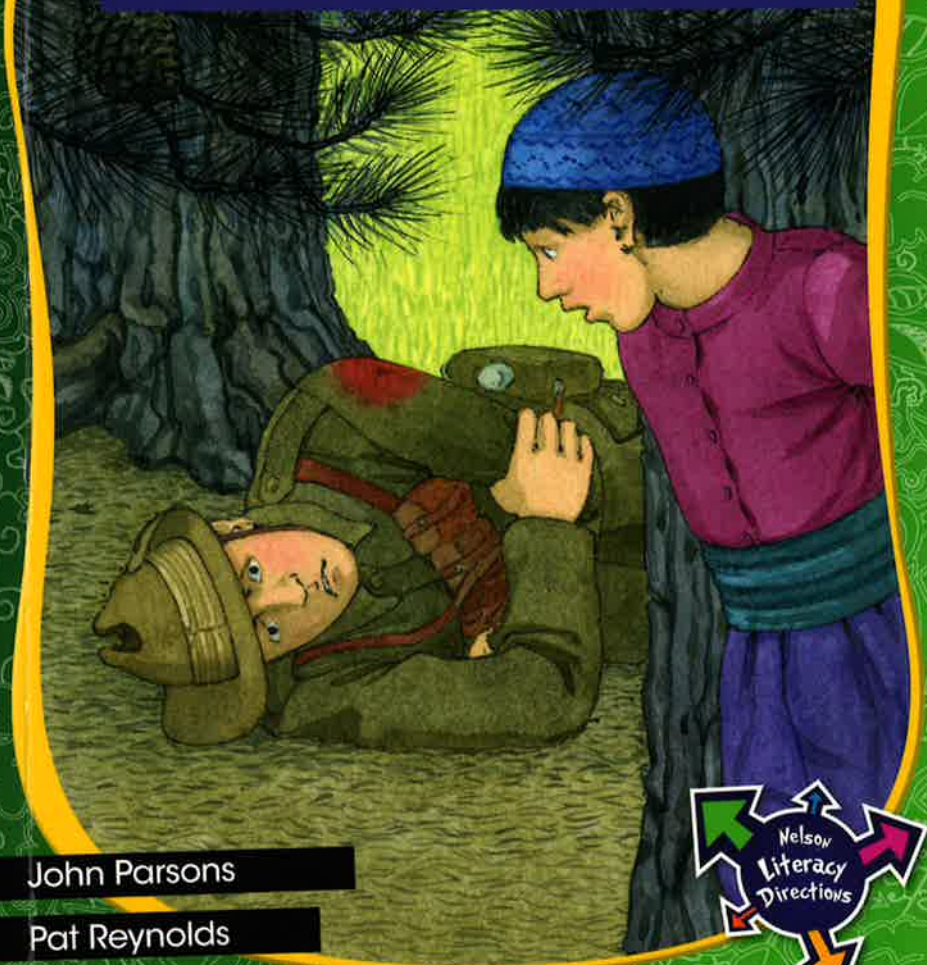
Ihsan and the Wounded Anzac



John Parsons

Pat Reynolds

Nelson Literacy Directions

For teachers' inspection ONLY

Ihsan and the Wounded Anzac

Written by John Parsons
Illustrated by Pat Reynolds

Contents

1	Three Minutes	4
2	A Story Never Told	11
3	A Young Goatherd	16
4	A Ferocious Storm	22
5	Two Frightened Boys	30
6	Three Fingers	37
7	Time to Remember	44

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Meet the Characters

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Ihsan

An old Turkish man.



Ihsan as a young boy.



Zerdali

Ihsan's great-granddaughter.



Bahar

Zerdali's mother, Ihsan's granddaughter.



Old Ekrem

A cafe owner.



An Anzac soldier

A young soldier.

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POSTCARD

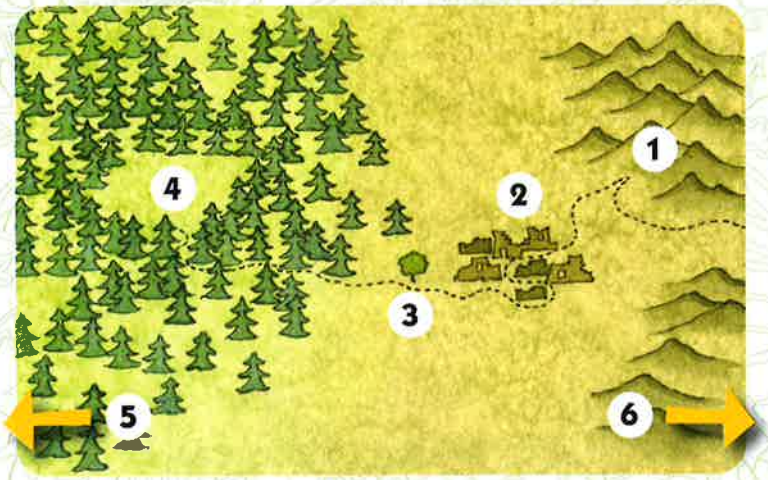
Dear Reader

Many years ago, I visited the Anzac battleground of Gallipoli, in Turkey. It was a silent, sombre place – but to get there, I caught a bus full of happy, spirited Turkish schoolchildren. The contrast made me think about the children who would have lived in the area during more dangerous times.

How might they have reacted to strangers from Australia or New Zealand then?

John Parsons
Author

Krithia and its Surroundings



1. The rocky hillside where the goats grazed
2. The town of Krithia
3. The old apricot tree
4. The clearing
5. Anzac cove and the Aegean Sea lie to the west
6. The Bosphorus Strait lies to the east

1 Three Minutes

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Zerdali carefully arranged a circle of salty black olives on a small yellow plate and checked her watch. Ten seconds to go.

The moment the second hand swept past the number twelve, she dipped a spoon into the boiling water and expertly scooped out a single egg.

"Not a second longer, not a second too soon," her mother Bahar instructed. "You know your great-grandfather likes his eggs just so."

The perfectly boiled egg slid and jiggled about on the spoon under a stream of cold water from the tap. As soon as the shell was cool enough to touch, Zerdali tapped it against the edge of the sink and carefully peeled the soft-boiled egg.

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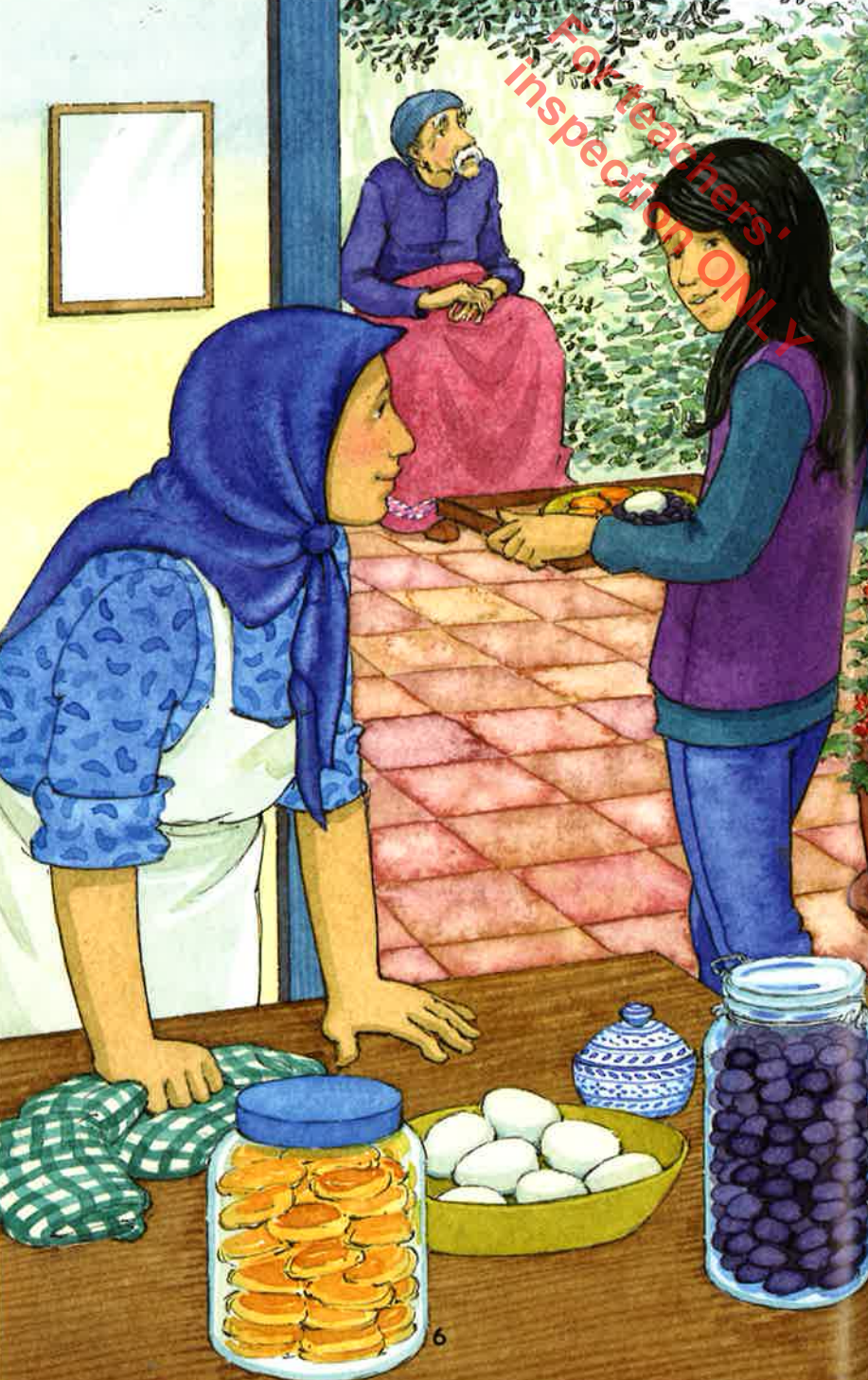
She laid the egg in the middle of the olives, along with a tiny pinch of salt.

"Salt is not good for Great-Grandfather," Zerdali said to her mother, who was rinsing dried apricots.

"He's almost 97 years old," replied Bahar. "He's been eating boiled eggs and salt since before Turkey even existed as a country. If it's not good for him, he's hiding it well." She picked three of the juiciest apricots and arranged them on the yellow plate.

"There!" she said, smiling at Zerdali. "It's ready."

Zerdali slipped the plate onto a tray and, with a nod to her mother, headed out of the kitchen and into the courtyard. There, shaded by an old spreading olive tree and warmed by a soft woven blanket, sat Ihsan. His pale, watery eyes alighted upon Zerdali and a smile crossed his deeply wrinkled, leathery face.


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"*Günaydın*, Great-Grandfather," smiled Zerdali. "Good morning."

"*Günaydın*," replied Ihsan in a whispery voice. The edges of his lips curled upwards. "Every morning I see my Zerdali is a good morning," he added affectionately. He gazed down at the yellow plate on the tray that Zerdali rested on his frail knees. "What do we have here, my darling?"

Zerdali laughed. For as long as she could remember, Ihsan had been eating exactly the same breakfast – but he still managed to look surprised and delighted each morning.

"You have some *yagli sele*, the cured olives you love. There are some dried apricots. And you have an egg. Don't put too much salt on it, Great-Grandfather."

Ihsan felt the egg with a crooked brown finger.

"Ah," he said. "Just the way I like it."

"It has to be three minutes, Great-Grandfather," smiled Zerdali.

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"Yes, it does," nodded Ihsan. "Three minutes each morning." He smiled, with a distant look in his eye.



As the sun rose into the azure-blue Turkish sky, the still air in the courtyard grew warmer and warmer. Ihsan fell asleep and dreamed of days gone by, tiny flecks of golden yolk drying in the whiskers beneath his lips. Zerdali crept out into the courtyard. She gently brushed the egg from her great-grandfather's face and cleared away the plate and the tray.

"He never eats the apricots," she said to Bahar, pointing at the deep-orange pieces of dried fruit, still neatly arranged on the plate where her mother had placed them earlier.

"No," said Bahar. "But if they're not there, he always asks for them."

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Later that morning, there was a knock on the door of the house where Bahar, Zerdali and Ihsan lived.

Bahar, who was upstairs, lent out the window to see who was there.

"Baris!" she said, when she saw her brother kicking stones in the dusty street outside. She hurried downstairs. "*Nasılsınız*? How are you?"

"I will be a lot better with a glass of sweet apple tea," grinned Baris. "It's hot."

Bahar made apple tea while Baris and Zerdali chatted in the coolness of the kitchen.

"How's the backgammon?" asked Zerdali, teasing her uncle. Together with his friends, Baris spent hours in the local cafe, losing at backgammon and drinking tea.

"Ah," shrugged Baris. "As long as you lose with honour, you have not really lost."

"So, what brings you here today?" said Bahar, placing three tiny engraved glasses brimming with steaming apple tea on the table.