



The Children of Lír

李尔王的孩子

(爱尔兰) Maire Buonocore 改编
(加拿大) Isabelle Arsenault 绘

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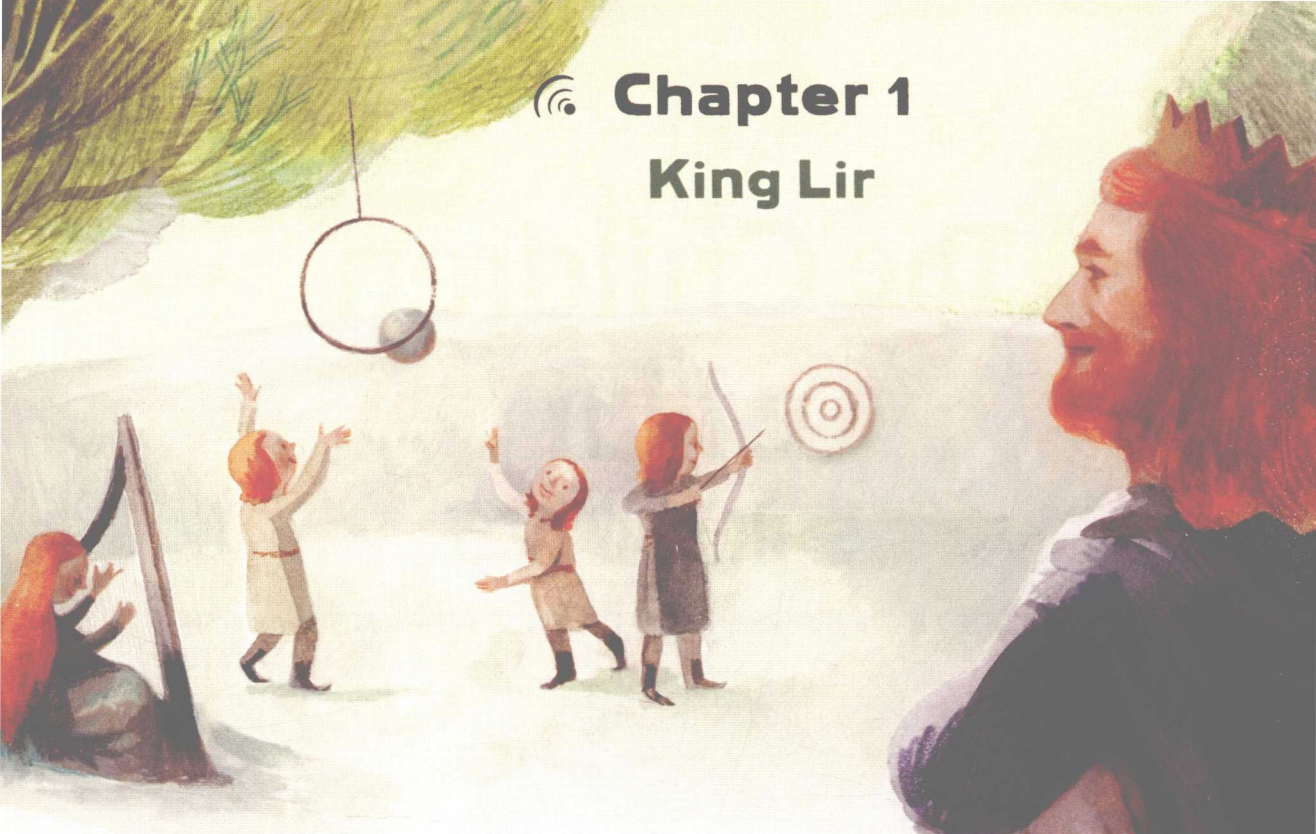
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Chapter 1

King Lir

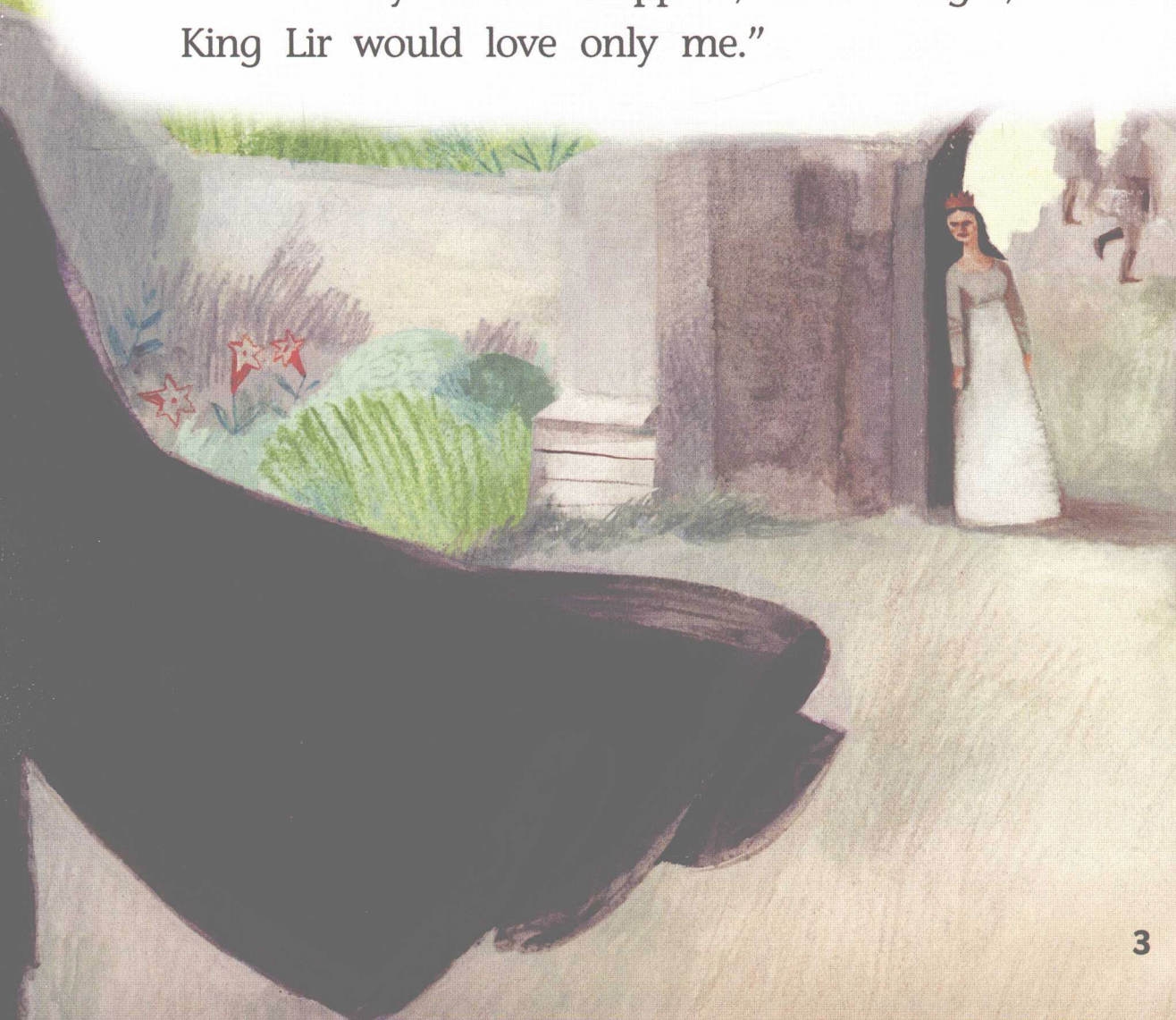


Many, many years ago a king named King Lir ruled in Ireland.

He was strong and brave and he commanded a mighty army. He lived with his four children, one girl and three boys, and their stepmother, the Queen. King Lir loved his children very much.

☞ The Queen only pretended to love the children. She felt jealous whenever King Lir was with them. As time passed her jealousy grew and she hated the children more and more.

“I wish they would disappear,” she thought, “then King Lir would love only me.”



- ☞ The Queen didn't spend time helping the children to shoot arrows, ride their ponies or play their musical instruments.



Instead, while everyone was busy, she would sneak away to her secret room and practise her evil magic. No one knew that she could make potions and cast magic spells.

☪ Sometimes she would go secretly into the woods and try her magic on small animals. One day, she turned a frog into a fish and a worm into a snail. The Queen was beginning to think dark thoughts. She decided the only way to get rid of the children was to use her magic.



6 In front of the King, the Queen was kind to the children. She tricked him into thinking she cared for them. In the evenings, by the fireside, she helped them to weave and told them stories about heroes of long ago. King Lir felt happy that the Queen loved his children.



Chapter 2

The magic spell



One day, news came of war. King Lir told his army to prepare for a big battle. He gathered his family together and told them that he had to go away for a while, to fight in the war. The children didn't want him to go.



- ☞ The Queen wrapped her arms around the children as they sadly waved goodbye to their father. “I’m sure he’ll be home soon,” she said. “We’ll have a lovely time. Why don’t we go for a picnic together tomorrow?”

☞ The next day was warm and sunny. The Queen said, "Let's go for our walk through the woods. We can have our picnic by the lake." As the children ran and skipped along the woodland path the Queen grinned. "Good," she thought, "today I'll put my plan into action."



☞ While the children splashed in the lake, the Queen touched the water with her crooked wand and chanted some strange words. Suddenly they began to flap about in panic. They hunched over as their bodies changed shape and cried out as their noses and mouths turned into long beaks.





☞ The children looked at each other in horror. The Queen screeched with laughter, “I’ve changed you into swans. Now King Lir will love only me!” The Queen began to chant:

“Now as swans you’re doomed to roam, you’ll never return to your father’s home ...”

☞ *“From north to south, from east to west, there’ll be
no place for you to rest.*

*There’s just one thing to break this spell. The chiming
of a wedding bell,*

*For a bride and groom who must unite, from kingdoms
that forever fight.”*

She laughed as she left them all alone.

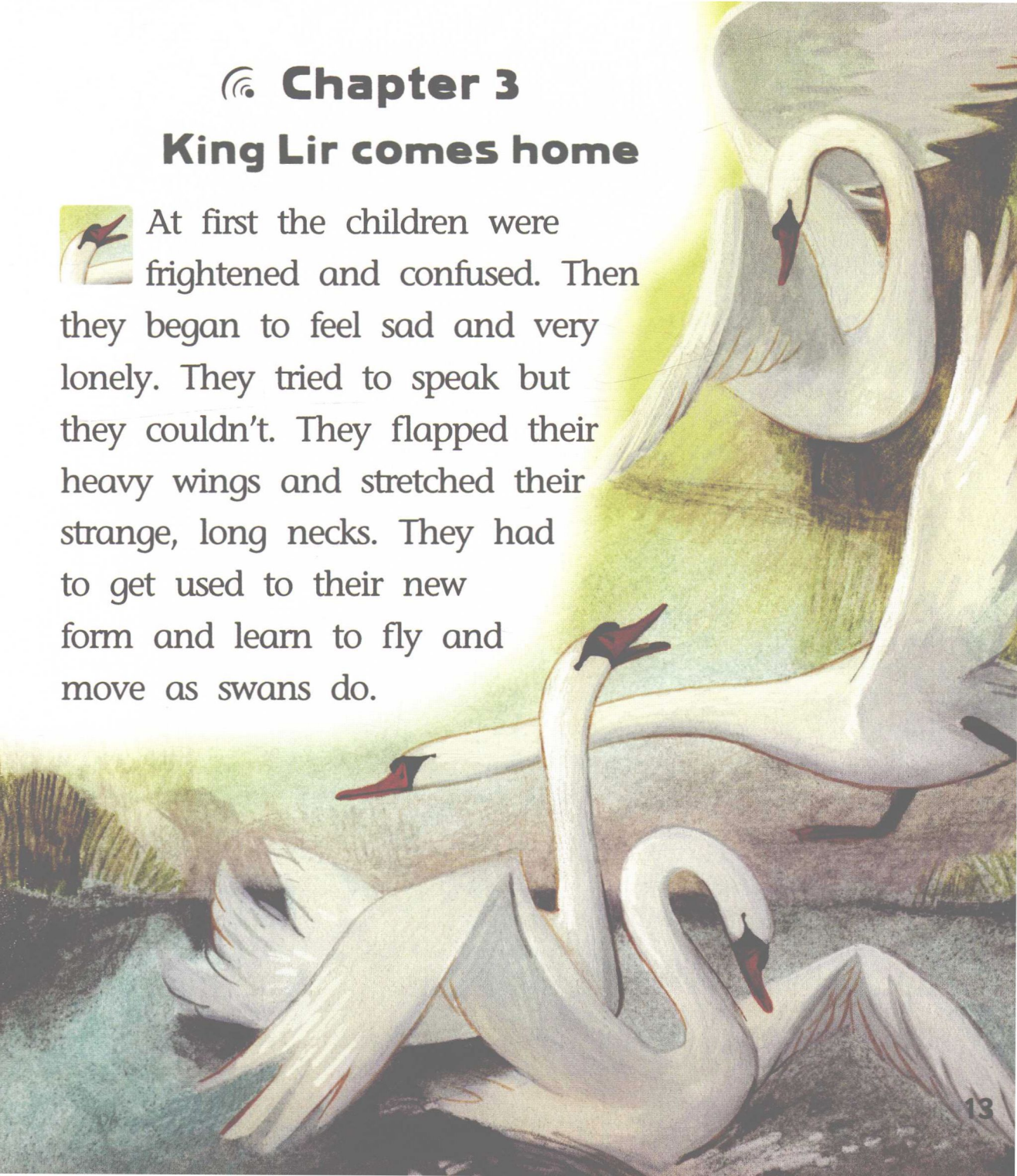


Chapter 3

King Lir comes home



At first the children were frightened and confused. Then they began to feel sad and very lonely. They tried to speak but they couldn't. They flapped their heavy wings and stretched their strange, long necks. They had to get used to their new form and learn to fly and move as swans do.





- ☞ They knew that the spell meant that they couldn't go home to the castle. The sister remembered a sad song and she began to hum the tune. As she hummed the other swans moved closer to hear her.