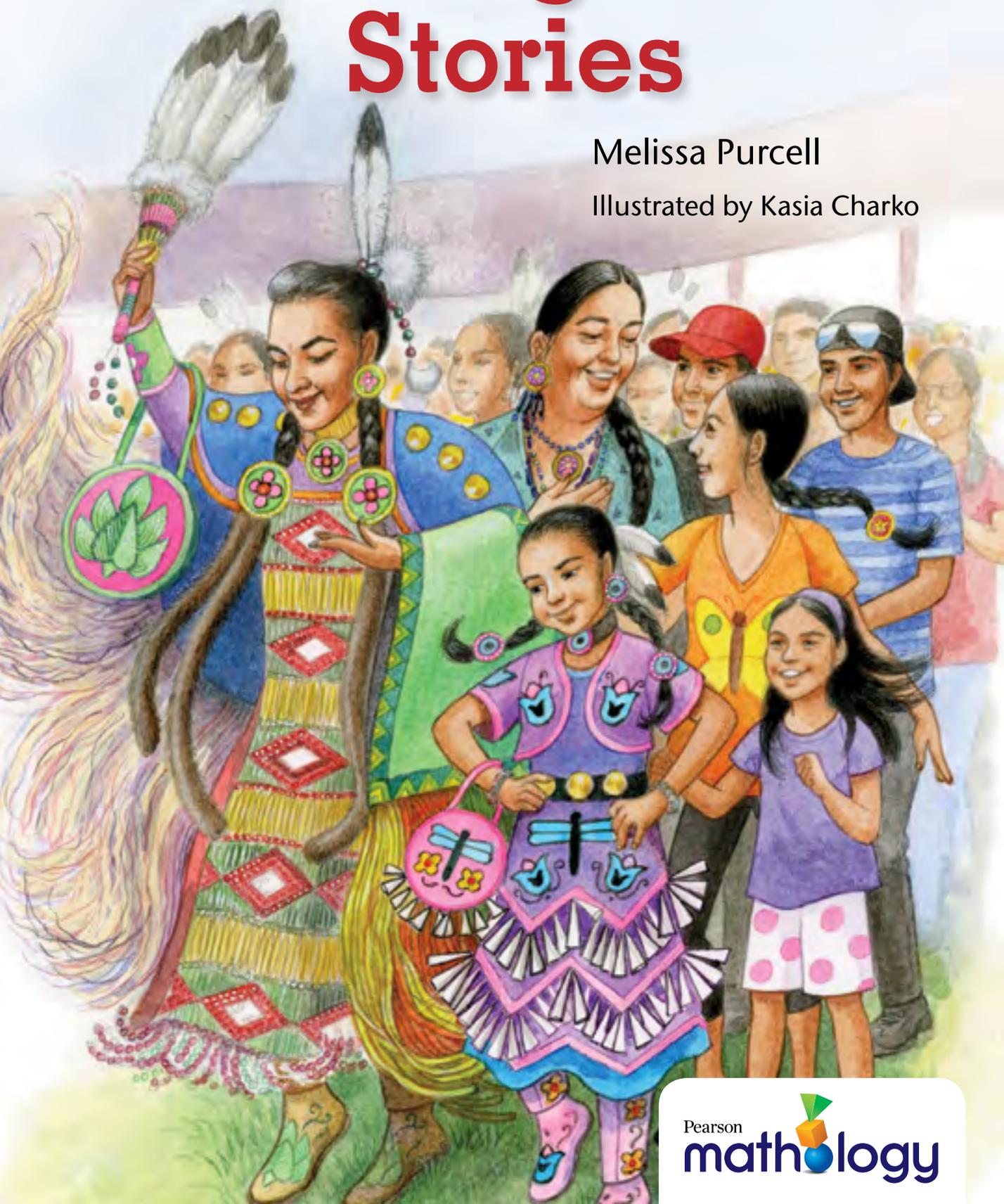


# Sharing Our Stories

Melissa Purcell

Illustrated by Kasia Charko





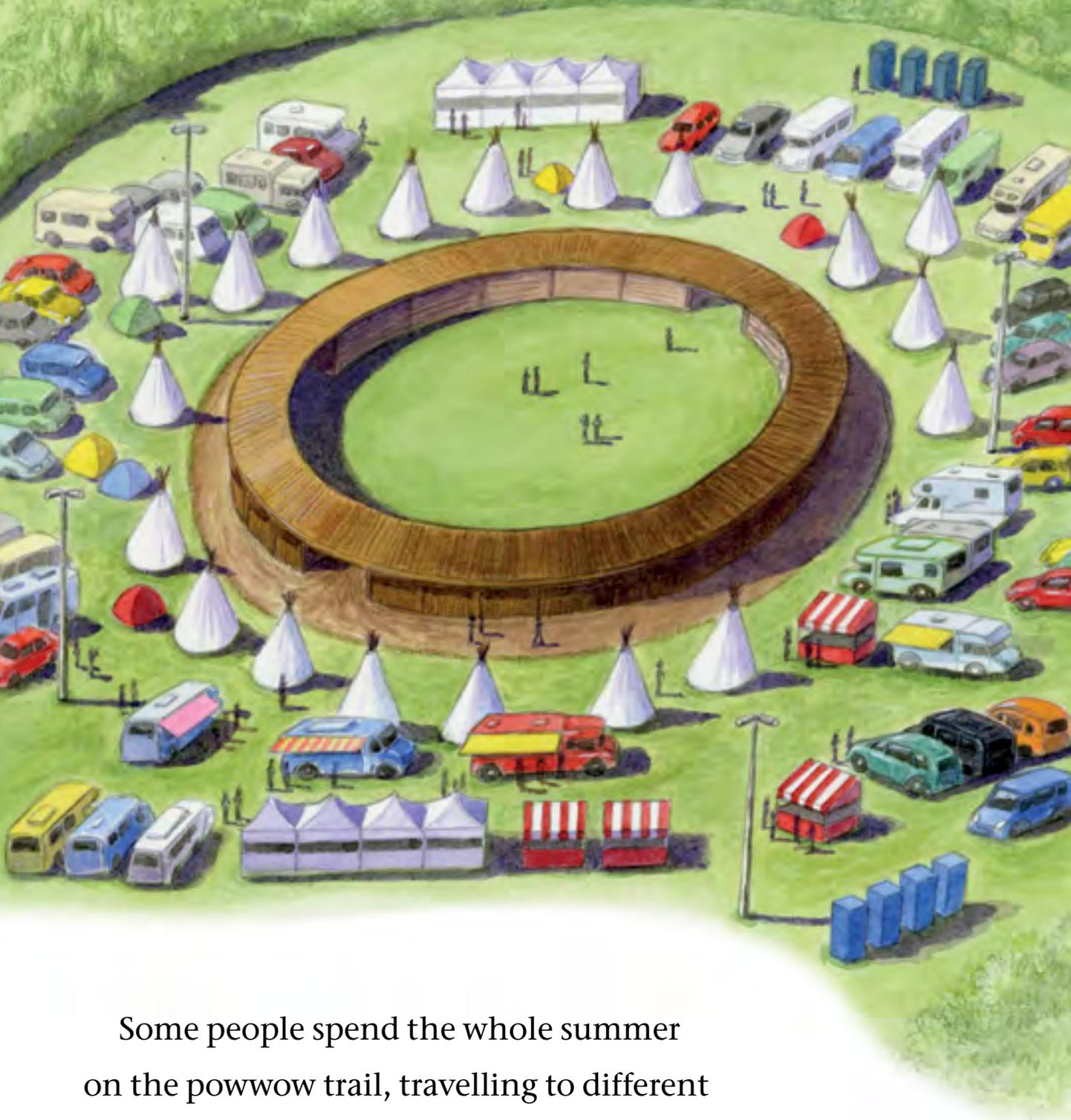
We are at a powwow with Aunty this weekend. At powwows, we listen to drumming and singing, and we watch dancers. We meet old friends, make new friends, and share stories.

Stories are often shared and passed on to others by important people in families and communities. Music, movement, colours, and designs can all be used to share stories.

We are excited to spend time with Aunty and to hear her stories.

I can hear the Master of Ceremonies calling the dancers and drummers to get ready.

"Let's find somewhere to sit so we can watch Grand Entry," says Aunty. "This is my favourite part of the powwow."



Some people spend the whole summer on the powwow trail, travelling to different communities to sing, dance, and visit with each other. Many people camp at the powwow grounds all weekend long, in tents, trailers, and even teepees.



Some teepees have designs on the teepee covers and some don't. The designs tell a unique story.

"A long time ago, women were responsible for putting up the teepees," says Aunty. "They had the teachings of the teepees and still do. Can you see shapes on this teepee that represent the earth and sky?"

My brother, Ryley, stops to help his friend's family with their teepee.



There are many different types of powwow dances. Dancers wear different outfits, or regalia, for each style of dance. Each dancer's regalia has its own story that is unique to the dancer.



We find a place to sit in the arbour.  
"Here come the dancers," says my sister, Madeline.  
"Grand Entry is about to begin!"  
Aunty reminds us to stand up. "Look at how everyone moves and dances to the heartbeat of the drum. Everyone moves and dances in the circle. Dancers, singers, visitors—we are all important, and we are each part of the circle."

The powwow singers sit around their drums. The singers visit with each other and learn new songs while they wait for their turn. They sing in different Indigenous languages. They share stories through their songs.

"See that young boy?" asks Aunty. "He is learning how to drum and sing from his family."

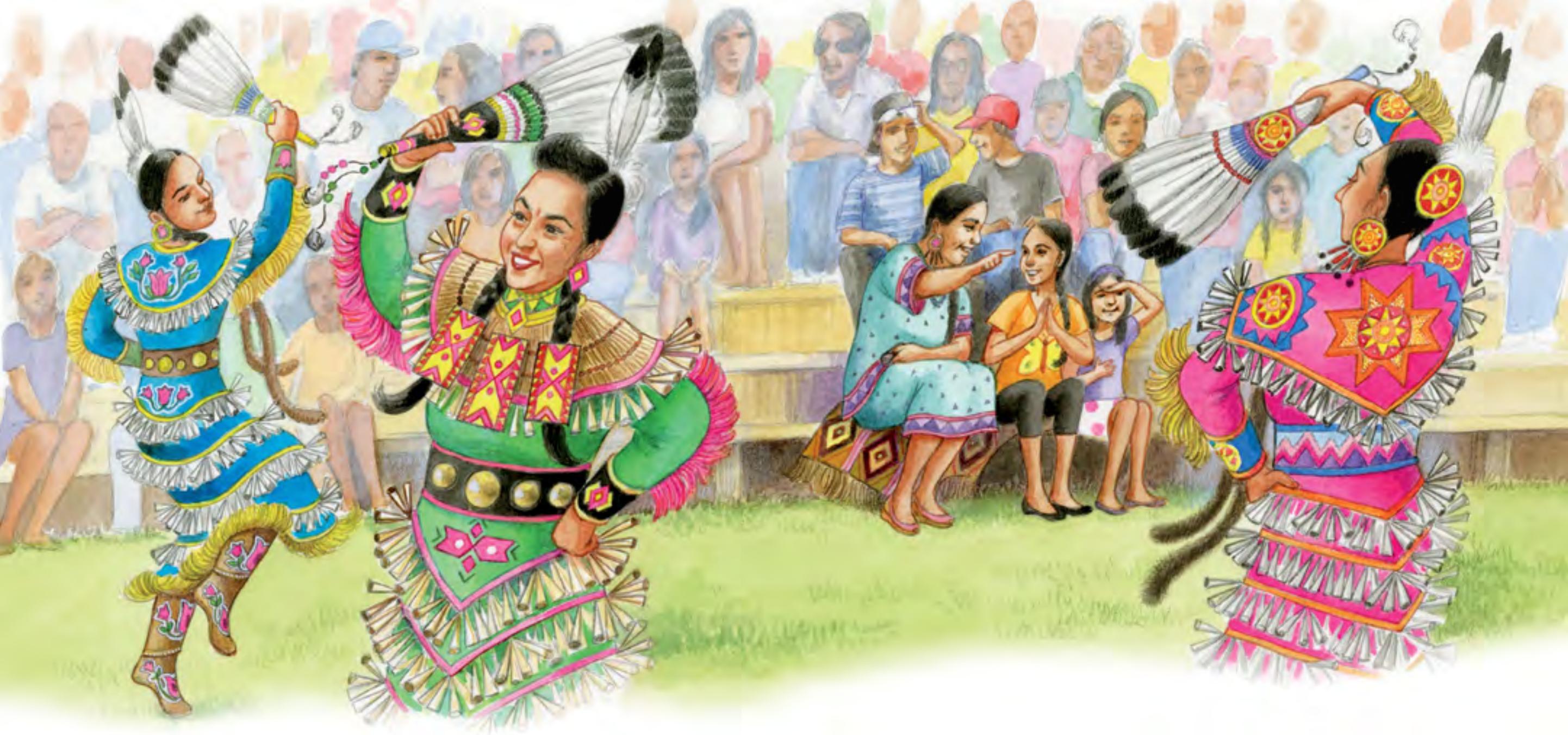


There are many drum groups from different Indigenous communities here. Some have travelled from far away.

"The people who made each drum earned and received the teachings from their Elders," says Aunty.

We go look at some of the drums. Each one is unique.

"What shapes do you see on the drum frame?" Aunty asks. "What does the design remind you of?"



The Master of Ceremonies calls the jingle dress dancers to the arbour. Aunty shares a story of the jingle dress and tells how this dance is a healing dance.

Madeline loves the sound that jingle dress dancers make when they dance. She says it sounds like a waterfall.

Aunty asks us if we see any familiar objects on the dancers' regalia.

"Teepees," I say.

"Mountains!" says Madeline.

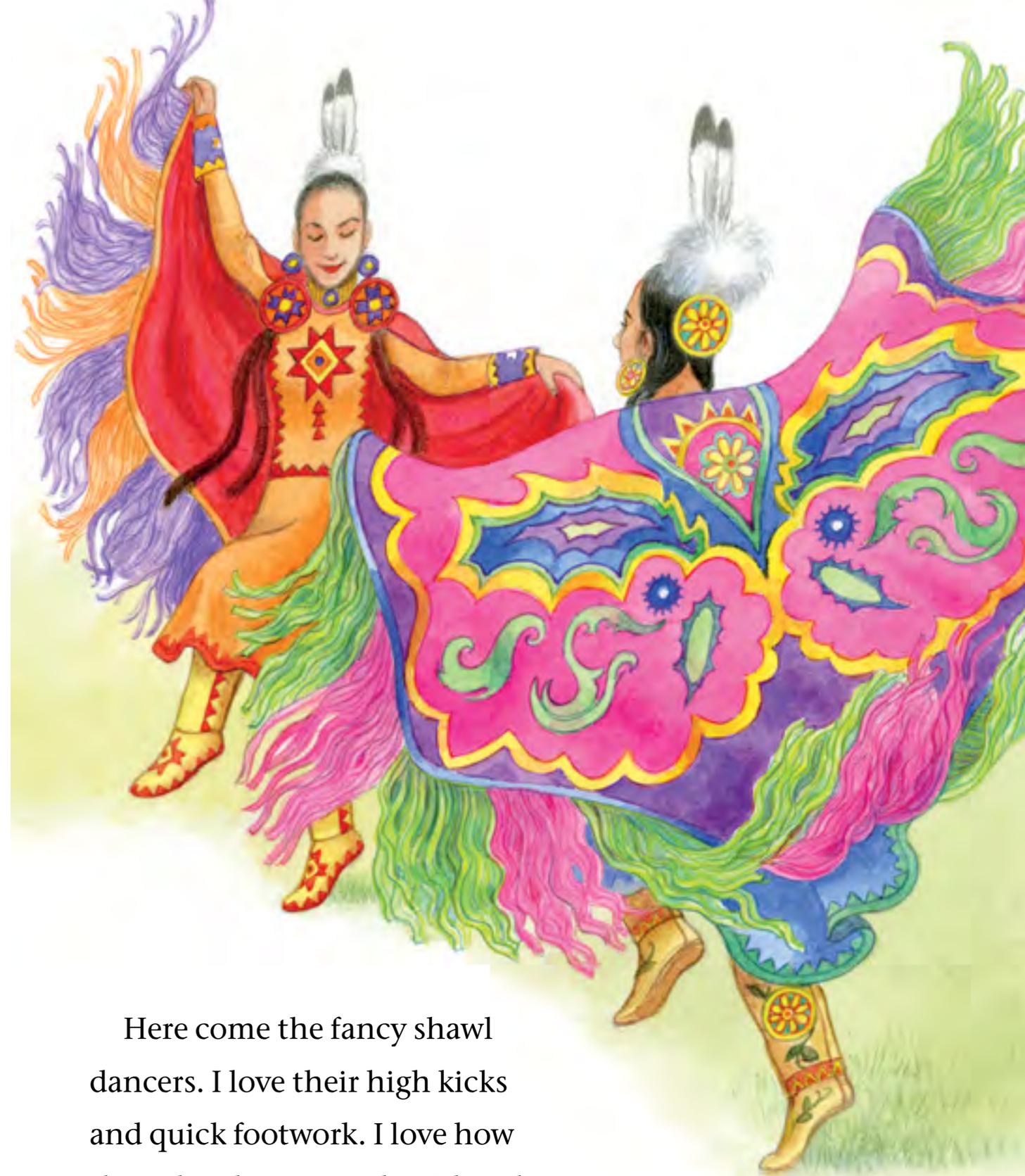
Aunty asks us to look at the different designs in the dancers' beadwork.



I see mountains and suns on one dancer's leggings and moccasins.

"There are so many tiny beads!" Madeline says. "That must have taken a really, really long time to make."

Aunty smiles. "Did you notice? Many of the designs are symmetrical. If you fold the design, one part matches the other. Symmetry is important. Symmetry is a symbol of balance."



Here come the fancy shawl dancers. I love their high kicks and quick footwork. I love how their shawls sway and swirl to the beat of the drum as they spin in circles.



The men's traditional dancers are next. They share stories about bravery, honour, and connection to the land. What the dancers wear, what they hold in their hands, and how they move all help to tell their story.

Madeline points to our uncle Francois. "He looks like he is hunting for animals while he dances."

Many people believe that the paint on a dancer's face also helps tell a story. Aunty reminds us that only some powwow dancers can paint their faces.





We walk to the booths where yummy foods and handmade items are for sale.

Madeline looks at all the pretty earrings, barrettes, and necklaces.

"Sarah, look!" She shows me a pair of earrings with purple flowers. "They match my outfit."

I look at all the beads that dancers can buy for their regalia.

"Aunty, would you teach me how to bead?" I ask.

"Yes, of course!" Aunty says. "Beading takes time and patience, and learning to bead takes practice. A lot of work goes into choosing the right colours and creating a design. Some beading projects take days or even months to finish."

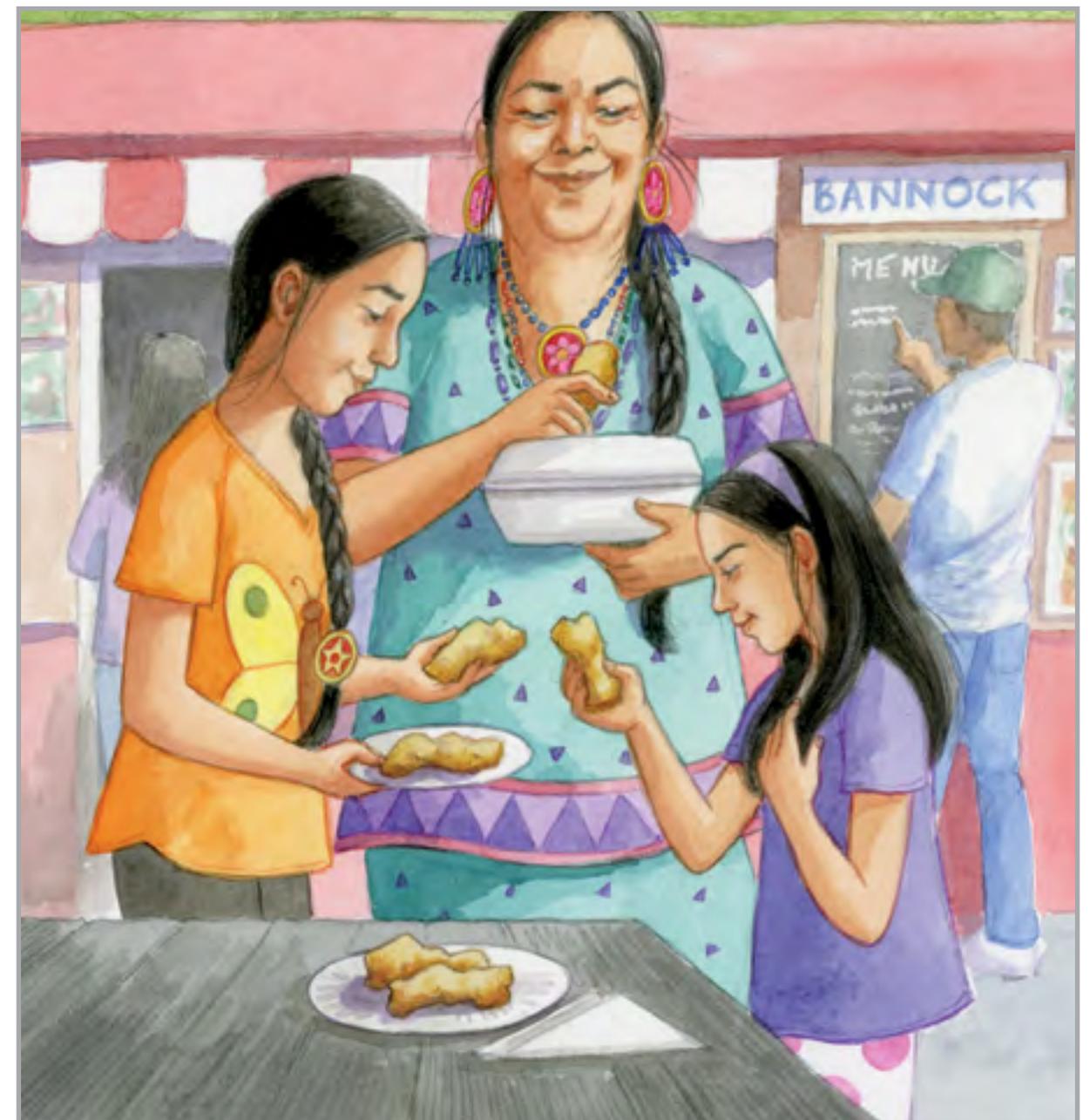
"I want to learn," I say.





Aunty wants to buy a blanket for a special person. There are so many to choose from! I pick out a blanket with rainbow stripes. Madeline likes the purple star blanket. She thinks it looks like the night sky.

Aunty decides to buy both blankets because they are the perfect gifts.



Madeline looks at me. "Mmm. I smell..."

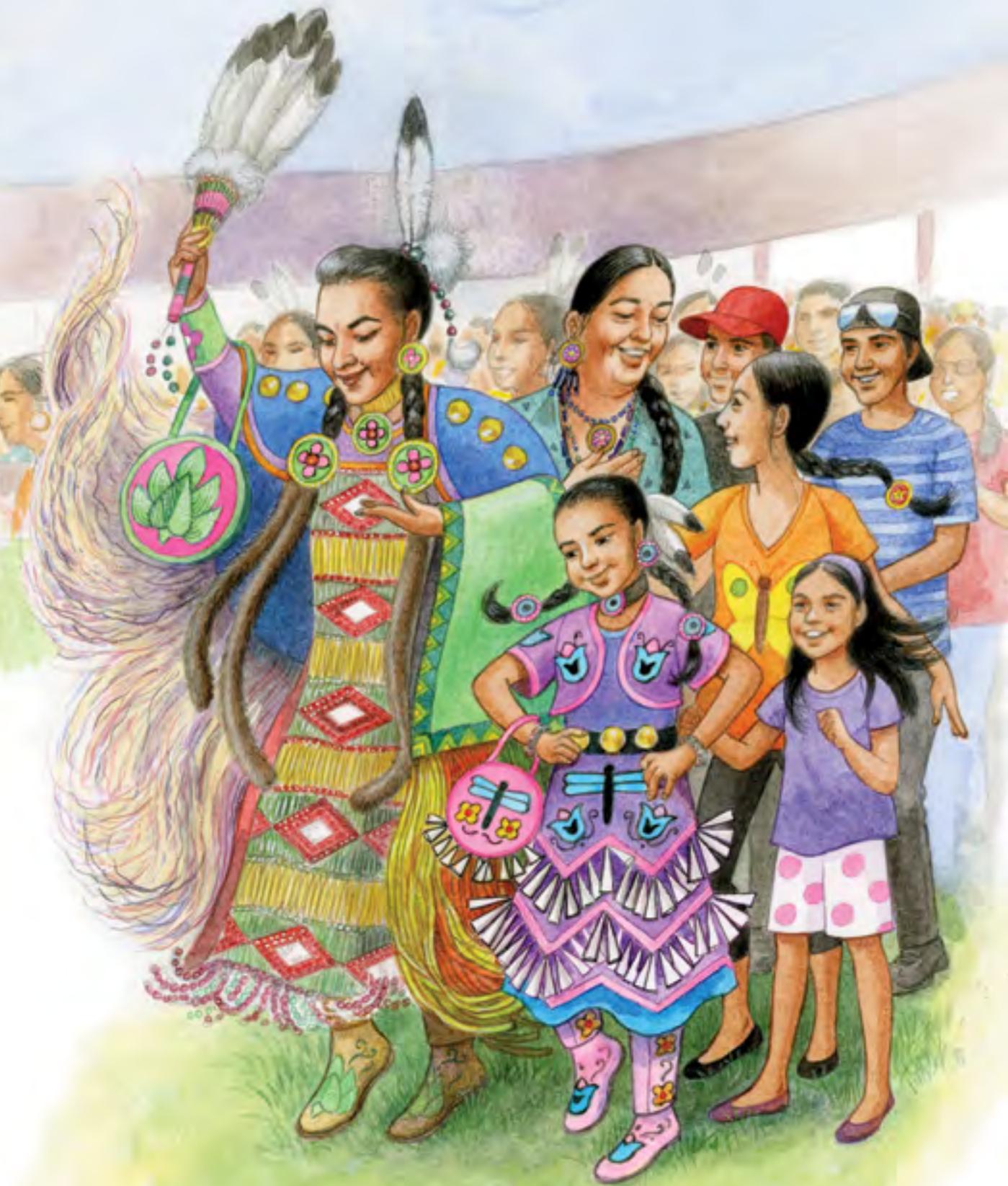
"Bannock!" we say together.

We love fried bannock with cinnamon and sugar. Aunty buys pieces for us to eat right away, and extra pieces for a late-night snack.



The drums are calling, and inter-tribal dancing has begun! Now everyone is welcome to dance. We join the dancers and other visitors in the arbour. Even Ryley joins in!

Aunty reminds us to move in a circle and to dance to the beat of the drum.





The sun is going down. The powwow will continue late into the night, but we are going to bed. We find a place to put up our tent, and Ryley helps me with the tent poles.

"Remember that time our tent blew across the field?" he asks. "It was such a windy day."

I remember! We make sure the tent pegs are all in this time.

Inside our tent, Aunty shares a surprise. She decided to buy both blankets because they are the perfect gifts... for us!

"Thank you, Aunty!" We are thankful for the gifts and for the stories we have learned today.



What shapes and designs could you use  
to tell stories about yourself?



---

**Visual Credits**

Back cover: (girl) GraphicsRF/Fotolia

Pearson Canada Inc., 26 Prince Andrew Place, North York, Ontario M3C 2H4  
Copyright © 2018 Pearson Canada Inc., Toronto, Ontario. All Rights Reserved.

Printed in Canada. This publication is protected by copyright, and permission should be obtained from the publisher prior to any prohibited reproduction, storage in a retrieval system, or transmission in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise. For information regarding permissions, request forms, and the appropriate contacts, please contact Pearson Canada's Rights and Permissions Department by visiting [www.pearsoncanada.ca/contact-information/permissions-requests](http://www.pearsoncanada.ca/contact-information/permissions-requests).

1 2 3 4 5 MP 21 20 19 18 17

Printed and bound in Canada

The licence for the *Mathology Little Books* website will expire on January 1, 2025.

ISBN: 978-0-13-467146-8