What is the most interesting or exciting aspect of the book for you?
- What are some questions you have about the book based on this synopsis?
- Read A.Y. Chan's biography and her letter to students. How do you think her interests and experiences contributed to the writing of this book? What does she hope you might learn from this story?



### Connecting to Prior Knowledge: What is Martial Arts?

Complete EXERCISE SHEET A ("Connecting to Prior Knowledge") in pairs then share ideas as a class.

*Discuss:* Martial arts is more than just superheroes punching and kicking. It encompasses a broad range of techniques and traditions originating from different cultures and often combines physical, mental and spiritual practices. It is about developing integrity, inner strength, teamwork, respect, and indomitable spirit—the idea of never giving up!

# EXERCISE SHEETS

Supplemental activities to the discussion questions (as indicated)

# Connecting to Prior Knowledge



What are some words, phrases, images or ideas that come to mind when you think about the words: “Martial arts”?

What are martial arts used for?

How many different types of martial arts can you name?

What are some other benefits of martial arts in addition to self-defence?  
(Hint: Other benefits may include mental and spiritual aspects)



# What's in a Name?

Naming characters in a story is like naming a real-life baby—it's a big deal! Names are packed with meaning and can influence the way we see a character. Just like parents pick names that reflect culture, traditions, or personal stories, authors choose names that bring their characters to life and make them unforgettable!



## Modesty (nickname: Mo)

The word *modesty* means the state of being humble and unassuming; limited or small in amount.

Mo's parents named her Modesty because they wanted her to be grounded, respectful and not overly boastful or proud.

Mo prefers her nickname, Mo.

## Ignacio (nickname: Nacho)

Ignacio is a traditional name in Spanish-speaking countries and means "fiery".

Nacho loves facts, especially historical facts. When he learned that nachos (the food) was created in 1943 by **Ignacio "Nacho" Anaya**, a chef who named the dish after himself, he insisted on being called Nacho, too!



## RESEARCH YOUR OWN NAME!

### Questions to ask your parent/guardian

- Who chose my name & why was it chosen?
- Does my name have a special meaning in our family or culture?
- What other names were considered for me?

### Questions to consider

- What is the meaning of your name (research) & how do you feel about it?
- Do you think your name reflects who you are? Why or why not?
- What is your favorite thing about your name?

Based on your research, write a 1-2 paragraph reflection about your name

# Styles of Martial Arts : Compare & Contrast



There are many different types of martial arts from many different countries.  
Choose two from the following list and conduct research to learn more about them.

Aikido  
Capoeira  
Eskrima (or Kali)  
Jiujitsu

Judo  
Karate  
Krav Maga  
Muay Thai

Taekwondo  
Tai Chi  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of martial art

Name of martial art

VS

Country of origin

Country of origin

How old is it?

How old is it?

What is it known for?

What is it known for?

Techniques

Techniques

Other interesting facts

Other interesting facts

Which martial art do you think is more effective/powerful? Use your research to support your thinking (there is no right or wrong answer).



# Character Study



Choose one character you’ve met so far (this can be a major or minor character!).  
Fill out this sheet using supporting evidence from the story.

**The character I choose is...**

**My character**      **wants...**

**This is what I think my character looks like...**

Adjectives to describe my character...	Supporting evidence from the story...
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

**If I could talk to my character, I would love to ask them...**

## That's a Punny Tee!



It's your turn to create your own tee-rifically punny shirt. Make sure it's high quali-tee! After you're done, stick them around your classroom for a pun par-tee!

### Definition Time

A pun is a form of word play that uses similar-sounding words (or words with more than one meaning) in a funny way.



### Did You Know?

**Homophonic** puns use words that sound alike but have different meanings.  
**Homographic** puns use a word with more than one meaning.

Write the type of pun you used: \_\_\_\_\_

# Lights, Cameras, Action!



Congratulations, you have been selected as the director for Flying Fist Studio's next movie! What is your blockbuster idea? (You can make it about anything you'd like!)

\*Bonus points for thinking about the **theme** and how the protagonist **changes** at the end.

Movie Title

Protagonist (main character)

What the protagonist wants

Villain (the baddie)

What the villain wants

Setting (where does your movie take place?)

Conflict (the clash between what the protagonist wants and what the villain wants)

Climax and Conclusion (the most exciting part of the movie which leads to the end)

Movie Synopsis (Write 1-2 lines that describe your movie. For example: In *Shih Tzu Ninjutsu*, find out what happens when the most feared ninja assassins in the world are actually a group of shih tzu puppies, and the only warrior skilled enough to outsmart them is severely allergic to dogs.





# Kindness Counts



What are three actions or changes you would recommend for Mo to become a kinder friend? Write the action/change, why it is important, and how Nacho might react to it.

\*Bonus points for adding dialogue!

**Action/Change #1:**

**Action/Change #2:**

**Action/Change #3:**



# Your Book of Joy Technique



In the story, Mo uses different techniques, such as *As the Chipmunk Charges*. Research smaller animals and their defensive moves and create your own technique for Mo to use!

My small animal is a...  
Here's what it looks like...

\_\_\_\_\_



Facts about how my animal defends itself from predators

My technique for Mo is called... It is effective because...



# Character Arcs



Pick a character from the story and fill in their character arc to examine how they change from the beginning of the story to the end of the story. \*Optional challenge: Don't write down the name of your character. Trade with a classmate and see if they can figure out who it is!

My character is:

Three words to describe my  
character at the **START** of the story

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Three words to describe my  
character at the **END** of the story

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Explain how these words are different.

What events happened to your character that prompted these changes?

How has my character changed emotionally, physically, and mentally?



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Discussion questions by chapter

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



## Chapter 1:

- **Point of view: From whose perspective is the story told?**
  - The story is told from Mo's perspective. We are able to hear her thoughts and tell how she really feels.
- **Describe Mo in two words. Now, describe Dax in two words. How are they different? How are they similar?**
  - Examples could include: Mo is competitive and determined. Dax is arrogant and competitive. Both are driven and talented at taekwondo, but Dax is unkind after his win.
- **Make an inference as to what caused Mo to get hit by Dax at the end of chapter one. Find text evidence to support your answer.**
  - Examples could include: She was distracted by her father leaving; she let Dax get to her head; she is too short. Text evidence: Page 5 "Dad's ringtone"; "Is Dad backed against a wall like I am now? Is that why he's leaving?"

## Chapter 2:

- **On page 9, Mo says: "Taekwondo is who I am, what I'm great at. Or so I thought." Why did she say this? How do you think she is feeling?**
  - After losing, she feels terrible and she's full of self-doubt. She questions whether taekwondo is right for her.
- **Describe a time you tried very hard at something but did not succeed. How did you feel? What did you end up doing about it?**
- **Why does Mo want this movie role so badly?**
  - Mo feels that this is her chance to prove herself.
- **How would you describe Dax? Find text evidence that supports your description.**
  - Examples could include: Arrogant, self-assured, confident. On page 10, Mo thinks: "But when I bring my hand up, Dax turns his back to me and lifts his arms. It's a cocky move, but the crowd cheers."
- **On page 11, Mo reflects upon her name. Read the paragraph starting with: "My Chinese name means..."**
  - Have students complete EXERCISE SHEET B ("What's In a Name?") by reading aloud Mo and Nacho's name origins and conducting research about their own name.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



## Chapter 3:

- **How would you describe Mo's friendship with Nacho?**
  - They are best friends. They are comfortable with one another, joke around with each other, and have a deep, trusting friendship.
- **What was Gramps' dream? Why didn't he achieve it? Find text evidence to support your answer.**
  - He wanted to travel the world with his wife, but she passed away. Page 22: "We were supposed to travel, you know, experience things, interesting things." Gramps chuckles ruefully. "Grams wanted to see the world."... "No, it wouldn't be the same without her."
- **Explain Mo and her mother's different communication and language styles.**
  - Mo speaks English, and her mother speaks Chinese. While her mother thinks it's important to learn Chinese, Mo doesn't think she needs to because everyone speaks English in the States.

## Chapter 4:

- **Mo can't audition for the movie because she doesn't meet the height requirement. Will she accept this and encourage Nacho to audition instead, or will she try to do something about it?** Discuss in groups or do a creative writing exercise about what you think Mo will do next.
- **Can you connect what happened to Mo to your own life, another text, or a current event? How does this connection help deepen your understanding of Mo or the story?**
- **Find text evidence foreshadowing Mo being too short to audition in chapter 3.**
  - Page 23: What do the words at the very bottom say?" "Oh, that's just the fine print. It's too blurry to read."
- **Why is the news that Mo can't audition particularly devastating for Mo?**
  - Mo believes that being short has held her back throughout her life, and this is another example. She feels she needs this to make her dad proud of her.



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



## Chapter 5:

- **Mom said: “I want you to understand—there’s something more important than physical size or strength. Do you know what it is?”** What do you think is more important than size or strength?
- **Using context clues, what does futile mean on page 32: “I know it’s futile to argue”?**
  - Pointless; She decides not to respond to her mother and cleans up the mess.
- **Why did the author include the flashback on page 33?**
  - To show that her mother and father disagreed about her participation in taekwondo.

## Chapter 6:

- **Mo is trying to decide whether to open the box. Why does she say: “What would Cody Kwok do?”** How does this question help her with her decision? Find text evidence to support your answer.
  - She looks up to Cody Kwok and knows that he is persistent and never gives up. Page 38: “Cody Kwok didn’t stop until he figured out how to reverse the curse.”
- **What did Mo think the book was about at first? What did Mo change her hypothesis to? Why did she think this?**
  - She thought the book was about dancers but then changed her answer to taekwondo after carefully examining the poses.

## Chapter 7:

- **Summarize the story of the three sisters. What predictions can you make about how Mo might be inspired by this story in her real life? What makes you think that?**
- **How is Mo’s mother’s response to the book different from what the reader may expect?**
  - She isn’t upset about Mo opening the book; she is fascinated by what is inside.
- **Describe how Mo’s relationship with her mom is changing. What supporting evidence from previous chapters leads you to think this?**
  - Mo and her mother are bonding over the book and the story of the three sisters, and it is bringing them closer, but her mother doesn't want Mo to keep looking into it.
  - Mo gives her mom a hug and Mom strokes her hair. On page 49, Mo thinks: “I wish she could be this happy every day. I wish I could feel this close to her every day.”

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



## Chapter 8:

- On page 52 it says, “The twinkle in her [Mom’s] eye is gone.” What does that mean?
  - Mom realizes this story could be real, and that her husband (Mo’s dad) might have hidden secrets from her. She’s unsure what to think and feels confused and frustrated.

## Chapter 9:

- On page 56, Mo thinks: “I grasp the original book. It feels light and heavy at the same time.” What does Mo mean by this?
  - The book is not physically heavy, but there is mystery surrounding its origin and Dad’s knowledge of it. It also contains important information about a powerful martial art and perhaps even Mo’s family history. All this makes it feel heavy (metaphorically).
- Mo’s Dad explained that quote from the book said, “Water becomes cup.” What do you think that means?
  - Examples could include: Water ‘goes with the flow’; water takes the shape of whatever it’s held in; water is persistent and never stops moving.
- Mo says she feels “like a shell strewn on the beach.” Name this literary device. Why does Mo think this?
  - This is a simile. She doesn’t feel like she matters anymore to her dad. He used to be the biggest supporter of her dreams, but now he is pulling away.

## Chapter 10:

- Mo wants to show her dad that she’s fierce. She said the same in Chapter 1 when she said, “I am fierce.” Did she believe it then? Does she believe it now?
  - Mo wants to believe she is fierce, but after all the disappointment and uncertainty around her dad, she is unsure. Page 63: “My hair cascades over my face as I bow my head and whisper, ‘Fierce.’ The word comes out sounding like a question.”
- Why does the author add the word ironically to the sentence on page 62: “He is wearing a faded blue tee with holes and, ironically, the words “Brand New” ...”
  - Ironically means to say or express something in a way that suggests the opposite. Because the shirt has holes in it, it is not brand new.
- On page 64, Mo thinks of Dad’s words: “When backed against a wall, a tiger learns to fly.” What do you infer from this quote, and how does Mo interpret it?
  - When it feels like all is lost, one must dare to be brave and do the impossible. Mo is determined to find a way to audition for the movie—no matter what.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



### Chapter 11:

- **Read aloud Mo's revelation on page 67 starting with "What's so special about water?" What does Mo realize? Support your thinking with evidence.**
  - On page 67-68: "Water is formless. It changes shape based on its surroundings." This is how Mo feels she must act. She must change to fit in at the auditions, and this includes changing her look and height.
- **Who does Mo use for inspiration and guidance as she is building her plan? What role do they play in her life?**
  - She thinks about what Cody Kwok, or her ancestral grandmother would do. She looks up to both as being fierce, brave fighters. They are role models for her even though she doesn't speak directly with them.
- **What does "My heart dips" on page 70 mean?**
  - She feels defeated when thinking Vivi Michaels, the casting director who she met earlier, might be at the auditions and recognize her.

### Chapter 12:

- **Who does Mo see at the auditions? How might this affect her?**
  - Mo sees Dax. She is afraid he will recognize her and reveal her secret—that she isn't tall enough to audition.
- **How has Mo changed? Find text evidence to support your answer.**
  - Mo's new look has given her new confidence. Page 73: "I feel lighter, like my disappointments, Dad's disappointments, have been hacked away too." With Mo's new plan and style, she has renewed hope.
- **On page 75, Mo says: "I'm gonna go out there, Dad, and I'm gonna win. You won't have to be disappointed in me anymore." What does this tell you about what Mo thinks of her dad?**
  - Her dad plays a very influential role in her life, and even though she is upset with him for disappearing, she wants to make him proud.



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



## Chapter 13:

- Different types of martial arts are mentioned. Have students practice their research and compare & contrast skills with a partner or in groups by completing **EXERCISE SHEET C** ("Styles of Martial Arts Types: Compare & Contrast").
- On page 78, why does Mo think: "Ack. Off to a good start with the director already."?
  - She's been noticed by the director but not in a positive way when he told her to take off her shoes and she refused.
- How does Dax's presence at the auditions impact Mo?
  - She begins questioning herself and is afraid he will reveal her secret causing her to be disqualified. Because they are rivals, she is preoccupied with what he is doing and saying, but also uses it as motivation to beat him.
- How does Mo find the confidence to stay in the auditions despite Dax being there? Find text evidence to support your answer.
  - She channels her inner Cody Kwok and asks herself, "But . . . what would Cody Kwok do?" to inspire her.

## Chapter 14:

- Describe Dax in this chapter. How is he different compared to the Dax we met in earlier chapters? How is he the same?
  - Dax doesn't know that Mona is Mo. Though he teases her about her height, he asks about her training and seems pleasant. Once she tries a move on him, he turns back into his old self and becomes rude again.
- What can you infer that Jun is writing on his notepad on page 83? Find text evidence to support your answer.
  - Mo has messed up, so Jun is likely noting her mistakes. It says, "Jun eyes me dubiously and writes something on his notepad," on page 83.
- What does this quote mean: "A boa constrictor wraps itself around my throat."?
  - Mo is so upset by the news she isn't moving forward that she feels like she can't breathe.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



## Chapter 15:

- **Why is Mo nervous about the kick she tried outside after the auditions?**
  - The move was from Xiao Xi's book, and she promised her dad she wouldn't share it with anyone.
- **Why does the author leave Mo's name for last?**
  - It builds up suspense to see if she will be called.

## Chapter 16:

- **Reread the paragraph on page 91 starting with: "*For a split second I think I feel my long hair, wet and heavy on my shoulders...*" What type of change is this? How might a physical change symbolize a mental or emotional change?**
  - Mo's new cut symbolizes the transformation she made to follow her dreams and be a taekwondo (movie) star.
- **Summarize what Mo's mom thinks happened to Yeye. Do you think this is true? What else do you think might have happened to him?**
  - Yeye got himself into trouble, and bad people destroyed his home. He told Mo's mom and dad they had to leave the country.
- **Reread the paragraph on page 92 starting with: "*After my shower I dress...*" How does this paragraph demonstrate the differences between Mo and her mother?**
  - Mo's mom focuses on Chinese values and traditions, while Mo has never lived in China and doesn't value the same practices.
- **Why does Mo's mother finally decide to tell Mo about her father's family?**
  - Mo's mother thinks she is old enough to know the real story, and perhaps she's been curious about it herself.

## Chapters 17:

- **Based on the translations of some of the moves in these chapters, why do you think the book might be called "Book of Joy"?**
  - Examples could include: Because this was Xiao Xi's passion and love; the moves make her feel happy.
- **Why does Mo think that learning Xiaoxi-shu will help her with the auditions? Find text evidence to support.**
  - Mo thinks the moves are powerful, beautiful and unique. She hopes that by showing moves no one has ever seen, she will have an edge over the other kids and win the role. Page 102: "I bet no one's seen anything like it before. If I can perform some of these moves...there's no way I won't win the part."

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



## Chapter 18:

- **What does Mo think she and Xiao Xi have in common?**
  - They are both small and fierce.
- **Does Mo seem different in this chapter compared to how she was at the beginning of the book? How has she changed?**
  - She appears more motivated and hopeful. She used to feel limited by her size, but now she seems empowered by a new martial art and new inspiration (Xiao Xi).

## Chapter 19:

- **Why does *Mo* think her dad doesn't want her to audition? Why do *you* think Mo's dad doesn't want her to audition?**
  - Mo thinks her dad doesn't believe in her and that she will hurt herself at the auditions because she can't take care of herself.
  - Prediction: Something else is going on. He is in danger/because of a family secret, etc.
- **Make a prediction about the man in the hoodie with the salt-and-pepper beard. Who is he? Why is he following Mo?**
- **How does Mo's opinion affect the way she first sees Cody?**
  - Mo is in awe of Cody and everything he does. She is mesmerized by his entrance.

## Chapter 20:

- **At the end of Chapter 20, Mo thinks Dax and the twins have formed an alliance. What is an alliance and how do you think this might benefit them?**
  - An alliance is a relationship or agreement between people who have a common goal to work with and support one another. Dax's alliance with the twins could be to do whatever it takes to beat Mo and the rest of the auditionees.
- **What does "all of the feelings that have come together for a dance-a-thon in my chest" mean on page 113?**
  - Mo feels like her heart is beating quicky and erratically with excitement and nervousness.
- **What happens when Mo tries one of the moves from the book?**
  - Everyone takes notice and seems intrigued.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



## Chapter 21:

- **Using context clues, what is a synonym for goad on page 118?**
  - Synonym for goading: Provoking; Encouraging; Urging; Egging on.
- **Why doesn't Mo fight back against Dax and the twins? How is this different from how Mo might have previously responded?**
  - She doesn't want to risk getting in trouble and being kicked out of the auditions. She is learning to keep her cool and focus on her goal.
- **Who is Sanjay? What do you think his personality is like? Use evidence from the text to support your thinking. Would you want to be friends with him?**
  - Sanjay seems like a loyal friend who stood beside Mo when she was being bullied by Dax and the twins. On page 118, he says: "Mona's not gonna want your backwash."
  - He is very talkative and friendly. He seems like a fun friend to have.
  - Have students complete EXERCISE SHEET D: ("Character Study").

## Chapter 22:

- **Who is Cody Kwok? What do you think his personality is like? Use evidence from the text to support your thinking.**
  - Cody is a martial arts movie star who appears high-maintenance and demanding and is concerned about his appearance and outfits. He also appears quite friendly and charismatic. Page 122: "I always have time for my fans."
  - He seems to care what others think of him and wants to be admired. Page 124: "See, my incredible hearing detected it before all of you."

## Chapter 23:

- **Why did Wyatt ask Mo to partner with him? How does this benefit his alliance?**
  - Since Wyatt partners with Mo, Dax and Quentin are able to sneak up on Mo and attack her from behind in order for her to look bad in front of Jun.
- **Why did Jun and the others suspect Mo of putting itching powder into the equipment? Find evidence in the text to support your thinking.**
  - On page 131: "I'm the only East Asian-looking kid left. Everyone stares at me." Because Mo is Chinese and the itching powder was written in Chinese, they assume she had something to do with it.
- **Summarize the incidents that have occurred this day. Then, make a prediction about whether they are related and who is causing mischief.**
  - When Sanjay and Mo talked to Cody, the light fixture almost fell on them, and someone put itching powder in the protective gear.



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



## Chapter 24:

- **What is a secret society? Summarize what Nacho said about them. Can you think of any other secret societies that have existed in the past or still do today?**
  - *Optional research project:* Name a secret society. What was/is this secret society's purpose? Who was/is involved? Are secret societies good/bad? Explain.
- **What do you think Nacho is trying to tell Mo? Why is he unable to tell her?**
  - Nacho is trying to tell Mo that he likes her, but she is too preoccupied to notice.
- **On page 137, why doesn't Mo finish her sentence? "Even if that emperor from my mom's story did create one, it's been hundreds of years. How could they even know where . . ."**
  - She realizes that the man in the hoodie could be part of the society.

## Chapter 25:

- **What is a pun? Find two puns in chapters 24 and 25. (Hint: they might be on t-shirts).**
  - A pun is a form of wordplay that uses words that sound alike (but have different meanings) to create humor. The puns were: "Wanna buy an ark? I Noah guy" (page 138); "Pork Chop" (page 142).
  - Creativity time! Students to create their own punny t-shirts by completing EXERCISE SHEET E ("That's a Punny Tee!").
- **How does Mo feel while she is doing Xiaoxi-shu? Do you think Mo feels different compared to how she felt while fighting with Dax at the taekwondo competition?**
  - She seems more joyful, determined, hopeful and proud of herself now.
- **Make an inference about how Jun feels about Mo's performance. Support with evidence.**
  - On page 144, Jun says: "Can you introduce me to your sifu?" We can infer that Jun is impressed with Mo despite her falling while attempting her final move.

## Chapter 26:

- **On page 147 Mo thinks: "Suddenly the air isn't sweet anymore. It's heavy and thick." What does this mean?**
  - Mo was feeling so excited about making it to the next round, but with the abrupt news that she needs to bring her mother, she feels like all is lost because her mom would never agree to letting her audition.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



## Chapter 27:

- **Infer what Jun is feeling when Cody invites everyone to the museum. Find text evidence to support.**
  - Jun is frustrated that Cody interrupted the auditions. On page 153: “Jun walks out of the room, his gloved hands balled up by his sides.”
- **What could be problematic about Mo being filmed by the reporters?**
  - Her parents could see footage on the news or online and discover her secret.

## Chapter 28:

- **What else have we learned about Cody Kwok up to this point? Does this differ from your earlier assessment of him? What evidence from the text support your thinking?**
  - Cody was having a panic attack in the car after the incident at the museum. Page 160: “He’s hunched over on his seat, snug between two bodyguards, and hyperventilating into a brown paper bag.” This feels different than the action-loving, death-defying superhero Cody makes himself out to be.
- **Describe Gramps. How is he different from other adults in the story?**
  - Gramps is young at heart. He once had his own dreams of movie stardom.
  - Gramps believes in Mo and supports her. He surprises her by not being upset about the auditions or her instincts at the museum; he is impressed and proud.

## Chapter 29:

- **What is a doppelgänger? Make an inference about what you think this means using contextual clues from the text.**
  - A doppelgänger is a person who looks almost identical to someone else but is not related.
  - On page 164, Mrs. Garcia says: “That girl... She looks so much like our very own Mo.”
- **The casting director said Nacho looked like a young Clark Kent. Can you name a person and who their doppelgänger might be (celebrity or otherwise)?**
- **How does Nacho feel about what happened at the museum? What evidence from the text led you to this conclusion?**
  - Nacho is worried about Mo and feels like things are getting dangerous. On page 165, he says: “I was so worried.” Also: “I know I said you were being paranoid, but maybe I was wrong. This is getting dangerous.”
- **Why didn’t Mo’s mother recognize the girl on TV as Mo?**
  - Mo has disguised herself to look bigger and taller. Her mom also does not realize Mo had cut her hair since she hides it when she is at home.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



## Chapter 30:

- **At the end of Chapter 30, why was Mo so determined to go first?**
  - Mo wants to prove that she can do it and that she is brave and graceful, not “awkward” as Dax called her.
- **What is the difference between how Sanjay and Mo handle the reporters?**
  - Sanjay is eager to talk to the reporters, while Mo ducks her head, likely because she doesn’t want to be filmed and recognized by her family.

## Chapter 31:

- **Why is *hang* italicized on page 174?**
  - It is a pun because they are literally hanging in the air, but also “get the hang of it” means to figure out how to do something correctly.
- **How does Mo tackle the challenge of this jump? Use evidence from the text to support.**
  - Mo uses guidance from those she respects like Xiao Xi. She is confident and doesn’t let her fears stop her. Page 177: “I picture myself in a flowing silk gown, like the ones from old Chinese movies, my sleeves trailing with the wind. I can imagine Xiao Xi rocking this.”

## Chapter 32:

- **Summarize Mo’s thinking process after the explosion. Dad’s words from the first chapter come back to her. What were they? What effect did they have?**
  - Mo takes note of everything and everyone going on around her before she makes her decision. Dad used to tell her, “When backed against a wall, a tiger learns to fly.” She takes a literal leap to *fly* over to Sanjay and says on page 182: “It’s time to fly.”
- **What does the author mean when they say, “That makes my safety harness about as effective as if it were made of dental floss.”**
  - If Mo’s safety harness were made of dental floss, which is thin and easily snapped, it would be completely useless in supporting Mo—just like Mo’s harness, which has been cut from the explosion and is no longer connected to the safety locks.
- **Why doesn’t the author tell us who helps Mo at the end of chapter 32? Who do you think it is?**
  - It builds suspense and leaves the reader guessing (and encourages them to keep reading!).

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



### Chapter 33:

- **Why do you think Dad saved Mo and Sanjay? Did Dax surprise you in this chapter? What evidence have you collected about Dax up to this point that might have indicated that there could be another side to him?**
  - Examples could include: Mo (as Mona) having a “civil conversation” with Dax (page 84); Dax not participating in drinking Mo’s water (page 118); Dax saying “Okay, that’s enough...” (page 129).
- **How are Mo and Dax similar?**
  - Mo and Dax are both trying to prove to a parent that they are good enough. They hope that if their mom (Dax) or dad (Mo) sees them in a movie, they will be so proud that they will come home.
- **Why does Dax want this movie role so badly? Is the idiom “Don’t judge a book by its cover” true of Dax? Explain.**
  - Dax wants the role so he can buy his dad a house and a car. He also wants to show his mom that he’s not a quitter. This side of Dax is new to Mo. She is used to seeing him as an arrogant, confident guy. She didn’t expect that he, too, could be hiding pain under the surface.
- **Can you think of an example from your life (or from another text) where you have experienced “judging a book by its cover”?**

### Chapter 34:

- **Summarize what Mo and Nacho discovered about the tattoo.**
  - Mo recognized the Five Claw Society tattoo from a photo in the book. Her grandfather was in a photo with a man who has the tattoo. Her grandfather told her dad to protect the book from “the society” and now Mo knows which society that is.
- **Make an inference as to why Nacho became so upset with Mo. Use text evidence to support.**
  - Nacho was confused that Mo could go from hating Dax to being his friend and trusting him with her secret. He said it was “stupid”, which angered Mo.
  - On page 201, Nacho says: “Have fun with your best friend Dax tomorrow.” I think Nacho feels he is going to be replaced by Dax, and he cares about Mo and doesn’t want to lose her friendship.



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



## Chapter 35:

- **Security guard Dean says: “We’re actin’ every day. The whole world’s a stage.” What did he mean by this? Making connections: How might you relate this to your life?**
  - There is no right answer. Sometimes we may feel like we are trying on different roles to fit in or discover who we are. Or we see ourselves in different “roles” and try to “act” in ways we’re expected, such as *student* or *sister* or *friend*, etc.
- **How has Mom changed since Dad disappeared? Find text evidence to support.**
  - Mo’s mom seems distracted as she waits to hear from Mo’s dad. She is visibly upset. On page 204 it says, “Normally the very first thing Mom does when she wakes up is throw open the upstairs hallway curtains, letting the morning sunshine spill into our house. But today I hear her shuffle slowly to the bathroom.”
- **When Mo overhears the Beard what does she learn?**
  - She learns that the black hoodie guy was on site during the explosion. She also learns that someone left him a voicemail telling him to film the movie somewhere else.

## Chapter 36:

- **Mo says, on page 212: “The alliance has fallen.” What did she mean by this? Why did it fall and were Dax and the twins really friends to begin with?**
  - At the start of the auditions, Dax and the twins had teamed up against Mo. Since Dax’s heart-to-heart with Mo, however, he has changed his way of thinking and defends her against the twins, thus breaking up the alliance.
- **Summarize 2-3 of Mo’s most important relationships and the status of each one.**
  - Mo has always been close with her dad, but she feels they have drifted apart. She is upset that he doesn’t want her to audition. They haven’t spoken in a while.
  - Nacho and Mo aren’t speaking after their fight, which is rare for them.
  - Mo and her mom often don’t see eye to eye, but Mo is worried because Mom seems distracted and sad lately.
- **What does Mo think of Cody’s acting abilities? Use text evidence to support.**
  - On page 211 Mo thinks: “Ack! He was being serious.” And “I must be missing something.” And on page 213, when Wyatt says, “Cody’s the greatest actor in the world.” Mo thinks: “This is what I’ve thought my entire life. But...I’m just not so sure anymore.”
  - Cody wasn’t trying to be funny, and the more Mo observes him, the less convinced she is that he can act. He seems overly dramatic.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



## Chapter 37:

- **Summarize the movie dialogue Cody and Mo read together. How did it connect with Mo and how she is currently feeling?**
  - The dialogue was about a master having to leave his protégé, and his protégé not wanting him to go. This is similar to how Mo feels about her dad.
- **Creativity time! Fill out EXERCISE SHEET F ("Lights, Cameras, Action!") in pairs or in groups.**
- **Cody believes his acting advice helped Mo. Is this true? Make an inference about where Mo was drawing inspiration from.**
  - Mo wasn't using Cody's acting advice; she was caught up in the scene and thinking that she was talking to her dad and trying to convince him to come back.

## Chapter 38:

- **On page 221, Mo describes herself feeling like "An artist without a paintbrush, a fish without water, a girl without her best friend." What does she mean by this? Come up with another way to express this.**
  - Mo feels lost, like she's missing something vital to herself.
  - Examples could include: Soup without a spoon; A book without words; An ocean without water.
- **On page 223 Mo thinks: "But is he really my hero?" What does Mo mean by this?**
  - Mo has idolized Cody all her life, admiring his bravery and talent. However, she realizes she has never seen evidence of this in real life. She wonders whether he is the hero she's always thought him to be.
- **When Mo went up against the man in the black hoodie, what did she learn about him? Use text evidence to support.**
  - He has surprisingly impressive fighting skills. Page 224: "Then he launches his feet off the ground, jumping higher than I've ever seen anyone jump."
- **What did Mo realize about Cody Kwok? What evidence supported her conclusion?**
  - Mo concludes that Cody Kwok "is a fraud" and that he isn't injured, nor does he do any of his own stunts.
  - On page 225, Mo observes: "Instead Cody's rooted to the ground, a look of pure terror in his eyes."

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



## Chapter 39:

- **Summarize Cody Kwok's story.**
  - Cody's dad wanted him to learn martial arts, but Cody didn't like it and didn't seem to have talent for it. Still, he wanted to be a movie star, so he secretly used a stunt double and tricked the world into believing it was *him* that was the death-defying hero. He became a success.
- **How are Mo and Cody Kwok similar? How are they different?**
  - Similar: Mo and Cody both want their dads to be proud of them. Different: Mo loves martial arts, and Cody can't stand it.
- **Why did Cody open the door for Mo? Is there any symbolism in this action? Explain?**
  - Cody always had people doing everything for him, including opening doors for him (literally and figuratively). By opening the door for Mo, he feels humbled, realizing that he doesn't deserve his success based on a lie.

## Chapter 40:

- **Summarize Mo's emotional rollercoaster throughout this chapter.**
  - Mo feels fear because of her run-in with Black Hoodie, sad and disappointed over her realization about Cody Kwok, and excited when she thinks she got the part. But when it's revealed they know about her lie, and they give the part to Dax, she feels crushed.
- **Does Mo think Dax betrayed her? Why? What do you think?**
  - Mo does think that Dax betrayed her because he knows her secret and used it against her so that she would be eliminated, and he would win the part.
- **How does the onomatopoeia "pop" on page 233 illustrate Mo's thoughts?**
  - Mo feels like she was so close to her dreams she was able to see them, but now, they are vanishing one-by-one like bubbles popping and disappearing.

## Chapter 41:

- **How did Mom's experiences in the past affect the way she thinks today?**
  - Her mom doesn't hate taekwondo. Rather, she is worried for Mo because she is so small. Mo's mom faced height discrimination when applying for a job and she is trying to protect Mo from the hurt she felt.
- **On page 239, what did Mo mean by: "She's always just been Mom. But I guess moms are people too..."**
  - Mo is learning about who her mom is beyond just seeing her as her mom. She realizes Mom has a past that has shaped who she is now, and that she is a person with her own passions, hopes and dreams.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



## Chapter 42:

- **Was Mo being a “bad friend”? Social Emotional Learning : What do you think she could do to become a kinder friend? What are three actions or changes you would recommend for Mo to do? Fill out EXERCISE SHEET G (“Kindness Counts”).**
  - Mo was preoccupied by her own life that and didn’t consider what Nacho has been going through and how he’s been feeling. She didn’t even know he won a photography competition. Nacho felt ignored by Mo.
  - Mo could have checked in with Nacho and paid attention to him when he was trying to talk to her. Mo could have explained the Dax situation better.
- **Find text evidence that supports the idea that Mo’s changing her way of thinking and intends to just be herself.**
  - On page 244, Mo thinks: “So what if I lost a few tournaments and a movie role? That doesn’t make me a failure. I am the best person for the role. And, like my mom, I need to make my own opportunities.”
  - On page 245, Mo thinks: “I pick up my shoes, shake out the last of the Play-Doh, and slip my feet inside... They feel right at home.” Mo is not hiding anymore.

## Chapter 43:

- **Compare & Contrast: Mo and Nacho reacted differently when witnessing Cody and Dax’s kidnapping. What were the differences? What does this reveal about them?**
  - Nacho wanted to get out of there and call the police, Mo wanted to chase after them. They handle dangerous situations differently.
- **Find text evidence that shows Mo’s personality in stressful and dangerous situations.**
  - “I take a deep breath and start pedaling. ‘I’ll be okay,’ I yell. ‘Trust me.’” Mo dives into situations with fearlessness. She doesn’t hesitate if her friends are in trouble, no matter how dangerous the situation.

## Chapter 44:

- **Why did Mo say, “What would Mo Seto do?”**
  - Throughout the story, Mo drew inspiration from her hero by asking herself “What would Cody Kwok do?” Mo realizes she no longer needs to be like Cody (or anyone else); she needs to be herself and rely on her own strength and determination.
- **On page 255, Mo thinks: “A chill sweeps over me and it’s not from the wind.” What does this mean?**
  - She sees the dagger and knows this is a very real, very dangerous situation.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



### Chapter 45:

- **Mo thinks Jun is “too big” and “too strong” and decided she needed to be “solid like a tree”. Do you think this was a good strategy? Why or why not?**
  - She thought she could hold strong against Jun, like a tree that is stiff and solid and unbending. But this wasn’t a good strategy because how could she go head-to-head with a much bigger and stronger Jun on strength alone?
- **Summarize Jun’s story, including his motivations for kidnapping Cody.**
  - Cody’s father told Jun he would make him a star. Instead, he cast Jun as Cody’s stunt double, let Cody take all the credit, and destroyed Jun’s reputation when he wanted to quit. Jun met his master who promised him his own studio if he got “the book” that he believes is with Cody.
- **On page 261 Jun says: “But for *years* I’ve broken bones, torn ligaments, fractured my skull, and risked my neck so *he* can reap all the glory for *my* work. So *he* can be a star. So *he* can make millions.” Why does the author italicize select words?**
  - Jun is upset Cody took all the credit, so he is stressing the difference between himself and Cody, and the things Cody ended up with that Jun feels should have been his.

### Chapter 46:

- **Mo discovers the meaning of this phrase in the Book of Joy: *The wind makes friends with reeds and willows while the mighty oak trembles with fear*. What do you think this means? How does Mo use this thinking against Jun?**
  - Reeds are not sturdy; they whip and bend and change direction easily. She uses that advice to defeat Jun by being constantly in motion and moving out of the way in time, just like a reed, and redirecting Jun’s flow of energy.
- **On page 264 Mo thinks: “When strength is used against strength, something breaks!” What do you think this means?**
  - Mo realizes that since Jun is stronger and bigger than she is, she can’t use her strength or size to beat him. She needs to try something else.
- **On page 266, Cody says: “We weren’t really in that much trouble. My dad would’ve given him whatever ransom he wanted. I wasn’t really that scared.” Do you believe him? Why or why not?**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



### Chapter 47:

- **How did thinking about the words “*Water becomes cup*” from the Book of Joy help Mo?**
  - She needed to transform herself into someone who can beat Jun. She has taken on the mindset and persona of someone who can beat him. She needs to believe in herself.
- **Who is the man in the black hoodie? How did the author build suspense leading up to this reveal?**
  - The man in the black hoodie is her father. Black Hoodie has been a curious figure throughout the story because Mo seemed afraid of him. It was surprising to find out that he was her father and not an evil villain.
- **Why were the techniques in The Book of Joy named after animals such as the earthworm, chipmunk, minnow, hedgehog, chickadee?**
  - These are all smaller animals that must face larger animals. Each have their own defensive techniques suited for their size.
  - Complete EXERCISE SHEET H (“Your Book of Joy Technique”) by researching smaller animals and their defensive strategies and creating a new Book of Joy move for Mo.

### Chapter 48:

- **Who is Huangdi and what does he want? Why did Mo’s dad refer to him as “emperor”?**
  - He is the descendent of Emperor Kong, and he wants all three of the three sisters’ books so he can learn all of the techniques, which he believes will make him unstoppable.
- **Make an inference as to why Mo’s dad was helping Huangdi? Use text evidence to support.**
  - On page 277, Huangdi says: “When I ordered Jun to keep her around, it was only for leverage over you.” On page 280 he says: “Since your father insists on feigning ignorance, perhaps you can tell me where the Book of Joy is hidden?” It’s clear that Mo’s dad has been forced to work for Huangdi to keep Mo safe.
- **Why does Mo text Nacho “sirens”?**
  - She warns him to tell the police they need to turn off their sirens so that the attackers will be caught by surprise and not get away.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



### Chapter 49:

- **Why does Mo ask her dad so many questions at once on page 285?**
  - She has many questions and is excited and eager for them all to be answered.
- **Summarize Yong Seto's story.**
  - Mo's grandfather, Yeye, was a descent of Xiao Xi, one of the three sisters who created the Book of Joy. Huangdi discovered Yeye had the book when Yeye showed off the moves instead of keeping them hidden. To keep the book safe from Huangdi, Yeye gave it to his son, Mo's dad, and told him to move to the States. But Huangdi found Dad and has been forcing him to teach him everything he knows.
- **Given what we know of Mom from earlier in the story, is her reaction to learning about what Mo did surprising? Why do you think so?**
  - Mo's mother is proud of Mo and doesn't seem upset, just concerned.

### Chapter 50:

- **Find text evidence to support the idea that Mo's dad was focused on protecting her and Xiaoxi-shu.**
  - Mo's dad admitted to following Mo around to make sure she was safe and attempting to sabotage the movie production to make sure Mo doesn't reveal her Xiaoxi-shu knowledge. On page 292 he says: "I was forbidden to speak with you or your mother, so I did the next best thing I could think of. I tried to shut down movie production."
- **What does Mo's dad mean when he says, "When backed against a wall, a mouse learns to fly"?**
  - In the first chapter, Mo recalls a Chinese proverb her Dad used to say: "When backed against a wall, a tiger learns to fly." Now, Dad has changed the word "tiger" to "mouse" because Mouse is Mo's nickname and he is saying that when challenged, Mo learned to fly.
- **How are Mo and her dad similar when it comes to helping others?**
  - They both are willing to do whatever it takes to help others, despite fears and challenges.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



## Chapter 51:

- On page 297, Mo's dad wrote this in the Book of Joy: *Water may change itself into another form—snow, fog, frost, hail, sleet, or ice—but it always comes back to water, the most powerful element of all, for even the smallest droplet, with persistence, will dent the hardest stone.* What do you think this means? How does this relate to Mo?
  - Even though Mo is small, she, like a tiny drop of water, is powerful, and she can make a difference if she is determined and persistent.
- **Why does Nacho feel guilty? Find text evidence to support.**
  - Nacho feels guilty that he didn't do more to save Mo. On page 299, he says: "I feel terrible. I should have been there."
- On page 300, Nacho says: "Modesty, um, I was wondering if you, um, if you know, um..." What do you think he is trying to tell Mo? Why do you think he can't say it?
  - Nacho may like Mo more than a friend, but he is nervous she doesn't like him like that and if he tells her the truth, it could ruin their friendship.

## Chapter 52:

- **How does Mo change from the beginning to the end of the story? What events prompted these changes? Examine each character's story arcs by filling out EXERCISE SHEET 1 ("Character Arcs").**
  - Mo has a new confidence in herself and loves herself just the way she is. The attributes she used to feel self-conscious about (e.g., her size and height) have become characteristics she is proud of.
- **Why do you think the author wrote this book?**
  - The author wrote this book to empower everyone to follow their dreams, even if it seems difficult, and that what we perceive as "flaws" may actually be strengths.
- **Identify a symbol, saying, or image that is repeated throughout the book. What is its significance? How might it help convey the story's theme or message?**
  - Some examples could include: "What would Cody Kwok do?" to "What would Mo Seto do?" The change from "Cody Kwok" to "Mo Seto" shows Mo's changing perception of herself.
  - "Water becomes cup" is repeated to show that a person, like water, can take on different forms.





# THANK YOU!

Dear Educator,

Thank you so much for reading *The Legendary Mo Seto* with your class and using this teacher's guide! Your dedication to bringing stories to life and fostering a love of reading mean the world. I truly appreciate the time and effort you've invested in helping students explore the book's themes of courage, determination, and perseverance, along with friendship, family and self-confidence/love.

I hope Mo's journey sparked great conversations and inspired your students to never give up on their dreams.

Thanks for being amazing!

Warmly,  
A.Y.

P.S. I would love to hear your thoughts on this guide, *The Legendary Mo Seto*, which activities your students enjoyed, and/or any other feedback/advice/comments you would like to share. Please contact me at [aychan@aychanwrites.com](mailto:aychan@aychanwrites.com).