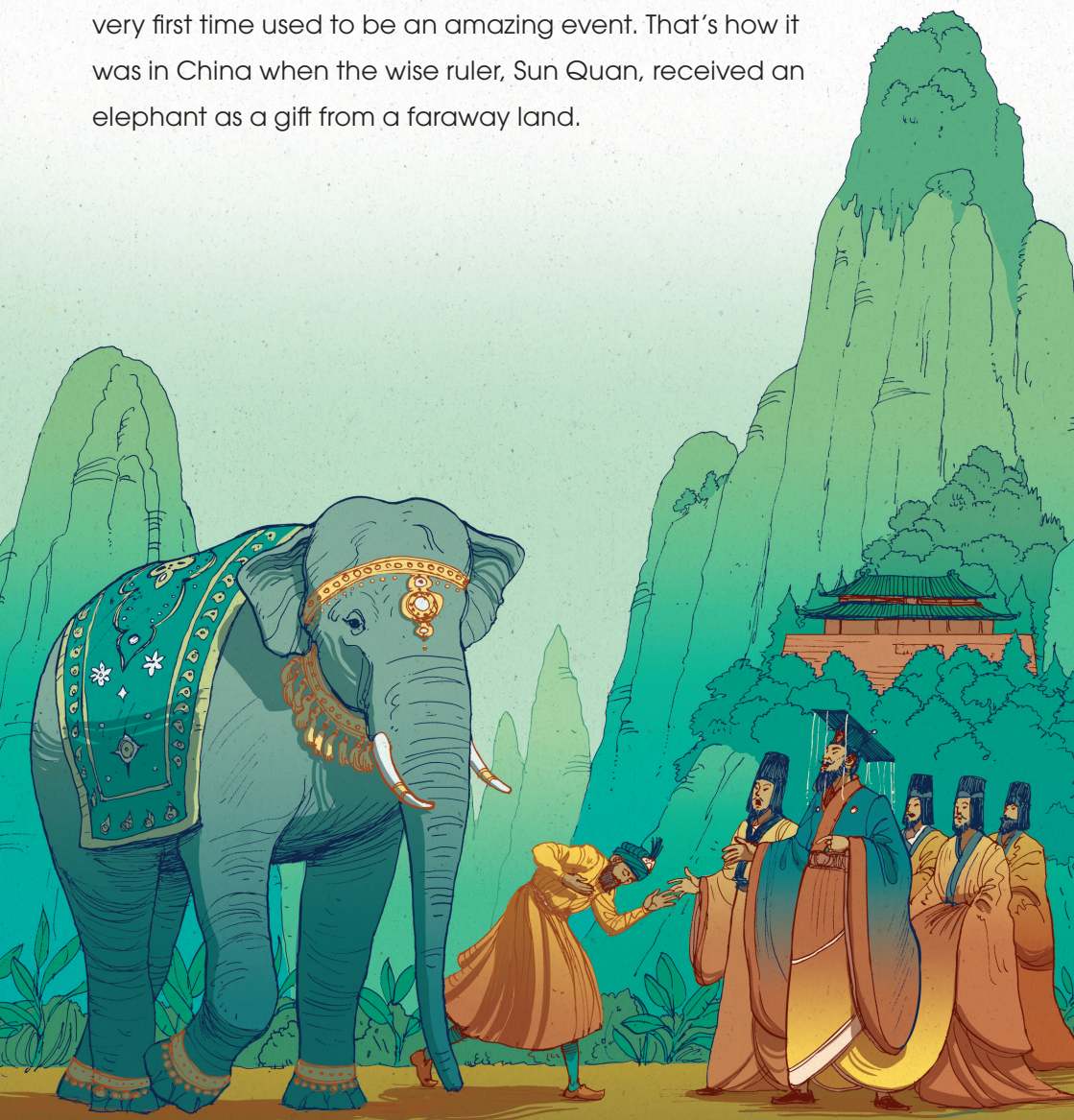


STORY
3

Cao Chong weighs an elephant



These days, it's easy to see animals from around the world, but hundreds of years ago, seeing a new animal for the very first time used to be an amazing event. That's how it was in China when the wise ruler, Sun Quan, received an elephant as a gift from a faraway land.





Sun Quan wondered how much this mysterious, new animal weighed. He asked his wisest, most intelligent women and men for advice.

One man stepped forward and said, 'We can use some scales.'

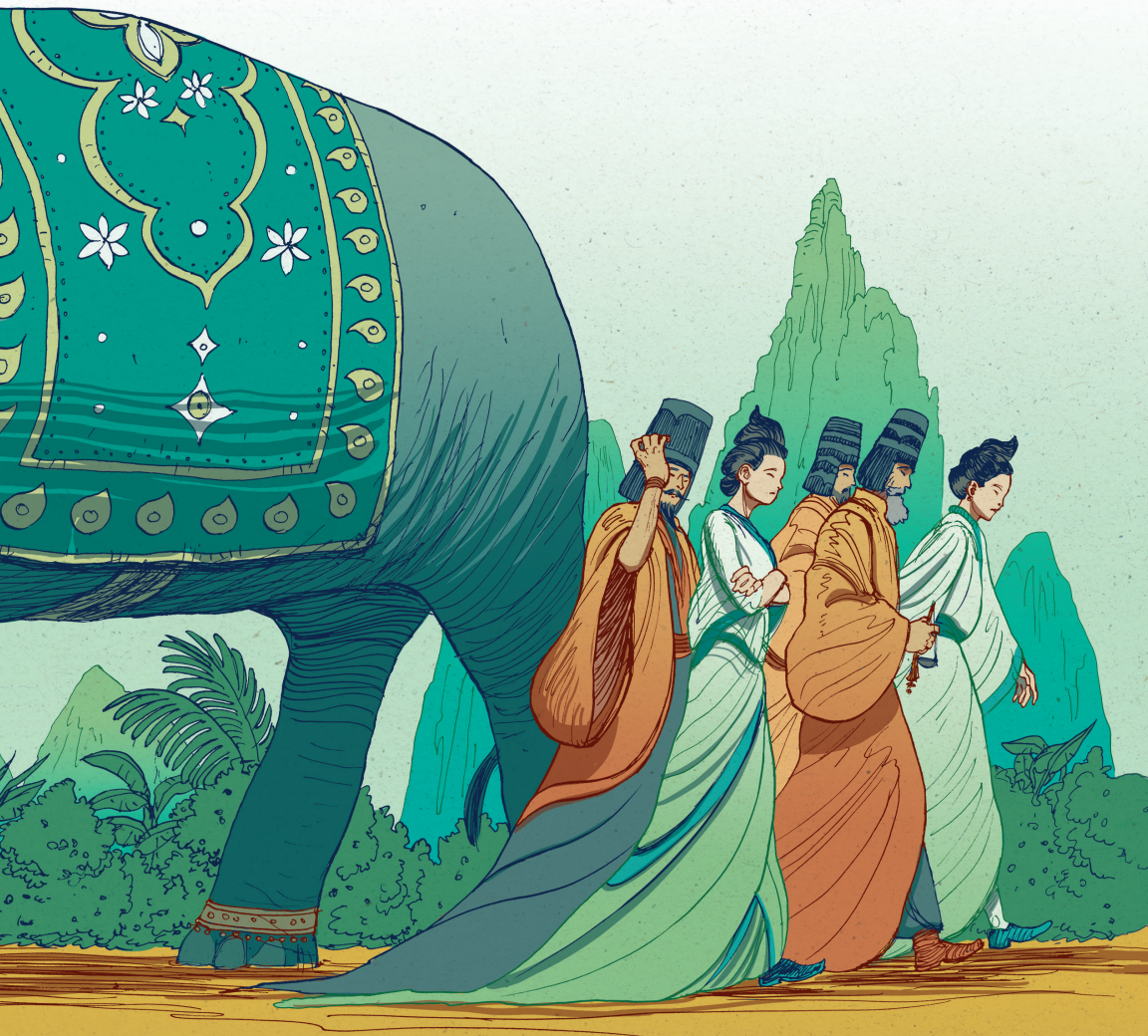
Sun Quan closed his eyes and thought for a few seconds. Then he replied, 'That's a wonderful idea, but there aren't any scales in China as big as this elephant.'



Another wise person suggested, 'We can build some scales that are big enough to weigh this creature.'

Sun Quan, who was wise as well as practical, replied, 'That's a good idea, but how can we know that the elephant won't just walk off the scales?'

They discussed the problem for a long time, but no-one could think of an answer that made the ruler happy.



Finally, Sun Quan announced, 'I've invited the wisest, most intelligent women and men in the land here today. It's clear to me that none of us knows the answer. If no-one here can solve this problem, then I officially declare that this problem is too difficult for us to solve. You can all go now.'

Just as everyone was leaving, a voice from the back of the crowd cried out, 'I know how to weigh the elephant!'

Sun Quan looked up and asked, 'Who are you? Please step forward!'

The crowd parted to let the person through. To everyone's surprise, the ruler's six-year-old son stepped forward and repeated, 'Daddy, I know how to weigh the elephant!'



Sun Quan laughed when he saw that it was his own son, Cao Chong.
He said, 'Tell us your idea, son. What is it?'

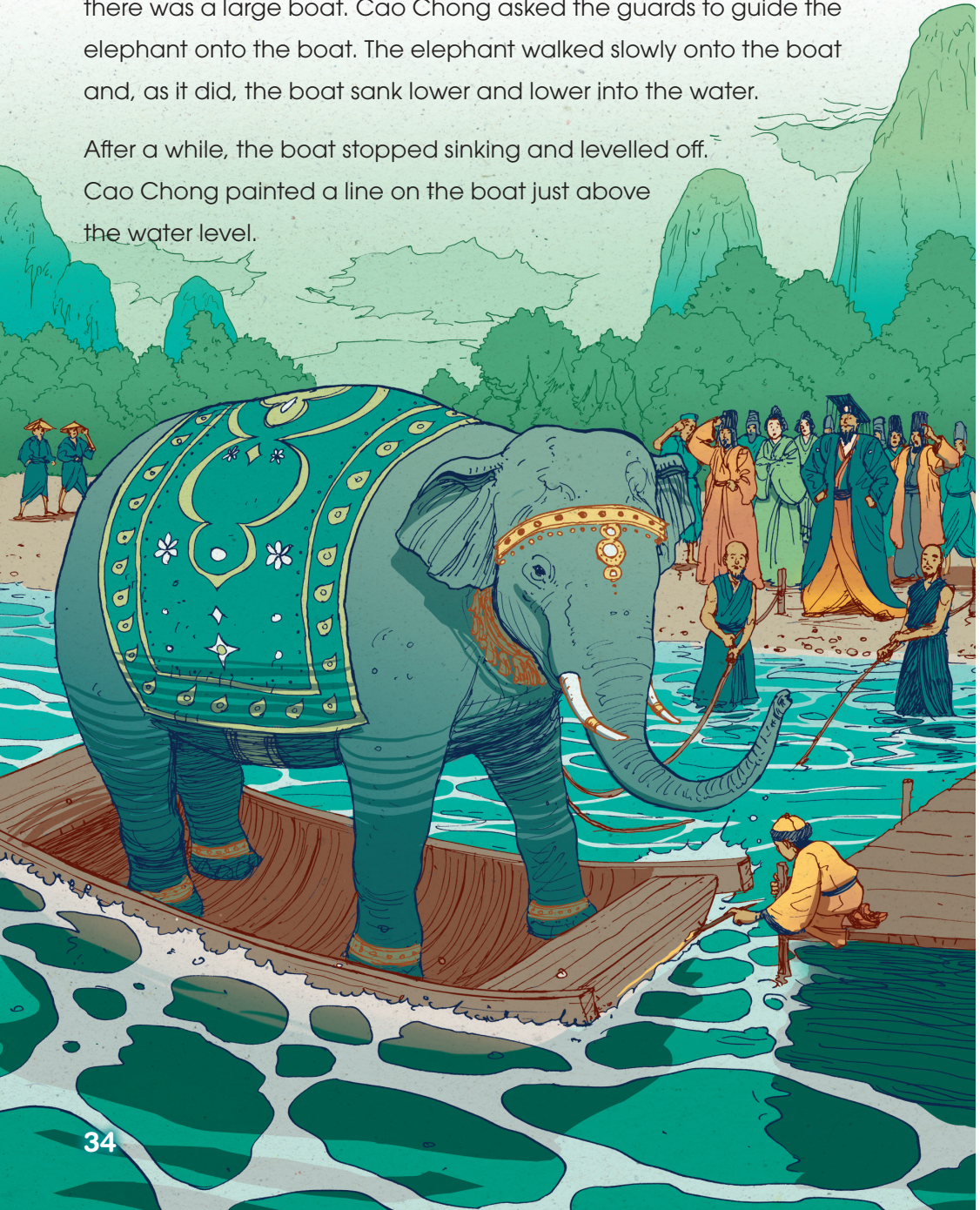
Cao Chong walked up to his father and whispered the idea in his ear.



The ruler listened carefully, then smiled and said to the crowd,
'Let's go! We will watch the weighing of the elephant by the river.'

Everyone followed Cao Chong and his father down to the river where there was a large boat. Cao Chong asked the guards to guide the elephant onto the boat. The elephant walked slowly onto the boat and, as it did, the boat sank lower and lower into the water.

After a while, the boat stopped sinking and levelled off. Cao Chong painted a line on the boat just above the water level.



Then Cao Chong asked the guards to take the elephant off the boat. As they did so, the boat gradually came up out of the water again. The crowd watched and scratched their heads. They didn't know what was happening.





The young boy whispered into his father's ear again. Sun Quan looked up and said, 'Guards, please fetch some rocks from the river bank and carry them onto the boat.'

The guards carried the rocks one by one onto the boat.



Again, at first, no-one really understood what was happening. As the boat started to sink back into the water, a few people gasped and shouted, 'Ah! Now I understand!'

By the time the water level reached the painted line again, everyone understood and was shouting, 'What a great idea!'

The people now realized what the boy knew all along: when the guards removed the rocks from the boat and weighed them, they weighed the same as the elephant!

Cao Chong became a hero, not only in his town, but across the whole country. Even today, people around the world talk about him and how clever he was.

