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I'VE DONE
A GOOD JOB

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After finishing their duties for the day, the student monitors went joyfully home.



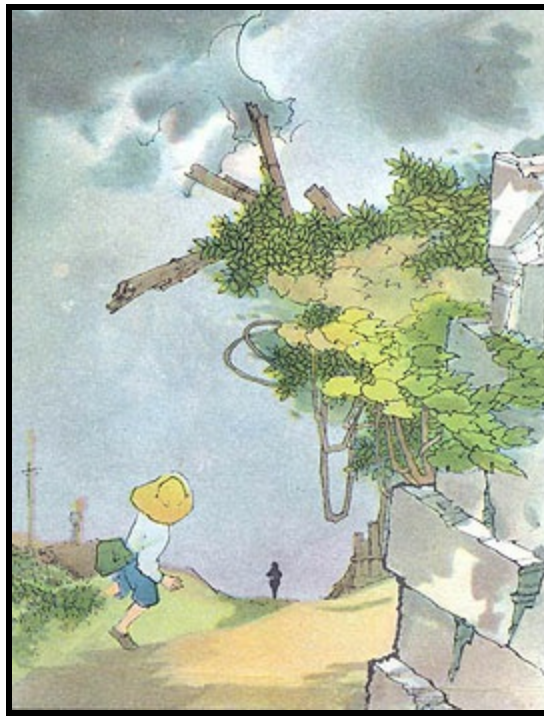
Only Wang Kai-hsiang of standard 5 remained. Besides sweeping the floor, which was part of his monitoring work, he straightened those desks which had been left in disorder by their owners.



When Wang Kai-hsiang finally left the classroom, all his schoolmates had long since gone home. The sky had darkened and thunder was rumbling in the distance. It was going to rain any minute.



Wang Kai-hsiang was worried. It would be today when he had on his brand-new clothes! He had no umbrella, and his home was three *li* away. He wished he could get home in one big stride.



Crossing the little bridge, he saw a small boy walking listlessly ahead. Who could it be? he wondered. School was over long ago, and it would rain soon --- why had the boy only got so far?



Catching up with him, Wang Kai-hsiang saw it was a boy from a lower class. His eyes were red; he had been crying. Wang Kai-hsiang asked him his name and why he didn't hurry home. "It's going to rain!" Wang pointed out.



The little boy burst into tears. His lips quivering, he told Wang: "My ... name is Cheng Fang ... I'm cold ... I feel awful sick."



Questioning Cheng Fang, Wang Kai-hsiang found out that he lived in Tien Village; that his father and mother had gone to a nearby fair; that only his grandma was at home; and that he felt sick. Comforting him, Wang Kai-hsiang helped him along.



Wang was in a fix. All these troubles would come at the same time! The wind was getting fiercer and the dark clouds were now directly overhead. It was rapidly getting dark. And Cheng Fang's steps were becoming weaker and slower.



At the crossroads, Wang Kai-hsiang thought: Tien Village is still two li to the west, while his home was only one li or so to the east. His mother must be standing at the door now, waiting for him. A clap of thunder shattered his thoughts.



Turning round, Wang Kai-hsiang told Cheng Fang: "The rain's going to come down in a minute. I haven't got an umbrella, so I can't take you home. You go home by yourself." Saying which he left Cheng Fang and started to run home.



But the heavens weren't helpful. Wang had not taken more than a few steps before the rain poured down. Afraid of getting his new clothes wet, he took them off and put them in his satchel.



Puddles of rain had already formed everywhere. If he didn't take care he would stumble and fall. Pausing to take a look at Cheng Fang, he discovered with surprise that he was crouching at the crossroads, motionless.



Wang Kai-hsiang immediately ran back to him. The rain had made Cheng Fang worse; he felt weak; he had a bad headache; he couldn't find strength to lift his feet. Seeing him in this plight and reminding himself that he was a Young Pioneer, Wang regretted having ever left him.



Wang comforted Cheng Fang as best he could, took out his clothes and wrapped them around the shivering boy, and prepared to take him home. Cheng Fang showed his gratitude at Wang's kindness.



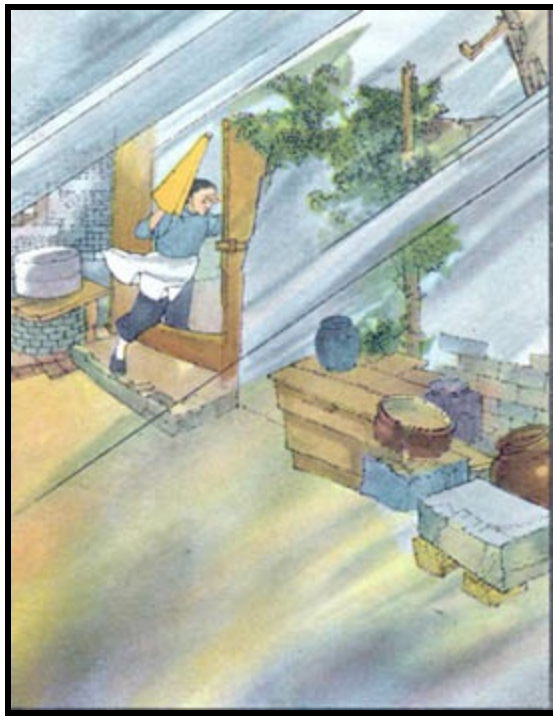
Having put his clothes around Cheng Fang, Wang stooped down and told Cheng Fang to climb on his back; he would take him home. Gratefully Cheng Fang obeyed.



The boy was, however, too heavy for him. After a while Wang Kai-hsiang got very tired. He thought: if only Li Shih-chung, the strongest boy in the class, were here to help him!



The wind and the rain were now raging in fury. At home, Cheng Fang's grandmother was pacing the floor, greatly worried. She took an umbrella and went to meet him. As she stepped out the door, a strong gust almost pushed her over.



She was forced back a few steps, but she stayed at the door in the pelting rain, anxiously watching the road. After what seemed a long time she saw a black figure slowly approaching.



She peered at it for a long moment, and finally saw that it was a boy carrying another on his back. When they came nearer she recognized her grandson, and, overjoyed and relieved, went to meet the pair.



Cheng Fang's grandma was greatly surprised to find that the person carrying her grandson was not an adult but a boy of 13. He was soaked and his legs were covered with mud. She helped him carry Cheng Fang into the house.



Cheng Fang's face was very pale and he moaned pitifully. Grandma was so frightened she was at a loss what to do, so that for the moment she even forgot to thank Wang Kai-hsiang.



Wang was exhausted, and longed to go home, change his clothes and go to bed. But seeing how the situation was he volunteered to go to the town clinic for a doctor.



Grandma could see how tired he was, and thought of dissuading him, but seeing the boy's determined face, said nothing but instead patted him gently on the back to show her gratitude.



Wang was embarrassed, as he wasn't used to being thanked by an elder. He ran off, saying: "I'll come back with the doctor in no time."



As it was still raining hard, grandma took an umbrella and chased after Wang Kai-hsiang.



But, fleet as a hare, the boy was already out of hearing.



On the way Wang Kai-hsiang kept thinking about Cheng Fang's illness and paid no attention to the ground, which was very slippery. Suddenly he slipped and fell heavily.



He picked himself up, took off his shoes and continued on his way. The town was still five *li* away. He'd have to hurry.



Barefooted, breathless, Wang reached the clinic. Maybe because it was raining, there were no patients at the clinic; the doctor was free. Wang told him why he had come.



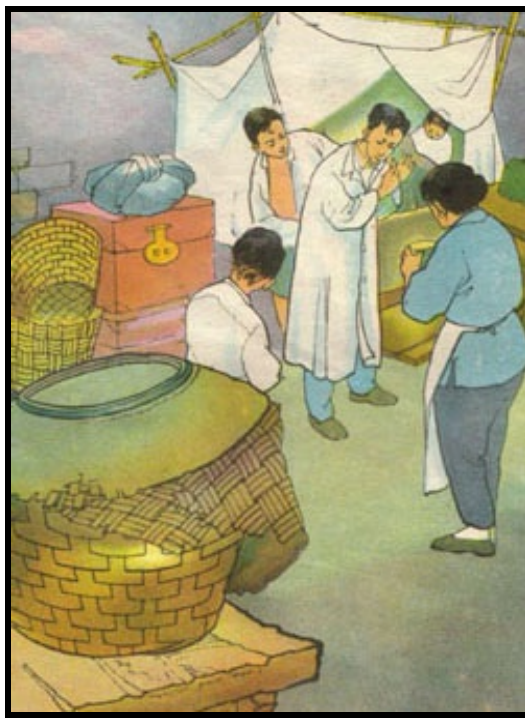
Seeing the boy's anxious face, the doctor knew that the patient must be in a bad way indeed. Wasting no time, he packed his medical kit and got ready to go. They started out. Wang Kai-hsiang carried the doctor's kit.



The doctor noticed that the boy walked with great vigour, and began to like him. He asked him why he didn't carry an umbrella, and who it was that was sick --- his brother, or his sister? Wang Kai-hsiang smiled and mumbled something in reply.



When they arrived at their destination, Cheng Fang's parents had already returned home. They helped the doctor as best they could.



The doctor examined Cheng Fang, gave him an injection, gave the parents full instructions what to do, and told everybody to relax as Cheng Fang was in no danger.



Only then did Wang Kai-hsiang notice that it had already turned dark. He took leave of Cheng Fang's parents, who tried hard to persuade him to stay for supper. The doctor showed his surprise: he'd thought they were all of one family!



Wang Kai-hsiang thanked them, but refused to stay, only asking for the loan of an umbrella. Having said goodbye he went out into the night. On the homeward road he felt the red scarf around his neck and thought happily: "Today I've done something worthy of a Young Pioneer."