



AKU FIELD GUIDE

CREATED BY MICAH JOHNSON



An out-of-this world adventure about
**DARING TO DREAM BIG AND
FINDING YOUR PLACE IN THE
UNIVERSE.**

Aku has always dreamed of becoming an astronaut. It's easier to picture life among the stars than deal with the bully at school—or the pain of his grandfather's mysterious disappearance. But when a strange space helmet shows up in his basement, Aku is pulled into something far bigger than he ever imagined.

The space helmet doesn't just look cool—it teleports him to Ibra, a distant planet under siege. There, precious Lunaberries are being stolen by a ruthless space militia, and Aku's grandfather may be the key to stopping them. With the help of his best friends and a few unlikely allies, Aku must dream bigger than ever before, find the courage to lead, and discover that bravery isn't about having no fear—it's about rising above it.

This thrilling first installment in the Aku series is a cosmic coming-of-age story perfect for fans of *Amari and the Night Brothers* and *Tristan Strong*.

AKU FIELD GUIDE



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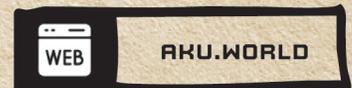
"THE BEST BOOK EVER"

-THE NEW YORK TIMES



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Micah Johnson is a former Major League Baseball player turned award-winning artist and storyteller. After leaving baseball to pursue painting, he created Aku—a young Black astronaut who reminds the world that no dream is out of reach. Through fine art, books, sculptures, and collaborations, Micah has built a creative universe that inspires courage, imagination, and limitless possibility.



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Summary

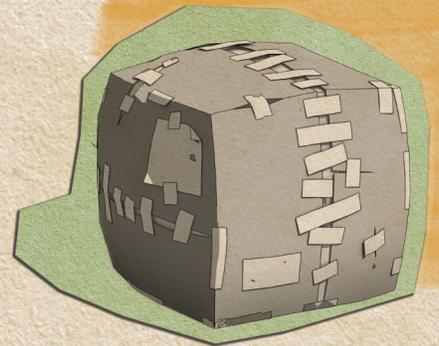
The chapter begins with an intense spaceship battle as Aku pilots a failing ship through an asteroid field with his crew, Benji and Trae. The ship is running out of fuel and under attack from the Squamatoids. Despite desperate attempts, the ship explodes—revealing this is actually a frustrating level in the video game 'Tribute Star' that Aku is playing with his friends.

Aku, Trae, and Benji are in Aku's room playing the game. They discuss their hero Nash Altair and Aku reaffirms his dream of becoming a real astronaut. Benji points out the irony that Aku wants to fly to space when his father won't even let him ride the bus. Aku reveals his father has become very uptight since his Grandpa vanished a year ago during a 'classified work trip.' At dinner, Aku is unable to communicate his feelings of loss to his father, feeling like a spaceship 'crash-landing to Earth in a ball of fire.

After completing his chores, Aku looks at a framed photo of himself and his Grandpa, a distinguished Air Force pilot and computer science whiz. He powers down the game, still dreaming about adventures and being an astronaut. Just as he is falling asleep, he hears a strange beeping sound coming from the basement.

CHAPTER 1 BALL OF FIRE

Art Challenge



**DRAW ONE THING YOU
WISH YOU'D FIND
INSIDE A MYSTERY BOX.**

SHARE WITH US AT @AKU.DREAMS

Writing Reflection

PROMPT: AKU LOVES BOTH VIDEO GAMES AND INVENTING THINGS.

WHAT ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT?

DESCRIBE HOW YOUR INTERESTS AND HOBBIES HELP YOU EXPRESS WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU DREAM OF BECOMING SOMEDAY.

Comprehension

Literal Questions

1. WHO ARE AKU'S TWO BEST FRIENDS THAT HE PLAYS VIDEO GAMES WITH?

2. WHAT IS THE NAME OF AKU'S HERO AND THE HEAD OF ALTAIR ENTERPRISES?

3. HOW LONG AGO DID AKU'S GRANDFATHER DISAPPEAR?

4. WHAT STRANGE SOUND DOES AKU HEAR AT THE END OF THE CHAPTER?

Comprehension

Inferential Questions

5. WHY DO YOU THINK AKU'S FATHER HAS BECOME SO UPTIGHT AND OVERPROTECTIVE?

6. HOW DOES AKU FEEL ABOUT HIS GRANDFATHER'S DISAPPEARANCE?

7. WHY DOES THE AUTHOR COMPARE AKU'S FEELINGS AT DINNER TO A SPACESHIP 'CRASH-LANDING TO EARTH IN A BALL OF FIRE'?

8. WHAT DO YOU PREDICT THE BEEPING SOUND IN THE BASEMENT MIGHT BE?

CHAPTER 1

BALL OF FIRE

VOCABULARY

Word: CUTTING EDGE

Page: 3

Definition: _____

Word: UNDERSTATEMENT

Page: 3

Definition: _____

Word: CLASSIFIED

Page: 3

Definition: _____

Word: COARSE

Page: 3

Definition: _____



Discussion

CHAPTER 1 BALL OF FIRE

1. AKU'S GRANDFATHER TOLD HIM "DREAMS HAVE NO LIMITS." HAVE YOU EVER HAD A BIG DREAM THAT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE?

THINK on your own:

PAIR discuss with partner:

2. AKU FEELS LIKE HIS FAMILY IS 'CRASH-LANDING' AFTER HIS GRANDFATHER DISAPPEARED. CAN YOU RELATE TO FEELING DISTANT FROM A PARENT OR FAMILY MEMBER?

THINK on your own:

PAIR discuss with partner:

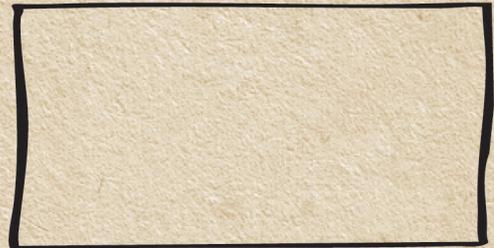
3. WHY DO YOU THINK BENJI POINTS OUT THAT AKU WANTS TO FLY TO SPACE BUT CAN'T EVEN RIDE THE BUS? WHAT DOES THIS TELL US ABOUT AKU'S SITUATION AT HOME?

THINK on your own:

PAIR discuss with partner:

I can do anything

Write a few positive words that describe what makes you special, strong, and unique.



draw or paste a picture
of your biggest dream

Summary

Late at night, Aku hears the strange beeping sound coming from the basement. The basement is dark, damp, and Aku is 93 percent sure it's haunted. He cautiously descends the stairs armed with his Louisville Slugger. When the beeping sounds again, his dog Rube bolts, leaving Aku alone.

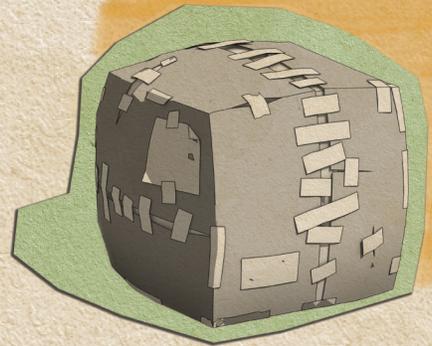
Aku continues down to the cold cement floor, scanning the maze of moldy cardboard boxes. He locates a medium-sized cardboard box that is the source of the beeping. The box is tightly taped shut with a handwritten note stuck to the front: 'TO: AKU OPEN IMMEDIATELY.' His heart pounds. Startled by another beep, Aku yelps, stumbles backward, and bolts back upstairs, spending the entire night tossing and turning.

The next morning, Aku heads to his garage workshop to get scissors. He returns to the basement, which is easier to approach in morning light. Using scissors, he cuts the tape and discovers the box contains a massive, domed astronaut helmet. The helmet is old and worn with chipped white paint over silver surface, and its dark visor gleams like polished obsidian. The helmet beeps once more. As Aku lifts the helmet to try it on, his mother calls from upstairs reminding him he'll be late for school. Aku quickly shoves the helmet into his closet and promises to return after school.

CHAPTER 2

mystery box

Art Challenge



DRAW ONE THING YOU WISH YOU'D FIND INSIDE A MYSTERY BOX.

SHARE WITH US AT @AKU.DREAMS

Writing Reflection

PROMPT: AKU DISCOVERS SOMETHING MYSTERIOUS AND EXTRAORDINARY IN HIS OWN BASEMENT—A PLACE HE SEES EVERY DAY.

HAVE YOU EVER DISCOVERED SOMETHING SURPRISING IN A FAMILIAR PLACE? WRITE ABOUT A TIME WHEN SOMETHING ORDINARY TURNED OUT TO BE MORE INTERESTING THAN YOU EXPECTED.

Comprehension

Literal Questions

1. WHAT DOES AKU CARRY WITH HIM WHEN HE GOES DOWN TO THE BASEMENT?

2. WHAT IS WRITTEN ON THE NOTE ATTACHED TO THE MYSTERIOUS BOX?

3. WHERE DOES AKU GO TO GET SCISSORS TO OPEN THE BOX?

4. WHAT DOES AKU FIND INSIDE THE BOX?

Comprehension

Inferential Questions

5. WHY DOES AKU'S DOG RUBE RUN AWAY WHEN THE BEEPING HAPPENS? WHAT DOES THIS TELL US ABOUT THE SITUATION?

6. THE NOTE SAYS 'TO: AKU OPEN IMMEDIATELY' WHO DO YOU THINK SENT THIS BOX AND WHY?

7. AKU CHOOSES TO HIDE THE HELMET INSTEAD OF SHOWING IT TO HIS PARENTS. DO YOU THINK THIS WAS A GOOD DECISION? WHY OR WHY NOT?

CHAPTER 2

mystery box

VOCABULARY

Word: DAMP

Page: 7

Definition: _____

Word: STEELING

Page: 7

Definition: _____

Word: DEFUNCT

Page: 8

Definition: _____

Word: OBSIDIAN

Page: 10

Definition: _____



Discussion

CHAPTER 2
mystery box

1. THE MYSTERIOUS BOX IS ADDRESSED DIRECTLY TO AKU WITH SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS. WHAT CLUES DOES THIS GIVE US ABOUT WHO SENT IT AND WHY?

THINK on your own:

PAIR discuss with partner:

2. AKU FACES HIS FEAR OF THE BASEMENT BECAUSE HIS CURIOSITY IS STRONGER THAN HIS TERROR. DESCRIBE A TIME WHEN YOU HAD TO BE BRAVE TO DO SOMETHING IMPORTANT. WHAT HELPED YOU OVERCOME YOUR FEAR?

THINK on your own:

PAIR discuss with partner:

3. AKU DECIDES TO KEEP THE HELMET A SECRET FROM HIS PARENTS. PUT YOURSELF IN HIS SHOES—WOULD YOU TELL YOUR PARENTS OR KEEP IT SECRET? WHAT ARE THE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF EACH CHOICE?

THINK on your own:

PAIR discuss with partner:

I can do anything

Write a few positive words that describe what makes you special, strong, and unique.



draw or paste a picture of your biggest dream

Aku
FIELD
GUIDE

field notes and sketches