

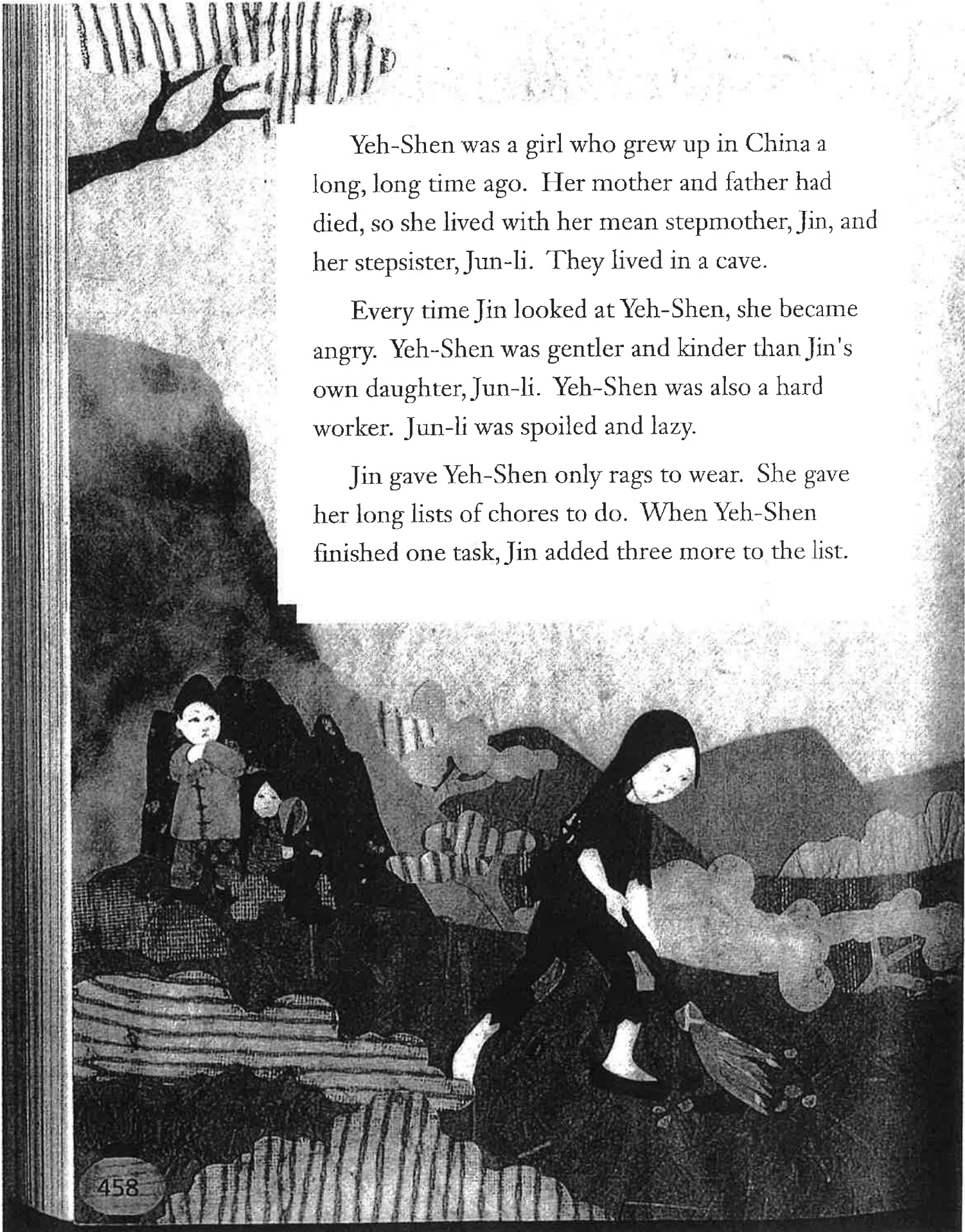
The book cover features a collage-style illustration. At the top, a striped slipper is shown. Below it, a girl in a dark dress and a black headscarf is depicted. The background includes various textured elements like crumpled paper and fabric. The title 'Yeh-Shen' is prominently displayed in a stylized font within a decorative border.

Yeh-Shen

by Gina Sabella illustrated by Jill Dubin

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What can you learn from
reading a fairy tale?



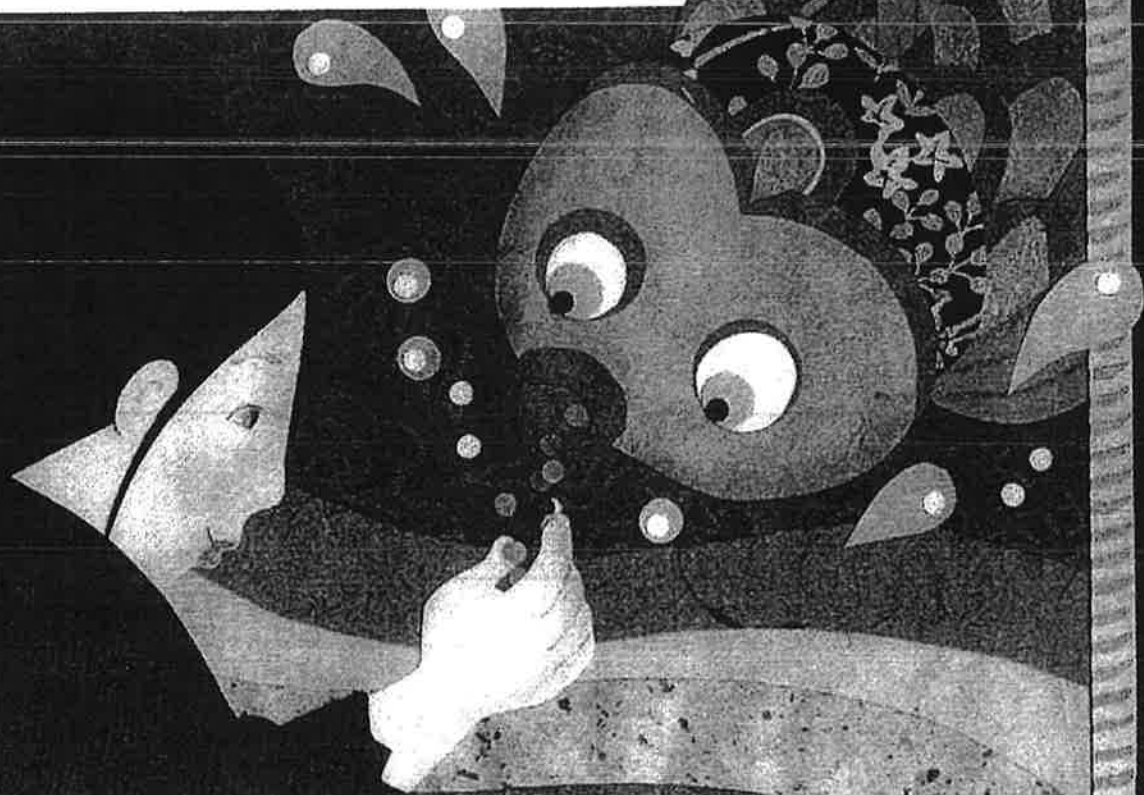
Yeh-Shen was a girl who grew up in China a long, long time ago. Her mother and father had died, so she lived with her mean stepmother, Jin, and her stepsister, Jun-li. They lived in a cave.

Every time Jin looked at Yeh-Shen, she became angry. Yeh-Shen was gentler and kinder than Jin's own daughter, Jun-li. Yeh-Shen was also a hard worker. Jun-li was spoiled and lazy.

Jin gave Yeh-Shen only rags to wear. She gave her long lists of chores to do. When Yeh-Shen finished one task, Jin added three more to the list.

Yeh-Shen was always busy working. She did not have a chance to make many friends, but she did have one very special friend. This friend had golden eyes, glimmering scales, and a big beautiful tail. It was a fish that lived in the pond. Every day Yeh-Shen stopped by the pond and shared some crumbs with the fish. Every day the fish popped up to greet its friend.

Yeh-Shen's stepmother saw this and became furious. She didn't want Yeh-Shen to have any friends, not even a fish! One day, Jin caught the fish and cooked it for dinner.



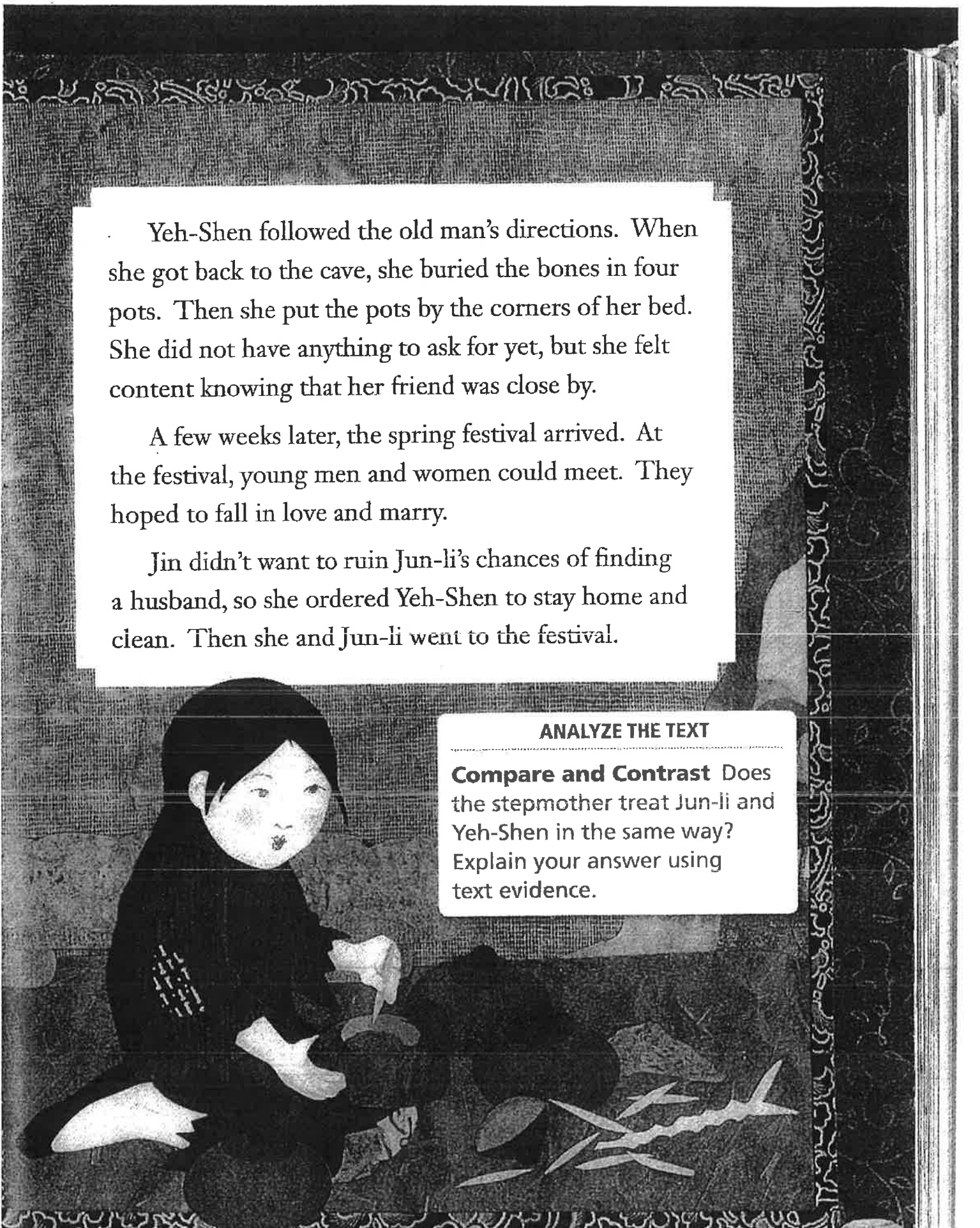
Yeh-Shen cried when she saw her friend served for dinner. She ran out of the cave and sat by the pond.

"What's the matter?" an old man asked her.

Yeh-Shen told him about her friend, the fish. Then she told him what her stepmother had done.

"Listen carefully to me," the old man said. "The bones of that fish hold special powers. Take the bones and bury them in four pots. Put one pot at each corner of your bed. Whenever you need help, tell the bones what you need. They will make your every wish come true."





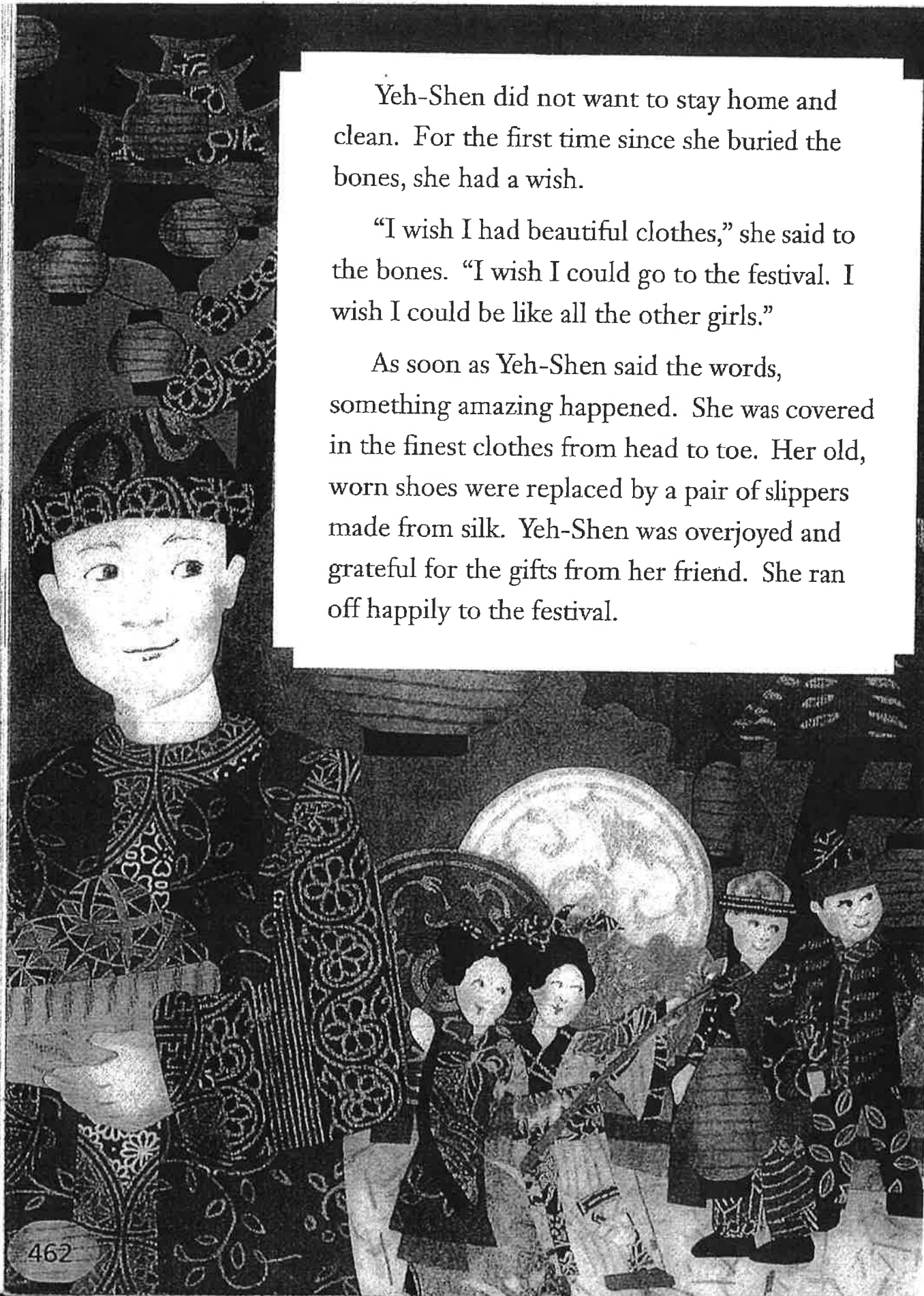
Yeh-Shen followed the old man's directions. When she got back to the cave, she buried the bones in four pots. Then she put the pots by the corners of her bed. She did not have anything to ask for yet, but she felt content knowing that her friend was close by.

A few weeks later, the spring festival arrived. At the festival, young men and women could meet. They hoped to fall in love and marry.

Jin didn't want to ruin Jun-li's chances of finding a husband, so she ordered Yeh-Shen to stay home and clean. Then she and Jun-li went to the festival.

ANALYZE THE TEXT

Compare and Contrast Does the stepmother treat Jun-li and Yeh-Shen in the same way? Explain your answer using text evidence.



Yeh-Shen did not want to stay home and clean. For the first time since she buried the bones, she had a wish.

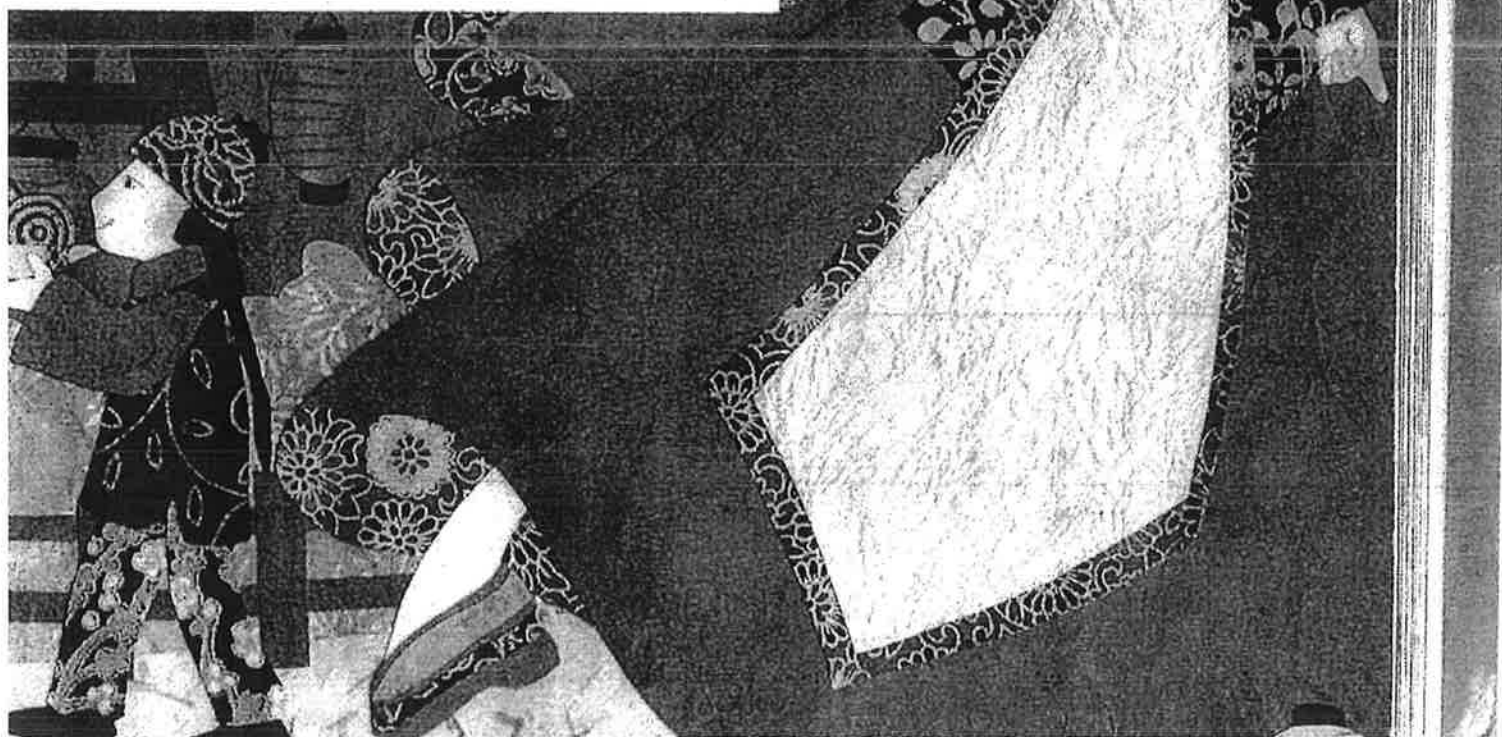
"I wish I had beautiful clothes," she said to the bones. "I wish I could go to the festival. I wish I could be like all the other girls."

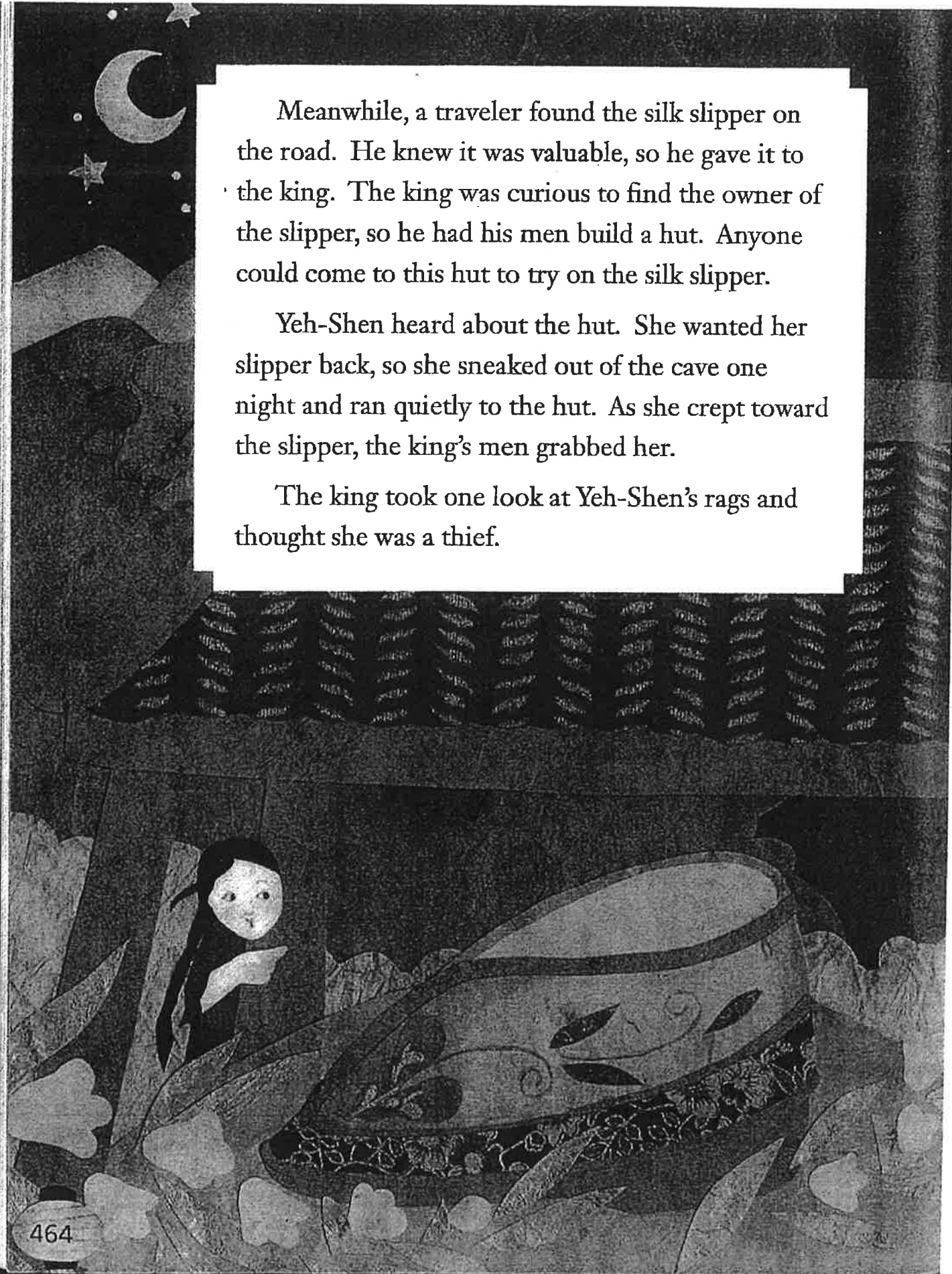
As soon as Yeh-Shen said the words, something amazing happened. She was covered in the finest clothes from head to toe. Her old, worn shoes were replaced by a pair of slippers made from silk. Yeh-Shen was overjoyed and grateful for the gifts from her friend. She ran off happily to the festival.

Everyone at the festival stopped to stare at Yeh-Shen when she walked in. Who was this beautiful girl in the magnificent clothes?

Yeh-Shen had a wonderful time at the festival, but she was worried that her stepmother would notice her. She decided to hurry home, but she ran so fast that one of her silk slippers fell off. It lay in the middle of the road. It was the only sign that Yeh-Shen had visited the festival.

At home, Yeh-Shen stuffed her new clothes into the pots. She concealed her one silk slipper, too. She changed into her rags and waited for her stepmother to return.





Meanwhile, a traveler found the silk slipper on the road. He knew it was valuable, so he gave it to the king. The king was curious to find the owner of the slipper, so he had his men build a hut. Anyone could come to this hut to try on the silk slipper.

Yeh-Shen heard about the hut. She wanted her slipper back, so she sneaked out of the cave one night and ran quietly to the hut. As she crept toward the slipper, the king's men grabbed her.

The king took one look at Yeh-Shen's rags and thought she was a thief.

Yeh-Shen looked up at the king. Her eyes were filled with tears. The king saw how gentle and kind she was. He listened to her words.

"Please, I will show you the other slipper," Yeh-Shen whispered to the king.

Yeh-Shen led the king to her home. She put on the matching silk slipper and her fine clothes. The king knew then that he wanted to marry her. However, he was angry at how Jin and Jun-li had treated Yeh-Shen. He told them never to come to his castle, so they stayed in their cave for the rest of their lives.



ANALYZE THE TEXT

Sequence of Events What happened first, next, and last to Yeh-Shen? What lesson can you learn from these events?