

Plate Full of Color

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.

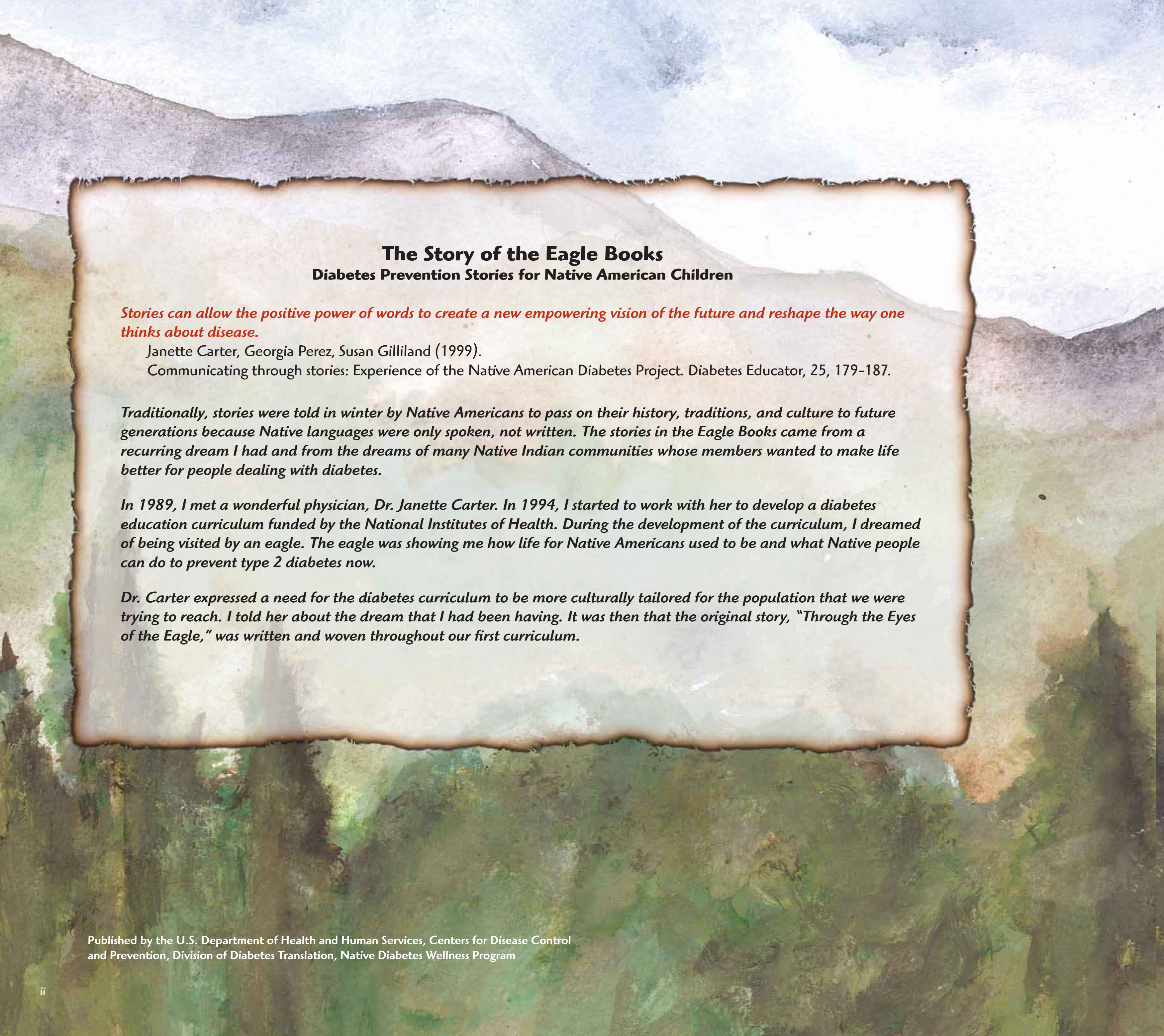
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The Story of the Eagle Books

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.

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 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.

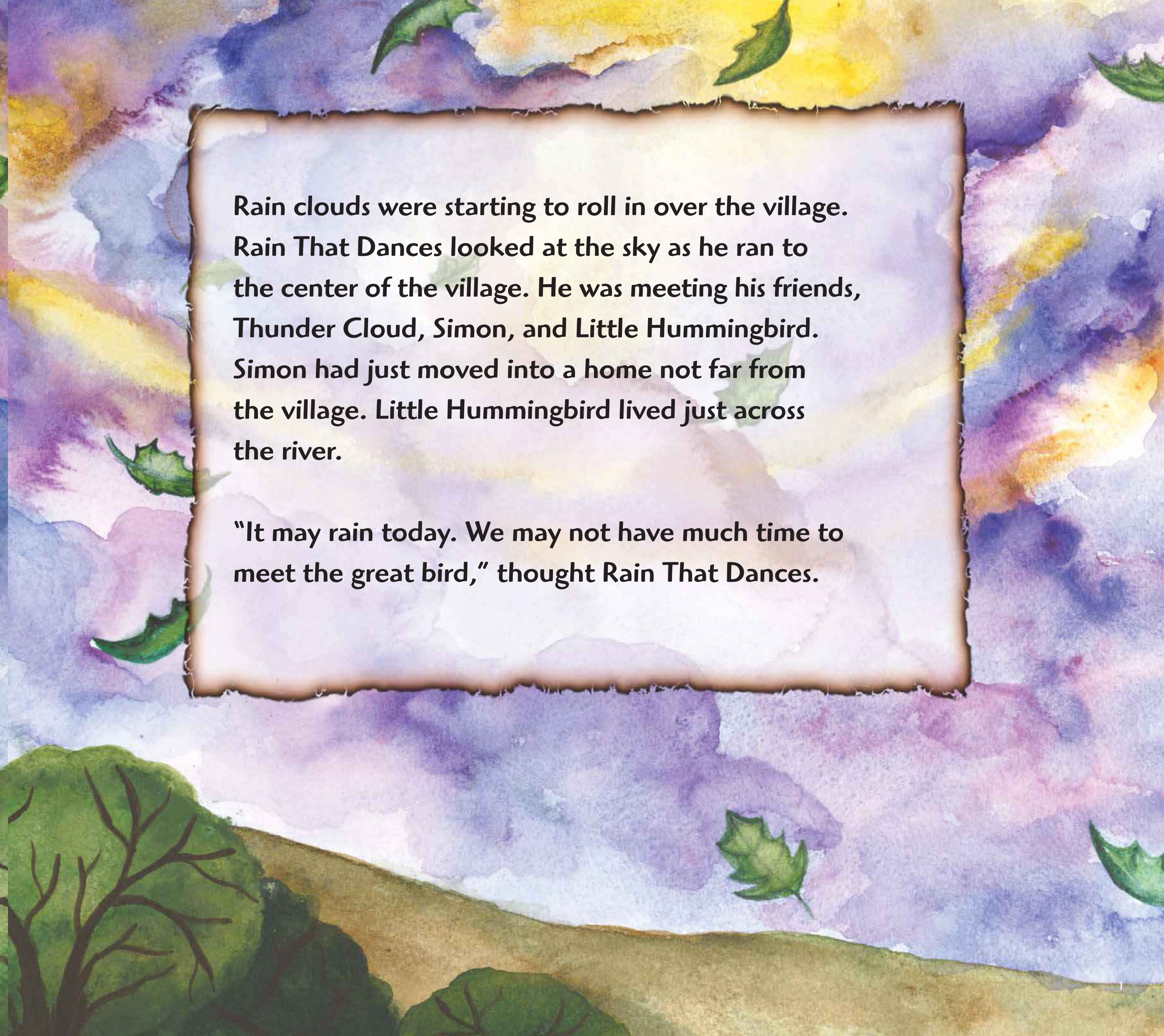
The partnerships have expanded even more broadly to include book illustrators Patrick Rolo and Lisa A. Fifield, Native Americans from Minnetonka, Minnesota; Westat, in Atlanta, Georgia; the Indian Health Service, Division of Diabetes Treatment and Prevention, based in Albuquerque, New Mexico; and the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

"Plate Full of Color," the third story in the four-story set, follows "Through the Eyes of the Eagle" and "Knees Lifted High." This story tells children about Mother Earth's gift of colorful, tasty vegetables for healthy eating.

-Georgia Perez







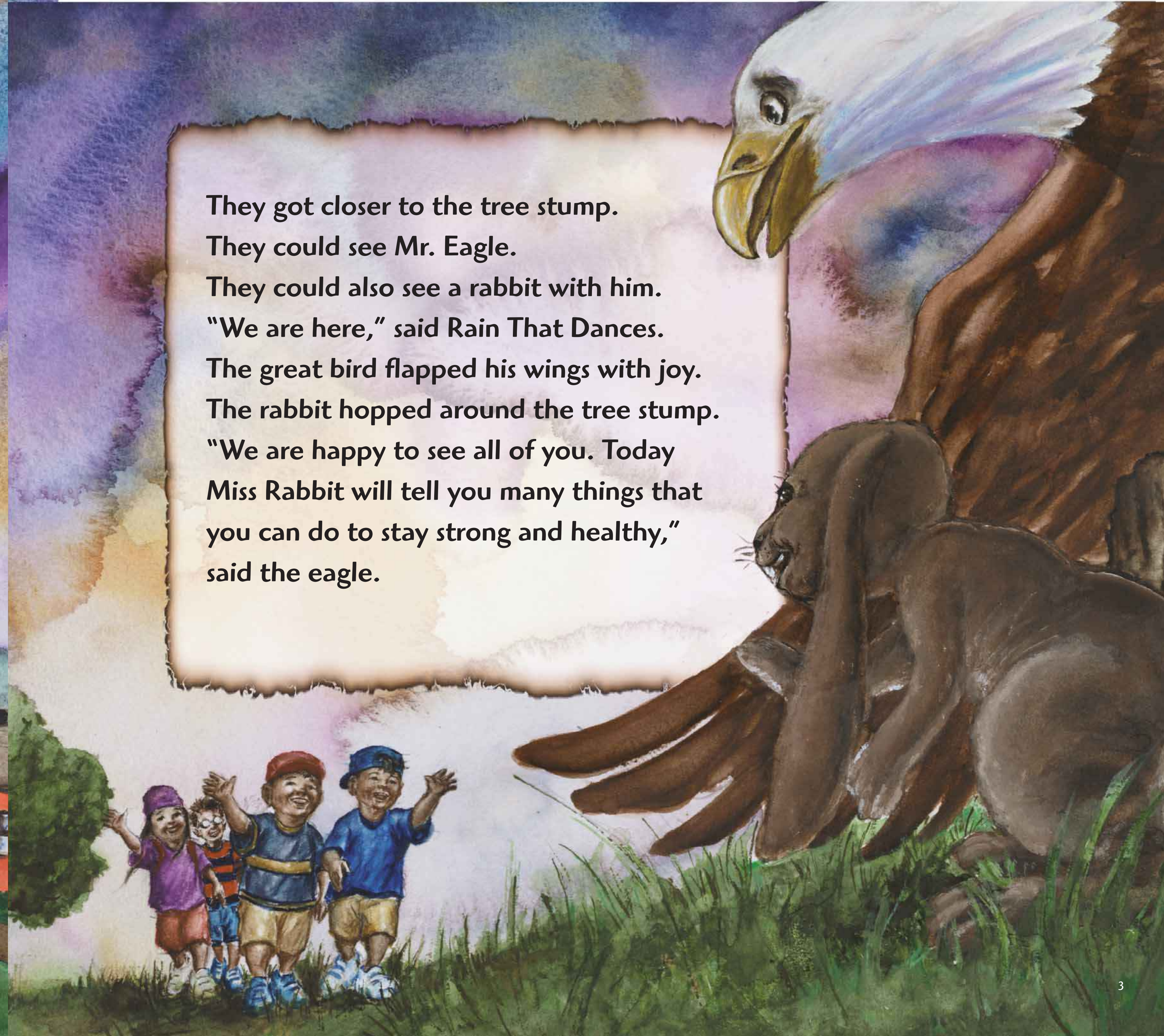
Rain clouds were starting to roll in over the village. Rain That Dances looked at the sky as he ran to the center of the village. He was meeting his friends, Thunder Cloud, Simon, and Little Hummingbird. Simon had just moved into a home not far from the village. Little Hummingbird lived just across the river.

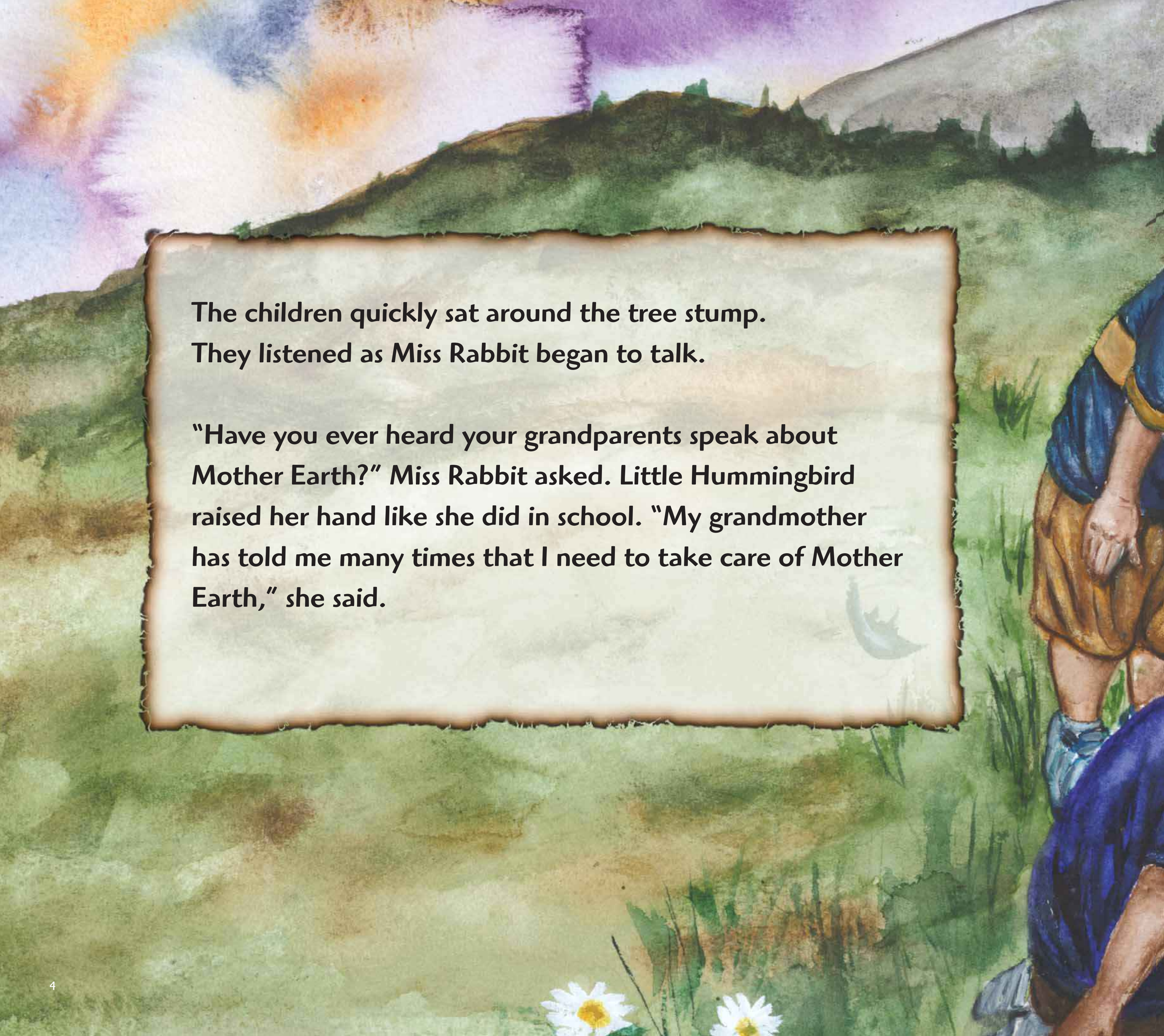
"It may rain today. We may not have much time to meet the great bird," thought Rain That Dances.

"Hi," yelled Rain That Dances as he saw his friends. "We better hurry before the rain starts," he said. Simon and Little Hummingbird ran behind their friends. "I cannot wait to meet Mr. Eagle," said Little Hummingbird. "Me, too," said Simon.



They got closer to the tree stump.
They could see Mr. Eagle.
They could also see a rabbit with him.
"We are here," said Rain That Dances.
The great bird flapped his wings with joy.
The rabbit hopped around the tree stump.
"We are happy to see all of you. Today
Miss Rabbit will tell you many things that
you can do to stay strong and healthy,"
said the eagle.

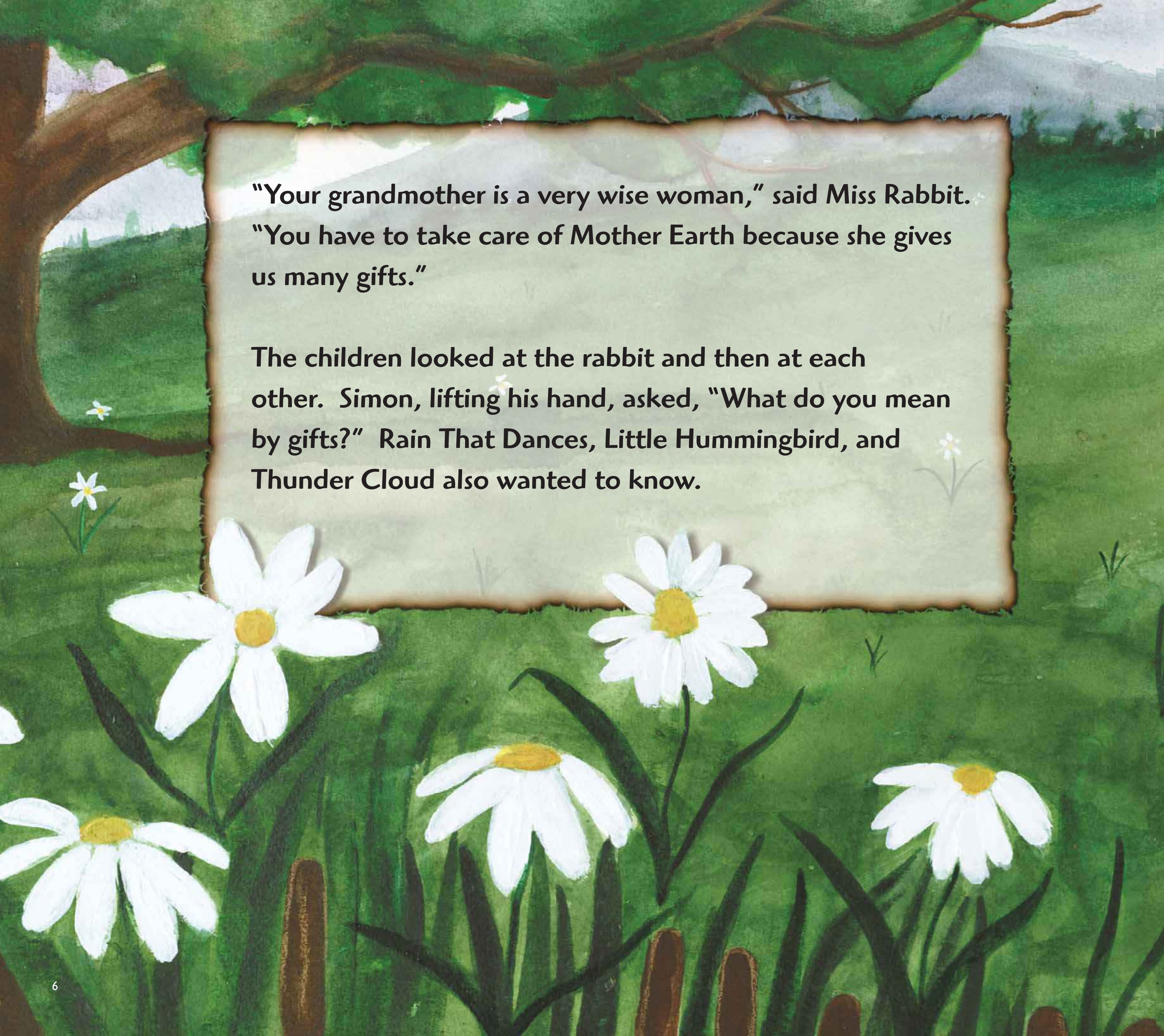




The children quickly sat around the tree stump.
They listened as Miss Rabbit began to talk.

“Have you ever heard your grandparents speak about Mother Earth?” Miss Rabbit asked. Little Hummingbird raised her hand like she did in school. “My grandmother has told me many times that I need to take care of Mother Earth,” she said.

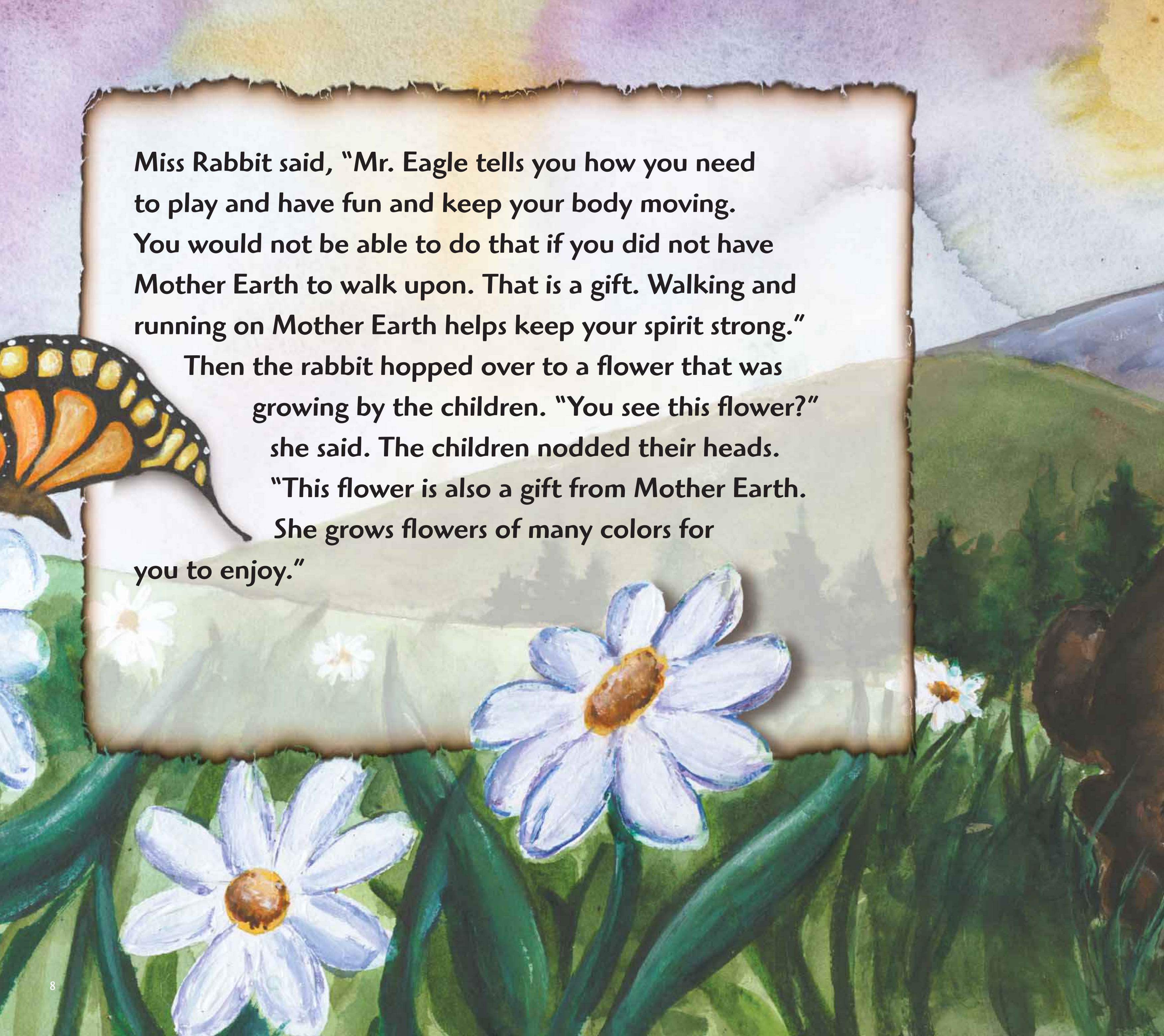


The background is a lush green forest scene. On the left, a large tree trunk is visible. The ground is covered in green grass and several white daisies with yellow centers. In the foreground, there are several large daisies. A parchment scroll with a torn edge is placed in the center of the scene, containing text. The text is written in a simple, black, sans-serif font. The overall style is that of a children's book illustration.

"Your grandmother is a very wise woman," said Miss Rabbit.
"You have to take care of Mother Earth because she gives
us many gifts."

The children looked at the rabbit and then at each
other. Simon, lifting his hand, asked, "What do you mean
by gifts?" Rain That Dances, Little Hummingbird, and
Thunder Cloud also wanted to know.





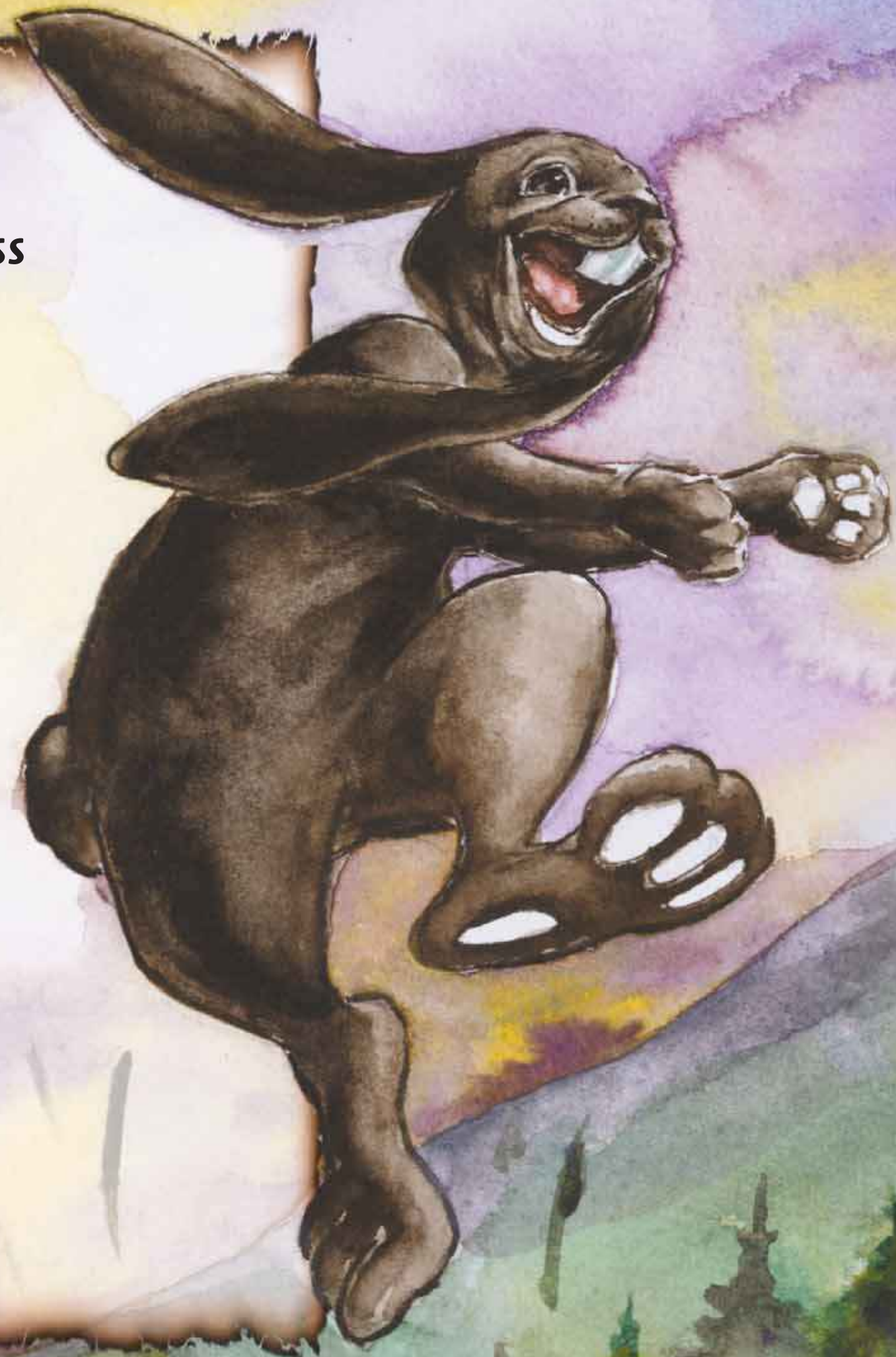
Miss Rabbit said, "Mr. Eagle tells you how you need to play and have fun and keep your body moving. You would not be able to do that if you did not have Mother Earth to walk upon. That is a gift. Walking and running on Mother Earth helps keep your spirit strong."

Then the rabbit hopped over to a flower that was growing by the children. "You see this flower?" she said. The children nodded their heads. "This flower is also a gift from Mother Earth. She grows flowers of many colors for you to enjoy."

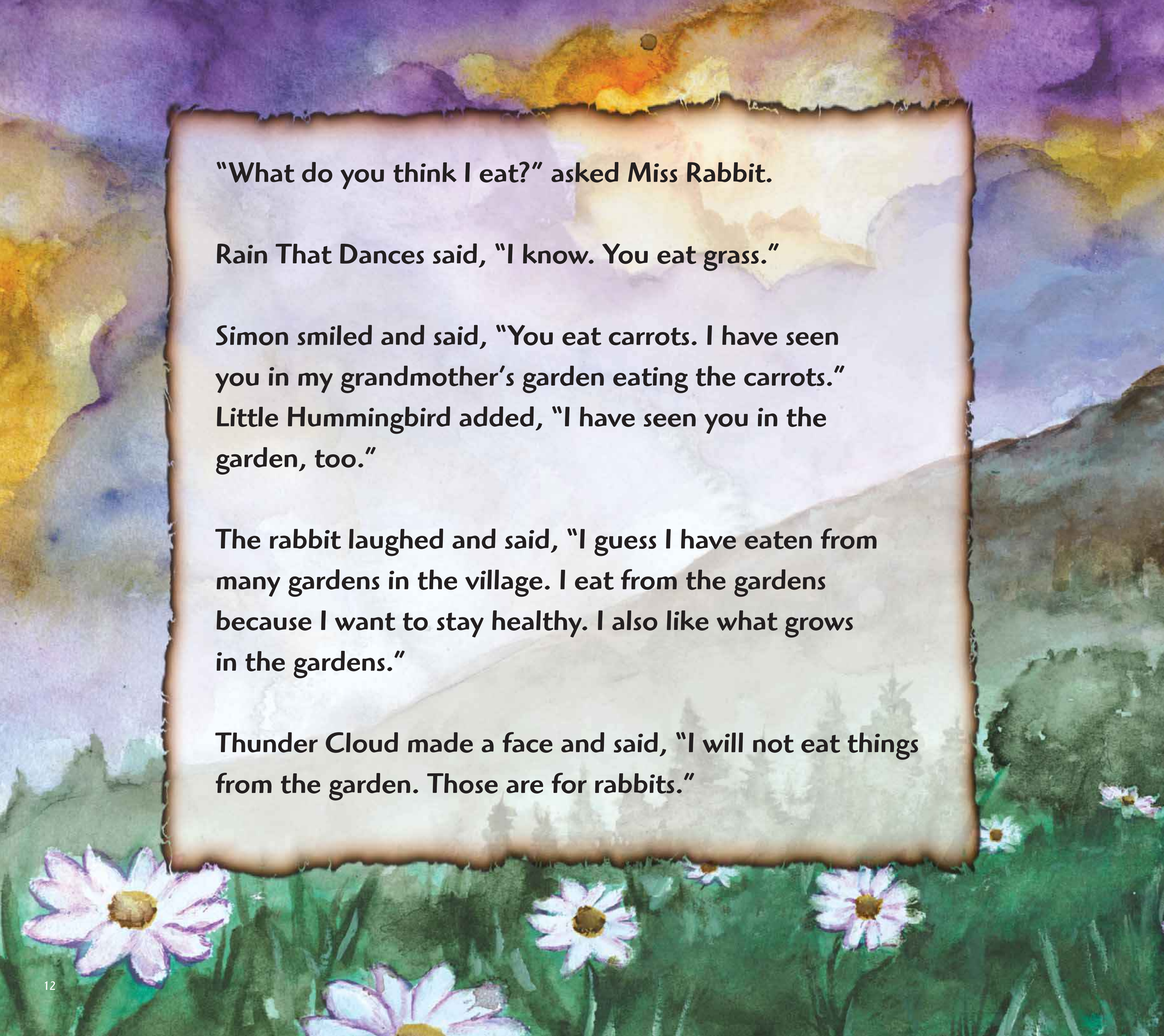


"What else does she give you?" Miss Rabbit asked. The children looked around and saw the trees and the grass. "I guess she gives us things that grow," said Rain That Dances.

The rabbit jumped and said, "You are right, Rain That Dances. She also gives us food to eat and water that helps the food to grow. I want to tell you about these foods now."







"What do you think I eat?" asked Miss Rabbit.

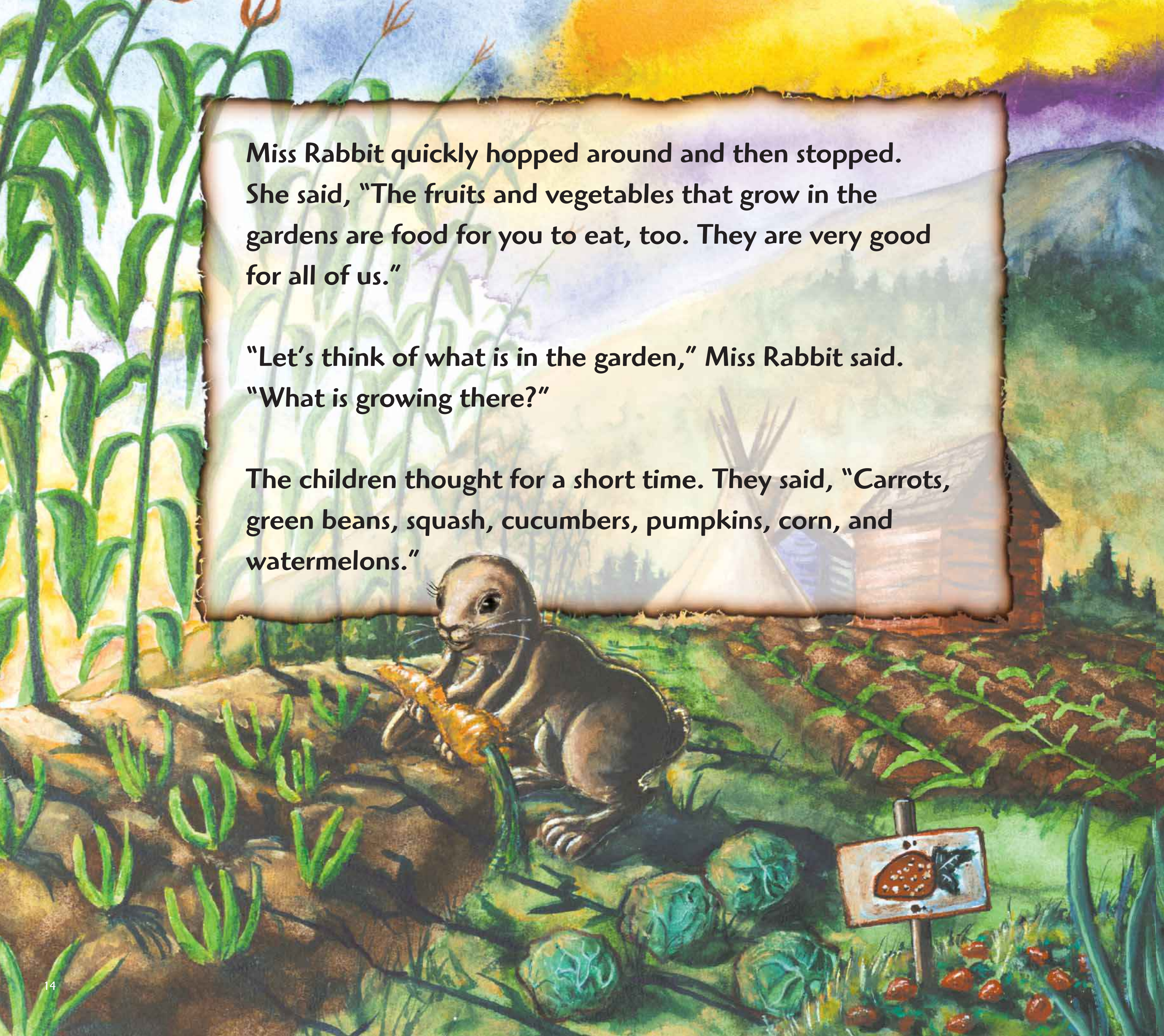
Rain That Dances said, "I know. You eat grass."

**Simon smiled and said, "You eat carrots. I have seen you in my grandmother's garden eating the carrots."
Little Hummingbird added, "I have seen you in the garden, too."**

The rabbit laughed and said, "I guess I have eaten from many gardens in the village. I eat from the gardens because I want to stay healthy. I also like what grows in the gardens."

Thunder Cloud made a face and said, "I will not eat things from the garden. Those are for rabbits."

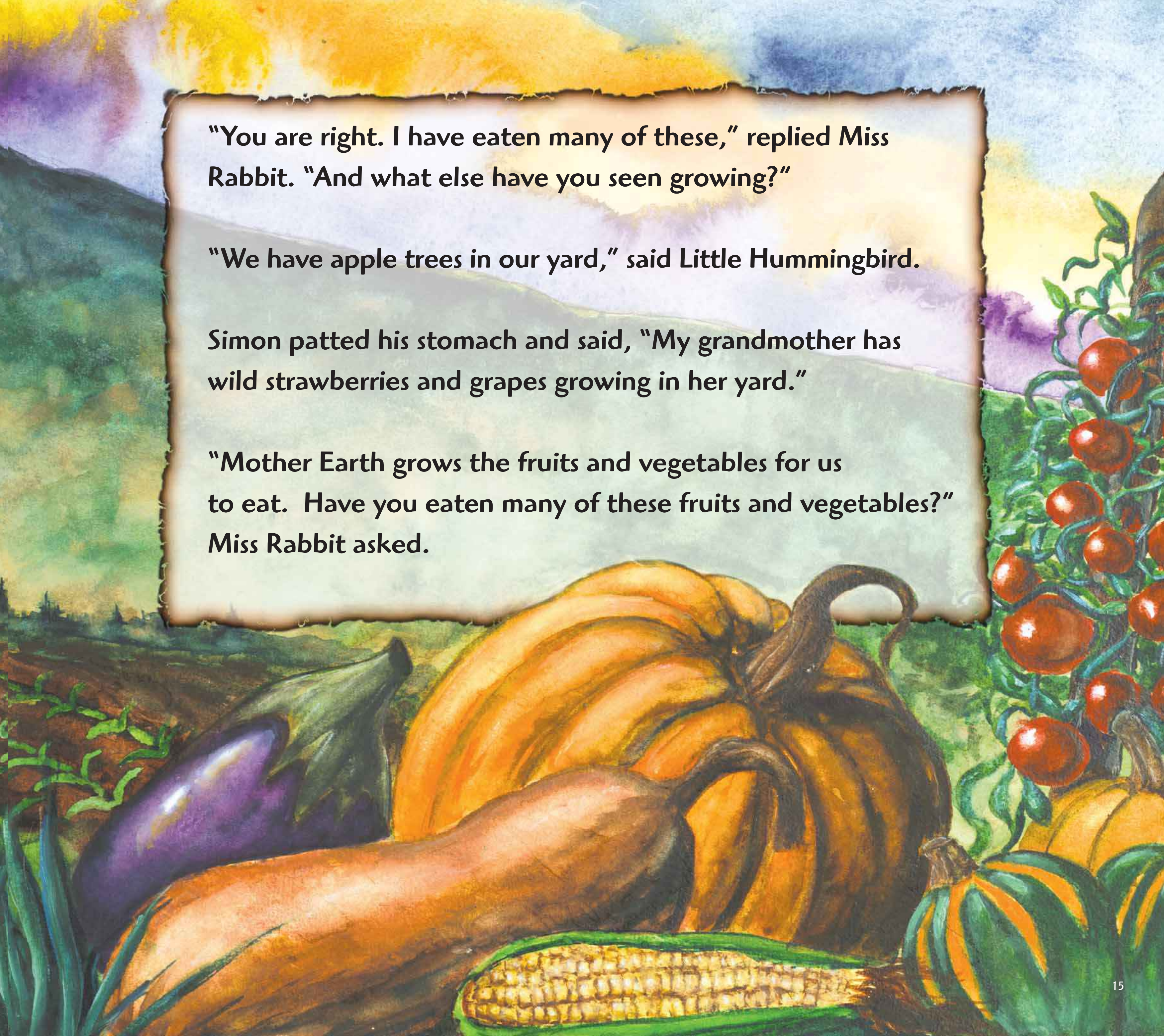




Miss Rabbit quickly hopped around and then stopped. She said, "The fruits and vegetables that grow in the gardens are food for you to eat, too. They are very good for all of us."

"Let's think of what is in the garden," Miss Rabbit said. "What is growing there?"

The children thought for a short time. They said, "Carrots, green beans, squash, cucumbers, pumpkins, corn, and watermelons."

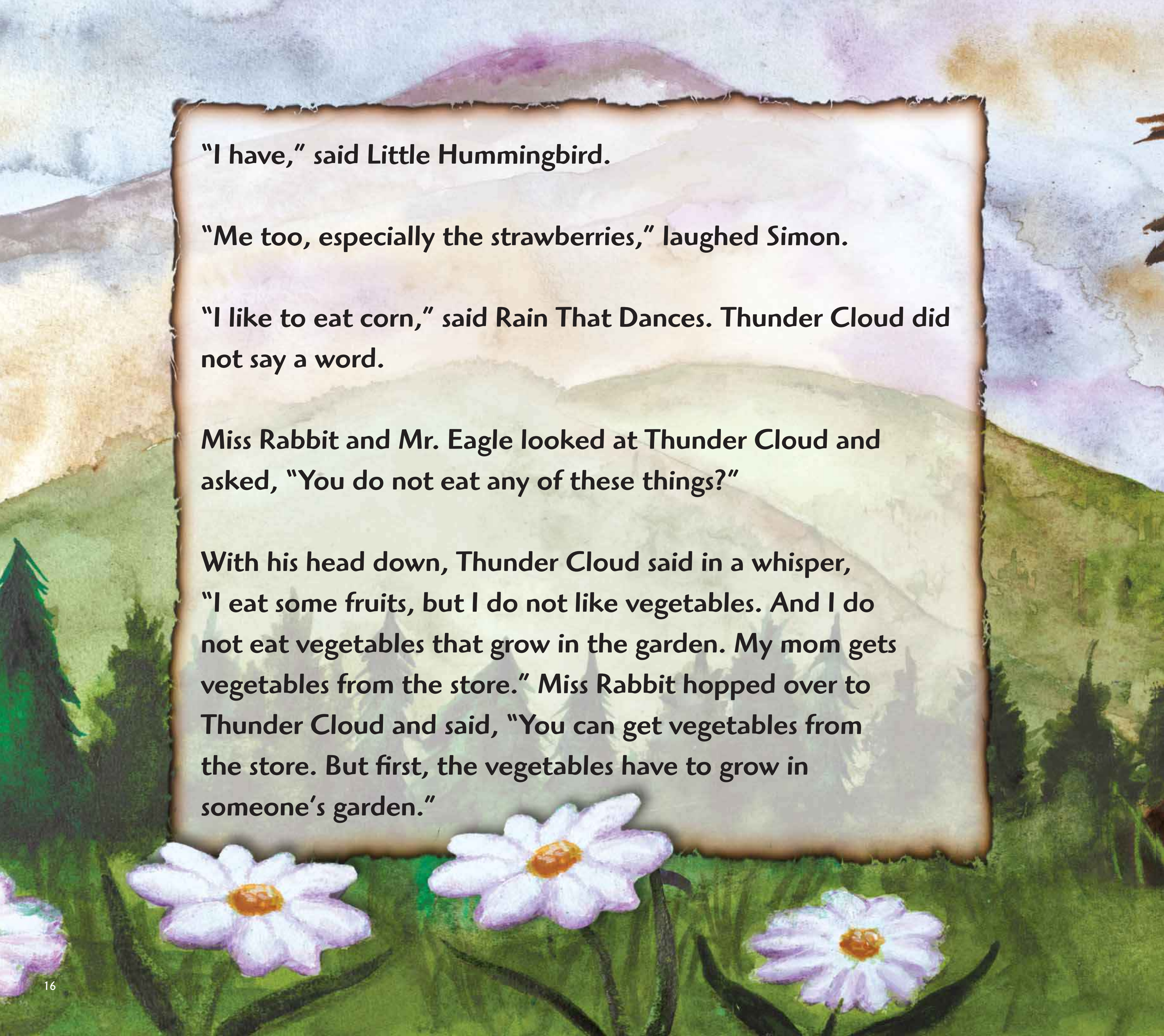


"You are right. I have eaten many of these," replied Miss Rabbit. "And what else have you seen growing?"

"We have apple trees in our yard," said Little Hummingbird.

Simon patted his stomach and said, "My grandmother has wild strawberries and grapes growing in her yard."

"Mother Earth grows the fruits and vegetables for us to eat. Have you eaten many of these fruits and vegetables?" Miss Rabbit asked.



"I have," said Little Hummingbird.

"Me too, especially the strawberries," laughed Simon.

"I like to eat corn," said Rain That Dances. Thunder Cloud did not say a word.

Miss Rabbit and Mr. Eagle looked at Thunder Cloud and asked, "You do not eat any of these things?"

With his head down, Thunder Cloud said in a whisper, "I eat some fruits, but I do not like vegetables. And I do not eat vegetables that grow in the garden. My mom gets vegetables from the store." Miss Rabbit hopped over to Thunder Cloud and said, "You can get vegetables from the store. But first, the vegetables have to grow in someone's garden."

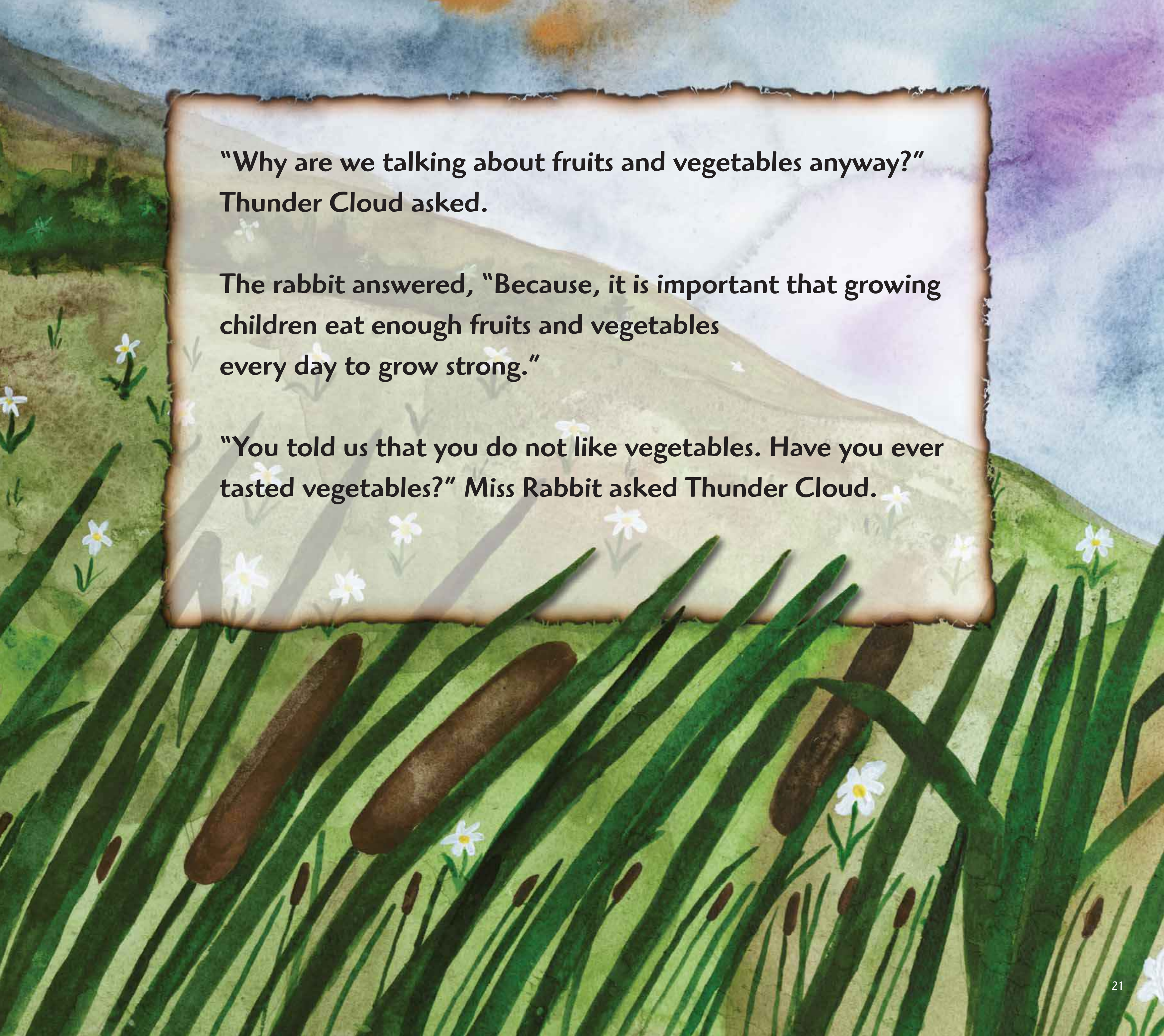


"Just as Mother Earth gives us flowers of many colors, she also gives us fruits and vegetables of many colors. Carrots are orange. Squash is green or yellow. Tomatoes, apples, and strawberries are red. Grapes and plums are purple. Green beans are green. Cucumbers are green. Pumpkins are orange."





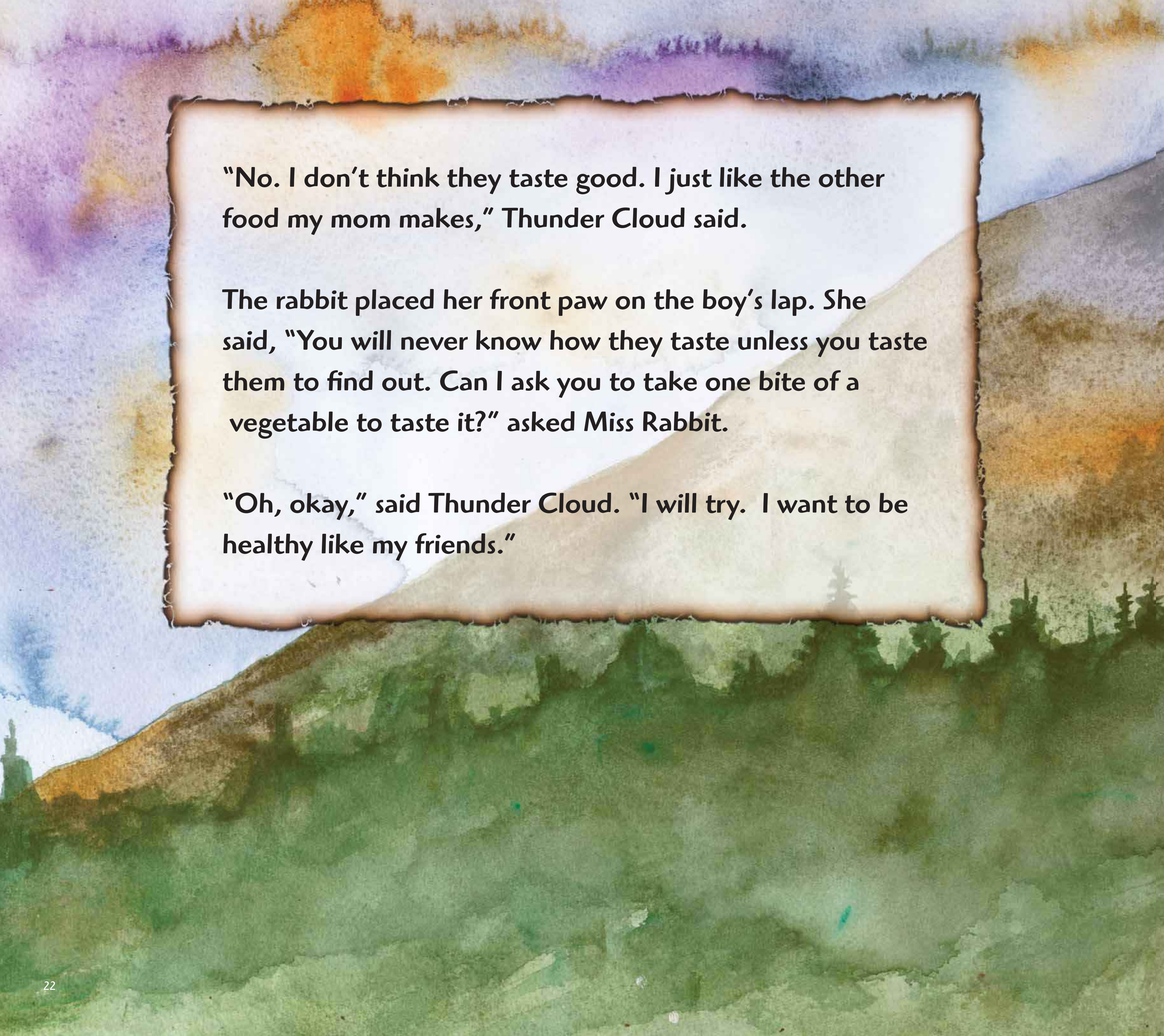




“Why are we talking about fruits and vegetables anyway?”
Thunder Cloud asked.

The rabbit answered, “Because, it is important that growing children eat enough fruits and vegetables every day to grow strong.”

“You told us that you do not like vegetables. Have you ever tasted vegetables?” Miss Rabbit asked Thunder Cloud.

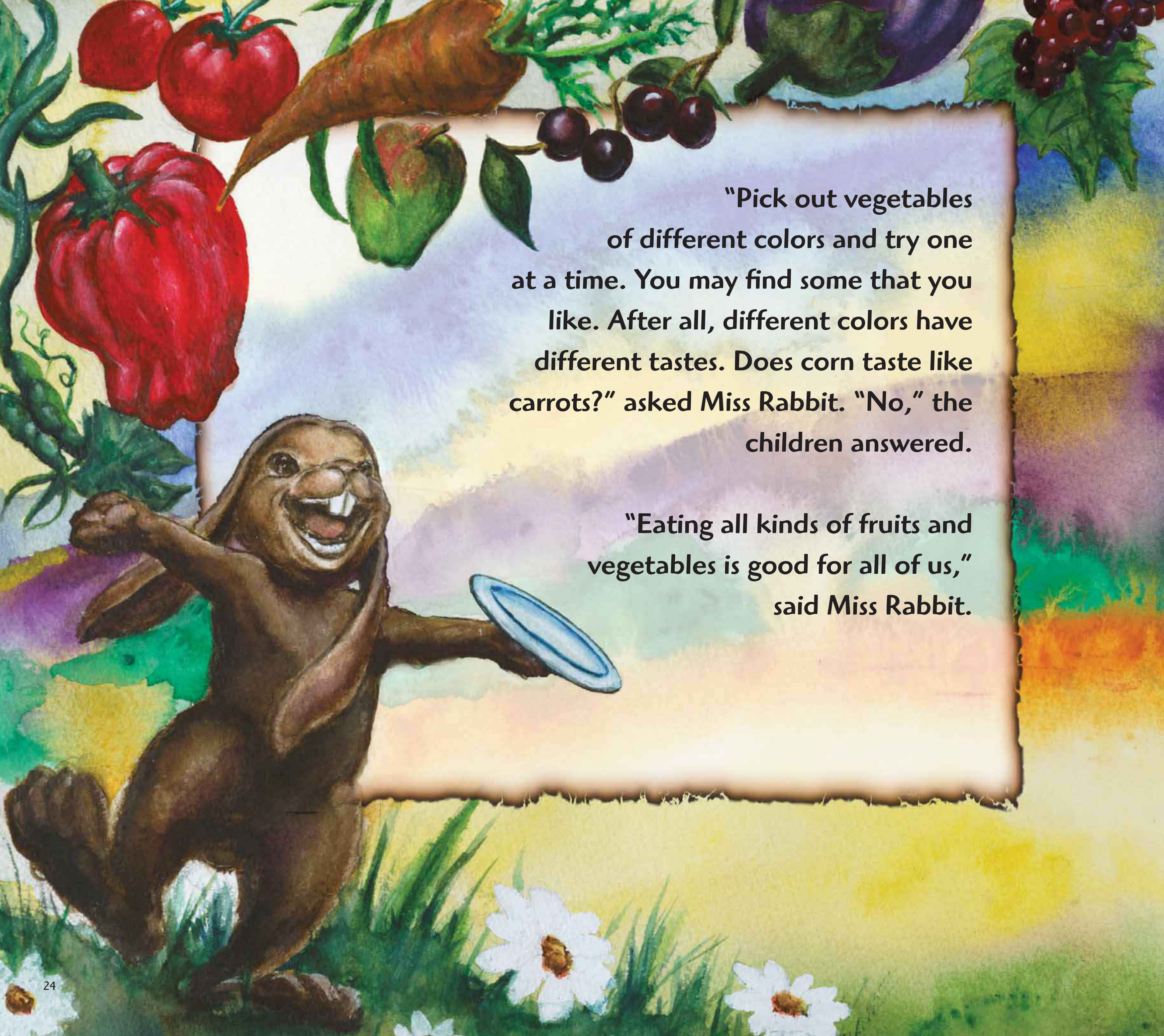


"No. I don't think they taste good. I just like the other food my mom makes," Thunder Cloud said.

The rabbit placed her front paw on the boy's lap. She said, "You will never know how they taste unless you taste them to find out. Can I ask you to take one bite of a vegetable to taste it?" asked Miss Rabbit.

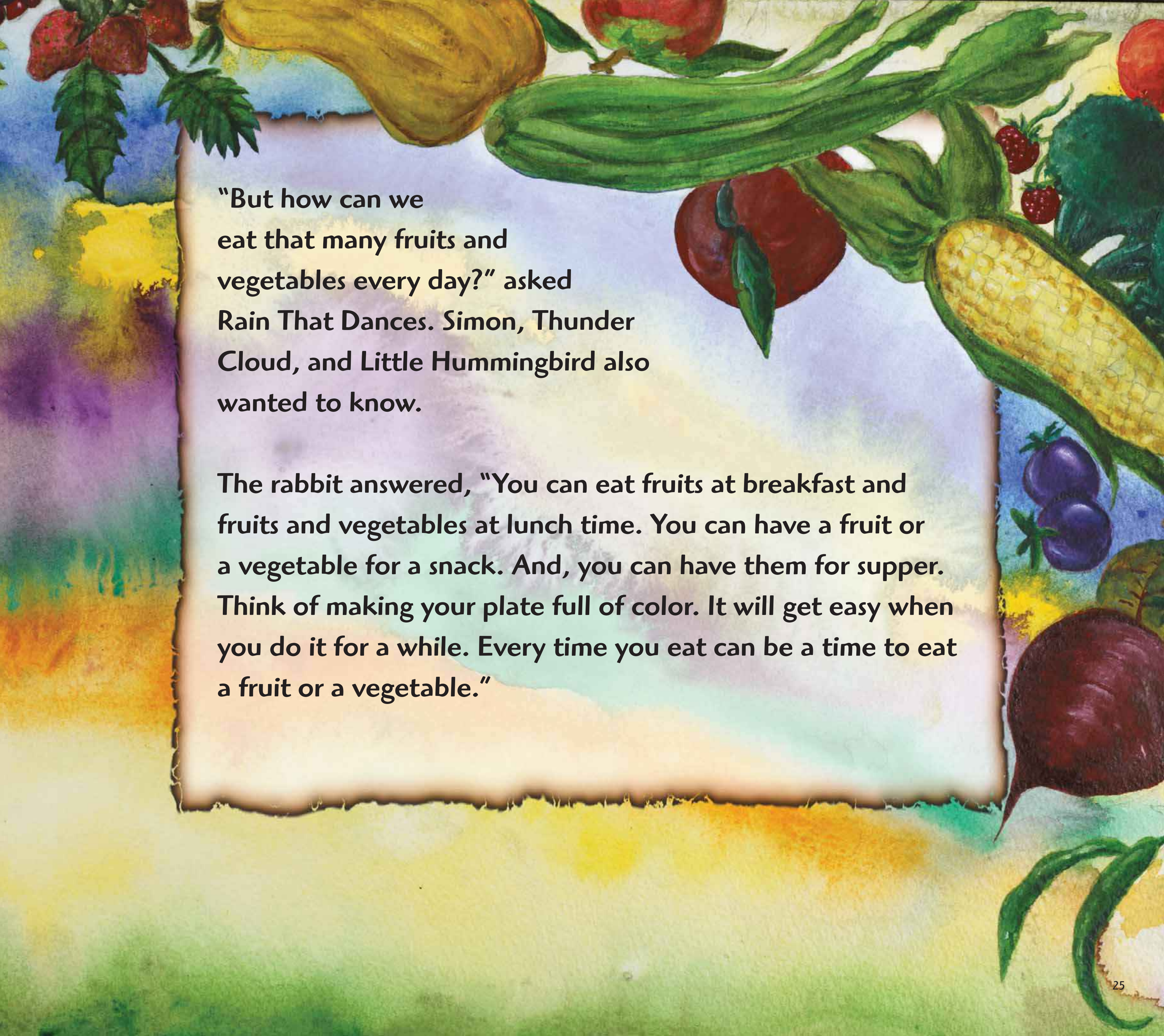
"Oh, okay," said Thunder Cloud. "I will try. I want to be healthy like my friends."





"Pick out vegetables of different colors and try one at a time. You may find some that you like. After all, different colors have different tastes. Does corn taste like carrots?" asked Miss Rabbit. "No," the children answered.

"Eating all kinds of fruits and vegetables is good for all of us," said Miss Rabbit.



"But how can we eat that many fruits and vegetables every day?" asked Rain That Dances. Simon, Thunder Cloud, and Little Hummingbird also wanted to know.

The rabbit answered, "You can eat fruits at breakfast and fruits and vegetables at lunch time. You can have a fruit or a vegetable for a snack. And, you can have them for supper. Think of making your plate full of color. It will get easy when you do it for a while. Every time you eat can be a time to eat a fruit or a vegetable."

Rain That Dances jumped up and said, "You are right. I like to eat all the time. For a snack, I can eat some strawberries instead of a cookie."

Simon said, "I can eat sliced cucumbers instead of potato chips."

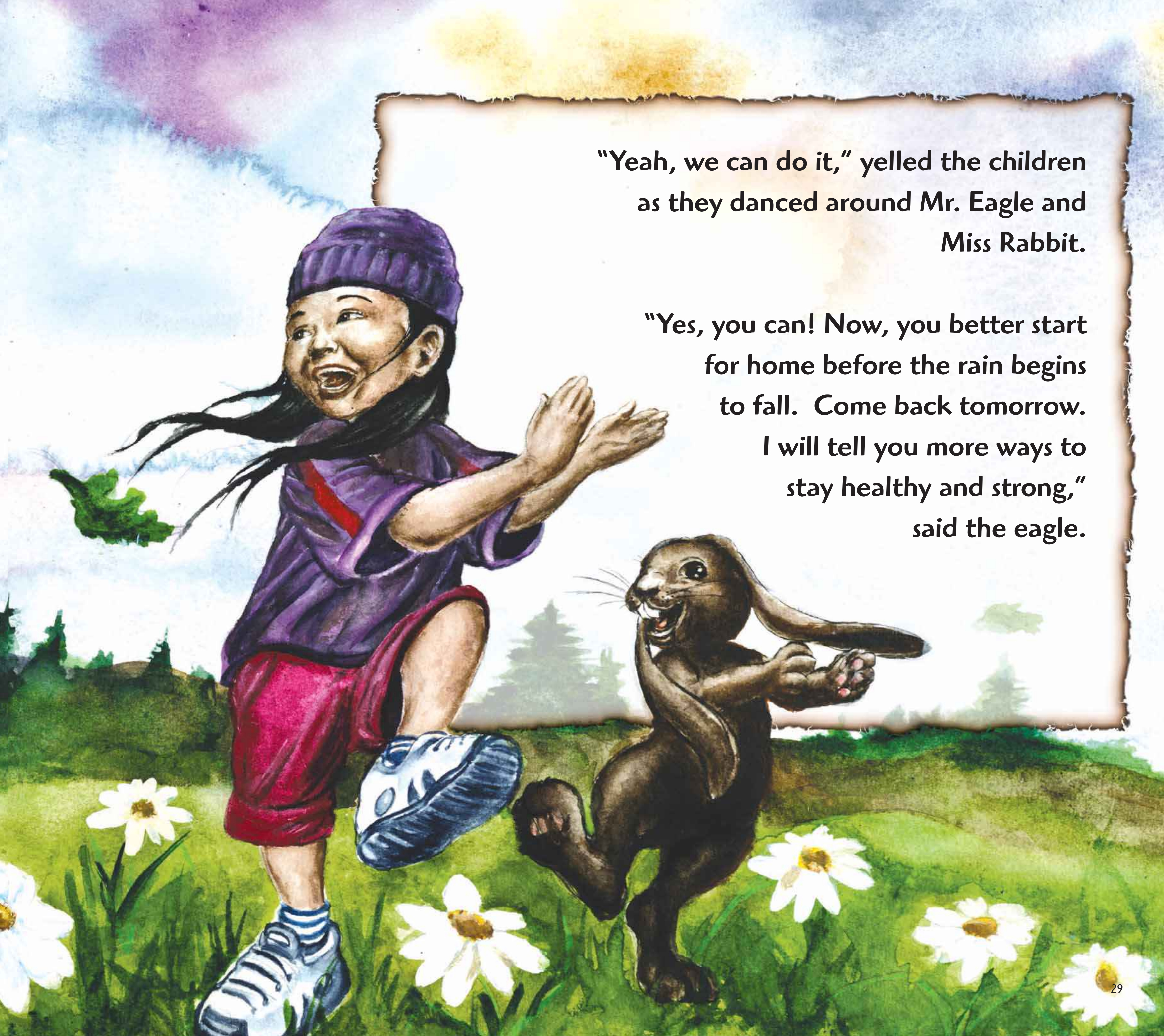
Little Hummingbird said, "I can eat grapes or a plum instead of candy."
Thunder Cloud stayed sitting down and did not say a word.



Mr. Eagle, Miss Rabbit, and the children looked at him. They asked, "What can you do to eat a vegetable, Thunder Cloud?" Thunder Cloud slowly stood up. He kicked at the dirt and smiled, "I guess I can try to eat some carrot sticks."







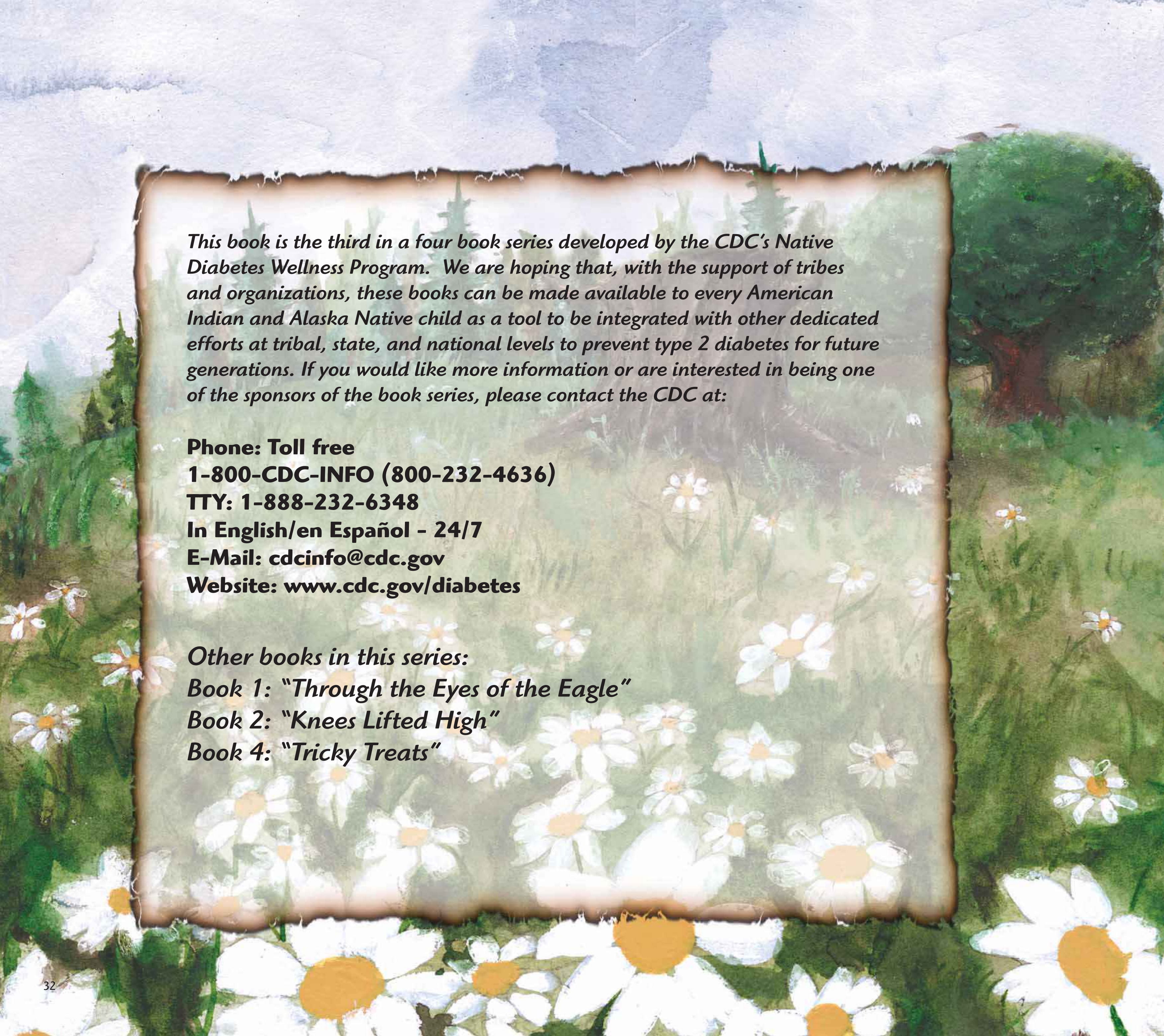
**"Yeah, we can do it," yelled the children
as they danced around Mr. Eagle and
Miss Rabbit.**

**"Yes, you can! Now, you better start
for home before the rain begins
to fall. Come back tomorrow.
I will tell you more ways to
stay healthy and strong,"
said the eagle.**



"Goodbye and thank you, Mr. Eagle and Miss Rabbit. We will be here tomorrow," said the children, as they left for home.

***Join us as we learn more about
being healthy and strong in
"Tricky Treats."***



This book is the third 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

Website: www.cdc.gov/diabetes

Other books in this series:

Book 1: "Through the Eyes of the Eagle"

Book 2: "Knees Lifted High"

Book 4: "Tricky Treats"

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 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, "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.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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