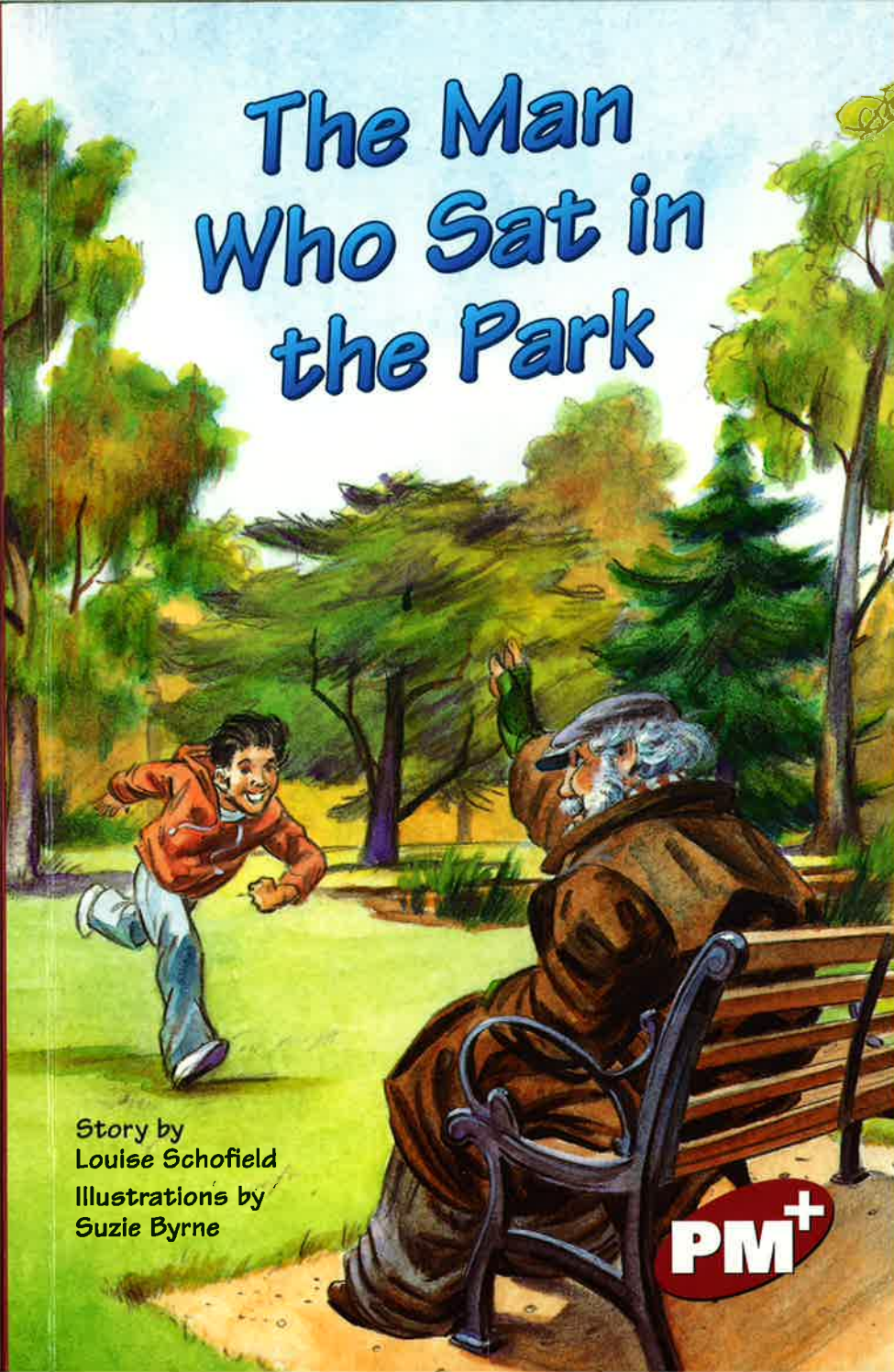
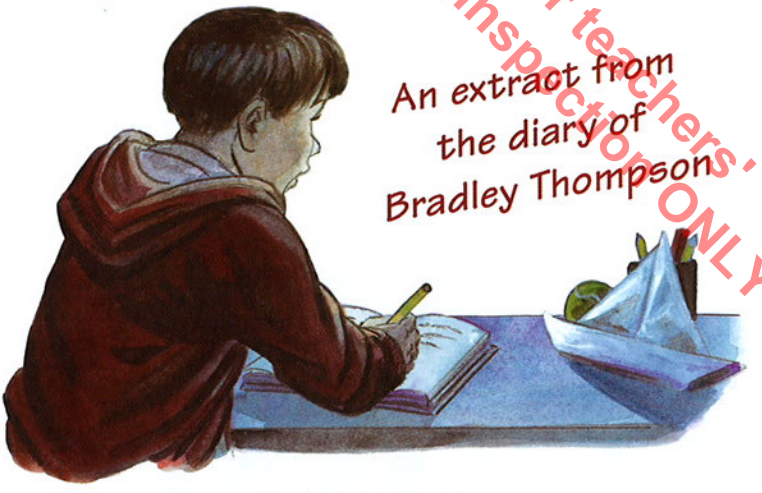
# The Man Who Sat in the Park



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An extract from the diary of Bradley Thompson

For teachers' inspection ONLY

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CHAPTER 1

# Thursday, June 14



School was the usual. At lunchtime I played marbles with Tim and Michael. Michael gave me an emperor.

I walked home with Ben and Shelley, and when we passed the park there was a funny-looking man sitting on our favourite bench under the trees. He was eating baked beans with a plastic spoon, straight out of the tin.

Ben and I told Mum about him when we got home. She told us to be careful when we go there to play and not to bother him.



CHAPTER 2

# Friday, June 15

That man was in the park after school today. He was sitting on OUR bench again. I couldn't believe it. Ben and I put our stuff onto a different bench, but it wasn't the same.

Anyway, Ben wanted to show-off how far he could throw the ball. He reckoned he could throw it twice as far as me and chucked it high over my head. Ben didn't throw it nearly far enough though, and it landed near the man.

The man threw it back to me.





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That man is really strange. His clothes look big and funny, and his beard is the bushiest I've ever seen. And all the time he just sits and watches everyone in the park. It's like he has nothing better to do.

Just before Ben and I left to go home, we saw him get off the bench and walk away. He was kind of shuffling along, as if his legs weren't good. I wonder where he lives.





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CHAPTER 3

## Saturday, June 16



I went shopping with Dad this morning and got some new runners and a pencil-case with dinosaurs on it. The zipper on my other one is broken.

After lunch, Mum, Dad and Ben and I went to the park for some family games. Shelley and Michael were there too. Later, as Mum was getting out afternoon tea, a white van pulled into the parking area and that strange man got out. There were some other men in the van too, but they stayed inside.

We told Mum that he was the man who sat on our bench.

We watched as the man shuffled over. So did the driver of the van, who waved to him when he sat down. Then he drove off.

Mum said the van was from the men's shelter. The man was probably staying there because he didn't have a home. She said Nanna sometimes helped to cook and serve the meals there.

Later, Mum offered the man a slice of chocolate cake. I went with her. He said thank you in a funny sort of way, and I thought he was going to cry.







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I told him not to be sad — he was sitting on the best bench in the park. It used to be Ben's and my bench, I said, but we didn't mind if he sat on it sometimes. Then he laughed and ate the cake. He said it was a very good cake. Mum and I went back to the others.

When we packed up to go home, the man waved goodbye.

