

# Ly-Lan and the New Class Mix-Up



**HÀ DINH**

 **ZONDERkidz™**

ZONDERKIDZ

*Ly-Lan and the New Class Mix-Up*

Copyright © 2025 Hà Dinh  
Illustrations © 2025 Hà Dinh

Zonderkidz, 3950 Sparks Drive SE, Suite 101, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546

Published in Grand Rapids, Michigan, by Zonderkidz. Zonderkidz is a registered trademark of The Zondervan Corporation, L.L.C., a wholly owned subsidiary of HarperCollins Christian Publishing, Inc.

Requests for information should be addressed to [customer-care@harpercollins.com](mailto:customer-care@harpercollins.com).

ISBN 978-0-310-17489-9 (softcover)  
ISBN 978-0-310-17493-6 (audio)  
ISBN 978-0-310-17491-2 (ebook)

**Library of Congress Control Number: 2025932246**

**Publisher's Note:** This novel is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either products of the author's imagination or used fictitiously. All characters are fictional, and any similarity to people living or dead is purely coincidental.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Zondervan titles may be purchased in bulk for educational, business, fundraising, or sales promotional use. For information, please email [SpecialMarkets@Zondervan.com](mailto:SpecialMarkets@Zondervan.com).

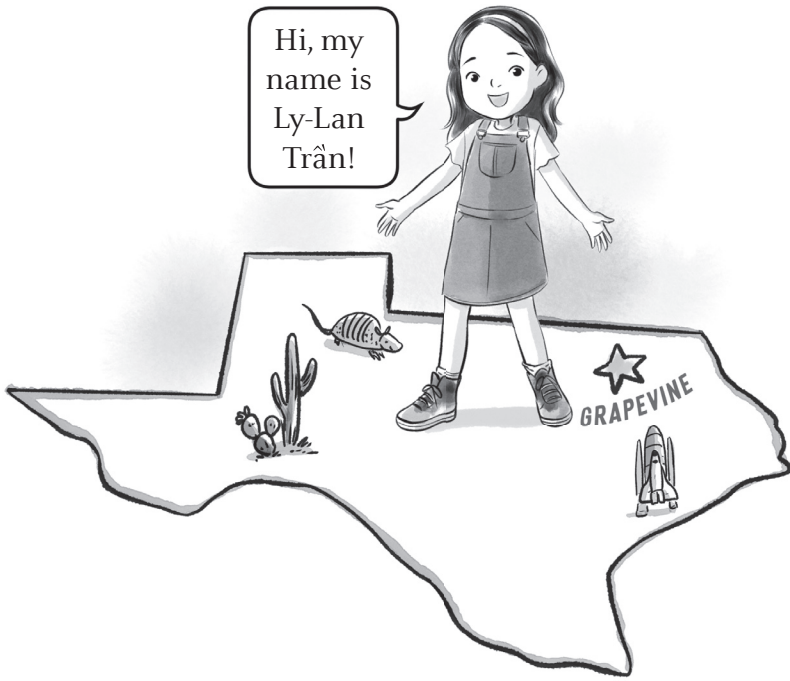
Editor: Katherine Jacobs  
Art direction: Patti Evans  
Cover Design: Patti Evans  
Illustrated by: Tracy Nishimura Bishop  
Interior Design: Kristen Sasamoto

*Printed in the United States of America*

25 26 27 28 29 CWM 5 4 3 2 1



*To my children and students,  
who inspire me to write from my heart.*



# Chapter 1

**T**his is Ly-Lan. She's eight years old and a soon-to-be third grader. She lives with her parents in Grapevine, Texas. Don't let the y in her name confuse you. It makes the long e sound, and you say it like *Lee-Lan*.

When Ly-Lan was born, her parents couldn't decide which grandmother to name her after. Her dad's mother is named Ly.

“My mom is strong-willed, sociable, and loves adventures,” Ba says. Ba is the Vietnamese word for dad.

“My mom is Lan and she is kindhearted, generous, and brave,” Má says. Má is the Vietnamese word for mom. It’s sort of like the English word ma, but with an accent mark that faces the sky over the a.

“We named you Ly-Lan after both of them because, to us, you’re all of those wonderful things,” Ba tells Ly-Lan. He always smiles with a big grin when he tells this story.

Ly-Lan loves hearing stories about her grandmothers and life back in Việt Nam. Việt Nam is a country halfway around the world. Má says it’s beautiful there, but Ly-Lan has never been.

She loves hearing about the food they cook, the markets they go to, and the peaceful countryside they call home.

It sounds much different than her life in the



city in America with towering buildings, rows of apartments, and buzzing street corners.

Last summer, Ly-Lan's parents had planned a family trip to Việt Nam. Ly-Lan was excited to see her grandmothers in person for the first time. Ba bought her a travel book filled with pictures of Việt Nam. He even wrote simple Vietnamese phrases in a notebook for Ly-Lan to read aloud and practice every day. "Your grandmothers only speak Vietnamese," Ba reminded her.

But then, Ba started a new job. So now, they are not going until next summer.

When she heard the news, Ly-Lan was sad, but also secretly relieved. She doesn't speak Vietnamese as well as she understands it yet.

She still loves reading her travel book, which is what she is doing when Má peeks her head into Ly-Lan's bedroom.

"Are you practicing the Vietnamese phrases that Ba wrote for you?" Má asks.

Ly-Lan quickly closes her travel book.

“Practice makes progress,” she adds.

Ly-Lan looks down. “I know, but I feel like all the words just blend together when I say them. They don’t sound as beautiful as when you and Ba say them.”

“Your grandmothers would be so happy if you could speak Vietnamese to them,” Má points out. “Maybe you can practice it with Cece. She’s at the front door.”

Cece is Ly-Lan’s best friend—ever since they were in the same class in kindergarten. Cece has red hair and freckles on her cheeks. She is spunky, likes to talk like a cowgirl, and always wears a smile on her face. She also loves wearing her cowboy boots



everywhere she goes—except when she’s inside Ly-Lan’s house. She keeps her boots by the front door since Ly-Lan’s family doesn’t wear shoes in the house.

“Howdy, neighbor!” Cece says as she pops out from behind Má.

“Cece!!! Perfect timing! Má, I promise I will get back to practicing, but Cece and I have lots to talk about!” Ly-Lan exclaims.

“Like what?” Cece asks with her head tilted.

“Like really important third-grade stuff,” Ly-Lan says as she pulls Cece into her room and closes the door.

Ly-Lan knows that Má is right about practicing, but she only needs to speak English at school.

And school is where she is going to tomorrow.

## Chapter 2

**L**y-Lan is finally going to be a third grader and there are lots of plans and choices to make!

Third grade is where big kids sit at big desks, in big chairs, and read big books. Plus, she heard that third graders can sit anywhere in the cafeteria.

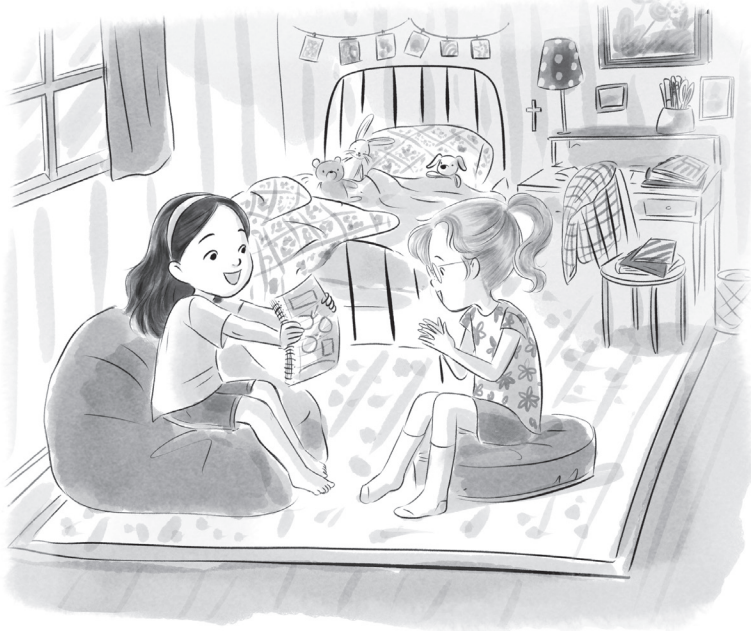
*This is going to be the best year yet. I have so many choices to make, Ly-Lan thinks.*

Since kindergarten, teachers have told her where to sit.

Now she gets to choose. This is huge. So huge that she and Cece are celebrating by making a plan!

Ly-Lan holds up a hand-drawn map of the cafeteria.

“Look at this, Cece. We can sit anywhere,



with anyone,” Ly-Lan says as they sit on the floor of her bedroom.

“Yes! I can smell the cafeteria from here,” Cece says.

“Like the smell of the rotten bananas Jimmy McClain left in his lunch box for three days?” Ly-Lan asks.

Jimmy McClain is one of their classmates. He has been in all of her classes since kindergarten too.

“Well, not exactly the rotten bananas! I’m thinking more of the smell of the fresh rolls from the cafeteria ladies,” Cece says as she closes her eyes and sniffs, pretending to smell the rolls.

Ly-Lan grabs her notebook and jots down their plans for lunch.

*On Mondays, sit closest to the door so it's easy to line up.*

*On Tuesdays, sit by the wall so we can see the entire cafeteria.*

On Wednesdays and Thursdays, sit in the middle of the cafeteria so we can hear everyone's conversations.

Fridays—FREE CHOICE!

“You know what would make it even better?” Ly-Lan asks Cece.

“What?” Cece responds.

“If we are in the same class again this year.”

“That would be so AMAZINGGG!!! How did we ever get so lucky all of these years?”

Cece asks.

“Well, you can actually thank me for it,” Ly-Lan brags a little as she twirls her hair.

“What do you mean?” Cece asks.

Ly-Lan looks up at the little wooden cross hanging in her bedroom. “Every time I need something, Ba tells me to get on my knees.”

Cece nods like she understands. “To beg? I do that all the time too, especially for extra ice cream.”

“Not beg! To pray!” Ly-Lan exclaims.

Ly-Lan prays with her family every night before bedtime.

Then just like her parents taught her, she walks over to the cross, kneels down, clasps her hands together, closes her eyes, and says a prayer in silence.

“Okay, it’s done,”

Ly-Lan says.

“What did you just do?” Cece asks, tipping her head to the side.

“I prayed to Jesus. My dad says that whenever I need help or have a special wish, I can ask Jesus for it.

Every year since kindergarten I have prayed for us to be together. And look, it worked,”

Ly-Lan points out.

“Oh! That’s cool. If I ever need something, I



just yell it across the house and hope that one of my parents gets it for me . . . like, ‘Mom, can you ask Principal Grant to have Ly-Lan and me be in the same class again?’”

The girls erupt in giggles.

“So what do we do now?” Cece asks.

“Now we just have to wait and see. That’s how prayers work.”