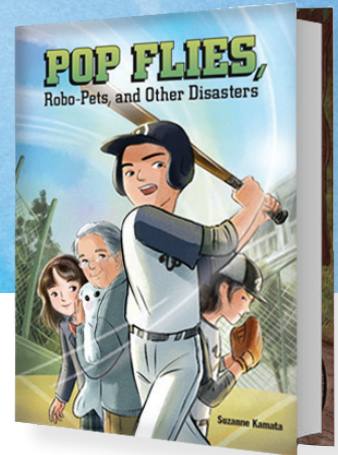


# POP FLIES,

## Robo-Pets, and Other Disasters

By Suzanne Kamata



## Discussion Guide

1. Look up Japan on a map. Find the island of **Shikoku**. This story is set in **Tokushima**, a specific part of the island. What do you think it would be like to live there? Research what things this region is famous for.
2. Why do you think Satoshi's friends treat him differently when he returns to Japan after living in Atlanta for three years?
3. Imagine that, like Satoshi, you are moving to a foreign country. Where would you go? How would you make new friends in that country?
4. In Japan, students choose one sport, which they play year-round. What are the advantages and disadvantages of playing on only one team year-round?
5. Have you ever played a team sport? What are some differences between team sports in your country and Satoshi's experience playing baseball in Japan?
6. Satoshi's grandfather has a robo-pet to keep him company. In what other ways could robots be used to make life better? If you had a robot, what would you want it to be able to do?
7. Beginning in elementary school, Japanese students have to study English. Why do you think that is? Do you study a foreign language? What language would you like to study? Why?
8. Satoshi and Oji-chan have bonded over their mutual love of baseball, and they like to watch games together. What kinds of things do you or would you like to do with your grandparents?
9. What do you think will happen next baseball season for Satoshi and his teammates?
10. Many Japanese athletes play for teams in the United States and other countries. There are also many American athletes playing for sports teams in Japan. Do research on one of these athletes.



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### Book Details

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## About Suzanne Kamata

Suzanne Kamata was born in Michigan and later moved to South Carolina where she graduated from the University of South Carolina. She has an MFA from the University of British Columbia. She is the author of books for both young and adult readers including *Losing Kei* (2008), *Gadget Girl: The Art of Being Invisible* (2013) winner of an APALA YA Honor Award, *Mermaids of Lake Michigan* (2017), *Squeaky Wheels* (2019), and *Screaming Divas* (2014), named to the ALA Rainbow List. Suzanne raised two children, and lives with her husband, a former Japanese high school baseball coach on the island of Shikoku.

## Synopsis of the Book

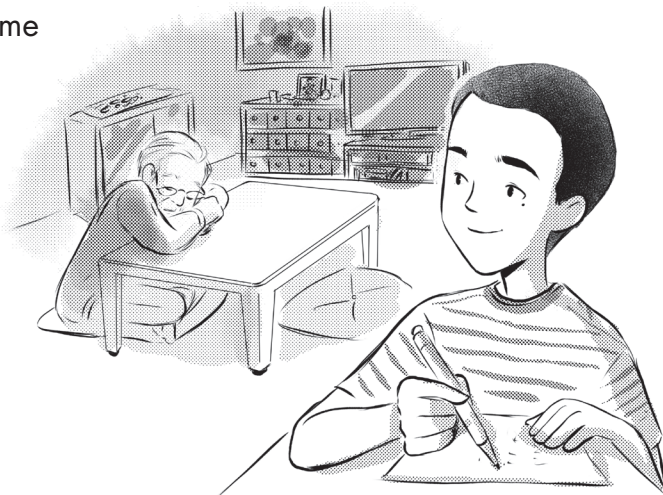
Thirteen-year-old Satoshi Matsumoto spent the last three years living in Atlanta where he was the star of his middle-school baseball team - a slugger with pro potential, according to his American coach. Now that his father's overseas assignment has finished, he's moved back to his hometown in rural Japan but he no longer fits in. Living abroad has changed him, and his old friends are suspicious of his newly acquired foreign ways. Even worse, his childhood nemesis, Shintaro, whose dad has ties to gangsters, is in his homeroom. As if that's not bad enough, his grandfather, who's suddenly obsessed with his robo-pet, doesn't seem to remember him.

Satoshi joins the baseball team at his new junior high school. However, rumor has it that the school's new owner is going to replace the baseball team with a trendier sport if they don't make it to the finals in the summer tournament. But when he gets into a fight with Shintaro and is kicked off the team, suddenly the team, his future, and lives are at risk. Satoshi must find a way to make amends - and keep his family safe.

## Praise for *Pop Flies*

"A story set in Japan rich in details only Kamata, an insider, could share. With ease and respect, she weaves the pressures, agonies and loyalties of Satoshi's life at home, at school and on a junior high school baseball team with the practices and traditions of the game played in Japan. I am ... a big fan of this middle-grade homerun!"

—Annie Donwerth-Chikamatsu,  
award-winning author of  
*Somewhere Among*



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