

Assiniboine Woman Making Grease

The Indian Reading Series

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THE INDIAN READING SERIES:
Stories and Legends of the Northwest

Assiniboine Woman Making Grease Series IV

An Assiniboine Story

As told by Jerome Fourstar

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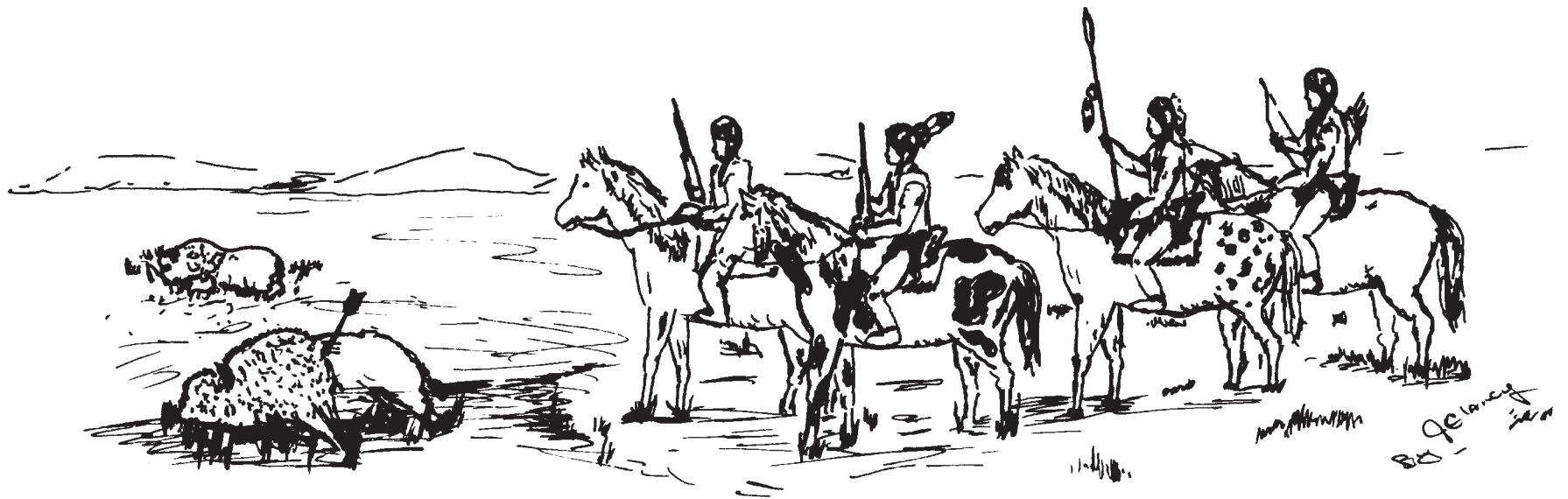
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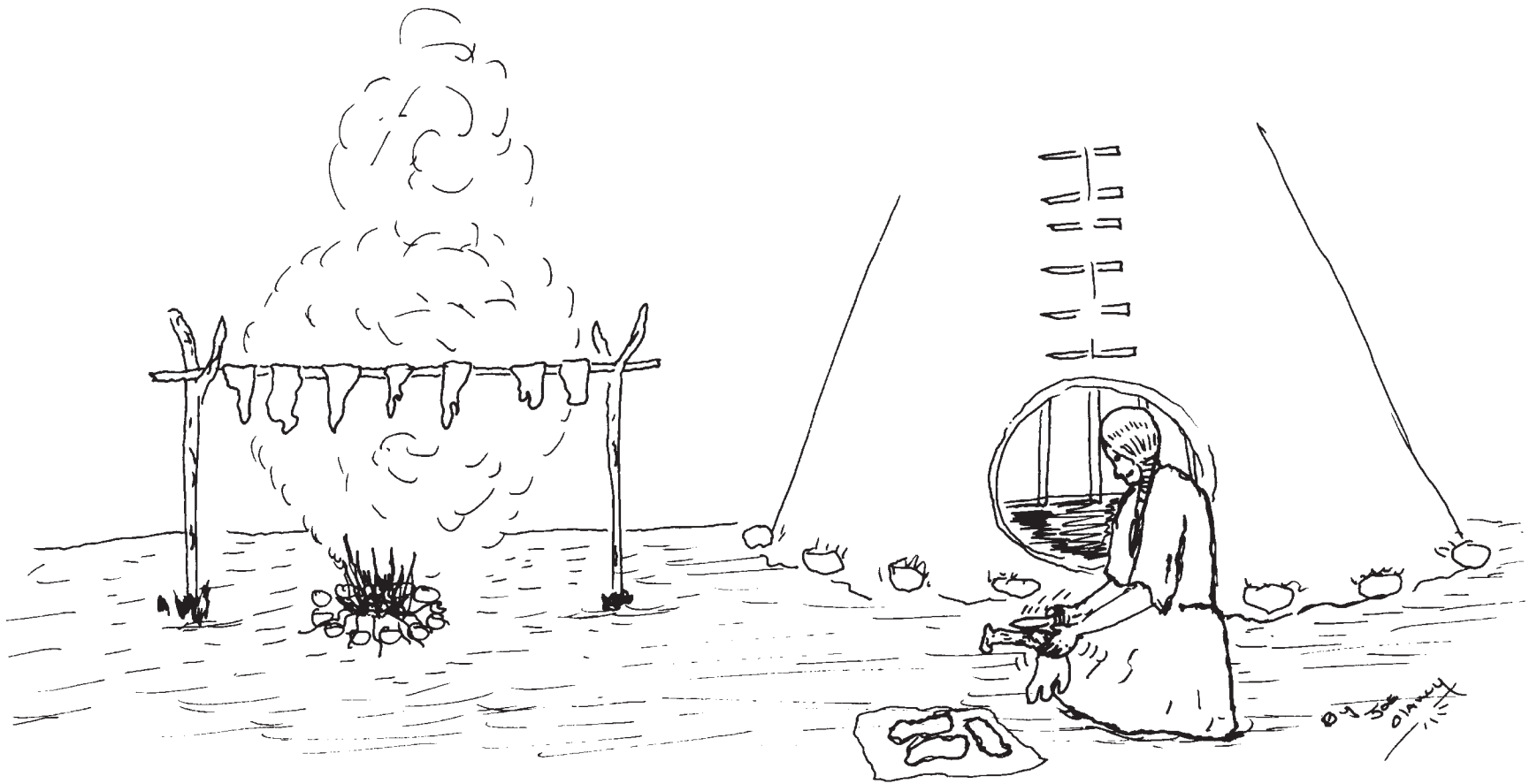
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Long ago a favorite camp site of Assiniboines was south of the present Jack Norris Coulee. It is 22 miles north of Frazier on the little Porcupine Creek.



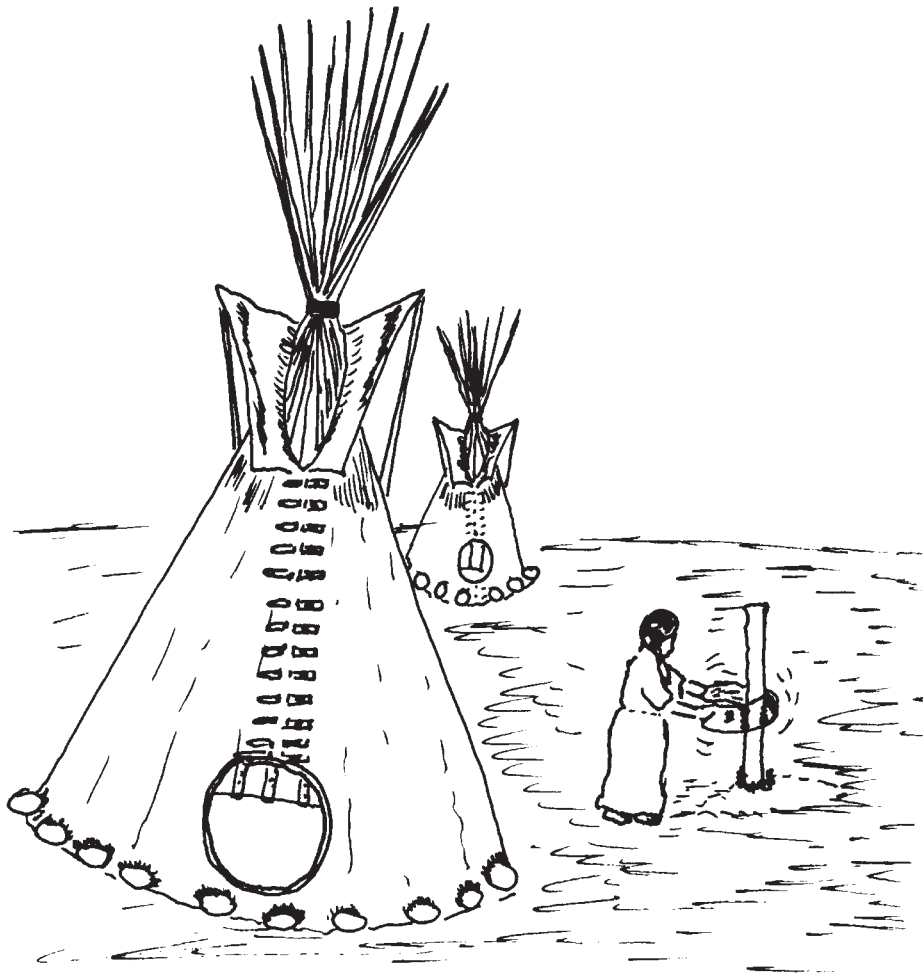
This was a large encampment. The hunters hunted buffalo in a radius of about twenty miles.



When the hunters brought in buffalo, the women prepared much of the meat for winter by drying it.

They would cut the meat into thin slices. These slices were hung on a rack. A smudge fire was built under the meat. The fire did not cook the meat, instead the smoke kept flies and other insects away from the meat while it was drying. It also provided a pleasant taste to the meat. Once the meat was dry, it could be stored for several months.

The buffalo hide was also prepared by the women. To prepare the hide, it was first stretched and pegged to the ground. After some drying, the hide was scraped by elk horn scrapers to remove the hair and the fat. The fat was then rendered into grease.



The grease was rubbed into the hide on both sides and allowed to soak into the hide. After a day or two, the hide was softened by pulling it back and forth around a pole that stands upright. After the hide was softened, the tanned hide was ready for use.

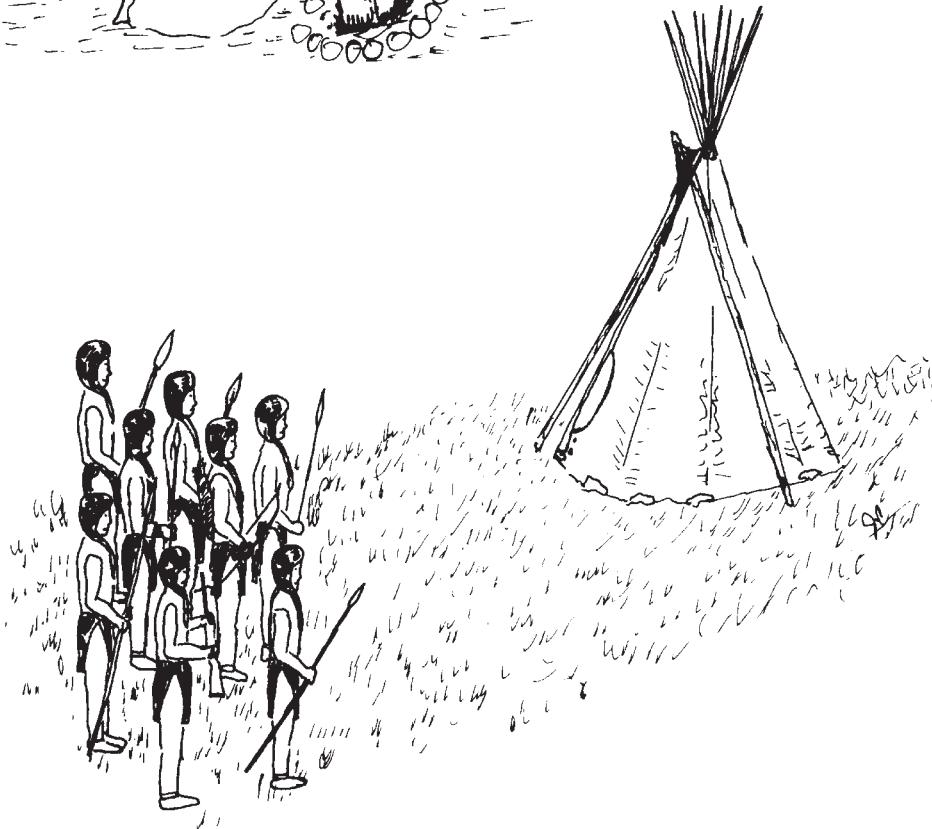


Game became scarce, and it was decided that the camp would move. Scouts had located a place where game was abundant. Everyone began packing to move.

An old woman in the camp was not ready to move because she was in the process of making grease. She told the others, "Go on. I am going to stay and finish before I follow you."



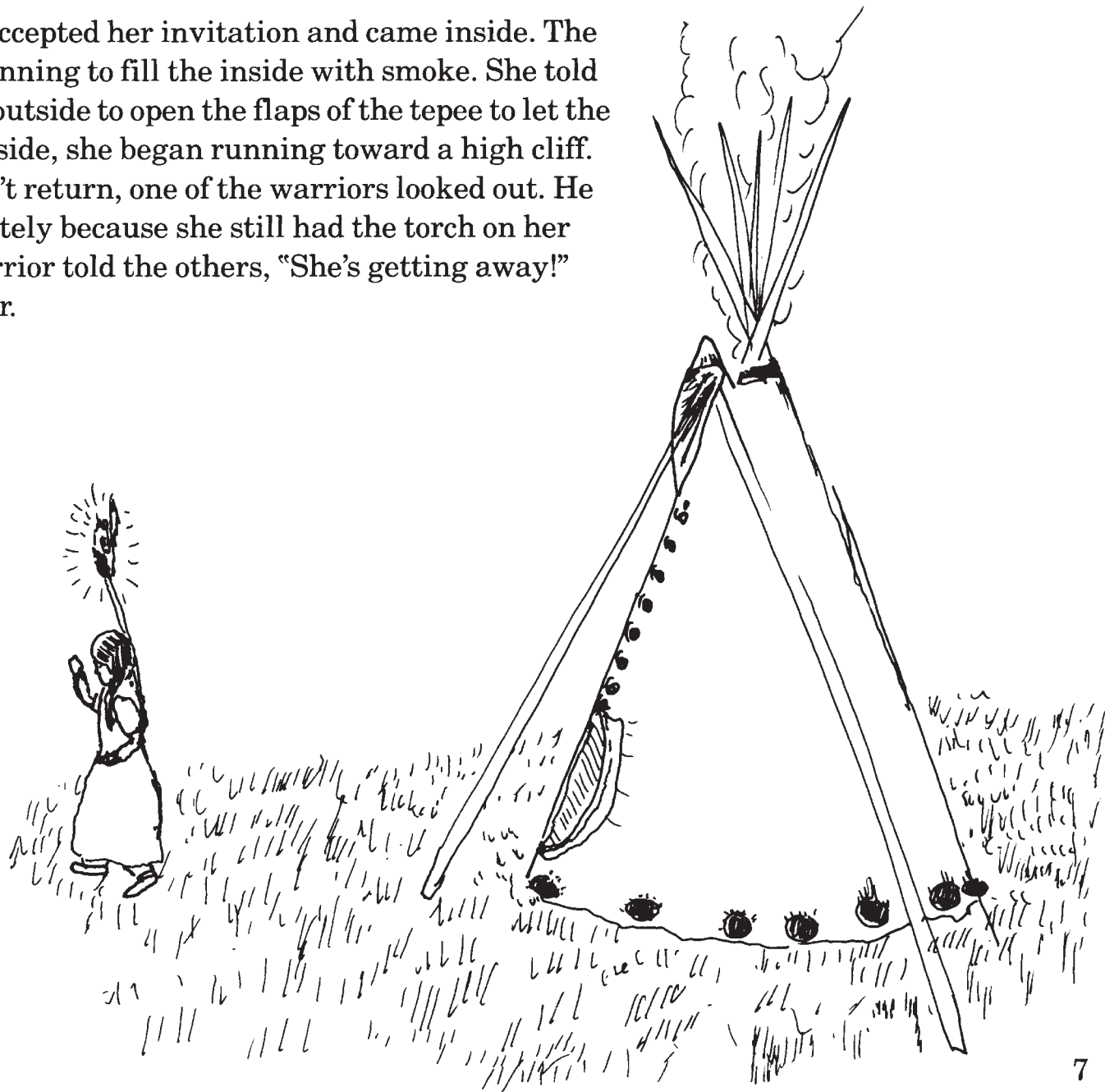
That night she was finishing the rendering of the grease. Because she did not have lights to work with, she took a long willow and made it into a torch. The torch was made by dipping one end into grease and lighting it. She took the unlighted end and pushed it down the back of her dress. This gave her light to work by.



The old woman heard some sounds outside. She looked out and saw eight enemy warriors. She was sure they were planning to kill her. She thought of an idea to escape. She put some green wood on her fire and invited the warriors in to eat pemmican.

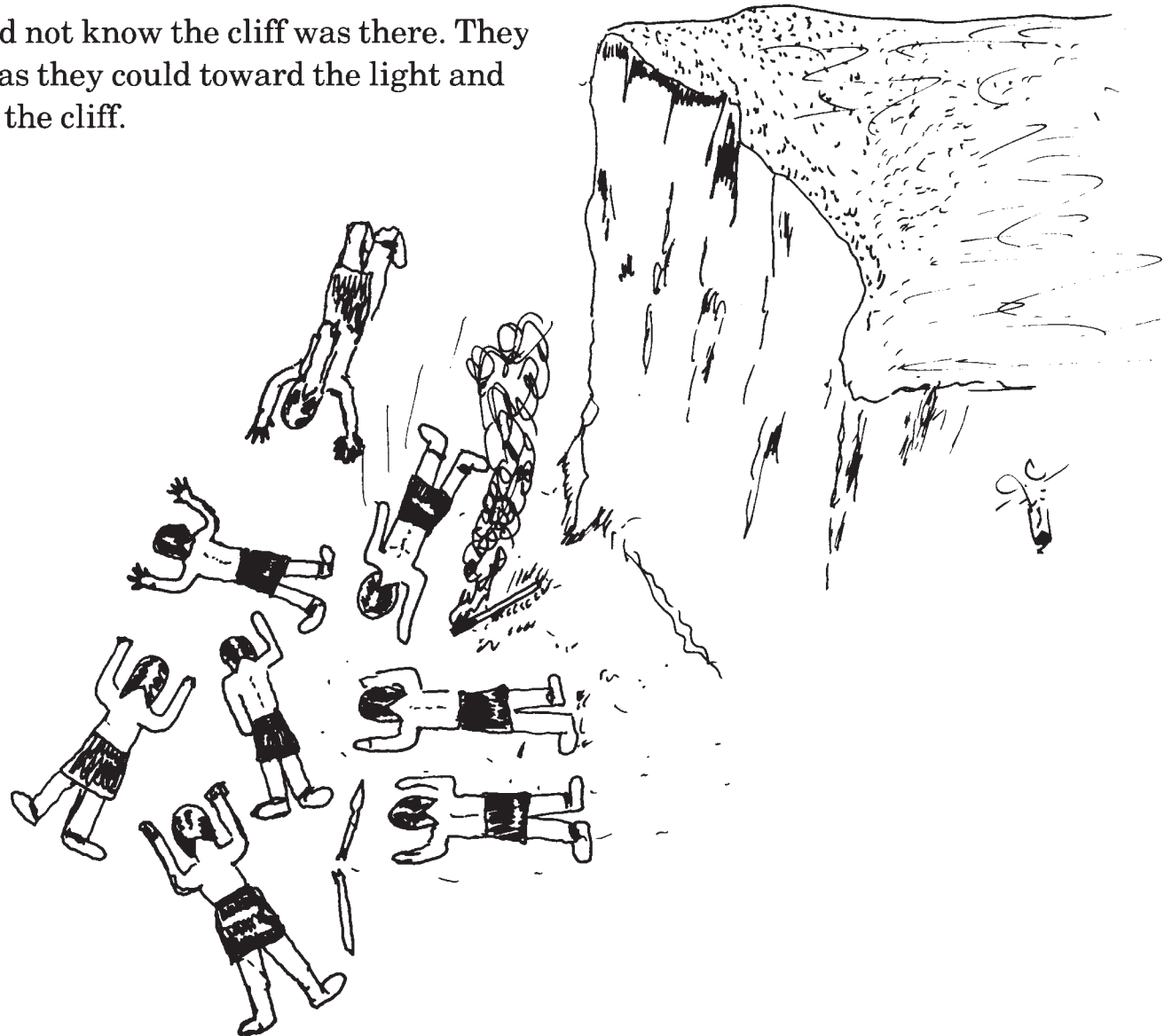
The warriors accepted her invitation and came inside. The green wood was beginning to fill the inside with smoke. She told them she was going outside to open the flaps of the tepee to let the smoke out. Once outside, she began running toward a high cliff.

When she didn't return, one of the warriors looked out. He spotted her immediately because she still had the torch on her back. The young warrior told the others, "She's getting away!" They all ran after her.

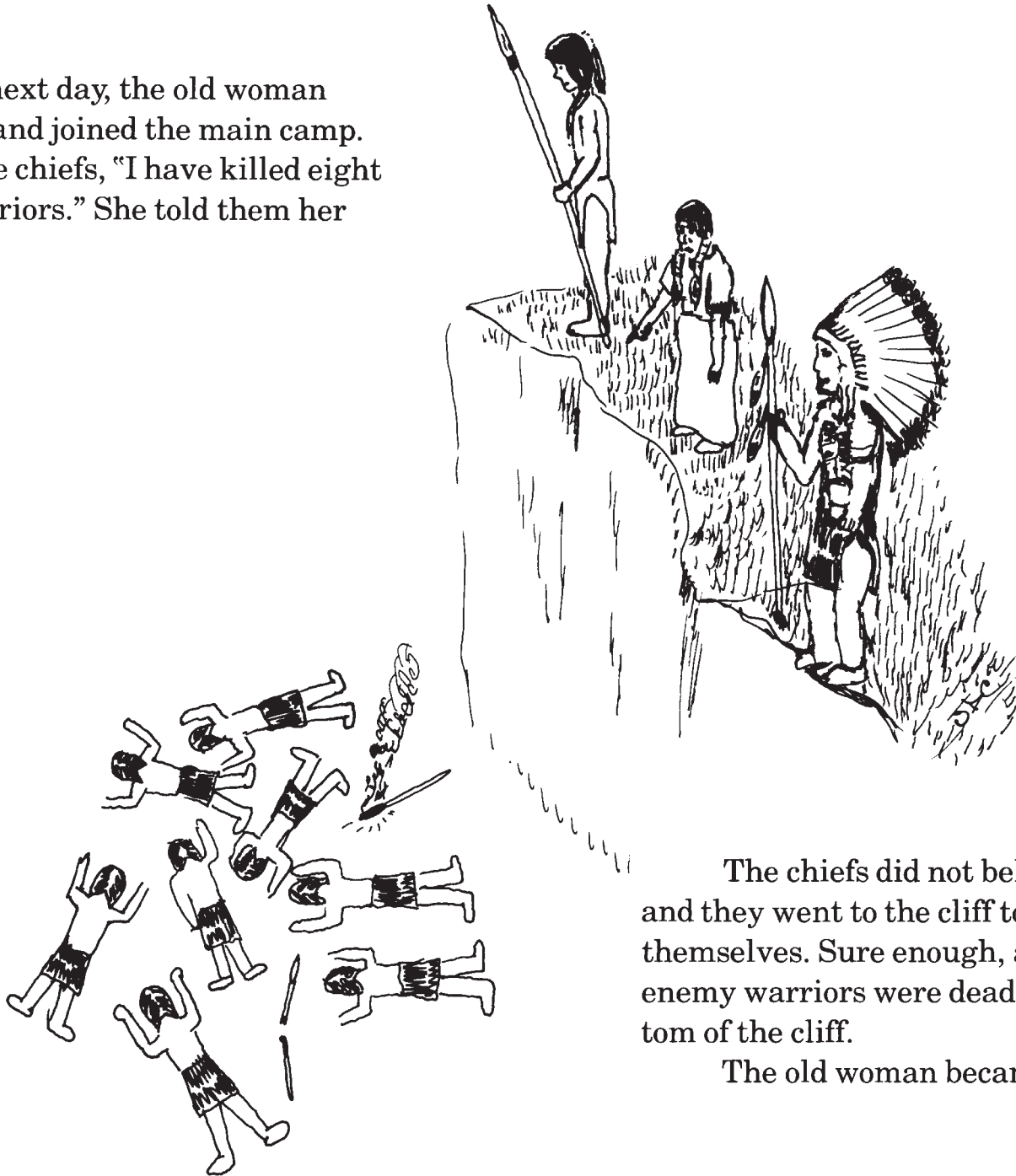


The old woman led them toward the high cliff. As they got closer, she threw the torch over the cliff. She ran to the side and hid.

The warriors did not know the cliff was there. They were running as fast as they could toward the light and went over the edge of the cliff.



The next day, the old woman packed up and joined the main camp. She told the chiefs, "I have killed eight enemy warriors." She told them her story.



The chiefs did not believe her, and they went to the cliff to see for themselves. Sure enough, all eight enemy warriors were dead at the bottom of the cliff.

The old woman became a heroine!

Booklets available in the Level IV sequence are listed below. Numbers refer to the Planned Sequence of use in the *Teacher's Manual*. Materials developed by these tribes and others in the Northwest are included in the Levels I, II and III sequences.

1. *Warm Springs Animal Stories*
The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs
Reservation of Oregon
2. *Snail Women at Sq³a'le*
The Suquamish Tribe of the Port Madison
Reservation
3. *Blue Jay – Star Child/Basket Woman*
Muckleshoot Tribe
4. *Assiniboine Woman Making Grease*
Assiniboine Tribe of the Fort Peck Reservation
5. *Coyote*
The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs
Reservation of Oregon
6. *How the Summer Season Came*
Assiniboine Tribe of the Fort Belknap
Reservation
7. *Little Weasel's Dream*
Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead
Reservation
8. *Fort Hall Stories*
Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall
Reservation
9. *The Bear Teepee*
Northern Cheyenne Tribe
10. *Sioux Stories and Legends*
Sioux Tribe of the Fort Peck Reservation
11. *Kootenai Stories*
Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead
Reservation
12. *Chief Mountain's Medicine*
Gros Ventre Tribe from the Fort Belknap
Reservation
13. *Coyote the Trickster*
Burns Paiute Reservation
14. *Running Free*
Shoalwater Bay
15. *Salish Coyote Stories*
Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead
Reservation
16. *Coyote and the Cowboys*
Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall
Reservation
17. *Napi's Journey*
Blackfeet Tribe
18. *Warm Springs Stories*
The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs
Reservation of Oregon
19. *Teepee Making*
Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead
Reservation
20. *Baskets and Canoes*
Skokomish Tribe
21. *Warrior People*
Blackfeet Tribe



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