

PREVIEW  
NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

SOLPAINTING,  
NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE  
INC.

by Meg Medina

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# Meet the Author

Meg Medina is an award-winning and New York Times best-selling Cuban American author.

- She is known for picture books and young adult fiction with a focus on family, culture, and heritage.
- Medina grew up in Queens, New York, with her mother but spent some time in Massachusetts with her father during her high school years.
- Medina advocates for more diversity in children's literature.
- Her most famous works include: *Burn Baby Burn*, *The Girl Who Could Silence the Wind*, *Tia Isa Wants a Car*, and *Merci Suarez Changes Gears*.



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**grudge** PREVIEW

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- noun

- harbored feeling of anger or  
resentment

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**apprentice**  
PREVIEW  
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- noun
- a person who works for another  
in order to learn a skill (often at a  
low wage)

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# PREVIEW

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# cavity PREVIEW

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- noun
- an empty space or hole

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# PREVIEW

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PREVIEW

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**gape**

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• verb

- to look at someone with great surprise, especially with one's mouth open

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**broker** PREVIEW  
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- verb
- arrange or negotiate a deal or plan

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# PREVIEW

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# maneuver

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- verb
- to carefully and skillfully guide

someone or something

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# PREVIEW

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# PREVIEW

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# tycoon

## PREVIEW

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- noun
- a wealthy and powerful person who has been successful in business

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# PREVIEW

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# PREVIEW

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# enforce

PREVIEW

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- verb
- to make people obey rules or laws;  
to impose with force

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# PREVIEW

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# PREVIEW

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# searing<sup>PREVIEW</sup> NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

- adjective
- describes something extremely hot or intense



# PREVIEW

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# PREVIEW

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# levitate PREVIEW

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- verb
- to rise and float in the air without any physical support



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Name:

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### Before Reading Anticipation Guide

PART A: Read the following statements.

If you agree, circle AGREE; if you disagree, circle DISAGREE.

1. The worst temptation is instant gratification.....	AGREE	DISAGREE
2. It takes guts to not fight back.....	AGREE	DISAGREE
3. Parents must make sacrifices for their children to succeed .....	AGREE	DISAGREE
4. Hard work is always rewarded.....	AGREE	DISAGREE
5. Helping family is more important than personal pride.....	AGREE	DISAGREE
6. Everyone has the same opportunities in life.....	AGREE	DISAGREE
7. Having money makes people think they are better than others.....	AGREE	DISAGREE
8. Doing the right thing is easy.....	AGREE	DISAGREE
9. People who attend expensive schools are snobs.....	AGREE	DISAGREE
10. There is strength in silence.....	AGREE	DISAGREE
11. Adults worry too much about the future.....	AGREE	DISAGREE
12. Girls should not run their own businesses.....	AGREE	DISAGREE
13. You have to go to college to be successful.....	AGREE	DISAGREE
14. Sibling rivalry always exists .....	AGREE	DISAGREE
15. Not all surprises are good surprises.....	AGREE	DISAGREE

PART B: Pick one of the statements from above. Clarify the meaning of the statement and explain in a few sentences why you agree or disagree.

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"Sol Painting, Inc." by Meg Medina

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Vocabulary

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Word	Part of Speech	Definition
grudge	noun	
apprentice	noun	
cavity	noun	
gape	verb	
broker	verb	
maneuver	verb	
tycoon	noun	
enforce	verb	
searing	adj	
levitate	verb	

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Name:  
"Sol Painting, Inc." by Meg Medina

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During Reading Questions

1. Who is narrating the story? What do you know about her/him?

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2. What is the relationship like between Merci and her father? Use textual evidence to support your answer.

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3. How does Merci feel about attending Seaward Pines in the upcoming school year? Use textual evidence to support your answer.

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4. What is the relationship like between Merci and her mother? Explain how the point of view of the story is significant when it comes to Merci and Mami's relationship.

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5. Why is Merci apprehensive about a surprise from Papi?

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6. How does Roli respond to Papi's surprise? What specific description from the story led you to your answer?

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7. What conflict occurs with the girls soccer team? How does Merci respond—why?

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8. How does Roli react to the high school soccer team? Why?

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9. Why does Merci say, "They're dead—and I can't wait to see it happen."?

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10. What surprises Merci about Papi's reaction to the girls messing up the paint? Use textual evidence to support your answer.

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11. What apology do the girls offer Merci? Why is it so offensive?

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12. Why does Merci say the following line, and does she mean what she says? "Seaward Pines is a dumb school...I'll hate it. And I hate Papi, too."

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13. Explain what Roli means when he says, "Papi chose to be invisible today so that you won't ever have to be."?

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14. How do you know that Roli cares about Merci?

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15. How does Merci change by the end of the story?

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After Reading Questions

1. Was Merci right to be angry with her dad? Why?

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2. Why is it challenging for children to understand their parents?

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3. Why do people react differently to the same situation?

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4. What is an effective way for parents to enforce their rules and expectations with their children at home?

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5. What do you do when someone offends you? Do you retaliate? Explain.

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6. Think of a time growing up that you learned something about the world around you that was unexpected or disappointing. How did this realization affect you?

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7. What if the kids' roles were reversed and Roli was the one who wanted to take over Papi's business... do you think Mami would still be averse to the idea? Explain.

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8. If you could be an apprentice for a day in any career or job, what would you choose to do? Explain why.

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Name:  
"Sol Painting, Inc." by Meg Medina

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After Reading

Rewrite the scene in the gymnasium from a different perspective. You can pick from the characters already included in the story, or write the scene as an objective bystander/witness. You must write at least six sentences and **use first person point of view** to describe the incident. Make sure you include a multitude of details and descriptions to make the story captivating. Put yourself in the mindset of your chosen character, and write how the occurrence makes that person feel. What thoughts are they experiencing and what are their motivations for their actions?

Choose the person whose perspective you are writing the scene from by circling one of the options below.

Soccer Player

Roli

Papi

Mr. Falco

Witness

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## **“Sol Painting, Inc.” by Meg Medina – Suggested Lesson Procedure**

1. Pass out the anticipation guide to students. Have students take a few minutes to silently read through the statements and decide whether they agree or disagree. Once students complete the entire worksheet, call on a few volunteers to share their answers with the class.

2. Review the vocabulary terms and author’s background with students using the Powerpoint presentation. Students should copy the definitions into their graphic organizers.

3. Read the short story “Sol Painting, Inc” by Meg Medina as a class. This takes about 26 minutes without stopping, but I recommend students stop every couple minutes to answer the “During Reading” questions. Ask for volunteers for answers and give students the time to record their answers.

You could also have students listen to the audio version. Here is a link I found: [Sol Painting Inc Audio](#)

4. Have students work in groups of 2-3 to complete the after reading questions.

5. Assign students the after reading activity where they will rewrite a scene from the text from a different perspective. This is an independent assignment. Collect the worksheets when students are finished.

Note to teachers: Due to copyright law, I am unable to offer a full text version of the story. If you enter “Sol Painting Inc by Meg Medina Full Text” into any search engine, you will find a copy of the story available for you to print and use in class. Here is the link I used: [Full Text Sol Painting Inc](#)

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email me at  
[chompingatthelit@gmail.com](mailto:chompingatthelit@gmail.com)

Name:

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### Before Reading Anticipation Guide

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Name:

"Sol Painting, Inc." by Meg Medina

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Vocabulary

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Word	Part of Speech	Definition
grudge	noun	harbored feeling of anger or resentment
apprentice	noun	a person who works for another in order to learn a skill (often at a low wage)
cavity	noun	an empty space or hole
gape	verb	to look at someone with great surprise, especially with one's mouth open
broker	verb	arrange or negotiate a deal or plan
maneuver	verb	to carefully and skillfully guide someone or something
tycoon	noun	a wealthy and powerful person who has been successful in business
enforce	verb	to make people obey rules or laws; to impose with force
searing	adj	describes something extremely hot or intense
levitate	verb	to rise and float in the air without any physical support

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Name:

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During Reading Questions

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1. Who is narrating the story? What do you know about her/him?

Merci Suarez is the narrator. She has an older brother named Roli who likes science. Their father wants Roli to be a doctor. Merci's father owns a painting business, and Merci and Roli work for him sometimes. Merci's family is Cuban. Merci hopes to take over her father's business when she's older. She is ambitious and hardworking, saying that she will turn Papi's business into an empire, she says "Home Depot will eat my dust."

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2. What is the relationship like between Merci and her father? Use textual evidence to support your answer.

Merci has a loving and playful relationship with her father. She admires him and has made a deal with him to be his apprentice, and eventually take over his company. Merci respects her father and likes to work with him. "Papi smiles at me and pulls the bill of my painter's cap down over my eyes." This line shows that Papi is playful; he knows Merci is scared of the dead body, but will go along with her lie.

3. How does Merci feel about attending Seaward Pines in the upcoming school year? Use textual evidence to support your answer.

Seaward Pines is a "fancy" school according to Merci. It's a private school, so students have to pay tuition. No one from Merci's neighborhood goes there and Merci will have to make all new friends, so she is not excited to go. She also isn't looking forward to wearing a uniform everyday because she thinks they are silly. Merci states, "I'm not much for fancy, and everything about that place is shiny and stiff."

4. What is the relationship like between Merci and her mother? Explain how the point of view of the story is significant when it comes to Merci and Mami's relationship.

Merci has a complicated and strained relationship with her mother because she feels Mami thinks Merci is not taking her future seriously enough. Mami wants Merci to attend private school and she wants Merci to be a better student academically. According to Merci, Mama doesn't understand "business" and does not want Merci to

take over Papi's company. Mami wants Merci to attend Seaward Pines for the structured learning environment, but Merci does not want to change schools. The point of view in the story is first person, with Merci as the narrator. Because Merci is only in seventh grade, readers are aware that her view of Mami may not be entirely accurate. Merci thinks Mami doesn't understand her, but readers know that Mami is just looking out for Merci's best interest.

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5. Why is Merci apprehensive about a surprise from Papi?

The last time Papi had a surprise for her, it was the announcement of her parents' divorce.

6. How does Roli respond to Papi's surprise? What specific description from the story led you to your answer?

"Roli glances at me uneasily and then shrinks into his seat again. 'You should have told us,' he mumbles. Something in his voice sounds tight, faraway."

These lines show that Roli is feeling embarrassed. He is a senior at the school and he's afraid his peers might see him; he's ashamed because he is wearing overalls and painting the building. This might make him seem poor since he is performing manual labor. Also, he is with his father and little sister, and being seen with family can be embarrassing to any young student.

7. What conflict occurs with the girls soccer team? How does Merci respond—why?

The team uses the doors that Merci just painted to get inside the gym; their hands have paint on them and the paint job is ruined. Merci is furious because the team missed the sign that said USE OTHER DOOR. The girls don't seem apologetic, one even just says, "Oops." Merci spent time painting the door, and the girls don't even seem like they care. Then one girl wipes her hands clean on one of the walls that Roli finished. They are acting very disrespectful, especially for "older" students. The girls on the soccer team react to Merci like she's not there, or that she's not a person with feelings. These are all good reasons for Merci to feel angry and upset. Merci suggests the girls clean up their mess because it would only be fair. Her father shuts down this idea.

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8. How does Roli react to the high school soccer team? Why?

Roli keeps his back turned because he doesn't want to be recognized by any of the girls.

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9. Why does Merci say, "They're dead—and I can't wait to see it happen."?

Merci feels sick to her stomach watching these girls disregard her hard work, and she wants the girls to be disciplined for their actions. Merci is prepared to see Papi yell at the girls for ruining her work. She knows her dad can be harsh, so she wants him to be hard on the girls and speak up for Merci in her defense.

10. What surprises Merci about Papi's reaction to the girls messing up the paint? Use textual evidence to support your answer.

Papi stays calm and doesn't say a word to the girls. The Suarez family goes "unseen" as the girls just walk away. Merci says, "Papi's stillness makes me feel worse. Why didn't he say anything? He's Papi. He's the boss, an adult, the guy in charge. How could he let this happen?" Then when Mr. Falco apologizes to Papi, Papi says it's not a problem and the workers will clean it up. This leaves Merci feeling more humiliated.

11. What apology do the girls offer Merci? Why is it so offensive?

One girl says, "Perdón," and another says "Excuse-oh moi!" This leads Merci to believe that the girls assume she doesn't know English because of her Cuban heritage. The girls think they can treat Merci and her family how they want because they don't look "American." This makes Merci feel even worse. Even if they didn't speak English, the apology was not sincere and it was as if the girls were mocking the Suarez family. The author highlights the race issues that a Cuban family experiences in a white area.

12. Why does Merci say the following line, and does she mean what she says?

"Seaward Pines is a dumb school...I'll hate it. And I hate Papi, too."

Merci says Seaward Pines is a dumb school because she already feels like she will not fit in. She already feels invisible from her interaction with the soccer team girls. She has a negative impression of the people who attend the school so she believes the school is dumb. Merci also says she hates Papi which she definitely does not mean. She is mad at her dad, and feels disappointed by his behavior. She doesn't understand that her father didn't speak up about the mess in order to protect her and his business. He

couldn't have risked losing her admittance and her reputation at the school by getting into a senseless fight with high school girls or the guidance counselor.

13. Explain what Roli means when he says, "Papi chose to be invisible today so that you won't ever have to be."?

Papi chose to be invisible by pretending like he was not upset or frustrated with the events that transpired and the disrespect that was displayed by the soccer team. The reason he swallowed his pride is for his family, in spite of what Merci believes. Papi wants to make sure Merci succeeds at her new school and doesn't have to be invisible by ensuring that she has a good future and is accepted at the prestigious school. Her admission to the school may have been compromised if Papi had argued with the girls or the guidance counselor, so he just kept his thoughts to himself.

14. How do you know that Roli cares about Merci?

Although Roli and Merci have a typical sibling relationship where they banter or tease each other for their differences, readers know Roli actually cares about Merci when he checks on her after she stops talking to their dad and won't eat. Roli takes the time to explain to Merci their dad's perspective to help her work through her feelings.

15. How does Merci change by the end of the story?

Merci acknowledges that her brother Roli is right. He explains that what their father did, standing there and acting calm, is actually "harder to do than shooting off your mouth." Merci realizes her father sacrificed himself in order to protect her free ride. She probably sees that parents must make sacrifices for their kids all the time, or that when you own a business you have to swallow your pride at times.

Name:  
"Sol Painting, Inc." by Meg Medina

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After Reading Questions

1. Was Merci right to be angry with her dad? Why?

Answers will vary.

2. Why is it challenging for children to understand their parents?

Answers will vary.

3. Why do people react differently to the same situation?

Answers will vary.

4. What is an effective way for parents to enforce their rules and expectations with their children at home?

Answers will vary.

5. What do you do when someone offends you? Do you retaliate? Explain.

Answers will vary.

6. Think of a time growing up that you learned something about the world around you that was unexpected or disappointing. How did this realization affect you?

Answers will vary.

7. What if the kids' roles were reversed and Roli was the one who wanted to take over Papi's business... do you think Mami would still be averse to the idea? Explain.

Answers will vary. (Maybe not because Merci is a girl, so it is less stigmatizing for a man to enter a trade career.)

8. If you could be an apprentice for a day in any career or job, what would you choose to do? Explain why.

Answers will vary.

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After Reading

Rewrite the scene in the gymnasium from a different perspective. You can pick from the characters already included in the story, or write the scene as an objective bystander/witness. You must write at least six sentences and **use first person point of view** to describe the incident. Make sure you include a multitude of details and descriptions to make the story captivating. Put yourself in the mindset of your chosen character, and write how the occurrence makes that person feel. What thoughts are they experiencing and what are their motivations for their actions?

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Soccer Player

Roli

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