

Springboard

into
Comprehension

6

Main Idea Number 15 Orchard Street

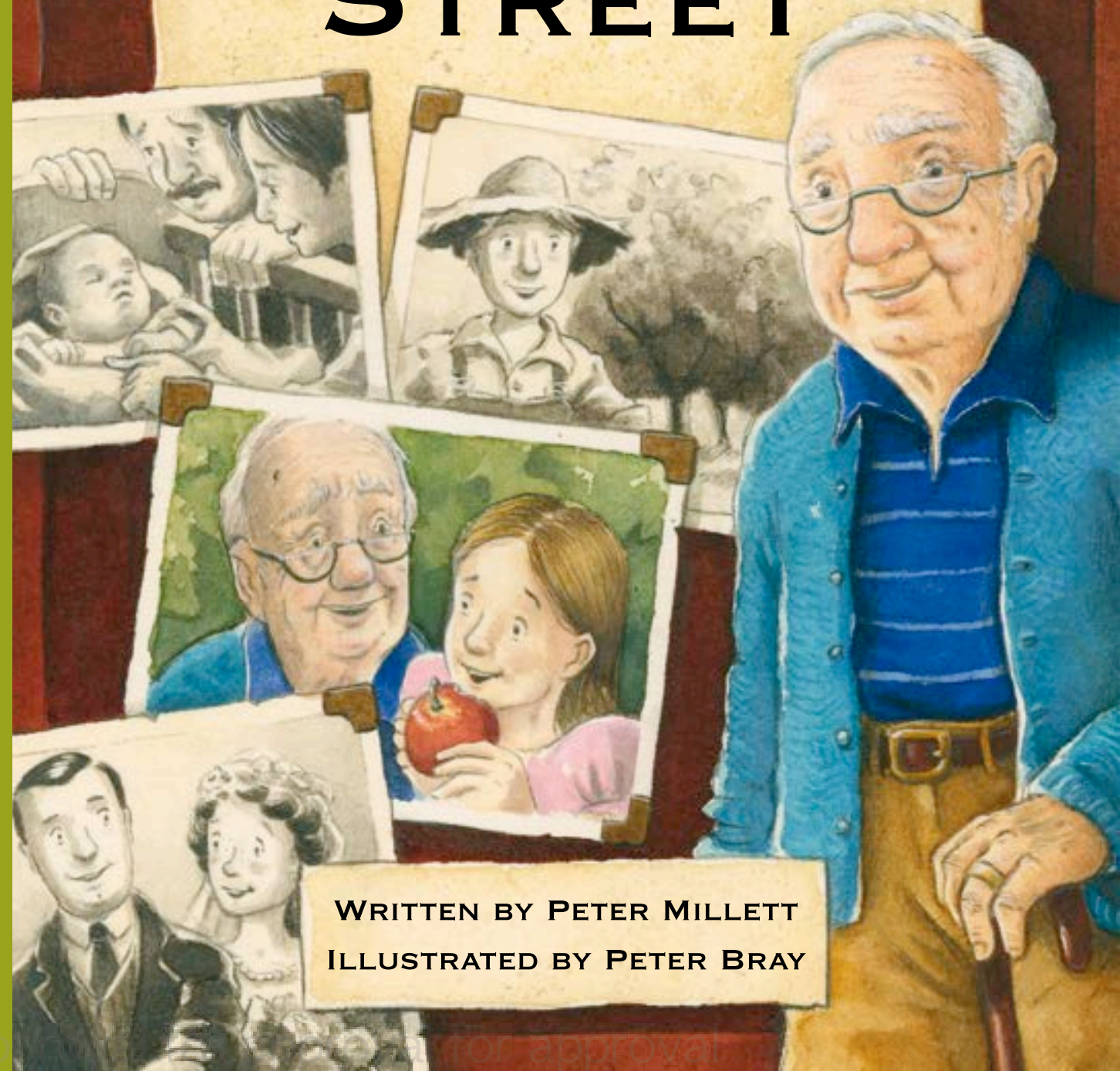
Compare and Contrast	Piracy in the Modern Age Back from the Brink Two Dying Seas
Fact and Opinion	What's the Real Story? On the Ball
Cause and Effect	Inventions by Women Use It, Wear It
Bias and Prejudice	My Way or the Highway? Whaling
Figurative Language	The Book of Banjo Paterson Gold in the Hills

RA 11.5–12.5



Narrative

NUMBER 15 ORCHARD STREET



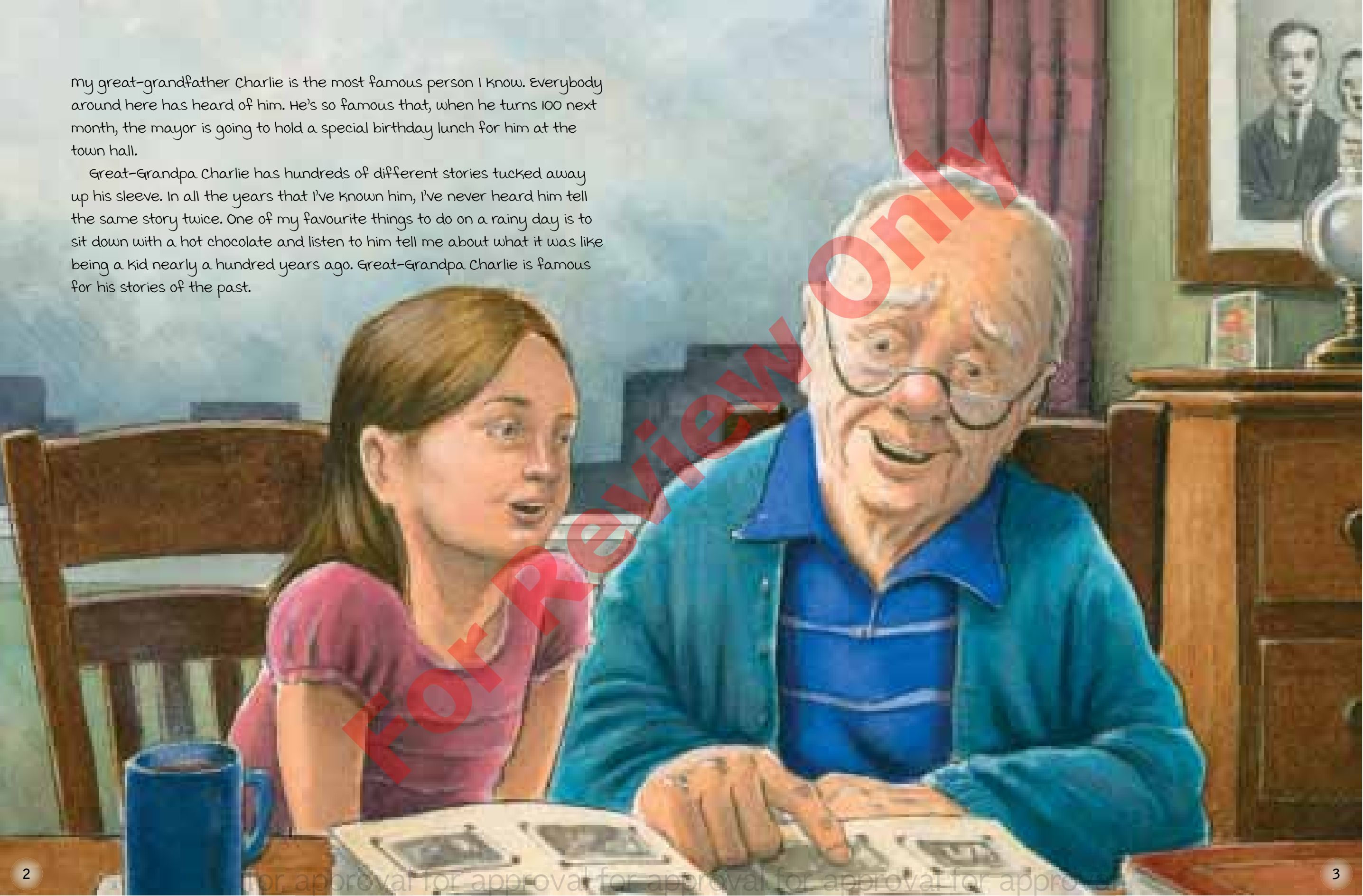
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ILLUSTRATED BY PETER BRAY



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my great-grandfather Charlie is the most famous person I know. Everybody around here has heard of him. He's so famous that, when he turns 100 next month, the mayor is going to hold a special birthday lunch for him at the town hall.

Great-Grandpa Charlie has hundreds of different stories tucked away up his sleeve. In all the years that I've known him, I've never heard him tell the same story twice. One of my favourite things to do on a rainy day is to sit down with a hot chocolate and listen to him tell me about what it was like being a kid nearly a hundred years ago. Great-Grandpa Charlie is famous for his stories of the past.



I was born a long, long time ago – long before people travelled into space on rockets or flew around the world on jet planes. I'm so old that they didn't even have TVs or radios when I was born. My youngest great-granddaughter, Georgia, asked me if I was going to be put in a museum, because I was so old. I told her I didn't think so. Well, not at this stage, anyway.

Even though I was born nearly a century ago, I'm still living in exactly the same place I grew up in. To the left of this building, just behind the new swimming pool, is where my parents' old farmhouse used to be. I was born in their living room on December 12, 1909. I arrived three weeks earlier than anybody expected. There were no mobile phones or private cars back then, so Mum and Dad had to take care of my birth all by themselves. Everything worked out fine in the end, and I was a happy, healthy baby named Charles, after my father.



My earliest memory as a kid was of the smell of apples. Our farmhouse was situated right in the middle of a huge apple orchard. As far as the eye could see, there were towering apple trees covered in the red, juicy delights. Inside the farmhouse, Mum was always stewing up apples on the stove and Dad would be rushing about packaging up piles of apples for his customers.

Mum and Dad came from a country on the other side of the world, where they'd been so poor that they had run out of money to feed themselves. They were very proud to be able to buy land of their own in what they called "the land of opportunity." They were still poor in their new homeland, but at least they had plenty of apples to eat if they ever got hungry! Mum and Dad worked really hard taking care of their orchard.

When I was six, I got my first job, which was to follow Dad around the orchard picking up all of the apple tree prunings he left behind. I didn't really like the job very much, but I loved spending time with my dad. Both Mum and Dad said that I was a really hard worker. In the evenings, Dad sometimes took me for short rides around the orchard on his horse, Nobby.

It wasn't just the orchard that needed a lot of work. My mother used to cook all our meals on a coal range, and doing washing was a huge undertaking. She had to wash all our clothes and bedding by hand in a large tub, and then run every item through a wringer. There was no hot water coming straight out of a tap, and no electricity either. Once a week, when we all took a bath, my mother had to heat several large pots of water on the coal range, one after the other. My father had the first bath, and my mother took the second one. By the time it was my turn to climb into the round tin tub, the bathwater was lukewarm, and needless to say, not as clean as I would have liked it to be!

