



## Send It Off in a Letter

*Writing prompts, discussion questions, and audio transcript*

### **ABOUT THE STORYTELLER**

**Kat Yeh** is the author of the award-winning middle grade novel *THE TRUTH ABOUT TWINKIE PIE* and the picture books *YOU'RE LOVABLE TO ME*, *THE MAGIC BRUSH*, and *THE FRIEND SHIP*. <http://www.katyeh.com>.

### **Talk it Out**

Read the following common relationship advice:

*The best person to talk with about the problems in your relationship is the person you're in the relationship with.*

#### **Now discuss:**

Do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer using examples from Kat Yeh's story where applicable.

Kat chose to write to the local newspaper for help with a friendship problem. What are the pros and cons of that approach? Where would you turn if you had a problem with a friend? Brainstorm a list of possible resources. Discuss the pros and cons of each.

How would you feel if you found out someone had written about you to a local newspaper advice column? Would you be upset? Why or why not?

### **Write it Out**

Choose one of the following prompts and write 1-2 pages, double-spaced:

- Imagine that you are Kat and write her letter to the paper asking for advice. Then pretend that you are the teen advice columnist and write a response.

- Write your own letter to an advice columnist based on a real or imagined problem you are having. Then try to write a response offering advice.
- Imagine that a friend of yours has written a letter to the newspaper about an argument the two of you are having. Imagine waking up one morning, reading that letter in the paper or online, and knowing it's about you. Now imagine that you text your friend about the letter. Write up the text exchange that the two of you have.

## TRANSCRIPT OF THE AUDIO MEMORY

*Kat: If a friend hurt me at a young age, I would just be hurt and then write about it. Oh, my gosh, I have this sudden memory of—I think I was in maybe fourth or fifth grade. And I was—and I don't remember what the fight was about, but ... our school was very, very small. So I think that when I was in fourth grade there were maybe six or eight girls in the class. It was a class of twenty-one.*

*And I think at one point, either I got into a fight or I wasn't getting along with some of the other girls; and I wrote a letter in, a little handwritten letter in to the local newspaper. It wasn't a Dear Abby. It was this teen girl who had her own column to give advice. And I wrote in saying, "I have no friends. Nobody likes me and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah."*

*So, even seeking help and advice, I wrote it down and sent it somewhere far away. It wasn't something that—I didn't turn to my friends and go, "What's going on? How come we had a fight? Why are you being mean to me today?" Instead, I summed it up in dramatic fashion and sent it off somewhere. It actually ended up being printed in the paper.*

*Julie: Wow. Wait. Hold on. Stop. The local paper?*

*Kat: I believe it was our local paper. It's funny—I can almost remember what the girl looked like. I remember what her little picture looked like--a little black and white picture of her. She had dark hair. I don't remember her name. But I remember writing to her. Definitely my mom didn't know I did it, so it must have had my little crooked handwriting on the envelope. I must have taken a stamp from my mom and put it in the mailbox and put the little red flag up. And it got printed in the paper.*

*I remember she said, "I think you should talk to your friends and find out what's going on." Or I said, "Only one friend is talking to me right now." And she was like, "I think you should talk to your friend and ask her what she thinks is going on." That's the one thing I remember she said. I was like, "Wow, talking. Opening it up."*

*Julie: I know. And so, do you remember whether you talked to your friend?*

*Kat: I remember I was so excited I got printed in the newspaper that I showed it to her, this one girl. She was like, "Why are you—nobody hates you. No one is mad at you or hates you or anything like that." I was like, "Oh." So I guess it must have been based on a day, or an intense feeling I had that day.*

*Julie: And your friend wasn't upset that this had been aired in the local paper because she thought there was nothing to air.*

*Kat: No, no. She was like, "Really?" I remember she was like, "Nobody thinks that." I remember feeling silly, like, Oh. I don't know. It was a mix of things where probably by the time it came out I wasn't upset with all my friends anymore. I was more just excited. Because it didn't come out the next day. I'm sure it took weeks. I was just excited that I was in the paper, even though it wasn't really me because it was a pen name.*

*Julie: Right. It does seem you really were born to be a writer.*

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