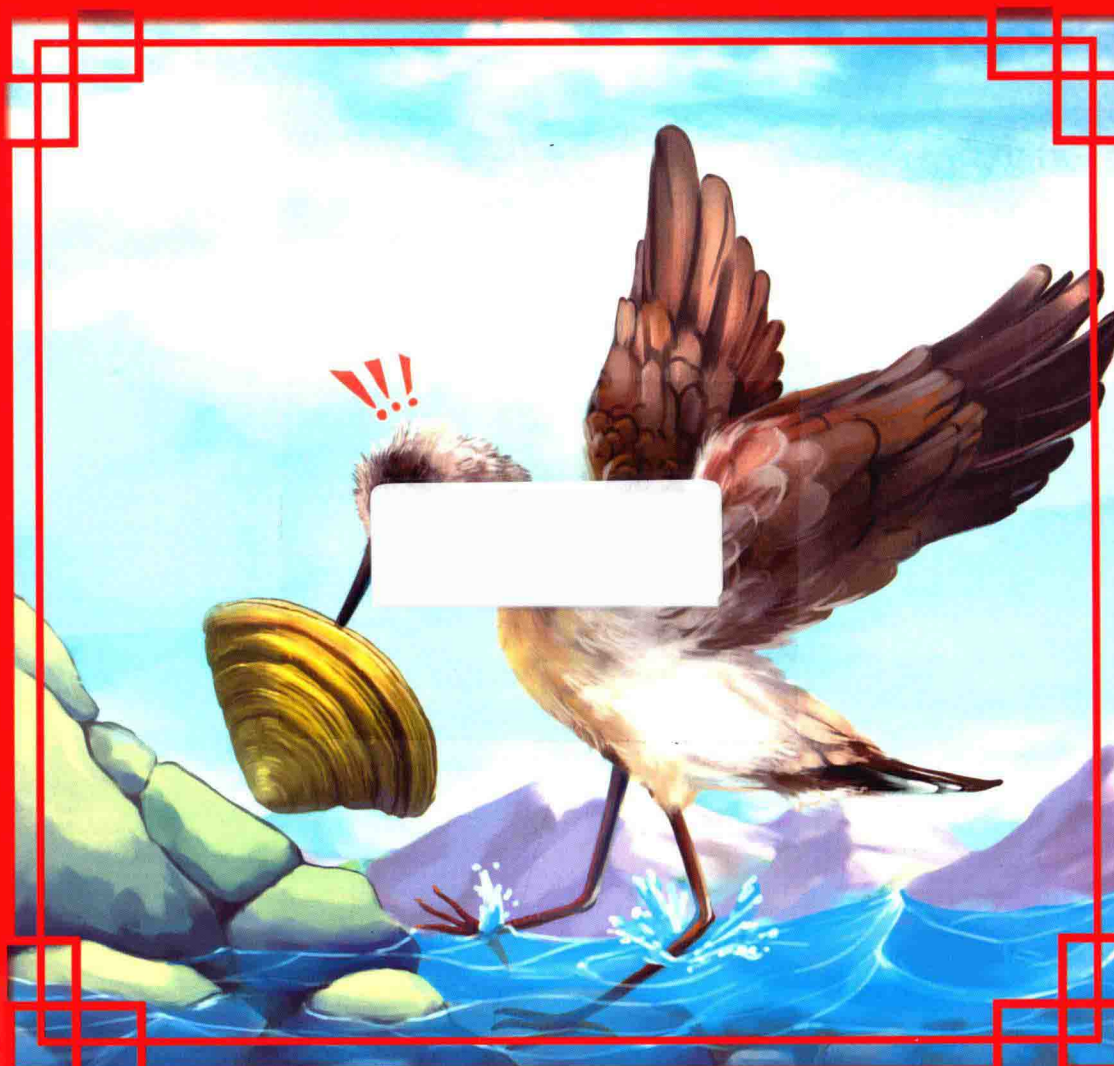


ILLUSTRATED CLASSIC CHINESE TALES
Fable Stories

THE SNIPE AND THE CLAM

· 鹬蚌相争 ·



中华传统经典故事绘本
附中文拼音



CHINA INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS

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Retold by Song Huaizhi
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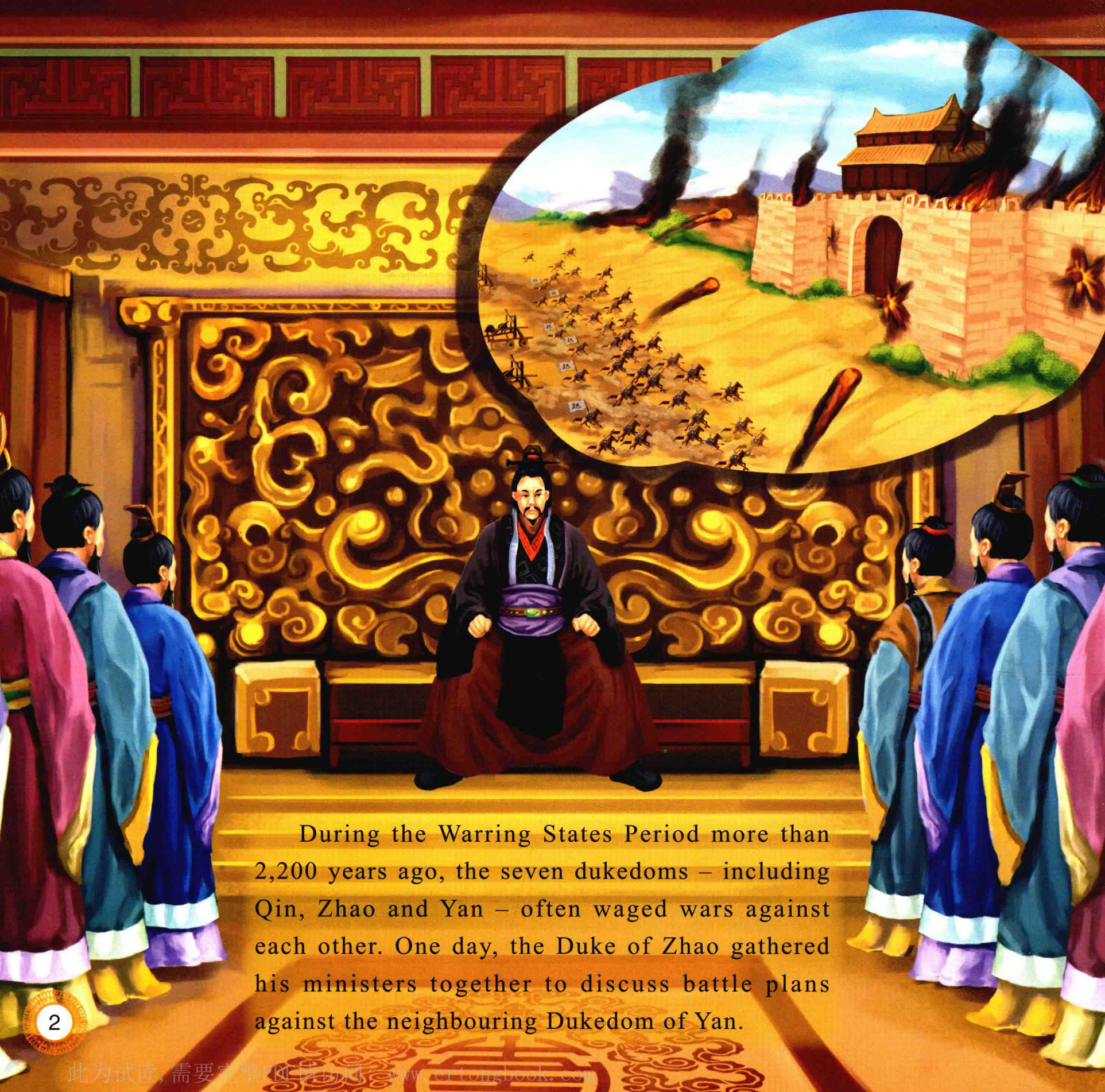
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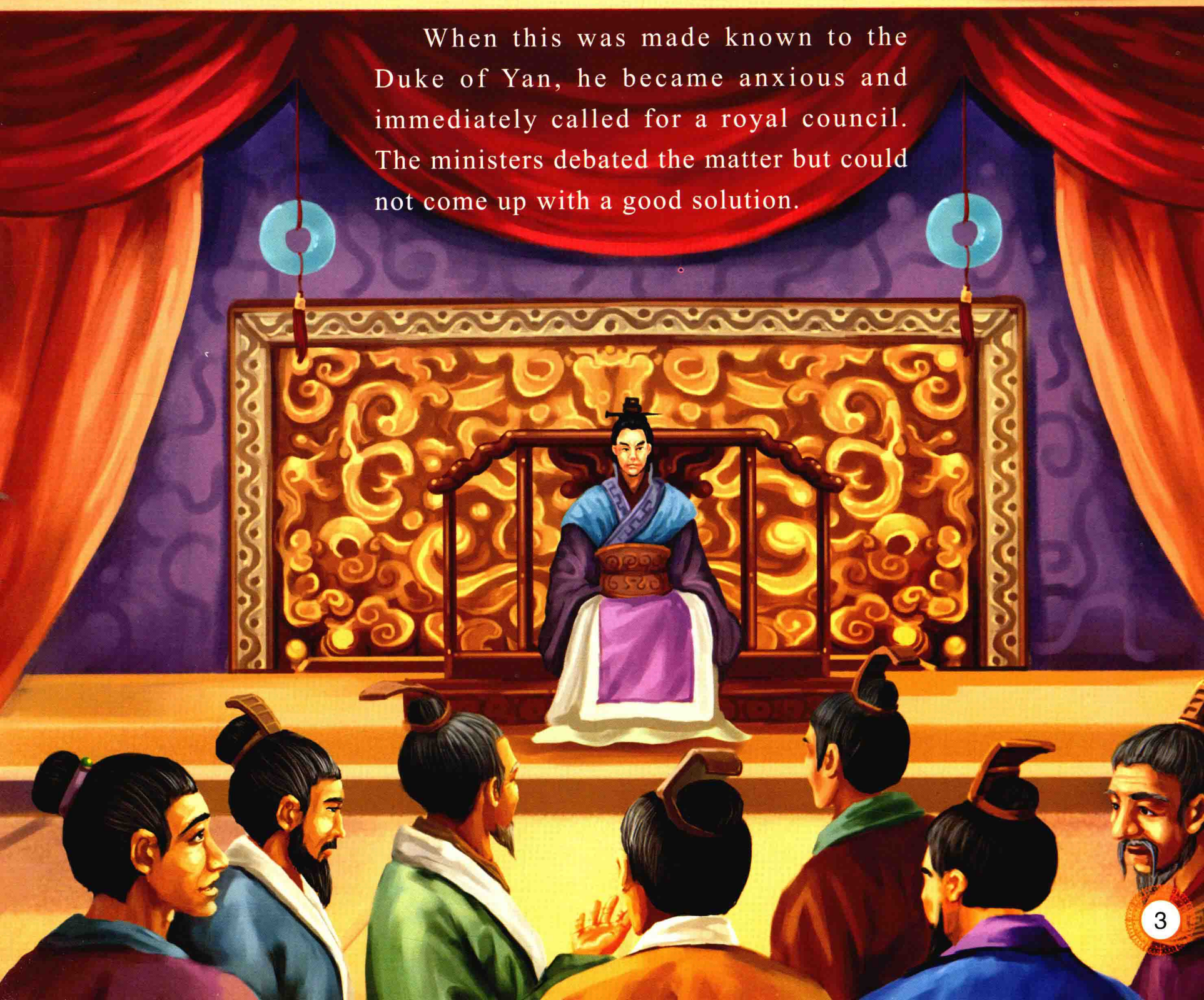


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During the Warring States Period more than 2,200 years ago, the seven dukedoms – including Qin, Zhao and Yan – often waged wars against each other. One day, the Duke of Zhao gathered his ministers together to discuss battle plans against the neighbouring Dukedom of Yan.

When this was made known to the Duke of Yan, he became anxious and immediately called for a royal council. The ministers debated the matter but could not come up with a good solution.



At last, one official stood up. His name was Su Dai.

“Your Grace,” he said, “please let me visit Zhao. I believe I can persuade the Duke of Zhao to stop his plans to attack us.”

The Duke of Yan welcomed Su’s advice and sent him as an envoy to Zhao.






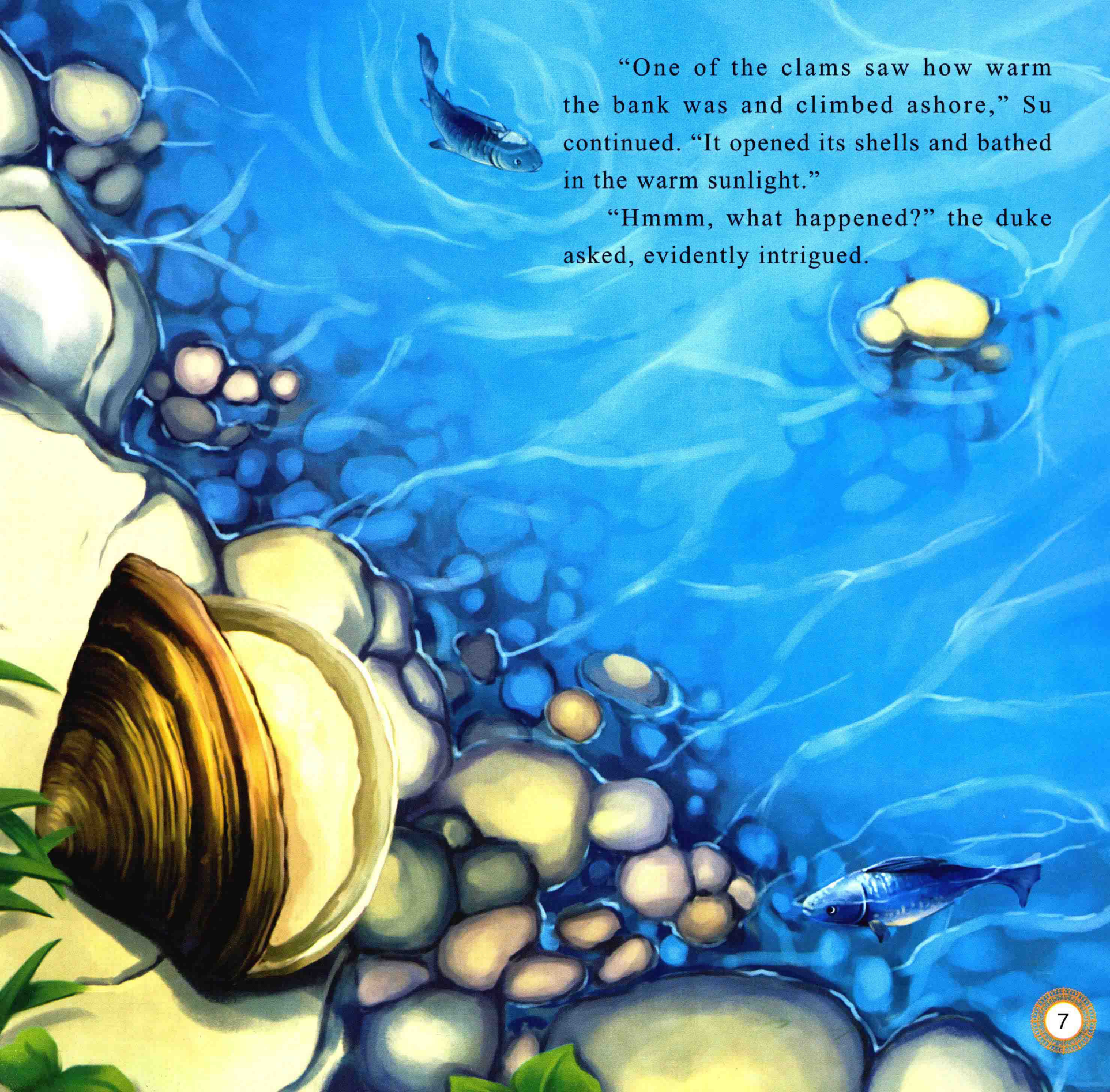
Su gained an audience with the Duke of Zhao.

“Your Grace,” he began, “why not postpone the talk of battle for a moment? Please allow me to recount a short story.”

The duke found this request rather peculiar, but he agreed nevertheless.




“On my way here,” Su said, “I crossed the River Yi, which is big. On that fine day, many birds were hovering over the water. Dozens of clams were enjoying the sunlight.”

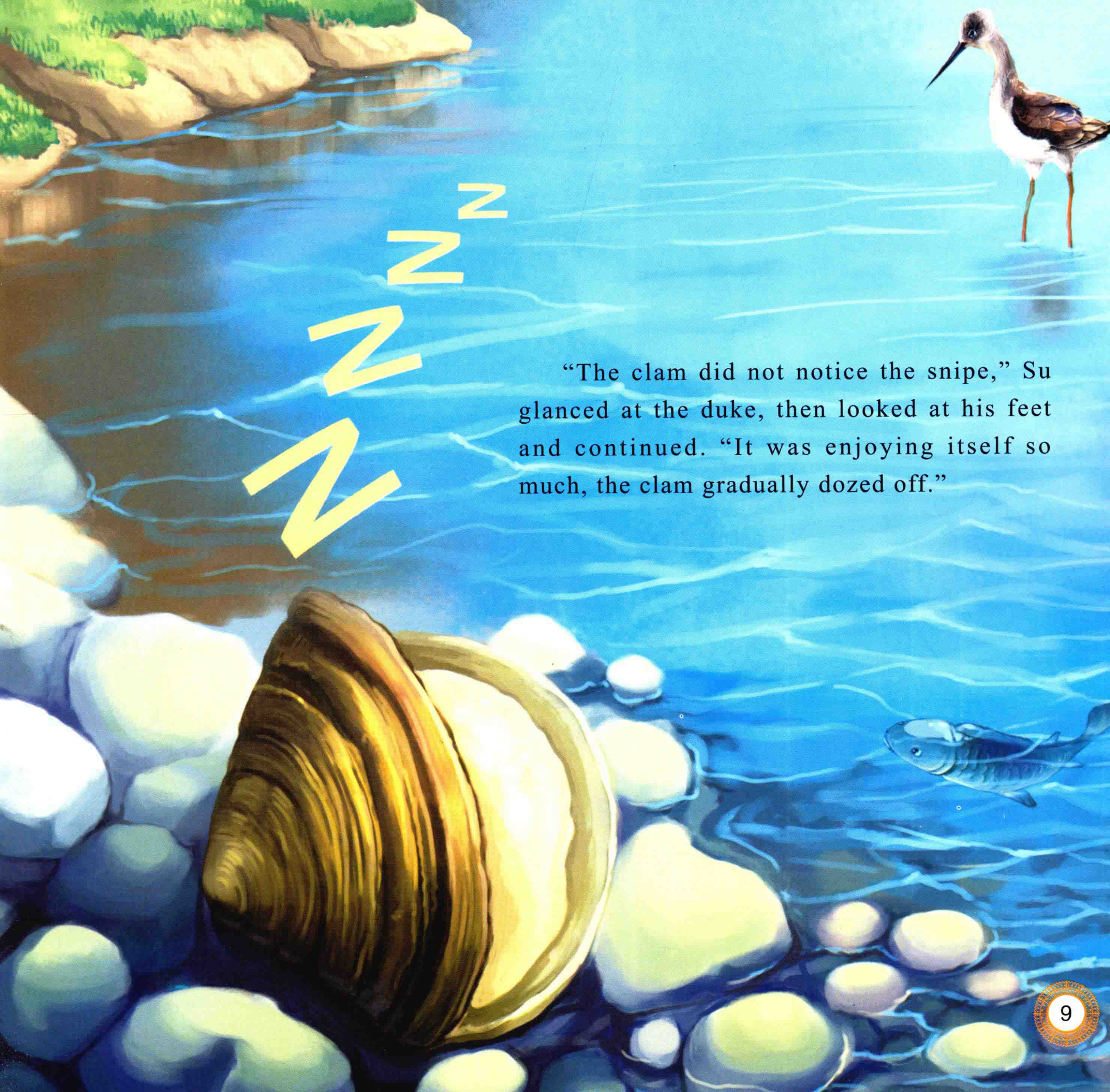


“One of the clams saw how warm the bank was and climbed ashore,” Su continued. “It opened its shells and bathed in the warm sunlight.”

“Hmmm, what happened?” the duke asked, evidently intrigued.

A detailed illustration of a coastal scene. In the foreground, a snipe with a long, dark beak and brown and white plumage stands in shallow, rippling blue water. To its left, a smaller brown bird is in flight. The shoreline is composed of smooth, light-colored rocks, some of which are partially submerged. Several clams are visible: one large clam is open on the shore, while others are closed and floating in the water. The background shows more water and distant rocks.

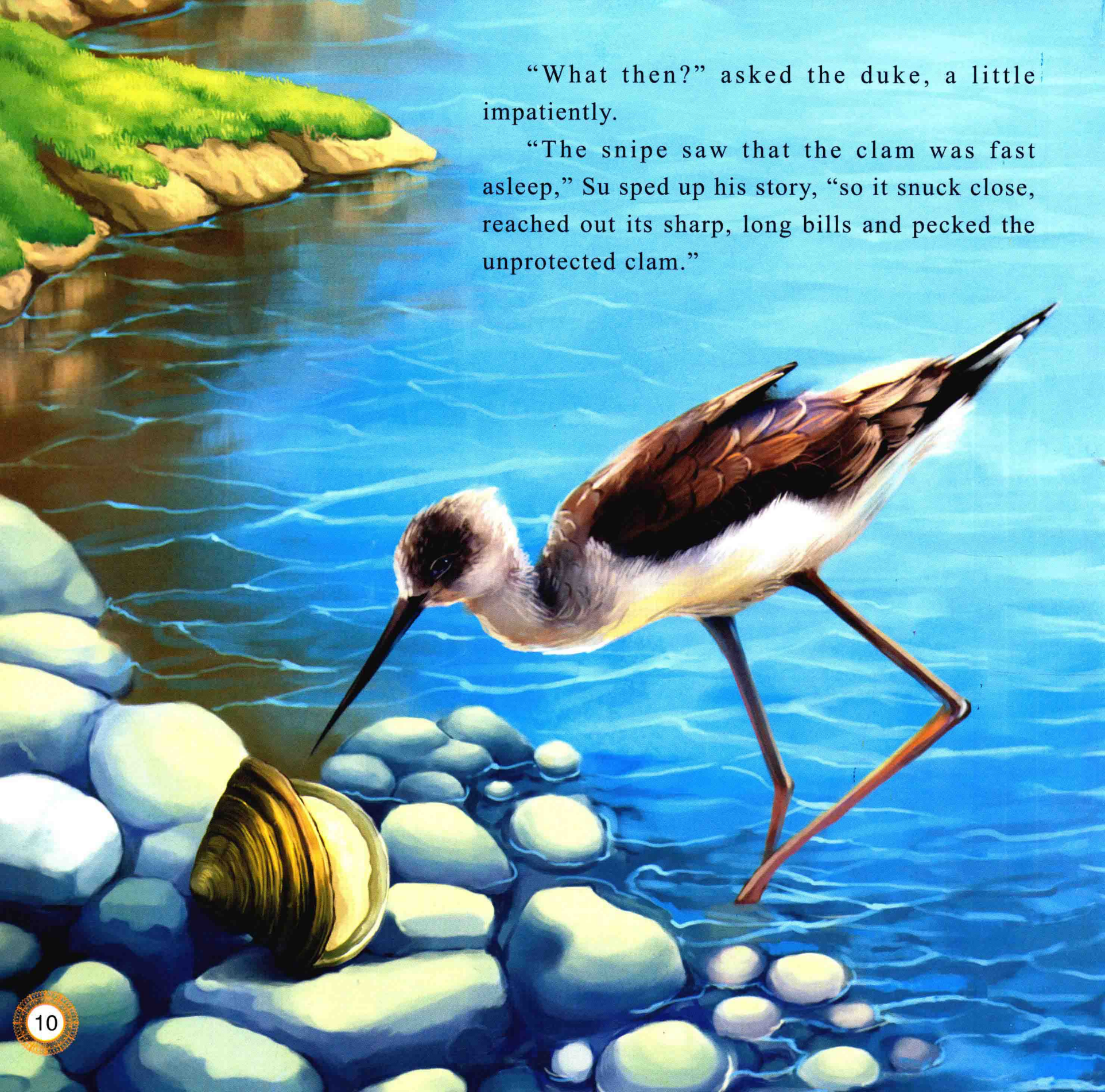
“In the distance, there was a snipe wading in the shallow water,” Su said. “The bird spotted the clam and stopped. It stood there, watching.”



“The clam did not notice the snipe,” Su glanced at the duke, then looked at his feet and continued. “It was enjoying itself so much, the clam gradually dozed off.”

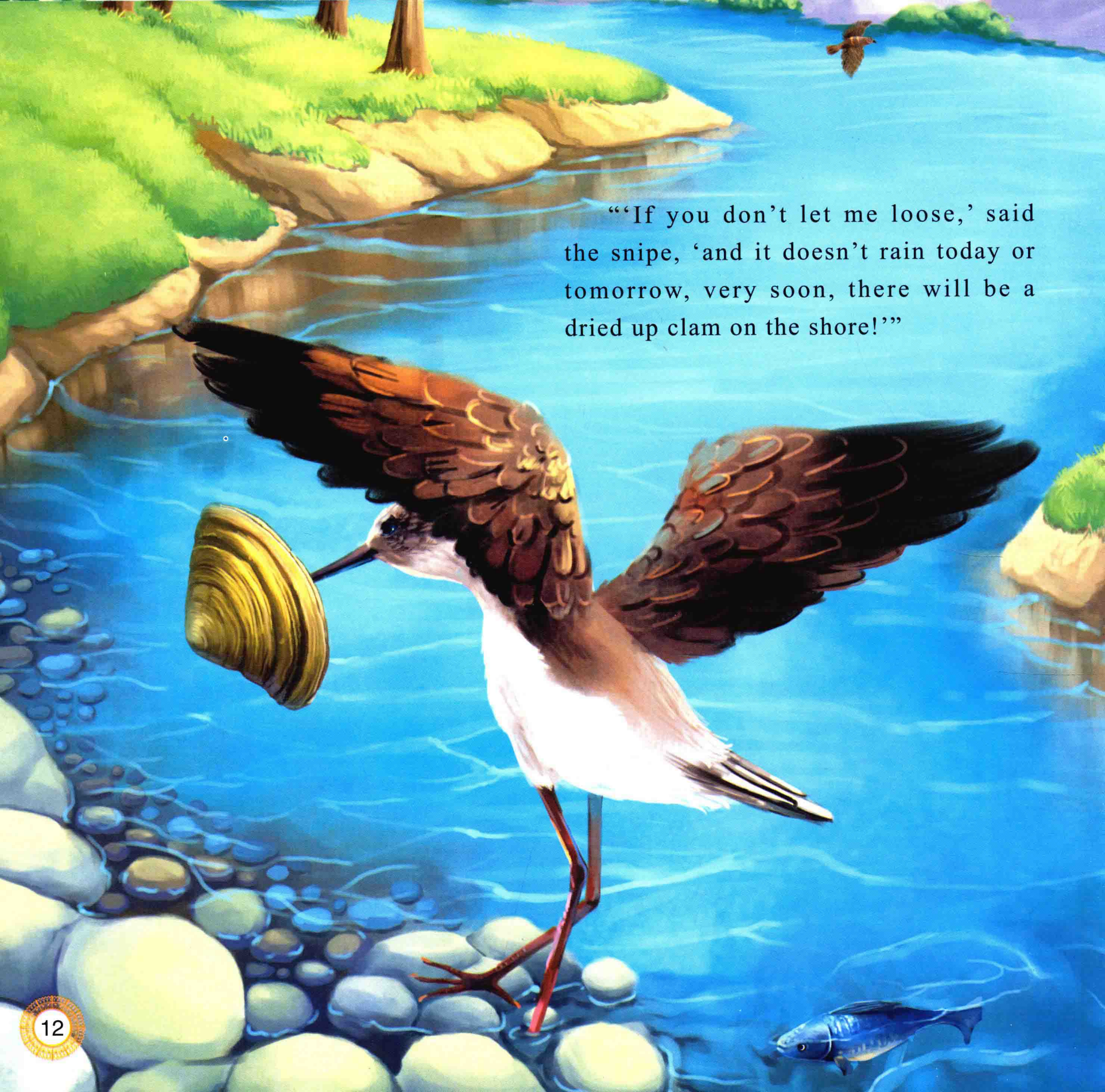
“What then?” asked the duke, a little impatiently.

“The snipe saw that the clam was fast asleep,” Su sped up his story, “so it snuck close, reached out its sharp, long bills and pecked the unprotected clam.”



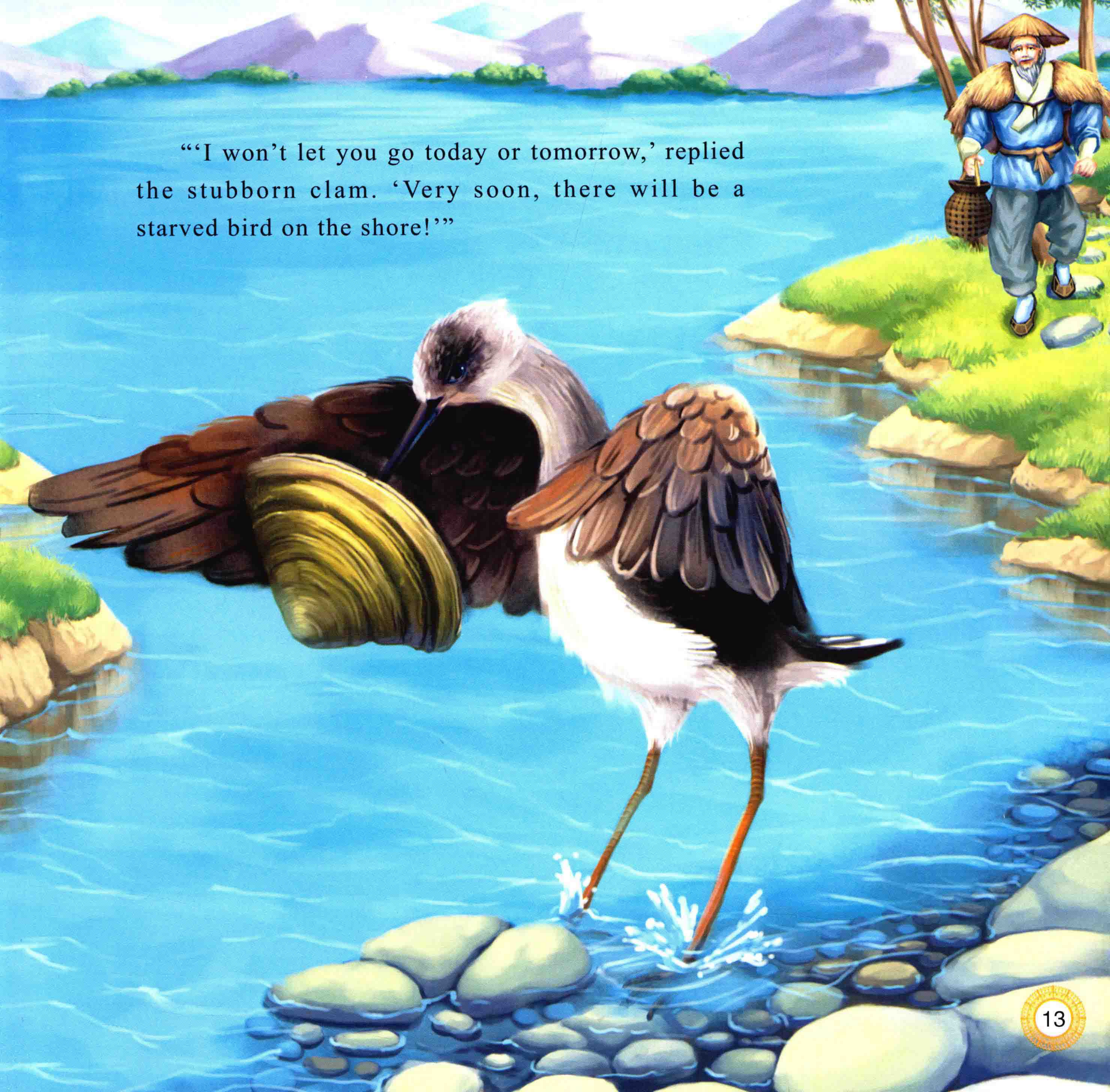
“‘Ouch!’ the clam woke up in sharp pain,”
said Su urgently. “It snapped its shells closed,
clamping the snipe’s bills.”






“‘If you don’t let me loose,’ said the snipe, ‘and it doesn’t rain today or tomorrow, very soon, there will be a dried up clam on the shore!’”

“‘I won’t let you go today or tomorrow,’ replied the stubborn clam. ‘Very soon, there will be a starved bird on the shore!’”





“And thus the two stayed in deadlock. Neither would budge,” Su said. “What they didn’t see was that a fisherman was approaching. Without any trouble, the fisherman caught both of them and happily went home.”