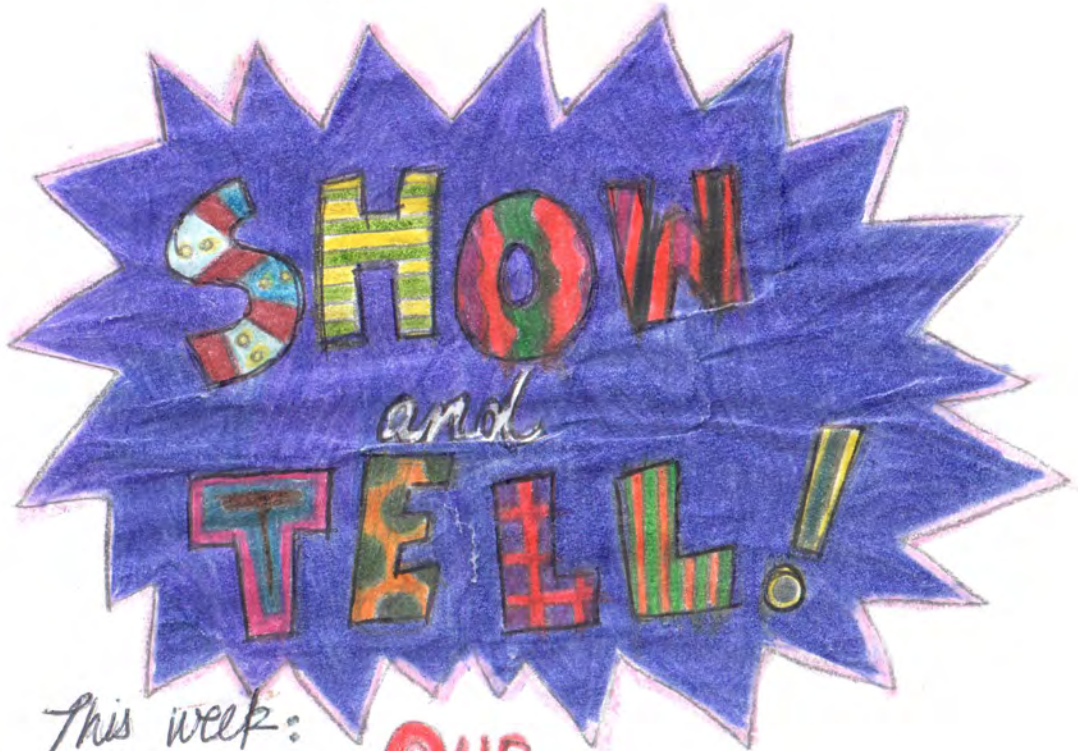




1-2B  
Ms. K

Marble Hill Elementary  
Date

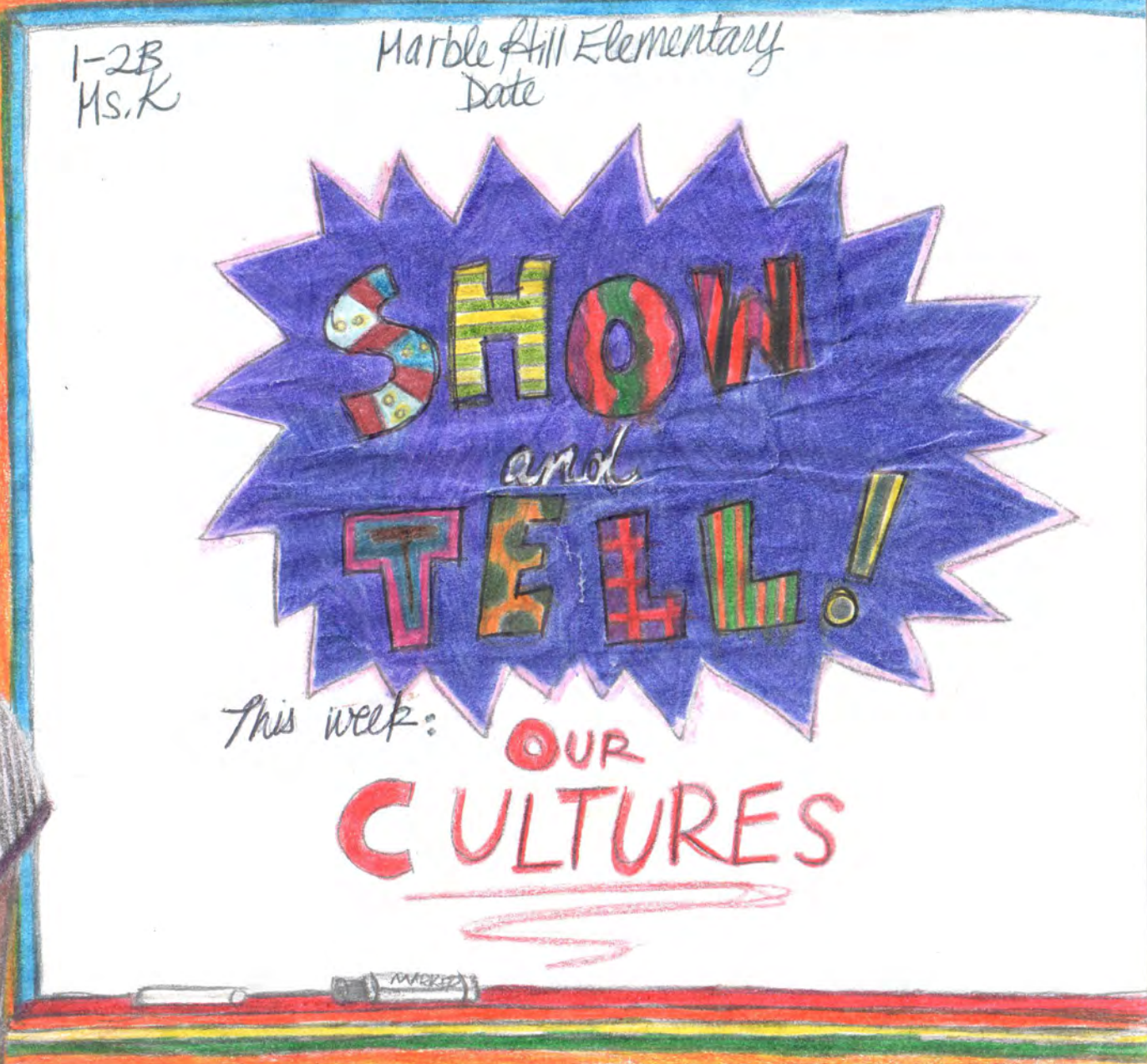


This week:

OUR  
CULTURES



Every Friday is Show-and-Tell at Marble Hill Elementary School. Each week, the students pick a theme and for this one they have chosen to explore their classmates' cultures.



The children have been waiting excitedly all week to bring in things from home and to learn more about their friends.

WHO WILL  
GO FIRST?


Maylin raises her hand enthusiastically and Ms. Kalu immediately calls her name. The child rushes to the board, red envelope in hand, and proudly displays it to her classmates. "This is called a hongbao. Chinese people give them with money inside as gifts for the New Year. The envelope is red because in China that is the color of good fortune. Like other people around the world, we feel it is important to start off the New Year with as much luck as possible!"



"There are a lot of fun things to do during the Chinese New Year.

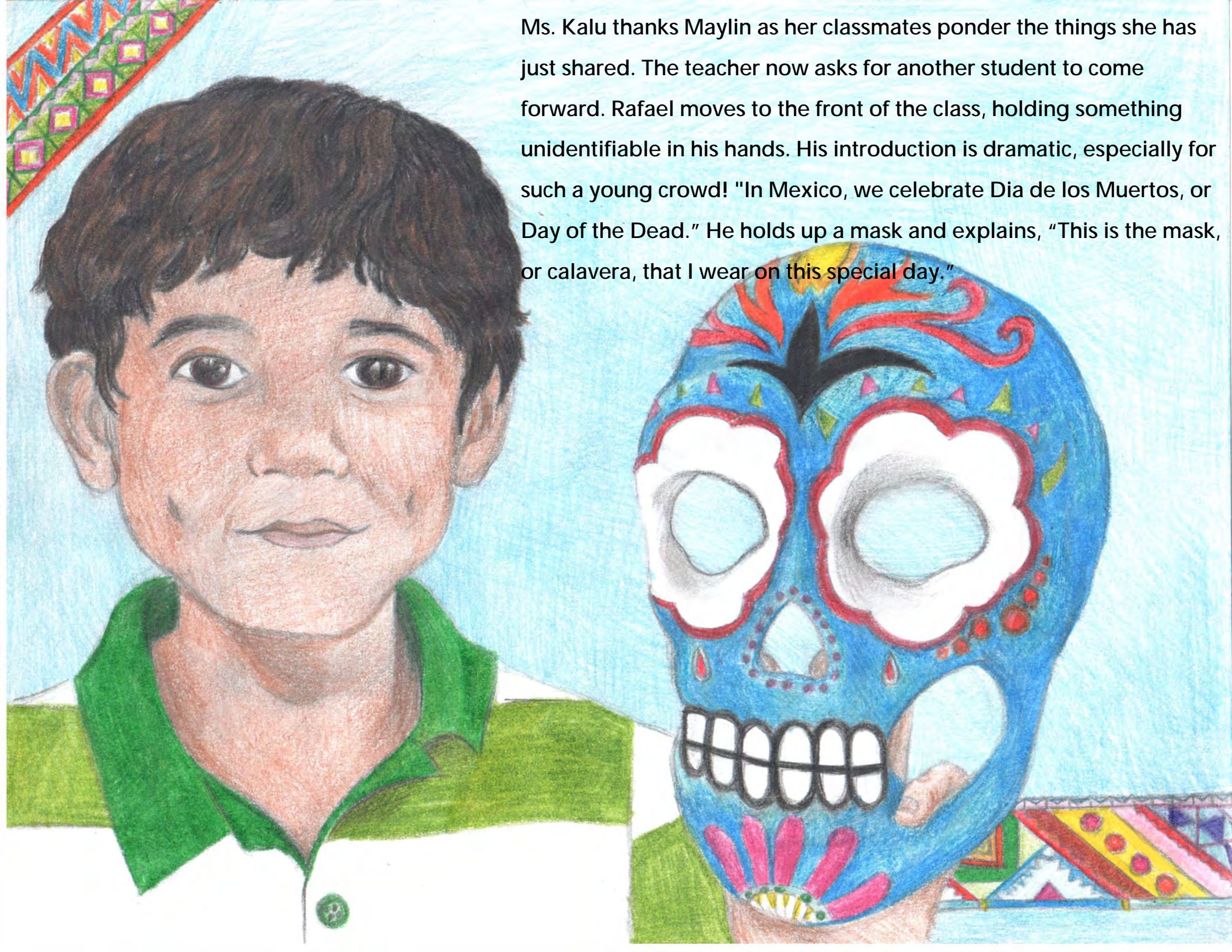


One of my favorites is going to see the lion dances. A team of people puts on a colorful lion costume and makes it dance up and down the street. As the men make the lion dance in creative ways, they drop coins behind them for people to pick up."

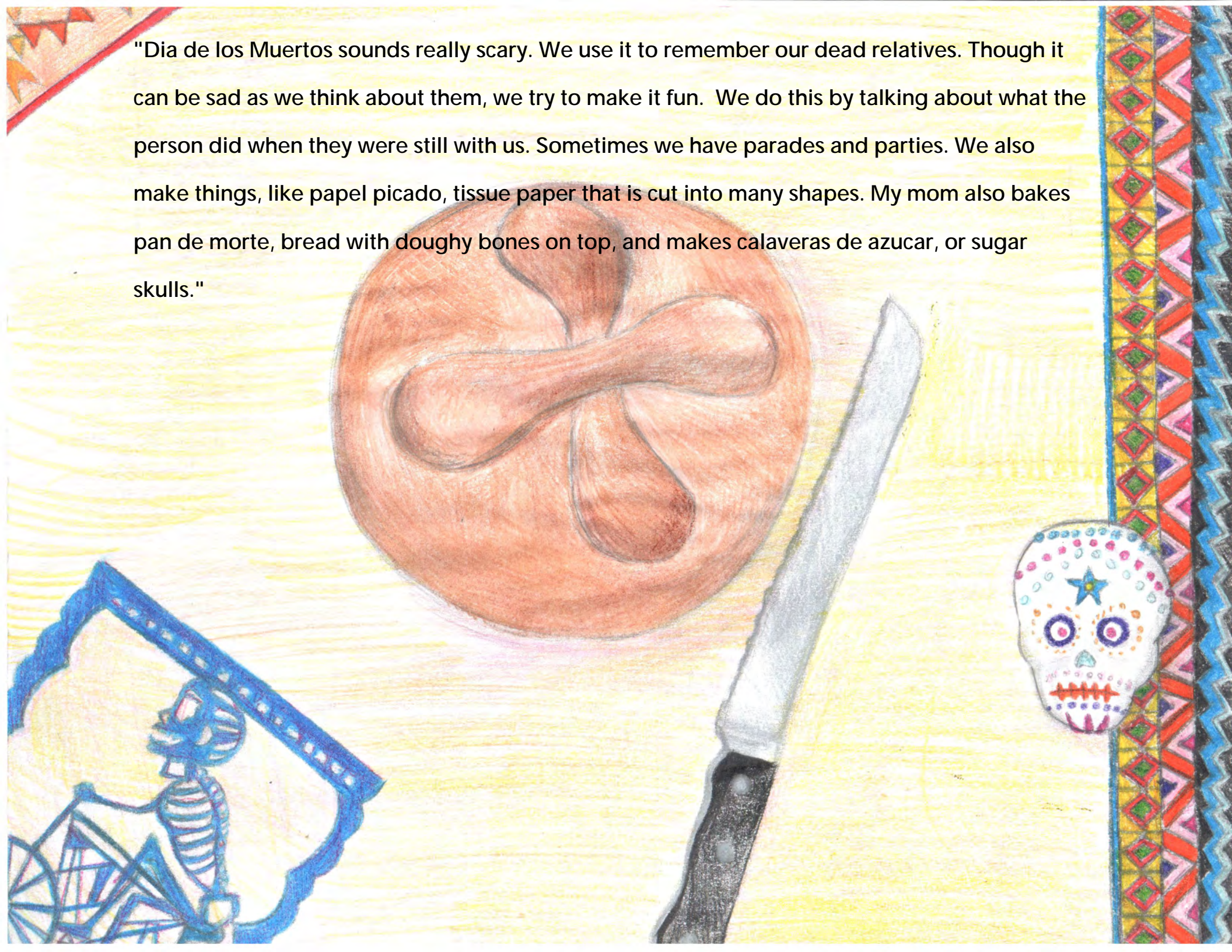


"Chinese New Year is special to me because I spend the entire night with my family playing games. We stay up late and watch fireworks light up the sky!"

Ms. Kalu thanks Maylin as her classmates ponder the things she has just shared. The teacher now asks for another student to come forward. Rafael moves to the front of the class, holding something unidentifiable in his hands. His introduction is dramatic, especially for such a young crowd! "In Mexico, we celebrate Dia de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead." He holds up a mask and explains, "This is the mask, or calavera, that I wear on this special day."



"Dia de los Muertos sounds really scary. We use it to remember our dead relatives. Though it can be sad as we think about them, we try to make it fun. We do this by talking about what the person did when they were still with us. Sometimes we have parades and parties. We also make things, like papel picado, tissue paper that is cut into many shapes. My mom also bakes pan de morte, bread with doughy bones on top, and makes calaveras de azucar, or sugar skulls."



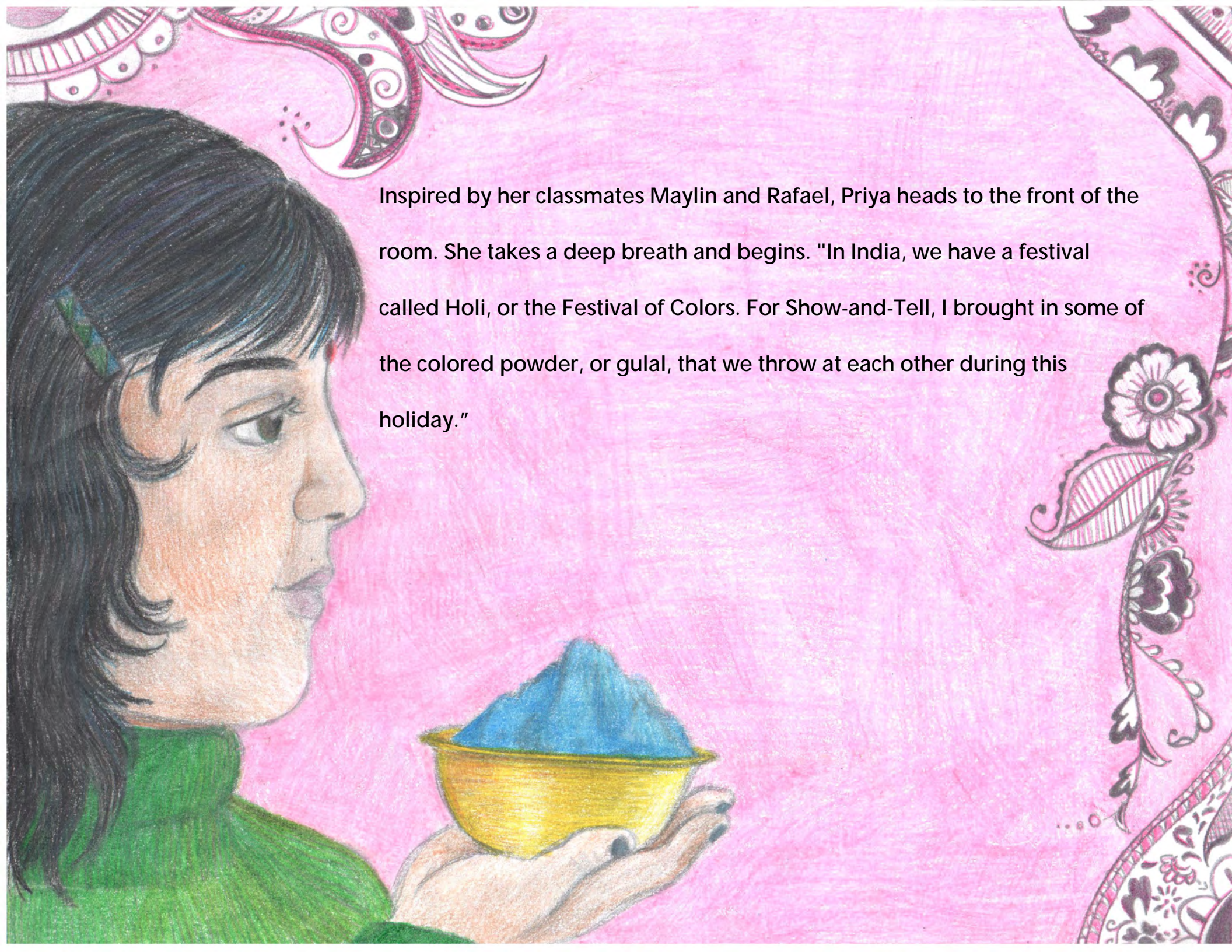


Thank you, Rafael, for a wonderful presentation!



WHO WILL  
GO NEXT?

... Ms. Kalu asks her class.

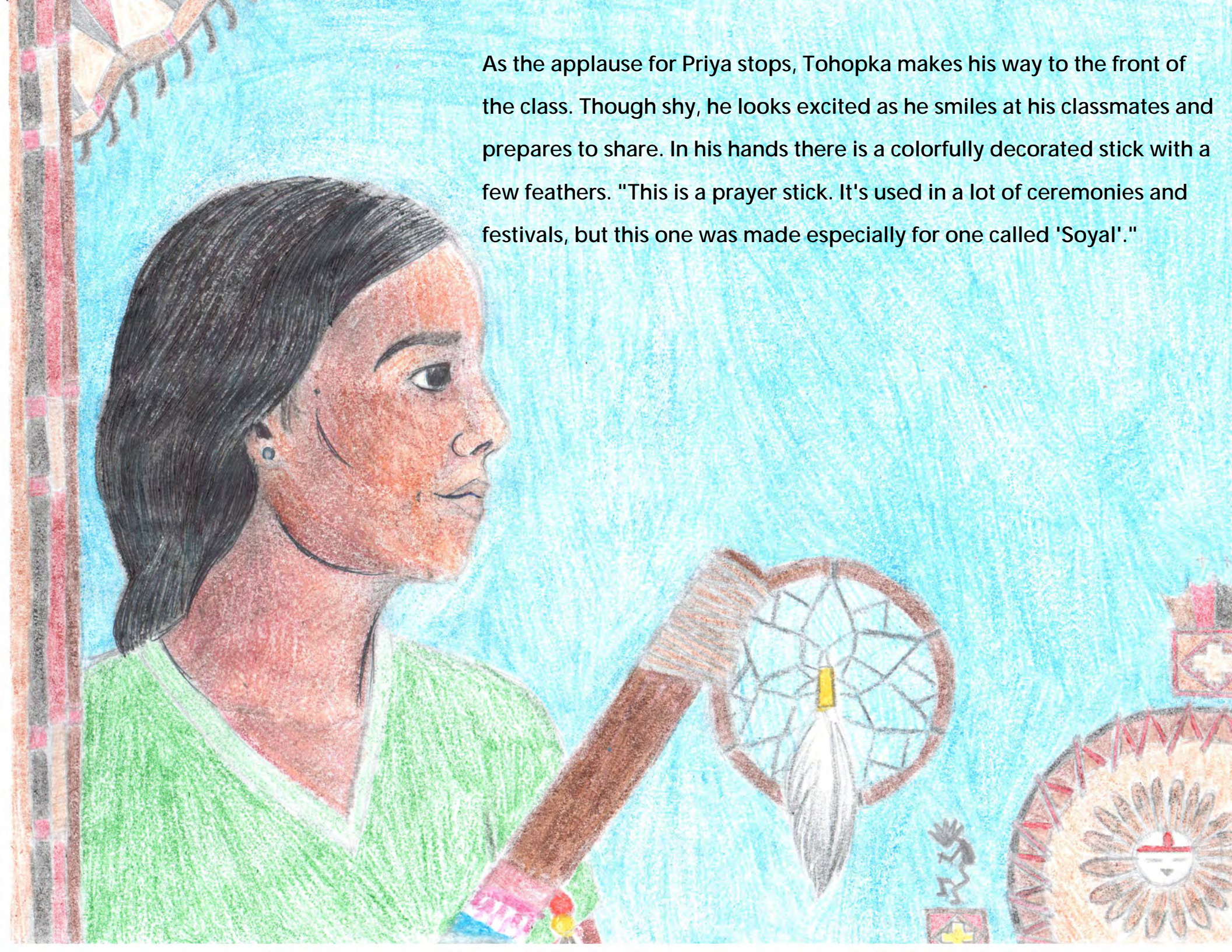
A colorful illustration of a young girl with dark hair and bangs, wearing a green turtleneck sweater. She is shown in profile, looking towards the right. In her hands, she holds a yellow bowl filled with a mound of bright blue powder. The background is a vibrant pink with intricate, traditional Indian patterns in white, black, and red. The text is positioned to the right of the girl's head.

Inspired by her classmates Maylin and Rafael, Priya heads to the front of the room. She takes a deep breath and begins. "In India, we have a festival called Holi, or the Festival of Colors. For Show-and-Tell, I brought in some of the colored powder, or gulal, that we throw at each other during this holiday."

"Holi is about togetherness. People from all backgrounds celebrate together. And as they do, they throw this powder at each other, creating colorful clouds of gulal. By the end of the day, everybody is covered! But no one complains. Holi is my favorite holiday because my family and I get to spend time with lots of other people in our community." "Wow, Priya!," Ms. Kalu says. "That was fun and I learned a lot!"

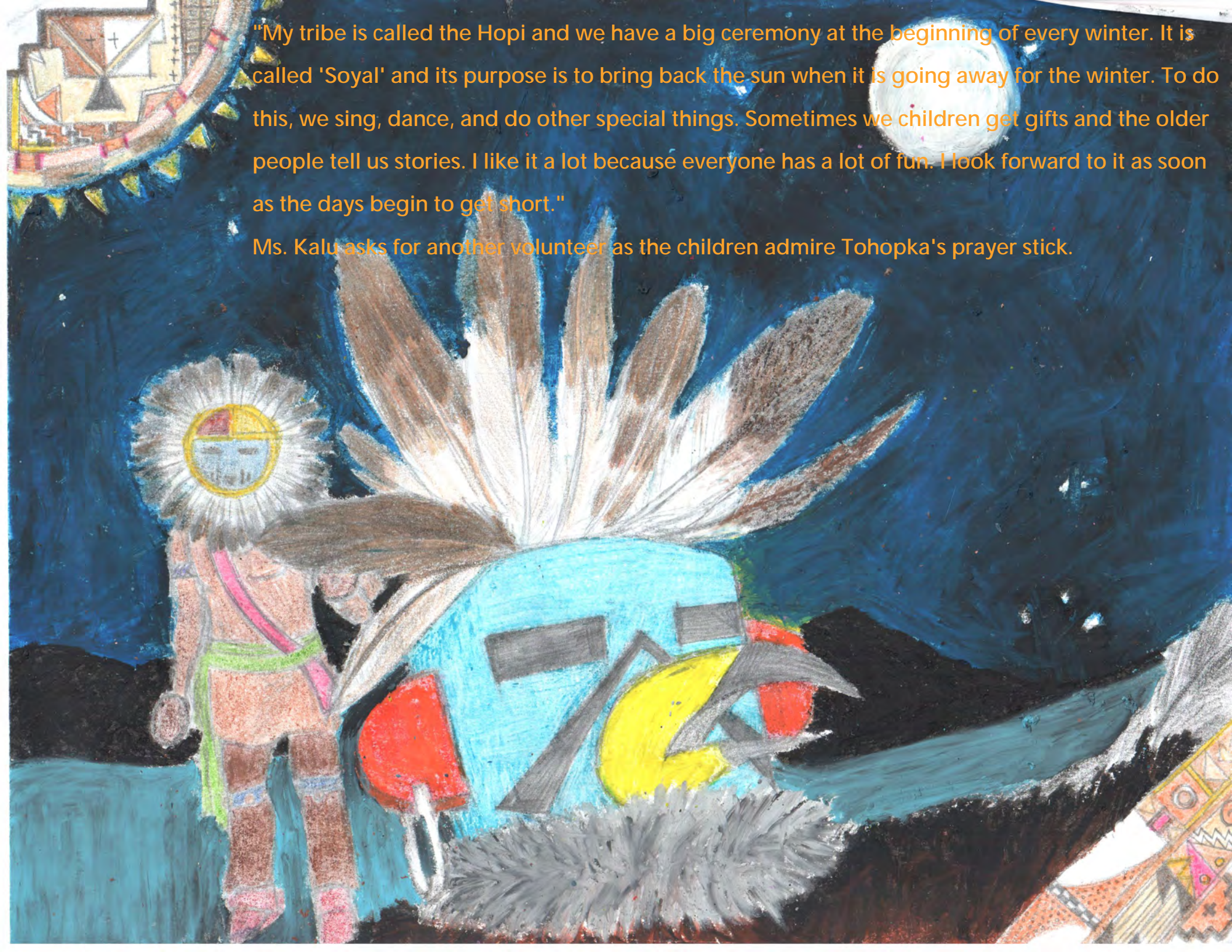


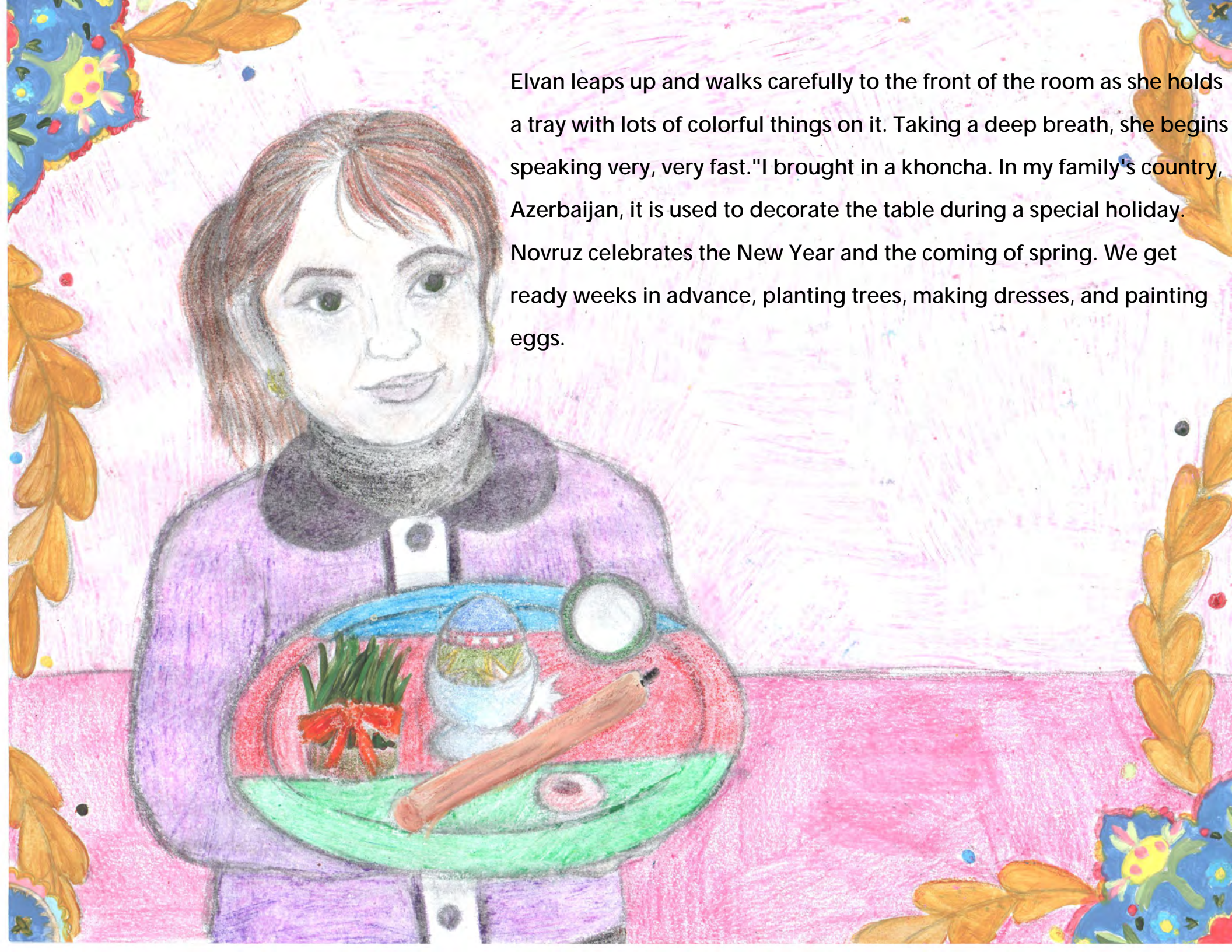
As the applause for Priya stops, Tohopka makes his way to the front of the class. Though shy, he looks excited as he smiles at his classmates and prepares to share. In his hands there is a colorfully decorated stick with a few feathers. "This is a prayer stick. It's used in a lot of ceremonies and festivals, but this one was made especially for one called 'Soyal'."




"My tribe is called the Hopi and we have a big ceremony at the beginning of every winter. It is called 'Soyal' and its purpose is to bring back the sun when it is going away for the winter. To do this, we sing, dance, and do other special things. Sometimes we children get gifts and the older people tell us stories. I like it a lot because everyone has a lot of fun. I look forward to it as soon as the days begin to get short."

Ms. Kalu asks for another volunteer as the children admire Tohopka's prayer stick.





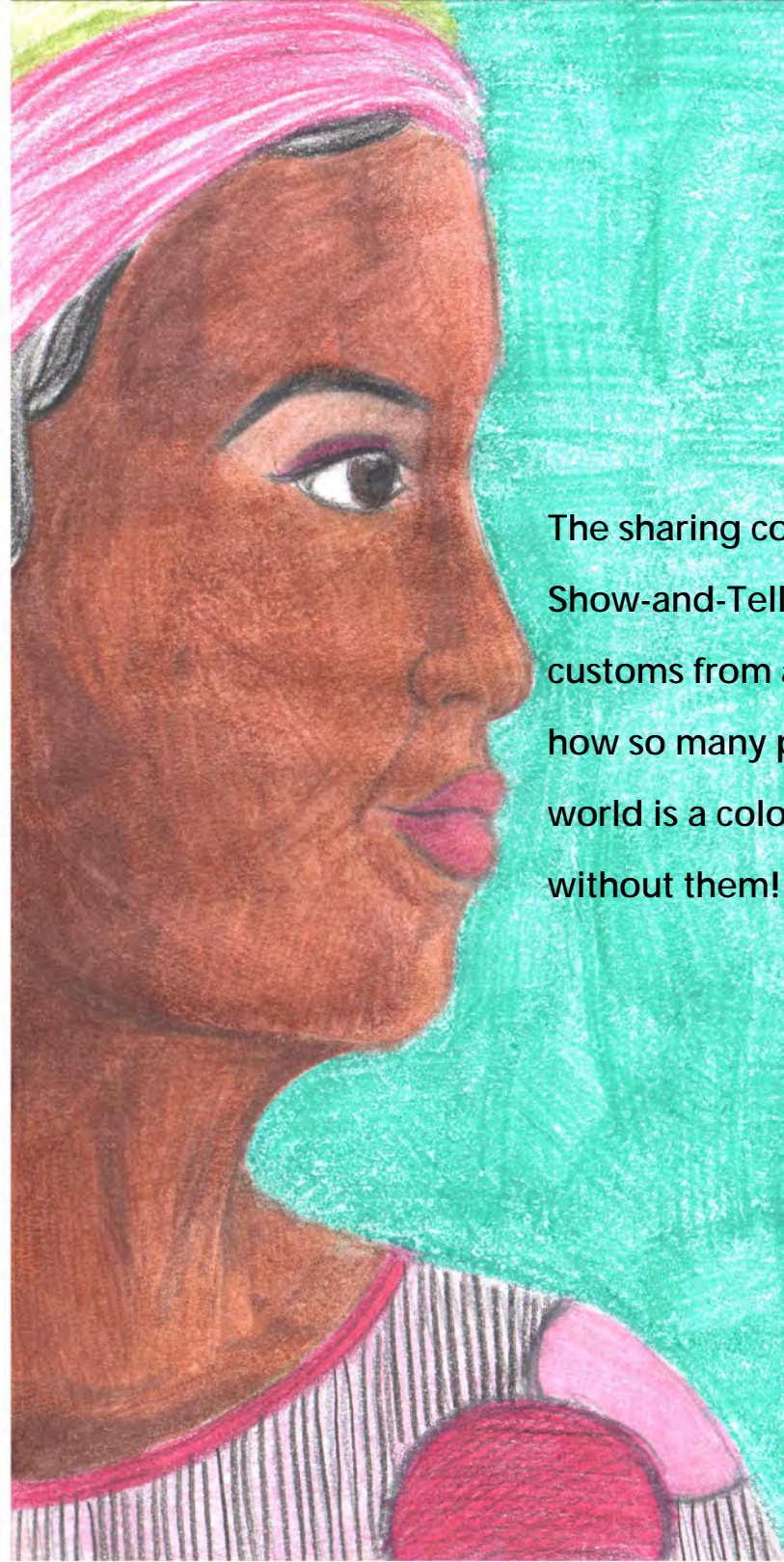
Elvan leaps up and walks carefully to the front of the room as she holds a tray with lots of colorful things on it. Taking a deep breath, she begins speaking very, very fast. "I brought in a khoncha. In my family's country, Azerbaijan, it is used to decorate the table during a special holiday. Novruz celebrates the New Year and the coming of spring. We get ready weeks in advance, planting trees, making dresses, and painting eggs.



"My family and I make many different foods for Novruz. Then we all sit around the table and eat! I like doing that a lot but my favorite part of the holiday is when the other kids and I put caps outside our neighbors' doors. When they come outside, they have to fill our hats with sweets and we get lots of goodies!"

When Elvan is done, she smiles and takes her seat. "That was very nice!", Ms. Kalu says with a laugh. "I hope all of you noticed that both Tohopka's and Elvan's holidays have something in common. They mark the changing of seasons."





The sharing continues and, after everyone has had a chance to talk, Ms. Kalu brings the Show-and-Tell session to an end. "Well that was very informative! We have learned about customs from all over the world. Do you see, children, how interesting our world is and how so many people from different places contribute their own distinct traditions? Our world is a colorful collage of people and their beliefs. Our lives would be so boring without them!"



The bell rings and it's time to go home. The children put on their coats and prepare to meet their parents as they talk with each other about all the exciting things they learned today.

PUBLIC  
SCHOOL  
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Suddenly, the things about each other that were different began to make sense. And the fullness of the diversity of their world began to dawn upon them.

