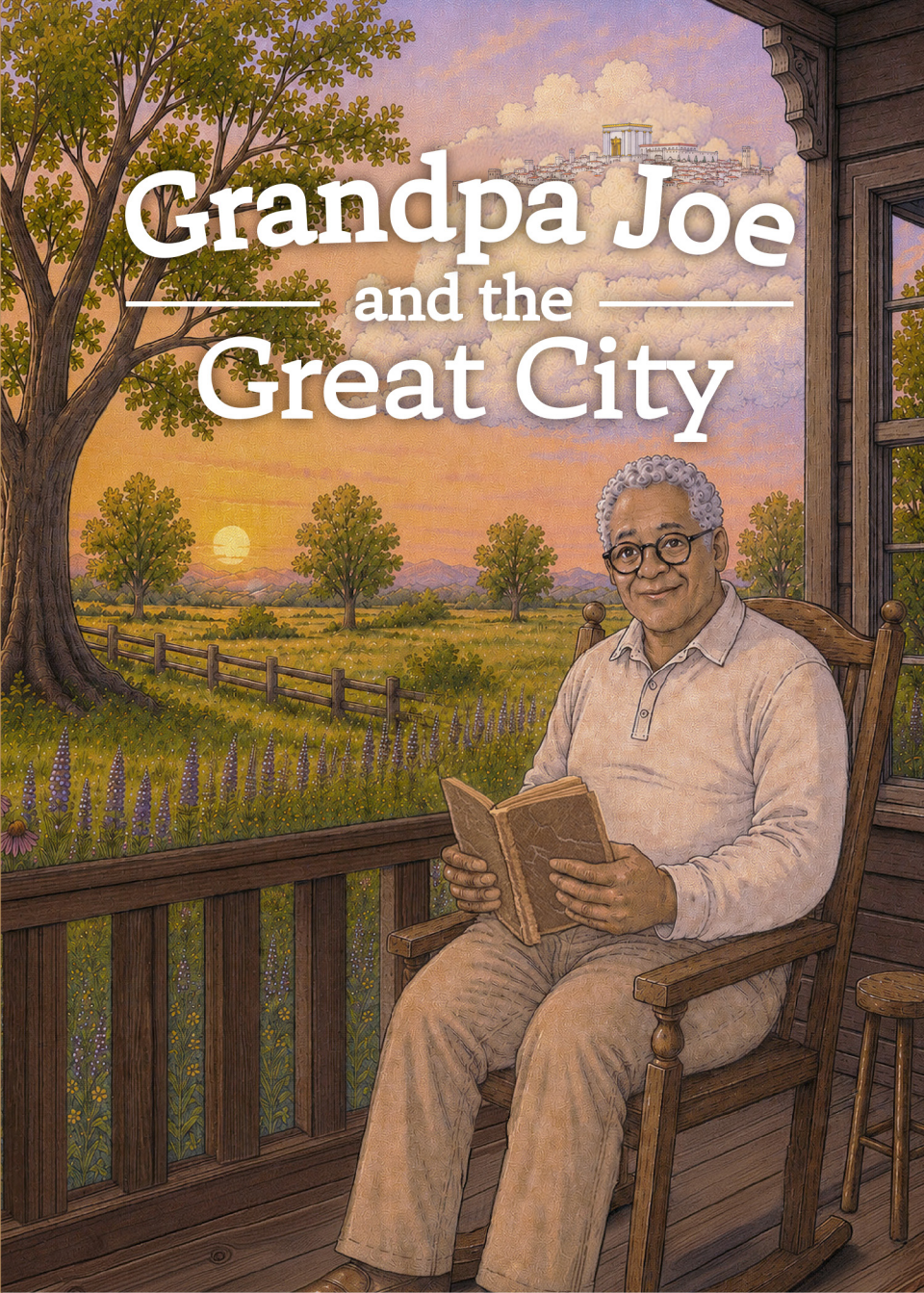


Grandpa Joe and the Great City



Grandpa Joe and the Great City

Grandpa Joe and His Amazing Stories, Book 1

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Grandpa Joe, Simon, and Lexi, along with the porch and cottage where their stories are told, and other characters and settings, are fictional creations of the publisher. The historical and biblical narratives Grandpa Joe recounts are drawn from the Old Testament and other historical sources, including the writings of the first-century historian Flavius Josephus, and are dramatized for young readers; while care has been taken toward historical and scriptural accuracy, some events, dialogue, and details have been imagined or simplified for clarity and age-appropriateness.

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Grandpa Joe's Porch

“Mom! I can’t find my bracelet,” cried 9-year-old Lexi, tears welling up in her eyes.

Mom put the bag of fresh vegetables she had just brought back from the neighboring farm on the kitchen table.

“Be patient, sweetie. It must be here someplace. I’m sure we’ll find it when we unpack all the boxes.”

“It’s probably gone,” Lexi groaned. “I knew something bad like this was going to happen. I just knew it!”

“Simon!” yelled Mom, calling to her son over her shoulder. “Would you help your sister find her bracelet? I bet it’s at the bottom of one of the boxes in her room. I need to get these vegetables started for dinner.”

But 11-year-old Simon, slumped in a chair, didn’t move.

“I’m tired of having to unpack! Why’s she whining over one bracelet? She has a bunch of other bracelets!”

“I’m not whining,” protested Lexi, stomping her foot. “And it’s not just any bracelet! It’s the friendship bracelet Maya gave me when we said goodbye. I have to find it, Mom!”

Mom hugged the little girl.

“I know you miss your friend, sweetheart. We’ll find your bracelet, I promise. And once we get the internet set up, you can call each

other and tell her all about the move and your new room.”

“Mom! Can’t it wait? I want to watch a video. I’m bored,” Simon complained from the living room.

Mom sighed as she placed the smoked sausage that would go alongside the fresh vegetables on the cutting board. Moving to her childhood home in the country right before school started was going to be a challenge.

“Simon, I’ve already explained that you can’t watch your videos just yet. We’ve only been here two days! Hopefully, tomorrow the cable company will come and hook up the internet and TV.”

She opened the window wide and said with a big, warm smile, “If you don’t want to help your sister find her bracelet, then go outside and enjoy the fresh air. Later, I’ll show you my favorite spots when I was your age. Aren’t you curious to find out what little creatures

are hiding under the rocks and in the trees outside?”

“Yuck!” replied Simon without looking up. “It’s so gross here on the farm . . . There’s no one to play with!”

Mom smirked and pointed toward the window. “Oh, really? It’s not true that there’s no one.”

A small, old wooden house stood at the far end of the garden. On its wide weathered porch, an elderly man with silver hair sat in his rocking chair, quietly reading a book.

“Grandpa?” asked Simon, clearly not impressed. “That’s not the same, Mom. We can’t play with Grandpa the way we did with our friends back home in the city.”

“We can play hopscotch with him!” Lexi cheered, finally excited about something. For a moment she had forgotten all about her lost bracelet.

“Maybe not hopscotch, but you might learn lots of fun things from Grandpa,” said Mom.

“Grandpa has lots of stories to tell, you know. You’ll be able to impress all your new friends when school starts with everything Grandpa has to tell.”

The children looked out the window again, not quite convinced, but definitely curious.

“I’ll tell you what, kids,” Mom said. “After dinner, I’ll make some lemonade, and you can take it over to Grandpa and see what he’s up to.”

They eagerly ate their dinner from paper plates, which was what Lexi and Simon liked most about the move, because there would be no dishes to wash until the kitchen boxes were all unpacked.

When they had finished cleaning up and the sun was slowly setting, they carried a tray of fresh lemonade across the garden to Grandpa Joe’s porch.



“Oh, I have visitors!” Grandpa exclaimed, looking up from his book and peering over his glasses. “And with refreshments too! How nice of you.”

“Mom made us some lemonade.”

“Thank you very much, Simon,” said Grandpa Joe, taking a glass. “Grab some chairs from inside and you two come join me out here on the porch.”

Grandpa Joe had recently moved from the bigger house into the garden house. This was a small cottage at the back of the property where his own grandparents had lived when they first started the farm.

“Did you get all your boxes unpacked yet, Grandpa?” Simon asked. “We still have so many to do. It’s going to take forever!”

“Not yet. I’ll get the rest done little by little.” Grandpa Joe chuckled as he sipped his lemonade.

“We haven’t finished unpacking either. We keep having to look through boxes for stuff.

Do you like it here, Grandpa?" asked Lexi.
"Don't you miss living in the big house?"

Grandpa gave her a big smile.

"That house was too big for me all by myself," he said. "I'm really happy to be in this little house, and to have you all close by. I hope you're enjoying your rooms and all this space!" He waved his hand toward the fields and the forest beyond. "Think of all the adventures you'll have out here in the country!"

"It's okay, I guess, but it's too quiet," Simon said. "In the city, we could hear everything. Even our neighbors in the apartment above us."

"Would you like to travel to the city, Grandpa?" asked Lexi.

"Well, I like the quiet of the countryside, and the view of the fields. And when I read this book right here," he said, tapping the worn book in his lap, "it's as if I'm traveling back in time. It's so interesting that I don't need to take a trip to any city!"

“What’s it about?” asked Simon, leaning over to look at the cover.

“An old story I’ve known for a long time,” he said. “A story about a great city. One that was captured, built into something beautiful, then tragically destroyed, and then rebuilt again.”

Lexi leaned in closer, puzzled. “Is it a happy or sad story?”

Grandpa Joe thought for a moment. “Well, it has both sad and happy moments. It’s also about faith and courage. It’s about brave people who learned a lot about themselves when everything they knew started to change around them.”

“Is it a true story then?” asked Simon.

“Yes, it’s like a history book. But the man who wrote it was right there when most of it happened. He saw it with his own eyes. So for us it’s history, but for him it was more like a diary.”

“When did all this happen, Grandpa?” asked Simon.

“A very long time ago. Long before your great-great-*great* grandparents were born. Long before this country even existed.”

He looked from Simon to Lexi. “Would you like to hear the story of that great city?”

“Oh, yes please, Grandpa!”

Back across the garden, a light flicked on in the kitchen window. Neither of the kids noticed Mom watching. She saw them sitting close together on Grandpa Joe’s porch. In the quiet of the house, just as dusk was settling in, she smiled, thankful to be back home.



Watching the children as they leaned in closer to listen to their grandfather, Mom knew that the move was worth it.

The cottage's porch light flickered on as the evening darkened. Grandpa Joe leaned forward, his voice taking on that storytelling rhythm they would soon come to know so well. He told them how it all began, when a shepherd found a hill and dreamed of a city that would be greater than any other.