

Boys Who Grew Up to Change the



Ishiro Honda



James Earl Jones

Ishiro Honda
(1911-1993)



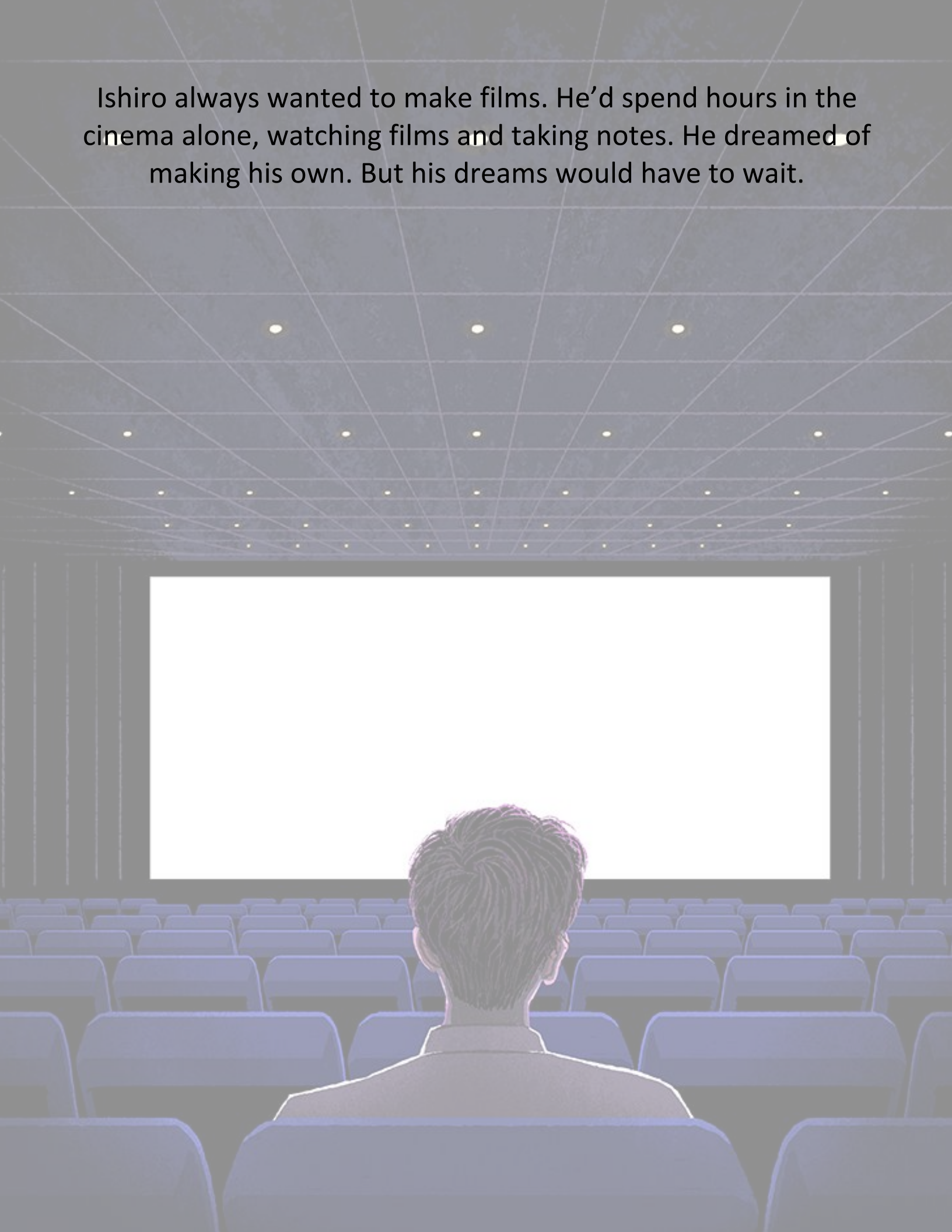
Godzilla is gigantic and terrifying, part dragon and part dinosaur. Usually, he's asleep at the bottom of the ocean. But when governments test their bombs in the water, he's woken up and sent stomping through cities, destroying everything and everyone in his path.



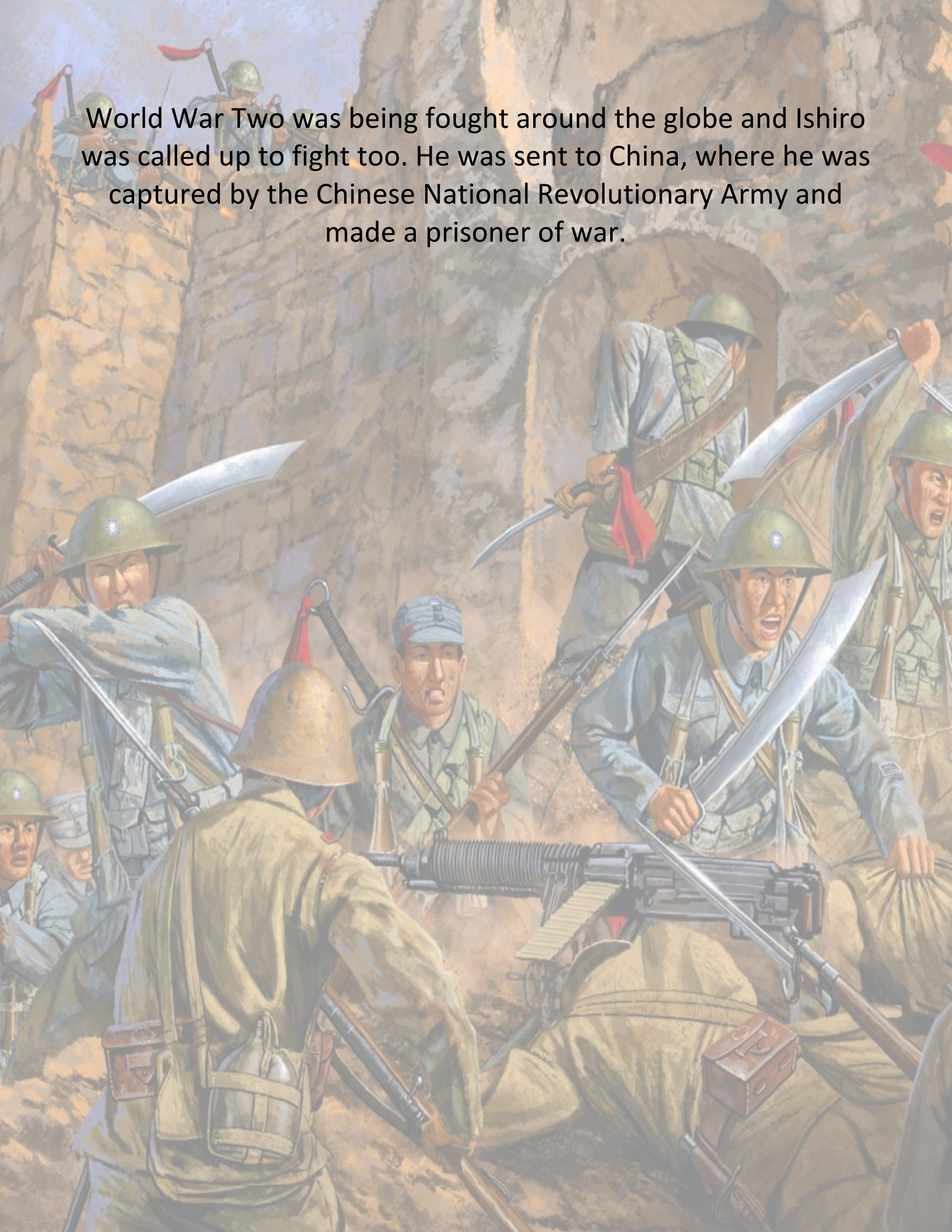
There have been a lot of different versions of the story, but the very first was created by a Japanese man called Ishiro, in 1954.



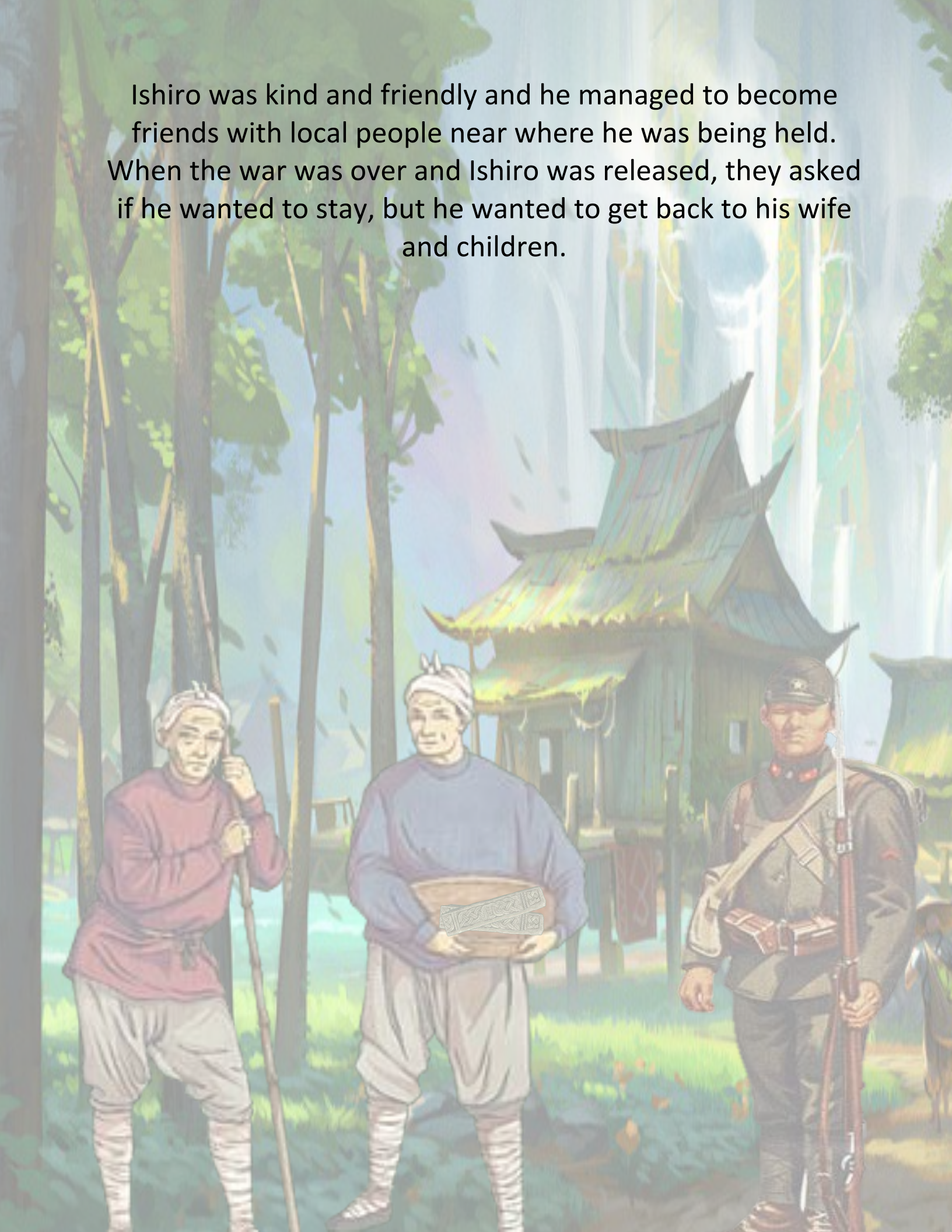
Ishiro always wanted to make films. He'd spend hours in the cinema alone, watching films and taking notes. He dreamed of making his own. But his dreams would have to wait.



World War Two was being fought around the globe and Ishiro was called up to fight too. He was sent to China, where he was captured by the Chinese National Revolutionary Army and made a prisoner of war.

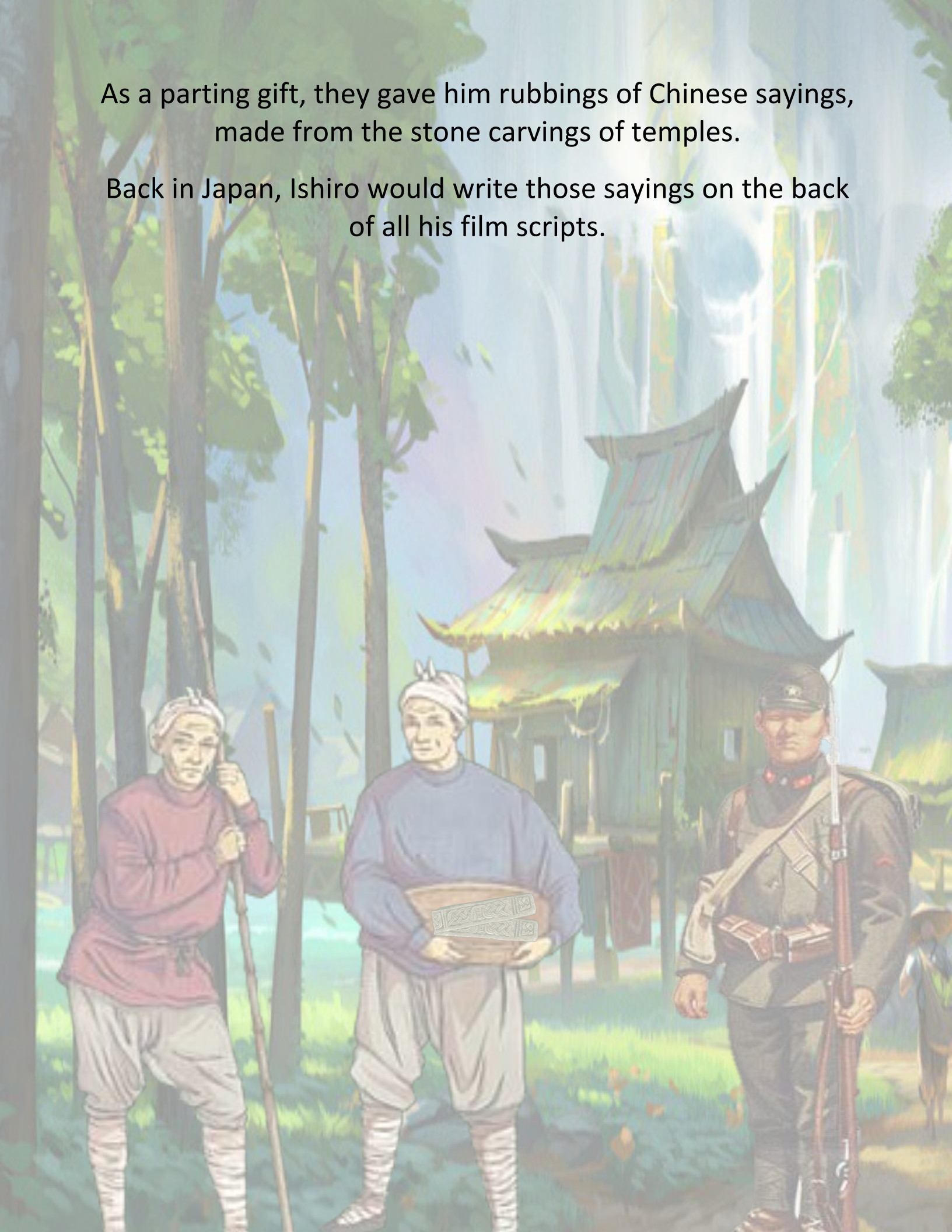


Ishiro was kind and friendly and he managed to become friends with local people near where he was being held. When the war was over and Ishiro was released, they asked if he wanted to stay, but he wanted to get back to his wife and children.



As a parting gift, they gave him rubbings of Chinese sayings,
made from the stone carvings of temples.

Back in Japan, Ishiro would write those sayings on the back
of all his film scripts.



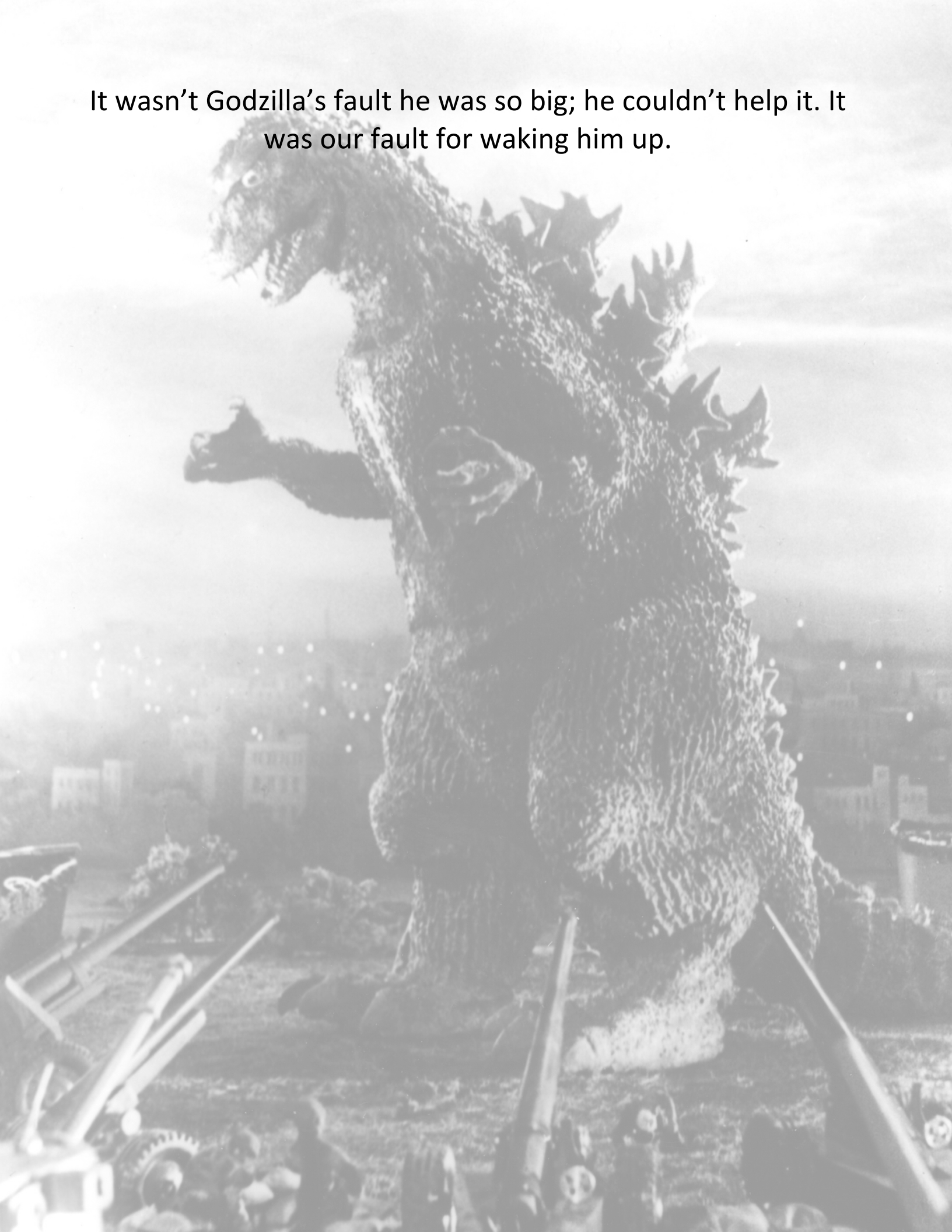
When he created Godzilla, he wasn't just trying to show a monster, he was trying to illustrate the devastation that his country had felt from the war: while a lot of people who watched his films felt afraid of the monsters in them, Ishiro himself felt sorry for them.



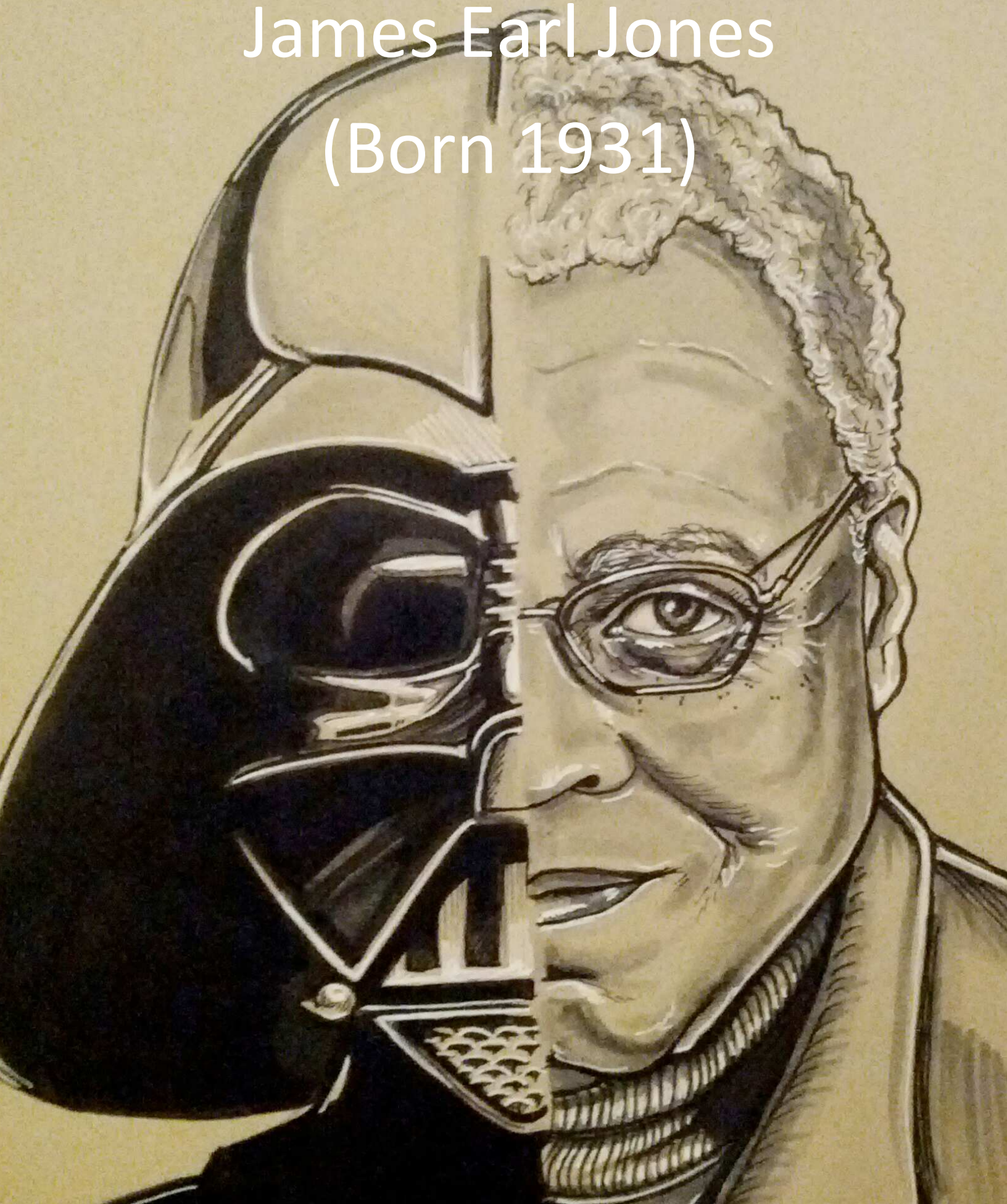
He said, 'Monsters are born too tall, too strong, too heavy –
that is their tragedy.'



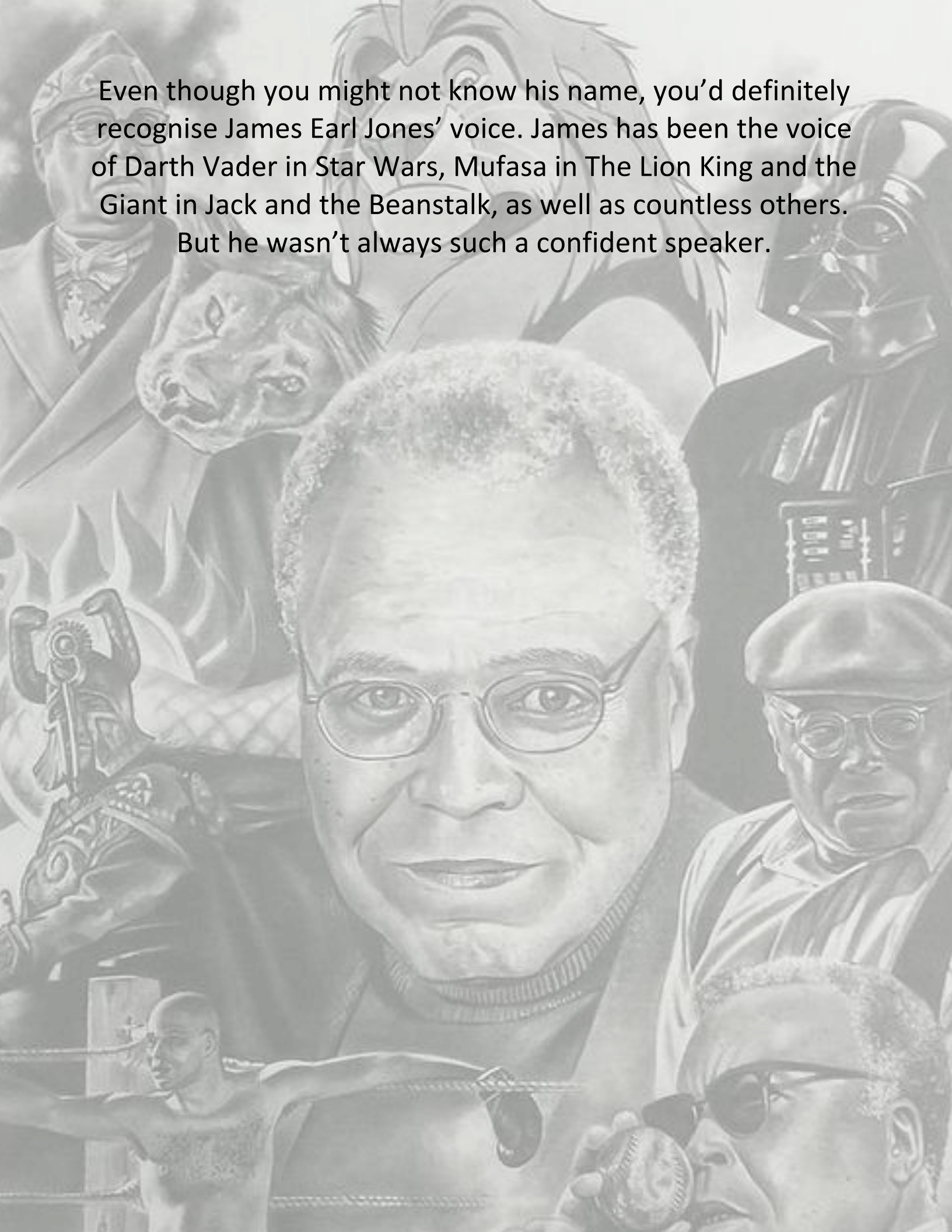
It wasn't Godzilla's fault he was so big; he couldn't help it. It was our fault for waking him up.



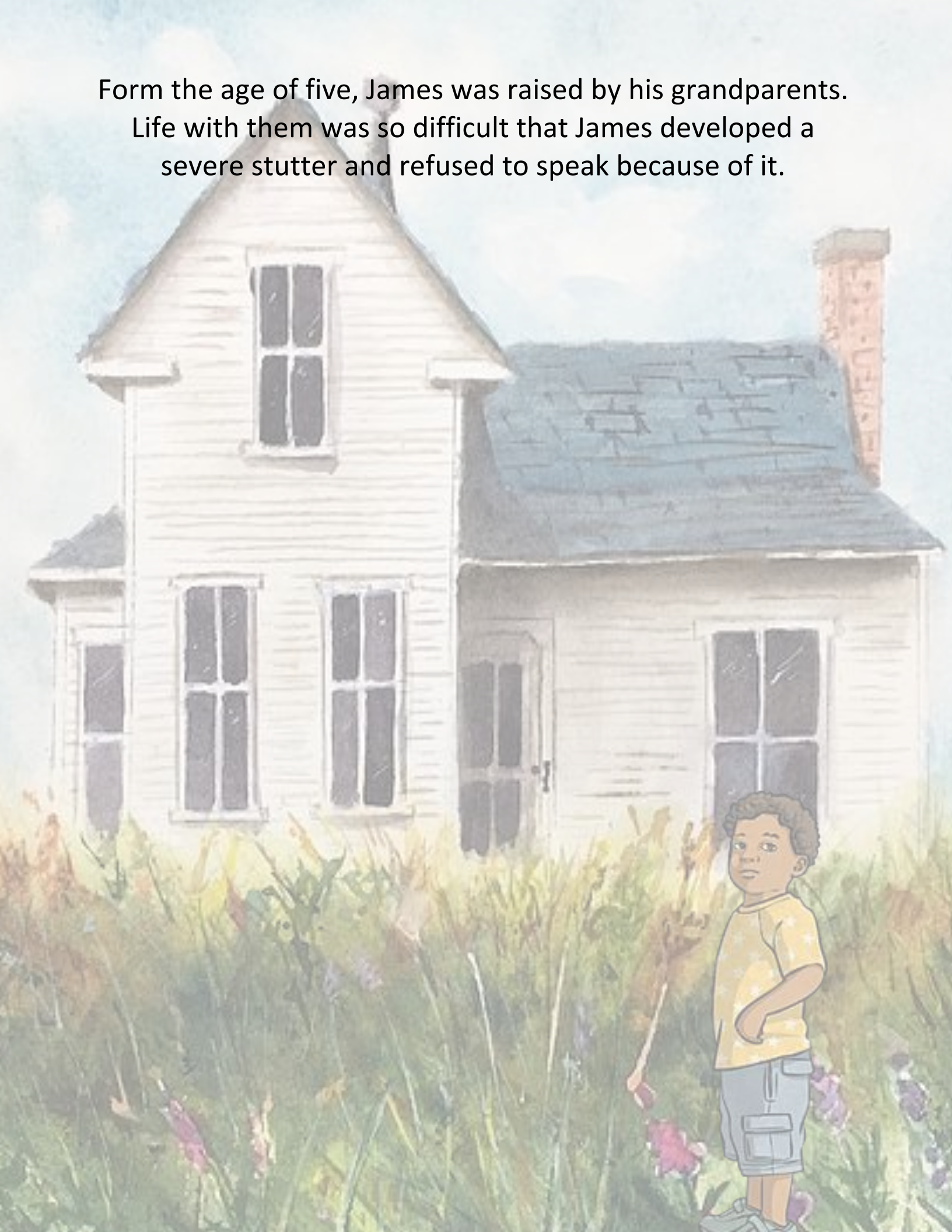
James Earl Jones
(Born 1931)



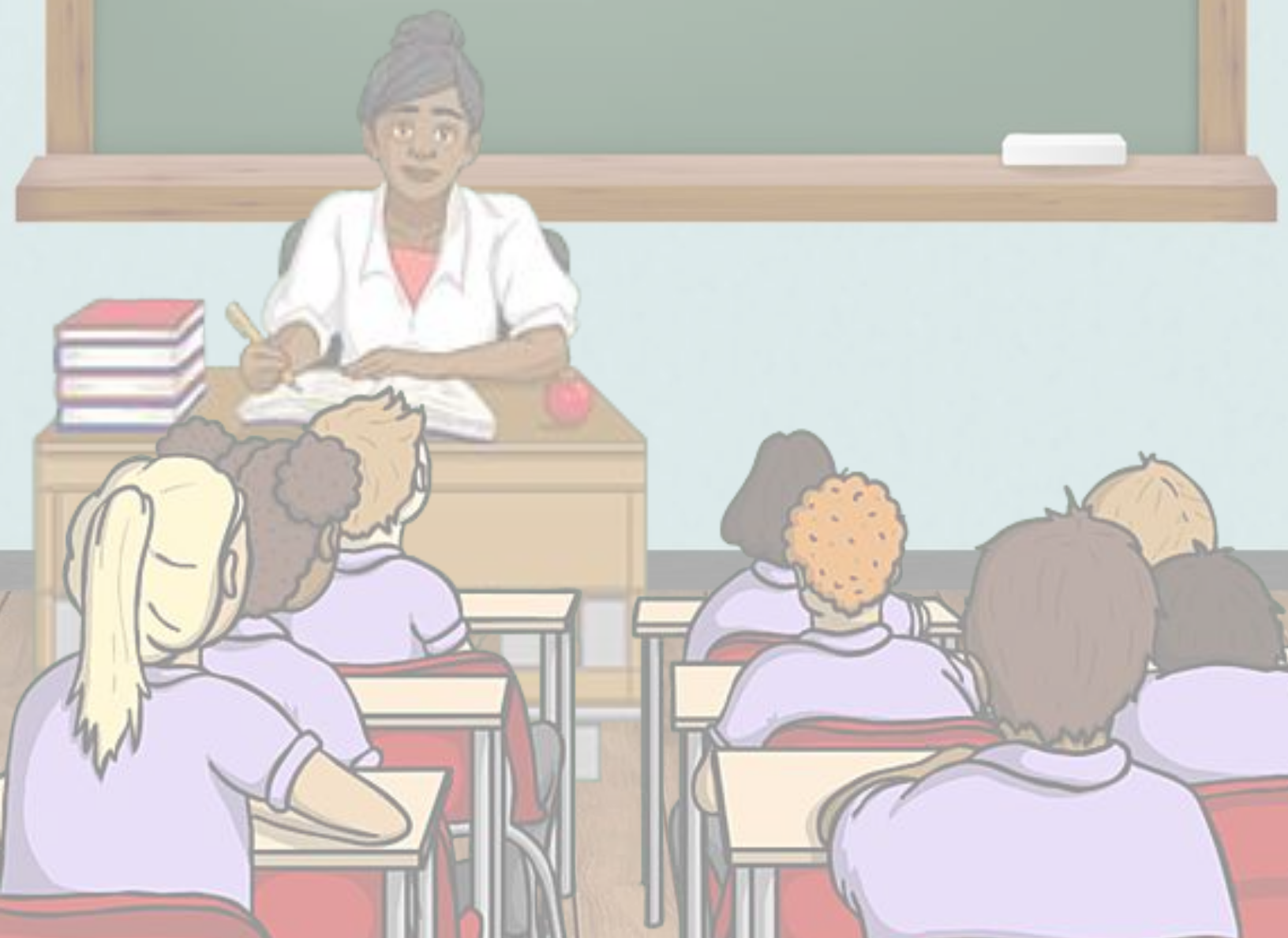
Even though you might not know his name, you'd definitely recognise James Earl Jones' voice. James has been the voice of Darth Vader in Star Wars, Mufasa in The Lion King and the Giant in Jack and the Beanstalk, as well as countless others. But he wasn't always such a confident speaker.



Form the age of five, James was raised by his grandparents.
Life with them was so difficult that James developed a
severe stutter and refused to speak because of it.

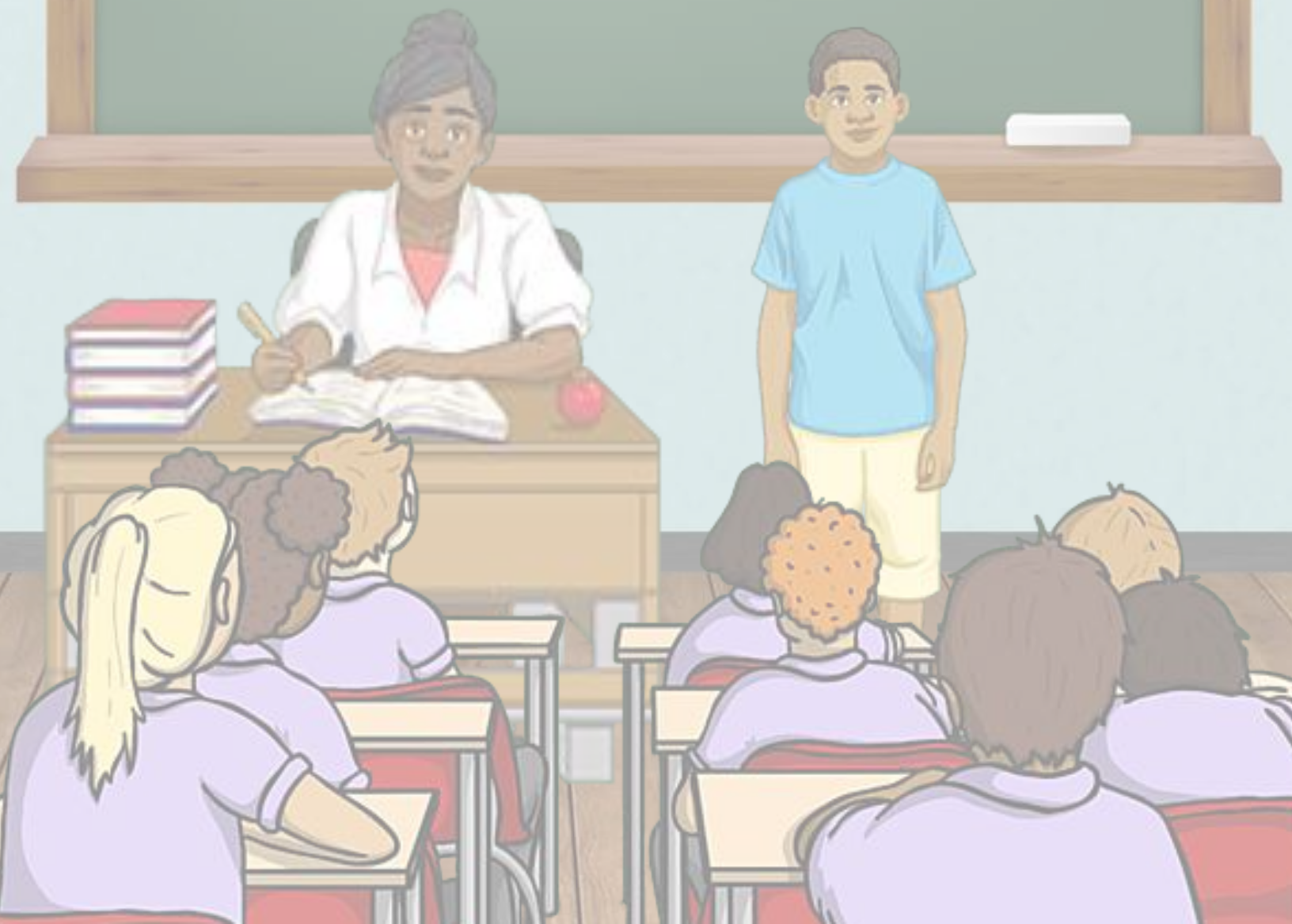


For eight years, he remained almost completely silent. It wasn't until an English teacher discovered his gift for poetry that James started speaking.

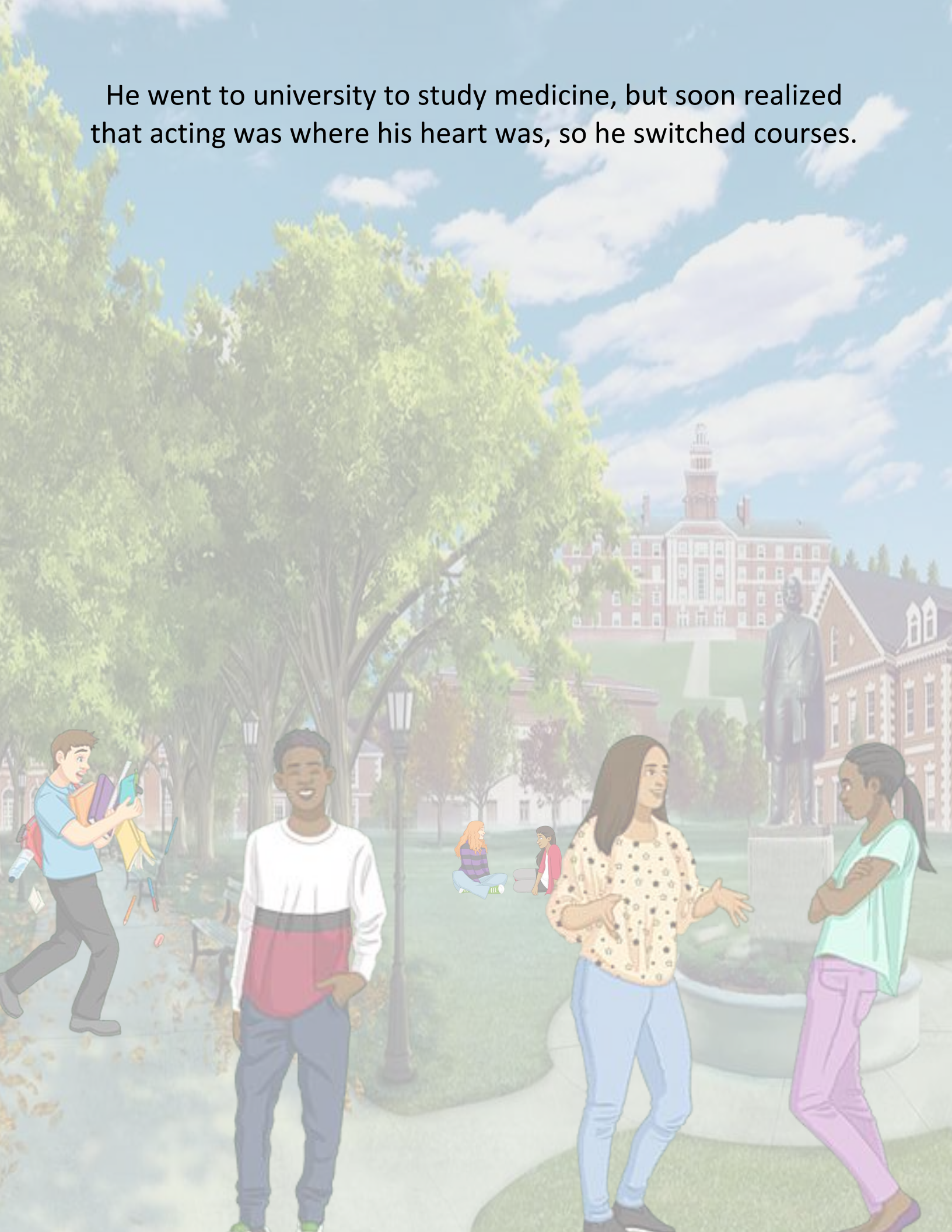


‘It’s too good for you to have written,’ the teacher told him, after reading one of his poems. ‘So please stand up and recite it from memory to prove that you did.’

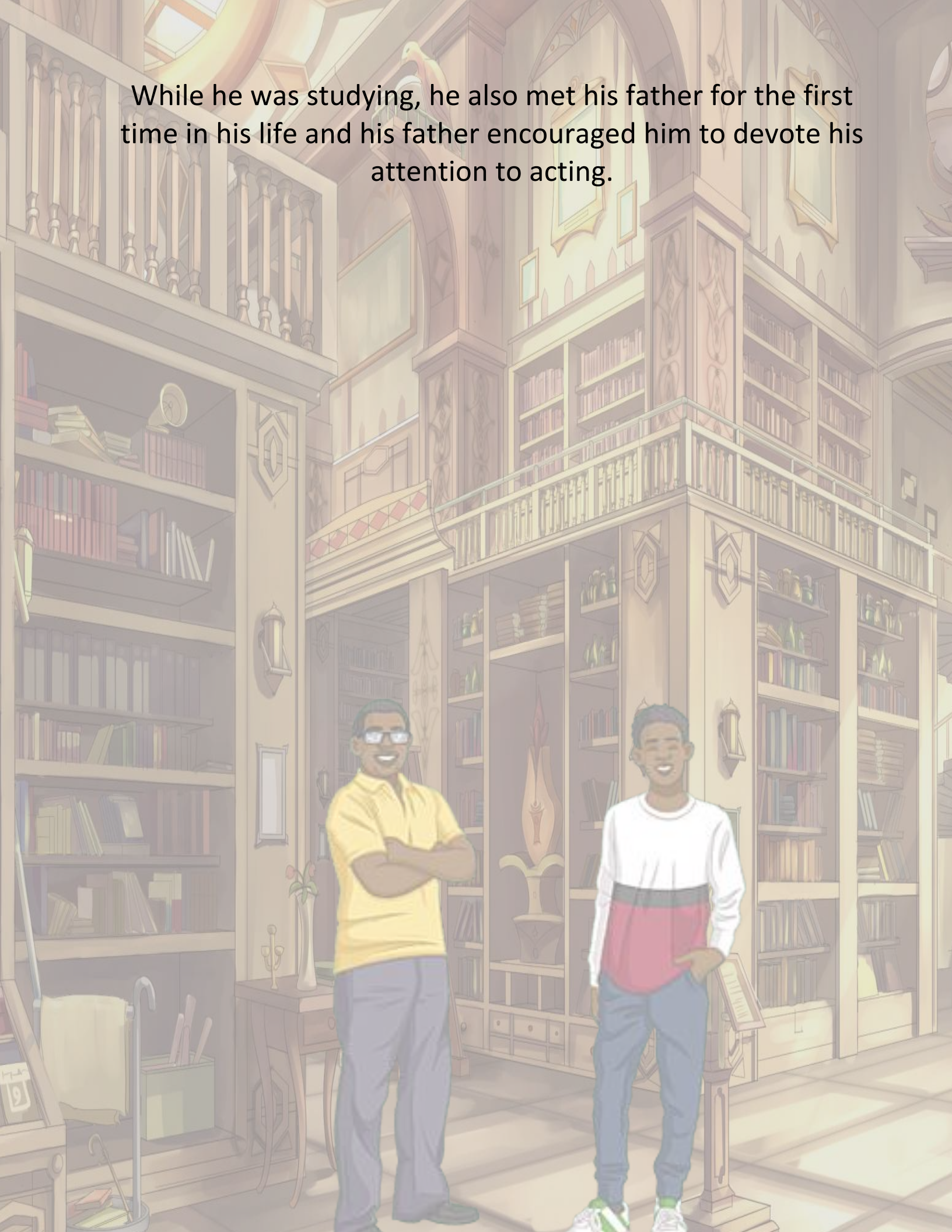
James did it without stuttering. He’d found his voice again.



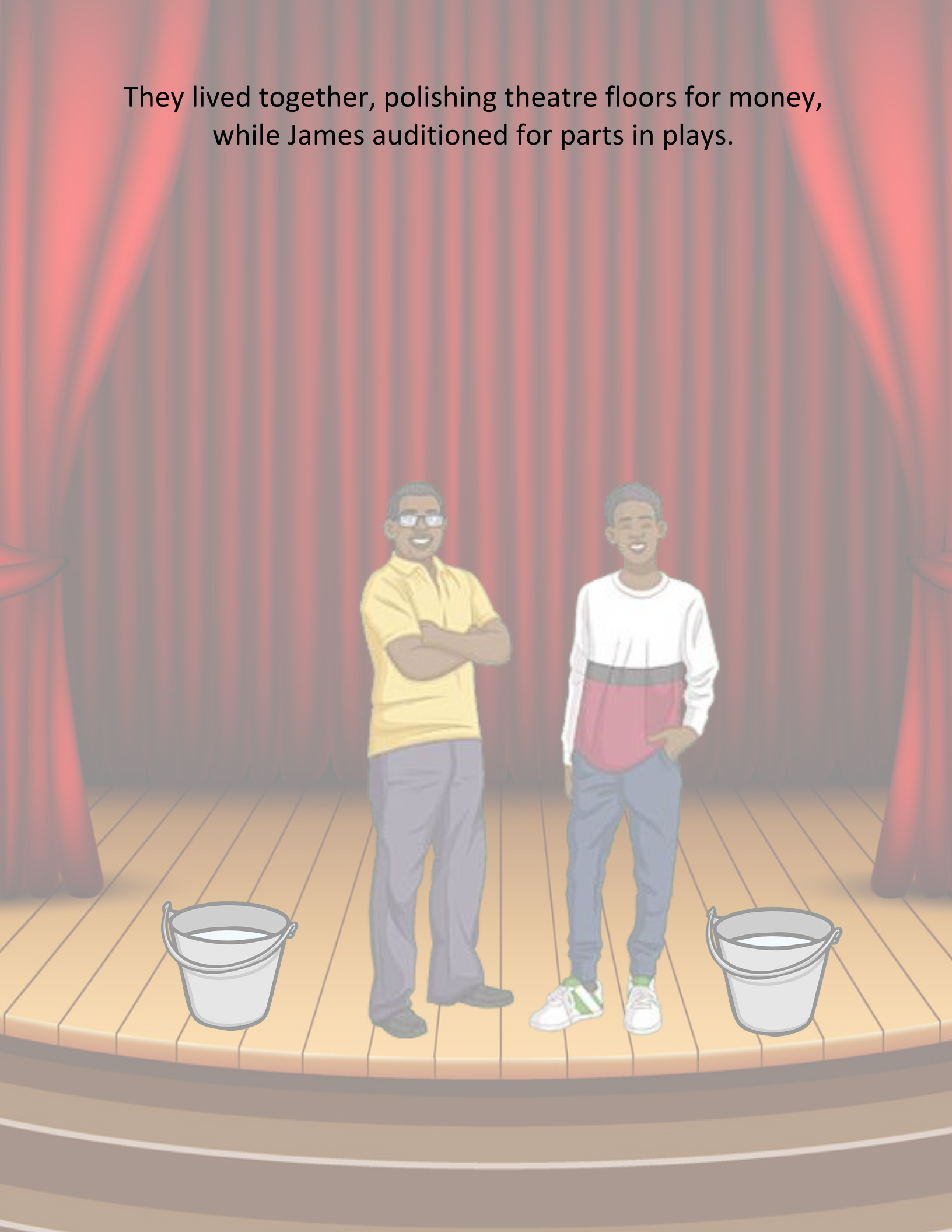
He went to university to study medicine, but soon realized that acting was where his heart was, so he switched courses.



While he was studying, he also met his father for the first time in his life and his father encouraged him to devote his attention to acting.

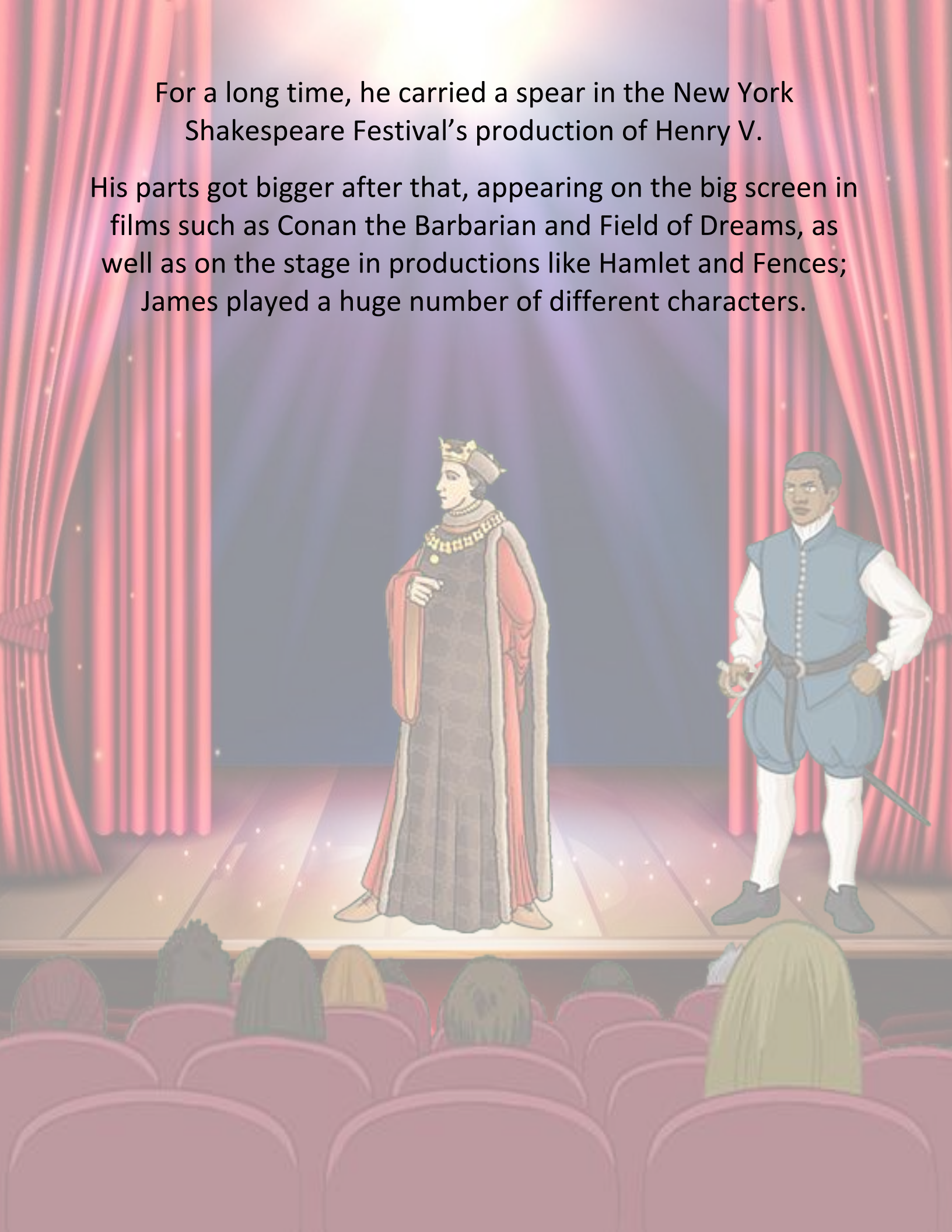


They lived together, polishing theatre floors for money,
while James auditioned for parts in plays.



For a long time, he carried a spear in the New York Shakespeare Festival's production of Henry V.

His parts got bigger after that, appearing on the big screen in films such as Conan the Barbarian and Field of Dreams, as well as on the stage in productions like Hamlet and Fences; James played a huge number of different characters.



He once said, 'One of the hardest things in life is having words in your heart that you can't utter.'



James is living proof that, even when it feels impossible, we shouldn't give up on finding our voices.





THINK

DIGITAL ACADEMY