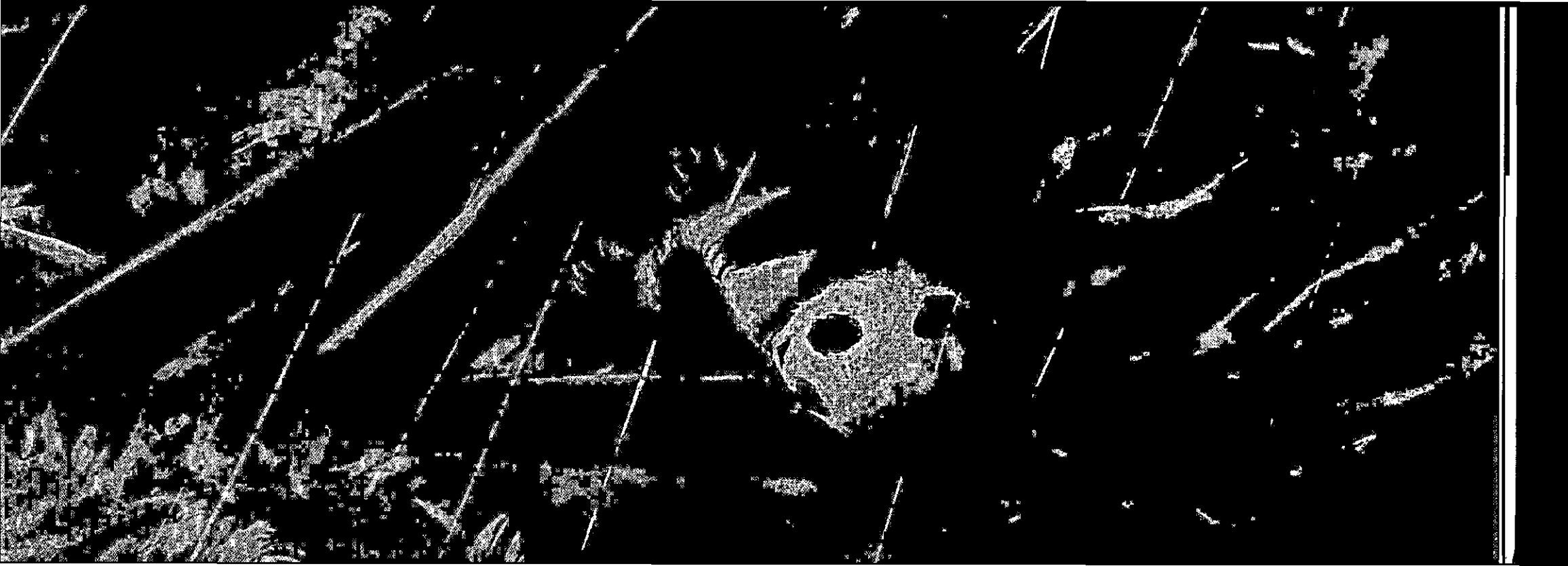


The boy ran out of the cottage and down the path. The roar of the storm was deafening. Pushing against the howling wind and drenching rain, he ran farther into the forest. There he found the panda's child, cold and shivering on the ground.

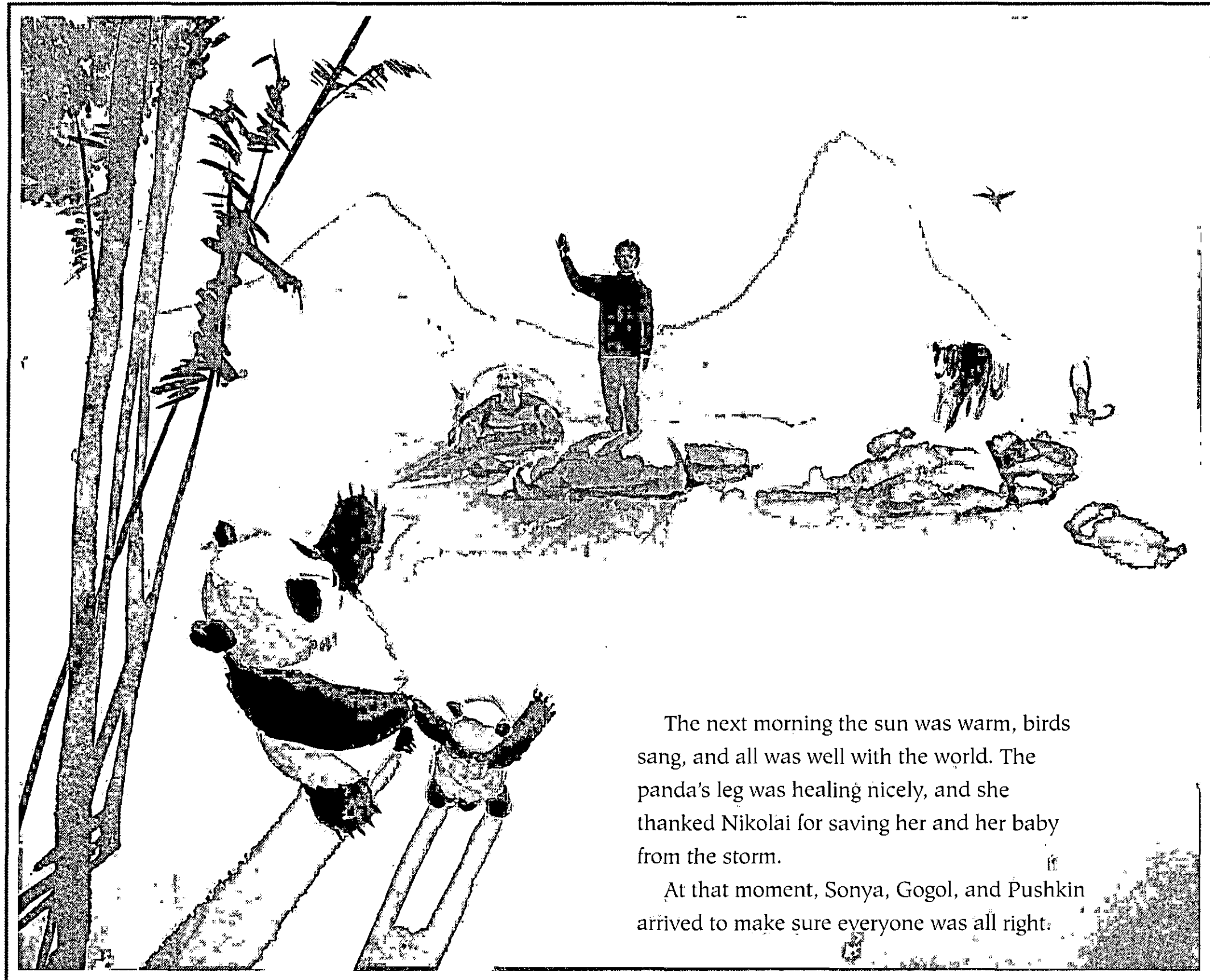




The little panda was wet and scared, but alive. Nikolai carried her inside and made her warm and dry. Then he laid her in her mother's arms.



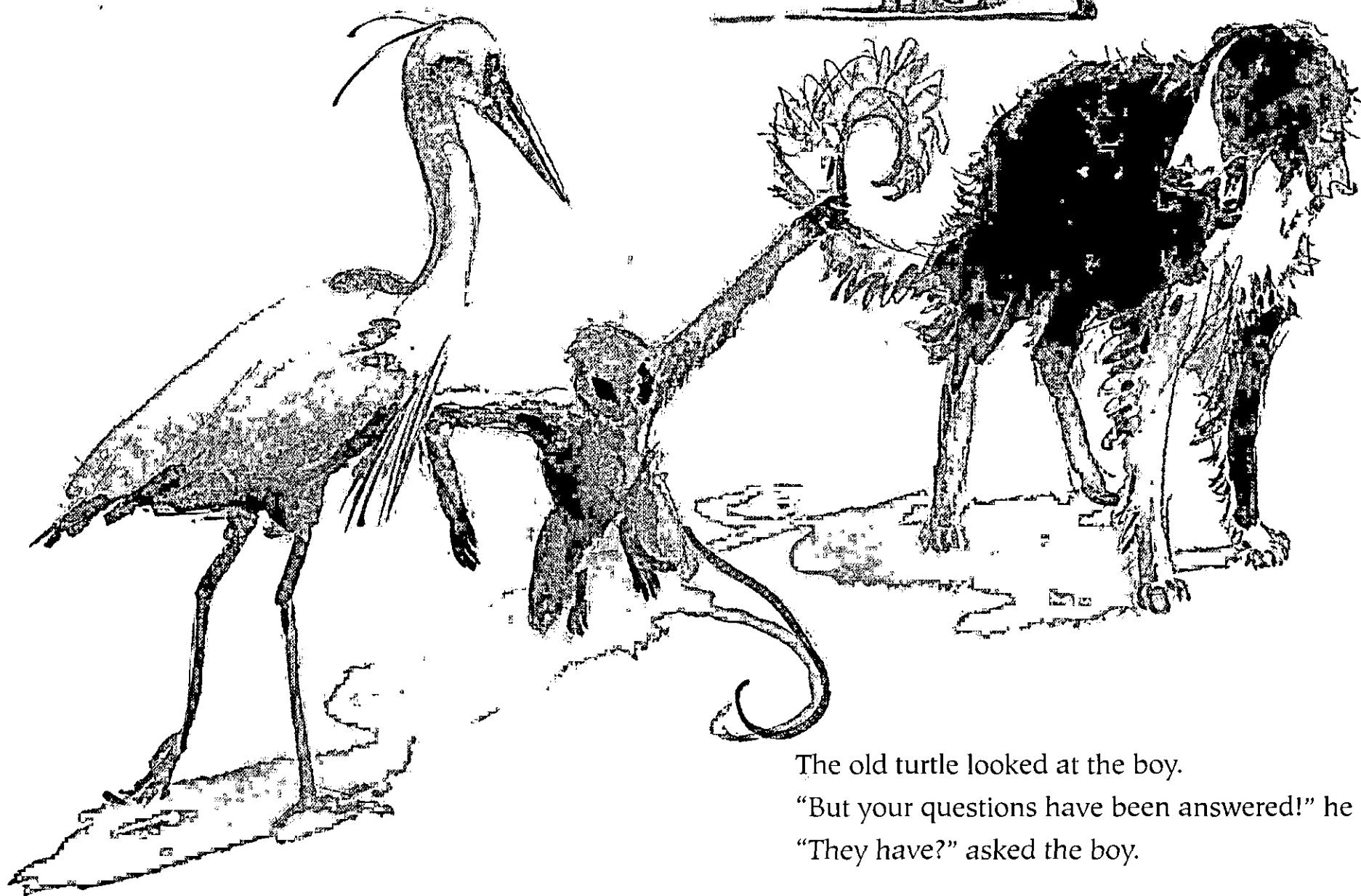
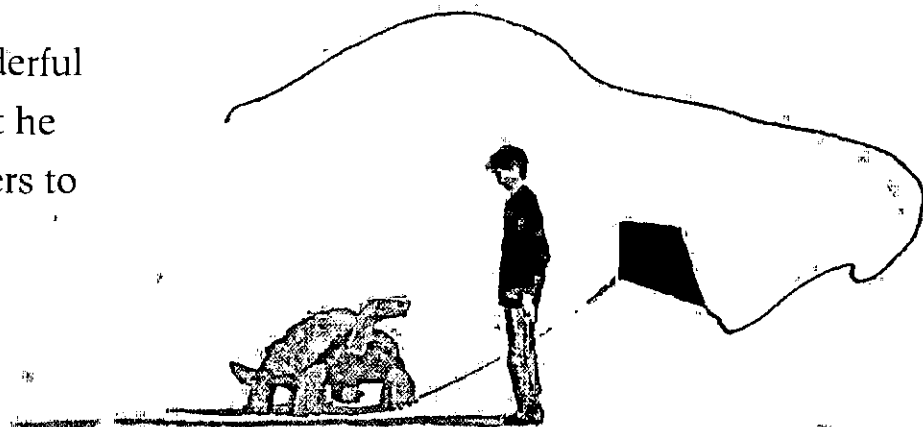
Leo smiled when he saw what the boy had done.



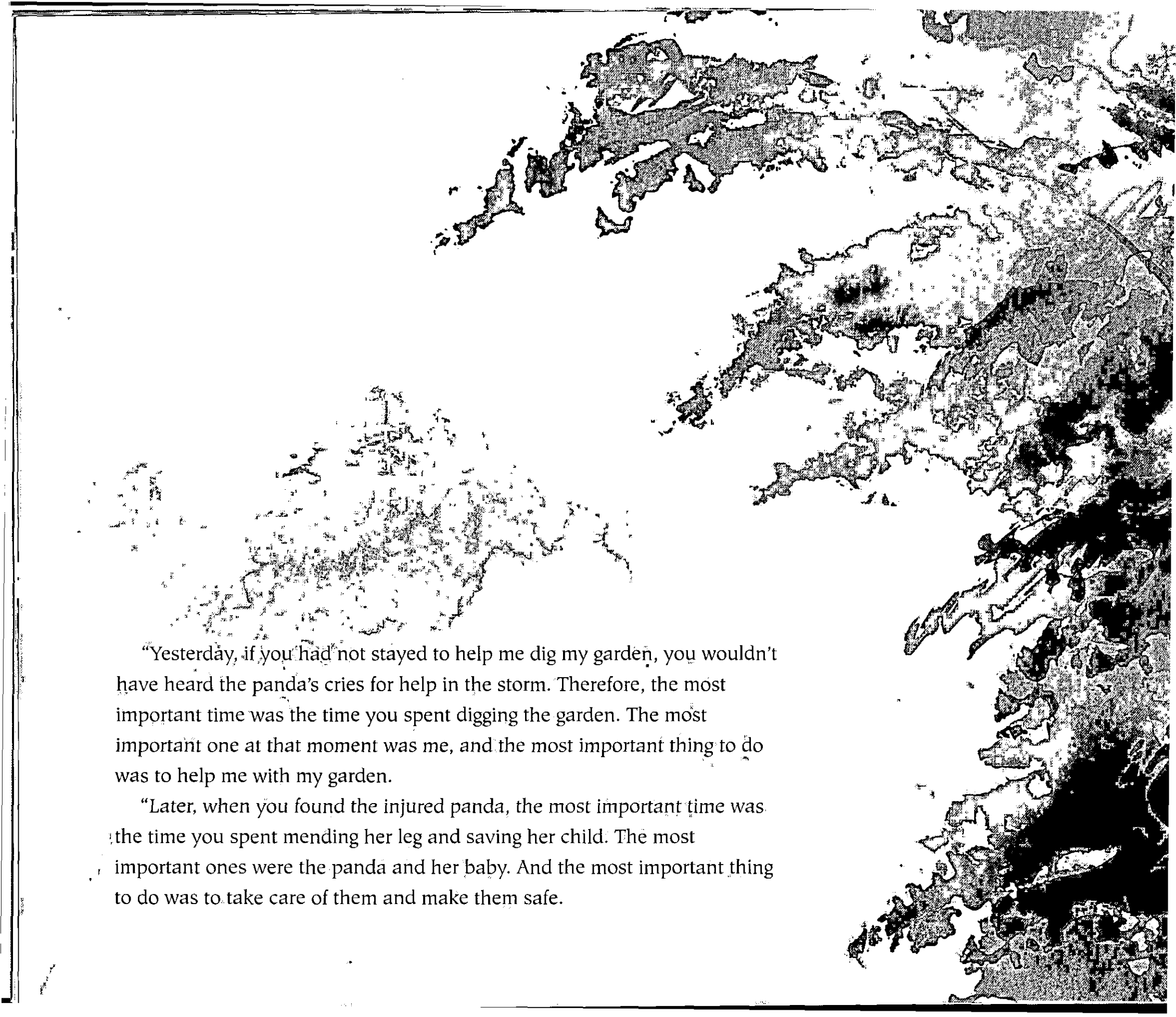
The next morning the sun was warm, birds sang, and all was well with the world. The panda's leg was healing nicely, and she thanked Nikolai for saving her and her baby from the storm.

At that moment, Sonya, Gogol, and Pushkin arrived to make sure everyone was all right.

Nikolai felt great peace within himself. He had wonderful friends. And he had saved the panda and her child. But he also felt disappointed. He still had not found the answers to his three questions. So he asked Leo one more time.



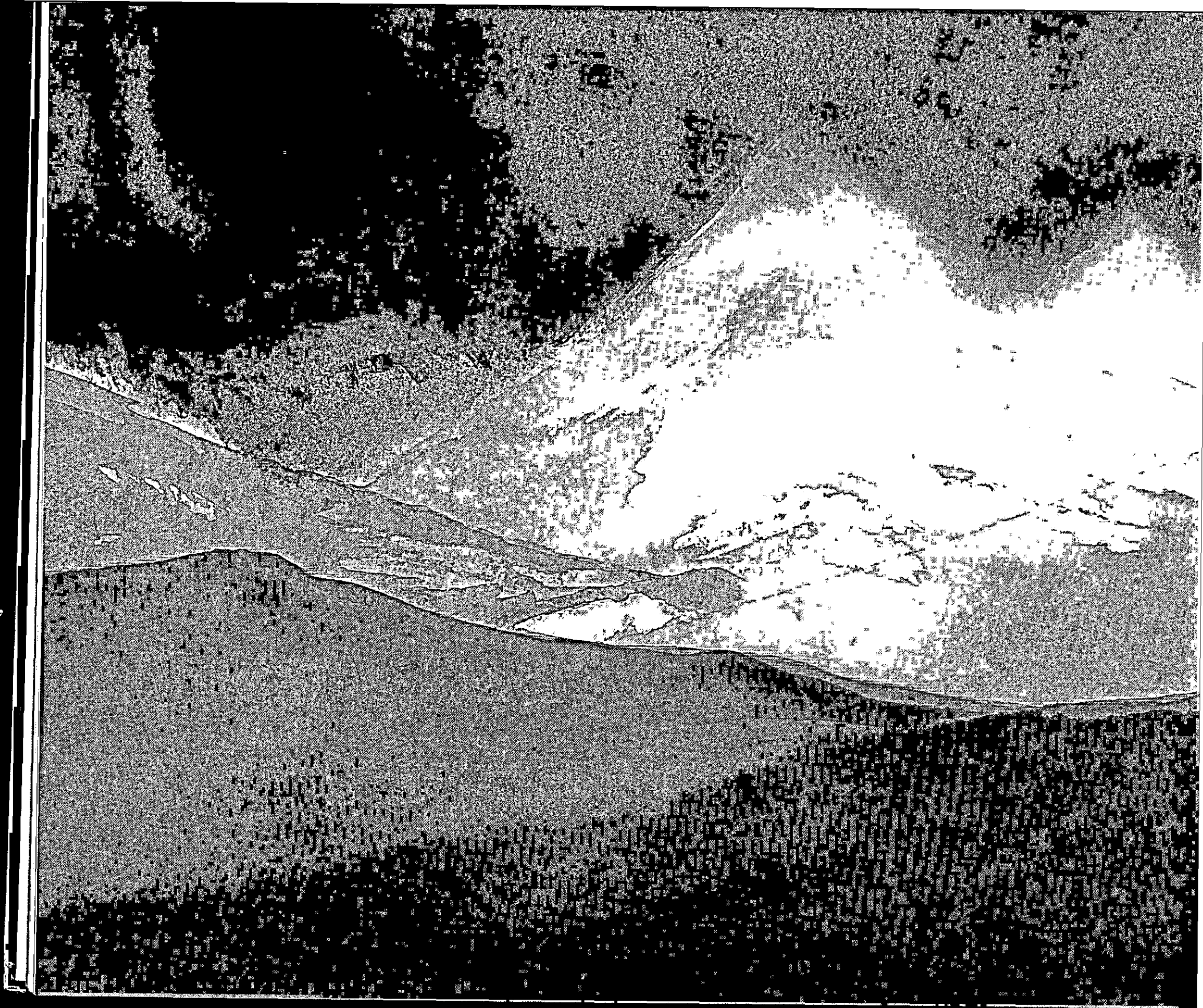
The old turtle looked at the boy.
“But your questions have been answered!” he said.
“They have?” asked the boy.

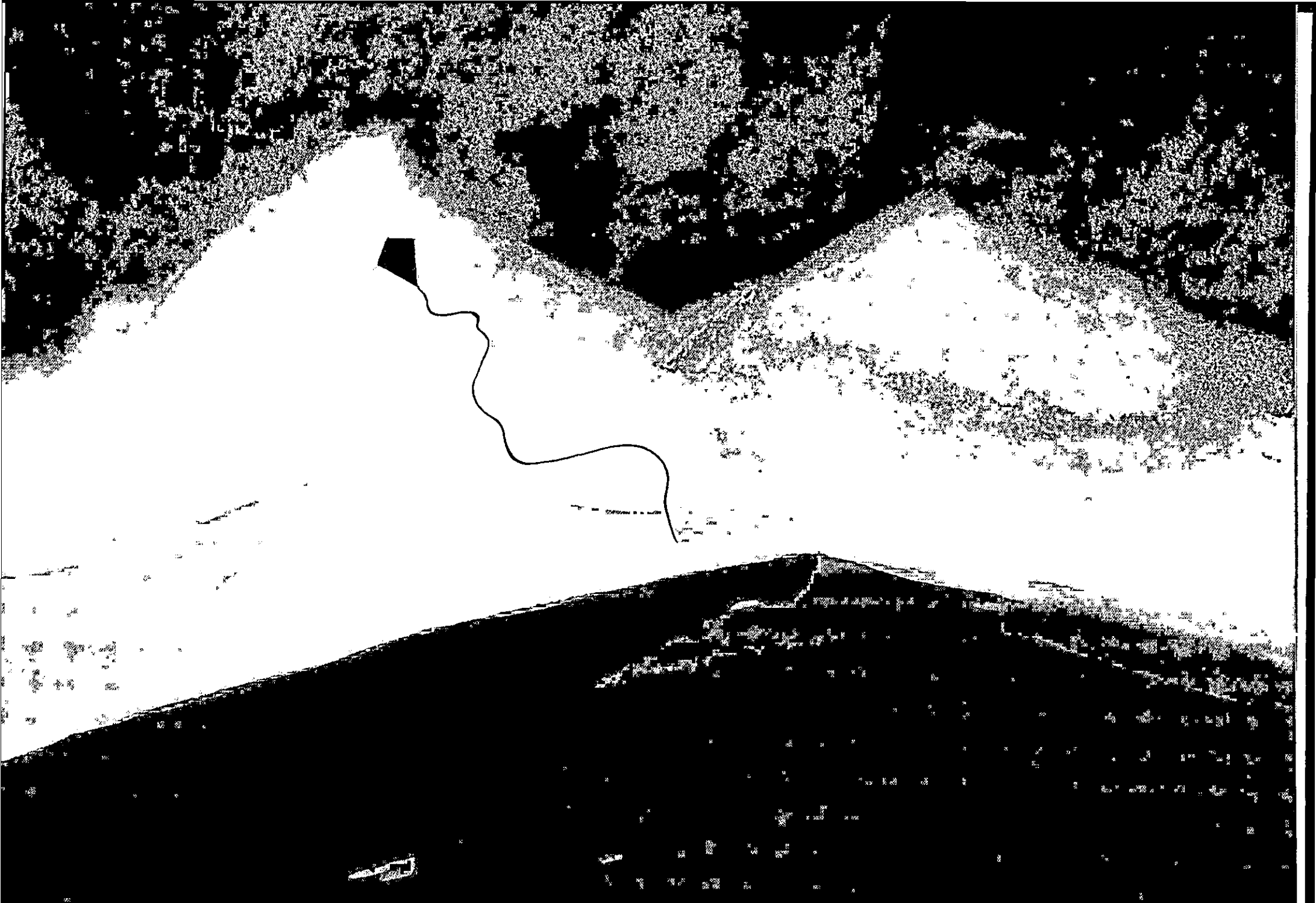


“Yesterday, if you had not stayed to help me dig my garden, you wouldn’t have heard the panda’s cries for help in the storm. Therefore, the most important time was the time you spent digging the garden. The most important one at that moment was me, and the most important thing to do was to help me with my garden.

“Later, when you found the injured panda, the most important time was the time you spent mending her leg and saving her child. The most important ones were the panda and her baby. And the most important thing to do was to take care of them and make them safe.







“Remember then that there is only one important time, and that time is now. The most important one is always the one you are with. And the most important thing is to do good for the one who is standing at your side. For these, my dear boy, are the answers to what is most important in this world.”



"This is why we are here."

