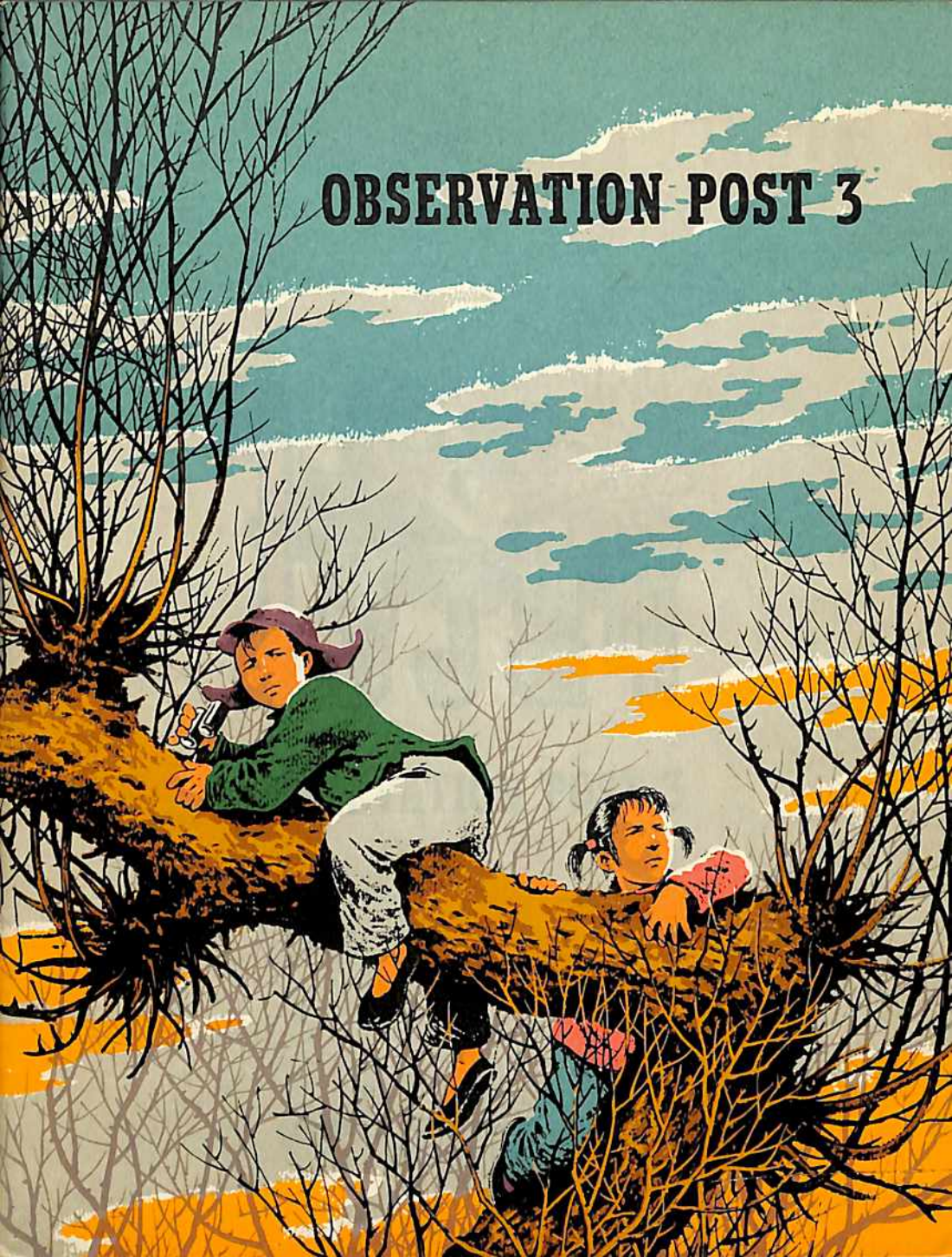


# OBSERVATION POST 3







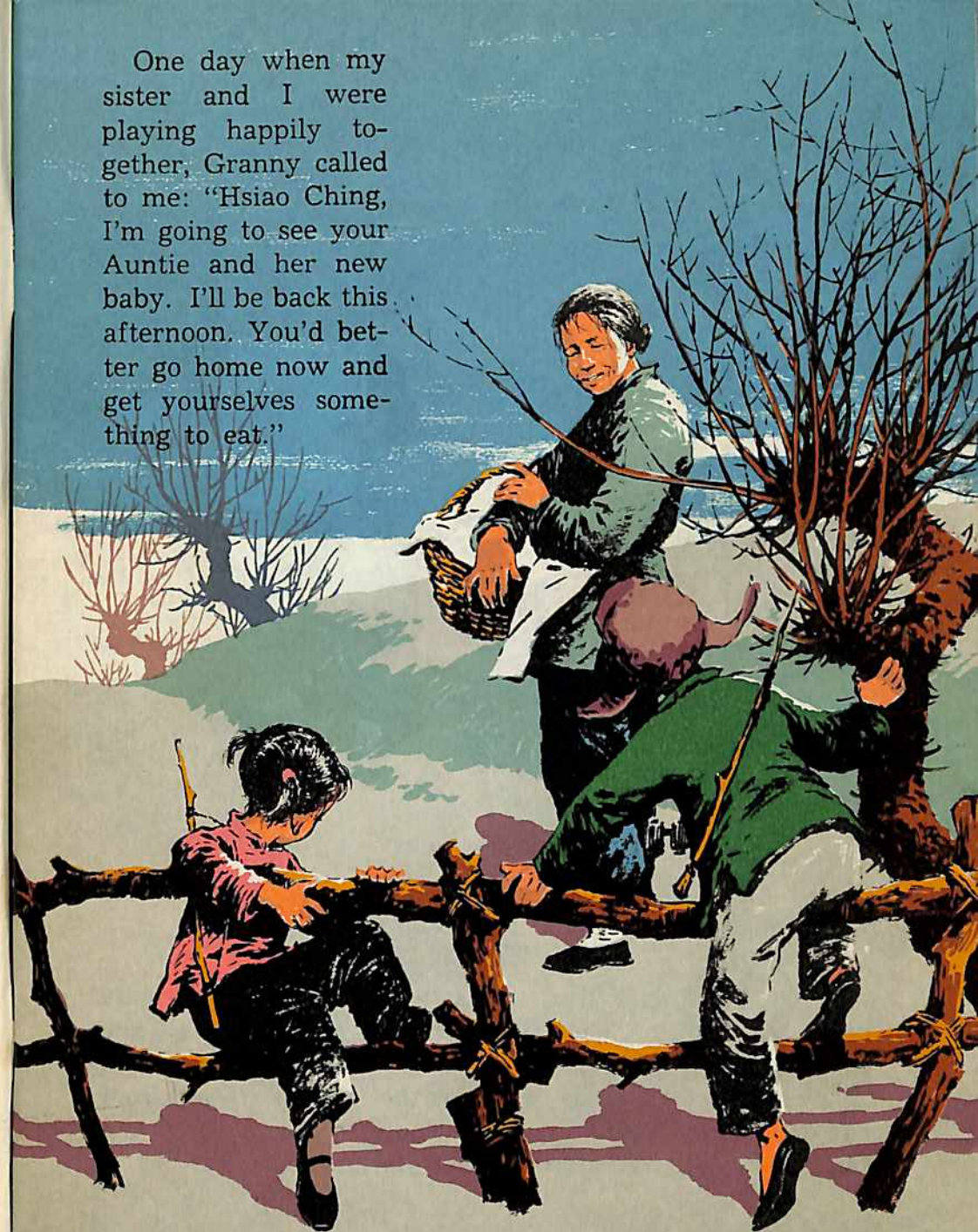
## OBSERVATION POST 3

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PEKING 1967



Story by Li Ju-ching  
Drawings by Fan Yi-hsin

One day when my  
sister and I were  
playing happily to-  
gether, Granny called  
to me: "Hsiao Ching,  
I'm going to see your  
Auntie and her new  
baby. I'll be back this  
afternoon. You'd bet-  
ter go home now and  
get yourselves some-  
thing to eat."



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We had only just filled the jar with water when Granny came back again. Throwing her basket on the *kang*, she said angrily: "The Japanese soldiers won't allow anyone to go over the bridge. They even took the eggs I borrowed from our neighbour!" Still fuming with anger, Granny took out the last two eggs from her basket and gave them to us.



My sister sat on a little stool beside Granny to eat. I gestured to her and tried to attract her attention, but she was enjoying her egg so much that she did not notice me.







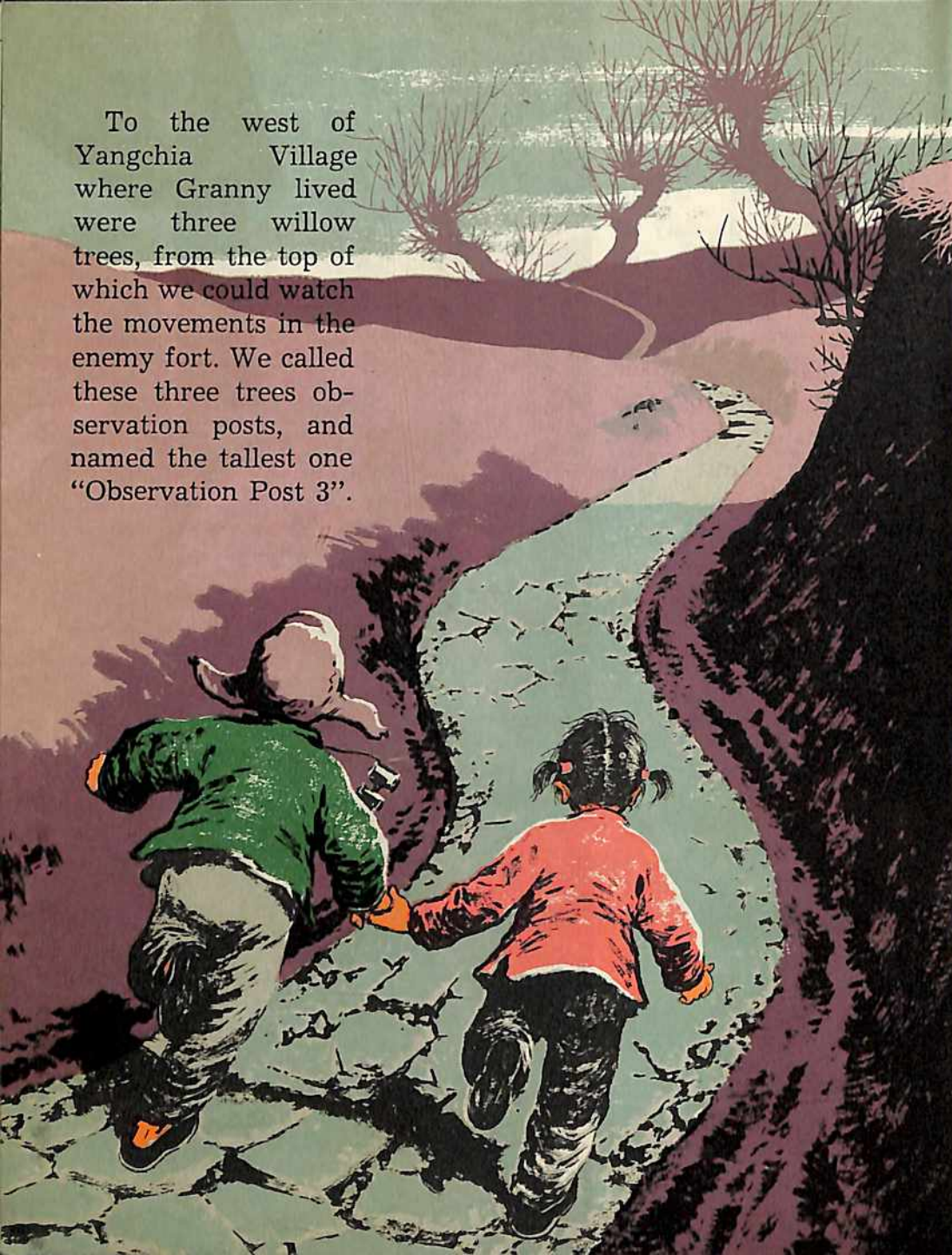
Finally I gave her a tug and whispered, "Let's go to Observation Post 3 and see what's happening!"

We slipped out without Granny noticing. She would have made us stay at home, of course. She didn't know that when we came to the village to see her, Political Instructor Liu of the local guerrilla unit had told us to see what we could find out about the enemy's movements.

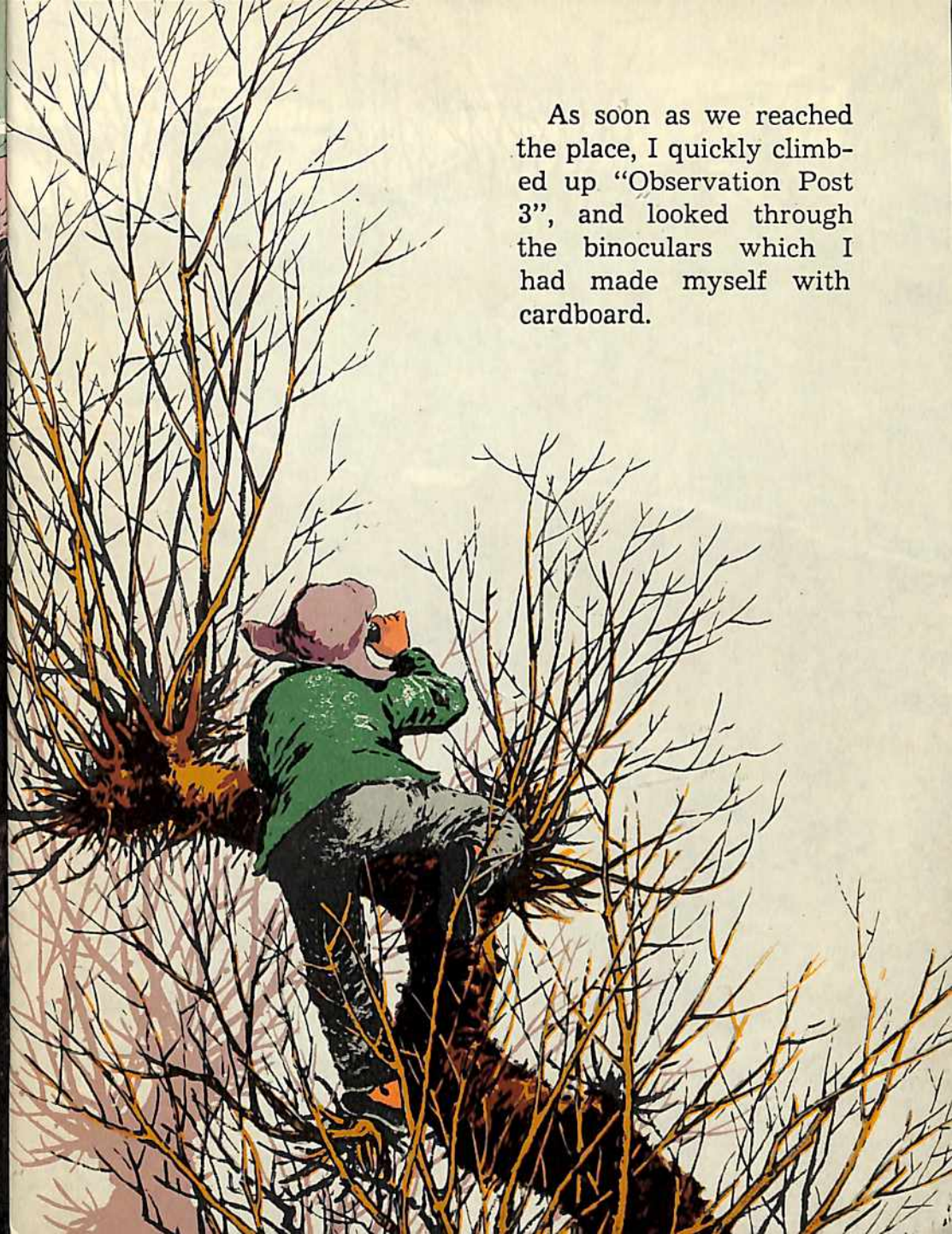




To the west of Yangchia Village where Granny lived were three willow trees, from the top of which we could watch the movements in the enemy fort. We called these three trees observation posts, and named the tallest one "Observation Post 3".



As soon as we reached the place, I quickly climbed up "Observation Post 3", and looked through the binoculars which I had made myself with cardboard.





All was as quiet as usual. An enemy sentry with a rifle on his shoulder was pacing to and fro in front of the fort.

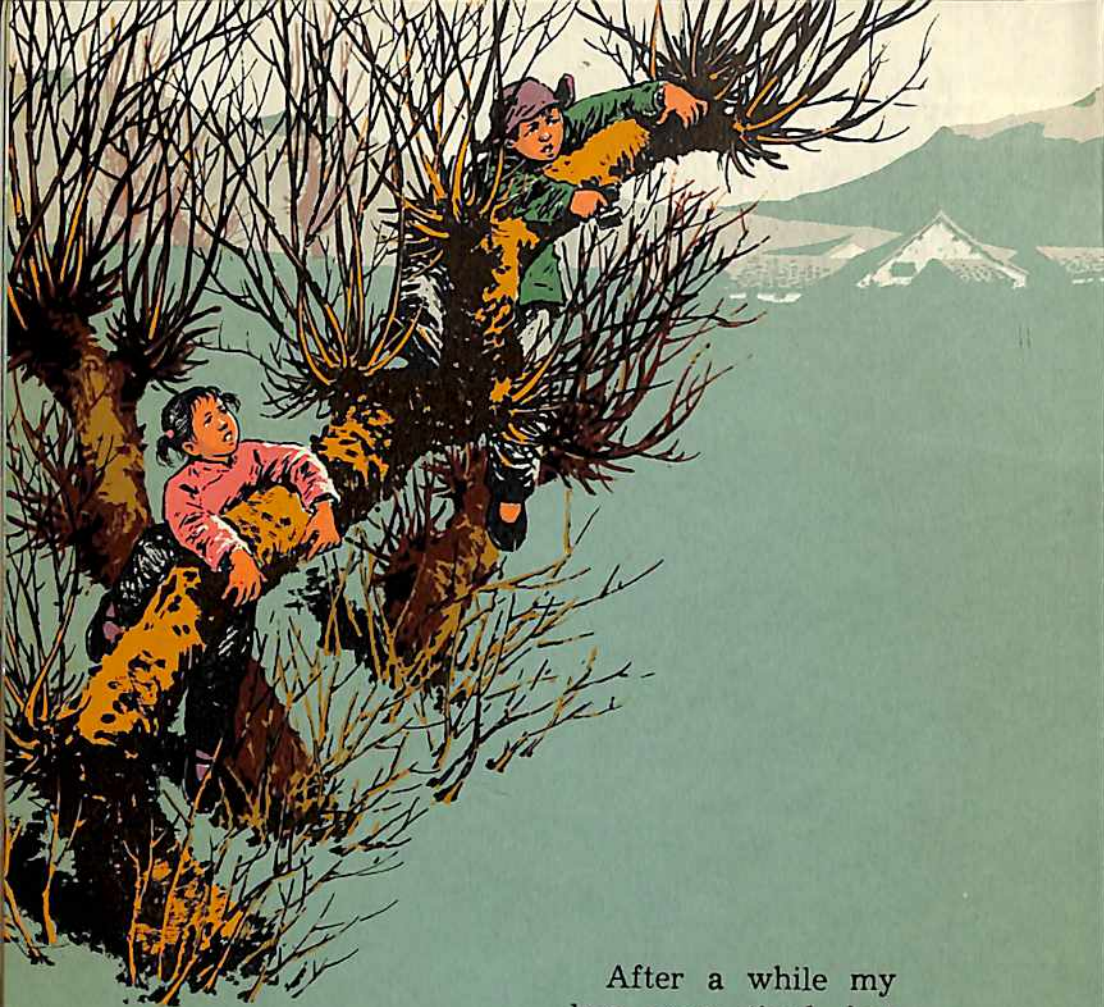
"Can you see anything?" my sister asked me. She was getting impatient standing there at the foot of the tree.

"Nothing unusual," I replied.

But that day did seem to be different somehow from other days. Why hadn't the peasants come to build the fort for the enemy as they were forced to do every day? Why was everything so quiet? And why. . . .







After a while my legs grew tired, but still I couldn't see anything.

"Come down!" urged my sister impatiently. "Perhaps there's nothing unusual today after all."

I was just going to slide down from the tree when I saw a man dressed in ordinary clothes running out of the fort. Screwing up my eyes and looking carefully, I saw that it was Comrade Lao Chiang, a guerilla scout. He usually delivered his information at night, so why was he leaving the fort so early today. I guessed that he must have some urgent message.

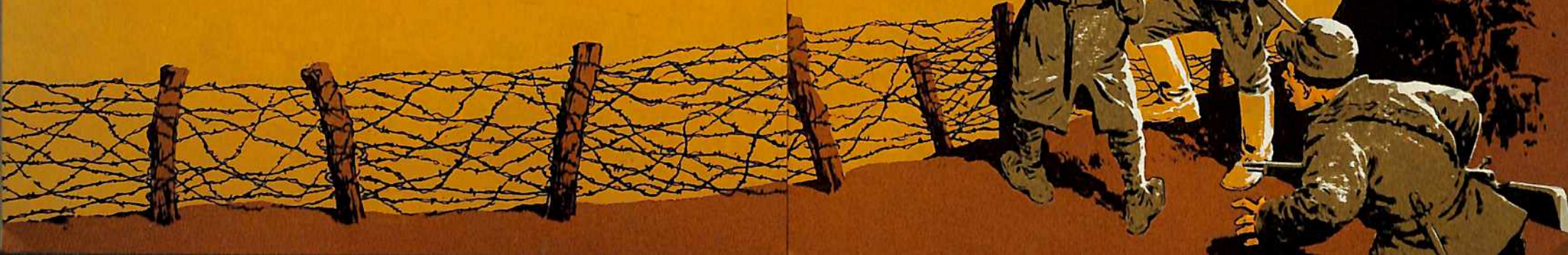






Bang! A rifle shot rang out from the fort. Lao Chiang was running away as fast as his legs could carry him. I was sure the shot was meant for him. But I couldn't understand why he was taking such risks in running out of the fort at this time.

Another shot was fired, and Lao Chiang ran even faster. He was quite a long way from the fort, but now the enemy machine-gun began to bark at him. Lao Chiang stumbled; he struggled to his feet again, but after a few paces he fell once more.







I nearly fell out of the tree in fright. A chill ran down my spine, and my binoculars slipped from my hand, hit a branch and fell to the ground.



I climbed down at once.

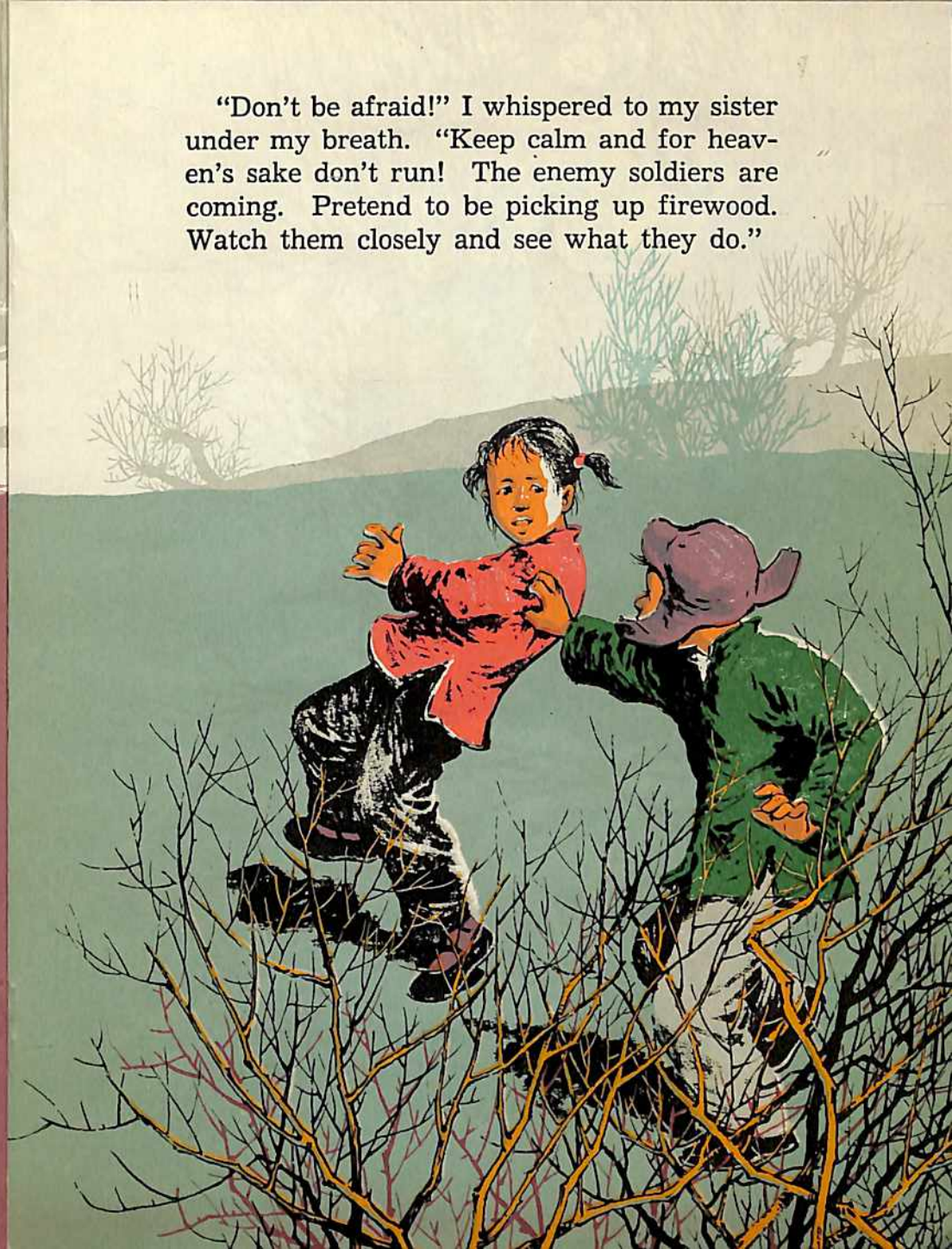
"Let's go and see what has happened!" I said to my sister, and we ran to the place where Lao Chiang was lying.





As we drew near we saw two enemy soldiers coming towards Lao Chiang.

"Don't be afraid!" I whispered to my sister under my breath. "Keep calm and for heaven's sake don't run! The enemy soldiers are coming. Pretend to be picking up firewood. Watch them closely and see what they do."







We began to pick up firewood, watching the two enemy soldiers out of the corners of our eyes.

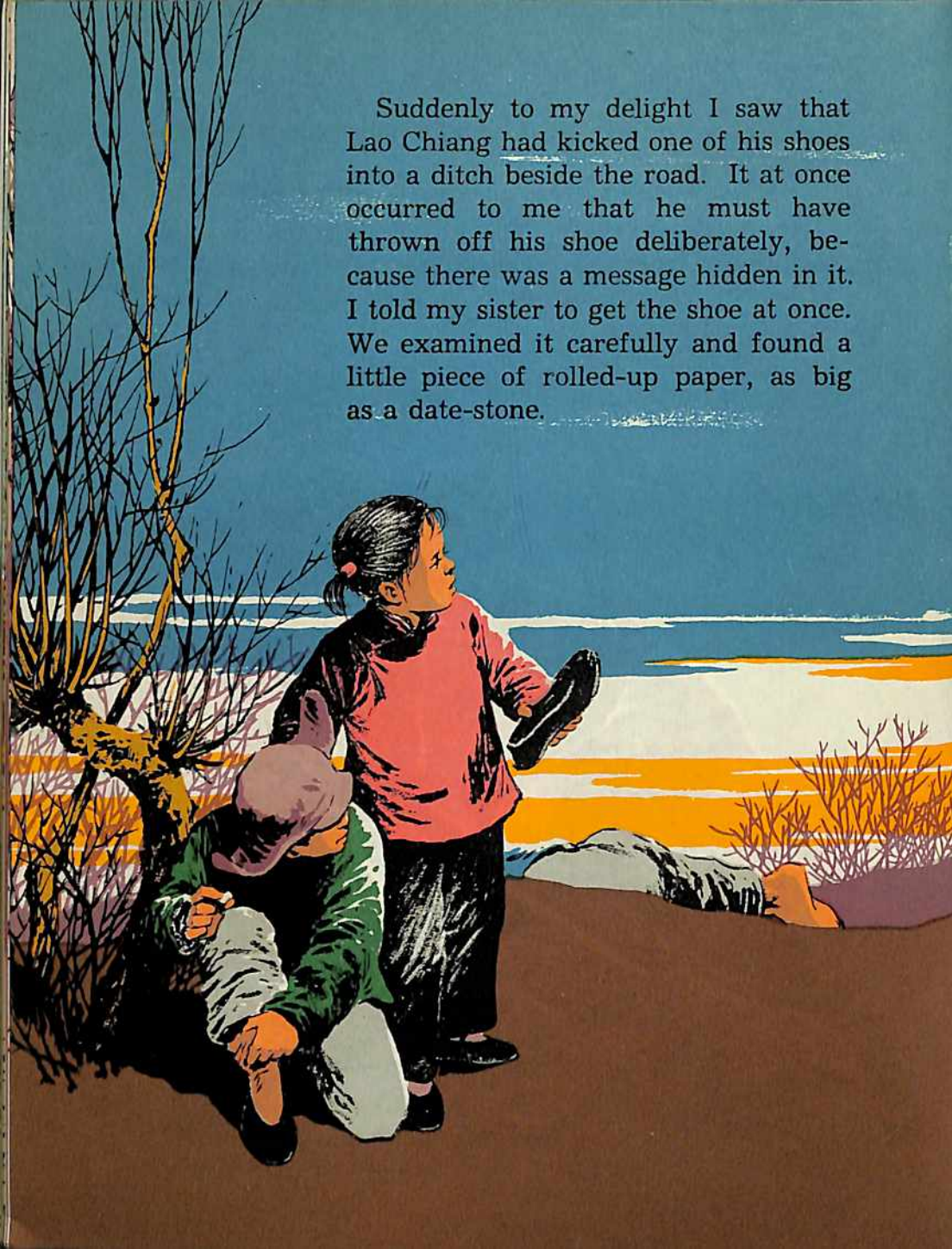
They searched Lao Chiang's body all over, then went away.

"Have they taken away a message!" I asked myself, a little worried. "No, they'll never get anything important from us." Then I remembered what Political Instructor Liu had told us about ways of hiding secret messages.





Suddenly to my delight I saw that Lao Chiang had kicked one of his shoes into a ditch beside the road. It at once occurred to me that he must have thrown off his shoe deliberately, because there was a message hidden in it. I told my sister to get the shoe at once. We examined it carefully and found a little piece of rolled-up paper, as big as a date-stone.



I quickly stuffed the paper into my stocking. We saw two puppet soldiers coming towards us, taking two peasants in their custody. It was too late for us to get away now.



"What are you doing here!" shouted one of the puppet soldiers. My sister was scared to death as she stood there with the shoe in her hand.

"Give it to him, we don't want it!" I said, trying to keep as calm as possible.

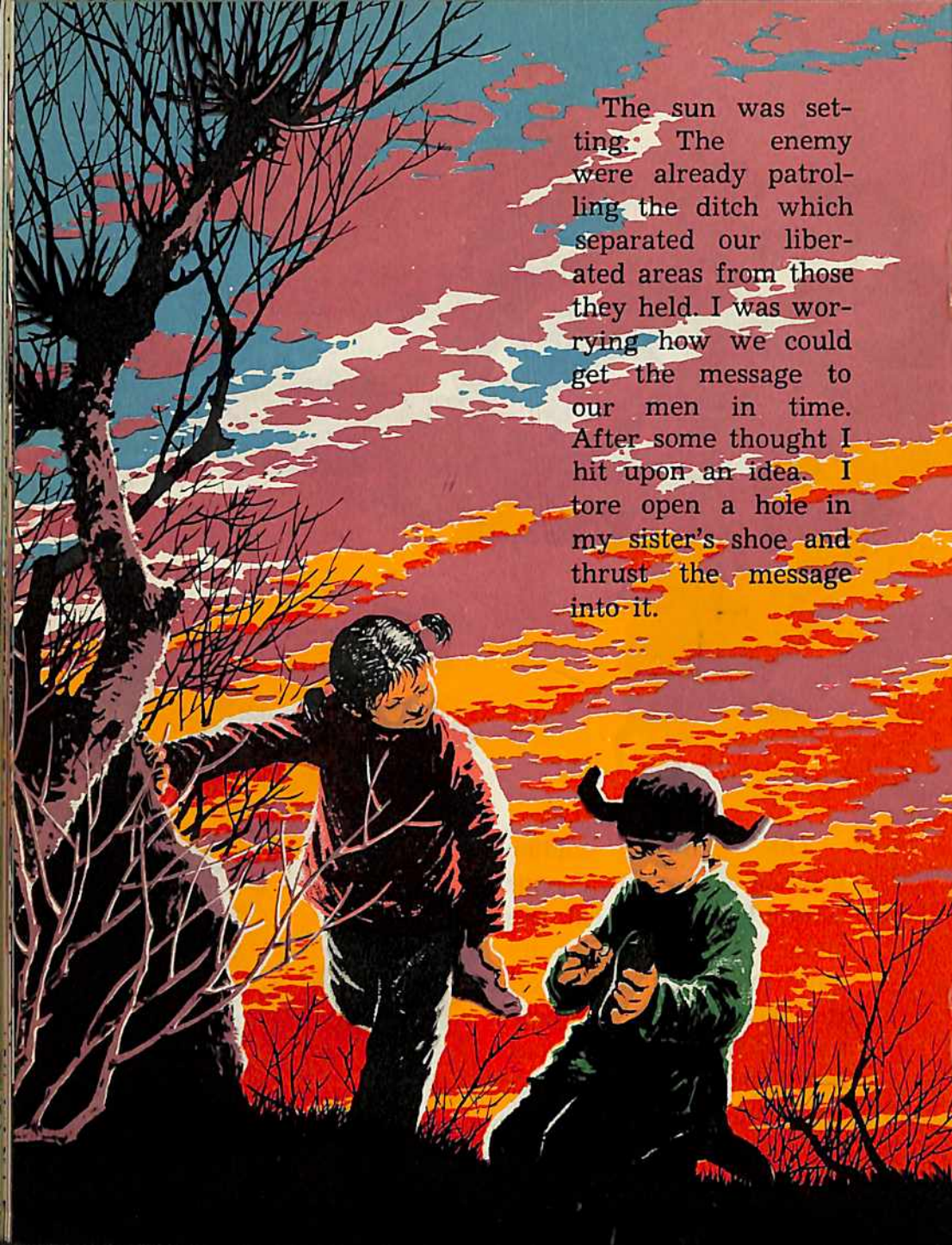


The puppet soldier grinned. "You poor wretch! You can eat the shoe!" he shouted as he gave my sister a slap on the face with it. I suppressed my anger and led my sister away, thinking that some day we would take our revenge on this scoundrel!

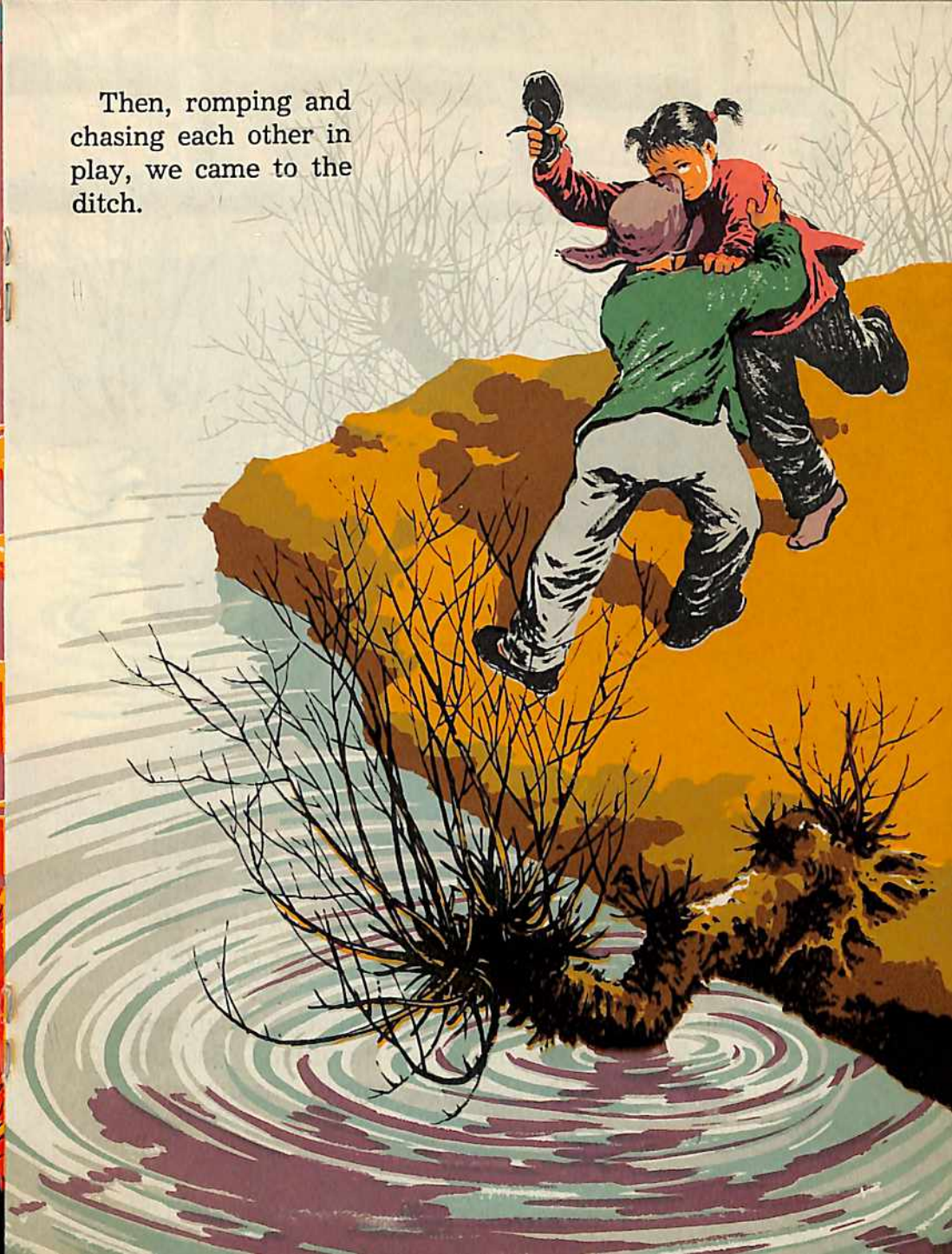





The sun was setting. The enemy were already patrolling the ditch which separated our liberated areas from those they held. I was worrying how we could get the message to our men in time. After some thought I hit upon an idea. I tore open a hole in my sister's shoe and thrust the message into it.



Then, romping and chasing each other in play, we came to the ditch.







A Japanese soldier was patrolling the bridge. Beneath it, we saw egg shells scattered here and there on the ground.

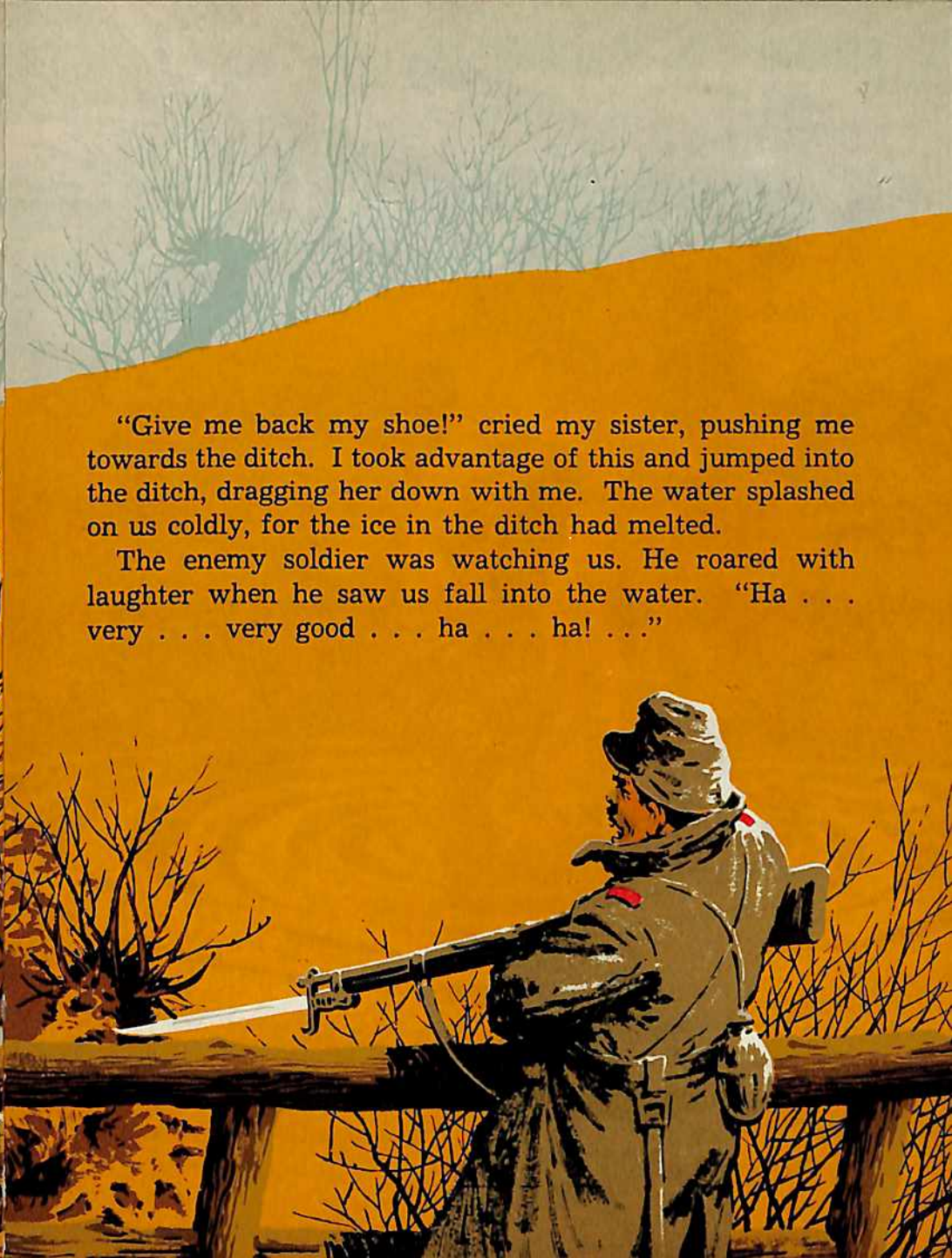
My sister struck at me with her shoe. I snatched it from her and threw it across the ditch. So our message, hidden in the shoe, was now on the opposite bank.



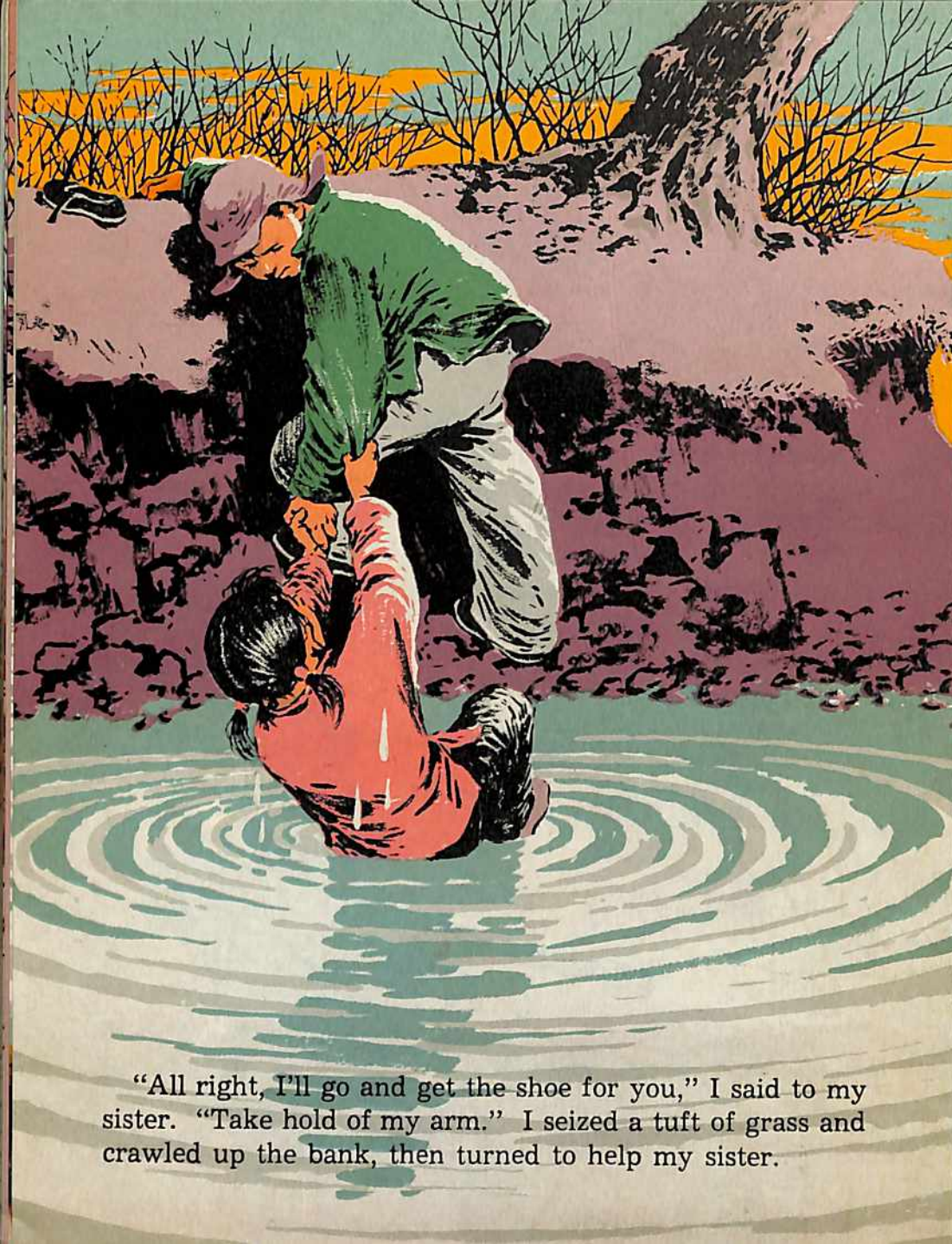


"Give me back my shoe!" cried my sister, pushing me towards the ditch. I took advantage of this and jumped into the ditch, dragging her down with me. The water splashed on us coldly, for the ice in the ditch had melted.

The enemy soldier was watching us. He roared with laughter when he saw us fall into the water. "Ha . . . very . . . very good . . . ha . . . ha! . . ."







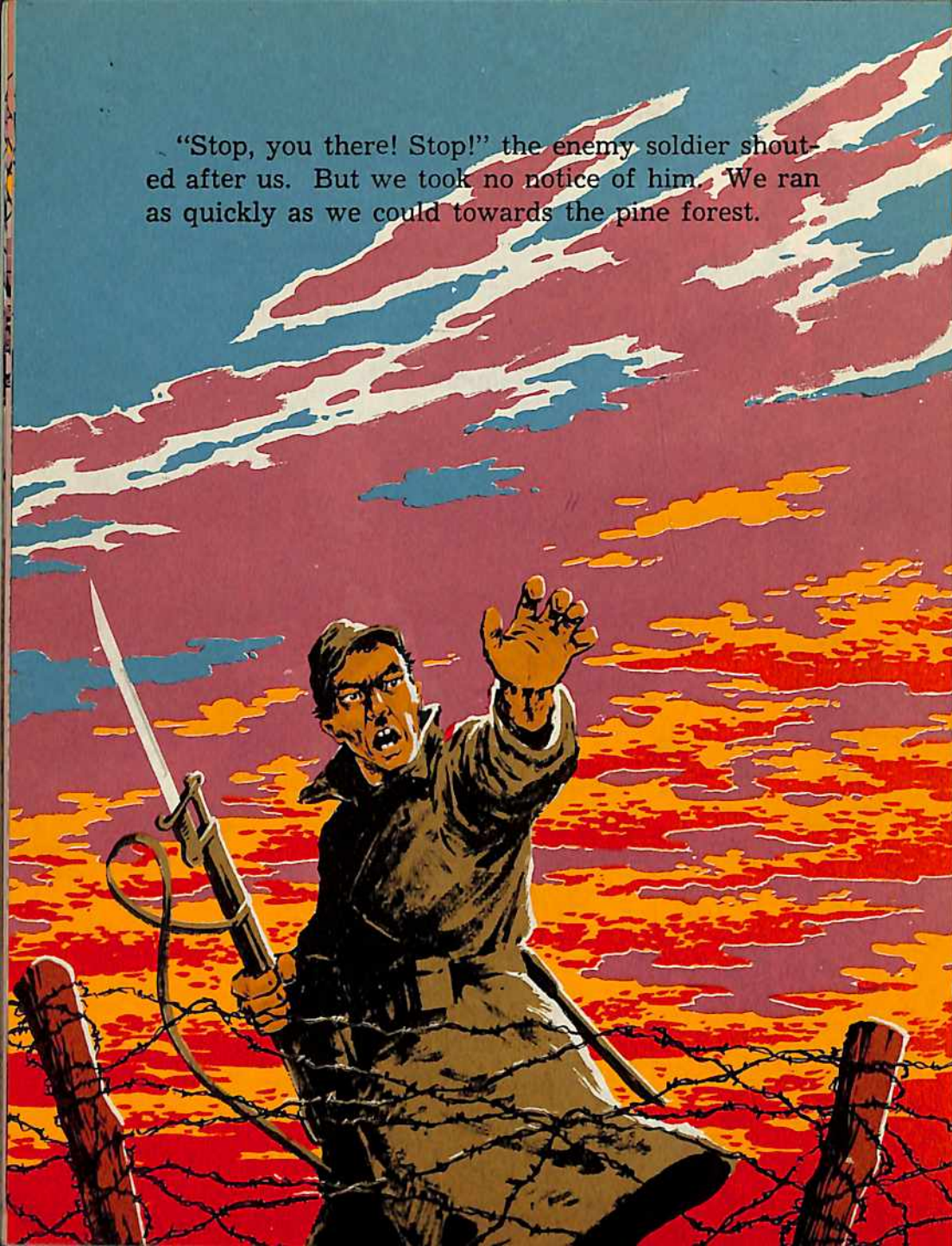
"All right, I'll go and get the shoe for you," I said to my sister. "Take hold of my arm." I seized a tuft of grass and crawled up the bank, then turned to help my sister.



She quickly put on her shoe with the message in it. Then we chased each other again, running all the time in the direction of the guerrilla headquarters.



"Stop, you there! Stop!" the enemy soldier shouted after us. But we took no notice of him. We ran as quickly as we could towards the pine forest.



The Japanese soldier started to fire at us. The bullets whistled over our heads. Suddenly my sister fell to the ground.





"Sister, are you hit?" I ran to her quickly and helped her to her feet.

"It's nothing. I only stumbled," she replied.

At that moment, I felt as if one of my legs had been hit by a lump of brick, and my strength suddenly failed. I sank to the ground scarcely knowing it, but as my head knocked against the side of a rock I uttered a sharp cry of pain. I was on my feet again and ran into the pine forest before my sister had time to help me.







After passing through the forest, we still had two miles to go to reach the district guerrilla headquarters. Now the pain in my leg began to cut me like a knife. I sat down on a heap of straw and found to my horror that blood was oozing from a wound.



"What shall we do! What shall we do!" my sister cried, tears streaming down her cheeks.

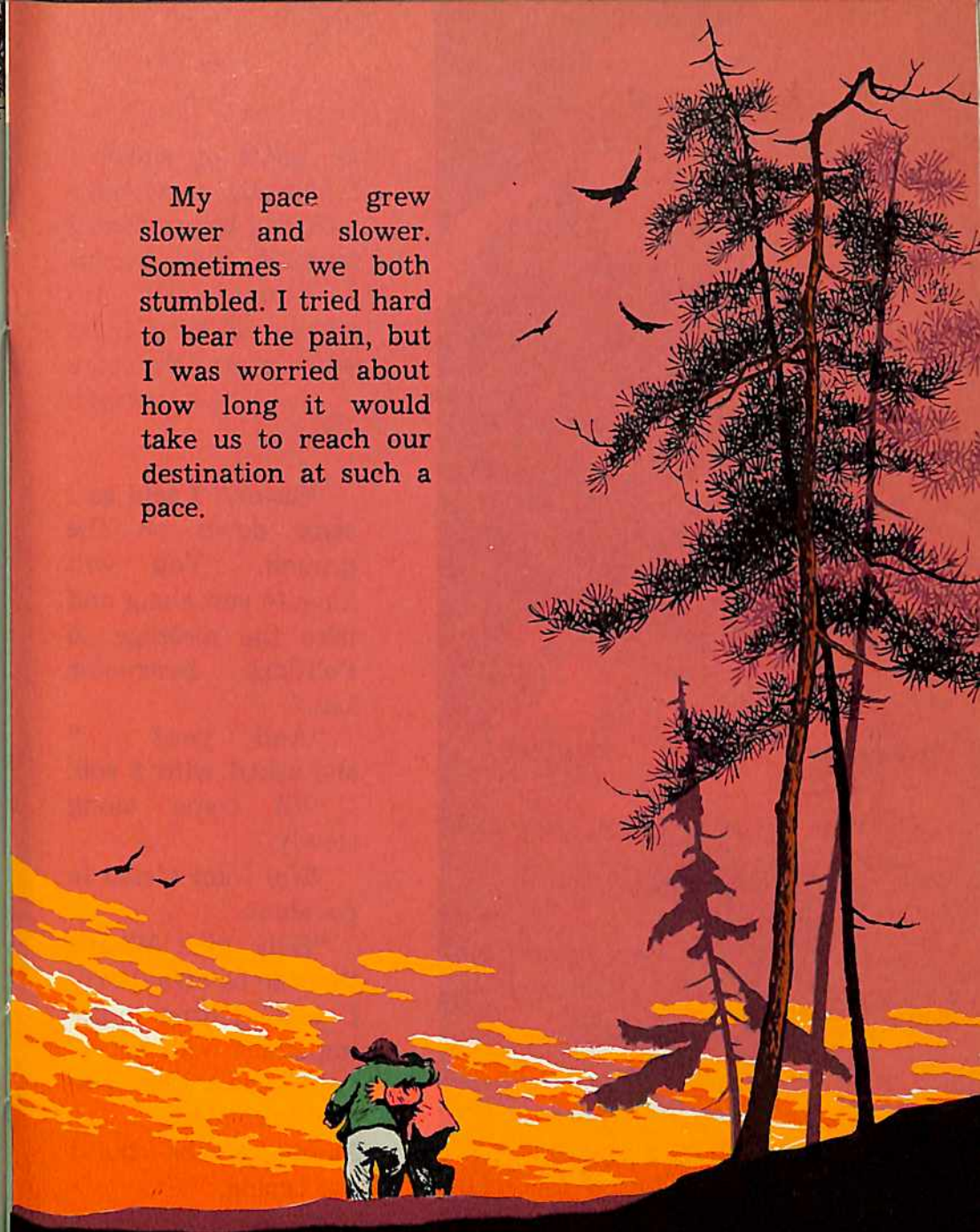
"Don't worry, it's only a scratch," I told her trying not to alarm her. I smothered my pain and struggled to my feet.





As we walked on, my sister sobbed. "We mustn't give up," I said to myself. "No matter what happens, we must deliver this message to the guerrillas." My sister helped to support me as we trudged on and on.

My pace grew slower and slower. Sometimes we both stumbled. I tried hard to bear the pain, but I was worried about how long it would take us to reach our destination at such a pace.







"Sister," I said as I sank down on the ground. "You will have to run along and take the message to Political Instructor Liu."

"And you? . . ." she asked with a sob.

"I'll come along slowly."

"No! I am afraid to go alone."

"Silly girl! What's there to be afraid of?" I was getting quite impatient with her.

"I can't let you stay here alone. . . ." Suddenly she burst out crying.

"Now go along, as quickly as you can," I encouraged her. She turned and hurried off. "Be careful!" I cried after her as she vanished into the darkness.





★ It was a lovely, star-lit night. I tried to walk a few paces, but felt too weak to go on. I was wondering how far my sister had gone, and I tried to imagine how happy she would be when she handed the message to Political Instructor Liu. "All the members of the Children's Corps are brave young people," I thought to myself with great pride.



My sister did a good job. She walked on through the night and carried out her mission successfully. When Political Instructor Liu received the message, he took her in his arms and said: "You're really a fine member of the Children's Corps. I'm proud of you."





Political Instructor Liu read the message, then set out with a few comrades to lay mines at a road junction where a Japanese unit was due to pass. He sent two other comrades, with my sister as guide, to look for me and take me home on a stretcher.



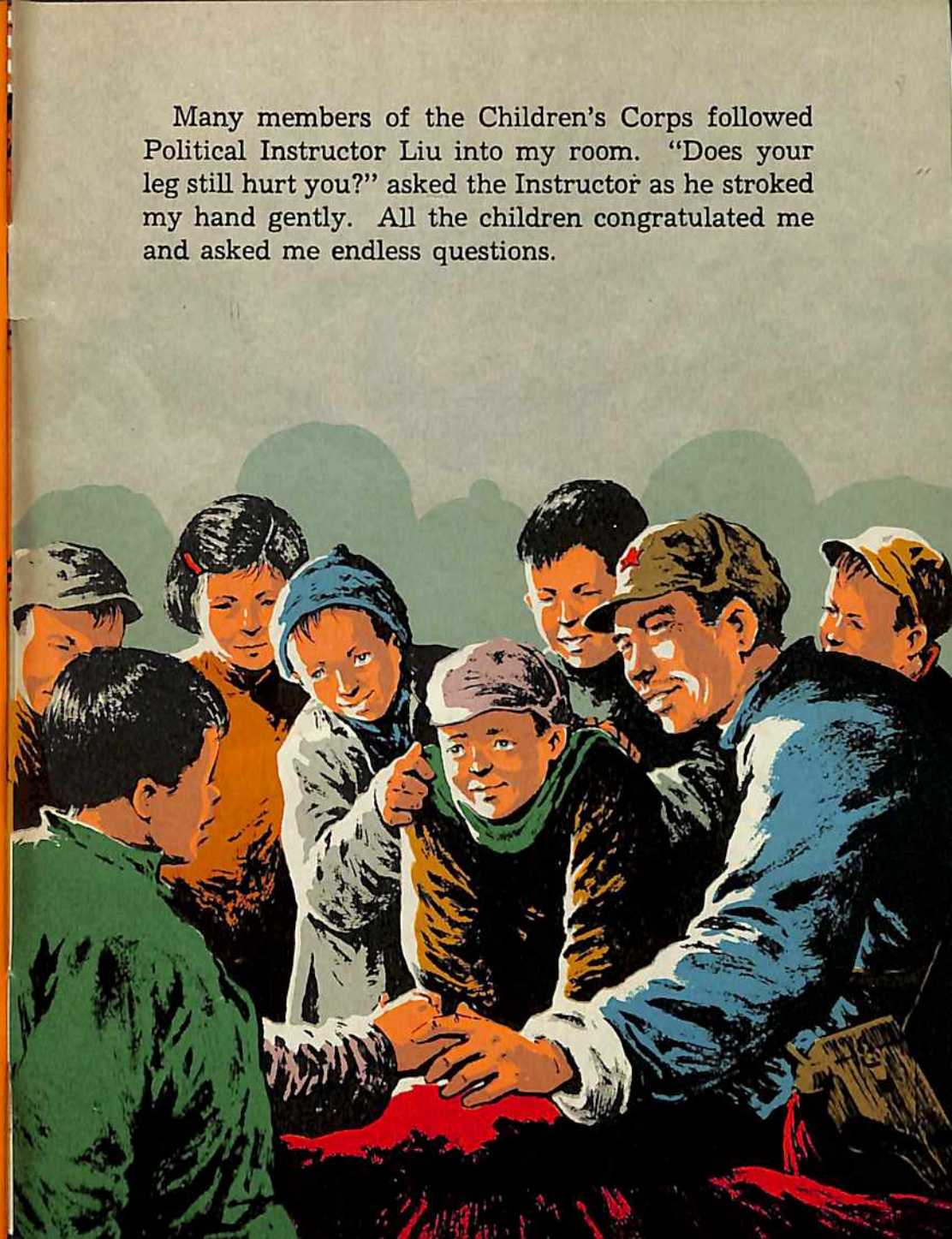
My mother was beside herself with joy when she learned that we had been of service to our guerrilla unit. She helped me change my clothes, while a nurse dressed my wound. My sister, exhausted with walking all night, immediately fell fast asleep.





Next morning I heard someone gently open the door. I sat up in my bed and saw that it was Political Instructor Liu. "Little Devil," he said joyfully, "you've done a splendid job."

Many members of the Children's Corps followed Political Instructor Liu into my room. "Does your leg still hurt you?" asked the Instructor as he stroked my hand gently. All the children congratulated me and asked me endless questions.

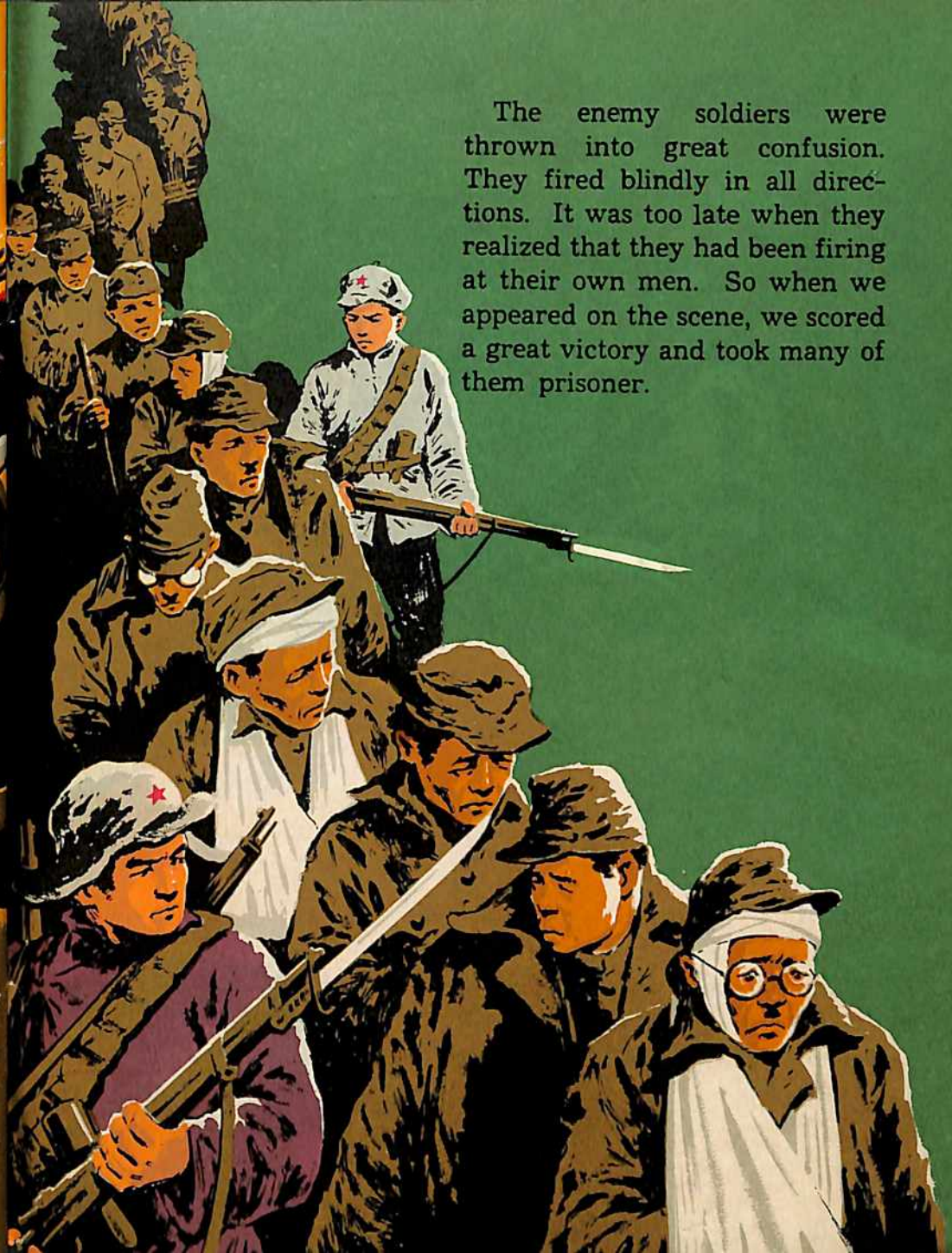






I took Political Instructor Liu's hand and asked him how the fighting was going on.

"When we received the message you brought," he began slowly, "we lost no time in laying the mines at the road junction before the enemy launched their attack. Well, when they came, the mines exploded and. . . ."



The enemy soldiers were thrown into great confusion. They fired blindly in all directions. It was too late when they realized that they had been firing at their own men. So when we appeared on the scene, we scored a great victory and took many of them prisoner.





This success inspired us to  
make even greater efforts in the  
cause of the revolution.







### 三号了望哨

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