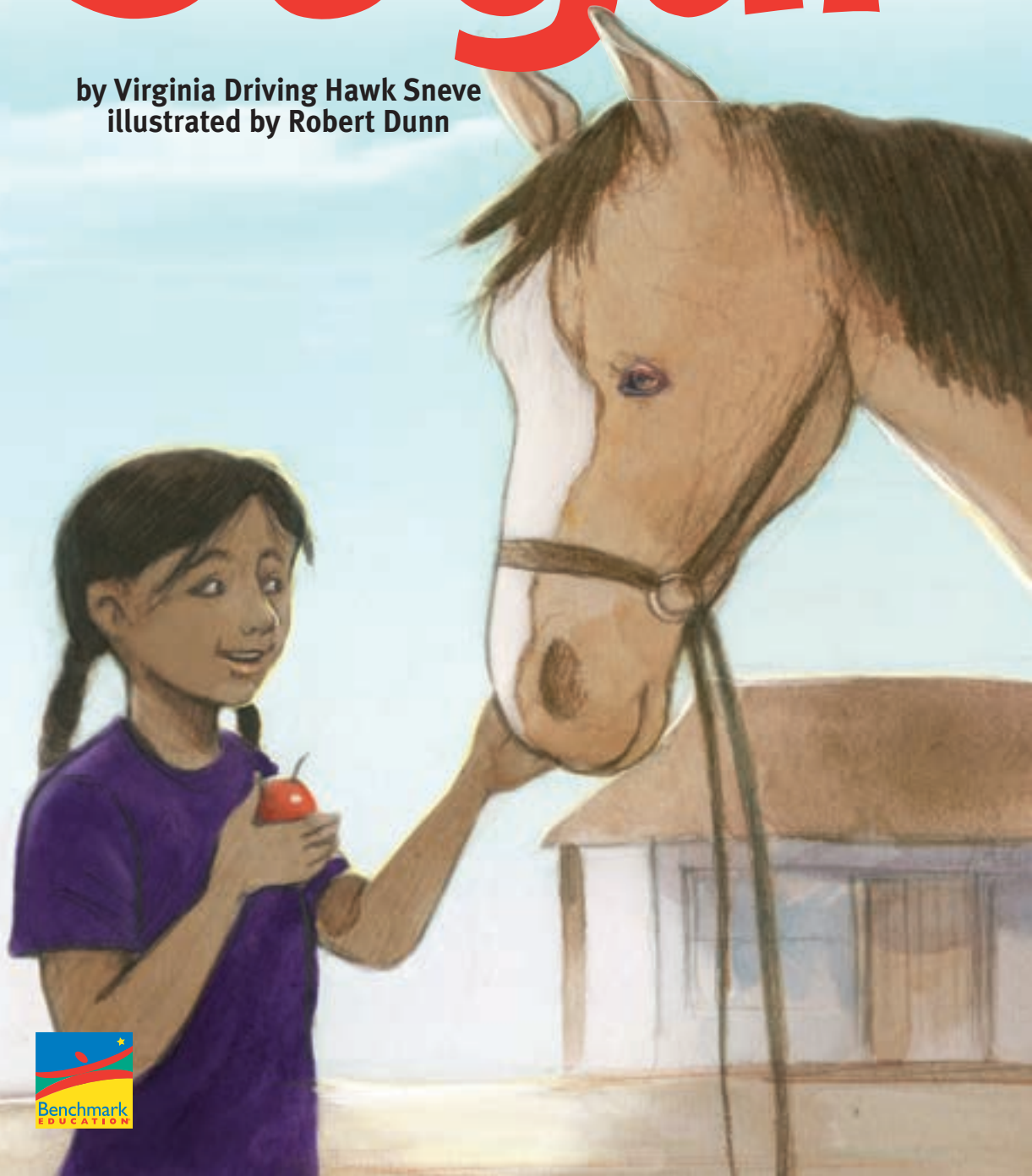


Two Lumps of Sugar

by Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve
illustrated by Robert Dunn

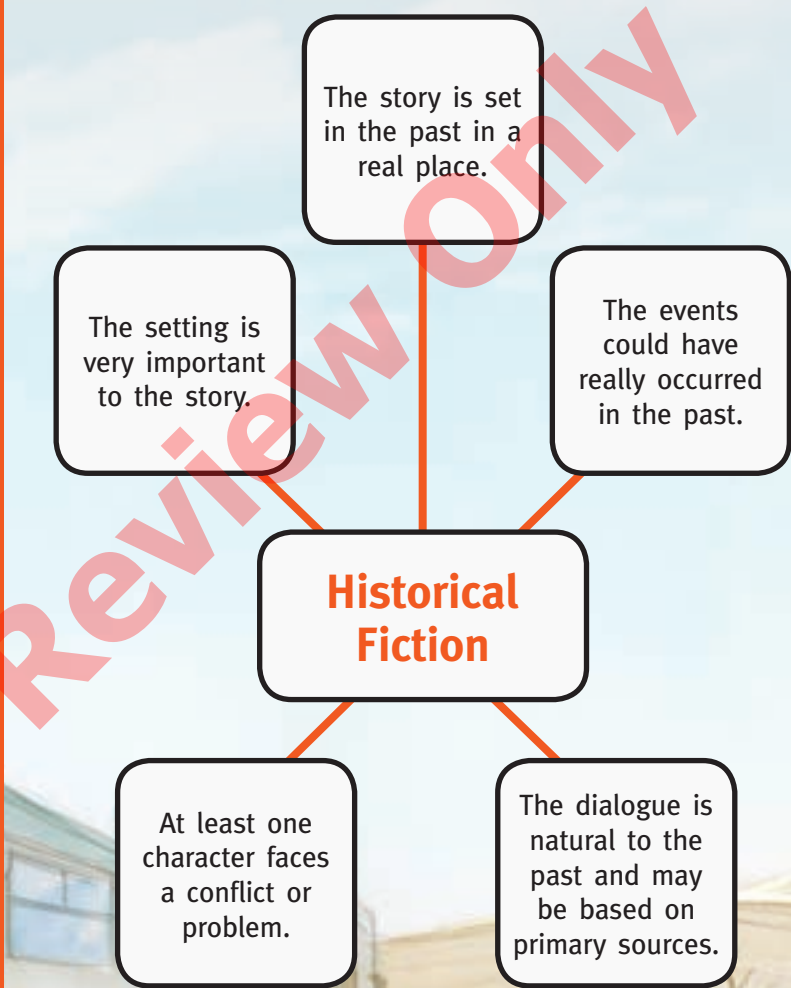


HISTORICAL FICTION
LITERATURE

Level **K/20**
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Historical Fiction

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Grandma, Grandpa, and Nelly

One summer, Marie's daddy had to go to a hospital because he hurt his back. Her mama had to go with him.

Marie had to stay with Grandma and Grandpa High Elk. She began to cry as her parents drove away. She was going to miss them.

"It'll be okay," a soft voice said. Marie turned to the comfort of her grandma's arms. "I've made cornbread."

Marie loved her grandma's cornbread. But, today, she had only one piece.

As Marie sat on the porch eating her cornbread, she watched Grandpa working in the corral.

The High Elks lived in the country on the Rosebud Reservation. It was a Lakota reservation in South Dakota. There used to be a lot of cows and horses on the farm. Now Grandpa had only one horse. He was getting too old for such hard work.

“Want to help feed Nelly?” he called.





Grandpa handed Marie a sugar cube. “Give it to Nelly, but don’t tell Grandma. She thinks it’s a waste.”

Nelly licked the cube from Marie’s hand. Nelly’s tongue was wet and rough. It tickled.

“Now,” Grandpa said, “Nelly knows you’re a friend. She’ll let you ride her.”

Marie said, “But I don’t know how.”

“You’ll learn while you’re here,” Grandpa said.

The next day, Nelly nuzzled Marie's shoulder until she got a sugar cube.

Grandpa said, "Take hold of her halter." So Marie pulled the halter and Nelly walked.

Grandpa helped Marie get on. Then he showed her how to guide Nelly.

Marie thought it was fun. Soon Marie rode Nelly around the yard.

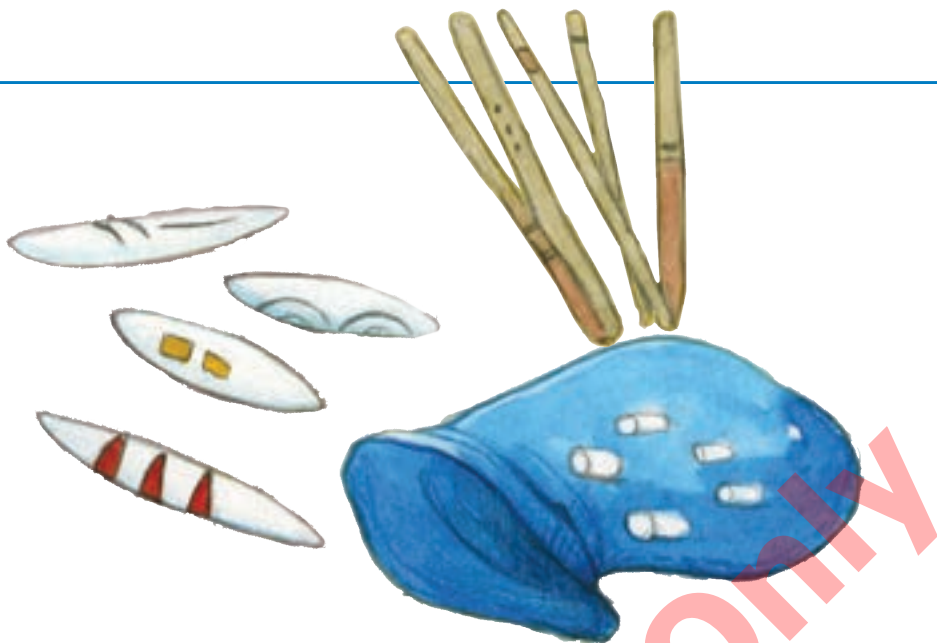


Keeping Busy

The first week at her grandparents' house passed quickly for Marie.

She set the table and helped wash dishes and swept the floor. Marie even helped Grandma pull weeds in the garden.





Then Grandma taught Marie a game that the Indians used to play a long time ago. Marie had to pass a smooth pebble from hand to hand. She had to do this while singing a Lakota song and waving a stick.

Marie passed the pebble quickly so Grandma could not guess which hand it was in. If Grandma guessed right, Marie lost her stick.

Helping Grandma kept Marie from thinking too much about Mama and Daddy. Playing games helped, too.

On Friday, Grandpa tried turning on their old car. It took a while to start. Then they drove to the store in the village. The store had groceries and a gas pump. It was a post office, too.

A man by the mailboxes said, “Hello, Mrs. High Elk. Who’s this little girl?”

“My granddaughter,” Grandma said. “Marie, this is Mr. Smith. He is the storekeeper and postmaster.”

“Hello,” Marie said. Mr. Smith shook her hand.

“Here’s mail for you,” he said, handing her a postcard. Marie felt excited. She had never had mail before.

The date on the stamp read, “June 6, 1962.”

The postcard was from Mama. Marie read it out loud. “The surgery was successful, but we have to stay awhile longer. Daddy’s room is on the fourth floor. Count the windows from the left. His is the sixth window. Love, Mama.”

Marie looked at the big brick building on the other side of the postcard. She found the window. She imagined Daddy waving at her.

