

ava  
anne  
APPLETON



For my little brother Noel.  
Off on the greatest adventure of all. I miss you—WH

For mum and Elecia—AE

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Accidental  
Adventurer

WENDY HARMER

illustrations by  
ANDREA EDMONDS

A Scholastic Australia Book



## CHAPTER one

Ava Anne Appleton loved the letter A.

And it was no wonder. Her initials spelled out A.A.A. She lived at number 3A, Australia Avenue. Her mother's name was Anne and her father's name was Alan.

It was a family joke that the Appleton's were the 'A-team'.

Ava was a neat and tidy sort of girl who always liked to have her dress ironed, her shoes polished and her straight black hair in two even plaits. She was quite strict about this. Quite ‘particular’ as Nanna Appleton liked to say.

Ava was very well-behaved and tried her best to get an A for all her tests and assignments, and almost always did.

‘That’s Ava Appleton for you,’ Ava’s father said happily when he read her report card. ‘First in the alphabet and in everything she does.’

‘Amen to that,’ said her mother with a big smile.

When Ava was given a small black and white terrier puppy for her eighth birthday it made perfect sense to name him Angus. Angus even barked the letter A, as in, ‘Aarf, aarf, aarf!’



When Ava cuddled his lovely furry body and stared into his

big brown eyes she would say ‘Aaaaaw,’ and, right there, were even more A’s.

Yes, everything was pretty much A-OK in Ava Anne Appleton’s world.

There were only the three of them in the Appleton family (four, if you counted Angus) and they lived in a two-storey house that went right up to the fence on either side. There was just enough space in the back for a kennel for Angus, a place to hang the washing, a fishpond with two goldfish and a miniature apple tree in a pot.



You couldn't play 'fetch' in the Appleton's courtyard. If you weren't careful when you threw a ball for Angus, it would be instantly over the fence and sizzling on next door's barbecue hotplate.

Fried tennis ball for dinner? Not a good idea.

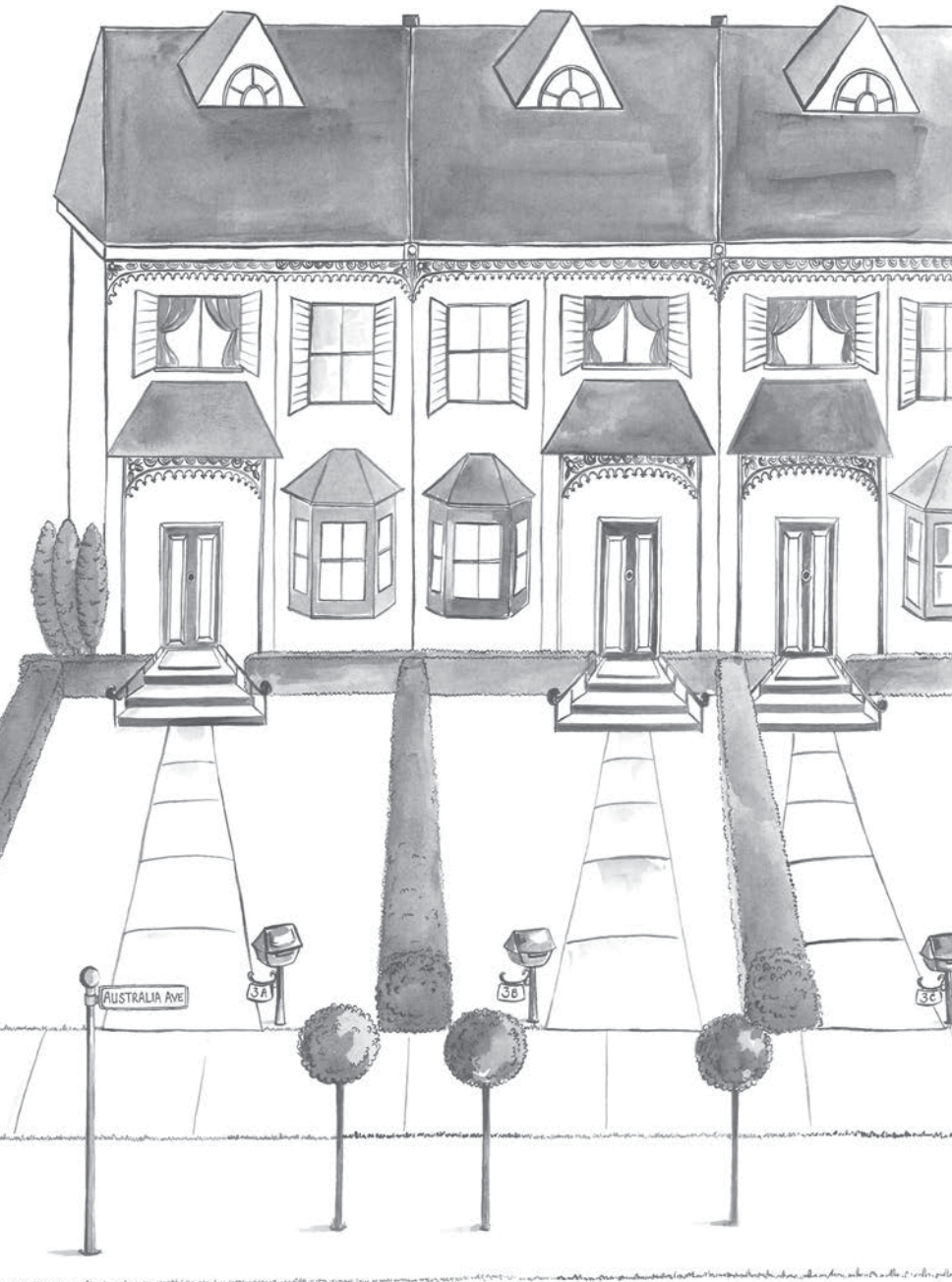
But Ava was a most careful sort of person and she loved the little courtyard. It was safe there and who knew what would happen if Angus got out? He might run out on the road into the traffic. That would be awful.

Every now and then Ava

thought about taking Angus away on a great adventure. Maybe to cross the vast, roasting African deserts in a camel train; travel the frigid Arctic Circle in a sled; or to see the wide prairies of America where the buffalo roam.

But it would be just too dangerous, she decided. She'd learned all about explorers and most of them seemed to get lost. No, it was much better here on Australia Avenue, where she knew where everything was.

There was a short path to her school two blocks away, and another path to the shop on the



corner. All her neighbours on Australia Avenue lived in two-storey houses that looked exactly the same as Ava's—although some houses were painted a shade different, or had their front door on the opposite side. But all had neat and tidy hedges and shiny letterboxes, and that was just how a neighbourhood should be, according to Ava.

It was a very orderly corner of the planet and that suited Ava Anne Appleton just fine.