



*Sea Flower*

*THE STORY is about Little Red Guards in a south China coastal village. During their winter vacation these Little Red Guards of the Red Star Primary School, helped by the village Party branch to organize for patrolling the seashore, one day find a suspicious rubber boot on the beach. Led in a search by the Party branch, they soon discover its mate and proceed to cooperate with the village militia to capture both the intruding enemy agent and the local fish-dealer's wife, who is in collusion with him, as they are trying to escape by sea.*



# Sea Flower

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FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS  
*Peking 1975*

I.

Early one morning the Tsaohsi Village Production Brigade militia were drilling on the beach when a red-tasselled spear suddenly appeared from behind some bushes. It was Sea Flower, Little Red Guard of the Red Star Primary School, imitating every movement. How she wished one day to perform sentry and patrol duties, to defend her country's coast the same as these militia "uncles"!





2.

And now Sea Flower's dream had come true. At the start of winter vacation a Little Red Guards patrol squad was organized under Uncle Li, the production brigade Party branch secretary. Sea Flower as squad leader directed Little Red Guards at bayonet drill.



3.

One day Uncle Li led the Little Red Guards patrol squad to Elephant Trunk Cliff at the edge of the village. The children ran and sang, happy as a nestful of fledgelings — quite different from the past as Uncle Li recalled it.







4.

Uncle Li told the children about the past. "In that dreadful old society fish-dealers big and small bullied the fisherfolk. Right here at Elephant Trunk Cliff a big Tsaohsi fish-dealer had the reactionary government execute fishermen who led a struggle against exorbitant taxes. . . ." The children's anger with the class enemy rose.



5.

Then Uncle Li solemnly presented to the Little Red Guards a conch used in the fight against the tax. Hsiao-po was deeply moved as he accepted the conch on behalf of the Little Red Guards, who pledged to learn their forefathers' revolutionary spirit of struggling against the class enemy.

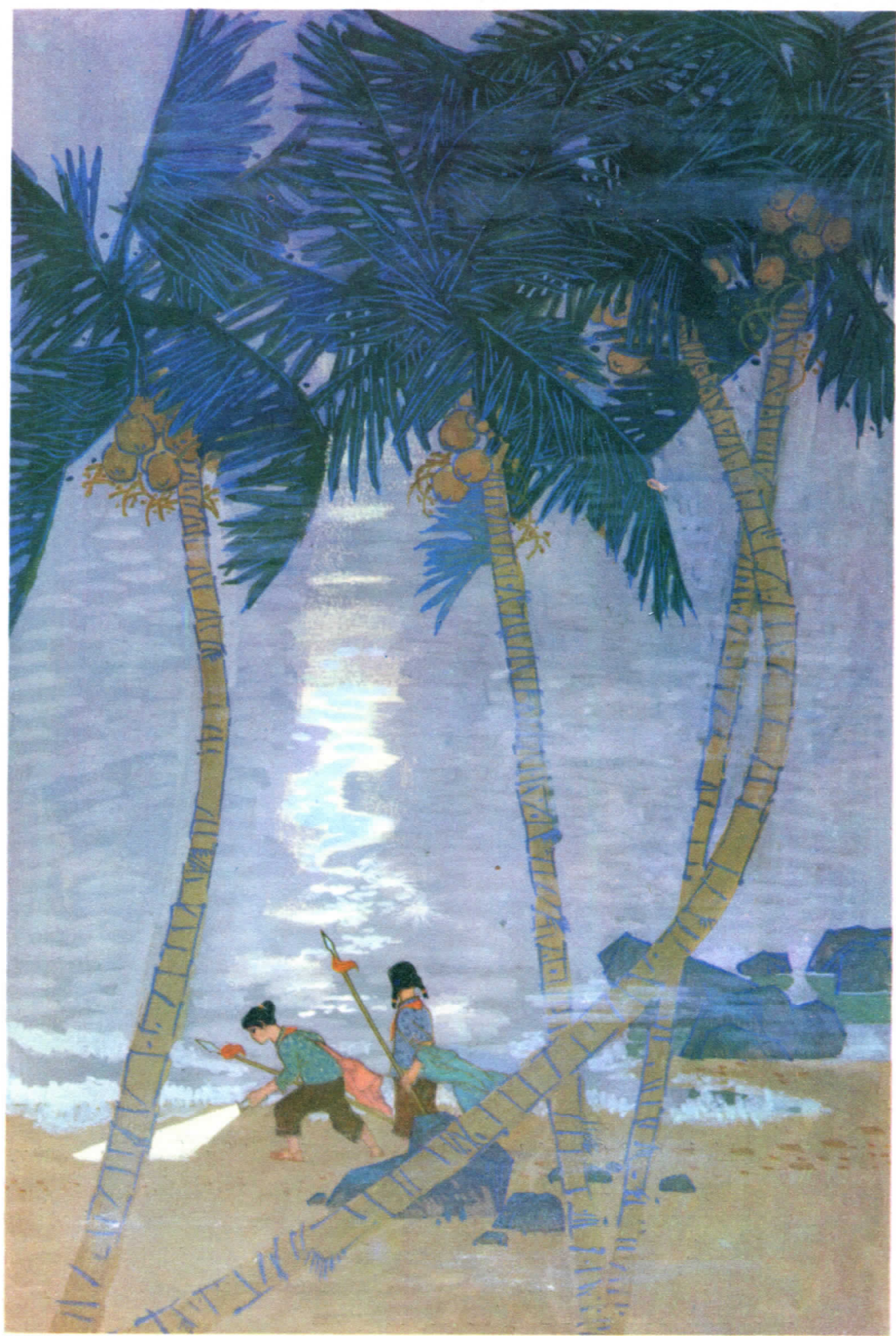




6.

Every morning in the quiet of the dawn, light footsteps could be heard on the beach. The Little Red Guards' patrolling had begun. Because bad people came and went at night and might leave evidence, the children patrolled the beach in turns each morning in fair weather or foul.





7.

The Little Red Guards' patrol was most feared by the class enemy. One day when Hsiao-po was on his way to the woods for more spear shafts, he ran into the village fish-dealer's wife returning after cutting firewood. Hsiao-po couldn't take his eyes off a stout branch with red bark in her bundle. The fish-dealer's wife cackled: "Do you like that stick? I'll give it to you!"





8.

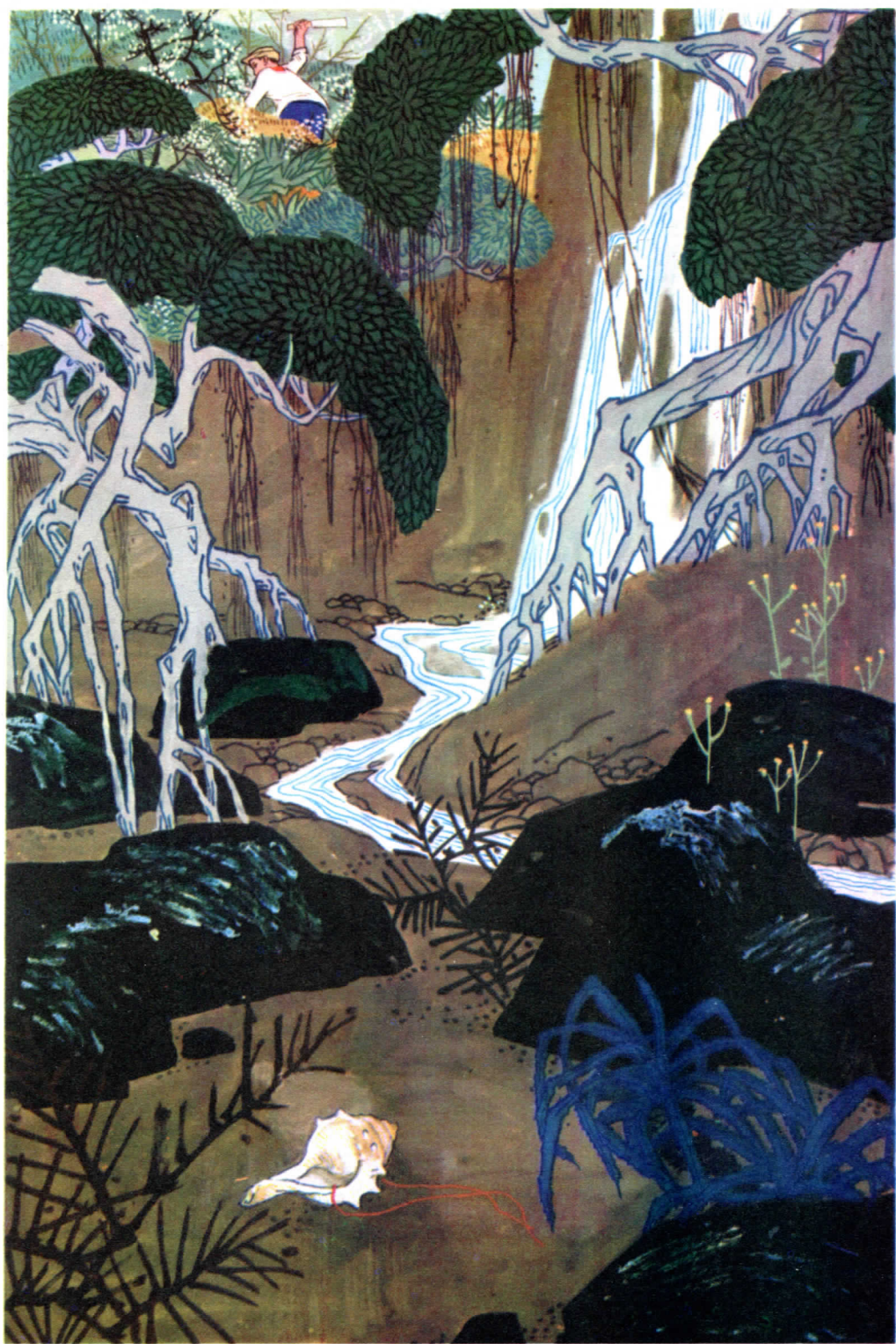
With a "Bah! Who wants anything of yours!" Hsiao-po went on his way. The fish-dealer's wife rolled her eyes and came up with a plot. "Follow this path till you come to a valley. On the slope is a drooping old pine, and there you'll find a lot of branches with red bark, and birds too," she croaked after him.





9.

Continuing half in belief, half in doubt, Hsiao-po did in fact come to a drooping pine. But, look as he might, he found no tree branches with red bark and knew he had been duped by the fish-dealer's wife. While scrambling about cutting other branches for spears, the conch he wore came loose and slipped down the valley. But Hsiao-po didn't know this.



10.

Meanwhile Sea Flower and Chih-hai had been looking for Hsiao-po in the village. Not finding him there, they went to the mountains calling his name. They had nearly reached Otter Lair when finally they heard Hsiao-po's reply.





II.

Sea Flower got a fright. Not even grownups dared go to Otter Lair alone. How dangerous it might be for Hsiao-po if he'd gone there! She charged up the slope and saw Hsiao-po coming out of a thicket.





12.

As Sea Flower inquired what had happened, she noticed the conch was gone. All three were very worried, for they remembered Uncle Li's so often telling them: "The conch is a bugleman's weapon, to be cared for and cherished." The three consulted for a moment, then decided to go separate ways to look for it.







13.

Sea Flower looked high and low until she came to the drooping pine. She glanced down the valley. Ah, there was the conch lying in the mud! She made her way down and was about to pick it up when a cat-like creature with a crab in its mouth darted towards her.



14.

Startled, Sea Flower watched it closely. It was an otter. Then, quick as a wink, about a dozen appeared, surrounding the crab holes. She silently reached the conch with her red-tasselled spear and was about to retrieve it when an otter spotted her.





15.

Squeaking weirdly, the otters charged Sea Flower. She was not afraid but defended herself with her red-tasselled spear. However, the otter's fur and skin were too sleek and tough for her wooden spear.







16.

Hsiao-po and Chih-hai finally turned back and, seeing Sea Flower battling with the otters in the valley, scrambled down the slope to her aid. Sea Flower turned an otter on its back with her spear, while Chih-hai killed one with his sword.



17.

Thinking quickly in the emergency, Sea Flower snatched up the conch and blew hard on it so that the sound echoed and reechoed through the valley, scaring the otters off.





18.

Uncle Li had been looking for the children and headed straight for the valley at the sound of the conch. When Hsiao-po told how he was misled there by the fish-dealer's wife, Uncle Li warned: "That viper is not frozen stiff yet. You were nearly bitten today. Look out next time!"







19.

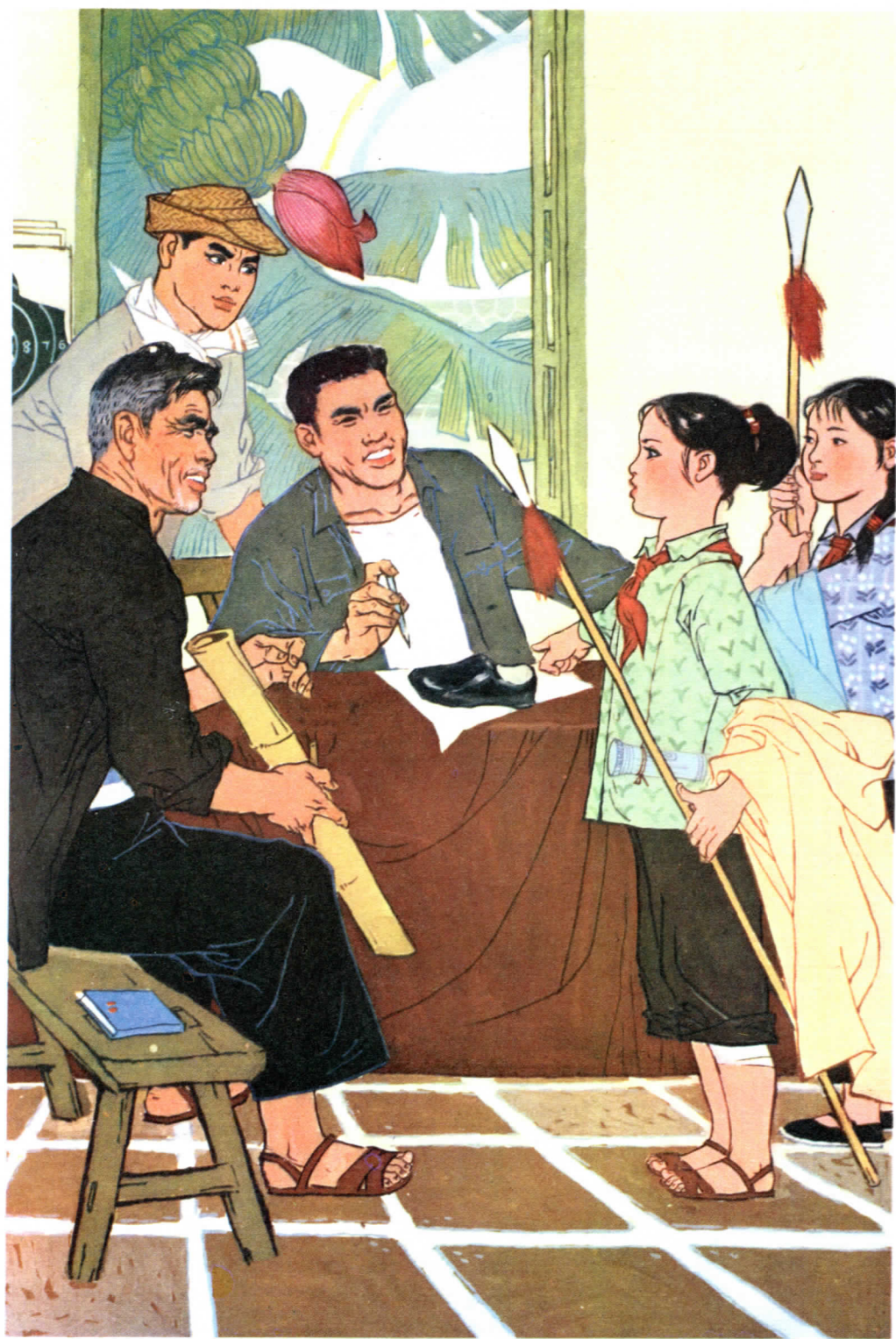
The lesson of Otter Lair sharpened the Little Red Guards' vigilance. So that when Sea Flower and Tsui-chuan saw a rubber boot at the foot of the Elephant Trunk Cliff one early morning while on patrol, they wondered how it got there.



20.

Sea Flower carried the boot back to report to Uncle Li, who examined it and said: "A commune member has just reported that someone was acting suspiciously at the seashore last night. From the way she walked they think it was the fish-dealer's wife. Maybe it's hers. We must keep our eyes open!"





21.

One afternoon, a strange junkman arrived in the village, made one round, then went to the fish-dealer's gate. After tallying signs with the fish-dealer's wife, he bought an old rubber boot from her. Now, all this was seen by the Little Red Guards, who were on watch.







22.

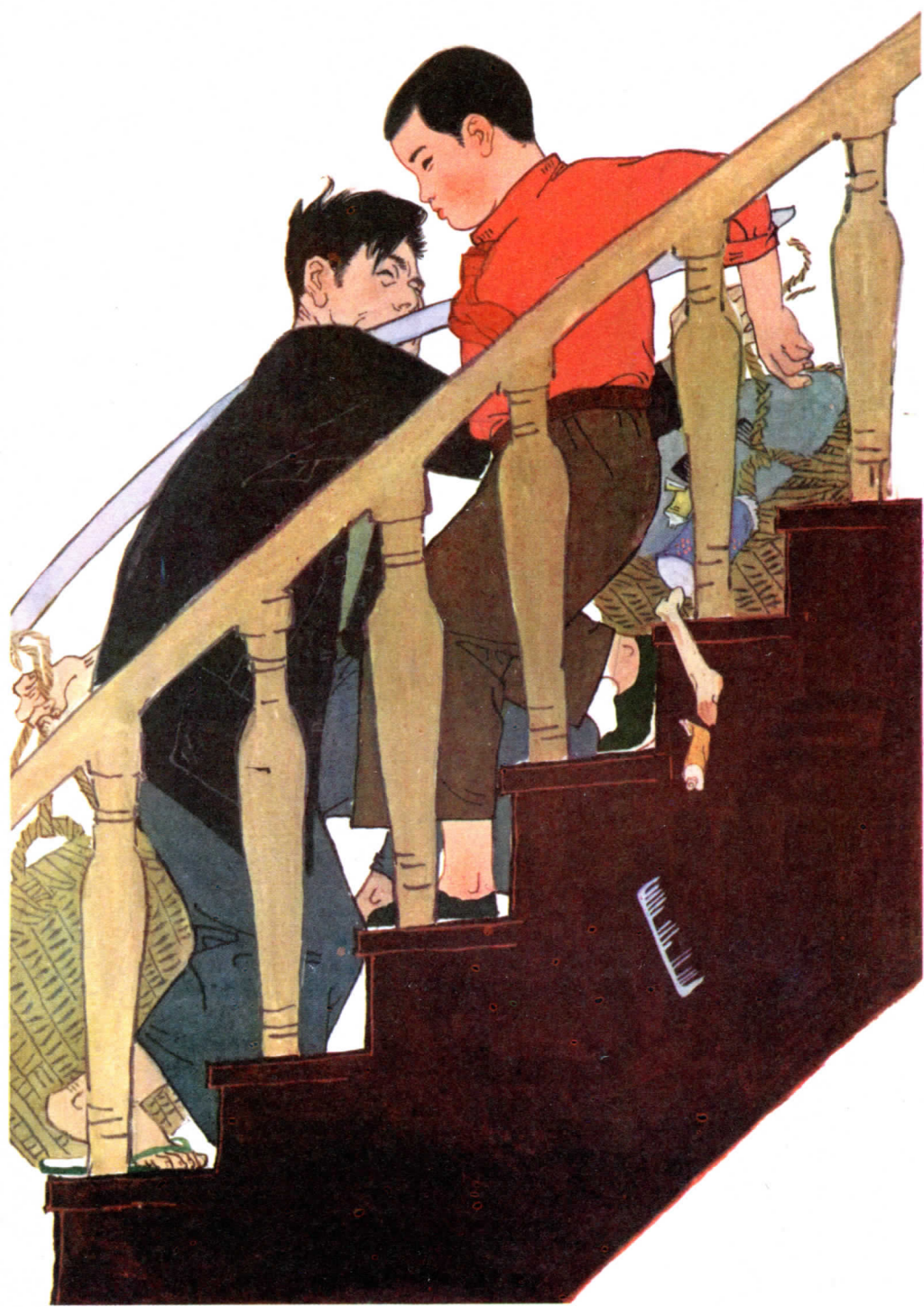
Just as the junkman was leaving the village, Hsiao-po and Chih-hai stopped him and, demanding to see his sales slips, took him to the production brigade office. The man was told to leave his baskets there and go upstairs to see the squad leader. The man, however, insisted on carrying the baskets with him.



23.

Sea Flower heard everything from upstairs and told a chubby little boy there to go down. The boy rushed down the narrow staircase, bumped into the junkman and overturned his baskets, scattering their contents.





24.

Chih-hai gave the stranger a dressing-down for trying to take his baskets up the narrow staircase. The man collected the things and, since there were only two children in the room, felt it safe to leave the baskets there and go upstairs. Hsiao-po soon discovered three rubber boots in the baskets and turned them over to Uncle Li, who was in the next room.





25.

Uncle Li found among the boots the mate to the one Sea Flower had picked up on the beach. Careful examination revealed a newly glued-on heel. Cutting into it, he drew out a slip of paper on which was a sketch of the sentry positions of the village and adjacent coordinated army and civilian defence.



26.

When the stranger saw only two little girls in the upstairs room, he turned to leave. Tsui-chuan shouted: "Where do you think you're going?" The man replied: "Two kids told me to see the squad leader upstairs, but where is he?"





27.  
“Here!” cried Tsui-chuan. “Squad Leader Sea Flower.” With a casual glance at the girl, the man plumped himself on a bench, crossed his legs and sneered: “Some squad leader!” When he scornfully struck a match to light a cigarette, Sea Flower rapped on the desk and commanded: “Behave yourself!”







28.

This brought the man to his feet as Sea Flower continued: "We're going to detain your baskets because you haven't written out any sales slips." The man became very nervous and cried, "Oh yes, I have! I have the sales slips."



29.

Sea Flower proceeded with the questioning until Hsiao-po ran up the stairs, for she knew they must have finished the examination of the things. "Make out your sales slips in greater detail next time," she warned. "You may go now." Seeing the things were all there, the man shouldered his baskets and was off.





30.

When enemy activity was detected one night the following week, Sea Flower, Hsiao-po and Chih-hai were assigned by the Party branch to keep watch from a wood bordering the village. Soon someone appeared, furtive and hurried. It was the fish-dealer's wife. Sea Flower whispered into Hsiao-po's ear.







31.

Sea Flower jumped out from ambush when the woman drew near and demanded to know where she was going. When the woman begged to be let off, Sea Flower reproached her: "How many poor fishermen did you cause to suffer and die in the old society? You engage in counter-revolutionary activity and now you think you'll be let off unpunished. Not that easy!"



32.

The fish-dealer's wife turned to run but was tripped by a rattan stem across the path. Sea Flower and Hsiao-po bound her up and she confessed her plan to escape by sea with the junkman, who was an enemy agent.





33.

Meanwhile the junkman had been captured outside the village by militiamen. When Uncle Li arrived with the head of the commune military department and saw the fish-dealer's wife in custody, he patted Sea Flower on the head, while to the enemy agent he said, "You're dreaming if you think you can slip through Little Red Guards' fingers!"







34.

There was the sound of a boat from the sea. It was a gunboat of the Chinese PLA Navy, with an enemy schooner that tried to get by as a fishing boat, in tow. Uncle Li said to the two enemies who had tried to flee: "Here comes your 'fishing boat' to pick you up." The two bad eggs hung their heads in fear.



35.

The Little Red Guards waved both hands to welcome the approaching gunboat. They burst into a song which rang far and wide through the night:

*Shouldering the red-tasselled spear,  
Our hearts brave and eyes clear,  
Chairman Mao's Little Red Guards are we,  
Defending our homes by the wide, wide sea.  
'Tis our life-long will, strong and sincere,  
To stand sentry for our motherland dear.*





*Printed in the People's Republic of China*

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外文出版社出版(北京)  
1975年(18开)第一版  
编号: (英)8050-1463  
00120  
88-E-124P

