

A Little Boy's Big Moment

The Indian Reading Series



THE INDIAN READING SERIES: Stories and Legends of the Northwest is a collection of authentic material cooperatively developed by Indian people from twelve reservations. Development activities are guided by a Policy Board which represents the Indian community of the Pacific Northwest. The Pacific Northwest Indian Reading and Language Development Program Policy Board members are:

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THE INDIAN READING SERIES:
Stories and Legends of the Northwest

A Little Boy's Big Moment

Level I Book 18

Developed by the Blackfeet Indians

Written by Joan Kennerly, Carmen Marceau, Doris Old Person, June Tatsey

Illustrated by Melvin Tailfeathers

**Joseph Coburn, Director
Pacific Northwest Indian Program
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory**

Developed by the Pacific Northwest Indian Reading and Language Development Program
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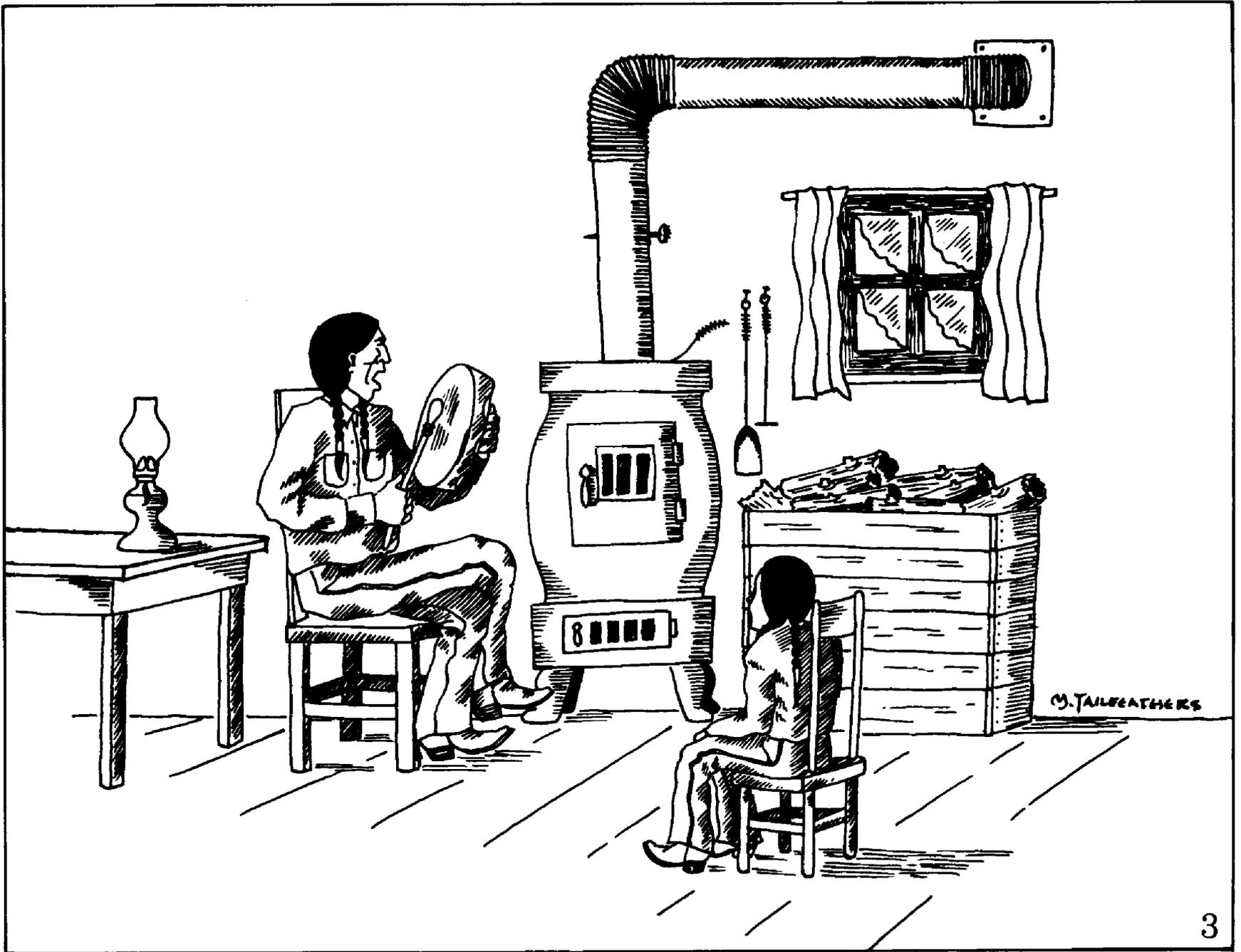
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***A Little Boy's Big Moment* is a story about a small Blackfeet Indian boy's first dance. It is traditional with our Blackfeet Indian people to have a giveaway ceremony to honor someone for something special. When a child or person makes their first public appearance as a dancer, this ceremony is done to honor the person. The person will then be recognized as a dancer in our Blackfeet Indian society. This ceremony is still carried out to a great degree among the traditional Blackfeet Indian people.**

One cold, winter evening Young Rabbit's father
was sitting by the wood stove.
He was singing a fast, grass dance song.
The little boy thought,
"This song makes me want to dance."



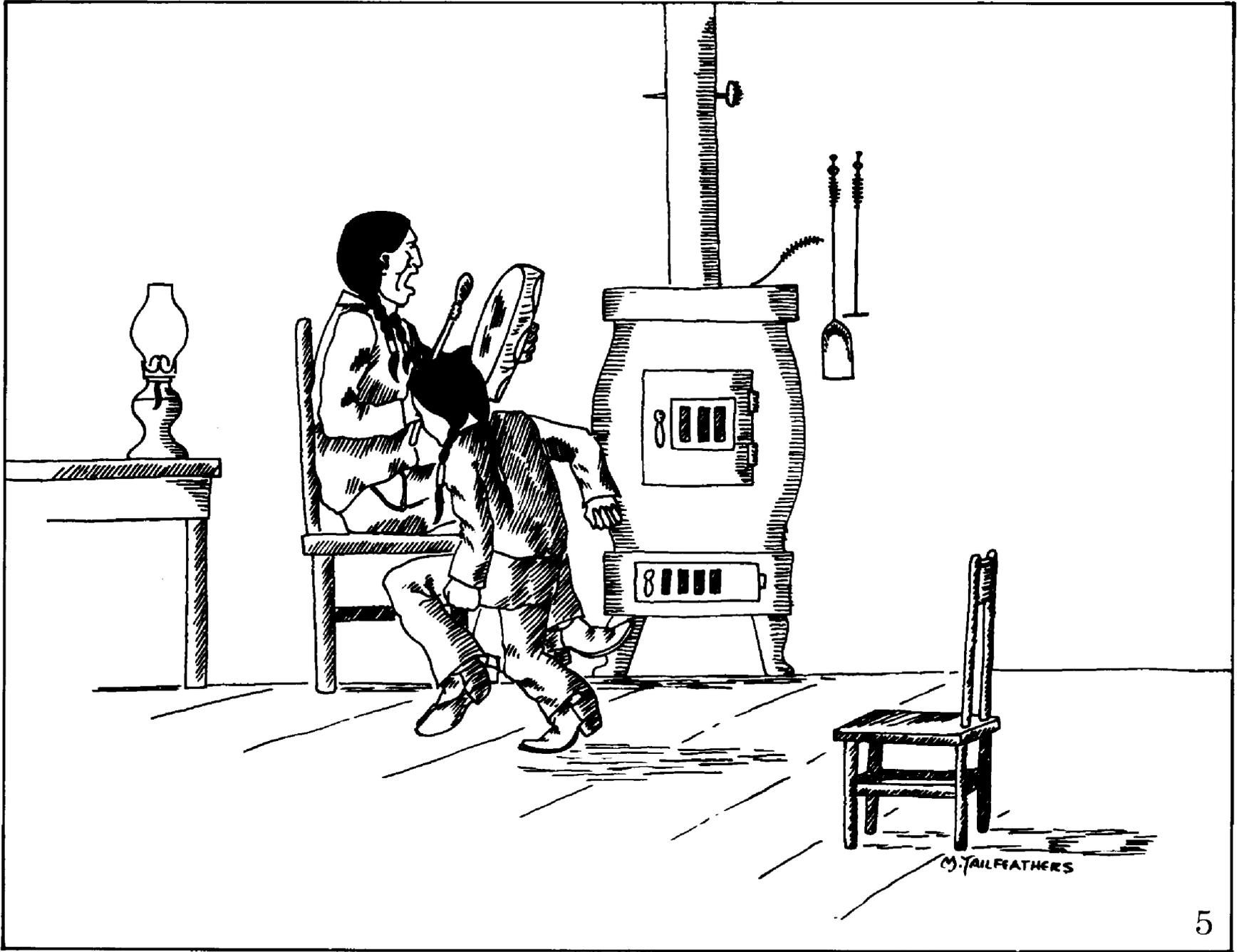
Young Rabbit began slowly tapping his foot
to the beat of the drum.

He then got up and began to dance very fast.

At the end of the song, the father said to his son,
“Young Rabbit, do you like to dance?”

“Yes, Father, it makes me feel good,” said Young Rabbit.

“Teach me how to do fancy steps.”

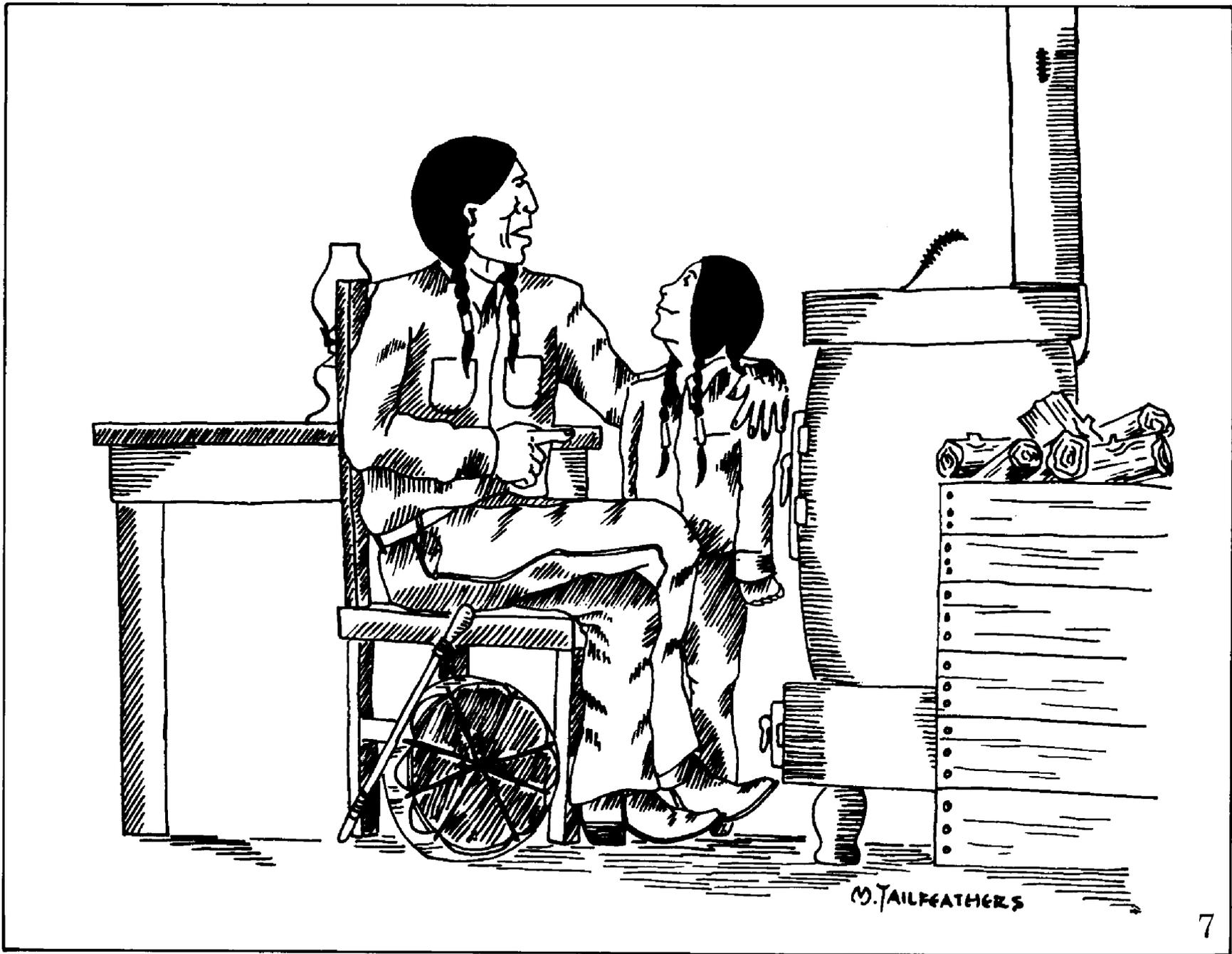


“Young Rabbit,” said his father, “at the big dance this year we will have a giveaway in honor of the first time you dance at a celebration.

We will give away many fine presents — some blankets, Indian crafts and some fine horses.”

The son listened to his father and felt very proud of this honor.

How grown up he felt!



Young Rabbit's mother and father began making a good,
fancy dance outfit.

Just the right colored feathers were chosen.

A fine porcupine headdress was made.

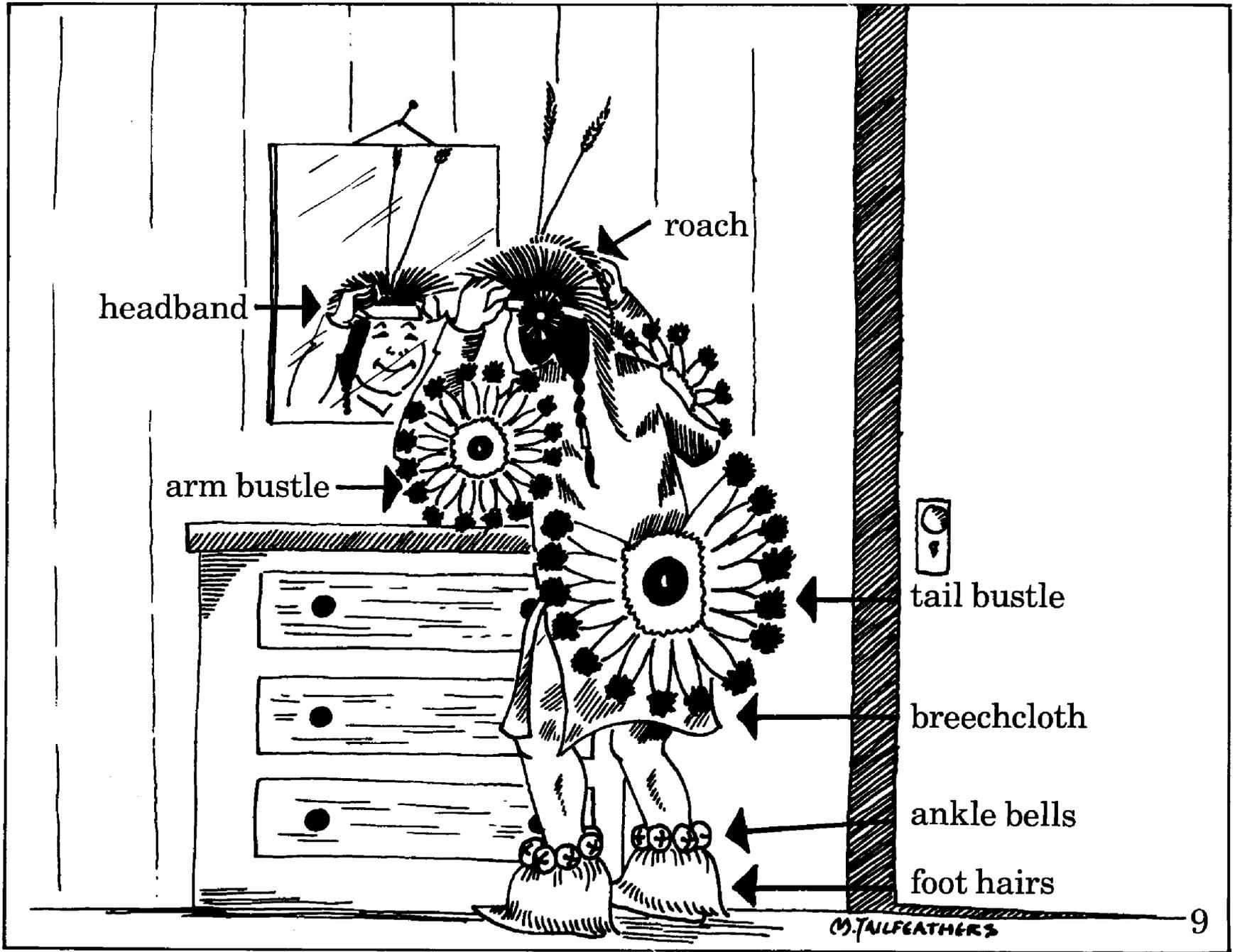
Bells were strung on rawhide.

After several months of work,

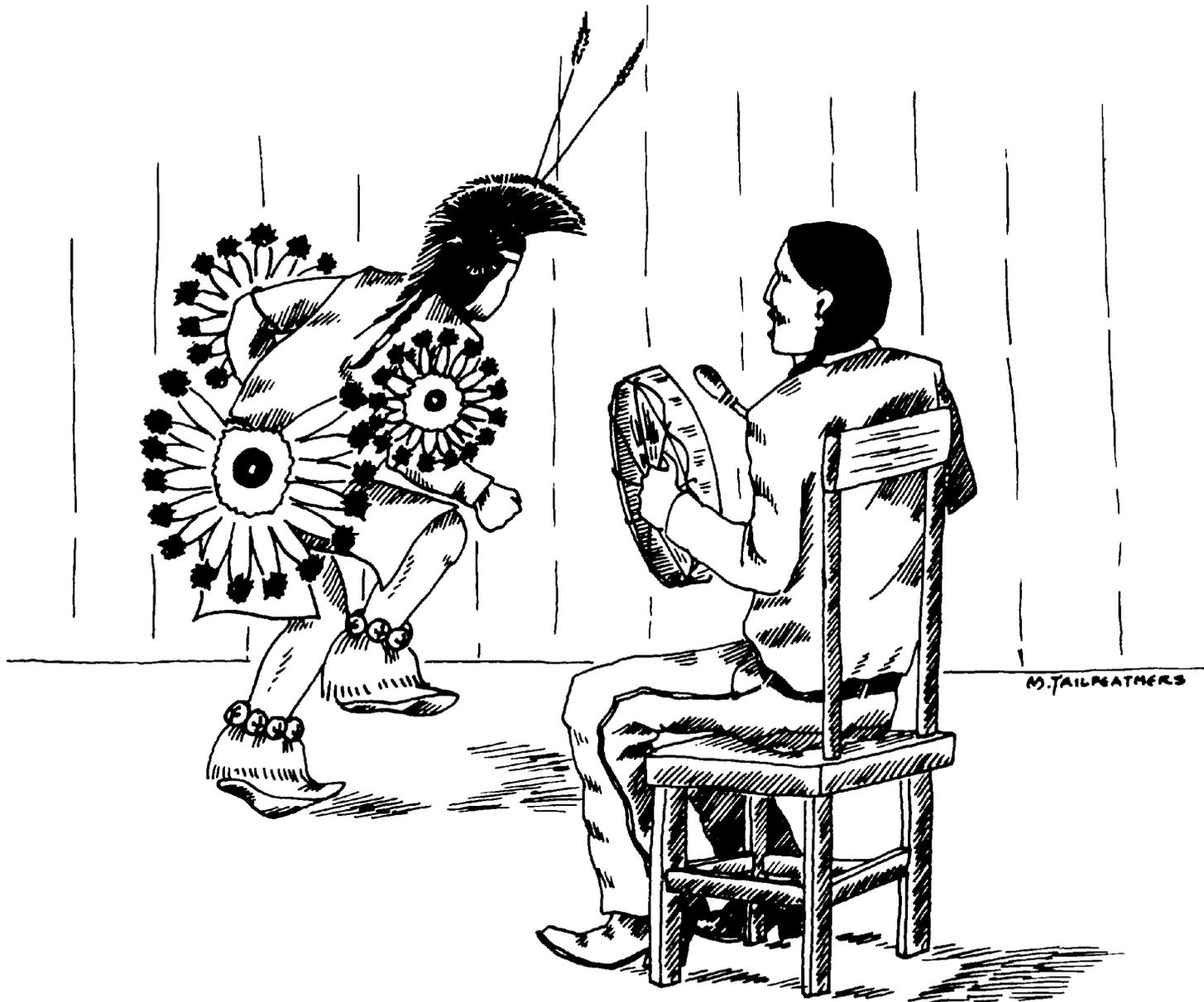
Young Rabbit tried on his outfit.

He felt great pride.

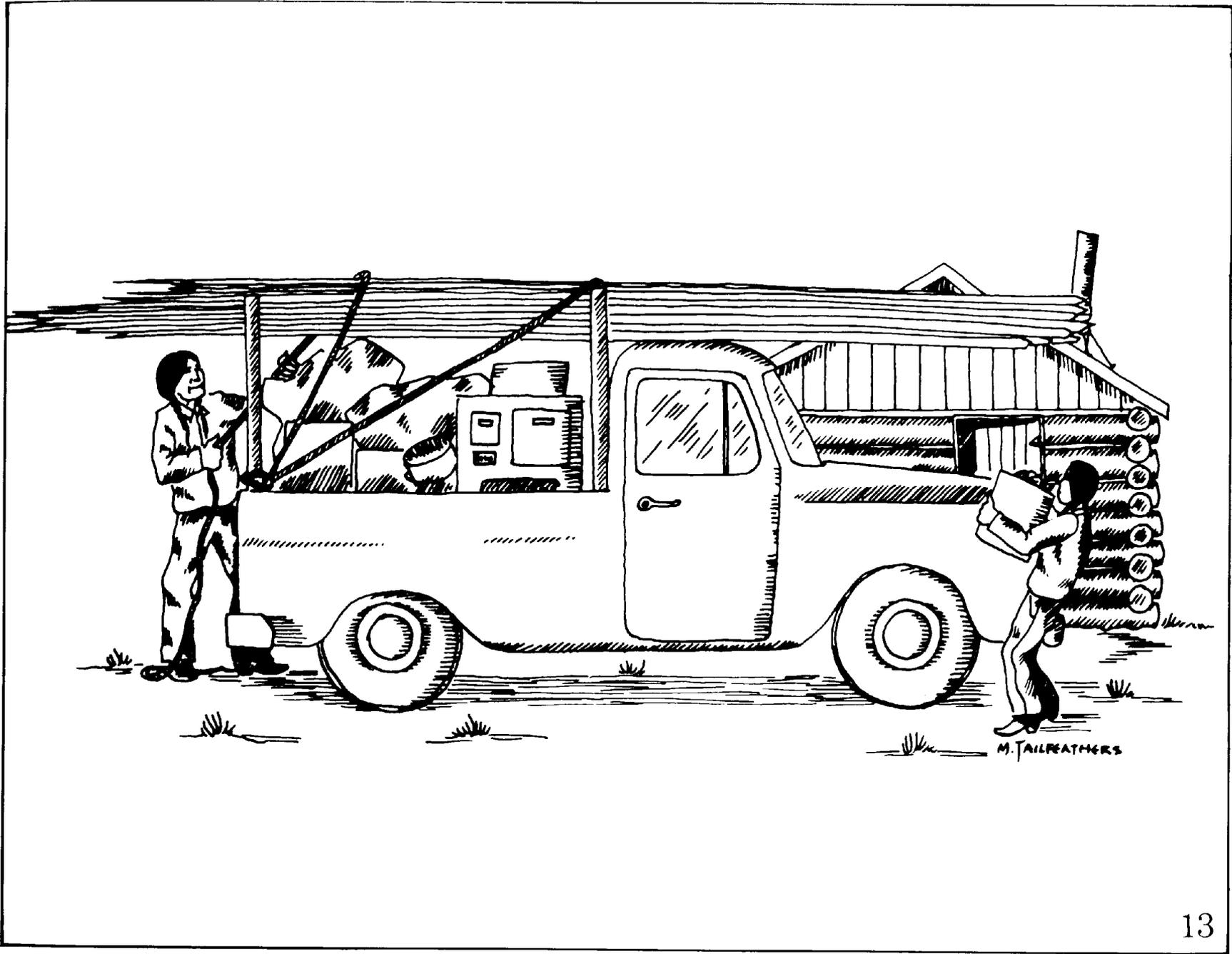
"I feel like a great Blackfeet brave," he said.



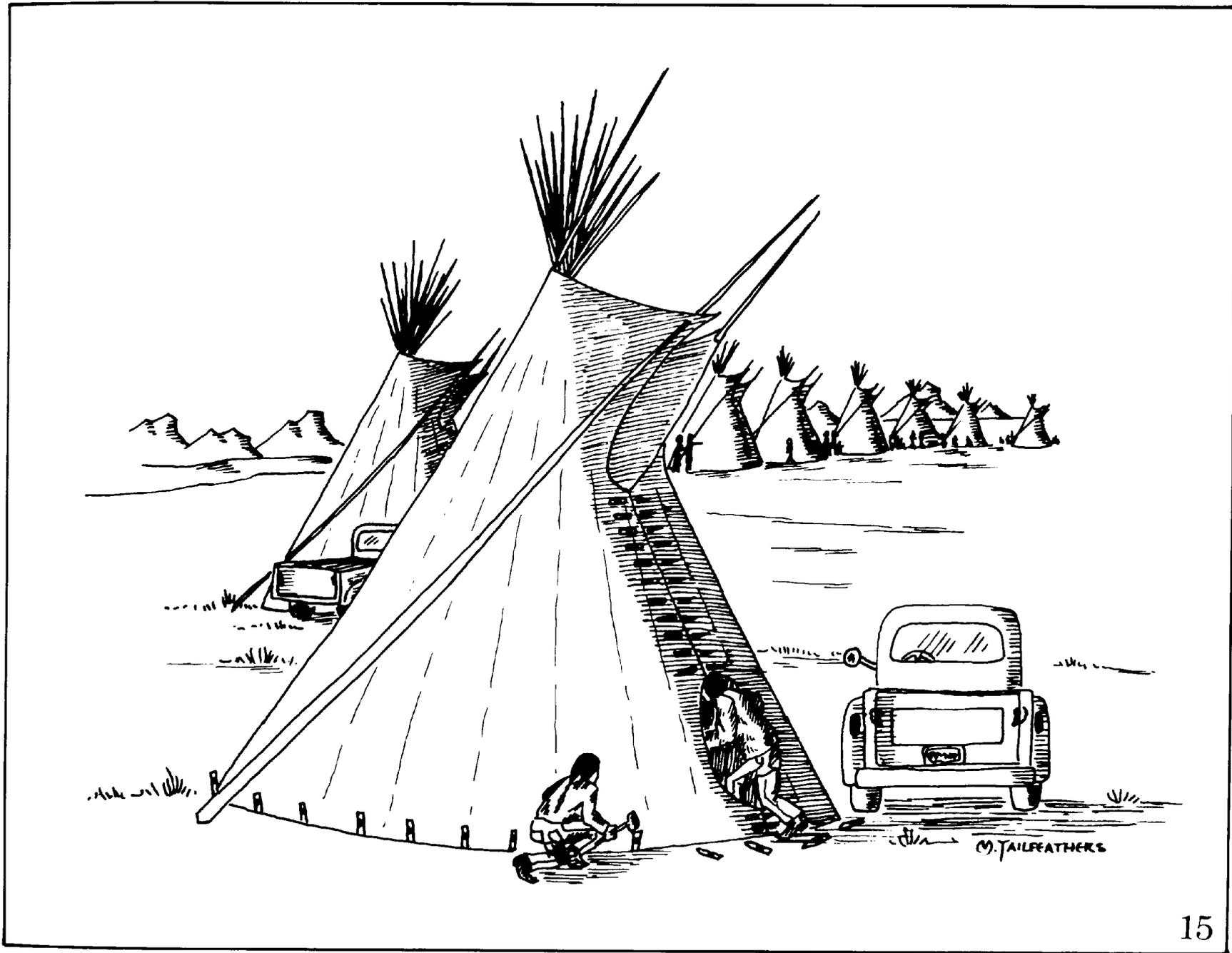
Many evenings Young Rabbit danced his new steps.
His mother bought many blankets.
She made some star quilts and put them away
for the big dance.
His father broke many horses for the giveaway.



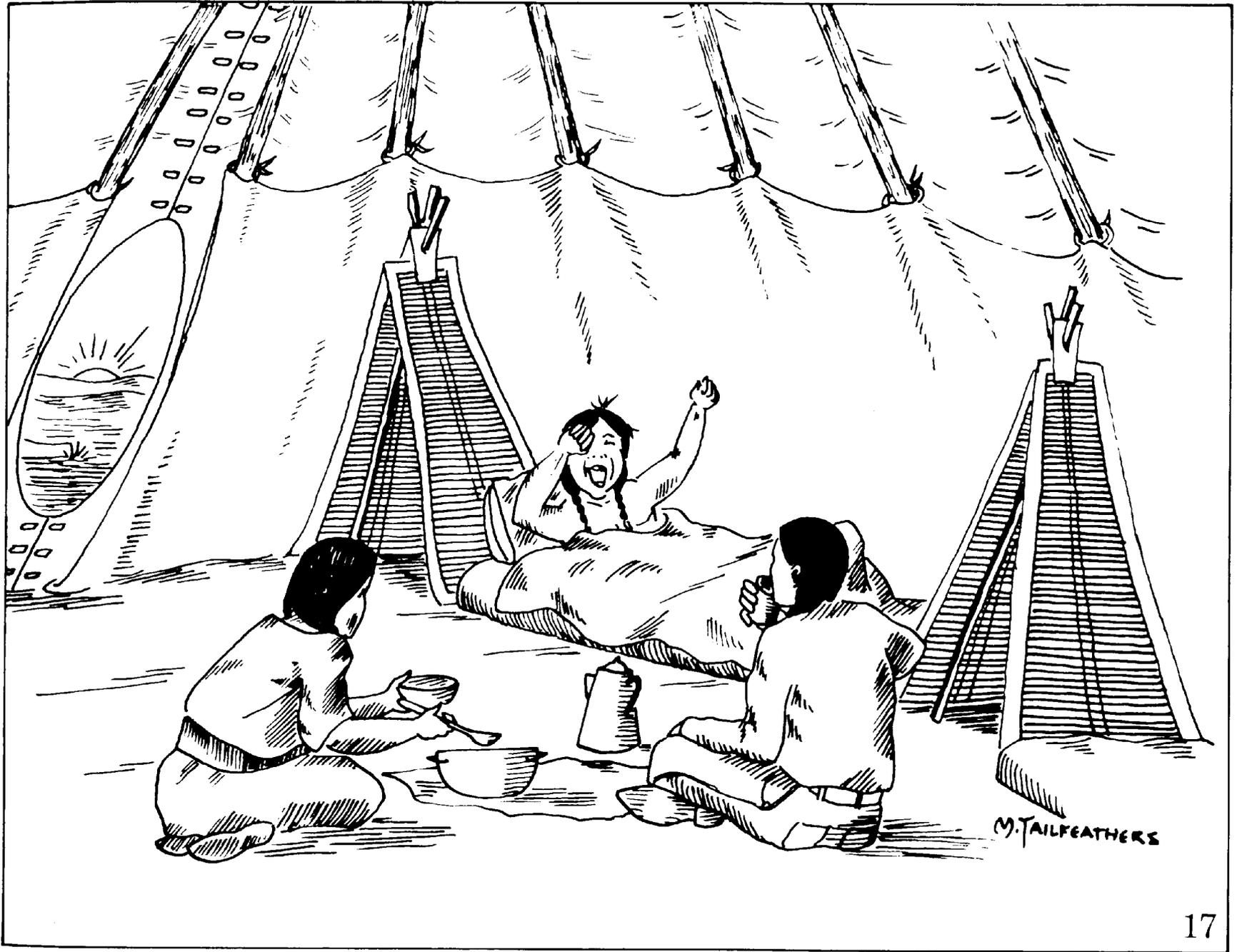
Young Rabbit became more excited as each day passed.
Finally the big day came!
Everyone was ready to move to the Indian Day campgrounds.



At the campgrounds, the tepee was pitched
among the other tepees in a big circle.
Everyone was happy to be together again
after a long, cold winter.



After two days had passed,
it was time for Young Rabbit's big moment.



Young Rabbit's mother and father brought all the blankets,
moccasins and beadwork to the ring.
Young Rabbit stood proudly beside them.



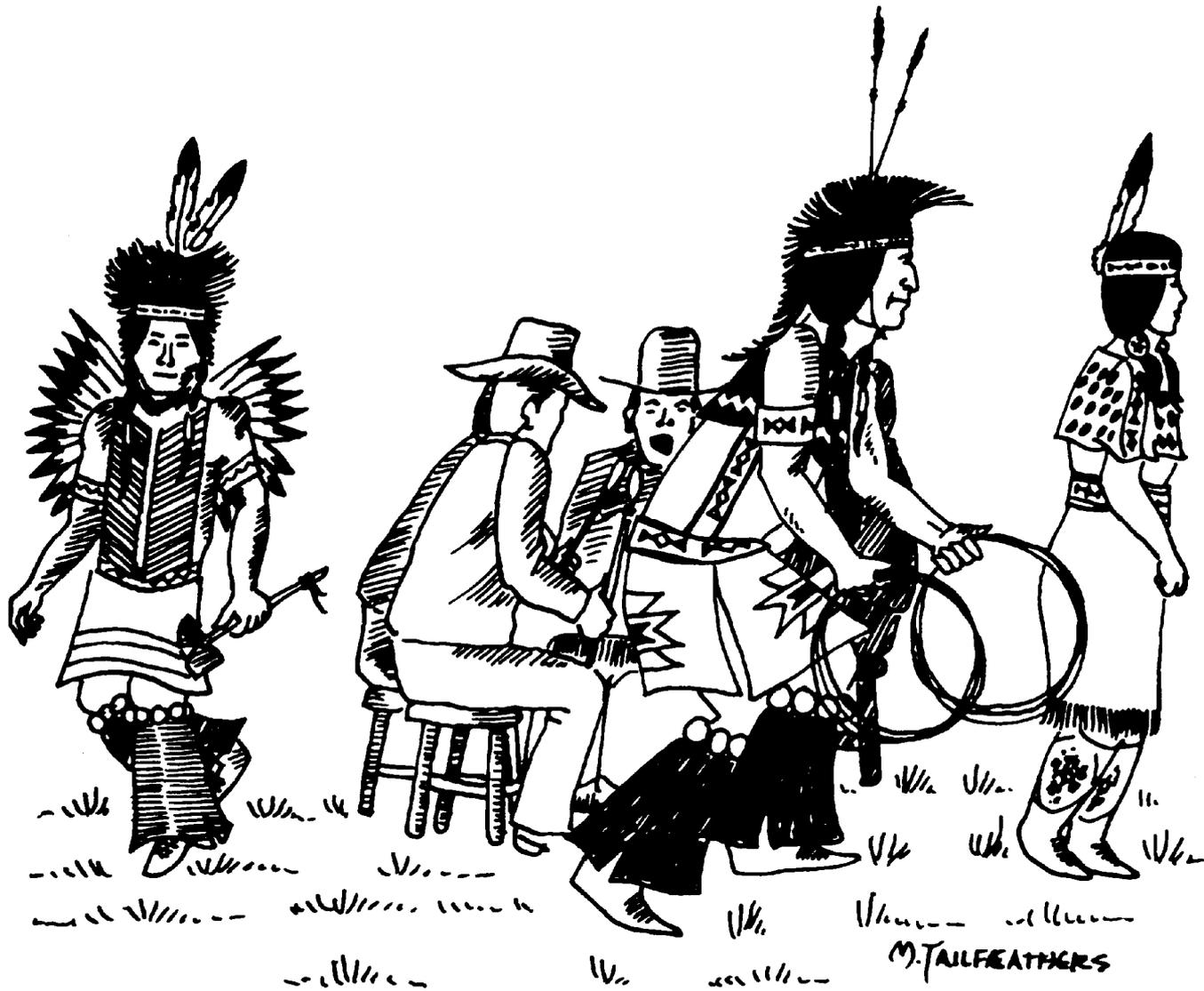
Each drum sounded loud and clear as the drummers sang
the grass dance songs.

What nice Indian costumes the dancers had!

The bells tinkled happily and the feathers swayed
as the dancers moved.

The people laughed and joked.

They were very happy.

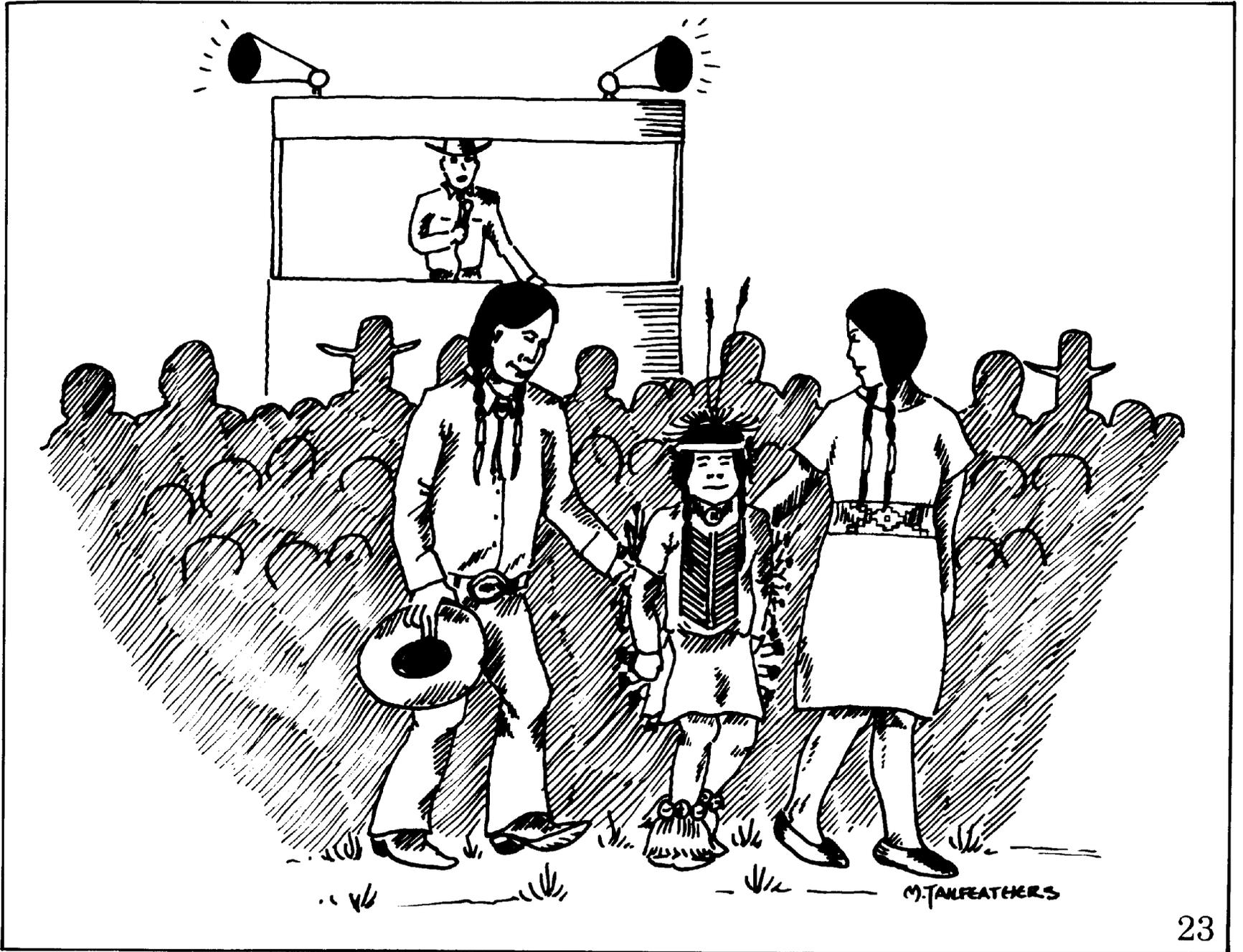


Suddenly the announcer said,

“The family of Young Rabbit will now have
an honor dance.

This will be the first time Young Rabbit will dance
at a big celebration.”

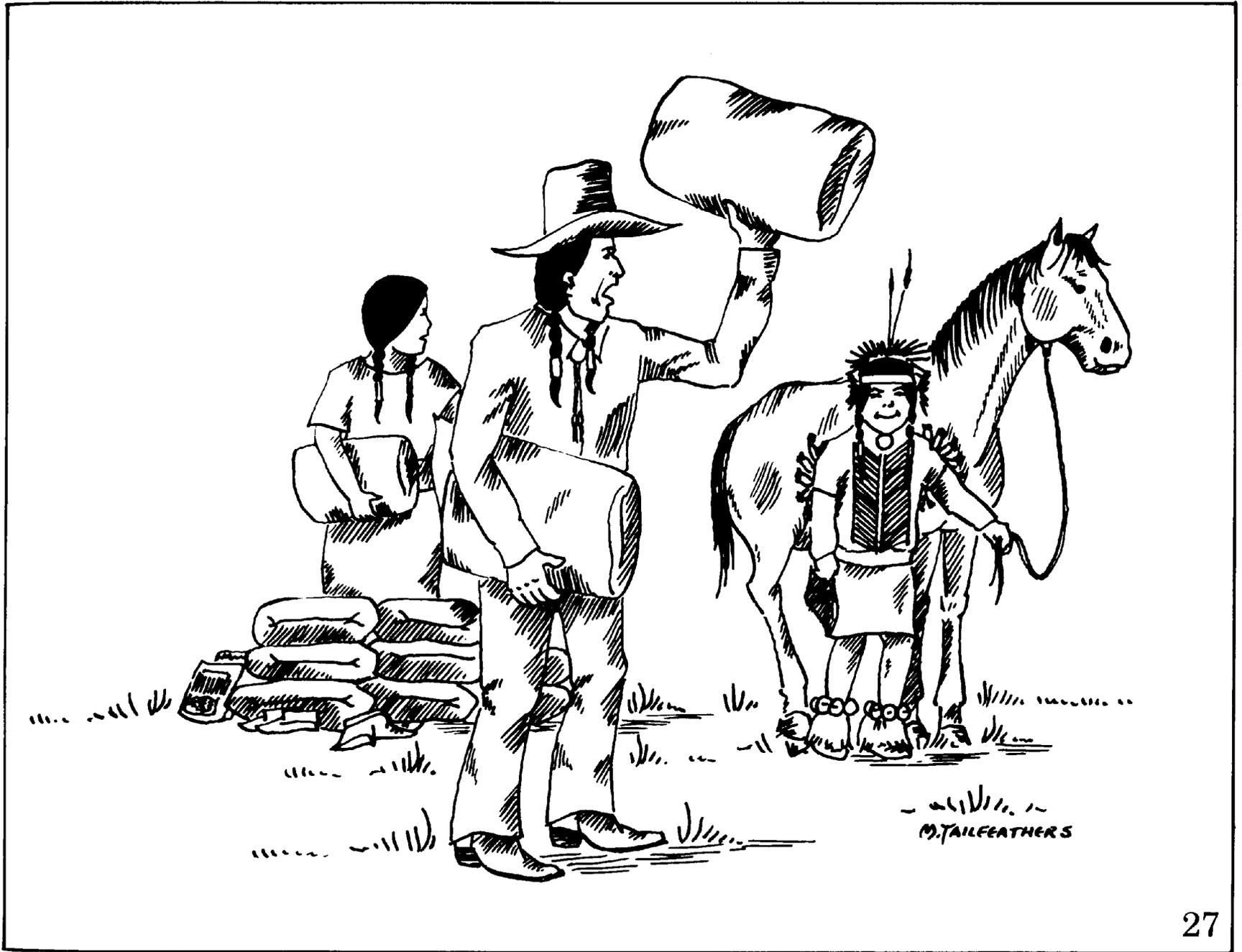
Young Rabbit’s heart pounded as his father and mother
walked with him to the center of the ring.



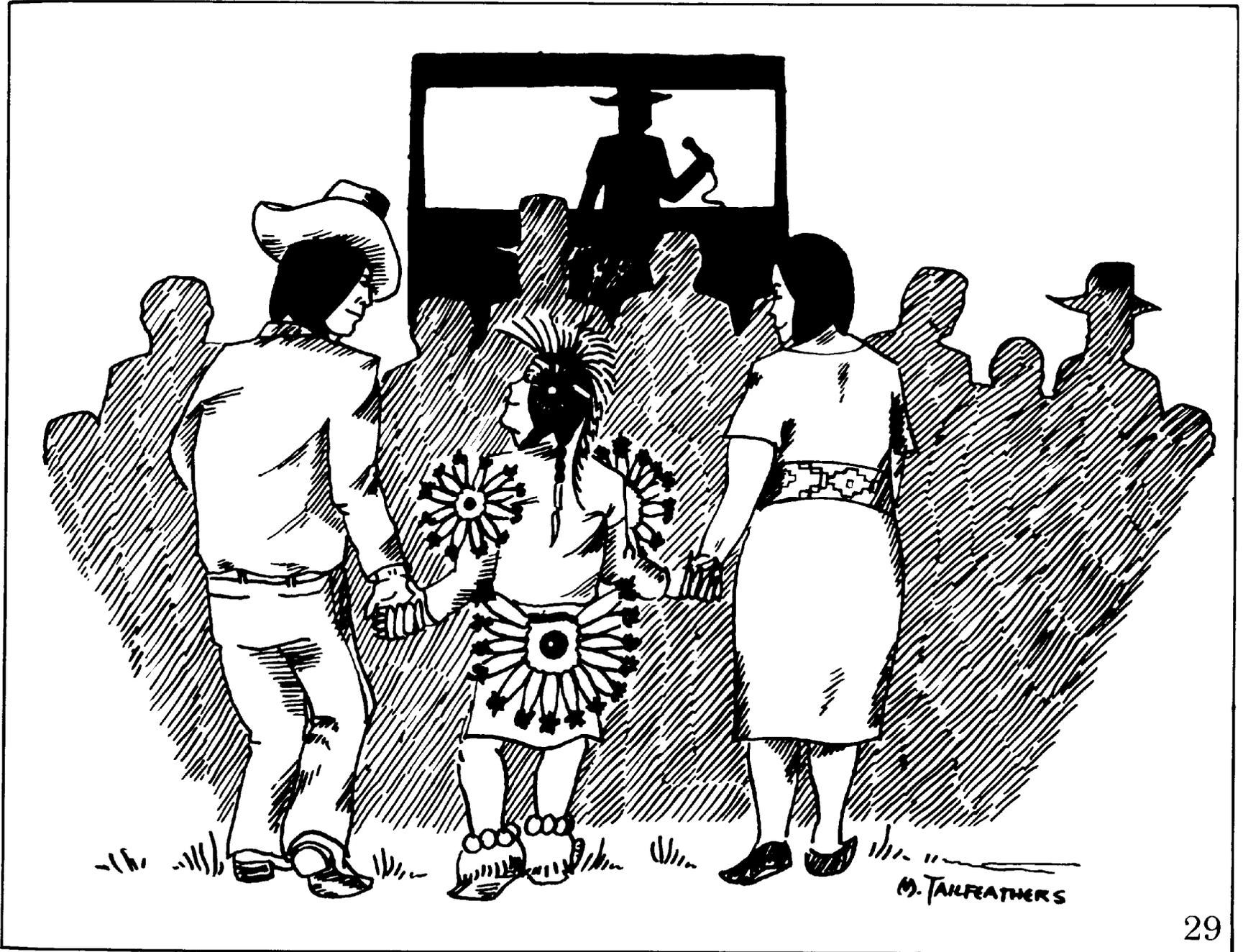
Young Rabbit danced proudly as he led the line.
His mother and father followed behind him.
Many relatives and friends joined in the dance.
The drumbeat seemed to say to Young Rabbit,
 “How proud we are of you!
You are a strong, wonderful Indian boy.
Someday you will lead our tribe to great honors.”



Then the drums stopped.
Young Rabbit's father and mother began the giveaway.
He thought, "How very lucky I am to be a Blackfeet Indian!
I'm so very proud.
And to think my ancestors have roamed this very land!"



When the giveaway was over,
the family left the center of the dance ring.
They were overjoyed to think that the Great Spirit
had helped them obtain enough to give to others
in honor of their son.
They felt great satisfaction to know this task had
been achieved.



M. TALKFEATHERS

Young Rabbit was now recognized as one of the dancers.

When the drums began to beat

and the dancers started to dance,

Young Rabbit joined in.

The drums seemed to say, "Young Rabbit dances so proudly.

Young Rabbit dances so lightly.

Young Rabbit is truly a great Indian dancer."



Young Rabbit danced for many hours.
He became, oh, so very tired.
His eyes wanted to close.
His legs would not move as fast as the drum beat.
Even his headdress seemed tired.
It hung slightly to one side.

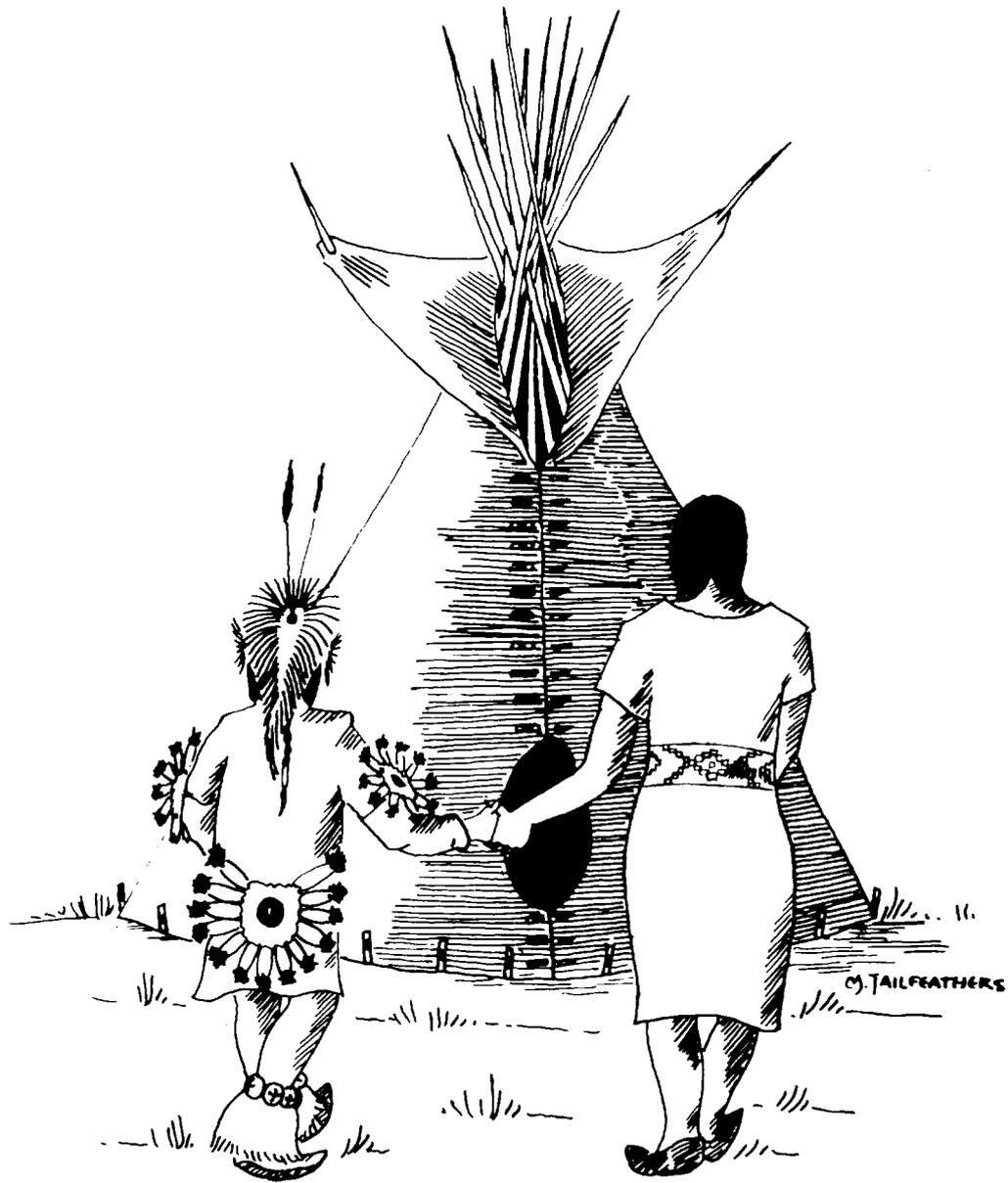


Young Rabbit's mother looked at the tired, little boy
and smiled.

She took his hand in hers.

They walked slowly toward the tepee.

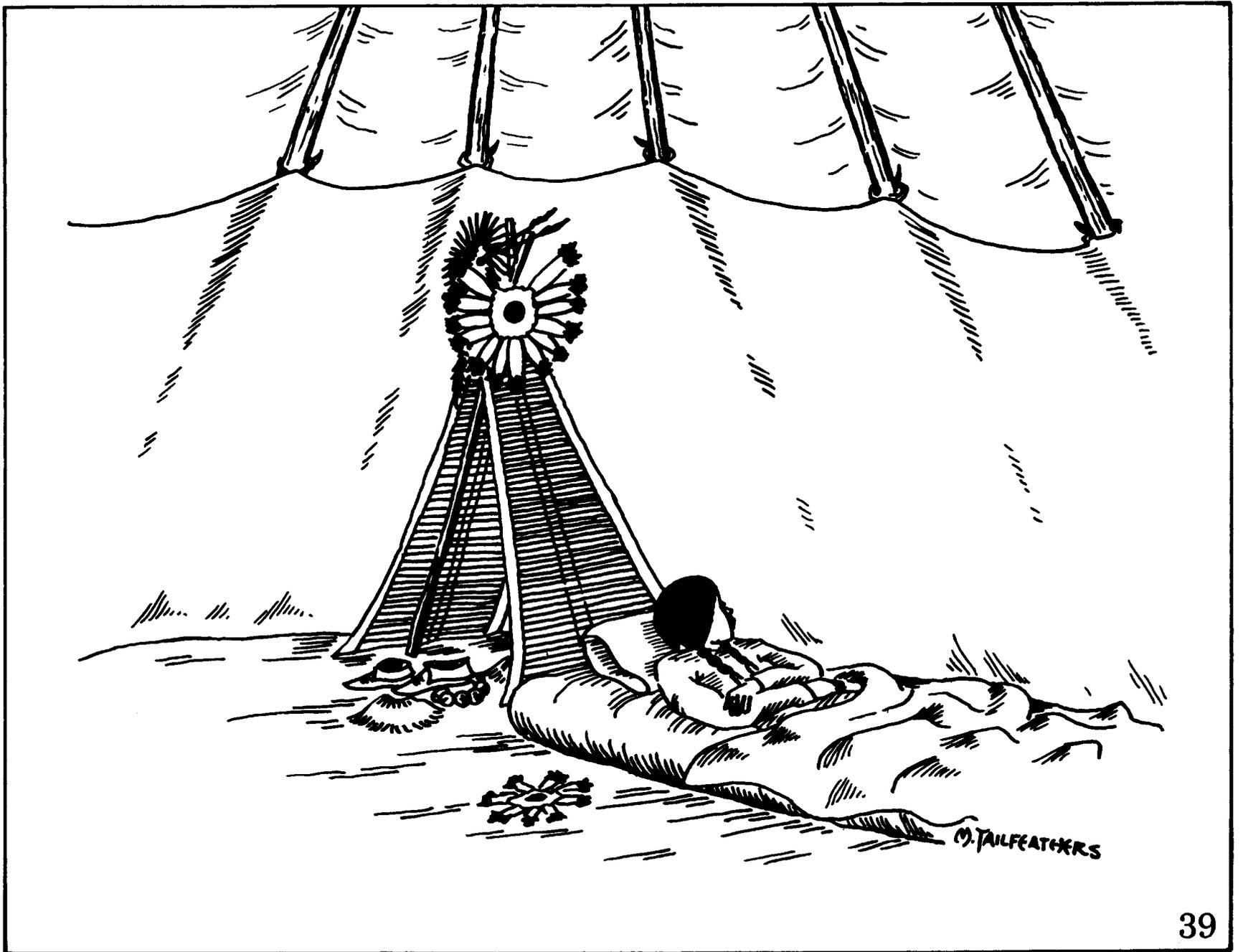
Although very tired, Young Rabbit had completed
a great event.



Young Rabbit's mother cooked a meal of boiled meat,
berry soup and fried bread.



After Young Rabbit had eaten, he fell into a deep,
happy sleep inside the comfortable tepee.
The next morning a happy family left for home.





JOAN BULLSHOE KENNERLY

Mrs. Kennerly is a member of the Blackfoot Tribe and has fifteen years of teaching experience in the Blackfoot and Northern Cheyenne public school systems. She was the first runnerup for the 1972 Montana Teacher of the Year. She received her B.A. in education at Northern Montana College and her M.A. in education at Arizona State University. She has served as an elementary school principal and is presently teaching.



JUNE BULLSHOE TATSEY

Mrs. Tatsey is a Blackfoot Indian with twelve years experience in teaching grades one through eight and pre-school in the public school system on the Blackfoot Reservation. She received her B.S. in education from Northern Montana College and her M.E. in guidance and counseling from the University of South Dakota and the University of Montana. She is reading supervisor in Browning on the Blackfoot Reservation.



CARMEN BULLSHOE MARCEAU

Mrs. Marceau is a Blackfoot Indian with thirteen years teaching experience. She has had one year experience in guidance and counseling on the Blackfoot Reservation. She received her B.S. in education from Northern Montana College and her M.E. in guidance and counseling from the University of South Dakota and the University of Montana. She is presently the principal of Vina Chattin School in Browning, Montana.



DORIS BULLSHOE OLD PERSON

Mrs. Old Person is a member of the Blackfoot Tribe and has fourteen years experience teaching in the Blackfoot Public School System. She has specialized in reading and has been Head Start Director-Supervisor for ESEA Title I and Director of the Native American Song and Dance Program. She received her B.A. from Northern Montana College and her M.A. in education from Arizona State University. Her interests are in Indian culture and developing the talents of Indian children. She is the mother of five children.

Mrs. Kennerly, Mrs. Tatsey, Mrs. Marceau, and Mrs. Old Person are the daughters of Lillian and Francis Bullshoe. They were raised on a ranch near Badger Creek in the Blackfoot Reservation countryside.

All four women had similar educational backgrounds. They attended a one room rural school, the Blackfoot Indian Boarding School, and all but Mrs. Tatsey attended Flaudreau Indian School in South Dakota. They all graduated from Browning High School. At the present time, the four women are teaching in the Blackfoot Public School System in Browning, Montana.



MELVIN TAILFEATHERS

Mr. Tailfeathers is a self-taught artist who has lived on the Blackfoot Reservation all his life. His grandmother was a Blackfoot medicine woman. Mr. Tailfeathers prefers to do pen and ink sketches of Blackfoot life although he sometimes works with ceramic figurines.

Booklets available in the Level I sequence are listed below. Numbers refer to the planned sequence of use as outlined in the *Teacher's Manual*. Materials developed by these tribes and others in the Northwest will appear in the Levels II and III sequence.

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