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– From the Preface –

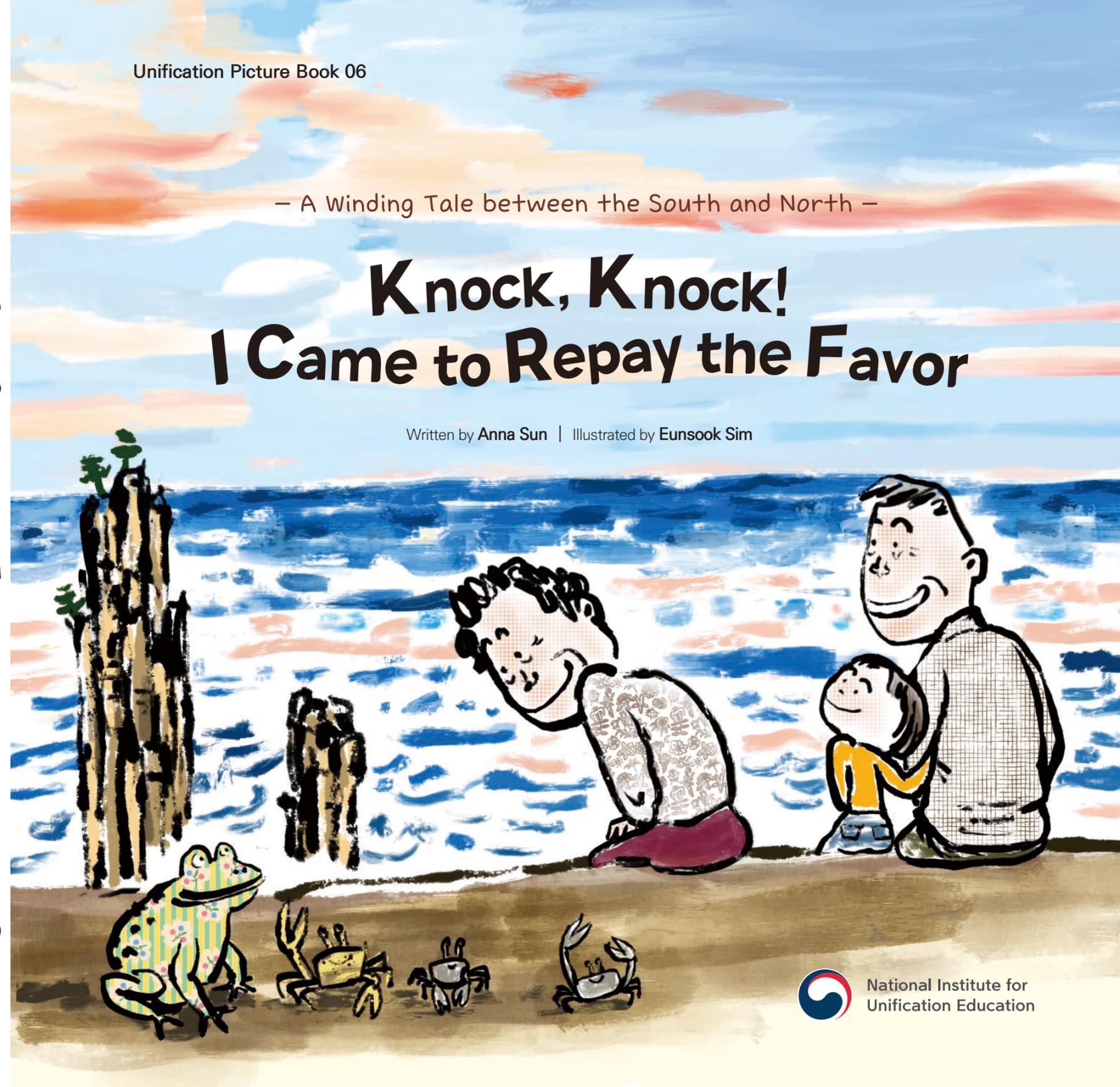


Unification Picture Book 06

– A Winding Tale between the South and North –

Knock, Knock! I Came to Repay the Favor

Written by Anna Sun | Illustrated by Eunsook Sim

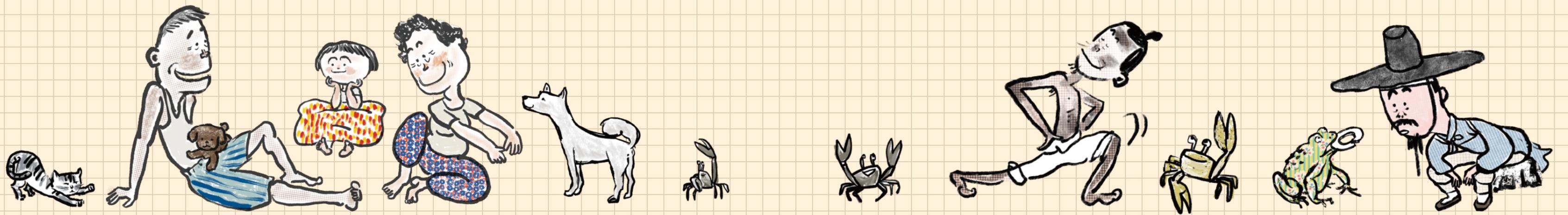


Unification
Picture Book 06

Knock, Knock! I Came to Repay the Favor

National Institute for
Unification Education

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Written by **Anna Sun**

Anna grew up reading a lot of fairytales and became a children's book author. She majored in children's literature at Sungshin Women's University and earned a Ph.D. in Korean literature, served as a researcher at Konkuk University's Humanities Research Institute, and was a visiting professor at Dankook University. One of her stories was selected for the Saebeot Literary Award and the Dong-A Ilbo New Writer Contest, and one of her reviews was selected for the Children's Literature Review. Her books *Dear Onyang* and *Why is My Older Brother an Older Brother?* were published in Korean language textbooks and won the Korean Children's Literature Award, Korean Children's Book Award, Sejong Children's Literature Award, and Open Children's Literature Award. Anna has also written many other books for children such as *Promises are Great*, *Maya and the Magic House 1&2*, *Like Wildflowers and Stars*, *Samsik*, *Get Out of The Way*, *Cat Mourners*, *Dangerous Boy*, and *Their Different Choices during the Japanese Colonial Period*.

Illustrated by **Eunsook Sim**

Eunsook studied Korean painting in college. By chance she started illustrating picture books, and has since provided drawings for several books. She loves drawing people, and when she sees children on the street, she wants to give them candy and talk to them, but she tries to hold back. When she sees grandmothers and grandfathers, she feels inexplicably emotional. Eunsook hopes the pictures she draws are warm, honest, and enjoyable. Some of the books she has illustrated include *Red Fan & Blue Fan*, *Holding Back Night Poop*, and *My Dad is My Friend*.

– A Winding Tale between the South and North –

Knock, Knock! I Came to Repay the Favor

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A Bridge to Connect the Future Children of a Unified Korea

- Anna Sun -



It has been nearly 80 years since Korea was divided.

Over the years, North and South Korea have undergone significant changes, evolving into distinct entities. Despite these differences, we still coexist on the Korean Peninsula and will continue to do so in the future. How should we teach children about the reality of division and convey our dream of a unified future? We cannot help but constantly think about it.

To achieve a unified Korea, where Korean children live without any prejudice and discrimination, it is important to understand each other. Thus, we need to know the similarities and differences between North and South Korea.

Folktales that have been passed down orally since ancient times are a common heritage of the Korean people. 'The Fairy and the Woodcutter' is a legend that originated from Geumgang Mountain but is known by South Korean children, and 'Heungbu Nolbu' is a folk tale from Jangsu-gun, Jeollabuk-do but is also known by North Korean children. Therefore, reading traditional fairy tales to children in North and South Korea is a meaningful way of maintaining and preserving the identity of a unified nation.

Knock, Knock! I Came to Repay the Favor uncovers lesser-known legends from North and South Korea and compiles them into a picture book. This particular story narrates how an animal repays the favor to someone who saved its life, rather than belittling them as small creatures. The shared themes of North and South Korea will instill the unique national sentiment and worldview of the Korean people in children.

However, terms like 'Sijung Lagoon' or 'Chongseokjeong' (a scenic rock formation) may be unfamiliar words to South Korean children. This is because Sijung Lagoon and Chongseokjeong are located in North Korea's Gangwon Province. The legend of *gamtang* (mud) originates from the topographical features of Sijung Lagoon. Among the eight scenic spots of Gwandong on the east coast, Sijung Lake and Chongseokjeong are the most beautiful. Through this book, South Korean children will be able to learn about areas in North Korea that are on the same Korean Peninsula but cannot be visited.

Similarly, if North Korean children read this book, they will be able to learn new things about Daejeon and Bomun Mountain. The more we learn about our differences and similarities, the better we will understand each other.

It's our hope that *Knock, Knock! I Came to Repay the Favor* can become a small but sturdy bridge connecting children from North and South Korea.



One day, Wooju went to her grandmother's house in the countryside. Her dad had gone to Jeju Island for work, and her mom was on a business trip in Australia. So she had to stay apart from her parents for ten nights. "Wooju, come have some dinner. I cooked your favorites: bulgogi and japchae." Her grandmother had worked hard preparing a delicious dinner. "Try the mung bean stew, too. It's very delicious." Her grandfather quickly finished his whole bowl, but Wooju only ate a little.

Wooju's grandmother and grandfather tried to cheer up the sulking Wooju who was sad her parents were gone.

"We are going to tell you some old folktales, so would you like to judge whose story is the best?"

"Me?"

"It's a bet! And the loser do whatever you'd like, Wooju."

Wooju was excited that she could hear some old stories and even have a wish granted.

It's like killing two birds with one stone.

"Great!"

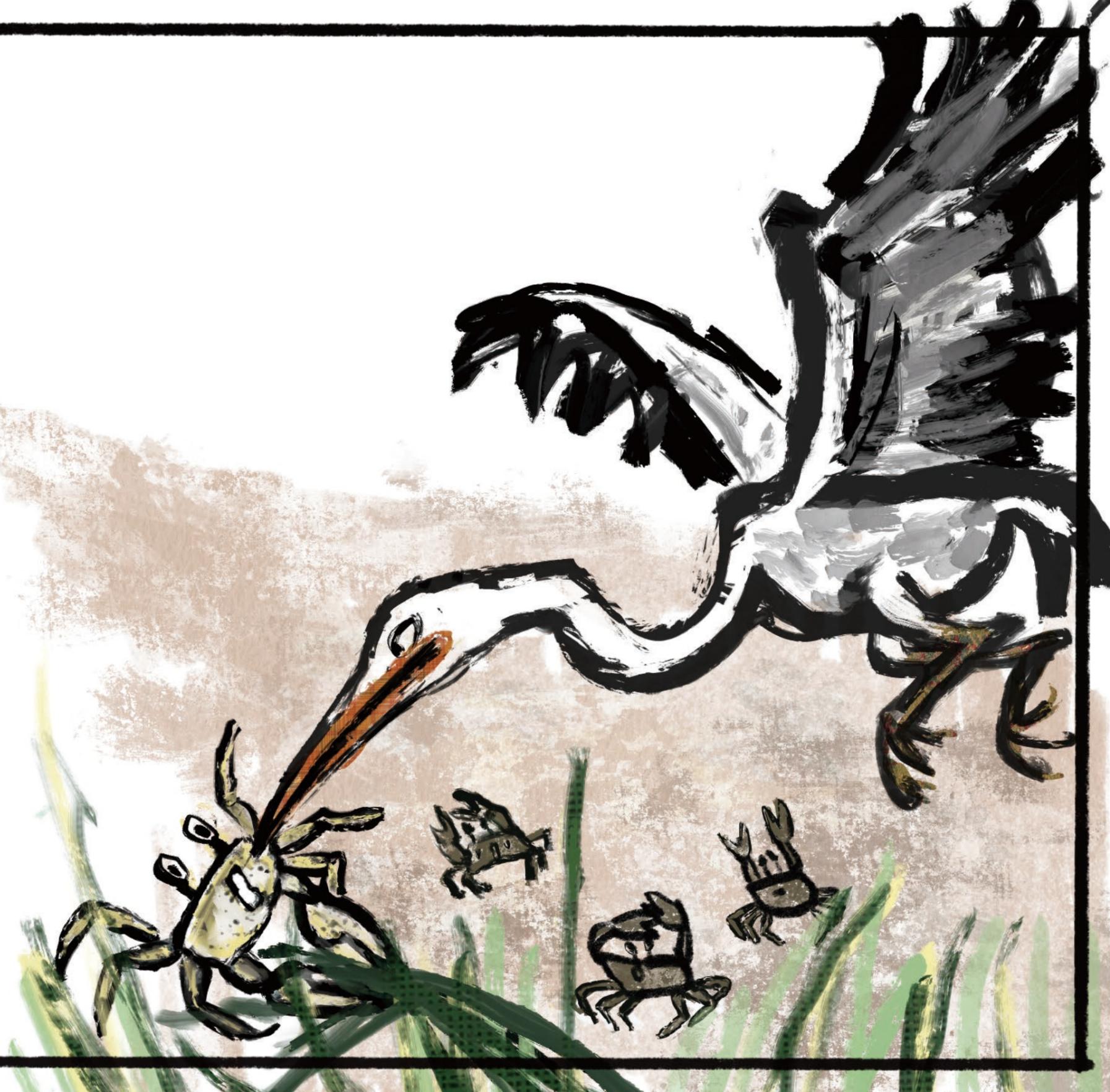
Wooju answered with sparkling eyes.





"There is a beautiful lagoon called Sijung Lagoon in my hometown, Tongcheon.
There is a legend handed down from there."
Her grandmother started her story.

Once upon a time, there lived a man named Jung-gap in an old village near the lagoon.
Every day, Jung-gap diligently cut wood from the mountains to sell.
His favorite place to rest after chopping lots of wood was next to the lagoon.
One day, Jung-gap saw an unexpected sight.
A big crab was fighting with a heron.
"Hey, shouldn't you just give up?"
The heron pecked at the crab and tried to catch it.
"No, I have to feed my babies."
The mother crab held tightly onto a reed so the heron could not swallow her.



But the crab was growing tired as the heron relentlessly pecked away. It seemed like even the reed that the crab was holding was about to get pulled out. Jung-gap felt sorry for the mother crab and her babies. "Crabs were born to work hard, not to be your food. Shoo, go away." Jung-gap threw his walking stick at the heron. The startled heron dropped the crab and flew off. 'Thank you for saving my life.'

The crab stared at Jung-gap for a while as if to say thank you.



As time passed, Jung-gap remained poor.

Although his entire body ached, he still had to work to make a living.

On another day too, Jung-Gap, after cutting wood, rested by the lagoon.

“Oh my, every bone in my body hurts...”

Jung-gap took off his sweat-trenched shirt and laid down for a moment.

Then he fell asleep and dreamt of flying in the sky.

When Jung-gap woke up, he was shocked at what he saw.

His entire body was covered in a considerable amount of strange, black mud.

“Wait, what is this?”

He looked around and saw crabs with *gamtang** in their mouths coming out of the lake.

They were putting it all over Jung-gap’s body.



**gamtang* (mud): mud that has been loosened like clumps at the edge of a stream

Then Jung-gap noticed a large crab was staring at him up close.

"Wait, aren't you the mother crab from back then?"

Jung-gap, with a strange feeling, jumped up.

His body didn't hurt at all. In fact, he felt so light that it was like he could fly.

"This is truly a miracle."

Jung-gap tried jumping up and down and shaking his arms and legs.

The crabs also danced around with their front legs raised.

Jung-gap easily picked up the wood he had cut and went home.



After that, Jung-gap built a house by the lagoon.

He began spreading a rumor:

“Anyone who has an aching body please come here.”

When people came, he covered them in *gamtang* and healed them.

Jung-gap lived a long and healthy life.

After finishing the story, grandmother said.

“In South Korea, they call the mud ‘*jinheuk*’ instead ‘*gamtang*.’

When I was young, I visited the mud hot spring with my mom.

It really made my body so light as if I could fly.”

“Really? I also want to go to the mud hot spring, too!”

Wooju got excited imagining sliding on the mud.





“After the two Koreas are unified, let’s go to the mud hot spring.
You have no idea how beautiful Sijung Lagoon is.
Let’s also visit Chongseokjeong.
It’s as beautiful as a painting...
And let’s go to Geumgang Mountain. It’s nearby too.”
Grandmother’s voice sounded sad.
Probably because she misses her hometown.
“We will definitely do that, Grandma.”
Wooju held her grandmother’s hand tightly.





Now, it was grandfather's turn to tell a story.

“There are many interesting stories
from my hometown, Daejeon, too.

Now listen very carefully.

I will tell you the story of Treasure Mountain.”

A long time ago, a government official who used to work in Seoul came to Daejeon for business. It was a hot day, so the officer rested for a while in the shade of a large tree. There was a *bangjuk** right next to it, but the water had all dried up due to the drought. However, a toad managed to drag itself out and collapsed, gasping for air, in front of the officer's foot.

**bangjuk* (embankment): a barrier built to prevent water from overflowing or flooding the area.

"Poor guy. You've been through a lot too."^W

The officer took pity on the toad.

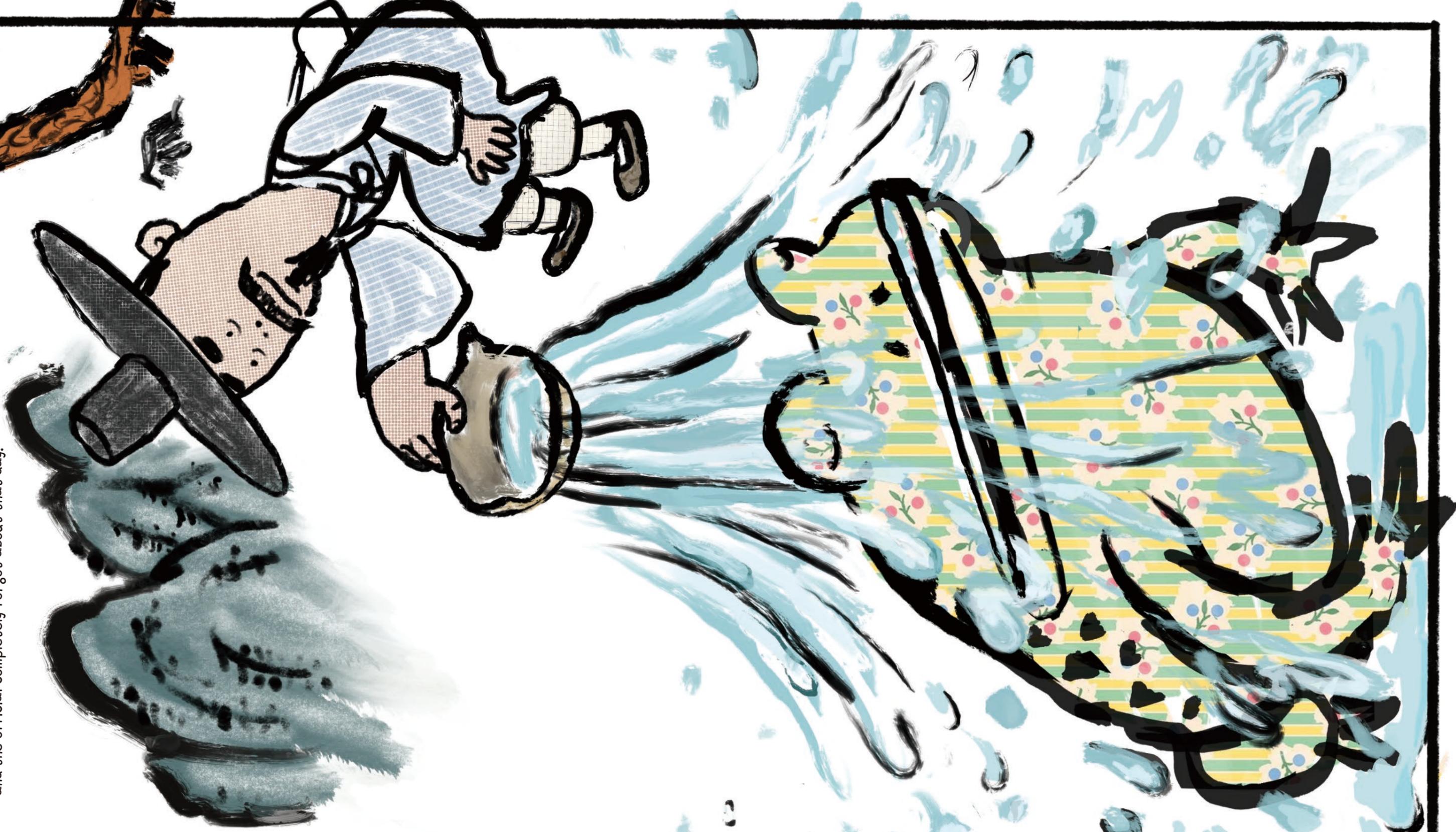
He fetched a basket of water from a nearby house and poured it on the toad.

"Here you go, hang in there."

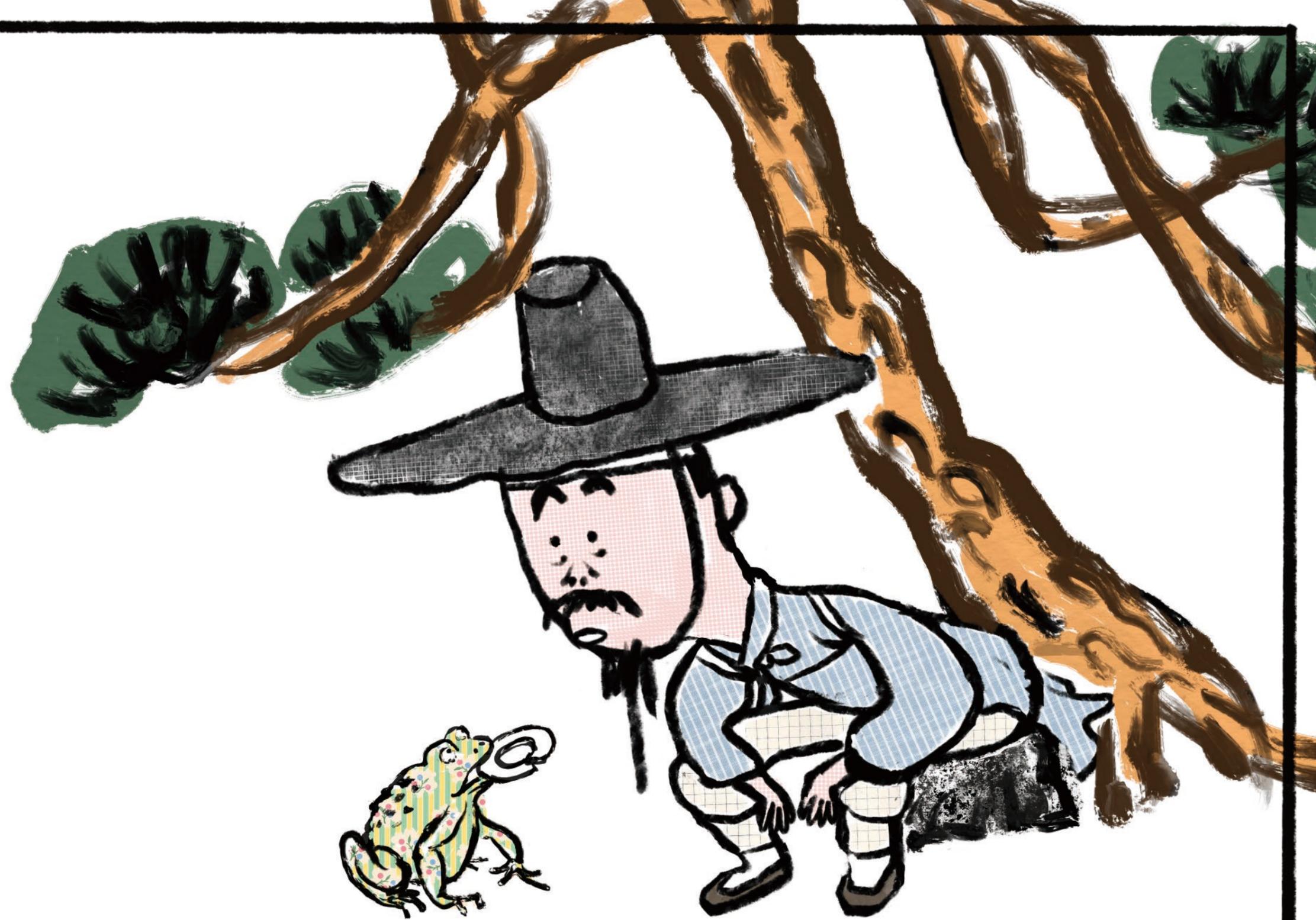
The toad came to its senses and took a long drink of the murky water.

Then it looked at the officer and blinked as if to say thank you.

The toad soon disappeared into the grass,
and the official completely forgot about that day.



The following year, the officer went to Daejeon again.
By coincidence, he was resting under that same tree again,
and a toad approached him slowly.
“What do you have in your mouth?”
The officer observed in confusion.
The toad placed a broken plate down by the officer’s foot,
and it stared then blinked.
“Aren’t you the same toad from last year?”
It was only then that the officer remembered.
The toad left the broken plate behind and disappeared into the grass.
Feeling strange, the officer took the plate home.



Since the plate was broken, it couldn't be used as decoration.

So, the officer left it under the table and forgot about it.

Later on, one day while smoking his pipe, the officer was looking for his ashtray.

"Wait a minute, where did the ashtray go?"

Then he noticed the broken plate under the table.

The officer was in a hurry,

so he put the ashes from his pipe on the plate.

The next day when the officer looked at the plate he was surprised.

"How did so much ash pile up?"

Feeling a bit confused, he decided to put a coin on the plate.

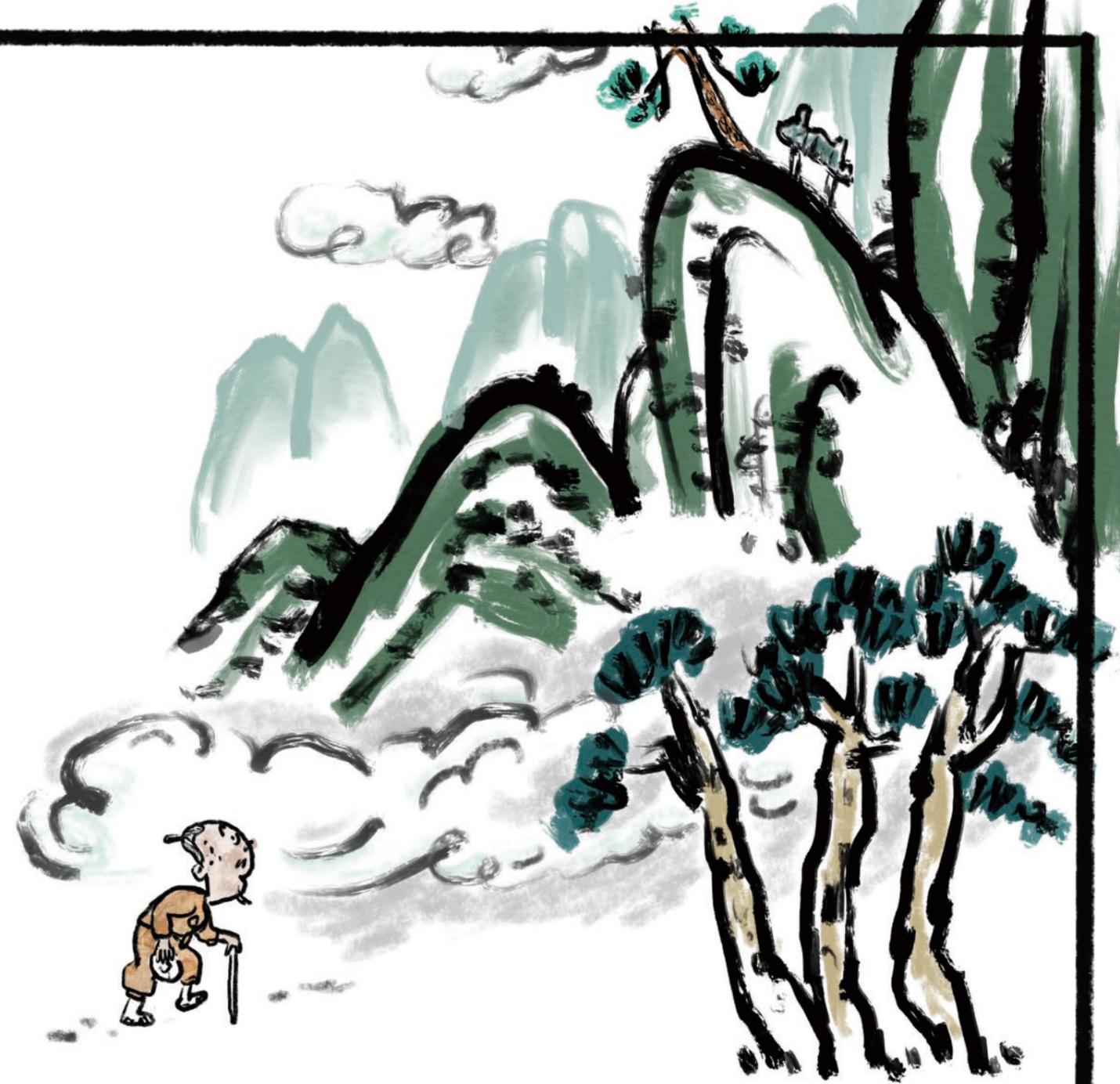
Sure enough, after a while, he saw that the plate was full of coins.

Rice, gold, whatever he put on the plate, it multiplied.





Most people would be happy about having such a *hoengjae*.^{*}
However, the officer worried that the plate could bring misfortune instead.
'If people hear that there is a treasure plate, someone may want it for themselves.
Arguments may arise between family members,
and descendants might end up relying on the plate instead of working.'
After thinking things over, the officer ordered his old servant to dispose of the plate.
"Throw this away in the deep valley over there in the mountains."



'Why would he ask me to throw away this worthless plate all the way over here?'
The servant thought it was strange, but quietly followed the officer's order.
After the old servant died, no one knew where the plate was.

^{*}*hoengjae* (windfall): unexpectedly obtaining wealth

“People who learned of the plate wandered through the mountains,
trying to find the treasure, but no one ever found it.

The mountain became known as Bomul (Treasure) Mountain as it hid the treasure.
Gradually, it became Bomun Mountain since its easier to pronounce.”

At the end of the story, Grandfather added,

“That plate may still be buried on Bomun Mountain.”

“Really? Wow, let’s go find the treasure!”

“There is no need to try and find the treasure.

We probably have it at home.”

“Where? Where is it?”

“What do you mean where? Our Wooju is the treasure.”

Grandmother laughed and agreed.

“Of course. A treasure beyond compare.”



A little later, Mom and Dad video-called me.

Behind Mom, there was a meadow and a flock of sheep,
and behind Dad, I could see a vast blue ocean.

“I want to see the sheep too. And I also want to go to the sea!”

As Wooju grumbled, Mom said,

“Let’s go on a family trip someday, together with Grandpa and Grandma.”

After the call ended, Wooju asked,

“Grandma, where do you want to go for our family trip?”

“The place I want to go most is my hometown
in North Korea. I really want to show you my home.

It would be nice to meet relatives and
play with friends your age, right?”

“Yes, Grandma. I hope unification happens soon!”



“Now, we must decide whose story is more fun.

Wooju, isn't my story more interesting?”

Grandmother also looked at Wooju with anticipating eyes.

“No, my story was more interesting, right?”

Wooju found it hard to choose, so she answered,

“Well, they're both equally fun.

If you share one more story each, I'll listen and let you know.”

“What!?”

The three family members burst into laughter.





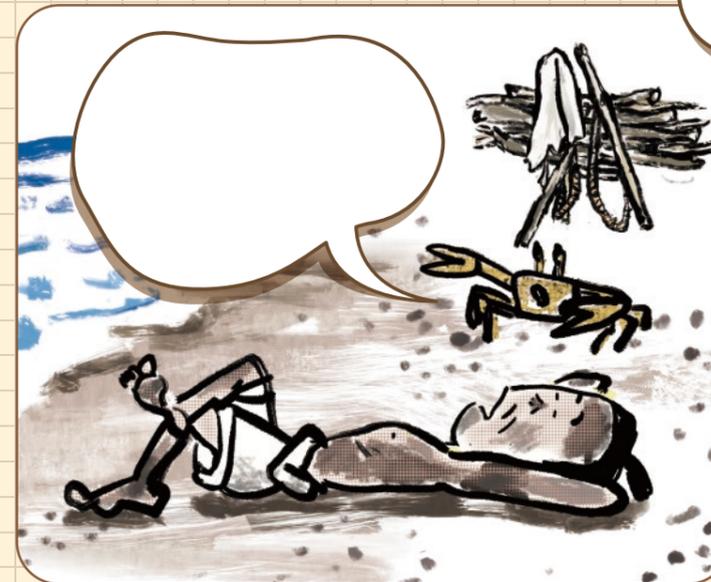
On this night filled with nostalgic old tales,
even the moon listens intently.



Activities



Write dialogue in the 4-panel comic strip speech bubbles
about the crab who repays Jung-gap's favor.



2

Create a 'Dictionary of Repaying' from the folktales.

Dictionary of Repaying by the 'swallow'

[Heungbu's story]

'I came to repay your favor' is...

...when Heungbu healed the swallow's leg which had broken while it practiced flying, ...the swallow never forgot his kindness and gave him gourd seeds that yielded gold and silver treasures.

Dictionary of Repaying by the 'Crab'

[Knock, knock! I came to repay your favor]

'I came to repay your favor' is...

.....
.....



Dictionary of Repaying by the 'Toad'

[Knock, knock! I came to repay your favor]

'I came to repay your favor' is...

.....
.....



3

What word fits in the blank?

Read the picture book and examine the illustrations carefully, and you can find out.

Bomun Mountain is located in Jung-gu, Daejeon, South Korea. It was called OOOOO Mountain because it was said that OOOOO was buried there, before it became Bomun Mountain.

If you go to Bomunsanseong, a mountain fortress from the Baekje era, you can see the city of Daejeon. The scenery of Bomun Mountain is one of the eight scenic views of Daejeon, and there are mineral springs in every valley.



<On the walls of Bomunsanseong Fortress in Daejeon>
Encyclopedia of Korean Culture



<Haegumgang Chongseokjeong>,
The Institute for Peace Affairs

Chongseokjeong is located on the beach in Chong seok-ri, Gojeo-eup, Tongcheon-gun, Gangwon Province, North Korea. It was called Chongseokjeong because it looked like a OOOOO OOOOOO towering over the sea. OOOOO OOOOOOs of various shapes, including hexagons and octagons, mysteriously sprung out of the water. Chongseokjeong is one of the eight scenic spots in the Gwandong region and is said to have a beautiful sunrise.





Draw a map of Korea.

1) Connect the dots to outline the map of Korea and color it.

2) Mark the region where you live.



Answers to Question No.3 : Bomi (Treasure), Stone pillar

Scanning the QR code allows you to enjoy an animated story or audiobook in Korean.



〈Hyeri Lee and Hyeri Ri〉
Animation



〈Camping Day〉
Animation



〈The Lost Magic Orb〉
Animation



〈Yes! It's okay
to be different!〉
Animation



〈Nam Tteok, Buk Tteok,
Suk-Tteok, Suk-Tteok〉
Animation



〈Camping Day〉
Audio Book



〈The Lost Magic Orb〉
Audio Book



〈Yes! It's okay
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〈Nam Tteok, Buk Tteok,
Suk-Tteok, Suk-Tteok〉
Audio Book



〈Knock, Knock! I Came
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Audio Book

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