

BOOK

15

Kimika & Kalynn SISTERS

Growing Up Gracefully

H.V.LYONS



This book discusses early puberty, menstrual periods, and the physical and emotional changes that occur as children grow.

The content is written in gentle, age-appropriate language for young readers, but because every child’s developmental journey is different, parents and caregivers are encouraged to:

- **Review the book before sharing it** with younger readers.
- **Use the story as a starting point** for open, supportive conversations about puberty.
- **Answer questions honestly and calmly** to reinforce a healthy understanding of body changes.
- **Reassure children that growing up is normal, natural, and nothing to be ashamed of.**

This book is **NOT** intended to replace medical advice.

If you have concerns about your child’s health or development, please consult a healthcare professional.

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters “Growing up Gracefully”



Book 15

Growing Up Gracefully

By

H.V. LYONS

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FEELING WEIRD & WORRIED

The first sign that something was different didn't come with a loud noise or a big event. It arrived quietly, like a whisper that only Kimika could hear.

Tuesday morning sunlight pushed its way through the blinds in soft strips, laying bright lines across Kimika's bedspread. Usually, mornings make her feel calm and excited. She liked the way the light fell on her sketchbook, the smell of breakfast drifting up the stairs, and the predictable rhythm of a new day.

But today, something was off.

She opened her eyes slowly and stretched her arms overhead. The moment she sat up, a sharp pain shot across her chest.

"Ow."

She froze.

It wasn't the kind of "Ow" from bumping into a door or landing wrong on the playground. It was deeper, achier, like something inside her chest was sore for no reason.

She pressed her fingertips gently against the area.

Tender and sore.

“What in the world...?” she whispered.

A tiny thread of worry tugged at her heart.

Before she could think more about it, a loud thump-thump-THUMP came from the hallway, followed by the sound of someone humming an off-key tune.

The door slammed open.

“GOOD MORNING, WORLD!” Kalynn shouted, bursting in like a superhero entering a scene. She had one sock on, one sock in her hand, and her hairbrush tucked under her arm like a sword.

Kimika winced. “Kalynn! You’re so loud!”

Kalynn gasped dramatically. “Loud? Me? Never! I am the gentle whisper of the morning breeze!”

Kimika raised an eyebrow. “...You literally stomped down the hallway like a baby elephant.”

Kalynn puffed out her cheeks, then laughed. “Fine, maybe a *tiny* bit elephant-y. But guess what? Breakfast smells AMAZING. I think Dad put cinnamon in the oatmeal today. My nose tasted it.”

“Your *nose* tasted it?”

“Yes,” Kalynn said with authority. “Noses can taste things now. Science is evolving.”

Kimika would usually laugh at such nonsense. But right now, all she could think about was the soreness that hadn’t gone away.

She tried to stand up. The ache tugged again.

“Ow...”

Kalynn’s silly grin melted into concern. “Hey... you, okay?”

Kimika hesitated. She didn’t want to worry her little sister. She didn’t want *anyone* to worry. She usually handled things herself, art projects, challenging homework problems, and even scolding Kalynn for making slime in the bathtub.

But this?

This was different.

“I... I don’t know,” she admitted quietly.

Kalynn’s eyes widened. She climbed up onto the bed, placing a hand on Kimika’s forehead. “Do you have a fever? Are you dizzy? Did you eat expired yogurt again?”

“That was **ONE** time!” Kimika protested.

“Still counts,” Kalynn said. “You were burping the alphabet for an hour.”

Kimika groaned. “That is not helping right now.”

Kalynn dropped her serious act and sat cross-legged beside her sister, speaking more softly. “Okay. Tell me what hurts.”

When Kimika placed her hand over her chest, Kalynn squinted at it.

“Did you fall on it? Did Cocoa jump on you in your sleep? Did Kimoy booby-trap your bed?”

“No,” Kimika sighed. “It just... hurts. And it feels tight, like my shirt shrunk. My whole body feels weird. My chest is so sore.”

Kalynn tilted her head, studying her big sister as if gathering important scientific data.

“You look the same to me,” she said honestly. “But you do look... uncomfortable.”

“I am,” Kimika muttered. “And I don’t know why.”

Kalynn reached over and held her hand gently, her voice soft in a way she rarely used. “Is it scary?”

“Maybe a little.”

Kalynn nodded with wisdom unusual for a seven-year-old. “Okay. Then we don’t panic.”

“You always panic,” Kimika pointed out.

“Not today. Today, we’re calm like turtles.”

“Turtles?” Kimika asked.

“Yes. Turtles are always calm. They move slow. They think before running around like crazy.” She paused. “Unlike me.”

Despite everything, Kimika laughed. “Definitely unlike you.”

Kalynn squeezed her hand. “But I can pretend, if it helps.”

Kimika felt a warmth in her chest, not the soreness kind, but the comforting kind.

“Thanks, Kaly.”

“Anytime.” Kalynn puffed up proudly. “And don’t worry. Whatever’s going on, we’ll figure it out. Together.”

There it was again — that warm, gentle feeling.

Sisterhood.

Support.

But even as she smiled, the ache in her chest reminded her:

Something is happening... and I don't know what.

As she slowly got dressed for school, tugging carefully at her shirt so it didn’t rub against the sore spots, a quiet worry followed her around, like a shadow she couldn’t shake.

And deep in her heart, a whisper repeated:

Am I sick? Am I changing? What does this mean?

She wasn’t sure.

But she did know one thing:

She couldn’t hide it forever.



CHANGES NO ONE TOLD ME ABOUT

By Wednesday afternoon, Kimika felt like her body had become a puzzle that someone had scrambled overnight and forgotten to tell her how to put back together.

The day had started normally enough. Birds chirping. Mom was humming while making breakfast. Dad lecturing Cocoa about not stealing socks (which Cocoa ignored, as usual). But as soon as Kimika put on her favorite shirt, the tightness and tenderness returned.

It clung to her chest in a way that felt uncomfortable, like the fabric was shrinking just around that one spot. She tugged at the hem, stretching it out, but nothing helped. Not to mention...It hurt.

Why do I feel like this? Why me?

The questions followed her like shadows.

Recess: A Battle Between Normal and Not-So-Normal

At recess, kids scattered everywhere, climbing the monkey bars, playing tag, jumping rope, and organizing chalk art contests. The playground buzzed with happy noise.

Usually, Kimika and Kalynn would join the chalk crew or practice cartwheels in the soft grass. But today, Kimika couldn't run, couldn't jump, couldn't even walk fast without the dull ache reminding her:

Something is wrong.

She sat alone on the red bench under the big oak tree. She held her sketchbook open to a blank page, pretending to draw. But the pencil felt heavy, her hand trembling slightly.

A warm breeze rustled the leaves above her, but instead of feeling relaxed, it made her nervous.

“Kimmy?”

Kalynn plopped beside her like she’d been launched from a catapult.

“You disappeared! I looked everywhere, even behind the big slide and under the art table. Guess who was under the art table? TWO BIG ANTS. Very suspicious ants.”

Kimika didn’t smile.

Kalynn paused. “You’re not laughing. Now that’s scary.”

Kimika bit her lip. “I don’t feel like laughing today.”

Kalynn scooted so close that their shoulders touched. She lowered her voice. “Chest thing again?”

Kimika nodded, barely.

Kalynn opened her “SUPER SERIOUS SCIENCE RESEARCH” notebook like a doctor reviewing a patient’s chart.

“Okay,” she said, flipping through doodles of mystery diagrams. “So... the book said kids grow at different speeds. Some early, some later. And it might hurt sometimes. The soreness is just your body stretching.”

Kimika frowned. “But why didn’t I know it would feel like THIS?”

Kalynn shrugged. “Maybe grown-ups forget to tell us.”

Kimika sighed. “I don’t want to grow yet.”

Kalynn blinked. “Why not?”

“I just... I don’t want everything to change.”

She looked down. “I like feeling like me. I don’t want to suddenly become... different.”

Kalynn kicked her feet gently against the mulch. “You’re still you. Even if you grow an inch or two. Or ten.”

“Ten?”

“What? It could happen. Maybe you’ll become a skyscraper.”

“Kalynn!”

“Fine, maybe not a skyscraper... but maybe a tall statue.”

Despite everything, Kimika giggled. “You’re ridiculous.”

Kalynn put her hands on her hips. “Ridiculous but wise.”

Then she softened again.

“But seriously... growing doesn’t mean you change who you are. It just means your outside is catching up to your inside.”

Kimika blinked. “What does that even mean?”

“Mom says you’re creative and brave and smart.”

Kalynn poked her forehead.

“That part stays the same.”

Those words nestled gently into Kimika’s heart. She smiled.

Still, fear lingered around the edges of her mind.

The Hallway Incident

When the recess bell rang, the girls headed inside with the crowd. As they walked down the hallway, Kimika noticed two older girls whispering near the water fountain.

One girl was holding her gym shirt up to her chest.

“It’s happening,” she whispered. “My mom said it would.”

Her friend nodded. “It’s normal. My cousin said the same thing.”

As Kimika’s ears perked up, she slowed down.

Were they talking about the same thing I was feeling?

Kalynn tugged her sleeve. “Kimmy! You stopped walking. Why are you standing like a frozen llama?”

Kimika swallowed. “Nothing... I just overheard something.”

“What something?”

“Something about... growing.”

Kalynn nodded solemnly. “Llamas grow too.”

“What do llamas have to do with—”

“Shh, it’s a metaphor.”

Kimika rolled her eyes.

But hearing older girls whisper about their bodies made her realize...

Maybe she wasn’t alone.

Maybe this wasn’t unusual.

Maybe it was just... growing up.

Lunch: A Quiet Moment With Big Feelings

During lunch, Kimika moved slowly, her tray wobbling slightly in her hands. She sat gently at the table, trying not to bump her chest on the table edge.

Her mashed potatoes sat untouched.

Her green beans stayed lined up in perfect little rows.

Her chocolate milk container remained unpoked.

“Okay, you’re officially worrying me,” Kalynn said, sliding into the seat across from her.

“Your food is untouched, and you’re not even looking at it with disgust.”

“I’m thinking,” Kimika murmured.

“I think what’s bothering you is called puberty.”

“I thought I knew about it. But I never thought it would be like this.”

Kalynn glanced around, making sure no one was listening. Then she leaned in with her elbows on the table.

“You know,” she whispered, “puberty isn’t a monster. Or a ghost. Or a jellyfish. It’s just...”

your body doing what it needs to do.”

“Even if it hurts?”

“Even then.”

Kimika sighed. “I still don’t feel ready.”

Kalynn reached over and took her hand again, something she rarely did in public.

“That’s okay,” she said. “Nobody feels ready at first. But you’re not doing it alone.”

This time, Kimika didn’t blink away the tears.

She let them stay in her eyes, not falling, not dramatic, but real.

End of School Day

As the final bell rang, kids rushed toward the buses like bees escaping a hive. But Kimika walked slowly, as if her backpack were heavier than usual.

She felt tired. Emotionally, physically... all of it.

On the ride home, she rested her head against the window, watching houses blur past.

Kalynn nudged her shoulder gently. “We’ll figure this out. And then everything will make sense.”

“Maybe,” Kimika whispered.

But inside, she still wondered:

*Why does growing up feel like a secret no one prepares you for? Why does it feel lonely?
Why does it feel so big?*

She didn’t know yet.

But tomorrow, the next big change would arrive, one she definitely couldn’t ignore.

And it would push her to finally ask for help.



THE EMBARRASSING SCHOOL DAY

Thursday morning felt like it was sneaking up on her.

Usually, Kimika woke up ready: ready to draw, ready to learn, ready to race Kalynn down the stairs. But when she opened her eyes today, she felt... off.

Her chest still ached, and the odd soreness in her belly from yesterday had grown stronger, like tiny knots tightening and loosening inside her. She pressed a hand to her stomach and inhaled slowly.

Please just be nerves. Please just be hunger. Please just be anything but something weird.

Breakfast Chaos... Without the Usual Fun

Downstairs, the familiar morning chaos was in full swing:

- Dad flipping eggs and humming off-key
- Mom sprinkling cinnamon and nutmeg into a bowl of porridge
- Cocoa barking at a dust bunny
- Kalynn dancing around in a tutu for absolutely no reason

Everything should have felt normal.

But it didn't.

When Kimika stepped into the kitchen, Mom's smile shifted immediately. “You're moving a little slow this morning, sweetheart.”

Kimika forced herself to smile back. “Just tired.”

“Want porridge?” Mom asked.

Usually, Kimika loved Mom's porridge.

But just looking at it made her stomach twist.

“Maybe later...” she murmured.

Kalynn screeched to a halt beside her. “Whoa. You turned down porridge? Alert the news! Sound the alarms! Call the—”

“KALYNN,” Kimika whispered fiercely.

Kalynn zipped her lips and saluted.

But her wide, worried eyes kept flicking toward Kimika as if silently asking, *Chest thing? Belly thing? New thing?*

The Bus Ride: A Moving Bubble of Nerves

The bus smelled like pencils and bubble gum. Kids chattered loudly, trading Pokémon cards and arguing about who had the fastest time on the monkey bars.

Kimika sat quietly beside Kalynn, hands in her lap, pressing her knees together. Every bump in the road sent a tiny pang through her stomach.

“You look like you swallowed a cactus,” Kalynn whispered.

“I'm fine.”

“You don't look fine.”

“I'm *trying* to look fine.”

“Well...” Kalynn leaned closer. “You look like you're trying really hard.”

Kimika sighed.

She didn’t want to say anything yet. Not here. Not with kids everywhere.
Not when she didn’t even know what was happening herself.

Gym Class: The Moment Everything Changed

Gym used to be fun.

It used to be simple.

Run. Play. Sweat. Laugh.

But today...

Today her chest and belly felt like they were made of glass, and little aches.

“Alright, class!” Coach Ortiz barked cheerfully. “Warm-up jog! Three laps! Nice and steady!”

Nice and steady for everyone else.

Not for her.

Kimika jogged slowly. Very slowly.

Every bounce made the ache sharper.

About halfway through the first lap, she was walking.

Ow... why does it hurt so much? What is happening to me?

Maya jogged past her. “You good, Kimika? You look kinda pale.”

“I’m fine!” Kimika squeaked.

Then it happened.

A warm, strange sensation.

Low in her belly.

Downward.

A shift.

She froze mid-step.

What was that?

She took another tiny step.

And felt it again.

Her heart slammed against her ribs. Her face flushed hot.

No. No. No. Not here. Not in gym class.

She pressed her legs together and walked stiffly toward the bathroom.

“Coach? Bathroom,” she stammered.

Coach Ortiz nodded. “Go ahead, sweetheart.”

Kimika hurried — but carefully — her sneakers squeaking on the polished floor.

Inside the bathroom stall, she stared in horror.

A stain.

A real stain.

Dark. Rust-colored.

Impossible to ignore.

Her breath hitched.

Her hands shook.

Her stomach flipped.

“No... no, no...” she whispered, biting her lip so she wouldn’t cry.

Her whole body felt hot and cold all at once.

She didn’t fully understand everything about puberty yet, but she understood *this*.

Her *first period* had started.

At school.

In light gray leggings.

During gym.

The worst possible combination.

Kimika grabbed her navy sweater and tied it around her waist so tightly she could barely

breathe.

She stood staring at her reflection in the mirror for a long moment.

Wide eyes.

Flushed cheeks.

Almost-tears.

“How am I supposed to walk out there?” she whispered.

Outside the Bathroom: The Almost-Disaster

When she stepped back into the hallway, Maya was there getting water.

She looked up. “Hey, you okay? You were gone awhile.”

“Yep!” Kimika said in a voice three octaves too high. “Totally great. Wonderful. Perfect. Amazing.”

Maya blinked. “You’re sweating a lot.”

“So much exercise! Love exercise! I should do more exercise!”

“Um... okay?”

Before Maya could ask more questions, Kalynn popped into the hallway like she’d been waiting behind a corner.

“Kimmy!” she whisper-shouted. “Why do you look like you just wrestled a ghost?”

Kimika cleared her throat. “Not now.”

Kalynn leaned closer, whispering, “Are you having... THE THING?”

“Stop talking!” Kimika hissed, face burning.

Kalynn zipped her lips and nodded, suddenly serious. She stepped behind Kimika, whispering, “Your sweater is covering everything. Nothing’s showing. You’re safe.”

Kimika blinked. “Thanks...”

“For what?”

“For checking.”

Kalynn shrugged. “That’s my job. I’m the sidekick.”

Back in Class: A Fog of Worry

The rest of the day slid by like she was underwater.

In math, Ms. Ramos called on her.

“Kimika, would you like to solve problem number three?”

Kimika stared at the board. The numbers swam in front of her eyes.

“I... uh... can someone else try?” she croaked.

The class giggled.

Ms. Ramos raised an eyebrow.

In reading class, she kept adjusting her sweater, terrified someone would notice something she didn’t want them to see.

At lunch, she poked at her food until the mashed potatoes formed a sad little mountain. Usually, she ate lunch with gusto. Today, even the smell of pizza made her stomach churn.

Maya and two other friends watched her with concern.

“You sick?” Maya asked softly.

“No. Just tired.”

“Like... zombie tired?” Maya pressed.

“Sure,” Kimika muttered. “Zombie tired.”

Her friends exchanged puzzled looks, but they didn’t tease. They could sense something was wrong.

Dismissal: Running Away From the Day

When the final bell rang, kids rushed toward the buses like a colorful river.

But Kimika stayed by the classroom door until most of the crowd was gone.

She walked slowly outside, her sweater tied tight around her waist like armor.

Kalynn was waiting at their usual spot, her eyebrows raised. “Okay, I’ve been patient. Extremely patient. Superhero-level patient. But now you HAVE to tell me what’s going on.”

“On the bus,” Kimika whispered.

They climbed aboard. The bus smelled like wet jackets and after-school snacks. Kids were laughing, shouting, arguing, and trading erasers shaped like dinosaurs.

But in the middle of all that noise, the bench seat they shared felt like its own tiny bubble.

Kimika stared out the window, eyes glassy.

Kalynn gently nudged her. “Was it... Your first time?”

Kimika nodded.

Kalynn’s eyes softened. “Oh... Kimmy.”

A tear slipped down Kimika’s cheek. She wiped it fast.

“I didn’t know it would happen today,” she whispered. “I didn’t know it would happen at school. I didn’t know it would feel like this.”

Kalynn gently wrapped her arm around her sister’s shoulders.

“You’re not alone,” she said quietly. “You’re not weird. You’re not wrong. You’re just... growing.”

Kimika swallowed hard.

She finally whispered the thing she had been afraid to admit all day:

“I think I need to tell Mom.”

Kalynn nodded. “She’ll know exactly what to do.”

And for the first time all day, Kimika felt a tiny spark of hope beneath the fear.

A small reminder:

She didn’t have to go through this alone.



MOM EXPLAINS PUBERTY

The moment the bus doors folded shut behind them, the cool afternoon air brushed across Kimika's face. She hadn't realized until now how tightly she'd been holding her breath all day.

As soon as they stepped onto the sidewalk, Kalynn looked up at her big sister with soft, serious eyes.

"You still want to tell Mom?" she whispered.

Kimika swallowed. Her stomach twisted — part nerves, part relief.

"Yes," she whispered back. "I have to."

Kalynn nodded and slipped her hand into Kimika's.

Not in a babyish way.

In a *you're not alone* way.

Together, they walked toward the house.

Coming Home

The door creaked open, and a wave of home greeted them, the smell of Mom’s lemon cleaner, the soft hum of the dishwasher, the warm glow of the late-afternoon sun on the hardwood floor.

Mom turned from the counter, wiping her hands on a dish towel.

“Hey, girls! How was...”

She stopped mid-sentence.

Her nurse eyes — the ones that saw things the rest of the family didn’t — noticed the tension immediately.

Kalynn standing close to her sister.

Kimika tightly clutching her sweater.

Both girls quiet and serious.

“Kimika?” Mom asked softly.

“Are you alright, sweetheart?”

The words almost broke her.

Kimika stepped forward... then stopped.

Her throat tightened.

She opened her mouth, but no words came out. Only tiny, trapped breaths.

Mom’s expression softened into full-mom mode. She walked over and knelt in front of her.

“Baby,” she whispered, brushing a braid from Kimika’s cheek, “you don’t have to say anything yet. It’s okay.”

The kindness in her voice melted everything Kimika had been holding in.

“Mom...” she finally whispered, eyes filling. “Something happened at school.”

Mom wrapped an arm around her shoulders. “Come on. Let’s go talk in my room.

Somewhere quiet.”

She led Kimika down the hallway.

Kalynn stayed behind, but her eyes followed with worry and sisterly love.

Safe Space

Mom’s bedroom was warm and cozy. Soft pillows on the bed. A candle on the dresser. A fuzzy blanket across the foot of the bed.

Mom closed the door gently and sat beside Kimika, inviting her to sit close.

“Take your time,” she said. “I’m listening.”

Kimika’s hands trembled as she spoke.

“My chest... It’s been hurting for days. And my stomach feels weird. And today in gym...”

Her voice cracked.

She took a shaky breath.

“I... I saw blood.”

Mom nodded, not surprised, not alarmed — just calm.

“I think...”

Kimika wiped her cheek.

“I think I got my first period.”

Mom’s face softened into a warm, glowing smile. Not a *laughing* smile. Not a *surprised* smile. A *proud*, understanding one.

“Oh, sweetheart,” she murmured, pulling Kimika into a hug.

“You’re okay. You’re more than okay. This is normal. Completely normal.”

Kimika finally let herself cry — small, quiet tears that she’d been holding in all day.

Mom held her gently, stroking her back. “I’m so proud of you for telling me. That was brave.”

“I was scared,” Kimika whispered.

“I know,” Mom said. “It can be scary the first time. It feels strange and confusing because it’s new. But nothing is wrong with you. Your body is doing exactly what it’s supposed to do.”

Kimika sniffled. “It started during gym. I didn’t know what to do. I tied my sweater around my waist.”

“That was very smart,” Mom praised. “You handled it just right.”

“Really?”

“Really,” Mom said, squeezing her hand. “You didn’t panic. You stayed calm. You protected yourself. That’s maturity.”

The Explanation — Gentle and Clear

Mom grabbed a small health booklet from her nightstand, the kind she kept for moments exactly like this.

“Let me explain what’s happening,” she said softly. “Your body is changing because you’re entering a new stage of growing up. It’s called puberty.”

Kimika nodded slowly. “I know, but it hurts sometimes.”

“Yes,” Mom said honestly. “Your chest, your breasts are starting to grow. They get tender and sore because the tissue is developing. It’s completely normal.”

She pointed to a diagram in the book. “Every girl goes through this. Some earlier, some later. There’s no ‘right age.’”

“What about the stomach cramps?” Kimika asked quietly.

“That’s part of your period,” Mom explained. “Every month, your body gets ready in case one day, when you’re much, much older, you decide to have a baby.”

Kimika scrunched her nose. “A baby?! I don’t want a baby!”

Mom laughed gently. “You don’t have to think about that now. What matters is that your body releases what it doesn’t need, and that’s what a period is.”

Kimika thought hard. “So... I’m not broken?”

Mom cupped her cheek. “Sweet girl, you are *perfect*. Perfectly healthy. Perfectly growing. Perfectly you.”

Tears rolled down again — but this time, they were from relief.

Mom’s Comfort Kit

Mom stood and opened a drawer in her cabinet. Inside were neatly arranged pads, wipes, and soft underclothes.

“I’ve been saving these for whenever you needed them,” Mom said.

She handed Kimika a small floral pouch. “This is your first period kit.”

Inside were:

- pads
- liners
- wipes
- a spare pair of underwear
- a small lavender hand-sanitizer
- a tiny bag of chocolate pretzels
- and a note that read:

You’re growing beautifully. I’m here for you. Always. – Mom



Kimika pressed the note to her chest. “Thank you... Mom.”

Mom kissed her forehead. “Anytime. This isn’t something to hide. It’s something to understand and learn about. And you never have to feel embarrassed asking me anything.”

Kimika took a deep breath — a real one. Her shoulders finally relaxed.

For the first time all week, she felt safe.

Seen.

Understood.

“Mom?” she whispered.

“Yes, baby?”

“I’m glad I told you.”

Mom smiled. “I’m glad you did too.”

She pulled her daughter into another warm hug, holding her as if she were the safest place in the world.

Because she was.



MOM SHARES HER STORY

After the long, emotional talk in Mom’s bedroom, Kimika felt calmer... but also full of questions she didn’t know how to ask yet.

Mom placed a warm heating pad across her stomach and handed her a steaming mug of chamomile tea.

“Slow sips,” she said gently. “It helps with cramps.”

Kimika nodded and curled into the pillows, letting the soft warmth sink into her skin. Her heart was still beating fast, but not from fear; this time it was from relief.

Mom sat beside her, brushing a braid behind her ear.

“There’s something I want to share with you,” she said softly. “Something I don’t tell many people.”

Kimika looked up. “What is it?”

Mom took a deep breath, smiling in that soft, nostalgic way grown-ups get when they remember something from long ago.

“I want to tell you about *my* first period.”

Kimika’s eyebrows shot up. “You... remember it?”

“Oh yes,” Mom chuckled. “I remember *everything*.”

She shifted on the bed, getting comfortable, and began.

Mom’s Story: A Girl in Jamaica

“I was twelve,” Mom said, “living in St. Mary, Jamaica. It was a hot day, so hot you could feel the sun baking the ground. I was helping Grandma hang clothes on the line, and I kept feeling something strange. A little cramp here... a little ache there...”

Kimika leaned closer.

“And then,” Mom continued, “I felt something wet.”

Kimika’s eyes widened. “Mom!”

“Oh, it gets better,” Mom said with a laugh. “I didn’t know what it was yet. No one had talked to me about it. So, I ran inside and checked my underwear, and when I saw blood, I thought...”

She paused dramatically.

“I thought I was dying.”

Kimika’s jaw dropped. “Dying?!”

Mom nodded, laughing. “I cried. I screamed. I called for Grandma at the top of my lungs. Poor woman thought I’d broken a bone!”

“What did she do?” Kimika asked.

“She sat me down,” Mom said, her voice softening. “Made me tea. Put her cool hand on my cheek. Then she explained everything, what a period was, why it happened, and that it meant I was healthy and growing.”

Kimika blinked. “So, you were scared too?”

“I was terrified,” Mom admitted. “But I didn’t have books, kits, charts, or apps. I didn’t have the information you have. I learned it all in one afternoon.”

She tapped Kimika’s knee gently.

“That’s why I talked to you. And why I gave you your period kit, so you’d never feel unprepared.”

Mom’s eyes glowed with pride. “You handled everything beautifully. You stayed calm and protected yourself. I know today was scary, but you were stronger than you realize.”

Kimika smiled shyly. “I wasn’t calm on the inside.”

Mom squeezed her hand. “You don’t have to be calm on the inside. Growing up is messy and weird and full of feelings. That’s part of it — and it’s okay.”

Emotional Reassurance: Normalizing Every Feeling

Mom reached up and gently touched Kimika’s temple.

“What you’re feeling today — nervous, embarrassed, confused — is normal. Every woman has felt that way. Even your Grandma.”

“Really?” Kimika said.

“Oh yes,” Mom nodded. “And every emotion you’re having? Valid. Feeling scared doesn’t mean you’re weak. Feeling embarrassed doesn’t mean you’re dramatic. It just means this is new.”

Kimika let those words soak in.

Mom took a slow breath. “Do you remember what I always tell you about big feelings?”

“That it’s okay to have them,” Kimika whispered.

“And that you can always talk to me about them,” Mom added. “No shame. No judgment. No shushing. Ever.”

Kimika’s shoulders relaxed as she leaned against her mother.

Kimoy Joins (But Softly)

A gentle knock sounded at the door.

“Mom? Is it okay if I...?”

Mom smiled. “Come in, Kimoy.”

The seventeen-year-old big sister slipped inside, quieter than usual. She sat on the other side of the bed and placed a hand on Kimika’s foot under the blanket.

“You’re going to be okay,” she said softly. “This is just the beginning of growing up. And trust me, it gets easier.”

Kimika’s eyes softened. “Did you freak out, too?”

Kimoy snorted. “Kimmy, I cried for two whole hours. I called Dad at work and told him I needed a doctor.”

“Seriously?!”

“Seriously,” Kimoy repeated, rolling her eyes. “And Mom gave me the same talk she's giving you.”

Mom nodded proudly. “And I’ll give the same talk to Kalynn when it’s her turn.”

“**NOPE!**” came a shout from outside the door.

They all laughed.

Mom’s Empowerment Moment

Mom gently cupped Kimika’s face.

“You’re not alone in this. Your body is not scary. It’s strong. It’s healthy. And it’s doing exactly what it’s supposed to do.”

She added softly:

“A period is not something to fear. It’s not something to hide in shame. It’s a sign that your body is powerful — and that you’re stepping into a new chapter.”

Kimika exhaled shakily.

But now, the air in her lungs felt... lighter.

“Mom?”

“Yes, baby?”

“Thanks for telling me your story.”

Mom kissed her forehead. “Thanks for trusting me with yours.”

The Three of Them

For the next hour, the three of them stayed curled up on the bed:

- Mom explaining what Kimika might feel in the next few days
- Kimoy offering older-sister advice about heating pads, snacks, and comfy clothes
- Kimika asking questions she used to be too embarrassed to ask
- And all of them laughing at the idea of Dad fainting if periods came with graphic descriptions

At one point, Mom said something that stayed with Kimika:

“Growing up doesn’t mean becoming someone different. It means becoming *more* of who you already are.”

Kimika felt that warmth in her chest again — not the soreness, but the love.

By the time the tea mug was empty and the cramps had softened, Kimika felt... ready.

Not ready for everything.

Not ready for adulthood.

Not ready for every new change.

But ready to understand.

Ready to talk.

And ready to trust herself.

Growing up wasn’t something to fear.

Not when she had this kind of love holding her through it.



GETTING PREPARED & FEELING EMPOWERED

Friday morning felt different, not because the soreness had disappeared, and not because everything suddenly made sense, but because when Kimika opened her eyes, she didn't feel afraid.

For the first time all week, she felt... *ready*.

The heating pad Mom gave her the night before still lay warm at the foot of her bed. The floral period pouch kit sat neatly on her nightstand, as if waiting to start its new job.

She sat up slowly, carefully, and took a deep breath.

I can do this, she thought.

I know what's happening now. And I'm not alone.

Morning Sunshine, Morning Wisdom

As she brushed her teeth, Kimika caught her reflection in the mirror.

Same eyes.

Same smile.

Same braids.

She looked... like herself.

Different in some ways, maybe. But still *her*.

She put on a soft, loose shirt that Mom had quietly laid out for her and dark leggings, just like Kimoy had suggested. Not because she felt ashamed, but because she felt *prepared*.

When she came downstairs, Mom was at the stove flipping pancakes shaped like hearts.

“For my brave girl,” she said, sliding a warm one onto a plate.

Dad looked up from his tea. “Hey, superstar. Feeling better today?”

“A little,” Kimika said honestly.

“Good,” Dad nodded. “Remember, growing up isn’t a race. It’s a journey. Some days are easy. Some days aren’t. But we’re here for all of it.”

Mom smiled at him. “You see why I married him?”

“I’m a fountain of wisdom,” Dad declared proudly.

“More like a leaky sink,” Kimoy muttered, entering the kitchen with sleepy eyes.

Everyone laughed — even Kimika.

Big Sister Support (Times Two)

As they sat down to eat, Kimoy nudged her shoulder gently.

“You sleep okay?”

“Yeah,” Kimika said. “The heating pad helped. And the tea.”

“See?” Kimoy said with a wink. “You’ve unlocked Level One of Puberty Survival.”

“Level One?” Kimika asked, raising an eyebrow.

“Yep. Level Two is learning how to deal with cramps and still concentrate on math.”

“That’s impossible,” Kimika said.

Kimoy grinned. “It *feels* impossible. But trust me, you can do it.”

Then, unexpectedly, Kalynn gently slid a folded piece of paper across the table.

“What’s this?” Kimika asked.

“My scientific notes,” Kalynn said proudly. “For emergencies.”

Inside the paper was a list titled:

“KALYNN’S GUIDE TO FEELING BETTER WHEN YOU’RE GROWING”

It read:

1. Use heat.
2. Drink warm stuff.
3. Hug your mom.
4. Eat chocolate.
5. Rest your body.
6. Don’t panic, it’s just biology.
7. Ask me if you need a distraction. I’m good at those.

Kimika laughed, a real, warm laugh that filled the kitchen.

She leaned over and hugged Kalynn tight. “Thank you.”

Kalynn whispered, “I got your back.”

Packing for the Day With Purpose

Before leaving for school, Mom met her by the door with a small, gentle smile.

“Did you pack your pouch?”

Kimika held it up proudly. “Right here.”

“Good girl,” Mom said.

She crouched down to her level.

“Remember, if anything happens today, anything at all, you know what to do. Breathe. Go to the bathroom. Take your time. And you can call me anytime.”

Kimika nodded.

For the first time, she really believed she could handle it.

“And baby,” Mom added, “hold your head up today. You have nothing to be embarrassed about. Your body is healthy, and you are growing beautifully.”

A warm glow filled Kimika’s chest — not pain, but pride.

The Walk to School — From Nervous to Brave

The girls walked together toward the bus stop, backpacks bouncing softly against their sides.

“Today feels better,” Kalynn said.

“It does,” Kimika agreed. “I’m still nervous... but I’m nervous in a brave way.”

Kalynn tilted her head. “There’s a difference?”

“Yeah,” Kimika said. “Brave nervous means you’re scared, but you keep going anyway.”

Kalynn grinned. “I like that.”

When they reached the bus, Maya waved from a seat.

“Kimmy! You feeling better?”

“Yeah,” Kimika said honestly. “Just needed some rest.”

Maya smiled. “Good. I saved you a seat.”

As Kimika slid in beside her friend, she felt something she hadn’t felt all week:

In Control.

Not over her body, that part was still unpredictable.

But over how she handled it.

A Day of Quiet Confidence

Throughout the school day, Kimika paid close attention to her body, its signals, its rhythm, its whispers. And every time she felt a twinge or cramp, instead of panicking, she reminded herself:

It's okay. This is normal. I know what to do.

During math, she sat with her heating pad tucked under her shirt as her mind helping keep her mind at ease.

During reading time, she found a comfortable position that didn't press too hard on her belly.

During lunch, she ate slowly, listening to her body's needs.

When she slipped away quietly to the restroom, her pouch tucked in her hand, she felt... confident.

Prepared.

Strong.

She walked back to class with her shoulders lifted just a little higher.

And when Maya asked if she wanted to play tag during recess, Kimika smiled, not embarrassed, just honest.

“I think I'll sit today. But I'll cheer you on.”

“Cool,” Maya said. “We still want you there.”

The Moment She Realized Something Important

On the bus ride home, the sunset painted streaks of gold and orange across the sky.

Kalynn pressed her face to the window. “The clouds look like giant marshmallows!”

Kimika giggled. “They kinda do.”

She rested her hand on her stomach, not in pain, but in acknowledgment.

Something inside her — something quiet and strong — whispered:

You’re growing. You’re learning. You’re becoming.

And she finally whispered back,

“I think I can do this.”



GROWING UP GRACEFULLY

Saturday mornings in the Lyons house were usually full of noise.

Dad blasting old-school R&B while cleaning the kitchen.

Kalynn racing Cocoa down the hallway.

Mom chatting with Grandma on the phone.

Kimoy begging for “just ten more minutes” of sleep.

The whole house buzzing like a happy beehive.

But this Saturday morning felt... peaceful.

The sun shone through the curtains in a warm golden glow. A gentle breeze flowed through the open window, carrying the smell of freshly cut grass. And for the first time all week, Kimika woke up feeling...

Balanced.

Calm.

Comfortable in her own skin.

Her period was still there — her belly still cramping a little, her chest still tender — but the fear she’d carried earlier in the week wasn’t.

It had been replaced by something else.

Something steadier.

Something stronger.

Confidence.

She stretched gently and winced a little — but then smiled.

This is normal, she reminded herself.

I know what to do now.

She wrapped herself in her soft robe and headed downstairs.

A House Full of Love

Mom was at the stove making plantain pancakes. Dad was reading the newspaper with reading glasses perched crookedly on his nose. Cocoa trotted around with one ear flopped sideways.

“Good morning, beautiful,” Mom said warmly. “How’s my girl feeling today?”

“A little crampy,” Kimika admitted, “but good.”

Dad peeked over his newspaper. “You’re looking taller already.”

“Dad!” Kimika laughed. “It’s been two days!”

“Growth happens fast!” he insisted. “One day you’re tiny, next day you’re borrowing my slippers.”

Mom gave him a look. “Honey... she’s nine.”

“Slippers!” Dad repeated with dramatic flair.

The girls burst into laughter.

It felt good — free and easy, not weighed down by fear.

A Sister Moment on the Porch

After breakfast, Kimika went out to the front porch with her sketchbook. She sat on the top step, toes curled under her, and opened to a clean page.

Soft pencil strokes glided across the paper. She drew a flower, tightly closed but slowly beginning to bloom, each petal opening with care.

Kalynn stepped outside, holding a juice box.

“Ooh,” she said, sitting beside her. “That’s pretty. Is it a sunflower?”

“Nope,” Kimika said.

“A daisy?”

“Nope.”

“A pineapple?”

Kimika stared at her. “A *pineapple*?”

“I don’t know! Your art is mysterious!” Kalynn insisted.

Kimika giggled. “It’s... me. Growing. Slowly. Carefully. One petal at a time.”

Kalynn stared at the drawing for a moment.

Then she smiled.

“I like it.”

“Me too,” Kimika said softly.

Kalynn rested her head on her shoulder. “I’m really proud of you, Kimmy.”

Kimika’s heart fluttered. “Thanks, Kalynn.”

Mom Joins

Mom stepped onto the porch holding a steaming mug of ginger tea.

“That’s beautiful,” she said, looking at the sketch.

“It’s how I feel,” Kimika said shyly. “Not all grown up. Just... growing.”

Mom sat on her other side and wrapped her arm around her.

“That’s exactly how growing works,” she said.

“One day at a time. One change at a time. One feeling at a time. And every bit of it is part of you becoming yourself.”

Kimika leaned her head against Mom’s shoulder.

“I was really scared before,” she whispered. “But now... I’m not.”

Mom kissed her forehead. “That’s what happens when we talk about things instead of keeping them inside. Shame grows in silence. Confidence grows in understanding.”

Kimika nodded slowly.

She understood that now, in a way she never had before.

A Sisterly Welcome Into a New Club

Inside, Kimoy emerged from her room wearing fuzzy socks and a messy bun.

“What are you two doing on the porch?” she asked, stretching.

“Kimmy’s drawing a metaphor,” Kalynn announced proudly.

“A what?” Kimoy blinked.

“A metaphor! A fancy picture with a deeper meaning,” Kalynn explained.

Kimoy rolled her eyes. “Okay, genius.”

She sat beside Kimika and nudged her knee gently.

“You know,” she said, “you’re officially part of the ‘Growing Up Club’ now.”

Kimika laughed. “Is that a real thing?”

“Oh, absolutely,” Kimoy said. “Membership includes complaining about cramps, asking Mom for heating pads, and eating chocolate whenever you feel like it.”

“That’s the best club ever,” Kimika declared.

Mom laughed behind them. “It’s a lifelong membership, too.”

The Realization

The breeze blew soft and warm through the porch, brushing against Kimika’s cheeks. She closed her eyes for a moment and let it wash over her.

And suddenly — gently — she realized something:

She wasn’t a little kid anymore.

Not in the same way.

Not exactly.

But she wasn’t a teenager either.

Not yet.

She was somewhere in the middle — a place full of new feelings, new questions, new changes.

A place where everything felt slightly different, but also a little more meaningful.

A place where she wasn’t just growing taller or older...

She was growing *into* herself.

Slowly.

Gracefully.

Beautifully.

She opened her eyes and looked at her drawing again — the flower with petals unfolding.

Then she smiled.

“I think,” she said quietly, “I’m ready for whatever comes next.”

Mom squeezed her hand.

“We always knew you were.”

Kalynn grinned. “And I’ll be here to take notes!”

Kimoy laughed. “And I’ll be here to pass down survival tips.”

Dad yelled from inside, “AND I’LL BE HERE TO BUY MORE CHOCOLATE!”

They all burst into laughter. And in that moment, surrounded by sunlight, family, love, and

laughter, Kimika felt something she hadn’t felt all week:

Peace.

She was growing up.

Not fast.

Not slow.

Just right.

And she wasn’t doing it alone.

Not now.

Not ever.

THE LESSON OF THE STORY

Growing up can feel confusing, surprising, and even a little scary, but it is completely normal. Everyone’s body changes in its own time, at its own pace, and those changes are nothing to hide or be ashamed of.

When Kimika told Mom what she was feeling, she discovered that:

- Her body wasn’t “weird.”
- She wasn’t alone.
- And she was braver than she thought.

Growing up gracefully means *listening* to your body, *asking questions* when you don’t understand something, and *trusting* the people who love you to help you through new experiences.

It means being patient with yourself as you learn, grow, and change.

Your body is strong.

Your feelings are real.

And with support, honesty, and love, you can get through anything — one gentle step at a time.

“WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?”

Here are the important lessons from Kimika’s journey:

Puberty is normal

Every girl’s body changes as she grows, and it happens at different times for everyone.

It’s okay to feel nervous or confused

New experiences can feel big or overwhelming. Those feelings don’t make you weak — they make you human.

Talking helps

When you’re open and honest with someone you trust — like a parent, sibling, or teacher — big worries can feel much smaller.

Preparation builds confidence

Knowing what to expect and having tools (like a period kit) makes growing up feel less scary and more manageable.

You are never alone

Family, friends, and trusted adults are always there to help you, guide you, and love you through every stage of growing up.

Growing up doesn’t change who you are

It helps you become even *more* of yourself — stronger, wiser, and more confident.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS FOR YOUNG READERS

These questions help children think about the story and their own feelings.

1. Have you ever felt worried about something happening in your body or your life? Who did you talk to about it?
2. Why do you think Kimika felt nervous when she didn’t understand what was happening?
3. Who are the trusted adults you can talk to if you ever have questions about your body or feelings?
4. What helped Kimika feel more confident and less scared after talking with Mom?
5. How did her family support her? What does that tell you about asking for help?
6. What does “growing up gracefully” mean to you?
7. If a friend was nervous about puberty or body changes, what could you say or do to help them feel supported?

Teacher Guide & Standards

1. Lesson Overview

- **Book Number:** 15
- **Book Title:** *Growing Up Gracefully*
- **Grade Level(s):** 2–5
- **Estimated Instructional Time:** 45–60 minutes
- **Lesson Focus: Literacy Skill:** Identifying central themes and using text evidence to describe character reactions to physical and emotional changes.
 - **SEL Focus:** Developing self-awareness and self-management during the transition into puberty.
- **Suggested Workbook Activities:**
 - 15-1A – 15-1B
 - 15-2A – 15-2B
 - 15-3A – 15-3B
 - 15-4A – 15-4B
 - 15-5A – 15-5B
 - 15-6A – 15-6B
 - 15-7A – 15-7B
 - 15-8A – 15-8B
 - Assessment 15A
 - Assessment 15B

2. Learning Objectives

- **Reading Comprehension:** Students will identify the main lesson of the story by citing specific evidence of Kimika’s growth and understanding.
- **Speaking and Listening:** Students will participate in a collaborative discussion about why Kimika felt nervous and how talking to a trusted adult helped her.
- **Writing:** Students will write a reflection on what “growing up gracefully” means to them, using at least two Tier 2 vocabulary words.
- **Social-Emotional:** Students will identify internal physical and emotional changes and name a trusted adult they can talk to for support.

3. Standards Alignment

- **NYS Next Generation ELA Standards:**
 - **2R1 / 3R1 / 4R1 / 5R1:** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and make logical inferences; cite textual evidence to support conclusions.
 - **2L6 / 3L6 / 4L6 / 5L6:** Use words and phrases acquired through reading and being read to, including those that signal precise emotions or states of being.
- **NYS SEL Framework:**
 - **Goal 1:** Young people develop a self-awareness that nurtures and affirms a strong sense of identity.
 - **Goal 3:** Young people demonstrate intentional decision-making skills and behaviors that consider social and emotional factors.

4. Pre-Reading Activity (Activate Prior Knowledge)

- **Discussion Prompt:** “Have you ever noticed your body changing as you get older, like getting taller or losing a tooth? How did that make you feel?”
- **Vocabulary Preview:** Briefly introduce the concept of “Puberty” as a natural, normal part of growing up that everyone experiences.

5. Vocabulary & Key Concepts

1. **Predictable (adj.):** Happening in a way that is expected, like Kimika’s usual morning routine.
2. **Rhythm (n.):** A strong, regular, repeated pattern of movement or sound.
3. **Achier (adj.):** Feeling a continuous but not sharp pain, like the tenderness Kimika felt in her chest.
4. **Puberty (n.):** The period during which adolescents reach sexual maturity and their bodies change.
5. **Empowered (v.):** Given the authority or power to do something, especially after learning new information.
6. **Gracefully (adv.):** Moving or behaving in a smooth, relaxed, or attractive way as one grows up.
7. **Embarrassing (adj.):** Causing someone to feel awkward or self-conscious, like a sudden change at school.
8. **Confident (adj.):** Feeling or showing certainty about oneself after getting answers to questions.
9. **Anxiety (n.):** A feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about unknown body changes.
10. **Whisper (n.):** A soft or quiet way of speaking or a subtle sign, like the first sign of change Kimika noticed.

6. Read-Aloud / Shared Reading

- **Teacher Actions:** Read the story with empathy, pausing at the “Embarrassing School Day” to model how to handle sensitive topics calmly.
- **Student Actions:** Listen for “clues” in the text that show Kimika is feeling worried or “weird”.

7. Guided Reading Questions

- **Literal:** What was the first physical change Kimika noticed on Tuesday morning?
- **Inferential:** Why did Kimika feel “something was off” even though her morning routine was usually predictable?
- **Emotional:** How did Kimika’s feelings change after her mom shared her own story and explained puberty?

8. Post-Reading Discussion

- **Focus:** Discuss the “Lesson of the Story” found on page 40—that growing up is natural and asking for help is a sign of strength.
- **Format:** Turn-and-talk: “Who is a trusted adult you can talk to if you feel worried about your body?”

9. SEL Focus Activity

- **Activity:** “Trusted Adult Web.” Students draw themselves in the center of a circle and branch out to the names or roles of adults they trust (e.g., Mom, Dad, Teacher, Doctor).
- **Skill:** Self-awareness and identifying support systems.

10. Writing Extension

- **Prompt:** Write a letter to your “future self” about growing up. Use the word **empowered** or **confident** to describe how you want to feel as you get older.
- **Differentiation:** Provide sentence starters: “When I have questions about my body, I can...” or “Growing up gracefully means...”

11. Independent or Small-Group Practice

- **Activity:** In small groups, students can look at the “What Have We Learned?” section (page 41) and choose one fact about puberty to illustrate and explain in their own words.

12. Assessment & Check for Understanding

- **Exit Ticket:** List one physical change and one emotional change Kimika experienced in the story.
- **Observation:** Note if students can identify that Kimika felt “less scared” after talking to her mom.

13. Reflection & Closure

- **Prompt:** “What is one thing you learned today that makes you feel more confident about growing up?”
- **Closing:** Remind students that growing up is “nothing to be ashamed of”.

14. Extension & Enrichment Activities

- **Creative Project:** Create a “Growth Timeline” showing how people change from babies to adults, highlighting that everyone grows at their own pace.

15. Differentiation & Support Strategies

- **Visual Aids:** Use diagrams or illustrations to show the “predictable rhythm” of a day versus the “unexpected” changes of puberty.
- **Small-Group:** Work with students who may feel anxious about the topic in a smaller, private setting to review the “Reflection Questions”.

Workbook Activities

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

Book 15: Growing up Gracefully

Word Bank

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

1. **Predictable (adj.):** Happening in a way that is expected, like Kimika's usual morning routine.
2. **Rhythm (n.):** A strong, regular, repeated pattern of movement or sound.
3. **Achier (adj.):** Feeling a continuous but not sharp pain, like the tenderness Kimika felt in her chest.
4. **Puberty (n.):** The period during which adolescents reach sexual maturity, and their bodies change.
5. **Empowered (v.):** Given the authority or power to do something, especially after learning new information.
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9. **Anxiety (n.):** A feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about unknown body changes.
10. **Whisper (n.):** A soft or quiet way of speaking or a subtle sign, like the first sign of change Kimika noticed.

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

ACTIVITY: 15-1A

Chapter 1: Feeling Weird & Worried

(Answer in complete sentences using evidence from the text)

1. How does Kimika describe her usual morning routine? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

2. What physical sensation does Kimika notice while getting dressed? Provide a quote from the chapter.

3. Why does Kimika choose to wear a baggy hoodie instead of her favorite shirt? Answer in a complete sentence.

4. What does Kalynn notice about Kimika's behavior during breakfast? Cite the text.

Continue to the next page...

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

Feelings Check-In:

Identify and name two complex emotions Kimika feels in this chapter. Explain why she feels them.

Adjective Hunt:

Find four adjectives in this chapter that describe how Kimika feels or how her room looks.

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

ACTIVITY: 15-1B

Turn-and-Talk

"Have you ever felt like something was changing, but you weren't sure what? How did you handle it?" Discuss for 2 minutes and write your partner's response.

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

ACTIVITY: 15-2A

Chapter 2: Changes No One Told Me About

(Answer in complete sentences using evidence from the text)

1. Who does Kimika talk to at school about her worries? Use evidence from the text to answer.

2. What "secret" do the friends discuss regarding their bodies? Answer in a complete sentence.

3. How does Kimika's mood change after talking to her friends? Provide a quote as evidence.

4. What does Kimika realize about her "predictable" life in this chapter? Cite the text.

Continue to the next page...

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

Feelings Check-In:

Identify an emotion shared by Kimika and her friends in this chapter. Why is it important that they felt this together?

Vocabulary Detective:

Find the word "rhythm" in this chapter. What is the "rhythm" of the school day?

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

ACTIVITY: 15-2B

Perspective-Taking

Rewrite the conversation at the lunch table from the perspective of one of Kimika's friends.

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

ACTIVITY: 15-3A

Chapter 3: The Embarrassing School Day

(Answer in complete sentences using evidence from the text)

1. What unexpected event happens to Kimika during gym class? Answer using a complete sentence and text evidence.

2. How does Kimika feel when she realizes what has happened? Cite a specific word or phrase from the text.

3. Who helps Kimika during this moment, and what do they do? Provide evidence.

4. Why does Kimika feel "exposed" even though she has a sweater tied around her waist? Cite the text.

Continue to the next page...

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

Feelings Check-In:

What is the difference between "anxiety" and "embarrassment" as shown in this chapter?

Adjective Hunt:

Find adjectives used to describe the "light gray leggings" and the "gym floor".

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

ACTIVITY: 15-3B

Letter to a Friend

Write a letter from Kalynn to Kimika offering support after her "embarrassing" day.

[illegible]

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

ACTIVITY: 15-4A

Chapter 4: Mom Explains Puberty

(Answer in complete sentences using evidence from the text)

1. Where do Kimika and her mother have their "big talk"? Answer in a complete sentence.

2. How does Mom define "puberty" for Kimika? Use a quote from the text.

3. What does Mom say about the "rhythm" of a woman's body? Provide evidence.

4. What does Mom give Kimika to help her feel more prepared? Cite the text.

Continue to the next page...

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

Feelings Check-In:

Identify the shift in Kimika's emotions from the beginning of the talk to the end. What caused this change?

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

ACTIVITY: 15-4B

Turn-and-Talk

"Why is it important to have a 'trusted adult' to talk to? Who is a trusted adult in your life?"

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

ACTIVITY: 15-5A

Chapter 5: Mom Shares Her Story

(Answer in complete sentences using evidence from the text)

1. What story does Mom share from her own childhood? Answer in a complete sentence with evidence.

2. Why did Mom's own mother (Kimika's grandmother) call it "growing up gracefully"? Provide a quote

3. How does hearing Mom's story affect Kimika's perspective? Cite the text.

4. What does Kimika learn about her family's history with these changes? Provide evidence.

Continue to the next page...

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

Feelings Check-In:

Name the emotion Kimika feels when she realizes her mother went through the same thing.
Is it relief, pride, or something else?

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

ACTIVITY: 15-5B

Perspective-Taking:

Rewrite a scene from this chapter as if you are the Grandma in Mom's story.

[illegible]

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

ACTIVITY: 15-6A

Chapter 6: Getting Prepared & Feeling Empowered

(Answer in complete sentences using evidence from the text)

1. What items does Kimika put in her "empowerment kit"? List them using complete sentences.

2. How does Kimika feel when she looks at herself in the mirror at the end of the chapter? Provide a quote.

3. What does "empowered" mean in the context of this chapter? Use text evidence.

4. How does Kalynn react to Kimika's new "kit"? Cite the text.

Continue to the next page...

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

Feelings Check-In:

Identify the "complex emotion" of feeling both nervous and ready. How does the text show this?

Adjective Hunt:

Find adjectives that describe the "kit" and the "feelings" Kimika has now.

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

ACTIVITY: 15-6B

Letter to a Friend:

Write a note Kimika might leave for Kalynn to explain what she learned.

[illegible]

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

ACTIVITY: 15-7A

Chapter 7: Growing Up Gracefully

(Answer in complete sentences using evidence from the text)

1. What is the "Growing Up Club"? Use evidence from the text to explain.

2. How does Kimika use her sketchbook in this chapter? Answer in a complete sentence.

3. What does it mean to "grow up gracefully" according to the final pages? Provide a quote.

4. How has Kimika's relationship with her sister Kalynn changed or stayed the same?
Provide evidence.

Continue to the next page...

Kimika & Kalynn: Sisters - STUDENT WORKBOOK

Feelings Check-In:

Describe Kimika's final emotional state. Use one of the vocabulary words.

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ACTIVITY: 15-7B

Perspective-Taking

Imagine you are Kalynn. How do you feel about your sister growing up?

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ACTIVITY: 15-8A

Chapter 8: The Lesson of the Story

(Answer in complete sentences using evidence from the text)

1. What is the main message or theme of the book? Answer in a complete sentence with evidence.

2. What advice does the author give to readers who might feel "nervous"? Provide a quote.

3. Why is the title "Growing Up Gracefully" appropriate for this story? Cite the text.

4. How does Kimika's journey show "intentional decision-making"? Use evidence.

Continue to the next page...

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Feelings Check-In:

How does the "lesson" of the story help resolve the "anxiety" from Chapter 1?

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ACTIVITY: 15-8B

Turn-and-Talk

"What is the most important thing you learned from Kimika's story?"

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

ASSESSMENT:15A

Vocabulary Quiz

Part 1: Fill in the Blank

Choose the correct vocabulary word from the word bank to complete each sentence.

1. Kimika's morning routine was so _____ that she always woke up, brushed her teeth, and ate breakfast at the same time.
2. The steady _____ of the music helped Kimika relax and feel calm.
3. Kalynn watched as Kimika handled the situation _____, staying calm and confident.
4. After talking with her mom, Kimika felt _____ and ready to understand the changes happening to her body.
5. It was _____ when Kimika noticed a sudden change while she was at school.
6. After learning more about her body, Kimika felt _____ and no longer afraid.
7. During _____, children's bodies begin to change as they grow into teenagers.
8. After a long day, Kimika felt _____ in her chest and didn't know why.
9. Kimika felt a sense of _____ when she didn't understand what was happening to her body.
10. The first sign of change felt like a quiet _____ that something new was beginning.

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Part 2: Matching

Match each vocabulary word with the correct description.

Write the correct letter on the line.

Word	Description
1. Rhythm _____	(A) feeling nervous.
2. Gracefully _____	(B) When something happens as expected.
3. Empowered _____	(C) Feeling like you are sure of yourself.
4. Puberty _____	(D) Feeling uncomfortable
5. Embarrassing _____	(E) A time when a young person's body becomes sexually mature.
6. Confident _____	(F) Feeling in control of yourself
7. Predictable _____	(G) Moving smoothly
8. Anxiety _____	(H) A regular repeated pattern

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Part 2: Sentences

Create sentences for the following words.

Achier	Rhythm
Puberty	Predictable
Whisper	Confident

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ASSESSMENT 15B

Wrap-Up Writing Activity

- In one paragraph (**Grade 2**) or three paragraphs (**Grades 3–5**), explain how Kimika changed from the beginning of the story to the end. Use at least three vocabulary words and provide evidence from the text to show how her feelings about "growing up" moved from anxiety to confidence.

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