

SCENE TWO

by Don Abramson and Robert Kausal

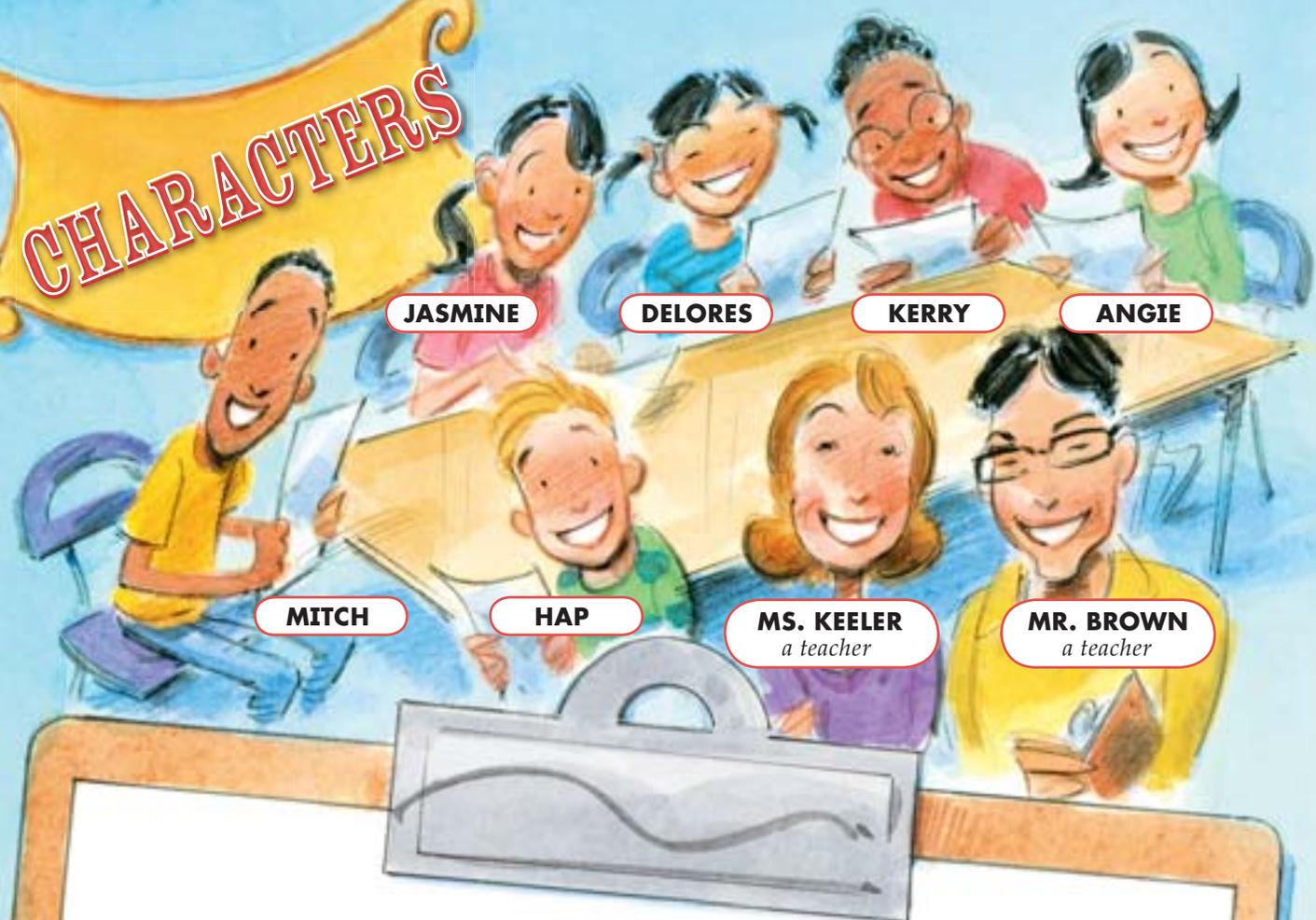
Genre

Dramas, or plays, are stories performed in front of an audience. As you read, think about how one character can play two parts.



Question of the Week
What can teams accomplish?

CHARACTERS



SETTING: A room next to the stage in a school auditorium. It is bare, except for a table and chairs, perhaps clothes racks, a makeup table and mirror, some boxes, etc.

AT RISE: MR. BROWN enters, carrying a clipboard. He shows in MITCH, JASMINE, HAP, ANGIE, KERRY, and DELORES, all carrying books, backpacks, etc. MS. KEELER follows.

MR. BROWN: All right, kids, you can work on your script in here while the others rehearse on the stage.

JASMINE: Thank you, Mr. Brown.

MS. KEELER: And how's that script coming along?

ANGIE: Oh, we're doing fine, Ms. Keeler.

MS. KEELER: Good, good. How many scenes are you planning?

KERRY: We were going to do a scene for each year of Riverside's history, but we thought 134 scenes would run long.

MR. BROWN: You think? Just keep in mind it's a skit in our Founders' Day talent show. You're sharing the stage with—*(He consults his clipboard.)* Betty and Beverly Tanner singing "If I Ain't Got You"—

MS. KEELER: "Don't Have." Sorry! Force of habit.

MR. BROWN *(still reading):* Milton the Miraculous Magician—oh, by the way, if you see an escaped rabbit come by here, try to corner him or something—Gloria Newman and her Hula Hoop™ Extravaganza—well, you get my point. It's a talent show. Nobody's going to win an acting award.

MS. KEELER: We'll let you work now.

KERRY: Right, thanks. *(MR. BROWN and MS. KEELER leave.)* Okay, so where are we?

ANGIE: We finished scene one.

DELORES: Who's got scene two?

MITCH AND JASMINE *(together):* I do. *(They look at each other.)*

MITCH: I was supposed to write it.

JASMINE: I told you I was going to write it.

MITCH: Two too?

JASMINE: Yes.

DELORES: Two twos?

JASMINE: I guess.

KERRY *(like a train):* Too-too-too-too! *(They all look at him; he grins and shrugs.)*

ANGIE: Cool it, Kerry.

HAP: I wrote a scene too. No, I mean it's *also* a scene, not two a scene—I mean—

DELORES: Don't get Kerry started again.

JASMINE: We'll see, Hap. Let's get this scene two business straightened out first.

KERRY: You guys could arm-wrestle for who goes first.

DELORES: Kerry!

JASMINE: I'll go first. Here, I made copies of the script. *(She distributes the scripts.)* Kerry, you play Joshua Wilkins; Angie, you read Becky Isaacs; and Hap, play Gunther Isaacs for now. *(They all take their scripts and move down center.)* This is scene two, now. After Gunther Isaacs and his wife and two daughters have moved to Riverside—except it isn't Riverside yet—and they've built their cabin and planted their crops. Lights up.

KERRY: Huh?

JASMINE: Begin.

KERRY (JOSHUA): Becky, I must tell you I truly appreciate your family's hospitality this week.

ANGIE (BECKY): Joshua, in truth, my mother bade you stay because she is so eager to hear news from the East.

MITCH (interrupting): Hold up. What does that mean, "bade you stay"?

JASMINE: It's a past tense of "bid."

MITCH: Like an auction?

JASMINE: No, no! Like in "invite." Go on.

MITCH (to the others): She reads too many books.

KERRY (JOSHUA): You know, Becky, I came west looking for land. If I could find the right spot, I might be of a mind—

MITCH (interrupting): Now, what does *that* mean—"of a mind"?

JASMINE: It means "to think; to have an opinion." Stop interrupting, Mitch.

MITCH: Well, why can't they talk regular English?

JASMINE: Because it's history, that's why. They're speaking—*(She searches for a word but can't find it.)*—historical. *(to the actors)* Please!

ANGIE (BECKY): My father owns all this land, Joshua. If you but talked to him—

HAP (GUNTHER, enters): If you talked to me about what?

ANGIE (BECKY): Hello, Papa!

KERRY (JOSHUA): About your land, Gunther. What if a young fellow desired to stay here?

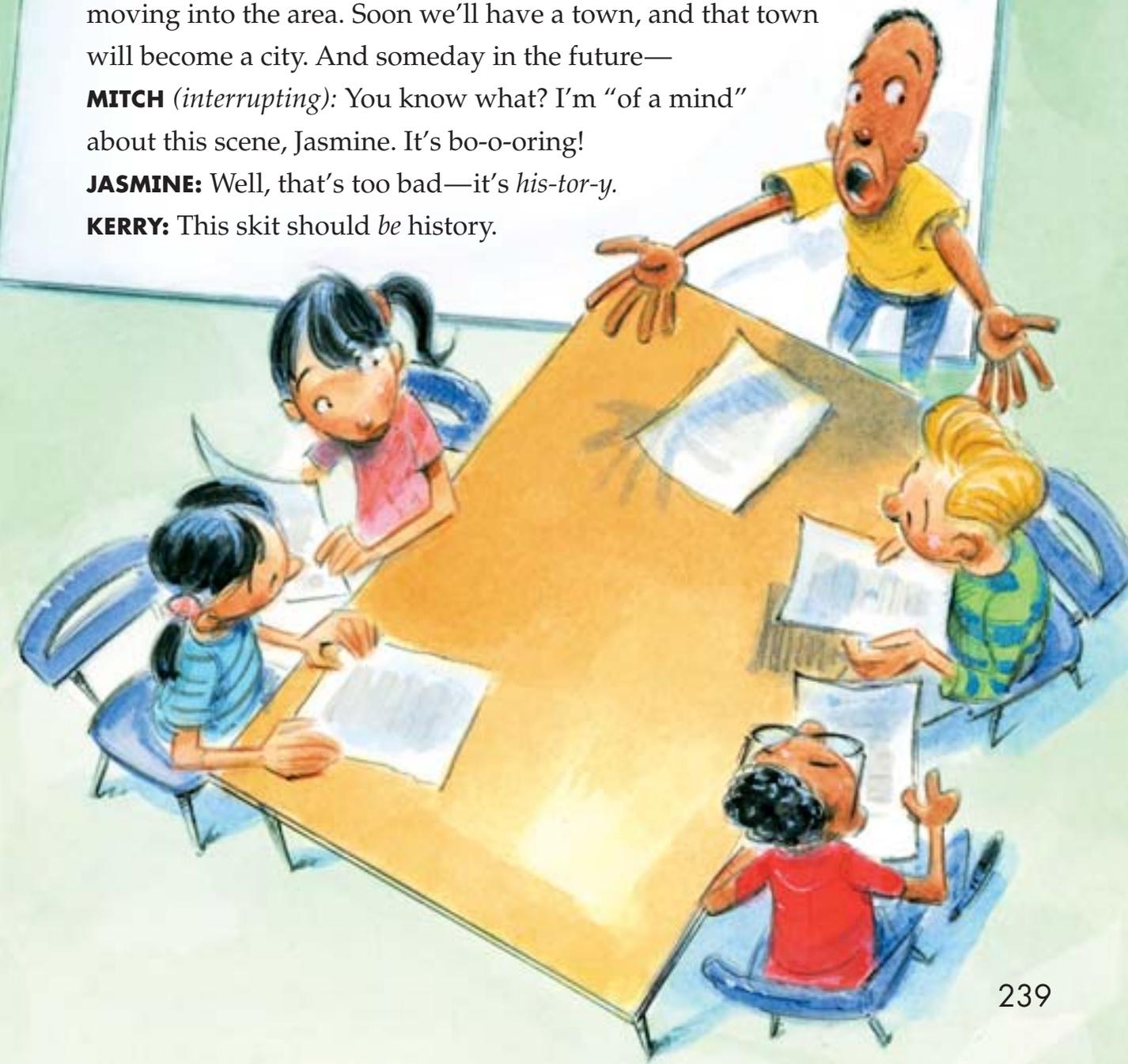
HAP (GUNTHER): Why then, Joshua, I'm sure some sort of **arrangements** could be made. I can see more and more settlers moving into the area. Soon we'll have a town, and that town will become a city. And someday in the future—

MITCH (interrupting): You know what? I'm "of a mind" about this scene, Jasmine. It's bo-o-oring!

JASMINE: Well, that's too bad—it's *his-tor-y*.

KERRY: This skit should *be* history.

BO-O-ORING!



MITCH: Yeah, but you've got to read *my* scene about Gunther Isaacs. *(handing out scripts)* Here, Hap, you're still Gunther—Delores, you're Gunther's wife, Amity Isaacs, and Kerry, you're Peter Marlon. *(They all move to their places.)* Scene Two. And—action!

KERRY (PETER): Gunther, it's been awesome doing business with you.

HAP (GUNTHER): You made my day, Peter. High five. *(Following the script, he raises his hand, but unsurely. Kerry high-fives him.)*



JASMINE (interrupting): Now, wait a minute! The Founders did *not* high-five each other.

MITCH: How do you know? *(He holds up his hand; Kerry high-fives him. Then quickly, before Jasmine can think of an answer, he continues.)* Action, action!

HAP (GUNTHER): So, Pete, when are you going to start clearing your land?

KERRY (PETER): First, I think I'll get my wife and son in Philly.

DELORES (AMITY, enters): Take my **advice**, Peter, build first. Your family'll thank you for it.

HAP (GUNTHER): Yo, Amity, you never complained before.

DELORES (AMITY): About sleeping outdoors while you built a barn for the horses? What good would that do me?

HAP (GUNTHER): Good point. You know how much those horses are worth? *(to PETER)* Anyway, if you head east now, it'll be winter before you get back.

KERRY (PETER): Cool, I'll go give them a call now.

DELORES (dropping character): Give them a call? Mitch, even I know they didn't have telephones back then.

MITCH: Um—I guess you're right. We'll make it a telegraph. Action, action, action!

KERRY: How did we ever get scene one written? *(as PETER):* Well, I'll go start my cabin. And I'm sure looking forward to fishing in that river.

HAP (GUNTHER): Me too. Later, dude. *(PETER, exits)*

DELORES (AMITY): What's this about fish? You know there are no fish in that river!

HAP (GUNTHER): I made that mighty river by damming that sorry-looking creek.

DELORES (AMITY): True, but what about the fish?

HAP (GUNTHER): I thought—you know—if you dam it, they will come.

DELORES (AMITY): The fish? They'll have to crawl through the forest to get here.

HAP (GUNTHER): But you've got to admit, the dam helped.

DELORES (AMITY): Oh, that pathetic creek looks like a real river now. But Gunther, what if the settlers find out?

HAP (GUNTHER, shrugs): Good point.

JASMINE: Mitch, you can't put that on stage!

MITCH: Why not?

JASMINE: Because it's not true, that's why not! *(holding up a book she has dug out of her backpack)* I've read all the way through *The History of Riverside*, and I know it's not in here. Besides, Gunther Isaacs was a Founding Father. He would never—

MITCH: I got it off the Internet. Look, I got a printout— *(He digs in his backpack and finds several pages of printout. He hands them to Jasmine.)*

JASMINE *(scanning the article quickly):* “. . . another tale told of Gunther Isaacs, but probably an apocryphal one. . . .” Don't you know what that means?

MITCH: I thought it meant—like, “secret.”

JASMINE: No—it means—it means—oh, wait a minute. *(She digs in her backpack to find her electronic dictionary. She punches in the word and reads the screen.)* It means “of doubtful authorship or authenticity.” See, it's made up!

MITCH: Well, so?

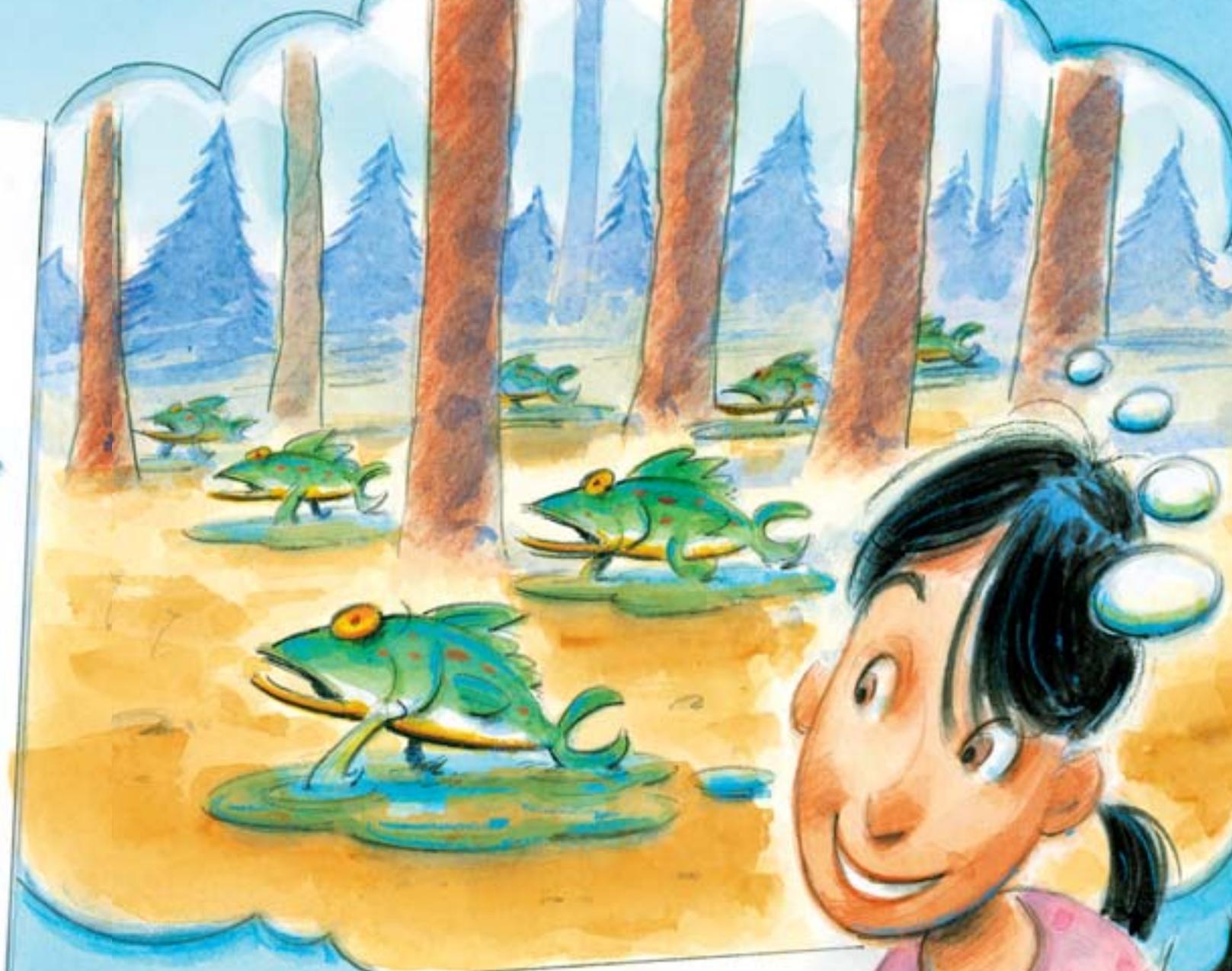
DELORES: I think what Jasmine is getting at, Mitch, is that it's a lie.

KERRY: It is a good story, though.

HAP: But this is a play about history!

KERRY: Do you think anybody'll know the difference?

DELORES: I think a lot of the audience will know about the town's history.



JASMINE *(waving her book):* Some of them might even have read *The History of Riverside*.

MITCH: But face it, Gunther Isaacs was a shady character.

DELORES: You're saying he was dishonest?

MITCH: If he was, at least he wasn't dull!

JASMINE: The scene's out, and that's final!

MITCH: If the scene's out, I'm out. And you can't use scene one either.

HAP: Come on, Mitch. We all worked on that scene together.

MITCH: Well then, I'll just take back the lines I wrote.

DELORES: That's silly. You can't just take back some lines!

MITCH: Sure I can. They're my lines. So—who's with me?

HAP: Mitch, don't do this.

MITCH: Whose side are you on, Hap? Come on.

DELORES: This isn't about sides.

MITCH: Sure it is.

ANGIE (in a surprisingly sharp voice): Will you all stop this! (They all fall silent and look at her.) I'm sorry. But my mom's a family counselor, and if there's one thing I learned, it's how to settle arguments.

MITCH: That's a lot of hoey!

ANGIE: No, it isn't!

DELORES: Be quiet, Mitch.

KERRY: Me, I enjoy a good argument.

DELORES: We can tell.

ANGIE: You can talk about what you really want. But then you really have to listen. Jasmine, Mitch, why do you want to put on this skit?

JASMINE: Well, I guess I want to bring history alive.

MITCH: I want people to be entertained.

ANGIE: Does the skit have to have this scene to be entertaining?

MITCH: I was just trying to add a little humor.

ANGIE: Well then, can't we all work together—?

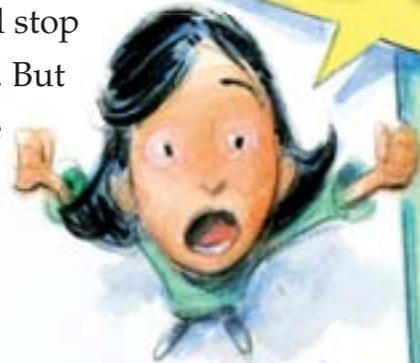
MITCH: Look, we don't need another lecture on teamwork.

KERRY: Yeah, when I hear the word *teamwork*, I just want to punch somebody.

DELORES: Look, I've got an idea. If this story about damming up the creek is apoc—uh—made up, why does the Web site even run it?

ANGIE: Well, they do *say* the story probably isn't true.

STOP!



DELORES: So why can't we do the same thing? Then we could keep Mitch's scene.

MITCH: Yeah—we could have the narrator say—um—“There's another story about Gunther Isaacs—”

JASMINE: “Some say it's true, and some say it's untrue—”

MITCH: “But we say—it's a good story.”

HAP: Yes!

KERRY: Write that down. (Mitch does so.)

ANGIE: Can we move on now?

DELORES: Yes!

HAP: Would you like to hear *my* scene?

MITCH: I suppose we've got to.

JASMINE: If we're really cooperating now—

MS. KEELER (enters): Teamwork, yes.

(Kerry quickly and secretly punches Mitch's arm.)

MITCH: Hey!

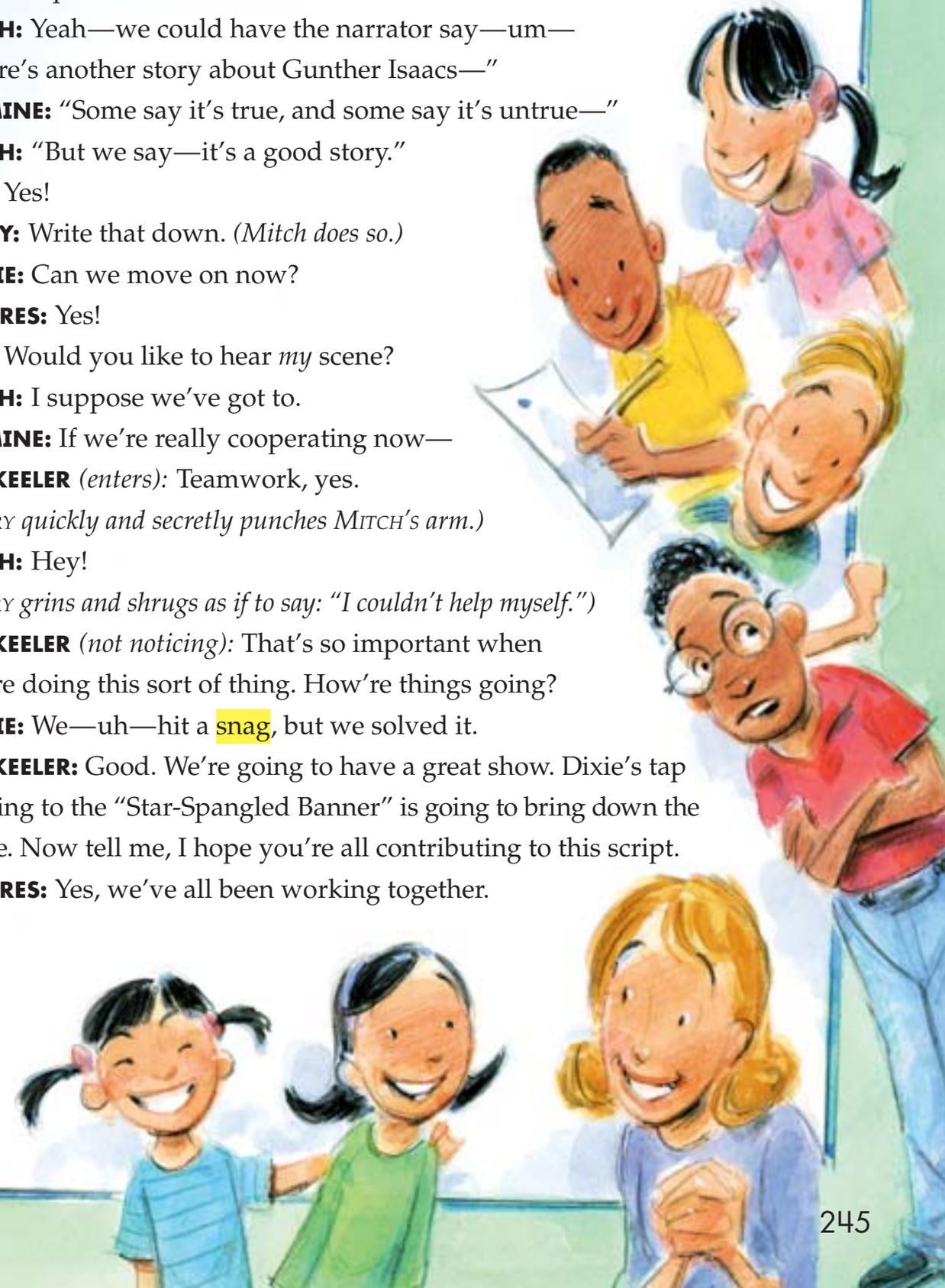
(Kerry grins and shrugs as if to say: “I couldn't help myself.”)

MS. KEELER (not noticing): That's so important when you're doing this sort of thing. How're things going?

ANGIE: We—uh—hit a snag, but we solved it.

MS. KEELER: Good. We're going to have a great show. Dixie's tap dancing to the “Star-Spangled Banner” is going to bring down the house. Now tell me, I hope you're all contributing to this script.

DELORES: Yes, we've all been working together.





HAP: Now we're going to read my scene.

MS. KEELER: Hap, did you write about your ancestor, Cornelius Hapgood?

HAP: Yes, I did.

MS. KEELER: I'm so glad. Kids, I don't know if you know this, but Hap's family are **descendants** of Riverside's earliest settlers.

KERRY: The buffalo?

HAP: No, my great, great, great, great—I don't know how many *greats*—grandfather was Cornelius Hapgood.

ANGIE: Wow, that's *great*, Hap.

DELORES: Who's Cornelius Hapgood?

HAP: He opened Riverside's first shoe store—for people *and* horses.

DELORES: Okay. So what's your scene about, Hap?

HAP: Picture this: the curtain rises. Sunset. Cornelius Hapgood is talking to his faithful horse Bucketmouth—

ANGIE: Bucketmouth?

JASMINE: Wait a minute! Where are we going to get a horse?

HAP: Good point. Okay—picture this: the curtain rises. Sunset. Cornelius Hapgood walks on stage, talking to himself—
(*reads, as CORNELIUS*): Oh, my dogs are tired—

KERRY: Dogs? I thought he had a horse.

HAP: They're his *feet*. Okay—picture this: the curtain rises—

KERRY: I know! Sunset, dogs, feet. Get on with it!

HAP (*CORNELIUS*): I plum wore out these boots down to my socks. Where can a person buy full-grain leather shoes that are rugged, yet stylish?

MITCH: Ms. Keeler, I think we're going to need another hour. Or two.

HAP (*CORNELIUS*): I'm talkin' comfortable, yet affordable. Maybe a waterproof moccasin with fringes. . . .

(*As he talks, the lights fade out.*)

