

# Tricky Treats

written by Georgia Perez

illustrated by Patrick Rolo & Lisa A. Fifield



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Georgia Perez has specialized in diabetes education with the Native American Diabetes Project, University of New Mexico, since 1994. From 1975 to 1994, she was the Community Health Representative for Nambe Pueblo.

Ms. Perez calls her series of children's stories the "Eagle Books." In these stories, a wise eagle assumes the role of Tribal Elder in the time-honored Native American tradition of using storytelling to pass on tribal culture and to teach lessons of life.

The author was inspired, in part, by telling stories to her three grandsons. She lives with her husband, Edward Perez, in Nambe Pueblo, New Mexico, a small federally recognized tribe of 600 people.

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## The Story of the Eagle Books

Diabetes Prevention Stories for Native American Children

*Stories can allow the positive power of words to create a new empowering vision of the future and reshape the way one thinks about disease.*

Janette Carter, Georgia Perez, Susan Gilliland (1999).

Communicating through stories: Experience of the Native American Diabetes Project. *Diabetes Educator*, 25, 179-187.

*Traditionally, stories were told in winter by Native Americans to pass on their history, traditions, and culture to future generations because Native languages were only spoken, not written. The stories in the Eagle Books came from a recurring dream I had and from the dreams of many Native Indian communities whose members wanted to make life better for people dealing with diabetes.*

*In 1989, I met a wonderful physician, Dr. Janette Carter. In 1994, I started to work with her to develop a diabetes education curriculum funded by the National Institutes of Health. During the development of the curriculum, I dreamed of being visited by an eagle. The eagle was showing me how life for Native Americans used to be and what Native people can do to prevent type 2 diabetes now.*

*Dr. Carter expressed a need for the diabetes curriculum to be more culturally tailored for the population that we were trying to reach. I told her about the dream that I had been having. It was then that the original story, "Through the Eyes of the Eagle," was written and woven throughout our first curriculum.*

Published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Diabetes Translation, Native Diabetes Wellness Program

*The story broke down barriers that people had about health and diabetes. When we began with the story and then talked about diabetes, we found that the children listened intently. They were eager to take the information back to their parents and talk about what they had learned in school that day. It became a future dream to write a series of children's books to help them learn how important it is to have healthy eating and physical activity in their lives. In July 2001, Janette Carter passed away and never had an opportunity to see this dream become reality. But it did. She would be glad.*

*In 2002, the Native Diabetes Wellness Program (formerly the National Diabetes Prevention Center), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, formed partnerships with the New Mexico State Diabetes Prevention and Control Program and the Office of Native American Diabetes Program at the University of New Mexico to plan for the series of children's books. These books would contain healthy lifestyle messages to help children as well as family and community members begin making positive changes in their lives. The underlying messages would be to prevent obesity and type 2 diabetes.*

*The partnerships have expanded even more broadly to include book illustrators Patrick Rolo and Lisa A. Fifield, Native Americans from Minnetonka, Minnesota; Westat, in Atlanta, Georgia; the Indian Health Service, Division of Diabetes Treatment and Prevention, based in Albuquerque, New Mexico; and the Tribal Leaders Diabetes Committee, represented by leaders across the country. Partners and communities are involved from all directions: north, south, east, and west.*

*"Tricky Treats," the fourth story in the four-story set, follows "Through the Eyes of the Eagle," "Knees Lifted High," and "Plate Full of Color." This story shows children the difference between healthy snacks and sweet treats.*

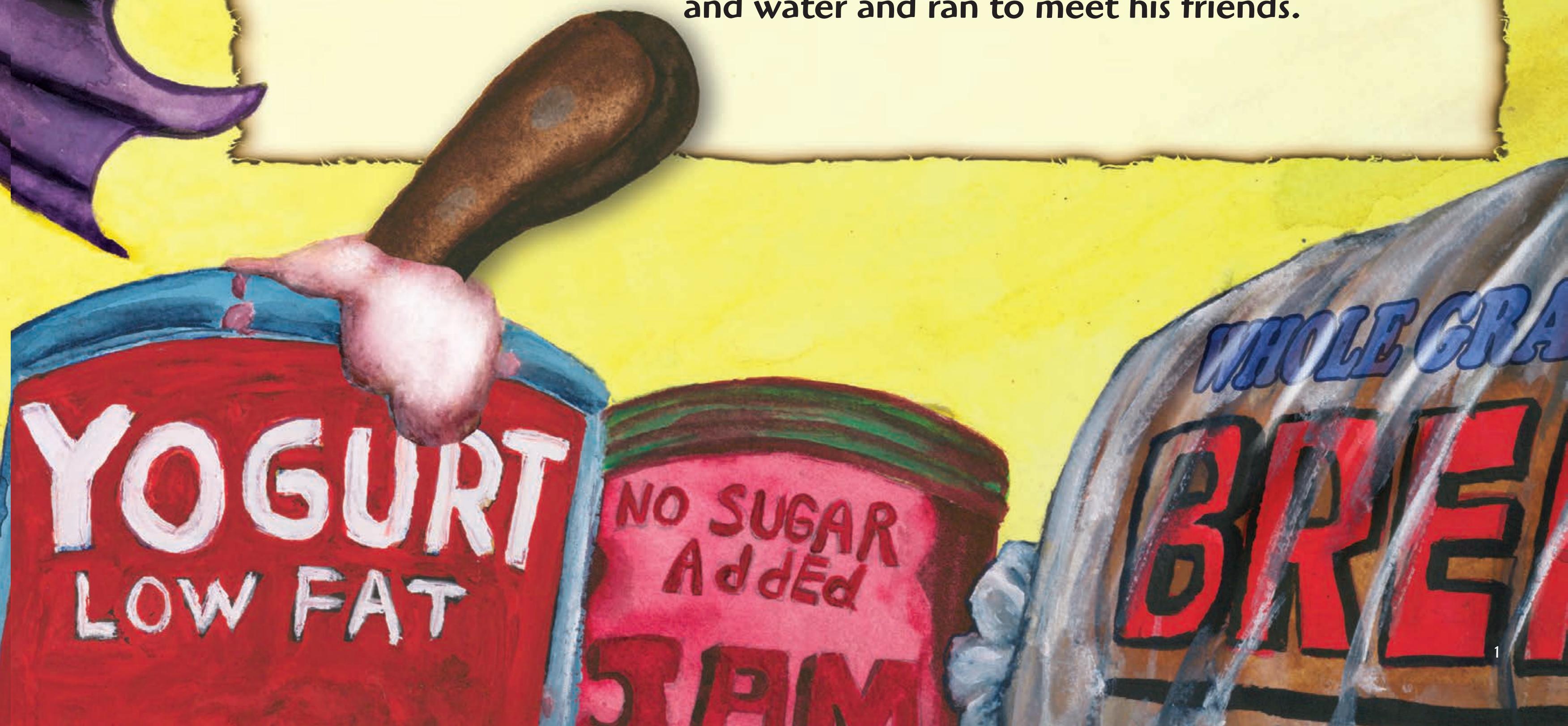
-Georgia Perez

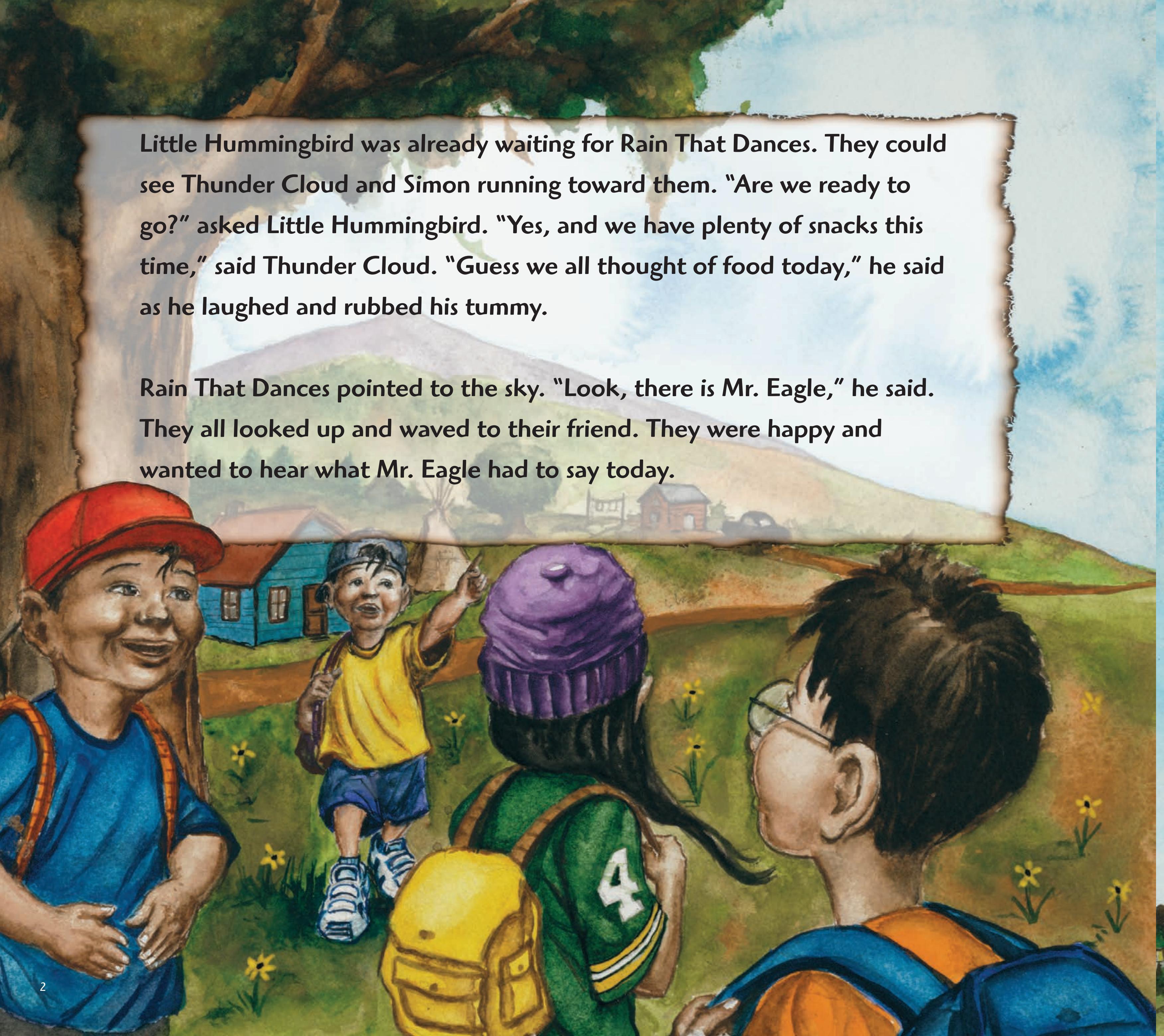




"Good morning, Brother Sun," said the great bald eagle as he opened his eyes and flapped his wings to start a new day. He flew over and circled the village as he did every day. Below, he could see the village coming to life. People began moving about to begin their busy day.

Today was the last day Rain That Dances and his friends would meet with Mr. Eagle. "I better take some snacks with me in case we get hungry," thought Rain That Dances. He filled his backpack with snacks and water and ran to meet his friends.





Little Hummingbird was already waiting for Rain That Dances. They could see Thunder Cloud and Simon running toward them. "Are we ready to go?" asked Little Hummingbird. "Yes, and we have plenty of snacks this time," said Thunder Cloud. "Guess we all thought of food today," he said as he laughed and rubbed his tummy.

Rain That Dances pointed to the sky. "Look, there is Mr. Eagle," he said. They all looked up and waved to their friend. They were happy and wanted to hear what Mr. Eagle had to say today.

The great bald eagle looked down and saw his friends. He flew down to circle closer above them and then flew ahead.

The children started running to keep up with the eagle.

As the eagle flew closer to the tree stump, he saw Miss Rabbit and someone with her.

"Who could that be?" he thought to himself.

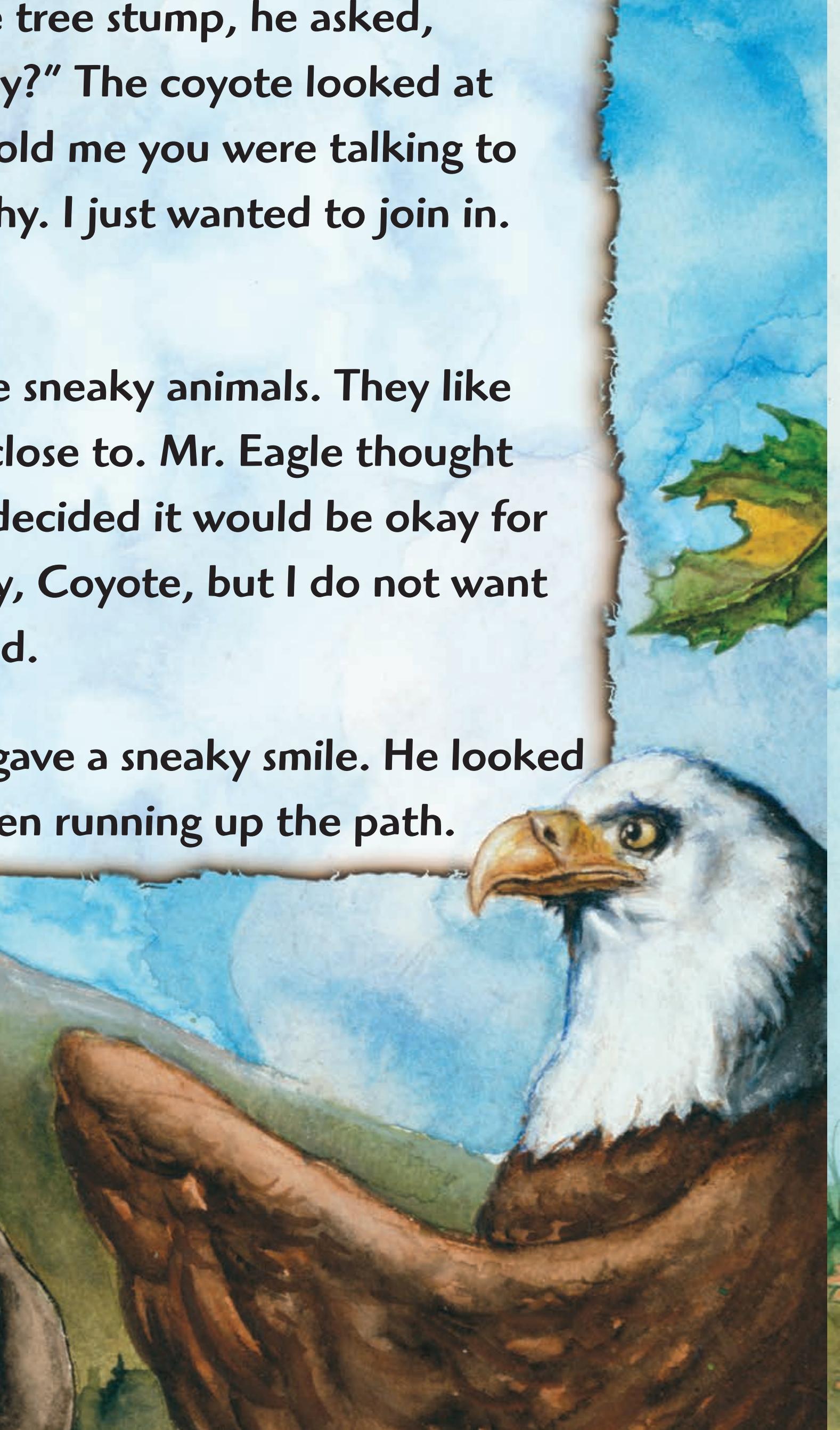
It was Coyote.

He knew someone else would be joining them and the children today but he did not know it would be Coyote.





As the eagle came to rest on the tree stump, he asked, "Coyote, why are you here today?" The coyote looked at the bird and said, "Miss Rabbit told me you were talking to the children about staying healthy. I just wanted to join in. Is that okay?"



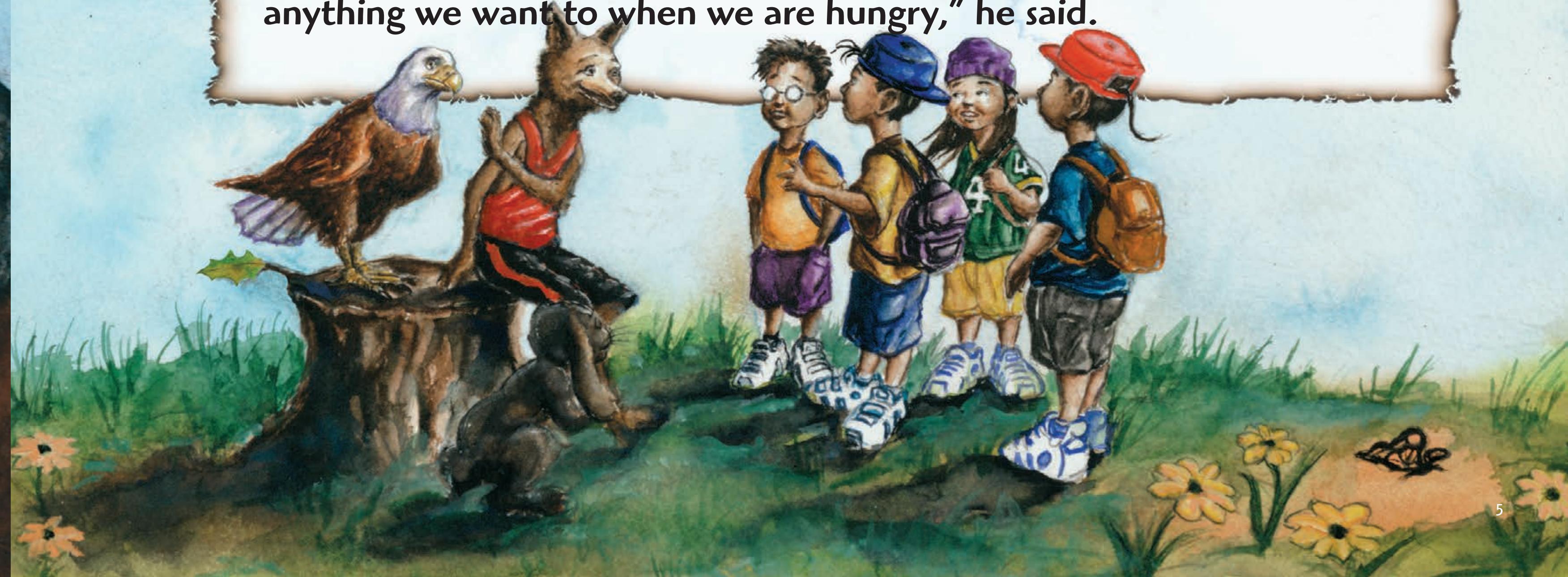
Now, coyotes are known to be sneaky animals. They like to trick anyone they come close to. Mr. Eagle thought about this for a minute and decided it would be okay for the coyote to stay. "You can stay, Coyote, but I do not want you to trick the children," he said.

"Thank you," said Coyote as he gave a sneaky smile. He looked down the hill and saw the children running up the path.

Rain That Dances, Little Hummingbird, Thunder Cloud, and Simon were laughing and waving to their friends. "This is Coyote," said Mr. Eagle. "He wants to learn about staying healthy, too."

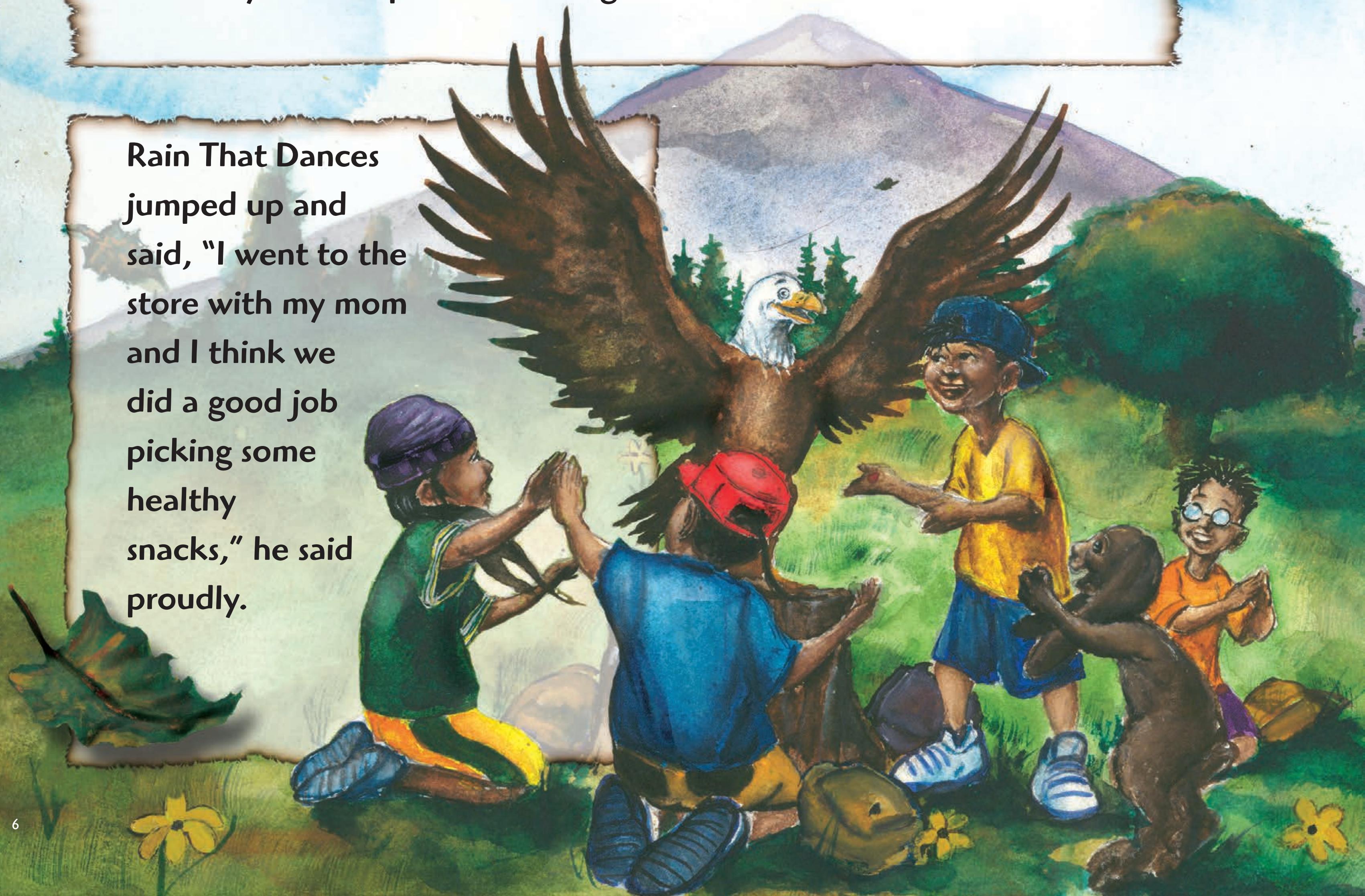
"Hello, Miss Rabbit and Coyote. We brought some snacks today in case we get hungry," said Thunder Cloud. "Well, that is good because that is what I want to talk to you about today," replied Mr. Eagle. "I know everyone likes to snack. But do you know there are everyday snacks and snacks that are to be eaten only sometimes?"

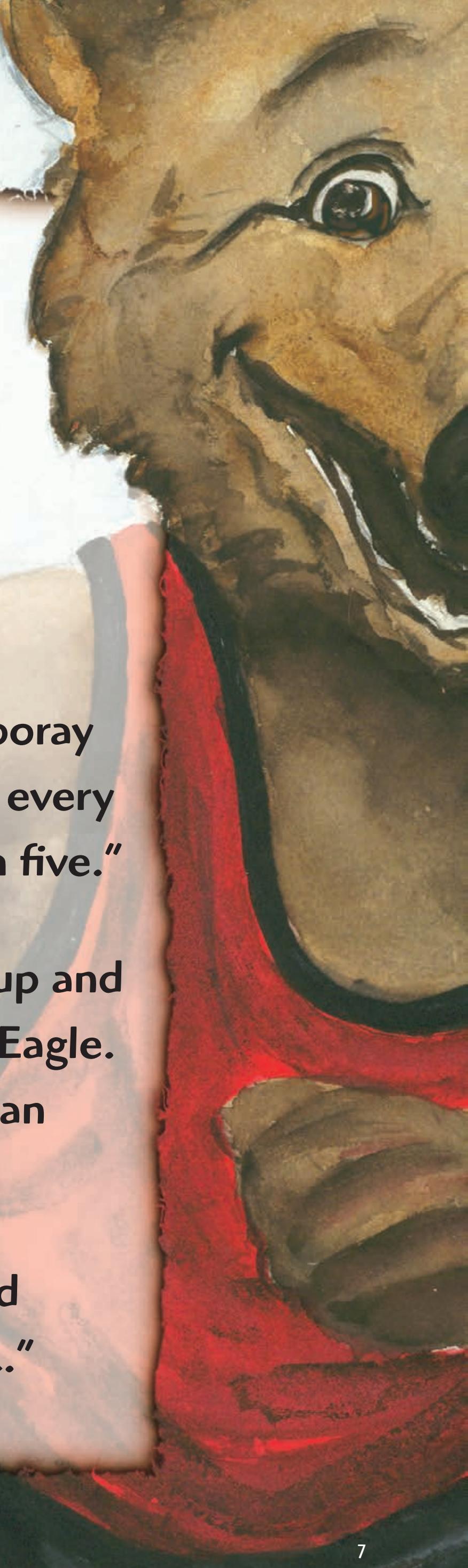
Coyote lifted his front paw and stopped the eagle from talking. "What do you mean by everyday and sometimes? I think we should eat anything we want to when we are hungry," he said.



This made Miss Rabbit hop into the air and Mr. Eagle flap his wings. They both looked at Coyote. "This is why I want to talk to the children. I think the best way to talk about this is to see what you have in your backpacks," Mr. Eagle said.

Rain That Dances jumped up and said, "I went to the store with my mom and I think we did a good job picking some healthy snacks," he said proudly.





He opened his backpack. First, he pulled out some apple slices. "How is this for an everyday snack?" he asked.

Coyote saw the small bag, laughed, and said, "Gee, that is such a small snack. That is not enough, even for me."

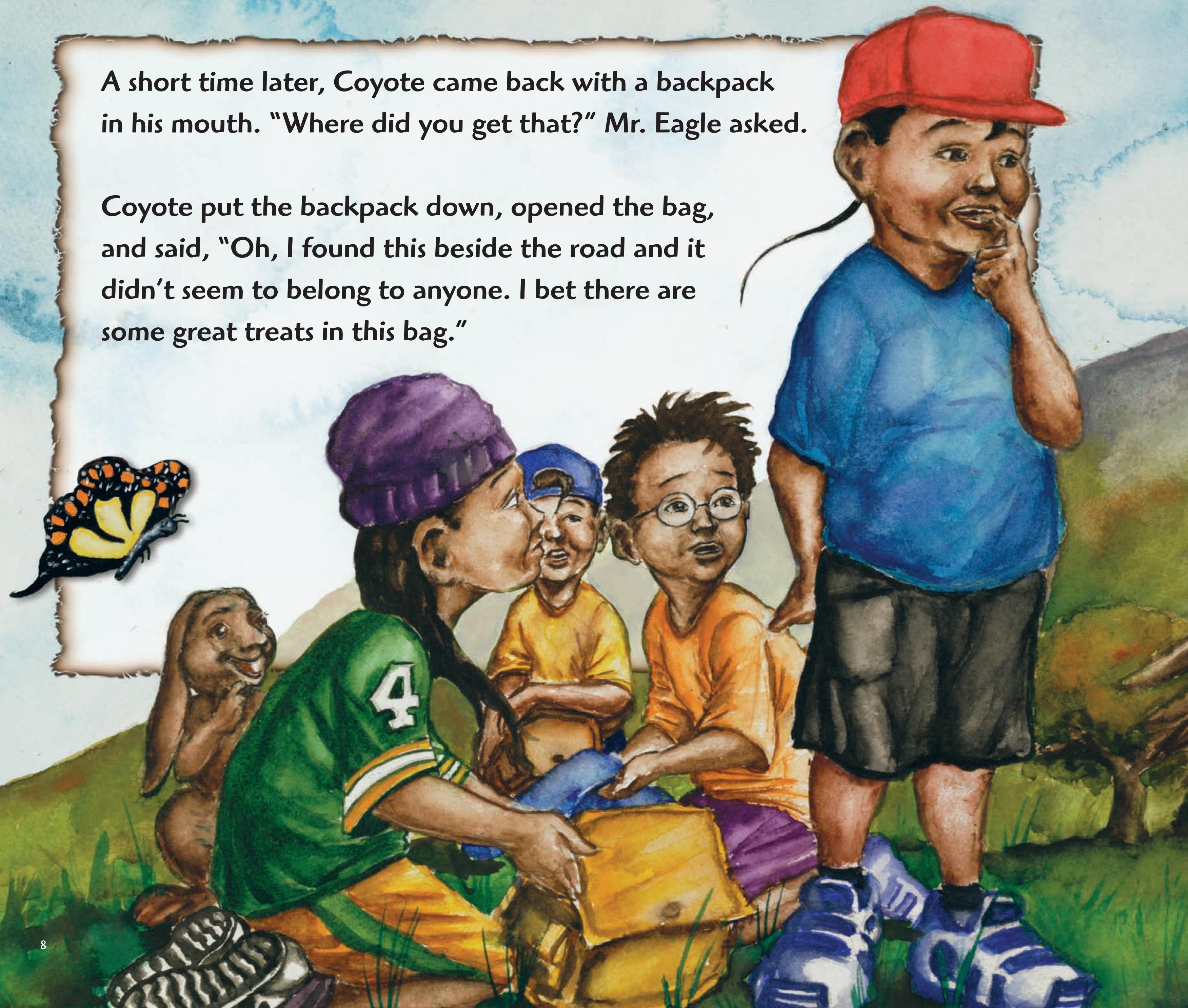
The eagle looked at the bag of apple slices and said, "Hooray for you! That is a good size and a healthy snack food for every day. Rain That Dances smiled and gave his friends a "high five."

He pulled out some carrots that he helped his mom cut up and put into bags. "How is this?" he said. "Perfect," said Mr. Eagle. "Those look delicious and they are something that you can grow yourself in a garden," said Miss Rabbit.

Coyote was disappointed at what he saw. "Wait," howled Coyote as he ran toward the village. "I will be right back."

A short time later, Coyote came back with a backpack in his mouth. "Where did you get that?" Mr. Eagle asked.

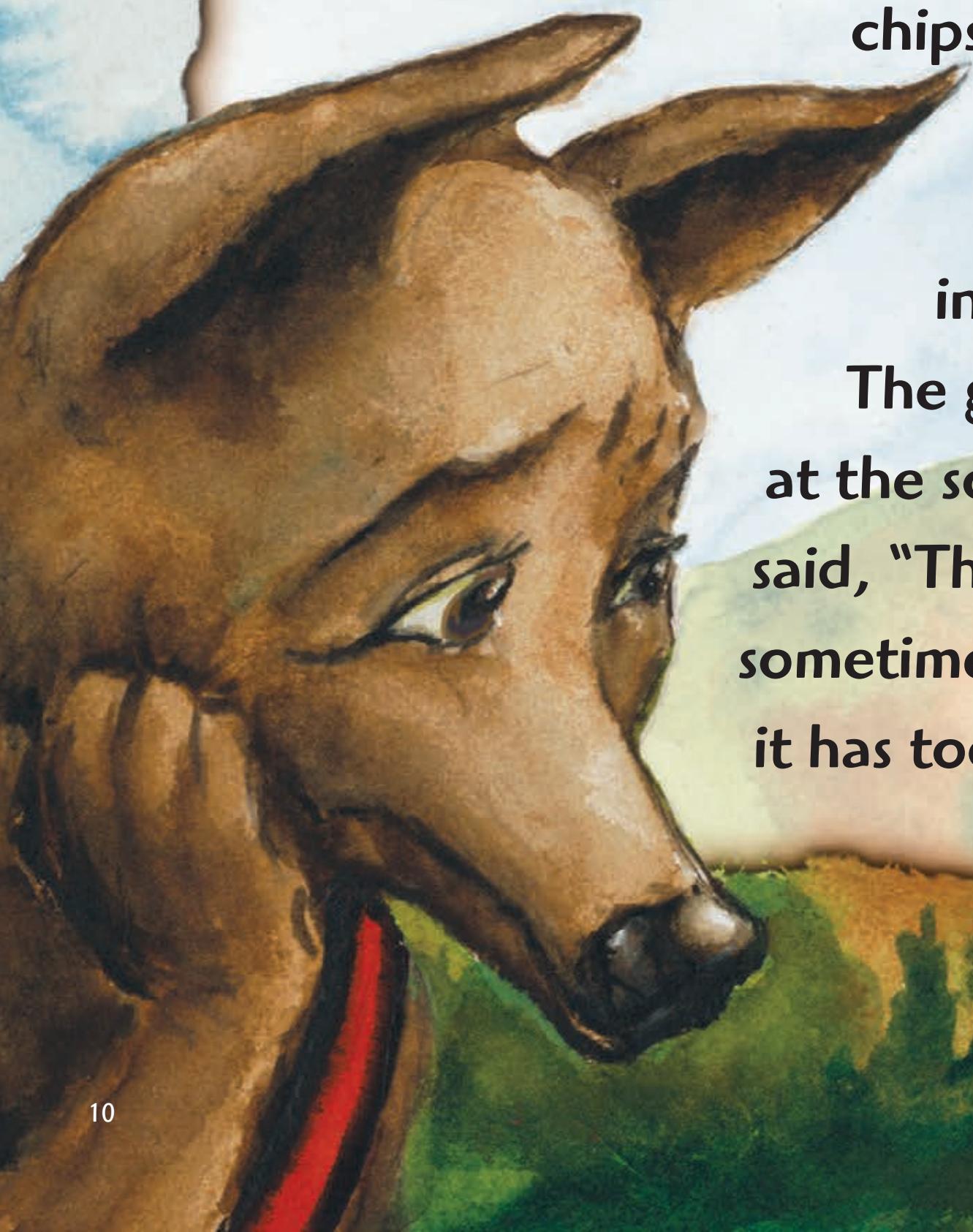
Coyote put the backpack down, opened the bag, and said, "Oh, I found this beside the road and it didn't seem to belong to anyone. I bet there are some great treats in this bag."



The children, Miss Rabbit and Mr. Eagle looked at the coyote and then the bag. With one shake, treats tumbled out of the bag. "Look, now this is a great snack," said Coyote as he picked up a bag of cookies. He waved the bag under the children's noses.



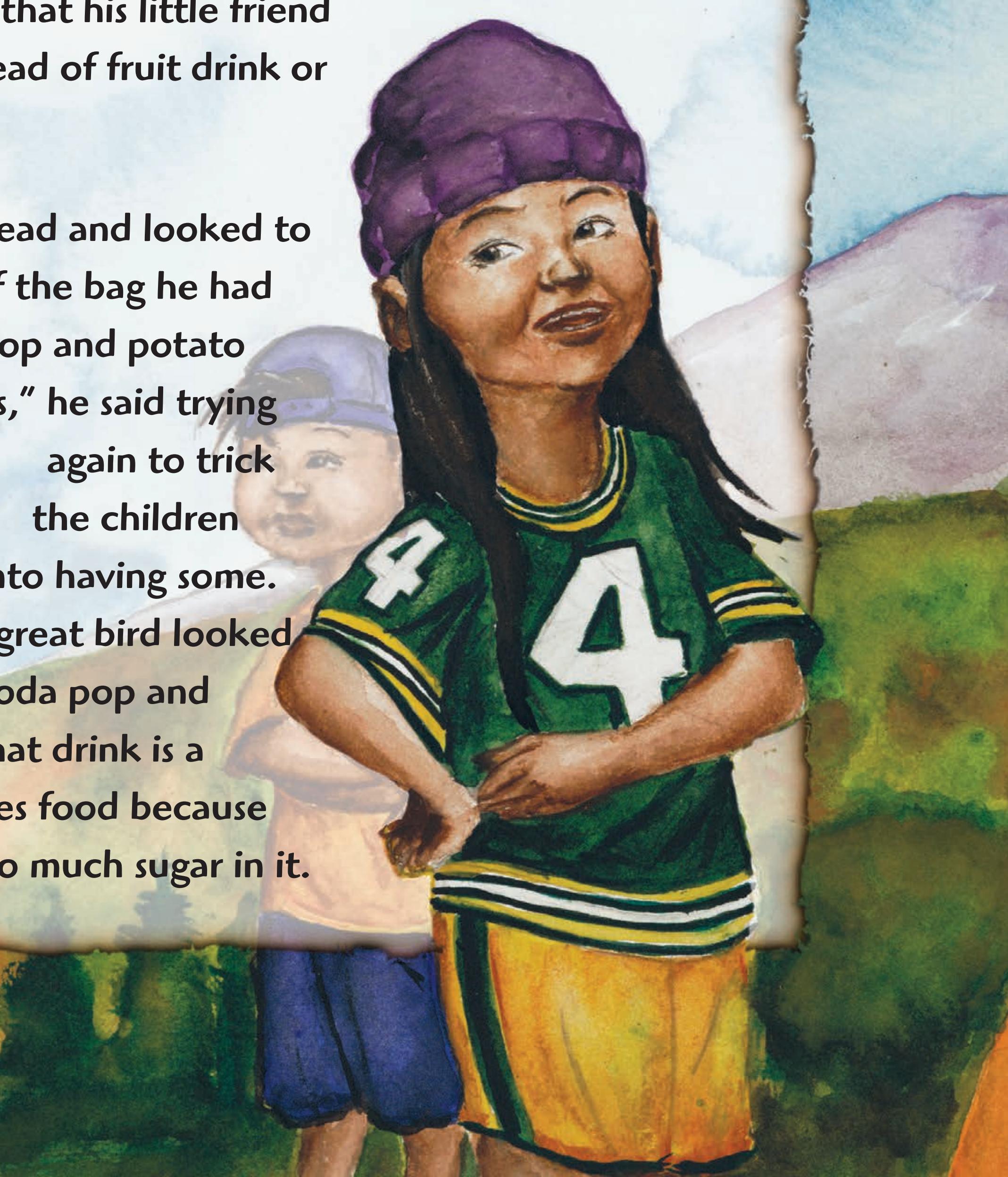
"Can I have some?" asked Thunder Cloud as he reached for the bag. The great bald eagle knew that the coyote was trying to trick the children. Mr. Eagle said, "Thunder Cloud, it is not safe to eat food that you find lying around. Let's see what else Rain That Dances has in his backpack."



Rain That Dances pulled out a bottle of water. The great bald eagle was happy to see that his little friend had brought water instead of fruit drink or soda pop.

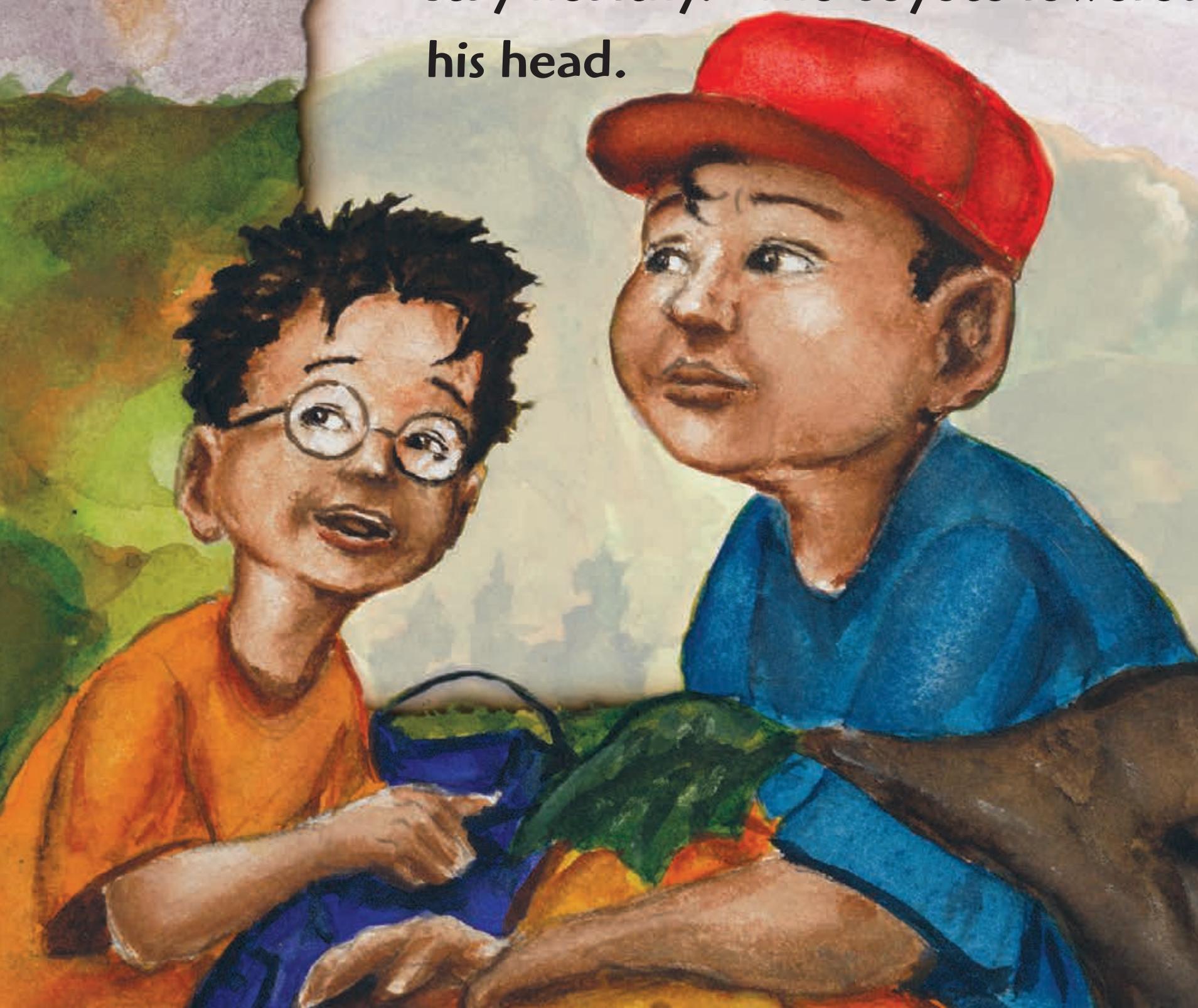
Coyote just shook his head and looked to see what else fell out of the bag he had "found." "I have soda pop and potato chips," he said trying again to trick the children into having some.

The great bird looked at the soda pop and said, "That drink is a sometimes food because it has too much sugar in it.



**Water is better. Water is a gift from Mother Earth and something we should have every day. Potato chips are a sometimes food."**

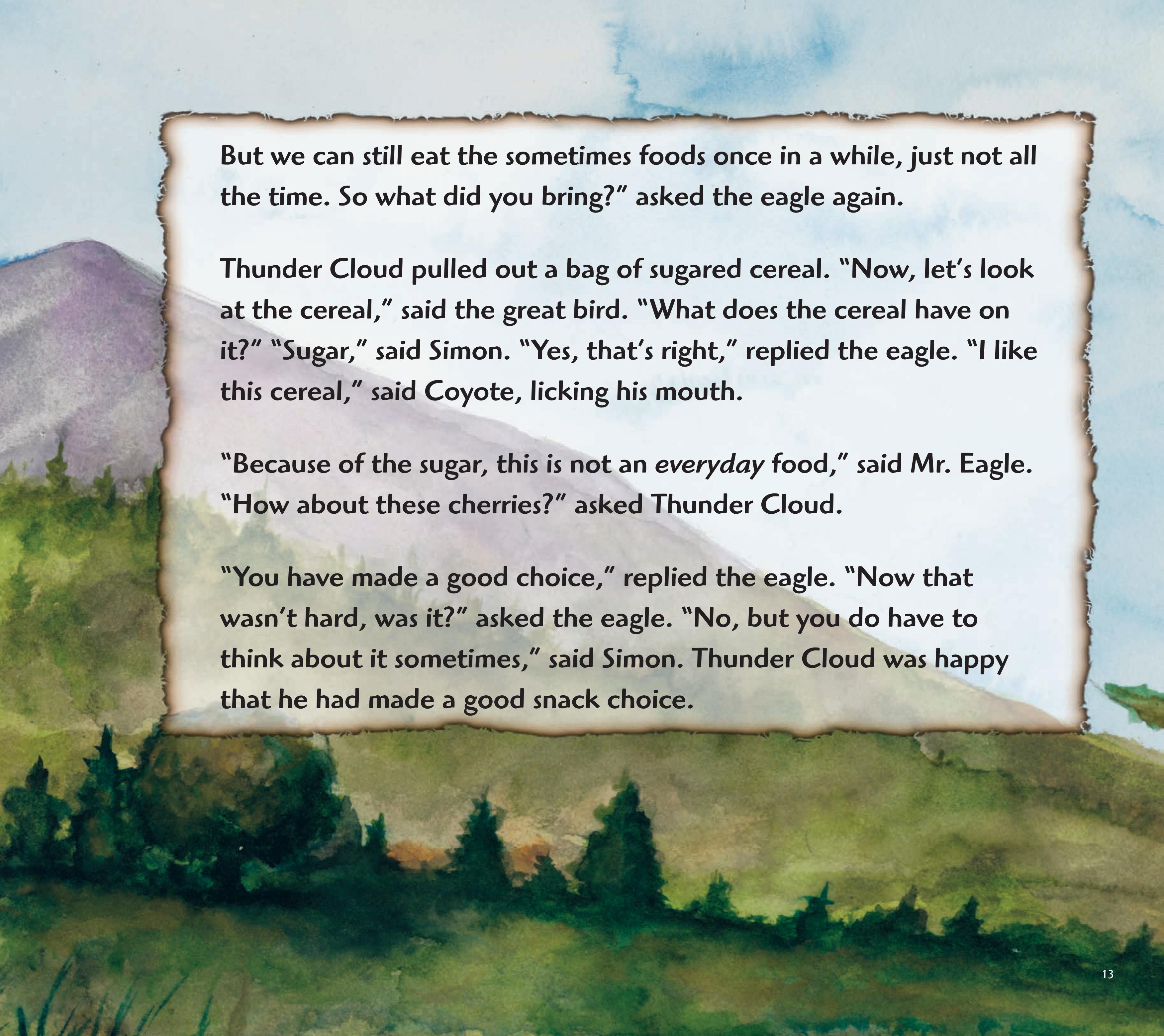
**Little Hummingbird, putting her hands on her hips, looked at the coyote, and said, "Coyote, I know what you were trying to do. You were trying to trick us and you better stop it. We will listen to Mr. Eagle so that we can grow up strong and stay healthy." The coyote lowered his head.**



A colorful illustration of a young boy with dark skin and curly hair, wearing a red baseball cap and a blue t-shirt. He is smiling and holding a long, yellow, textured object, possibly a piece of bread or a snack, in his right hand. He is wearing an orange backpack with a yellow buckle. A large, detailed eagle wing is visible behind him, partially obscuring the background. In the bottom right corner, there is a small, colorful butterfly with black wings decorated with orange and yellow spots.

The eagle was proud of Little Hummingbird. "Now, can we see what you have in your backpack, Thunder Cloud?" asked Mr. Eagle.

"Well, I was in a hurry this morning and now I think I didn't make the best choices," he said. The eagle put his wing around Thunder Cloud's shoulder. "You know, sometimes we don't always choose the best snacks."



But we can still eat the sometimes foods once in a while, just not all the time. So what did you bring?" asked the eagle again.

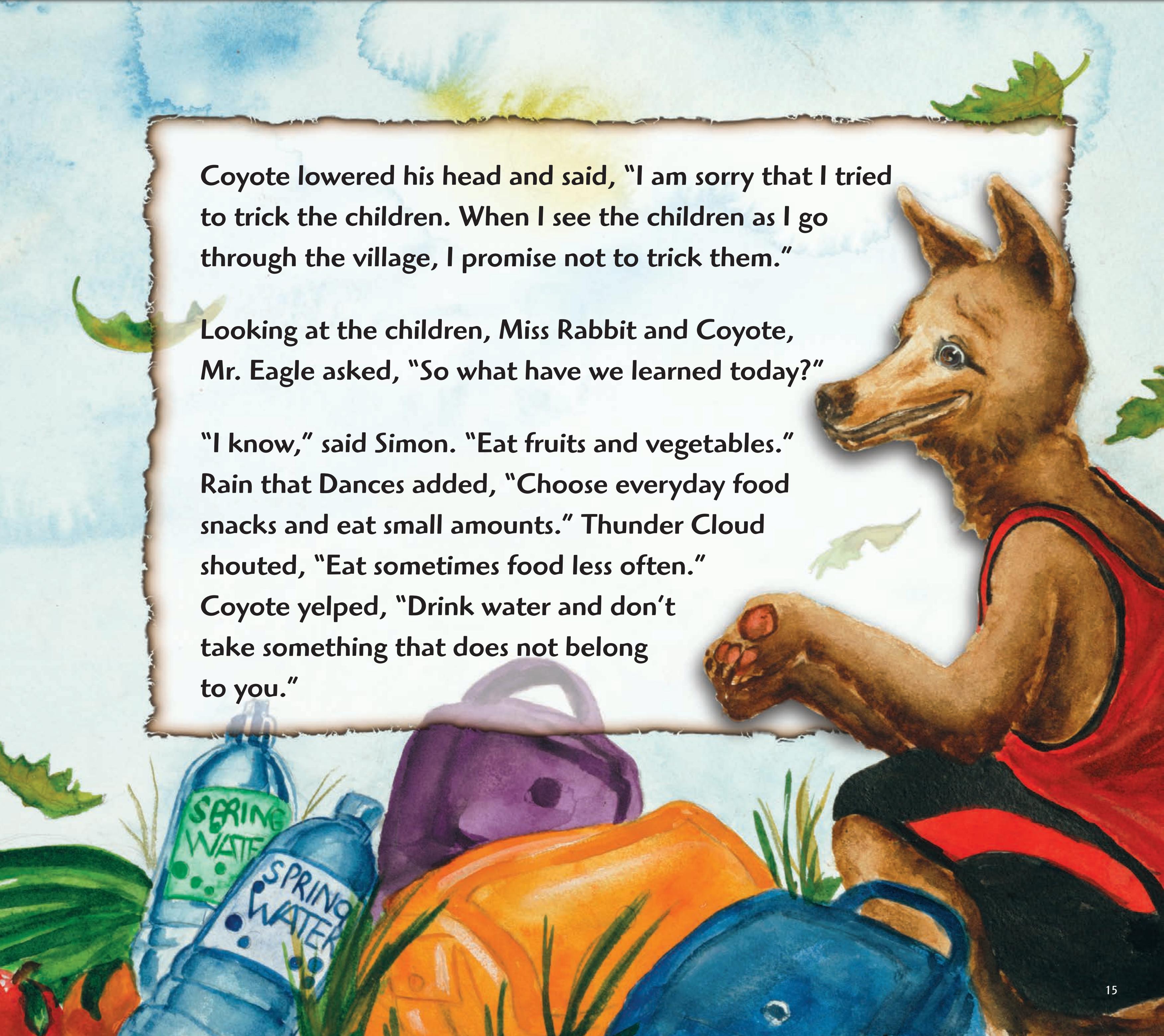
Thunder Cloud pulled out a bag of sugared cereal. "Now, let's look at the cereal," said the great bird. "What does the cereal have on it?" "Sugar," said Simon. "Yes, that's right," replied the eagle. "I like this cereal," said Coyote, licking his mouth.

"Because of the sugar, this is not an *everyday* food," said Mr. Eagle. "How about these cherries?" asked Thunder Cloud.

"You have made a good choice," replied the eagle. "Now that wasn't hard, was it?" asked the eagle. "No, but you do have to think about it sometimes," said Simon. Thunder Cloud was happy that he had made a good snack choice.

**"When picking a snack or a treat, we need to make sure it does not have a lot of sugar in it. We also need to remember that small amounts are better. Fruits and vegetables every day make for healthy snacks too," said Mr. Eagle. Still looking at the children and Coyote, the great bird said, "I am very proud of all my new friends. You have taken the time to learn how to stay healthy. Coyote, I hope you will not try to trick the children into eating something you know is not good for them. And I hope you will return that backpack where you found it."**





Coyote lowered his head and said, "I am sorry that I tried to trick the children. When I see the children as I go through the village, I promise not to trick them."

Looking at the children, Miss Rabbit and Coyote, Mr. Eagle asked, "So what have we learned today?"

"I know," said Simon. "Eat fruits and vegetables."

Rain that Dances added, "Choose everyday food snacks and eat small amounts." Thunder Cloud shouted, "Eat sometimes food less often."

Coyote yelped, "Drink water and don't take something that does not belong to you."

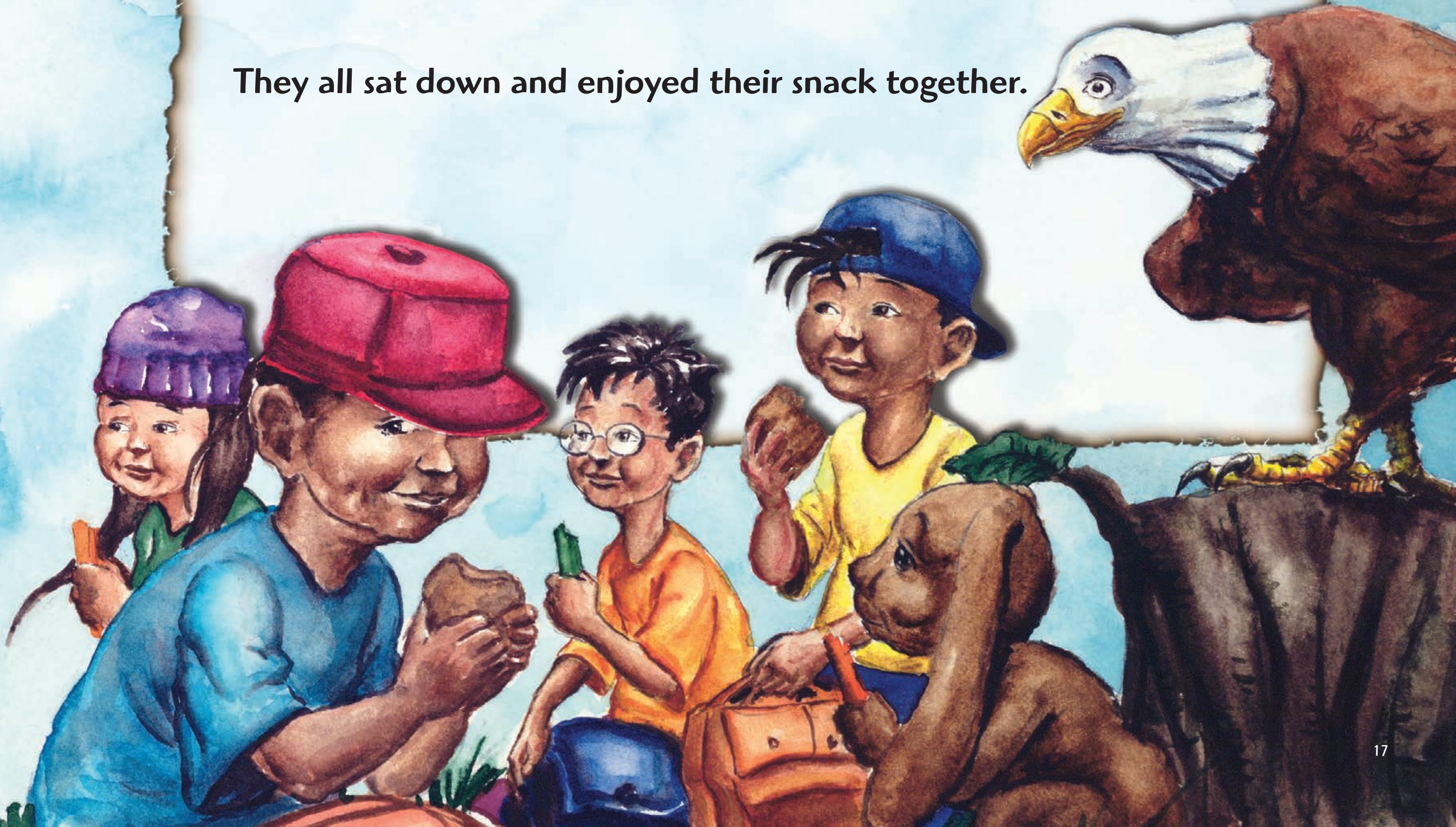
Little Hummingbird smiled and said, "Move your body every day to help stay healthy in body and spirit." Miss Rabbit jumped in and added, "Try growing your own vegetables!"

Mr. Eagle was so proud of his little friends. "I will always be flying above to see how you are doing. And when you see me, you will remember what I have told you," he said.



**"Now let us share the snacks that you have brought today and then you can go home," he said. "Coyote," the eagle continued, "you need to return the backpack. It belongs to someone. We will surprise the person by putting a new bottle of water and a bag of carrot seeds in the bag. And we will put a book, "Through the Eyes of the Eagle," in there – the book about us!"**

**They all sat down and enjoyed their snack together.**



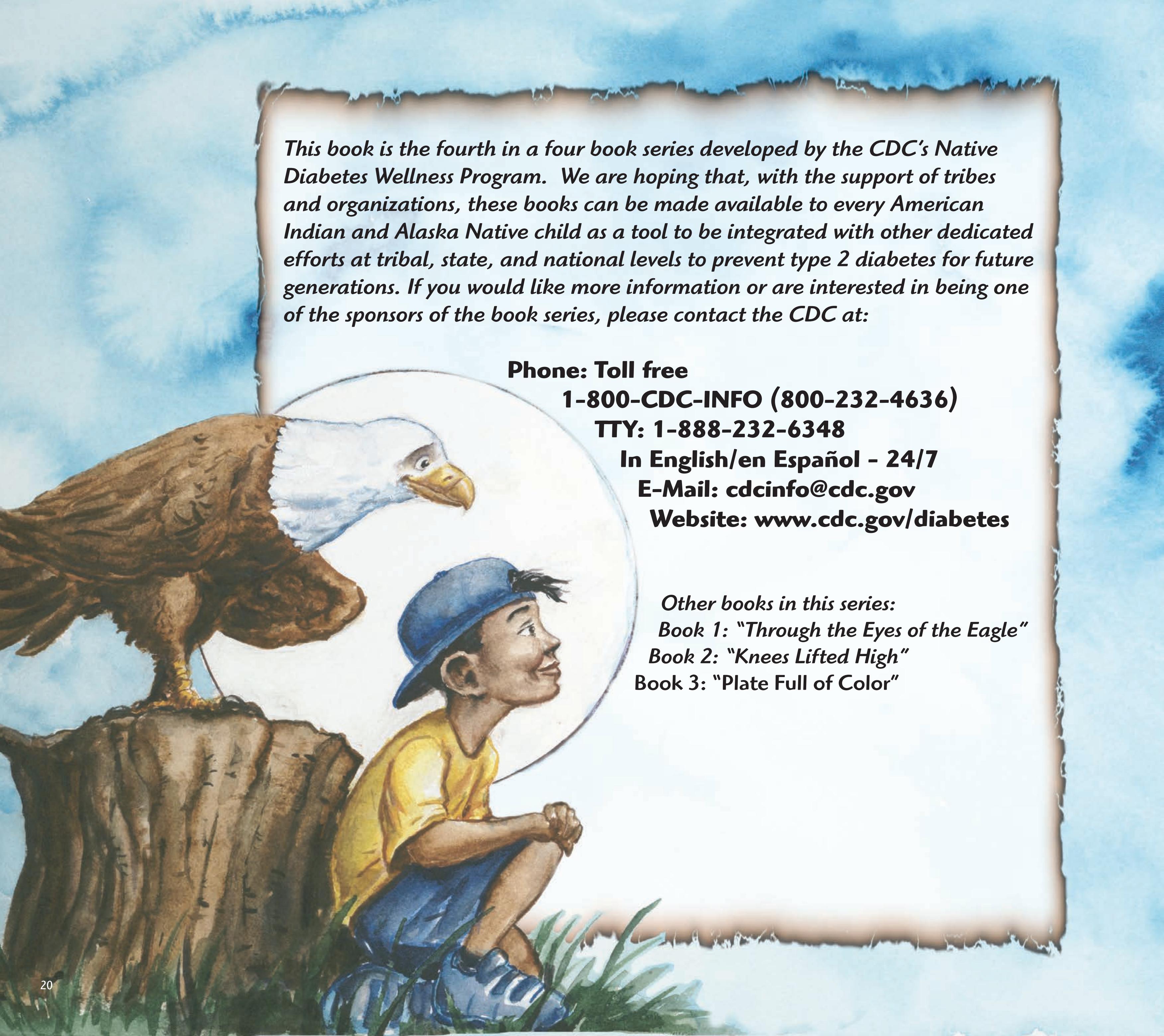
As the children were leaving, they turned and waved goodbye to Mr. Eagle, Miss Rabbit, and Coyote. Rain That Dances left with a big smile on his face. He and his friends would tell the people in the village about the ways they could stay healthy. "Diabetes might even go away some day," he thought. "Mr. Eagle will no longer be sad as he watches us from above."

As Brother Sun began to go down behind the mountain to end another day, Mr. Eagle had a happy thought and said out loud,

**"My new friends that have joined us to hear my stories will be strong in body. And like mine, their spirits will soar high with happiness knowing that their future is bright. So, until another time I will say goodbye."**

**The End**





*This book is the fourth in a four book series developed by the CDC's Native Diabetes Wellness Program. We are hoping that, with the support of tribes and organizations, these books can be made available to every American Indian and Alaska Native child as a tool to be integrated with other dedicated efforts at tribal, state, and national levels to prevent type 2 diabetes for future generations. If you would like more information or are interested in being one of the sponsors of the book series, please contact the CDC at:*

**Phone: Toll free**

**1-800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636)**

**TTY: 1-888-232-6348**

**In English/en Español - 24/7**

**E-Mail: [cdcinfo@cdc.gov](mailto:cdcinfo@cdc.gov)**

**Website: [www.cdc.gov/diabetes](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes)**

*Other books in this series:*

*Book 1: "Through the Eyes of the Eagle"*

*Book 2: "Knees Lifted High"*

*Book 3: "Plate Full of Color"*



#### U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Division of Diabetes Translation  
Native Diabetes Wellness Program

Indian Health Service  
Division of Diabetes Treatment and Prevention

## GLOSSARY

**Diabetes** means that sugar in the blood, or glucose, is too high. There are two main types of diabetes: type 1 and type 2. You can learn more about diabetes on the internet sites listed below.

**Glucose** is another word for sugar. Glucose comes from the food we eat and also is made in our liver and muscles. Our blood always has some glucose in it because it is needed for energy. But too much glucose in the blood is not good for the body. If diabetes is not kept in balance, over time, high blood glucose can damage the heart, eyes, kidneys, and nerves.

**Healthy** means the condition of being sound in body, mind, and spirit.

*To learn more about diabetes, visit these internet sites:*

- National Diabetes Education Program [www.ndep.nih.gov](http://www.ndep.nih.gov) or call 1-800-438-5383.
- CDC Division of Diabetes Translation. <http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes>.
- Indian Health Service Division of Diabetes Treatment and Prevention [www.ihs.gov/medicalprograms/diabetes](http://www.ihs.gov/medicalprograms/diabetes), "Resources."

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATORS

Patrick Rolo, Bad River Band of Ojibwe, draws from his rich Native American heritage to co-illustrate the Eagle Books. Mr. Rolo's career includes newspaper, magazine, comic book, and court room illustrations. Also a painter, his works in oil hang in galleries in Minnesota and Washington.

Lisa A. Fifield, Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin, Black Bear Clan, uses time-honored Native American tales and beliefs as the inspiration for her work. Her color palette is unique, as she mixes paint to her own aesthetic. Ms. Fifield's art has been exhibited in numerous museums in the Western U.S.

Both illustrators live in Minnetonka, Minnesota.