

Back straight! Suck that belly in! Lift that elbow!” Grandpa playfully ordered as his great-grandson tried to keep up.

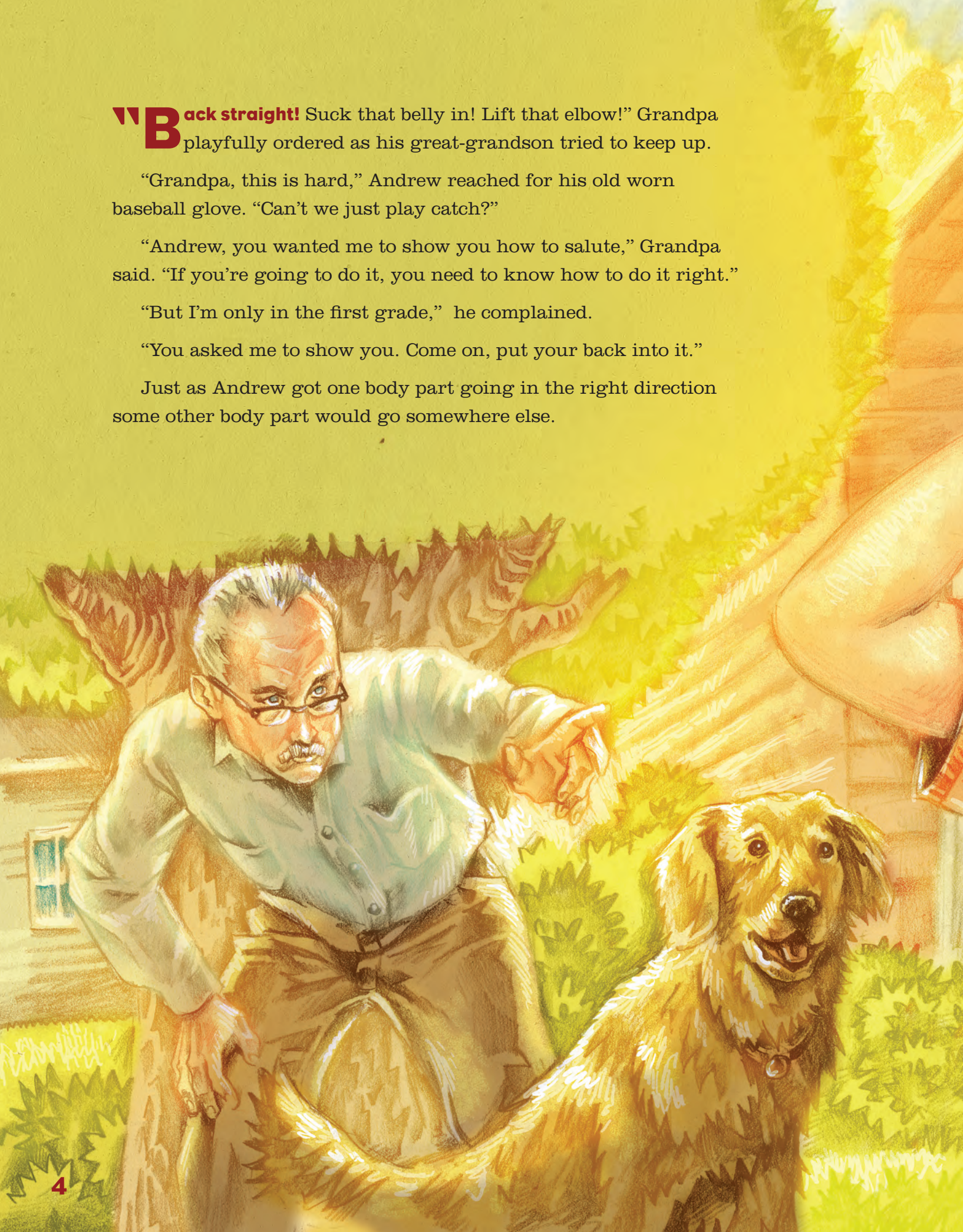
“Grandpa, this is hard,” Andrew reached for his old worn baseball glove. “Can’t we just play catch?”

“Andrew, you wanted me to show you how to salute,” Grandpa said. “If you’re going to do it, you need to know how to do it right.”

“But I’m only in the first grade,” he complained.

“You asked me to show you. Come on, put your back into it.”

Just as Andrew got one body part going in the right direction some other body part would go somewhere else.





“Take a break, Andrew,” Grandpa said. “We’ll try again tomorrow.”

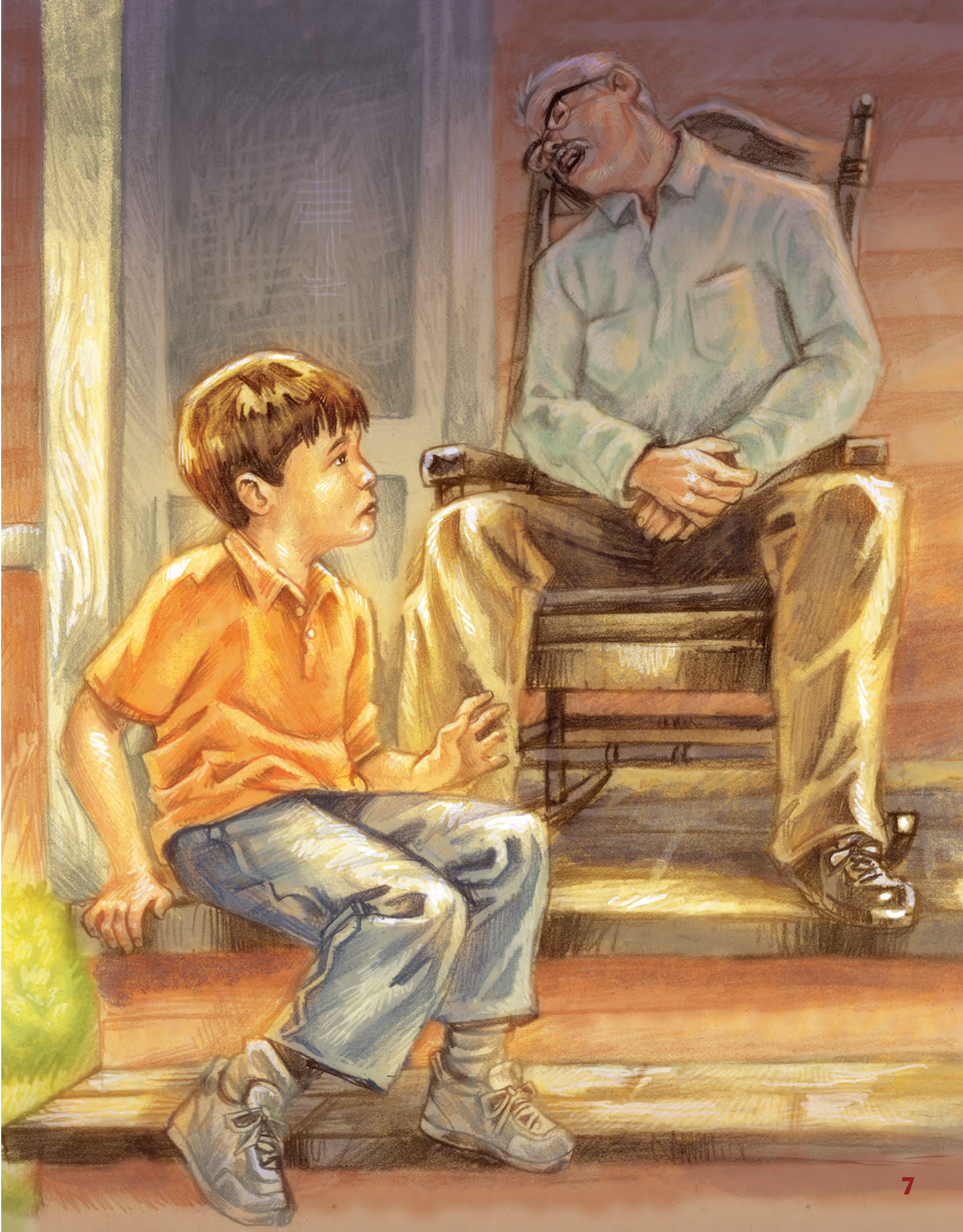


They sat down on the porch. Grandpa did what he always does lately when they sat down — he fell asleep.

Grandpa had been kind of sad lately and didn't have much energy to play. He had been like this since he got the letter from the people with the Honor Flight. Andrew had heard about the Honor Flight in school and really wanted Grandpa to go on the trip. He was proud that his grandpa helped saved the world from the bad guys in World War II. But Grandpa didn't feel like talking about it.

Andrew was sure he would share his stories with him. They were best buddies, after all. But so far, Grandpa kept saying, "Maybe when you are older."

Andrew had hoped the 'salute thing' would get him talking. But it hadn't worked. It just meant more work for *him*.






While Grandpa napped, Andrew jumped up to check the mailbox. There IT was. Another letter with the words “Honor Flight”.

“Grandpa, you have a letter,” he said just loud enough to wake him.





His lips smacked around like a flopping fish as his eyes fluttered open. He looked at the envelope, and he furrowed his brow.

“Aren’t you going to open it?” Andrew begged.

“Maybe later,” he mumbled as he stood up, patted him on the head, put the letter in his pocket and walked into the house. Andrew thought he looked even *sadder* than before.

At dinner, Grandpa didn't say anything about the letter. It was quiet until Mom asked, "Gramps, how was your day?"

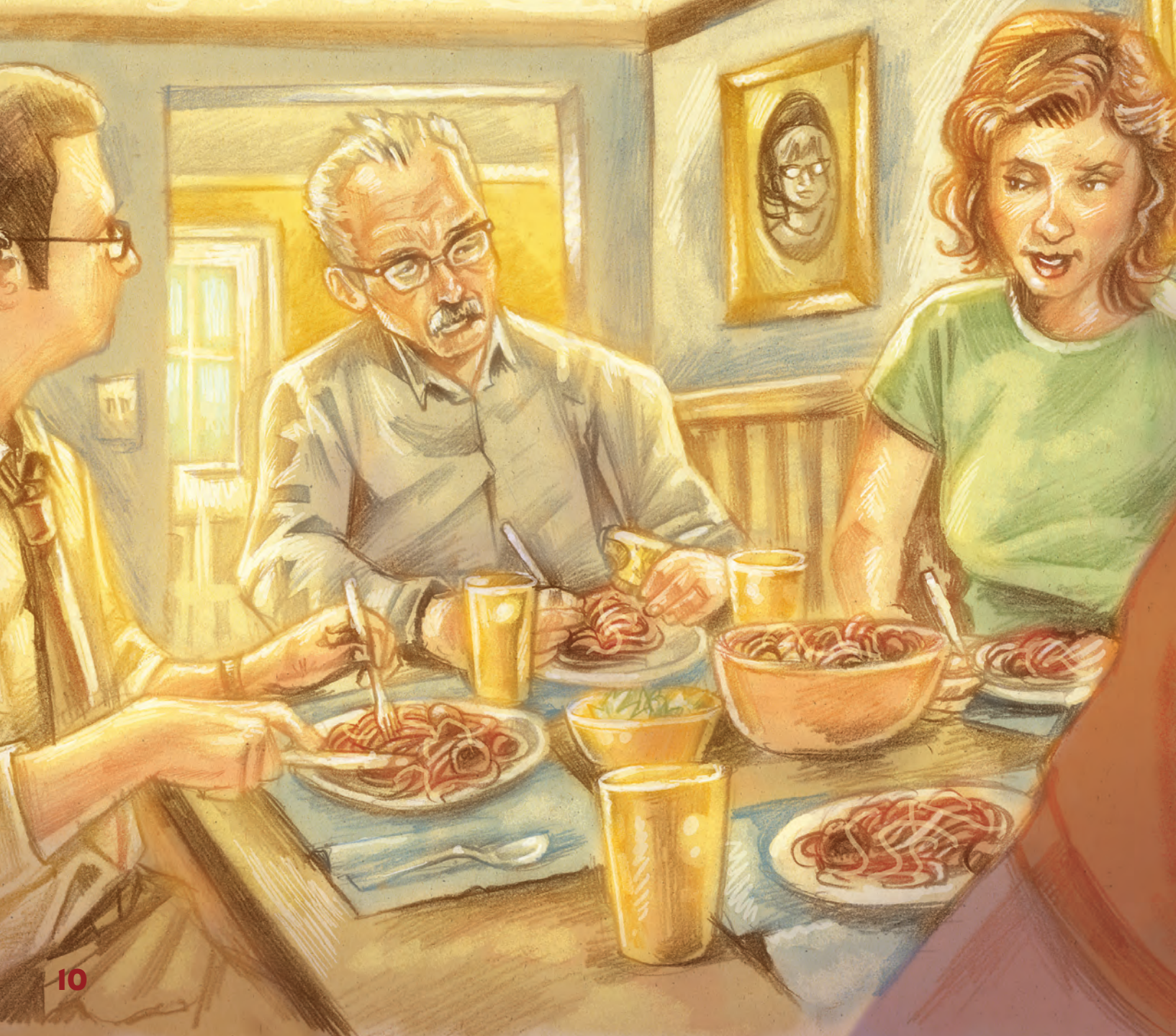
"Fine," was all he said.

Andrew felt frustrated. He couldn't hold it in one second longer.

"Grandpa got another letter today from the Honor Flight people," he blurted out as fast as he could. Grandpa crinkled his forehead.

"That's great!" Mom said. "You are going right?"

"I don't think so," he answered as he pushed his broccoli around on his plate. He slowly stood up and walked out of the dining room.





“He has to go,” Andrew complained.

“It has to be his decision, Andrew,” Dad said quietly as he cleared the table.

“I know, but all the other granddads get to go. They come home to all those people waving and cheering like we saw on the news. My Grandpa deserves that, too.”

“He sure does,” Mom said. “But, like your teacher told you, some veterans don’t want to remember their time at war.”

“But, I’m his buddy,” Andrew said putting his plate in the sink. “He should at least talk to *me*.”

