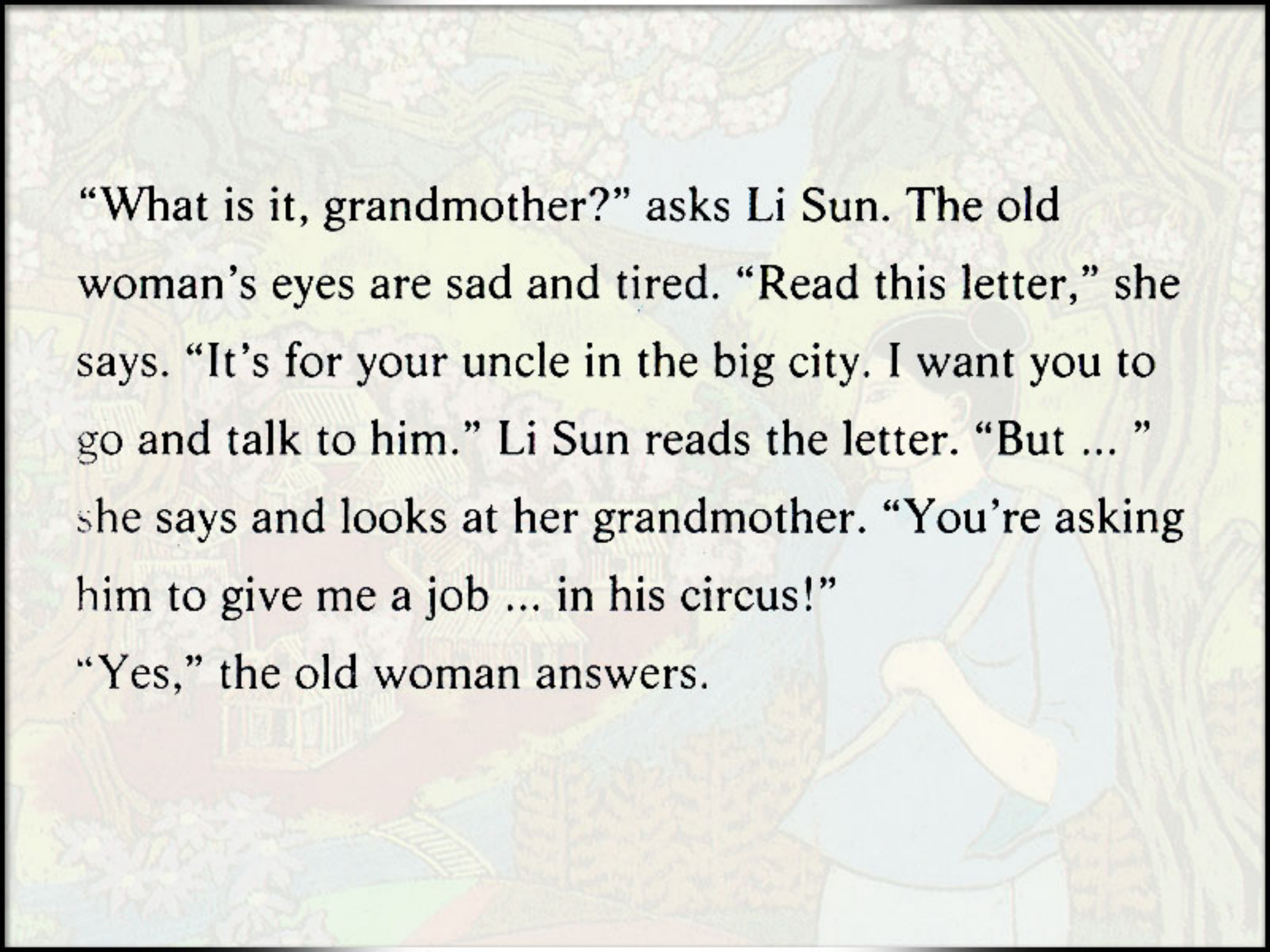
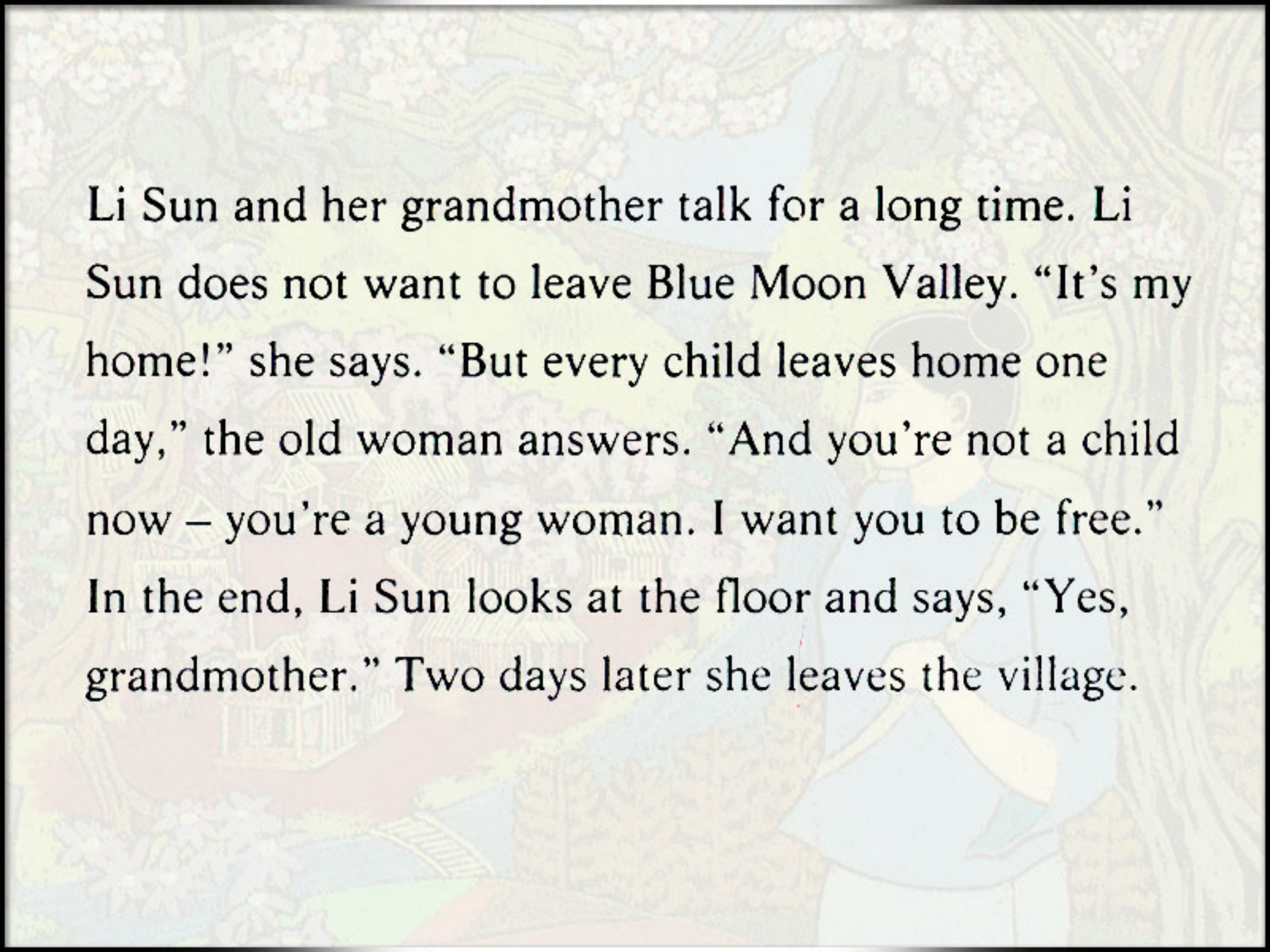
The background features a soft, watercolor-style illustration of a village. In the foreground, a woman with dark hair is shown from the chest up, wearing a light blue top and a white apron. She is looking towards the left. Behind her, a village with traditional houses and a winding path is visible, set against a backdrop of trees and a pale sky.

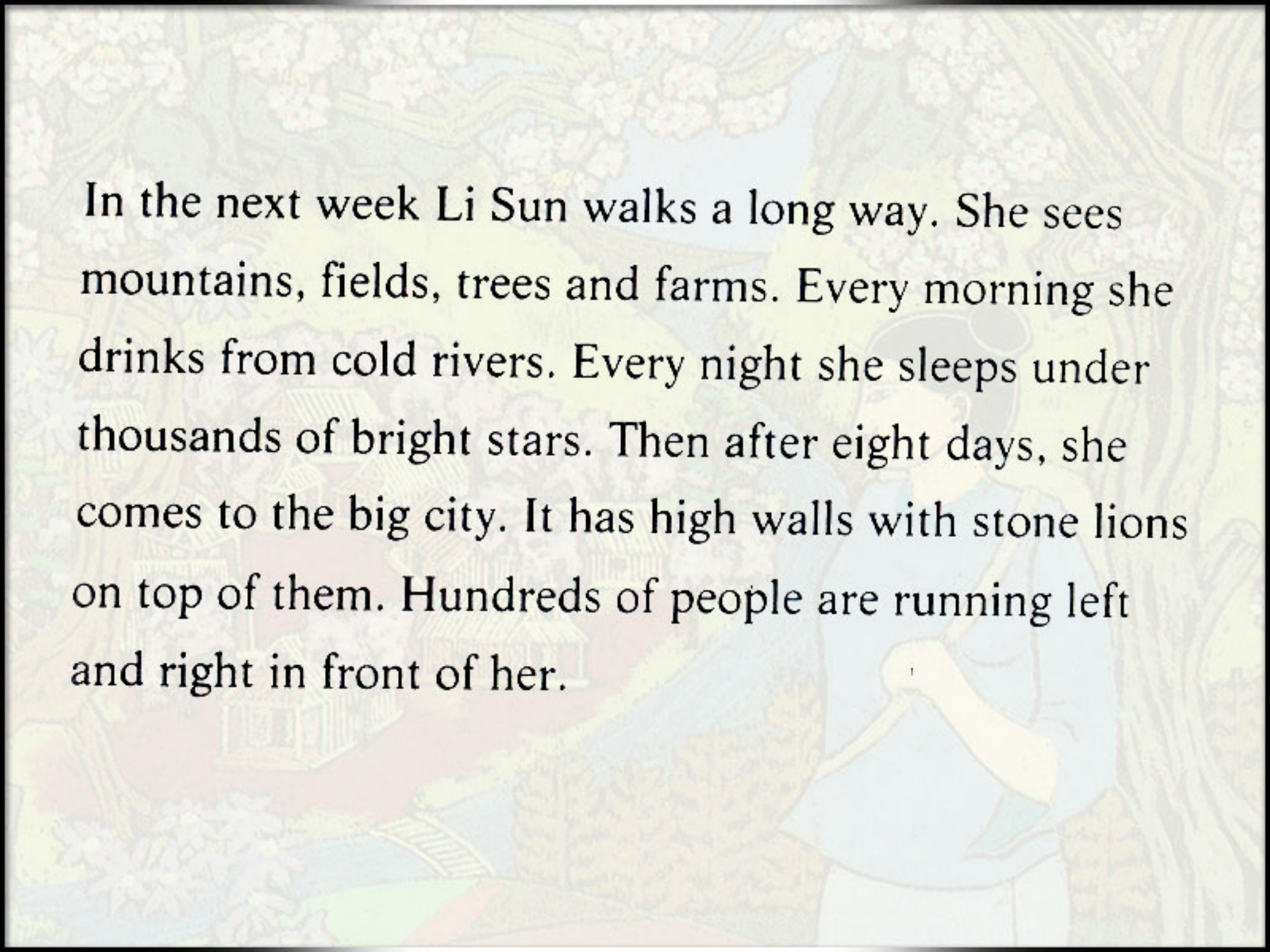
Blue Moon Valley is a small village. Li Sun lives there with her grandmother. She is very happy in Blue Moon Valley. But there is a problem. Li Sun's grandmother is very old and very ill. She cannot work any more and has no money. One bright April morning she says to Li Sun, "Sit down, granddaughter. I have something to tell you."

An illustration of an elderly woman with short, curly grey hair, wearing a blue dress and a white shawl. She is sitting on a wooden bench, holding a letter in her hands and looking down at it with a sad expression. The background is a soft, textured pattern of light green and yellow, suggesting a garden or a park setting with trees and flowers.

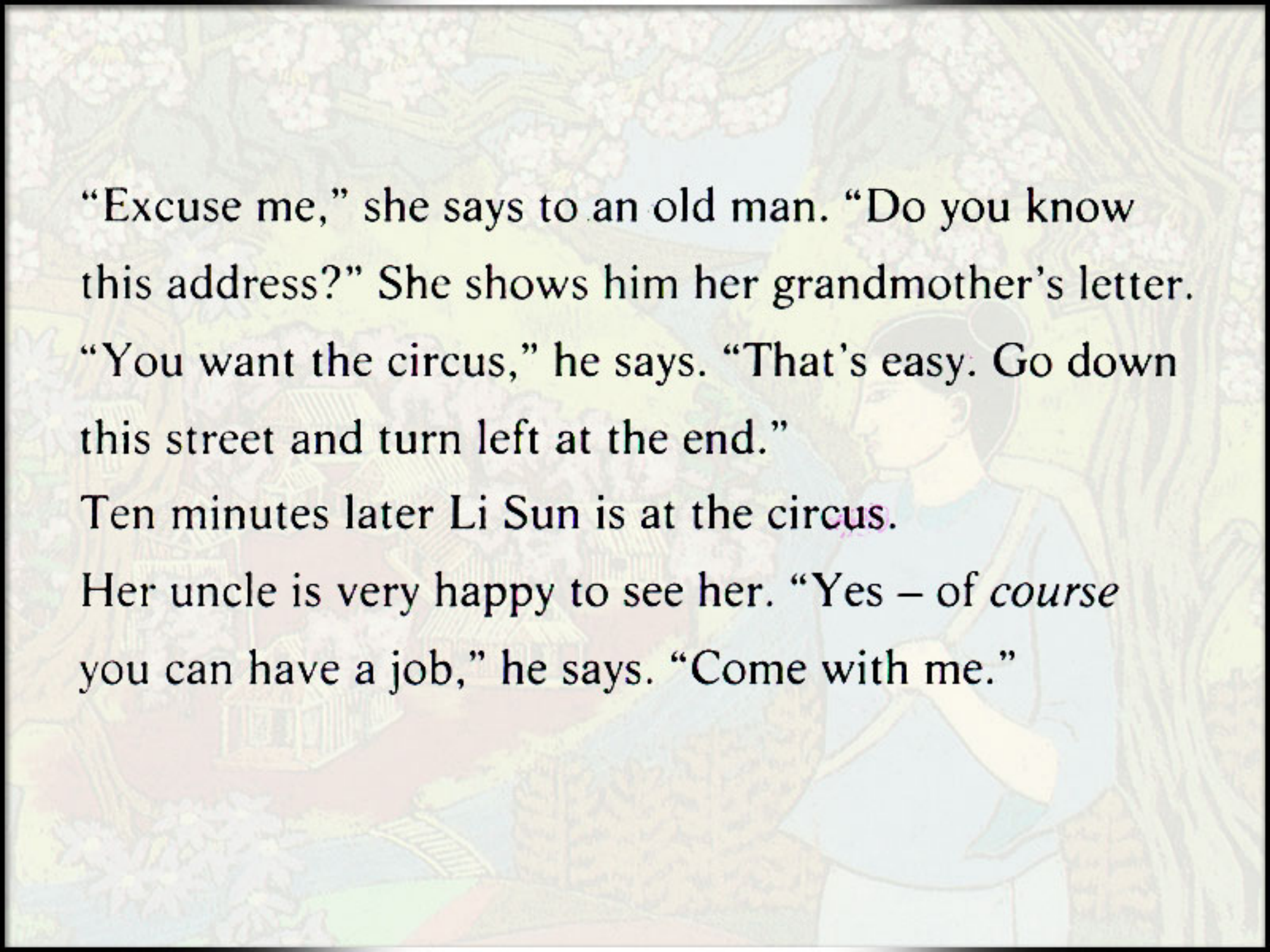
“What is it, grandmother?” asks Li Sun. The old woman’s eyes are sad and tired. “Read this letter,” she says. “It’s for your uncle in the big city. I want you to go and talk to him.” Li Sun reads the letter. “But ... ” she says and looks at her grandmother. “You’re asking him to give me a job ... in his circus!” “Yes,” the old woman answers.

A faint, stylized illustration of a woman in a blue dress standing in a valley with mountains and a river. The woman is positioned on the right side of the frame, looking towards the left. The background features rolling hills, a river, and mountains under a light sky. The overall style is soft and artistic, typical of a children's book illustration.

Li Sun and her grandmother talk for a long time. Li Sun does not want to leave Blue Moon Valley. “It’s my home!” she says. “But every child leaves home one day,” the old woman answers. “And you’re not a child now – you’re a young woman. I want you to be free.” In the end, Li Sun looks at the floor and says, “Yes, grandmother.” Two days later she leaves the village.

The background features a faint, stylized illustration of a woman in a blue dress walking through a landscape. The scene includes mountains, fields, and a city with a high wall and stone lions. The illustration is rendered in a light, sketchy style with soft colors.

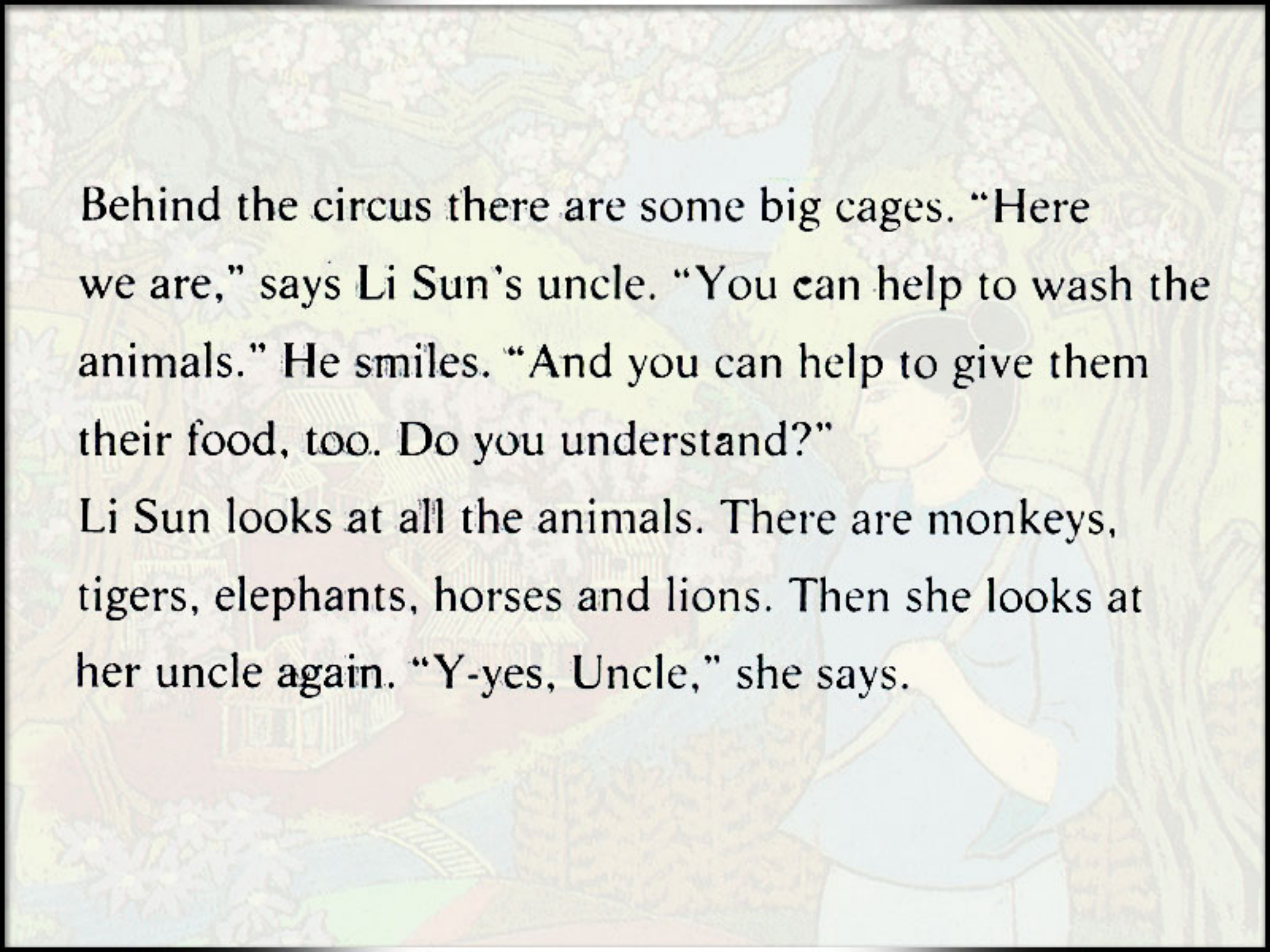
In the next week Li Sun walks a long way. She sees mountains, fields, trees and farms. Every morning she drinks from cold rivers. Every night she sleeps under thousands of bright stars. Then after eight days, she comes to the big city. It has high walls with stone lions on top of them. Hundreds of people are running left and right in front of her.



“Excuse me,” she says to an old man. “Do you know this address?” She shows him her grandmother’s letter. “You want the circus,” he says. “That’s easy. Go down this street and turn left at the end.”

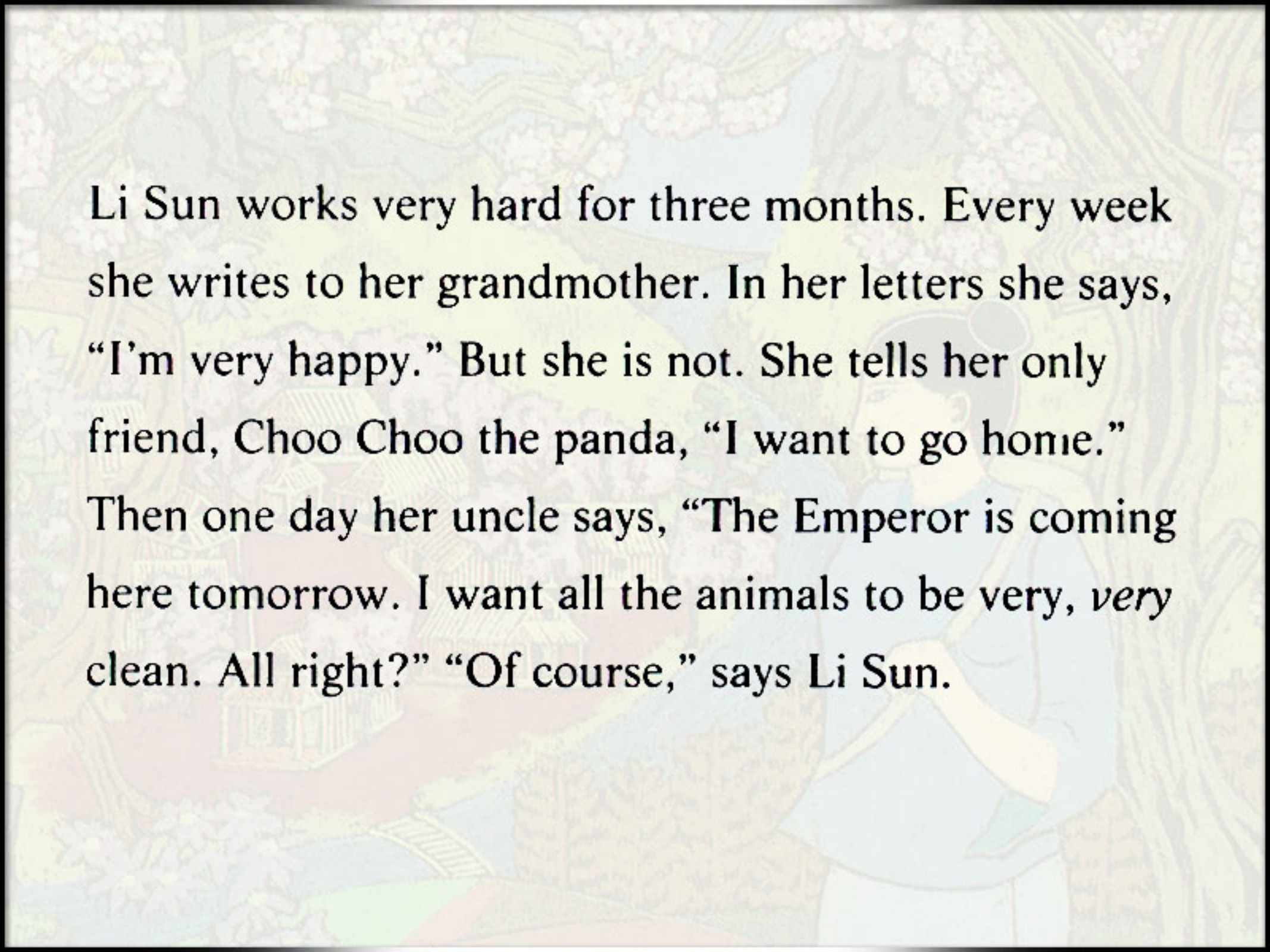
Ten minutes later Li Sun is at the circus.

Her uncle is very happy to see her. “Yes – of *course* you can have a job,” he says. “Come with me.”



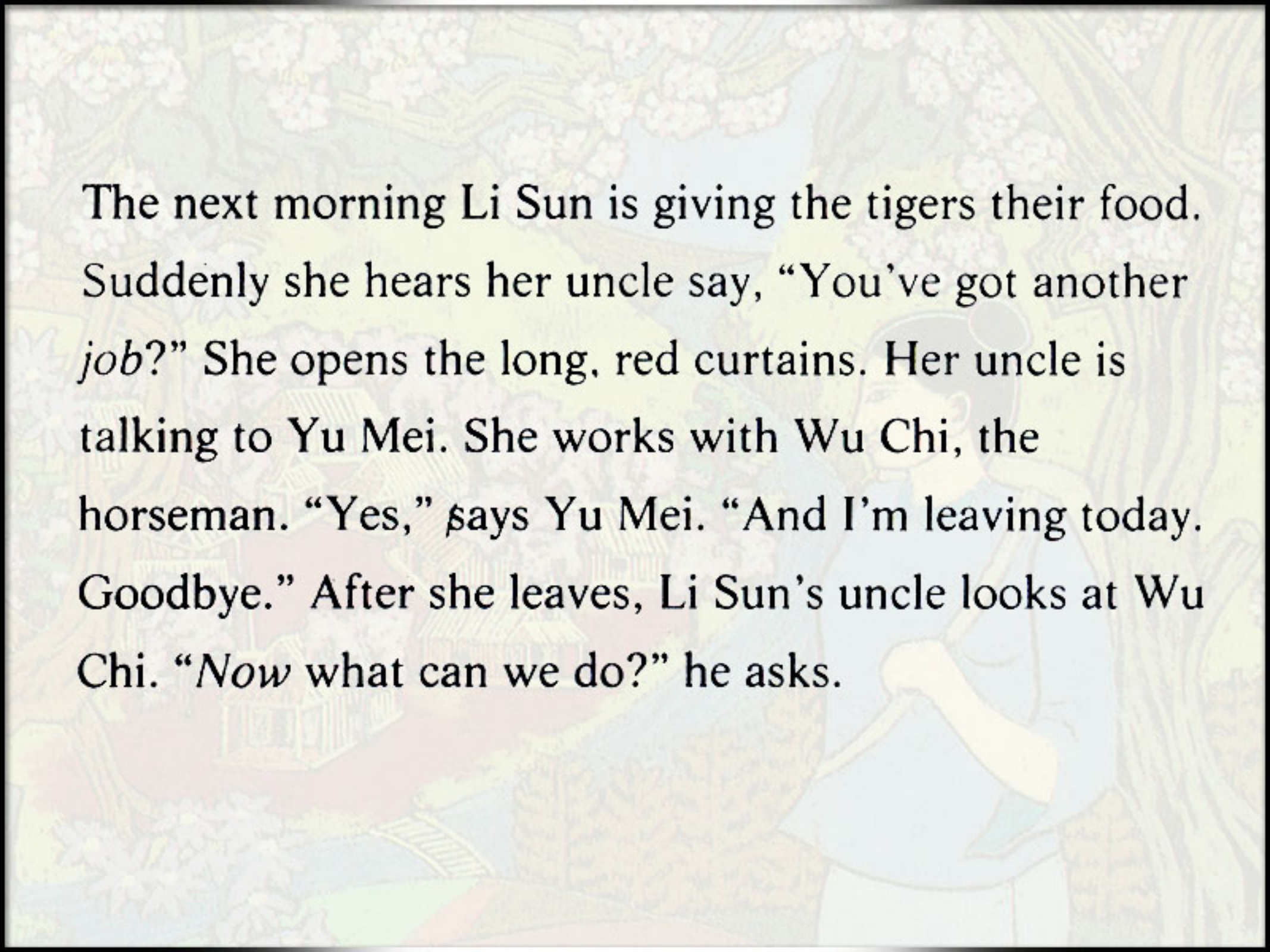
Behind the circus there are some big cages. “Here we are,” says Li Sun’s uncle. “You can help to wash the animals.” He smiles. “And you can help to give them their food, too. Do you understand?”

Li Sun looks at all the animals. There are monkeys, tigers, elephants, horses and lions. Then she looks at her uncle again. “Y-yes, Uncle,” she says.

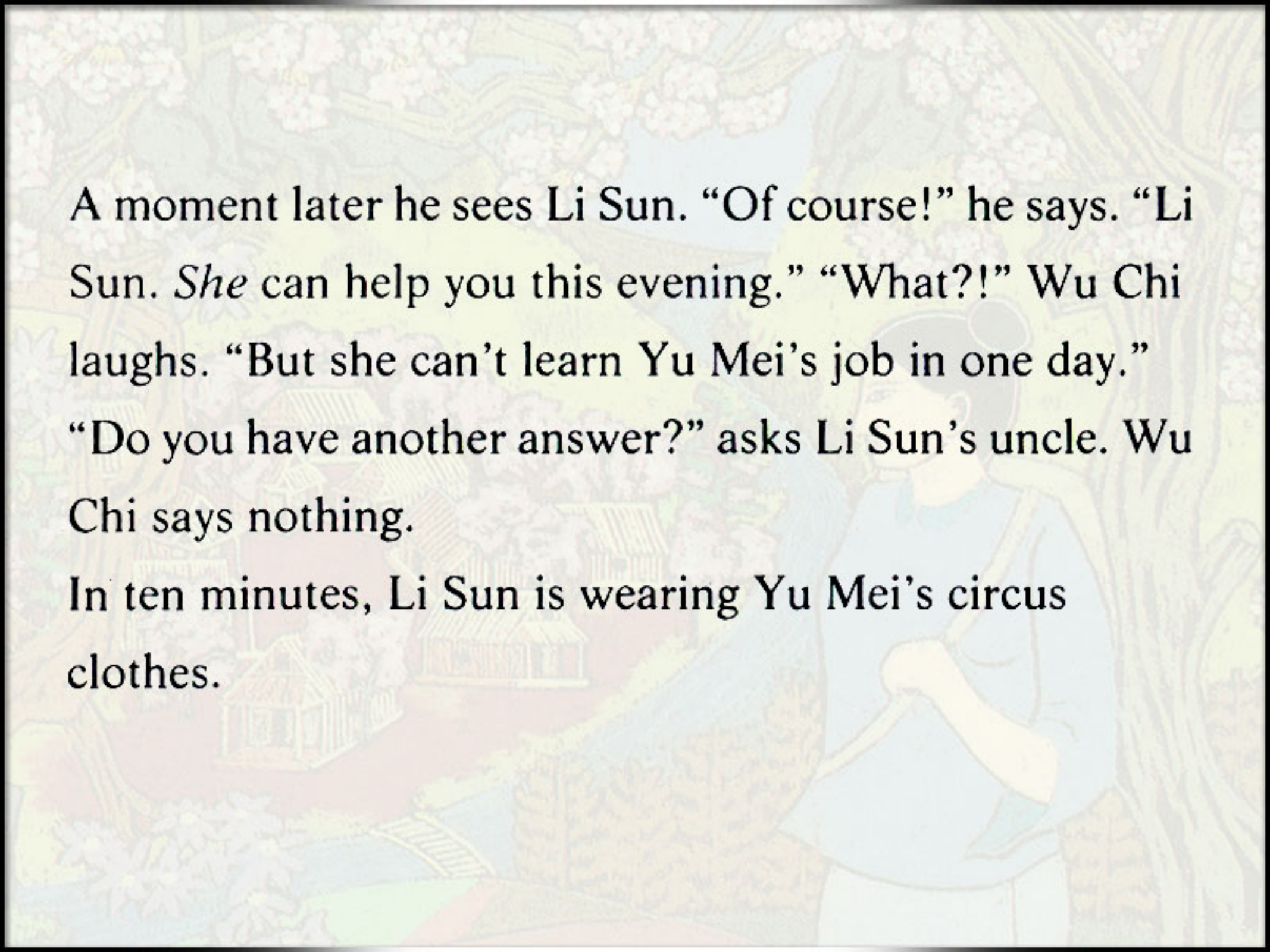


Li Sun works very hard for three months. Every week she writes to her grandmother. In her letters she says, “I’m very happy.” But she is not. She tells her only friend, Choo Choo the panda, “I want to go home.” Then one day her uncle says, “The Emperor is coming here tomorrow. I want all the animals to be very, *very* clean. All right?” “Of course,” says Li Sun.



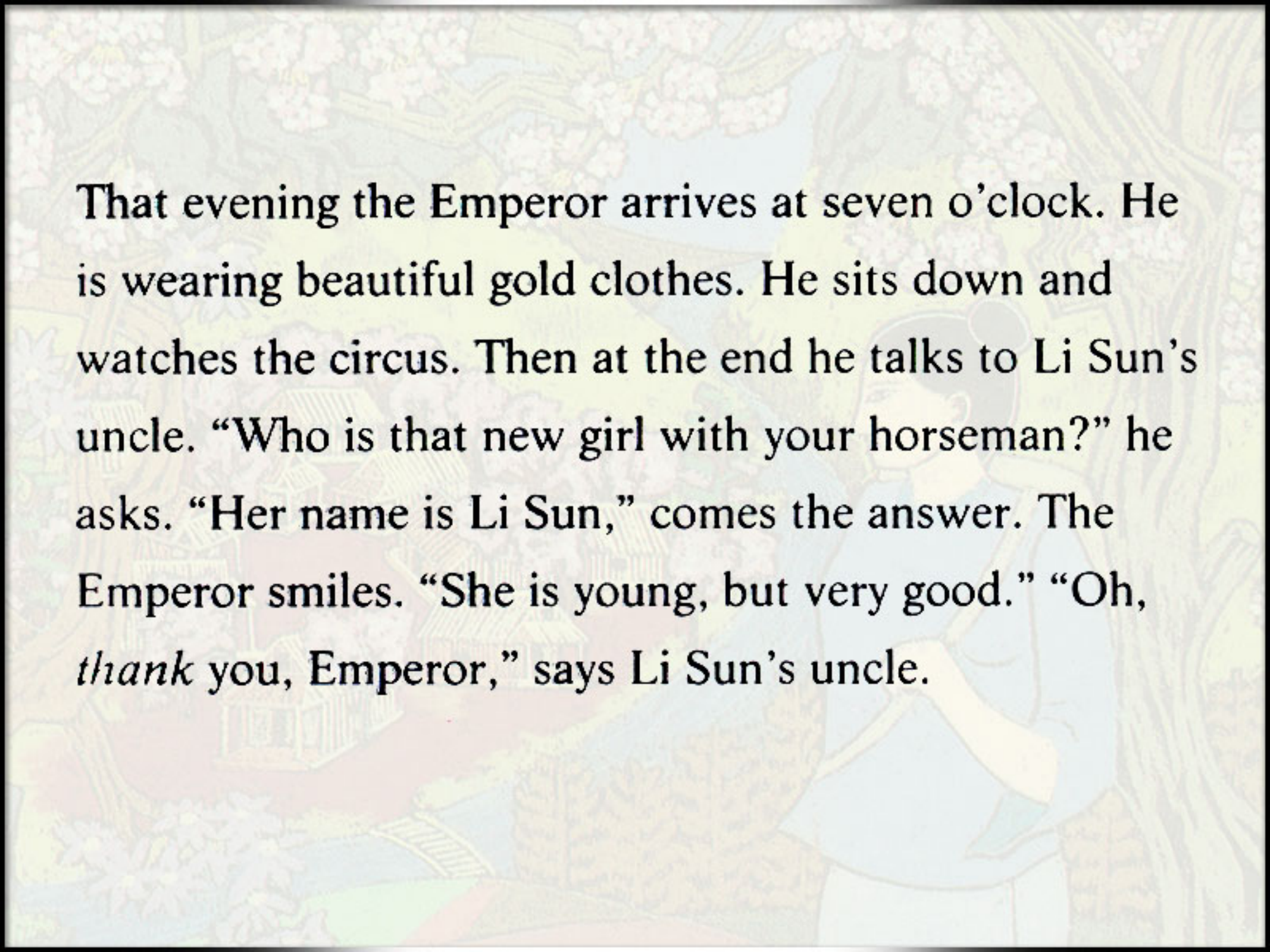
The background features a faint, stylized illustration. On the right, a woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a blue traditional Chinese dress, is shown from the waist up, looking towards the left. On the left, a man in a red shirt and dark pants is partially visible, appearing to be in conversation with the woman. The background is filled with intricate, light-colored patterns, possibly representing a garden or a traditional architectural setting.

The next morning Li Sun is giving the tigers their food. Suddenly she hears her uncle say, “You’ve got another *job*?” She opens the long, red curtains. Her uncle is talking to Yu Mei. She works with Wu Chi, the horseman. “Yes,” says Yu Mei. “And I’m leaving today. Goodbye.” After she leaves, Li Sun’s uncle looks at Wu Chi. “*Now* what can we do?” he asks.

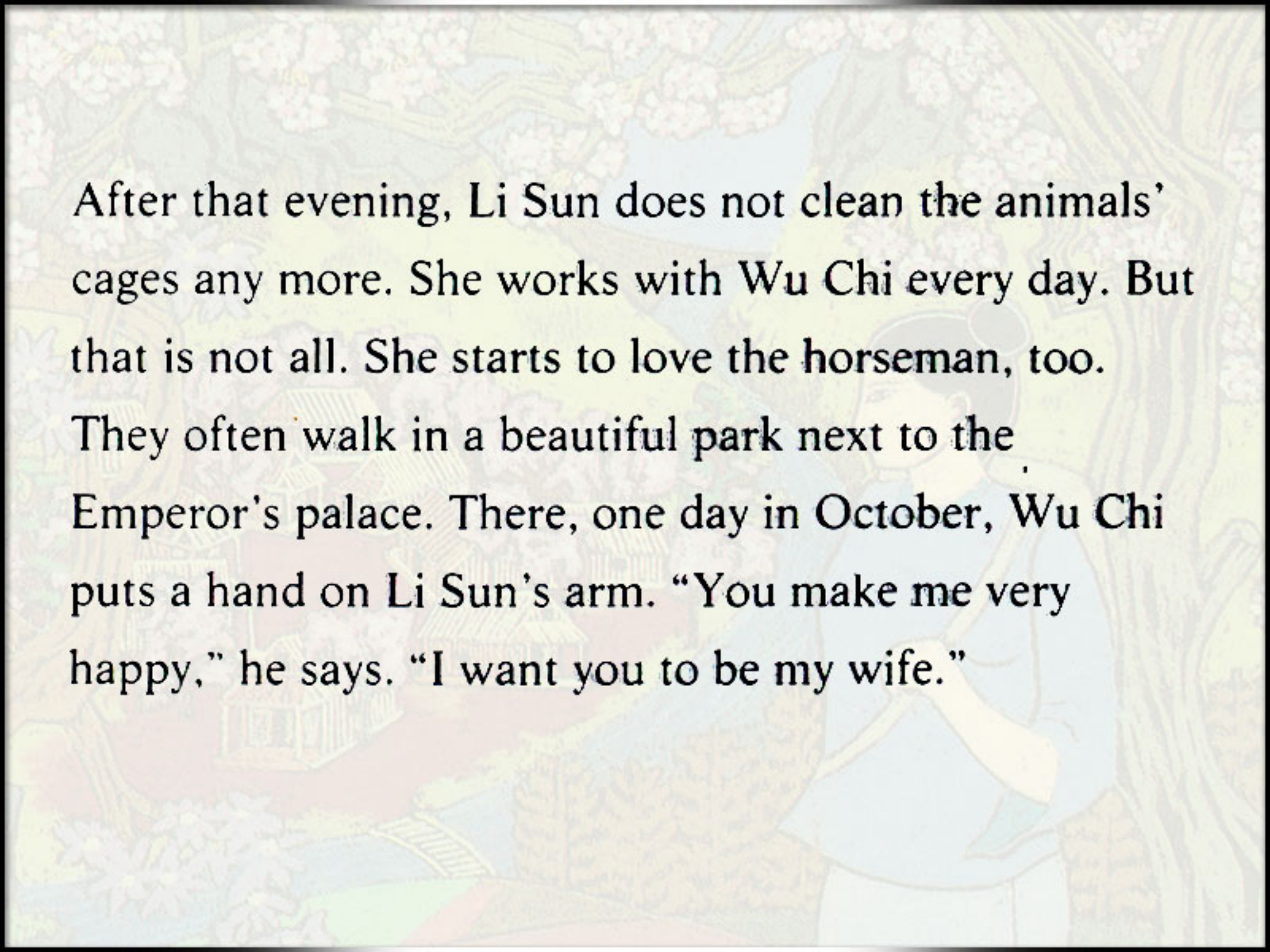
The background features a traditional Chinese ink wash painting style illustration. In the foreground, a woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a blue robe, is shown in profile, looking towards the left. Behind her, a village scene unfolds with several traditional Chinese houses with tiled roofs, a winding path, and trees. The overall color palette is muted, with greens, blues, and earthy tones.

A moment later he sees Li Sun. “Of course!” he says. “Li Sun. *She* can help you this evening.” “What?!” Wu Chi laughs. “But she can’t learn Yu Mei’s job in one day.” “Do you have another answer?” asks Li Sun’s uncle. Wu Chi says nothing.

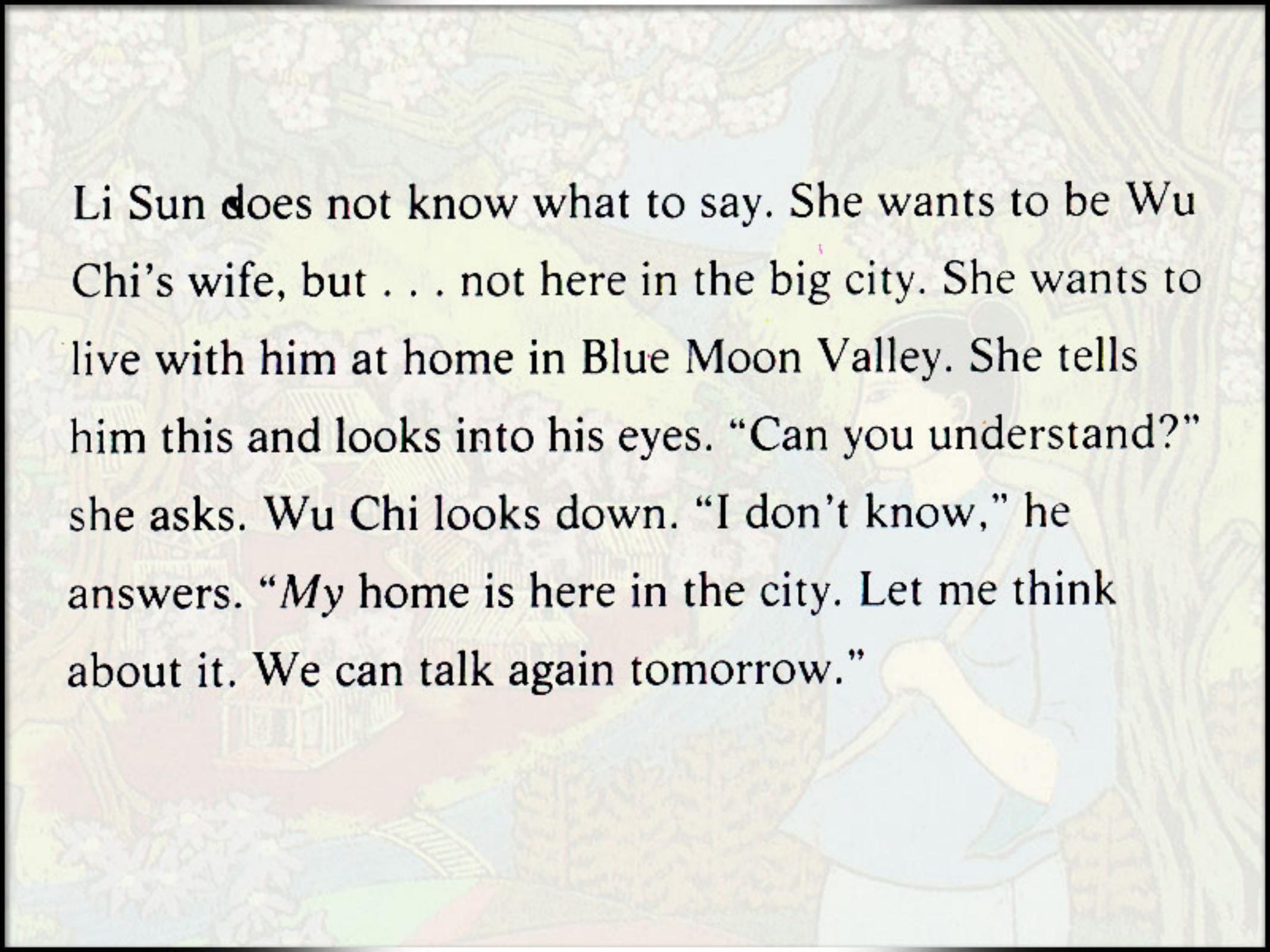
In ten minutes, Li Sun is wearing Yu Mei’s circus clothes.



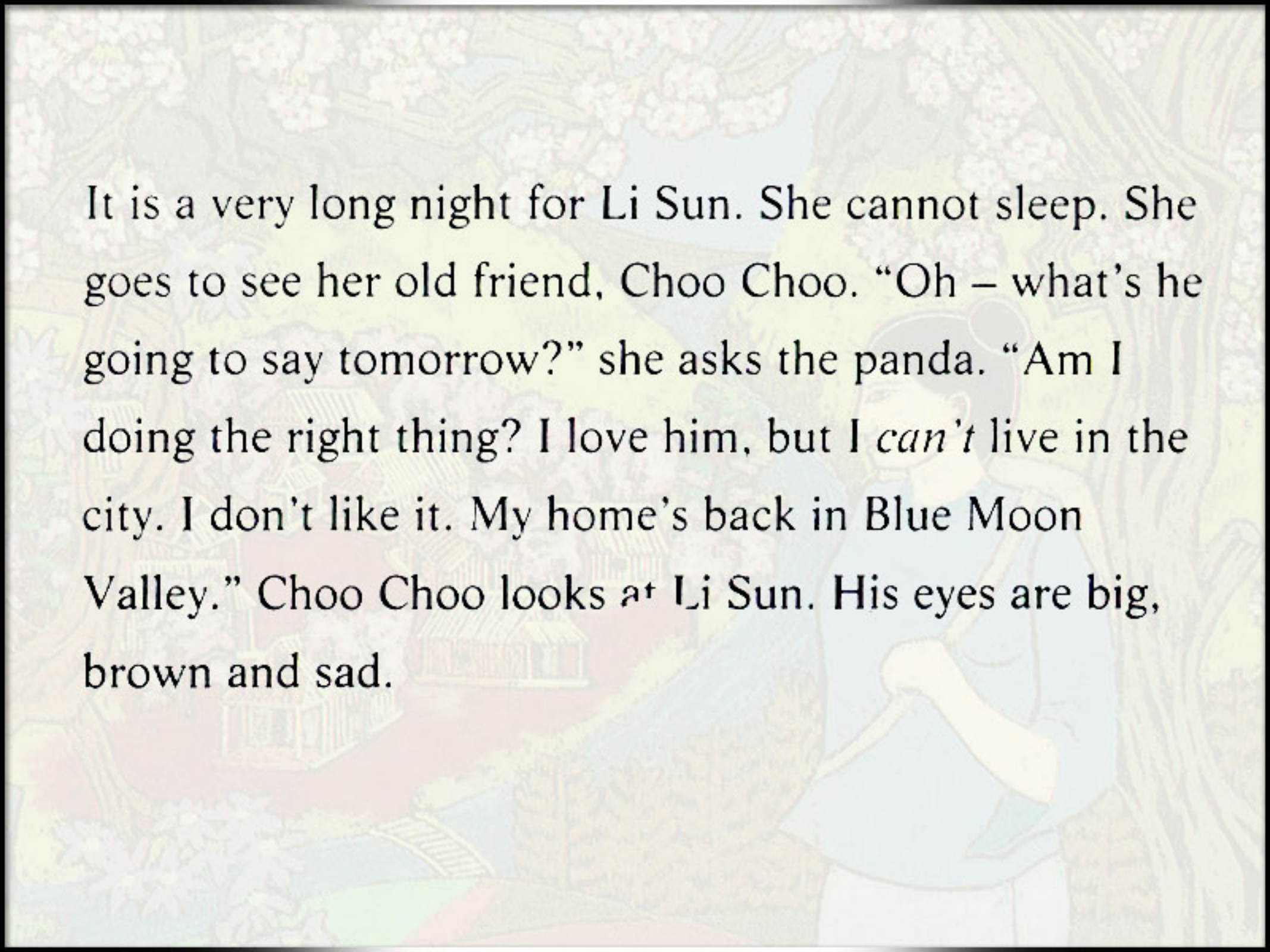
That evening the Emperor arrives at seven o'clock. He is wearing beautiful gold clothes. He sits down and watches the circus. Then at the end he talks to Li Sun's uncle. "Who is that new girl with your horseman?" he asks. "Her name is Li Sun," comes the answer. The Emperor smiles. "She is young, but very good." "Oh, *thank* you, Emperor," says Li Sun's uncle.

The background features a faint, stylized illustration of a woman in traditional Chinese clothing, possibly a scholar or a noblewoman, standing in a park-like setting. In the distance, a traditional Chinese pagoda is visible. The overall style is reminiscent of traditional Chinese ink wash painting with a soft, pastel color palette.

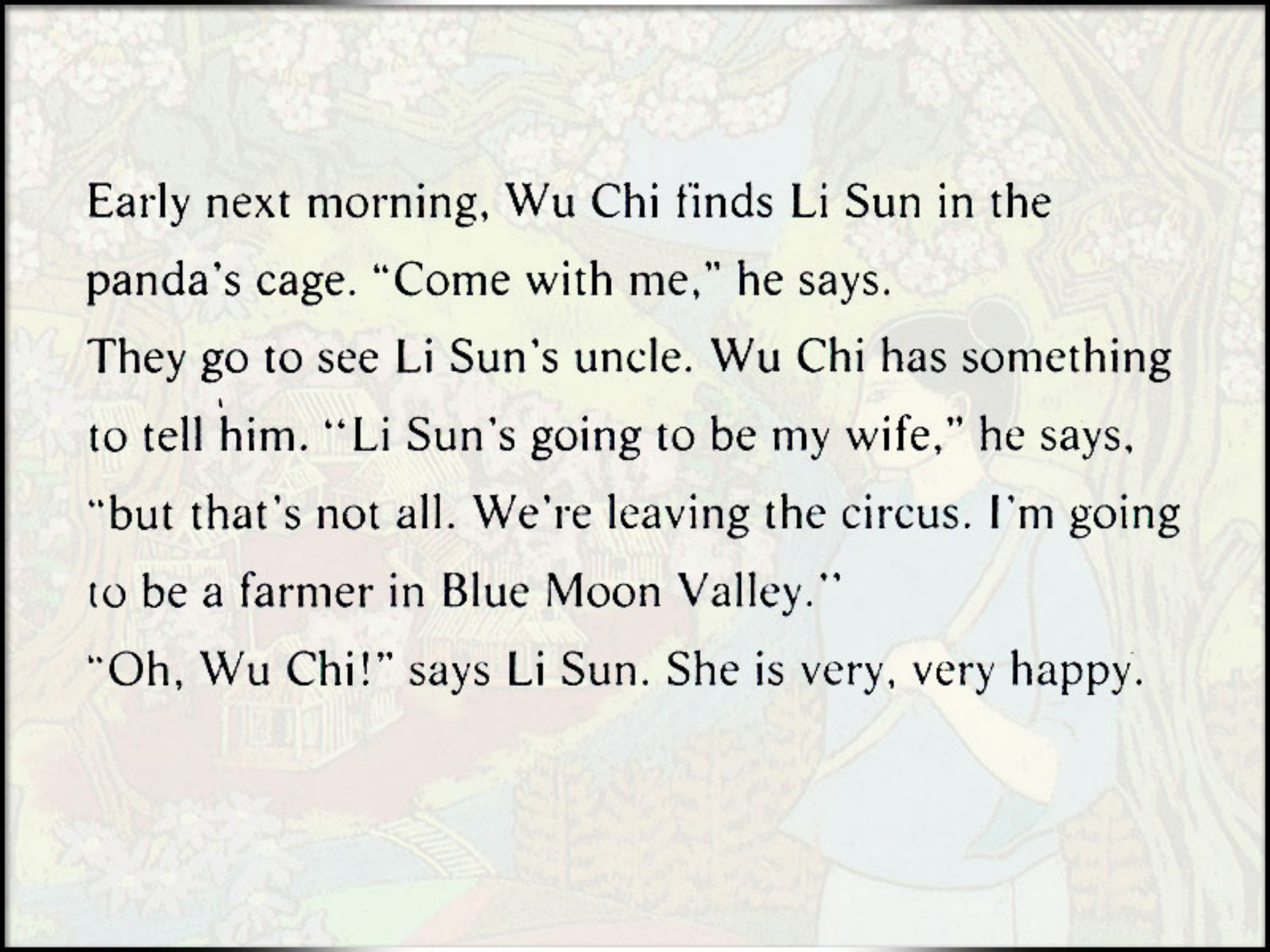
After that evening, Li Sun does not clean the animals' cages any more. She works with Wu Chi every day. But that is not all. She starts to love the horseman, too. They often walk in a beautiful park next to the Emperor's palace. There, one day in October, Wu Chi puts a hand on Li Sun's arm. "You make me very happy," he says. "I want you to be my wife."

The background features a faint, stylized illustration of a woman with dark hair, wearing a light blue dress, standing in a valley. In the background, there are rolling hills, a river, and several traditional-style buildings. The overall color palette is soft and muted, with greens, blues, and earthy tones.

Li Sun does not know what to say. She wants to be Wu Chi's wife, but . . . not here in the big city. She wants to live with him at home in Blue Moon Valley. She tells him this and looks into his eyes. "Can you understand?" she asks. Wu Chi looks down. "I don't know," he answers. "*My* home is here in the city. Let me think about it. We can talk again tomorrow."

The background features a faint, stylized illustration. On the right side, a woman with dark hair in a bun, wearing a blue dress, is shown from the waist up, looking towards the left. On the left side, a panda is depicted in a landscape with trees and a building. The overall style is soft and illustrative.

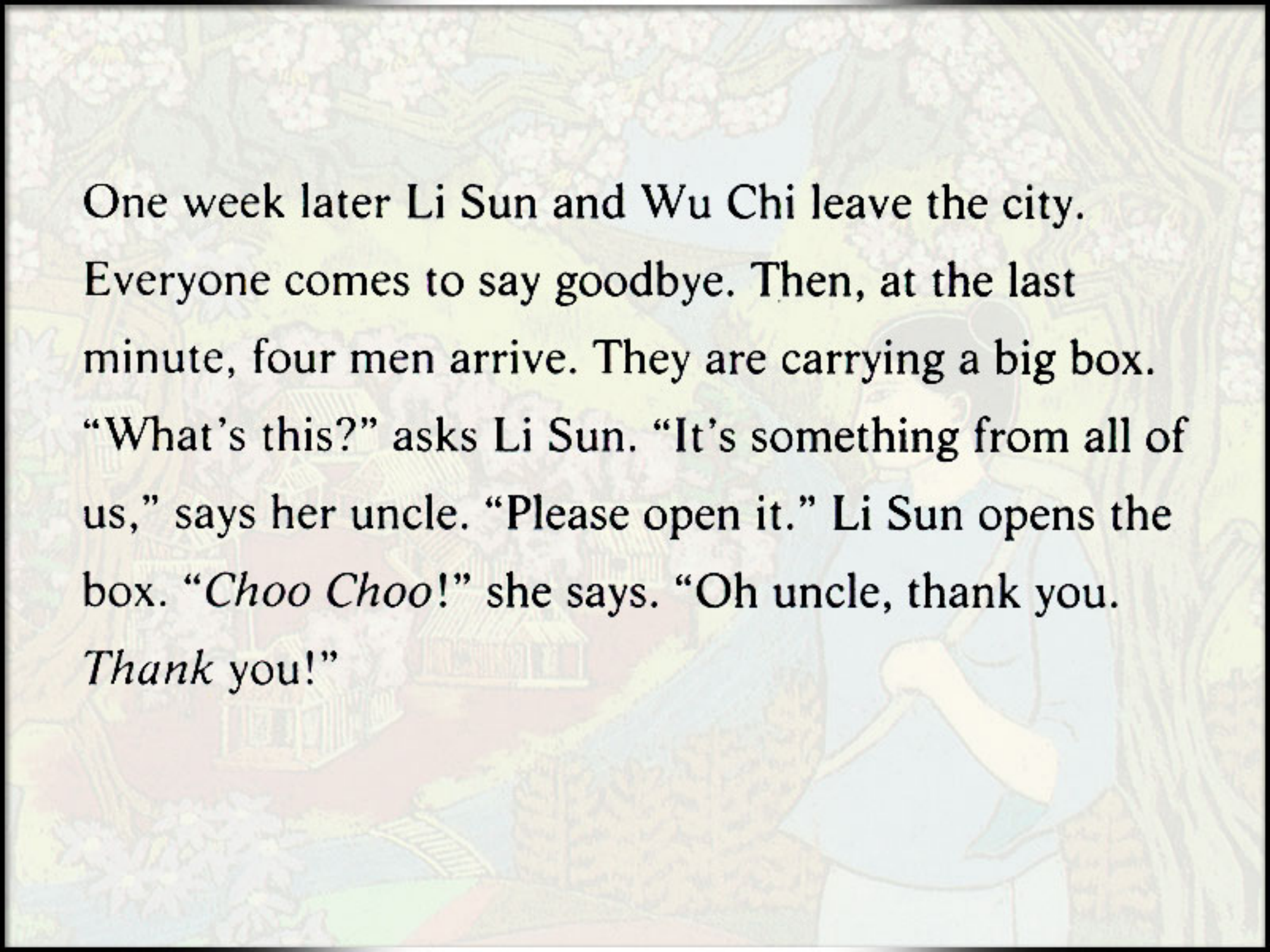
It is a very long night for Li Sun. She cannot sleep. She goes to see her old friend, Choo Choo. “Oh – what’s he going to say tomorrow?” she asks the panda. “Am I doing the right thing? I love him, but I *can’t* live in the city. I don’t like it. My home’s back in Blue Moon Valley.” Choo Choo looks at Li Sun. His eyes are big, brown and sad.



Early next morning, Wu Chi finds Li Sun in the panda's cage. "Come with me," he says.

They go to see Li Sun's uncle. Wu Chi has something to tell him. "Li Sun's going to be my wife," he says, "but that's not all. We're leaving the circus. I'm going to be a farmer in Blue Moon Valley."

"Oh, Wu Chi!" says Li Sun. She is very, very happy.



One week later Li Sun and Wu Chi leave the city. Everyone comes to say goodbye. Then, at the last minute, four men arrive. They are carrying a big box. “What’s this?” asks Li Sun. “It’s something from all of us,” says her uncle. “Please open it.” Li Sun opens the box. “*Choo Choo!*” she says. “Oh uncle, thank you. *Thank you!*”