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# The Priceless Chair

祖传的木椅

by Alvin Goh



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# The Priceless Chair

祖传的木椅

by Alvin Goh





Along the old street of Chinatown stands a century-old **mom-and-pop**<sup>[1]</sup> grocery shop. The shop owner, Uncle Chen, is the third-generation successor who has been running this friendly neighbourhood grocery shop for more than 70 years.

在老街上，有家古色古香<sup>[1]</sup>的小杂货店。老店主陈伯是杂货店的第三代接班人，这家祖传的店面已有70年的历史。

1953

# 陳昌雜貨



陳昌雜貨

Though the shop is old and **dingy**<sup>[2]</sup>, it is **patronised**<sup>[3]</sup> by his regular customers, neighbours, and passers-by. They would relax along the five-foot way, casually sip tea, play chess, or chat with one another, just like buddies.



尽管陈伯的杂货店有些昏暗老旧，但它却深受常客、邻里和路人的喜爱。陈伯经常坐在店外的木椅上。有空时，邻里街坊就会过来一起聊天、喝茶、下棋。大家就像是陈伯多年的好朋友一样。







Uncle Chen is very contented and comfortable with his current lifestyle. At his age, he no longer wishes for anything more in life. With his “laid-back” way of running his shop, he does not operate a cash register. He trusts his customers to pay for their purchases by dropping their cash payments into a money box at the entrance of the shop. His business has only been mediocre<sup>[4]</sup>, giving him just enough to get by each day.

随着年纪越来越大，他的生活已经不再需要其他多余的东西。他也不特别追求任何事物，过着非常知足与安逸<sup>[2]</sup>的生活。他的经营方式非常的“接地气”，客人可以自由地进出杂货店，大家也会直接将钱款放到店门口的小钱箱里。杂货店的生意没有好坏之说，每天的生意也足够维持陈伯的日常生活。



One sunny afternoon, an antique merchant visited the grocery shop for a cold drink. He saw Uncle Chen taking a nap on a wooden chair. Upon closer **scrutiny**<sup>[5]</sup> of the beautiful craftsmanship of the chair, the perfection of lines, the **mortise and tenon joinery**<sup>[6]</sup>, the merchant was **astonished**<sup>[7]</sup> to find out that this chair is actually a priceless possession.

一天下午，一位古董<sup>[3]</sup>商人来到老街上，因为天气炎热而走进了陈伯的杂货店买饮料。这时，他看见了正在睡午觉的陈伯，还有他坐着的那把木椅子。商人突然发现，这把木椅尽然是举世闻名<sup>[4]</sup>的「明代黄花梨交椅」。








**That handmade folding wooden horseshoe-back chair had been used by a travelling official during the Ming Dynasty. Only six of its kind in the world, this highly sought-after “huanghuali” furniture, made from rosewood, was last sold at an auction in Hong Kong for US\$17.5 million.**

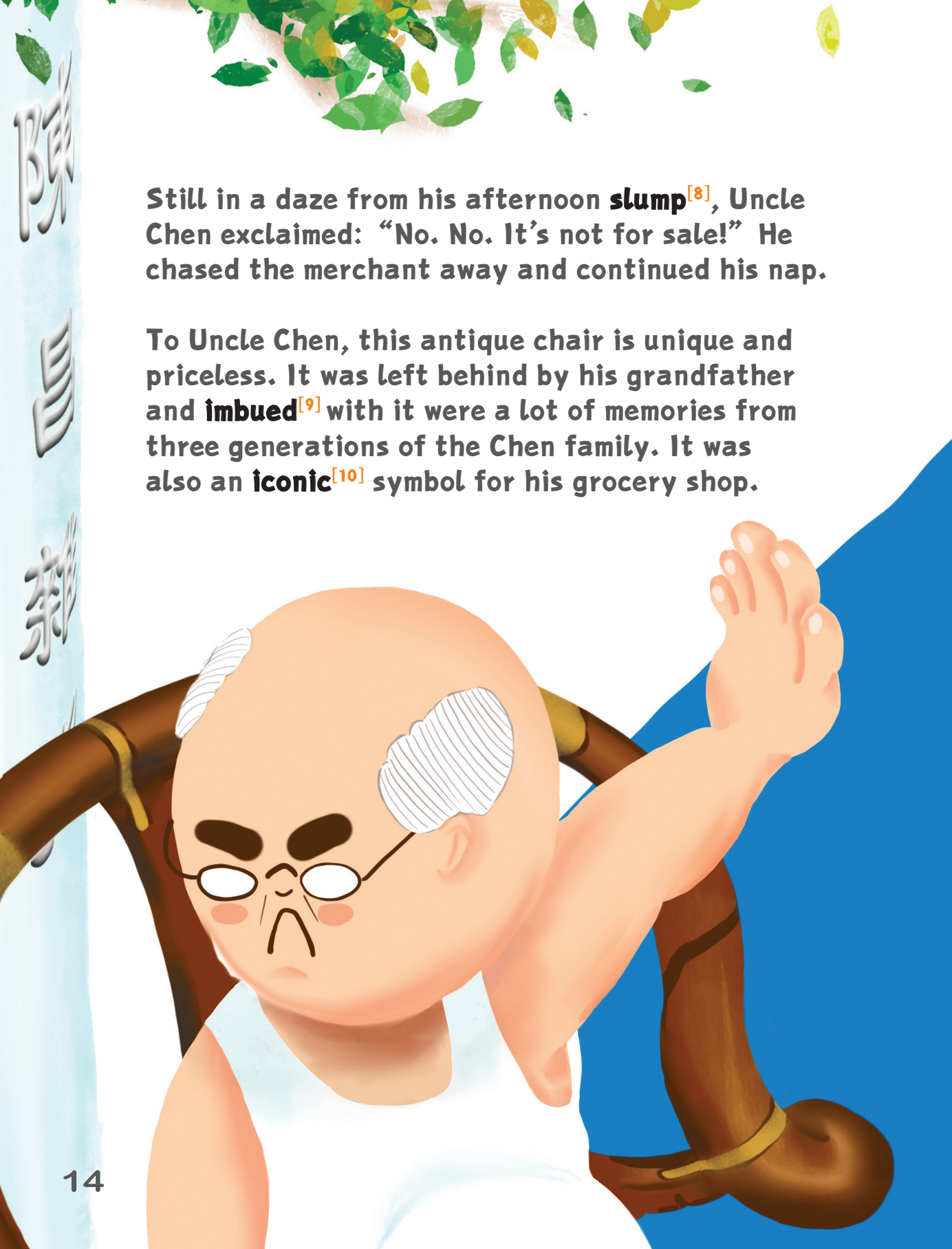
**这把木椅子，正是全世界只有6把的「明代黄花梨交椅」。它的造型优美，雕工精致，是明代宫廷御用<sup>[5]</sup>的“皇椅”。这把椅子曾在中国香港的拍卖会上，以1750万美金成交。**



The merchant took a long time to assess the value of the chair. Finally, he decided to wake Uncle Chen up: “Boss, I’d like to offer you US\$20 million for this chair that you’re sitting on.”

商人看了椅子很久，最终决定把陈伯叫醒：“老板，我愿意出价2000万美元买下你的木椅！”



The page features a decorative header with green leaves and a vertical banner on the left containing the Chinese characters '陳' (Chen) and '雜' (Za).

Still in a daze from his afternoon **slump**<sup>[8]</sup>, Uncle Chen exclaimed: “No. No. It’s not for sale!” He chased the merchant away and continued his nap.

To Uncle Chen, this antique chair is unique and priceless. It was left behind by his grandfather and **imbued**<sup>[9]</sup> with it were a lot of memories from three generations of the Chen family. It was also an **iconic**<sup>[10]</sup> symbol for his grocery shop.





**刚睡醒的陈伯呆呆的坐在椅子上，还以为自己在睡梦之中。陈伯清醒后，拒绝了商人的开价：“不，不，不，这是非卖品，你快走吧！”最终，陈伯送走了那位古董商人。**

**这把椅子是陈伯的爷爷留下的，对他来说是个无价之宝<sup>[6]</sup>，这把椅子也伴随了祖孙三代人还有杂货店的成长，也是陈伯杂货店的代表特色。**

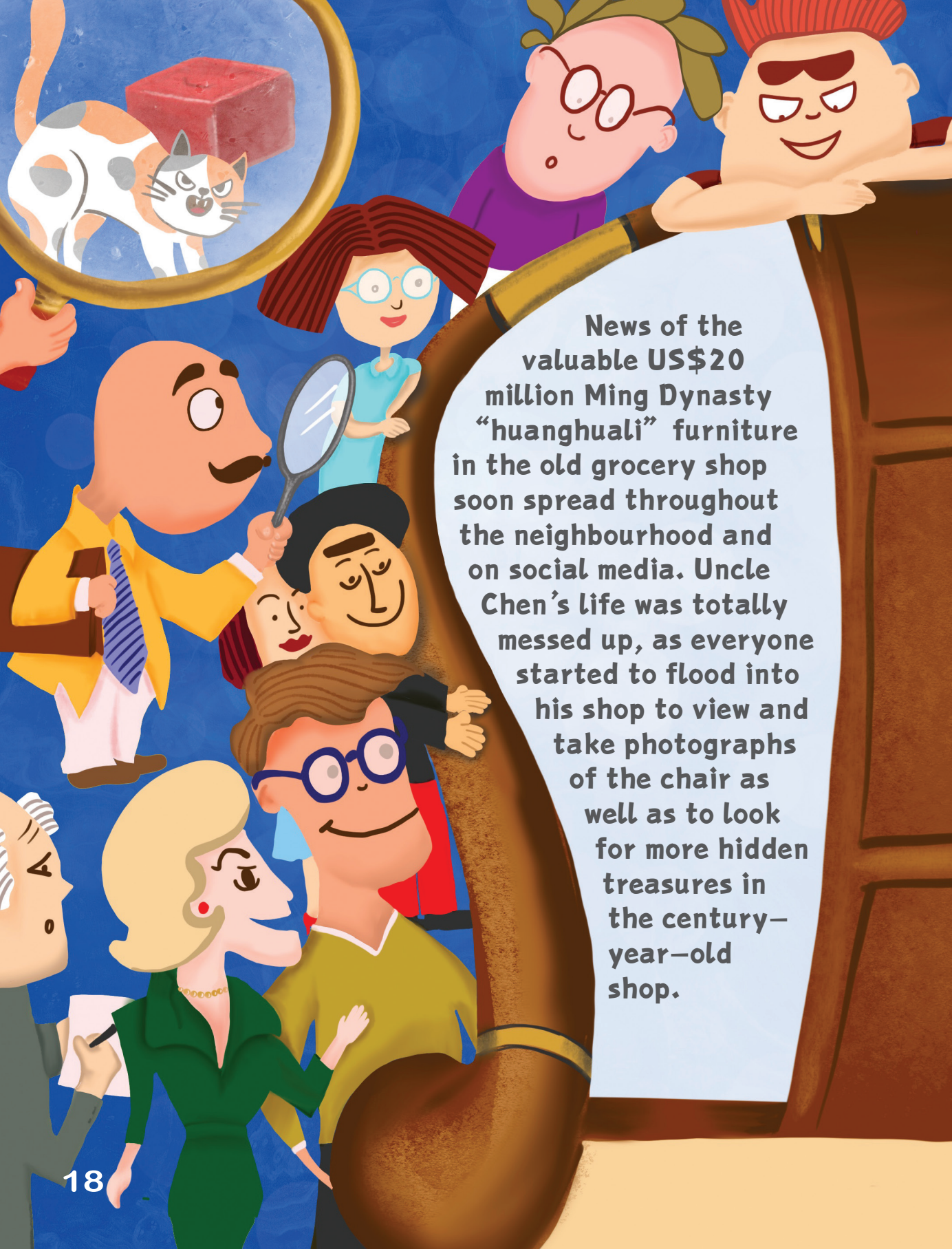


However, after knowing about the value of the chair, Uncle Chen could no longer live in peace. He used to leave the chair unattended along the five-foot way but has since moved the chair into the shop and was afraid to use it for fear of damaging it. At night, he could not sleep well as he was worried that someone would break into his shop to steal the chair.


那天以后，陈伯再也无法安定地过生活。曾经的他，在杂货店收档以后只会将木椅放在店外的**五脚基**<sup>[7]</sup>上。在知道木椅的来历和价格后，陈伯便将木椅收进店内，害怕一个不小心就刮坏了木椅。夜晚，陈伯也无法**安然入睡**<sup>[8]</sup>，他害怕会有人闯入店里偷走木椅。







News of the valuable US\$20 million Ming Dynasty “huanghuali” furniture in the old grocery shop soon spread throughout the neighbourhood and on social media. Uncle Chen’s life was totally messed up, as everyone started to flood into his shop to view and take photographs of the chair as well as to look for more hidden treasures in the century-year-old shop.




很快，左邻右舍和  
社交媒体上都传开了消  
息，大家都知道有一把价  
值2000万的「明代黄花梨  
交椅」出现在陈伯的杂货店  
中。陈伯的生活被彻底打乱  
了，平时冷清清的店，现在  
挤满了人，大家都来拍照  
和寻找这把椅子，也想知道  
杂货店内是否还有其他  
的古董宝藏。



**Antiquarians<sup>[11]</sup>, connoisseurs<sup>[12]</sup> and antique collectors from all over the world came to visit Uncle Chen and offer sky-high prices, to purchase the chair and the grocery shop. His regular customers and neighbours were no longer able to get together at the five-foot way due to the huge crowds.**



更多的古董爱好者与世界各地的收藏家都来到陈伯的店里，大家开出天价想要买下椅子和杂货店。现在的五脚基不再是陈伯的常客、邻居和那些曾经的“老朋友”了，只剩下满满的陌生人潮。



After a fortnight of madness, the antique merchant who visited the shop before came back and once again tried to convince Uncle Chen to sell the antique chair to him.

过了两个星期，之前的那位古物商人又再次来到了陈伯的杂货店，想要说服陈伯卖出木椅。









Frustrated by all that was happening, Uncle Chen immediately **summoned**<sup>[13]</sup> his neighbourhood buddies and shouted: “This chair is priceless and I’m not selling it to anyone for any amount of money!”

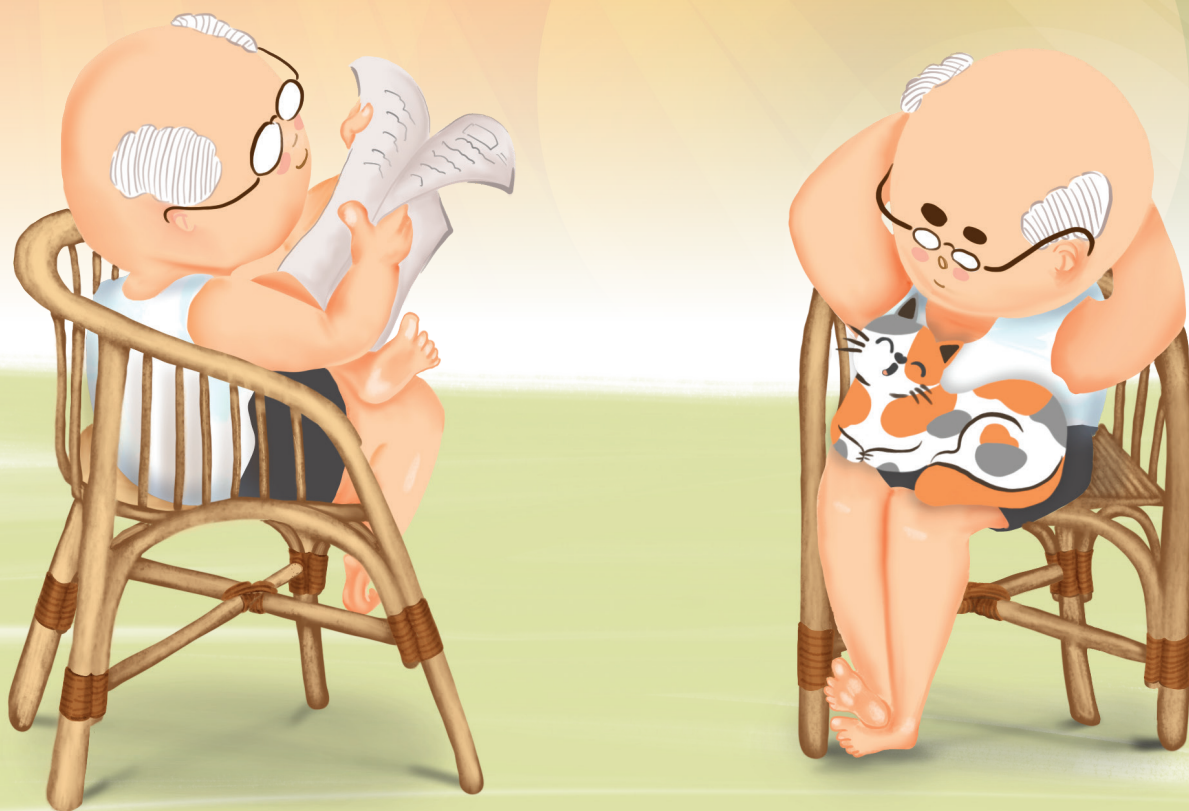
Upon saying this, he sawed the wooden chair into pieces.

陈伯受够了这些困扰，也感到非常沮丧。最终，他召集了邻里街坊，对所有人说道：“这个椅子对我而言是无价之宝，我不会接受任何一分钱，也不会卖出这把椅子的！”

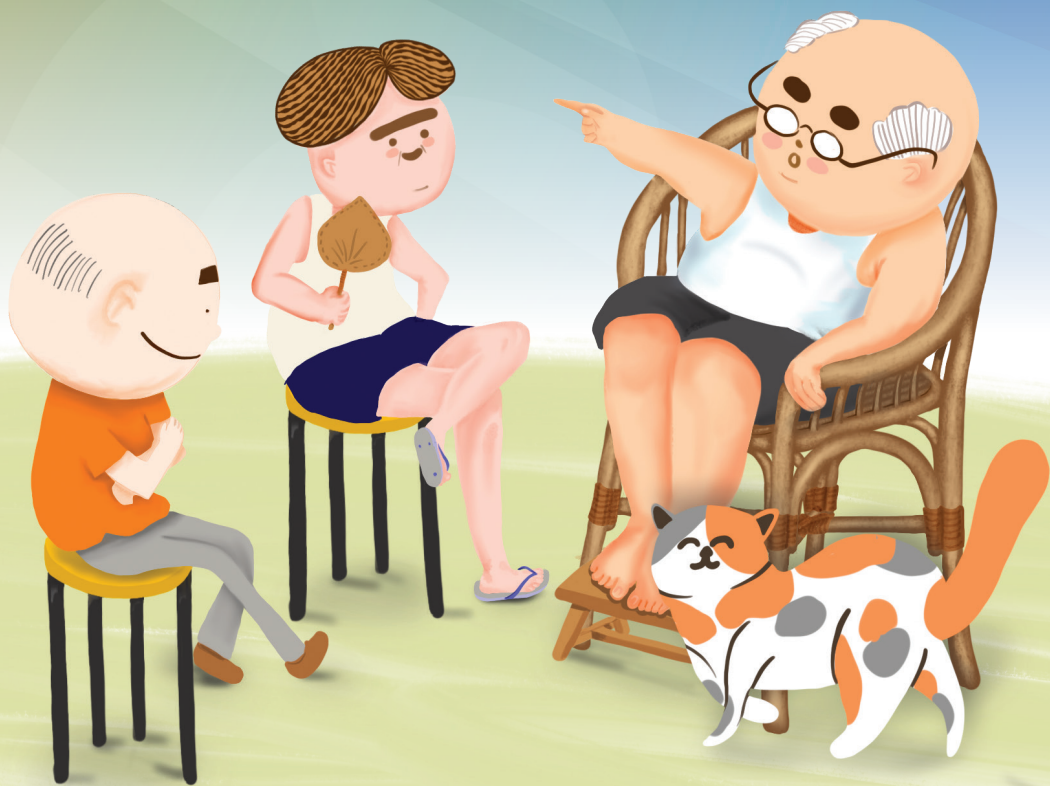
说完，陈伯当着大家的面把木椅锯断了。



Finally, Uncle Chen's life was back to normal. He continued to run his grocery shop. The spot where the Ming Dynasty "huanghuali" chair used to be placed was then replaced by an ordinary-looking rattan chair. Most importantly, Uncle Chen could continue to chill, take his afternoon naps, and enjoy the company of his neighbourhood buddies.



终于，陈伯的生活恢复了平静。现在的他一样经营着杂货店的生意，但是五脚基上再也看不到那把「明代黄花梨交椅」，只剩下一把普通的藤椅，还有自在的陈伯。陈伯也像以往一样，安稳地在五脚基上睡着午觉，享受着和“老朋友”们相聚的快乐时光。



# 故事的启发 Moral of the story

In life, many things might lead us to wrong directions, like wanting to be famous or having lots of money. If we get too caught up in these things, we might lose the freedom to be happy and peaceful. Money cannot buy important things, like having good friends and enjoying our time. So, it is good to be grateful and satisfied with what we have and appreciate the things that truly matter.

在生活当中，有许多事物可能引导我们走向错误的道路，好比沉迷于名利或钱财等。一旦深陷其中，我们就会失去内心的自由与平静。财富永远无法买到像幸福、友谊和时间这样宝贵的东西。所以，让我们珍惜和感恩眼前拥有的一切。



# Vocabulary

1. **Mom and pop:** A small family-owned business.
2. **Dingy:** Dirty or gloomy.
3. **Patronised:** When someone goes to or visits a place, to support or make use of its services.
4. **Mediocre:** Average or ordinary.
5. **Scrutiny:** Close and careful examination.
6. **Mortise and tenon joinery:** A type of joint that connects two pieces of wood or other material together.
7. **Astonished:** Extremely surprised or amazed.
8. **Slump:** A cozy and quick sleep in the day.
9. **Imbued:** Filled with strong feelings.
10. **Iconic:** Widely recognised and easily remembered.
11. **Antiquarians:** People who study or collect antiques.
12. **Connoisseurs:** People who have expert knowledge of something.
13. **Summoned:** To gather or bring people together.

# 词汇注解

1. **古色古香**: 形容物品或建筑富有古朴典雅的色彩。
2. **安逸**: 安闲舒服。
3. **古董**: 古代流传下来的有价值的器物。
4. **举世闻名**: 全世界都知道的事情，形容非常著名。
5. **宫廷御用**: 古代君王专用的。
6. **无价之宝**: 无法估价的宝物，指极珍贵的东西。
7. **五脚基**: 在新加坡或马来西亚建筑上的走廊，闽南移民习惯称为五脚基。
8. **安然入睡**: 安心地睡着。





# Activity

Let us see how detailed you can be. Search and circle the following 12 words hidden in the puzzle. Some of the letters in the grid are used more than once and the words can run in either a forward or backward direction; vertically, horizontally or diagonally.

antiquarian

dingy

mediocre

scrutiny

astonished

iconic

mortise

slump

connoisseurs

imbued

patronise

summon

W	S	L	U	N	P	M	I	D	Y	G	N	I	D
R	U	W	M	A	S	T	O	N	I	S	H	E	D
F	I	R	E	N	S	R	I	A	P	S	B	O	C
T	Y	U	D	J	L	T	E	N	K	P	O	I	M
A	N	T	I	Q	U	A	R	I	A	N	N	T	B
M	P	I	O	R	M	O	R	C	S	O	V	L	U
N	U	B	C	L	P	K	E	O	C	W	O	E	R
J	K	S	R	U	E	S	S	I	O	N	N	O	C
A	T	U	E	T	U	C	I	N	G	S	A	I	L
I	Y	M	S	L	P	A	T	R	O	N	I	S	E
M	N	M	E	D	I	R	R	C	Z	N	R	E	P
B	S	O	A	C	Y	N	O	T	F	A	H	I	T
E	E	N	O	R	E	I	M	B	U	E	D	U	O



# 活动

从字格中圈出下列的十个词汇。  
游戏中的文字可以横向、纵向、斜向相连。

平	古	毛	安	香	让	不	逸
三	祖	董	木	水	古	贪	己
无	价	之	宝	椅	婪	色	朋
接	历	惑	史	藏	诚	店	古
木	好	诱	维	日	之	月	安
举	诚	尽	商	平	人	皇	逸
了	木	实	宝	叫	静	醒	无
椅	贪	子	香	名	闻	世	举

诚实

贪婪

诱惑

安逸

平静

木椅

无价之宝

古董宝藏

举世闻名

古色古香

## After reading:

- Discuss with your child why Uncle Chen cherished his old chair and what it meant to him. Ask them if there is something in their life that holds similar importance and why.
- Explore the concept of contentment with your child. Ask if they find happiness in appreciating what they have. Share your own thoughts and experiences about finding joy in simple things.
- Drawing on Uncle Chen's interactions with his customers, discuss with your child the importance of trust in relationships and how it contributed to strong connections.
- Reflect with your child on why Uncle Chen prioritised inner peace and simple life over money. Encourage an open dialogue to help them develop a deeper understanding of life's priorities.

## 读后感

- 与孩子一同讨论，为什么陈伯那么看重这把老木椅，椅子对他有什么重要意义。问问孩子们，在他们的生活当中是否也有同样重要的东西，其原因是什么。
- 探讨知足常乐的观念。问问孩子们，是否满足于目前所拥有的一切，并与他们分享生活中能让您感到快乐和幸福的小点滴。
- 借助陈伯与顾客的互动关系，与您的孩子探讨信任在人际关系中的重要性，以及信任为何在人与人的关系之中扮演重要角色。
- 引导孩子反思，为何陈伯会觉得内心的平静与简单的生活，比起金钱更加重要。鼓励孩子们一同交流，并帮助他们了解人生中的优先次序。

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**Uncle Chen's peaceful life takes a surprising turn when a traditional wooden chair, passed down for generations, causes a big fuss in the neighbourhood. Now, Uncle Chen has to decide: should he stick to his simple life or go after fame and fortune?**

**一把祖传了三代的木椅，竟突然引起了社会与邻里的轰动，也打乱了陈伯安稳简单的生活。面对名利与钱财，陈伯究竟会选择守住本心，还是会陷入诱惑之中？**