

ILLUSTRATED CLASSIC CHINESE TALES
Idiom Stories

PLUGGING ONE'S EARS TO STEAL A NOISY BELL

· 掩耳盗铃 ·



成语故事

中华传统经典故事绘本
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CHINA INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS

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Retold by Song Huaizhi
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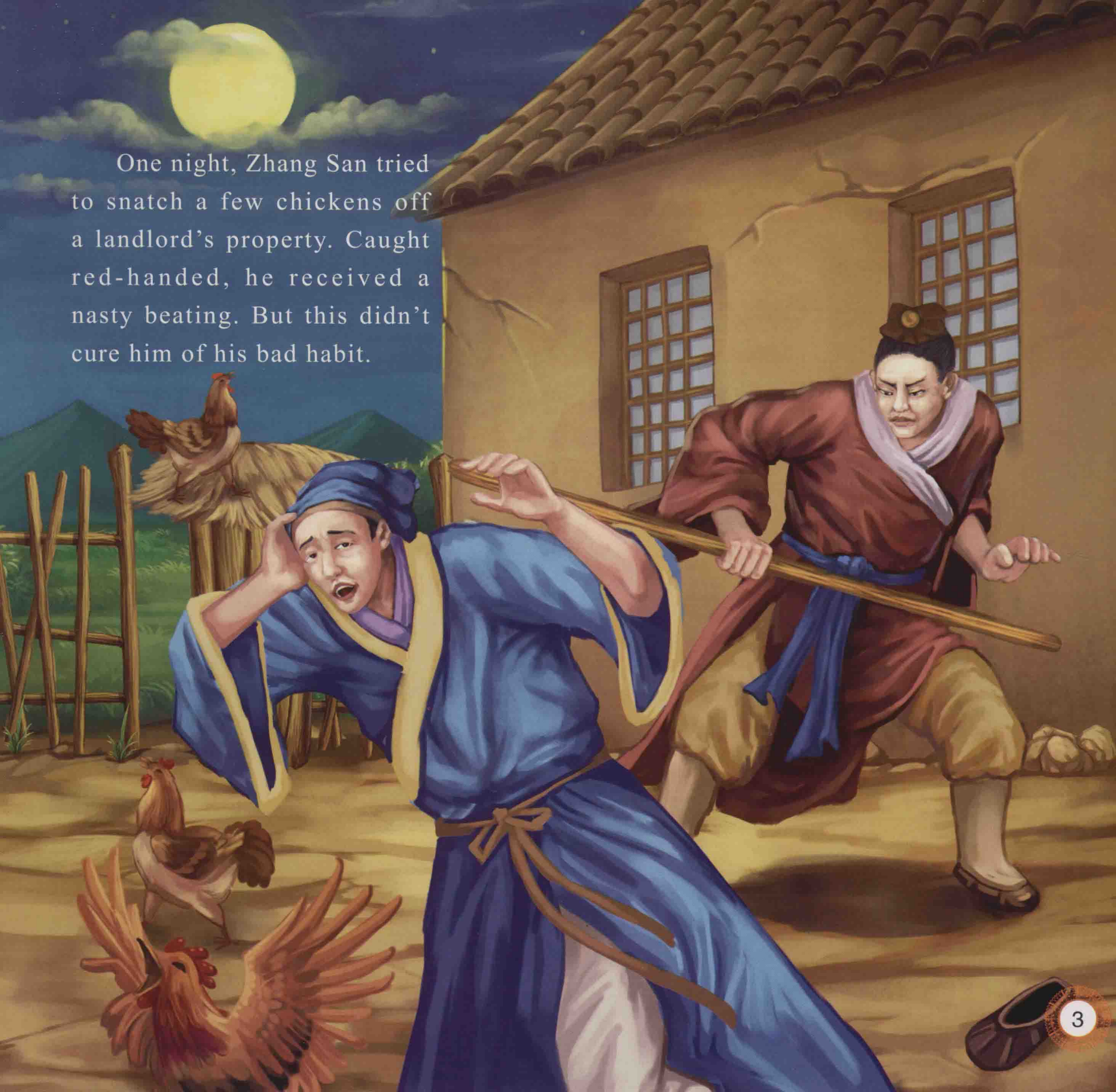


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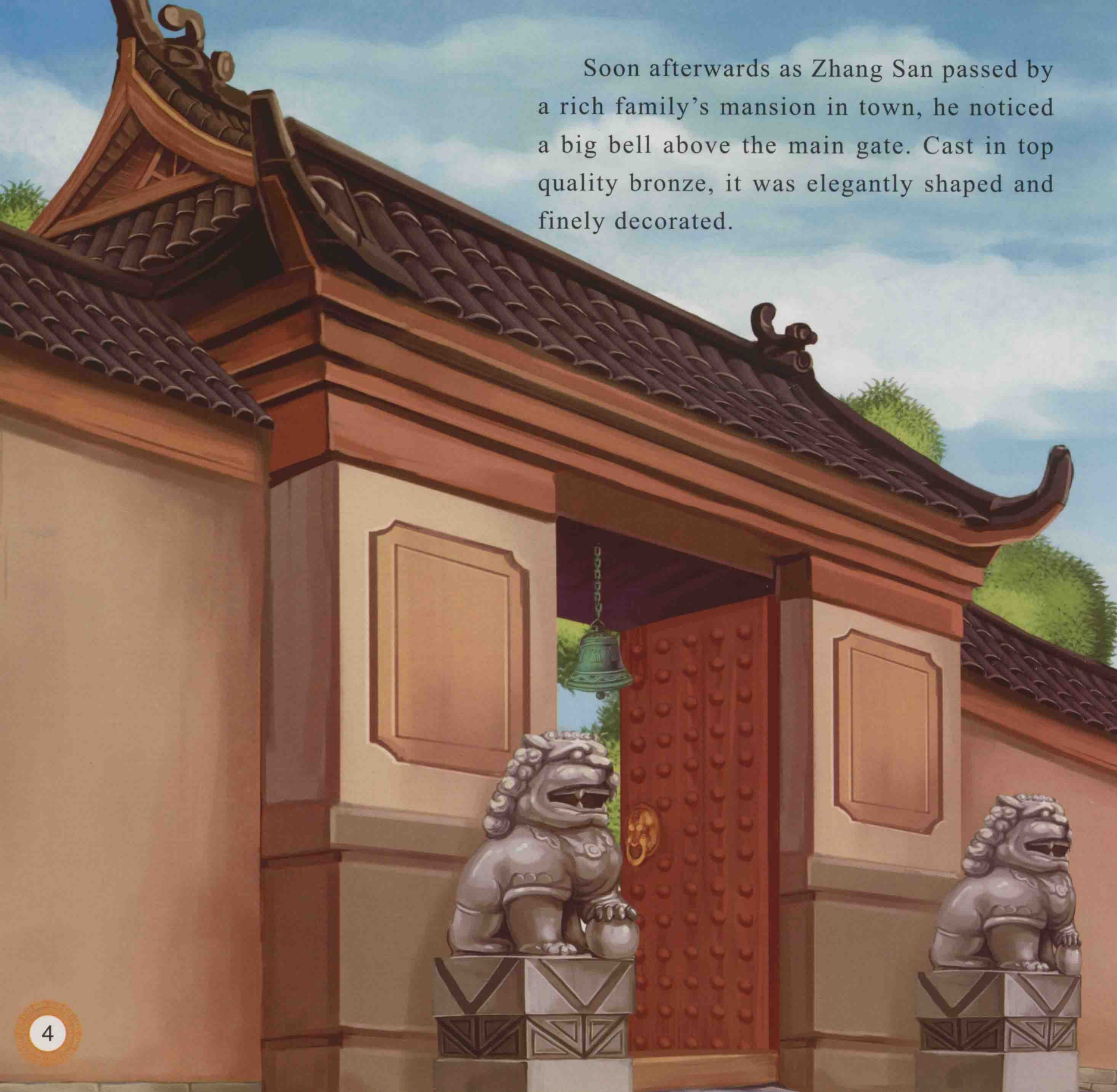


During China's Spring and Autumn Period, there lived a man named Zhang San in the state of Jin. He loved taking advantage of others and laying his hands on anything valuable. No wonder everyone steered clear of him.

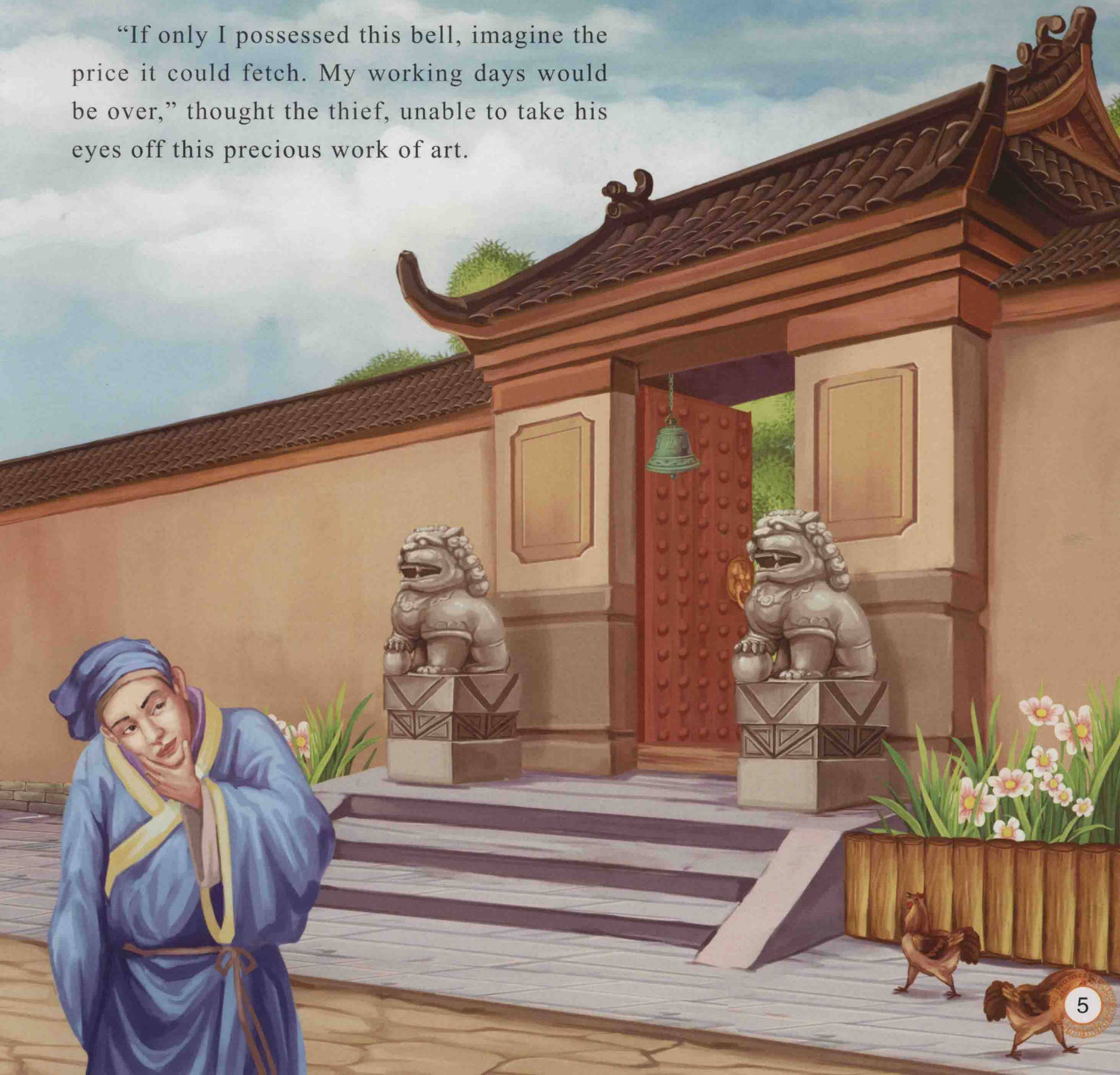
One night, Zhang San tried to snatch a few chickens off a landlord's property. Caught red-handed, he received a nasty beating. But this didn't cure him of his bad habit.




Soon afterwards as Zhang San passed by a rich family's mansion in town, he noticed a big bell above the main gate. Cast in top quality bronze, it was elegantly shaped and finely decorated.



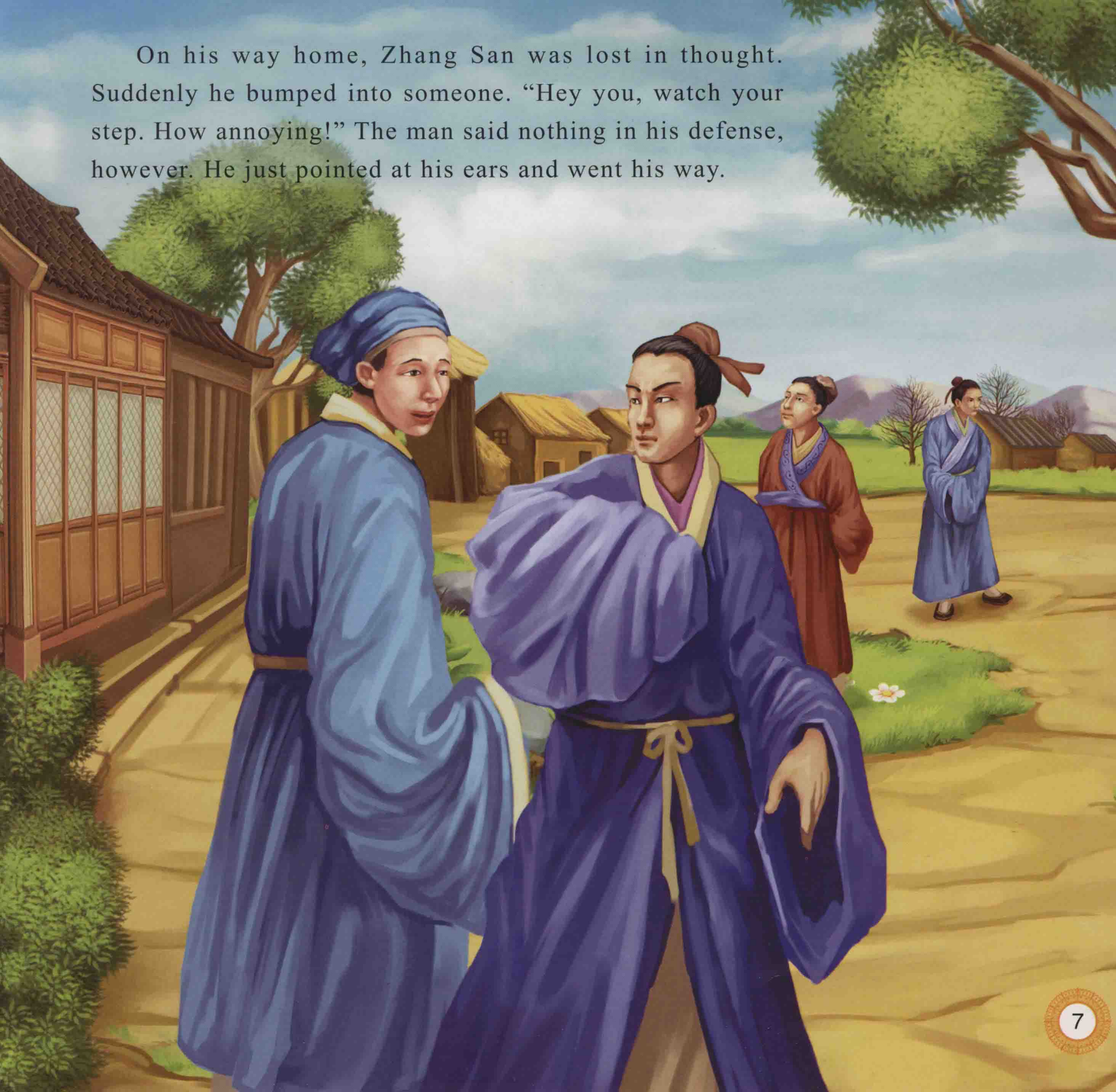
“If only I possessed this bell, imagine the price it could fetch. My working days would be over,” thought the thief, unable to take his eyes off this precious work of art.



A man in a blue robe with yellow trim and a blue turban is reaching up towards a green bell hanging from a gate. He has a surprised expression. The gate is made of red wood with a large stone lion on the left. Another stone lion is on the right, sitting on a pedestal. The background shows a traditional Chinese building with a tiled roof and a blue sky with clouds. There are some flowers and a small bush near the right lion.

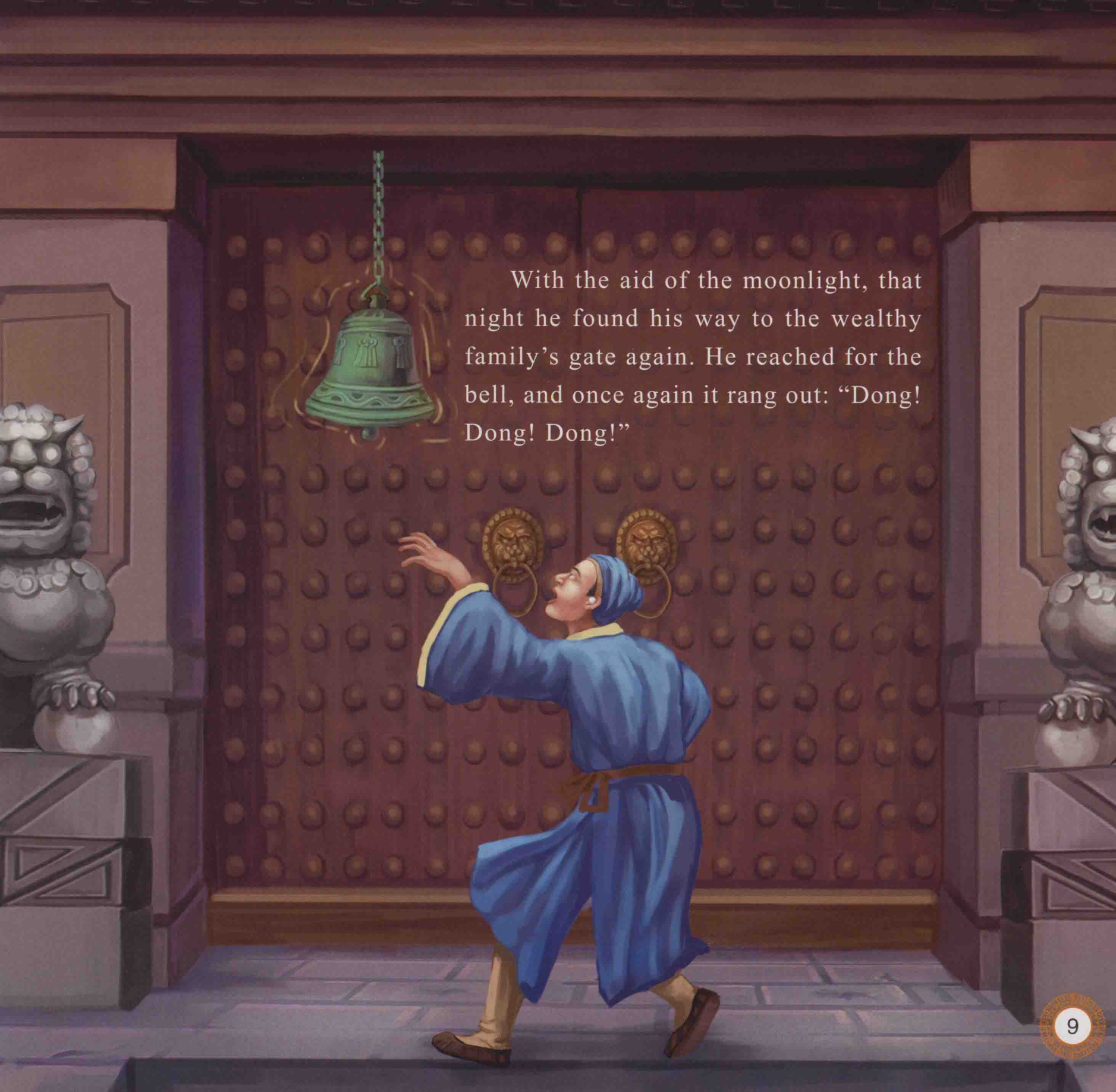
He waited until no one was in sight, then boldly approached the gate and reached up for the bell. But as soon as he touched it, the bell boomed, “Dong! Dong! Dong!” Zhang San scurried away. “I must come up with a better plan and come back again tonight,” he mumbled to himself.

On his way home, Zhang San was lost in thought. Suddenly he bumped into someone. “Hey you, watch your step. How annoying!” The man said nothing in his defense, however. He just pointed at his ears and went his way.

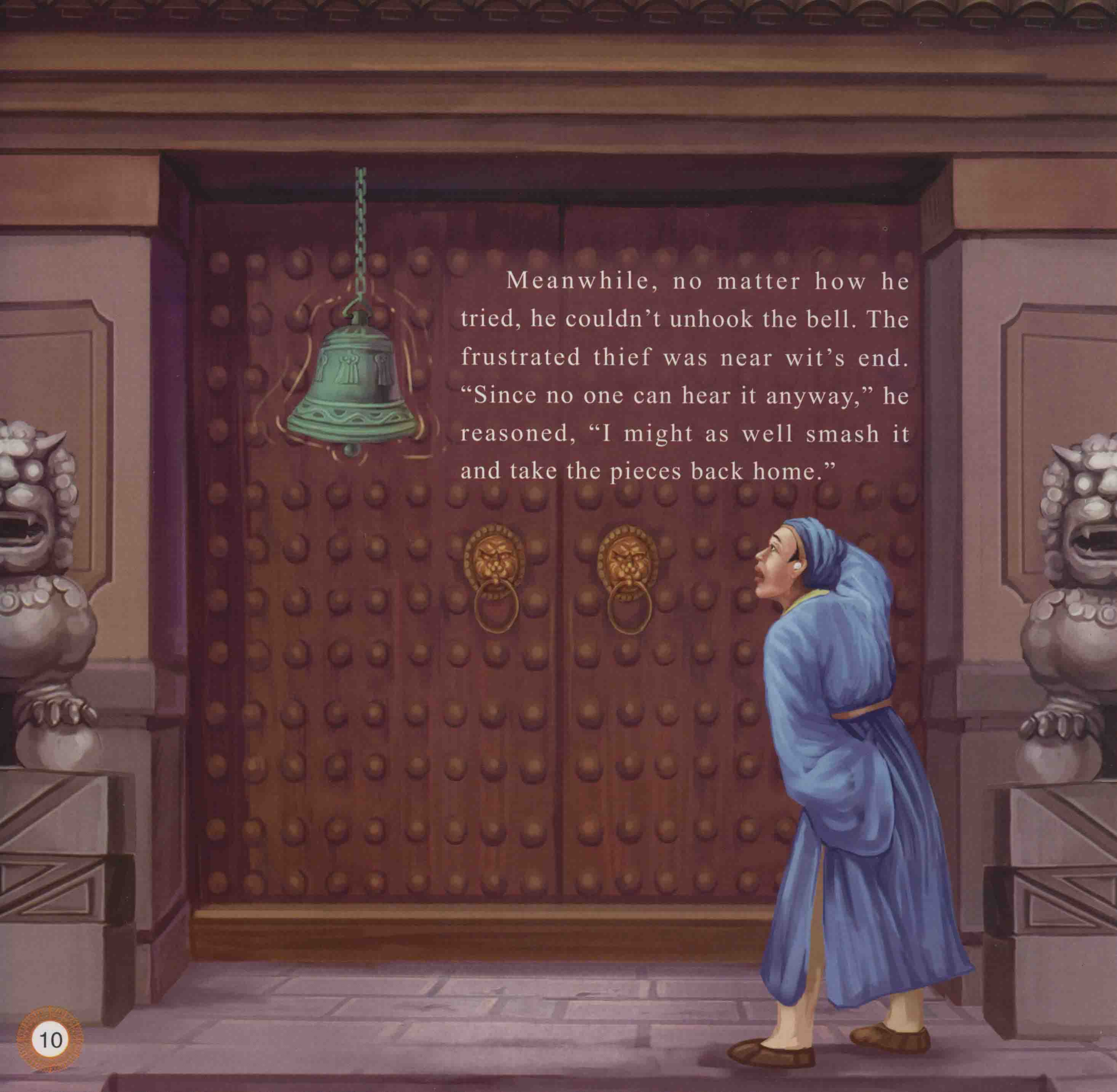


He must be deaf, thought Zhang San. "Why, that's it!" he hurried home in high spirits. He took cotton balls and stuffed them into his ears until he was deaf as a doornail. "If the bell ringing can't be heard, then no one will notice me!"




A man in a blue robe and turban is reaching up towards a large green bell hanging from a chain on a large, dark brown wooden door. The door is covered in a grid of small, round metal studs. The man is looking up at the bell with an open mouth, as if he is shouting or calling out. The scene is set at night, with moonlight illuminating the scene. The door is flanked by two large, ornate stone lion statues. The man is standing on a stone path leading to the door.

With the aid of the moonlight, that night he found his way to the wealthy family's gate again. He reached for the bell, and once again it rang out: "Dong! Dong! Dong! Dong!"

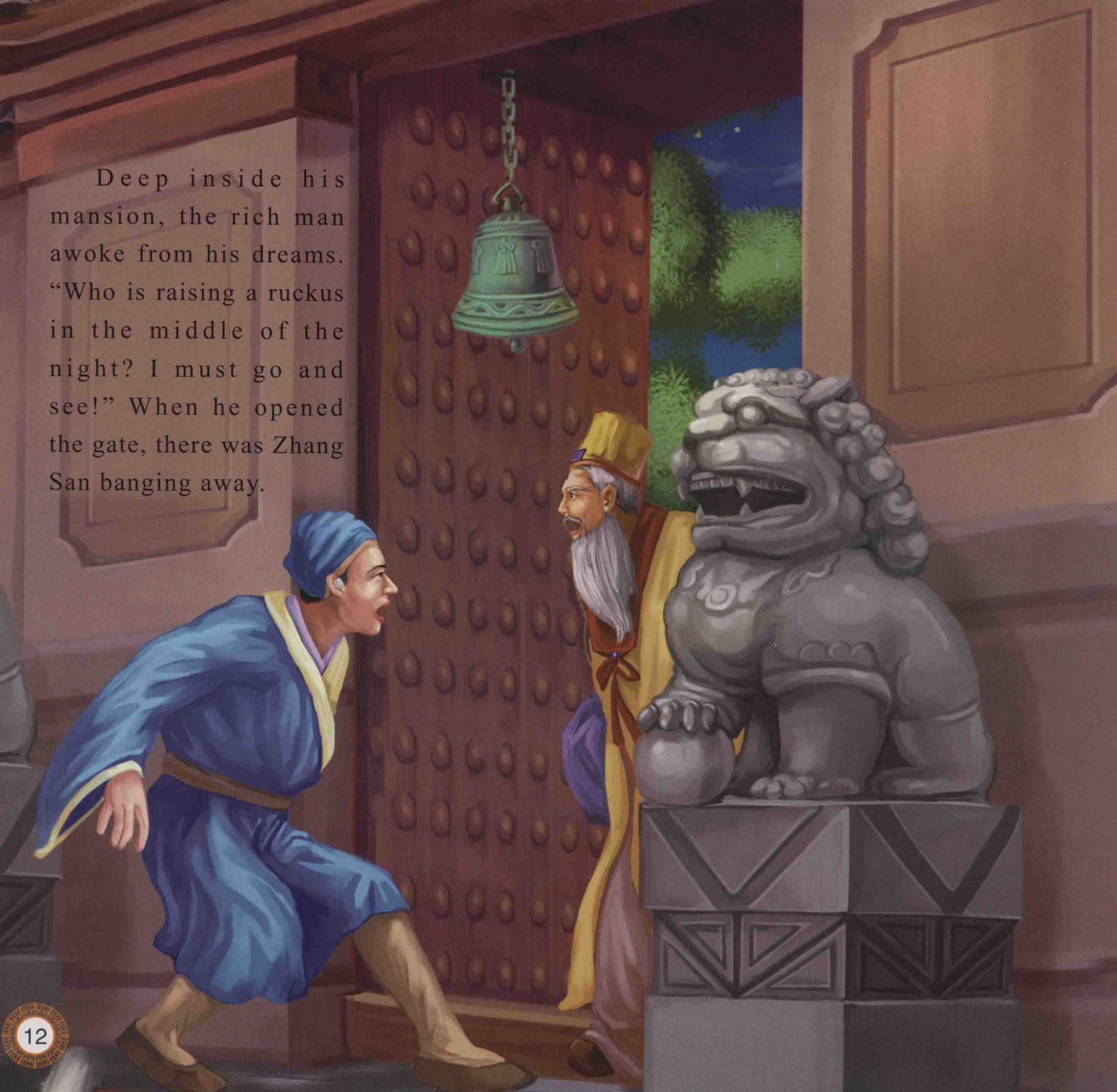
A full-page illustration of a thief in a blue robe and headscarf looking up at a large, ornate wooden door. The door is covered in brass studs and has two lion-shaped door knockers. A large green bell hangs from a chain on the left side of the door. The thief is standing on a stone step, looking up at the bell with a frustrated expression. The scene is set in a traditional East Asian architectural style with stone lion statues on either side of the door.

Meanwhile, no matter how he tried, he couldn't unhook the bell. The frustrated thief was near wit's end. "Since no one can hear it anyway," he reasoned, "I might as well smash it and take the pieces back home."

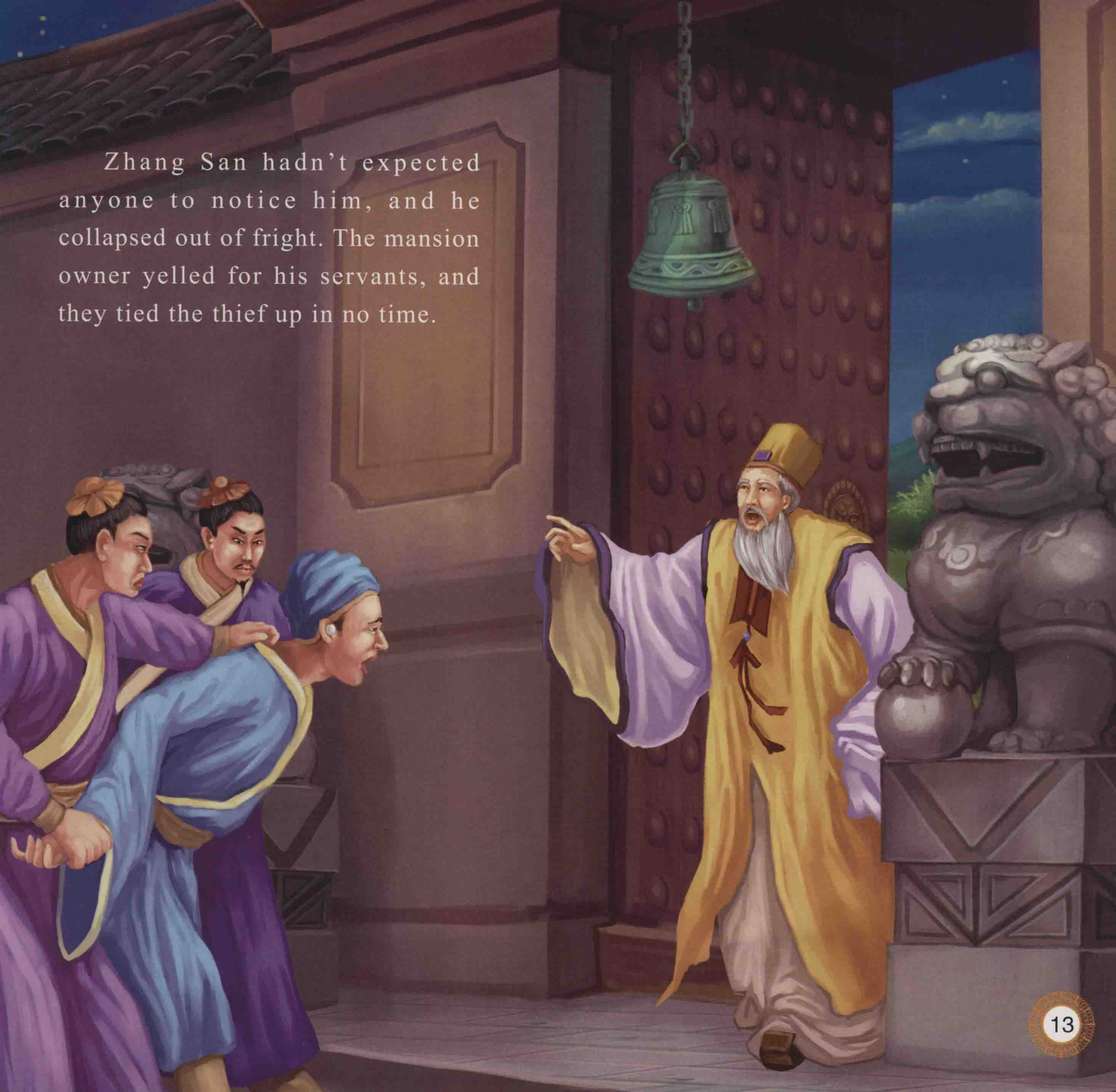
A full-page illustration in a traditional Chinese style. A man in a blue robe and turban is shown from the side, swinging a large wooden hammer towards a large, ornate wooden door. The door is covered in a grid of small, raised circular studs. To the left of the door, a large, grey stone lion statue sits on a tiered pedestal. Above the lion, a green bell hangs from a chain. The scene is set at night, with a dark sky and a tiled roof visible in the upper right corner.

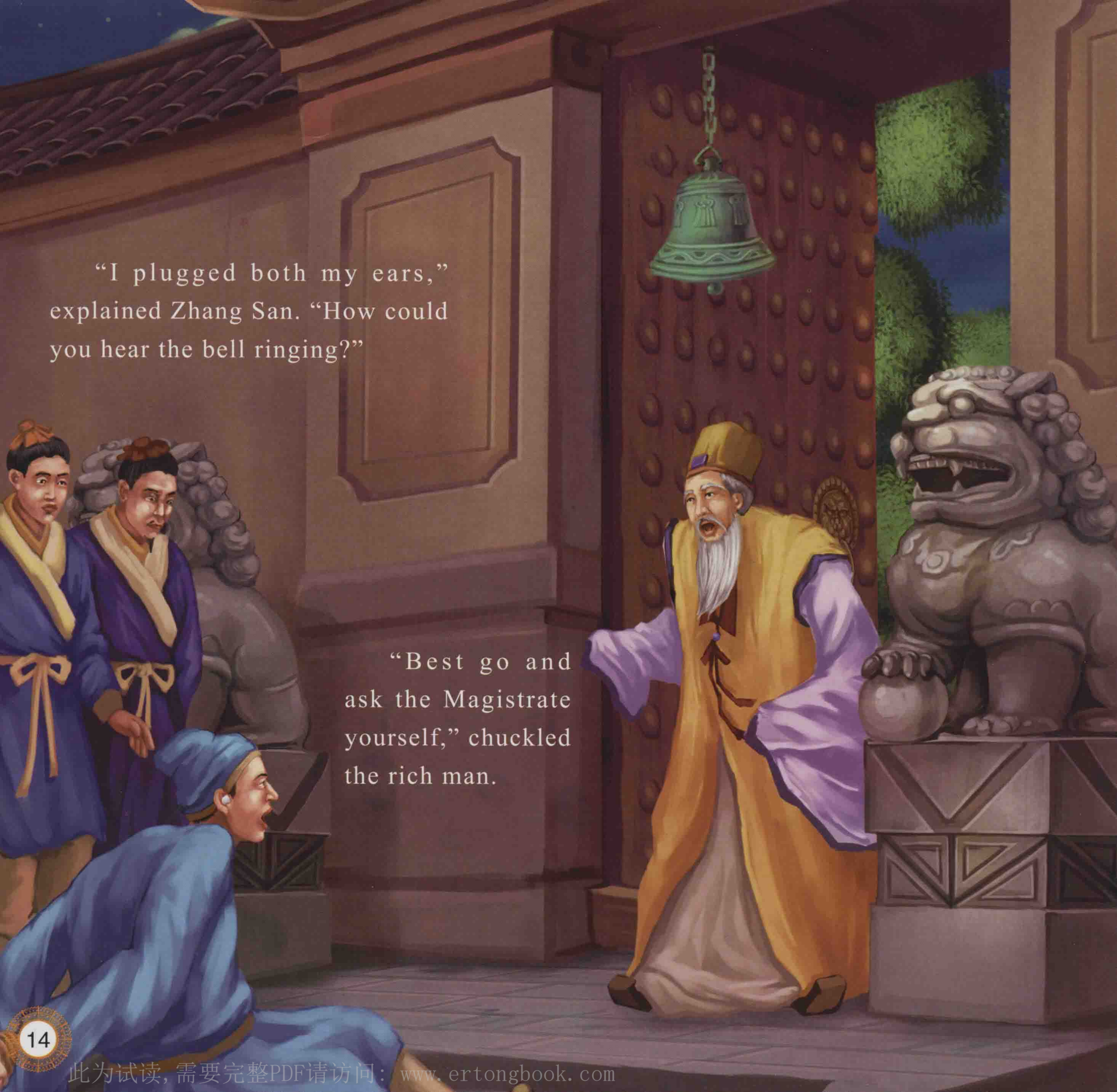
Zhang San fetched a hammer and slammed it against the bell. “Dong! Dong! Dong!” resounded the bell louder and louder. The only one unaware of the clanging was the thief himself.

Deep inside his mansion, the rich man awoke from his dreams. "Who is raising a ruckus in the middle of the night? I must go and see!" When he opened the gate, there was Zhang San banging away.



Zhang San hadn't expected anyone to notice him, and he collapsed out of fright. The mansion owner yelled for his servants, and they tied the thief up in no time.





“I plugged both my ears,”
explained Zhang San. “How could
you hear the bell ringing?”

“Best go and
ask the Magistrate
yourself,” chuckled
the rich man.