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Paul's First Jump

By Meriam Tumu
Illustrated by Mina Nader

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What a big day! Today would be Paul's first jump. He was twenty years old today, and the land diving jump would bring him into adulthood.





The women and children were singing and dancing at the land diving platform, which was set up and ready for the jump.







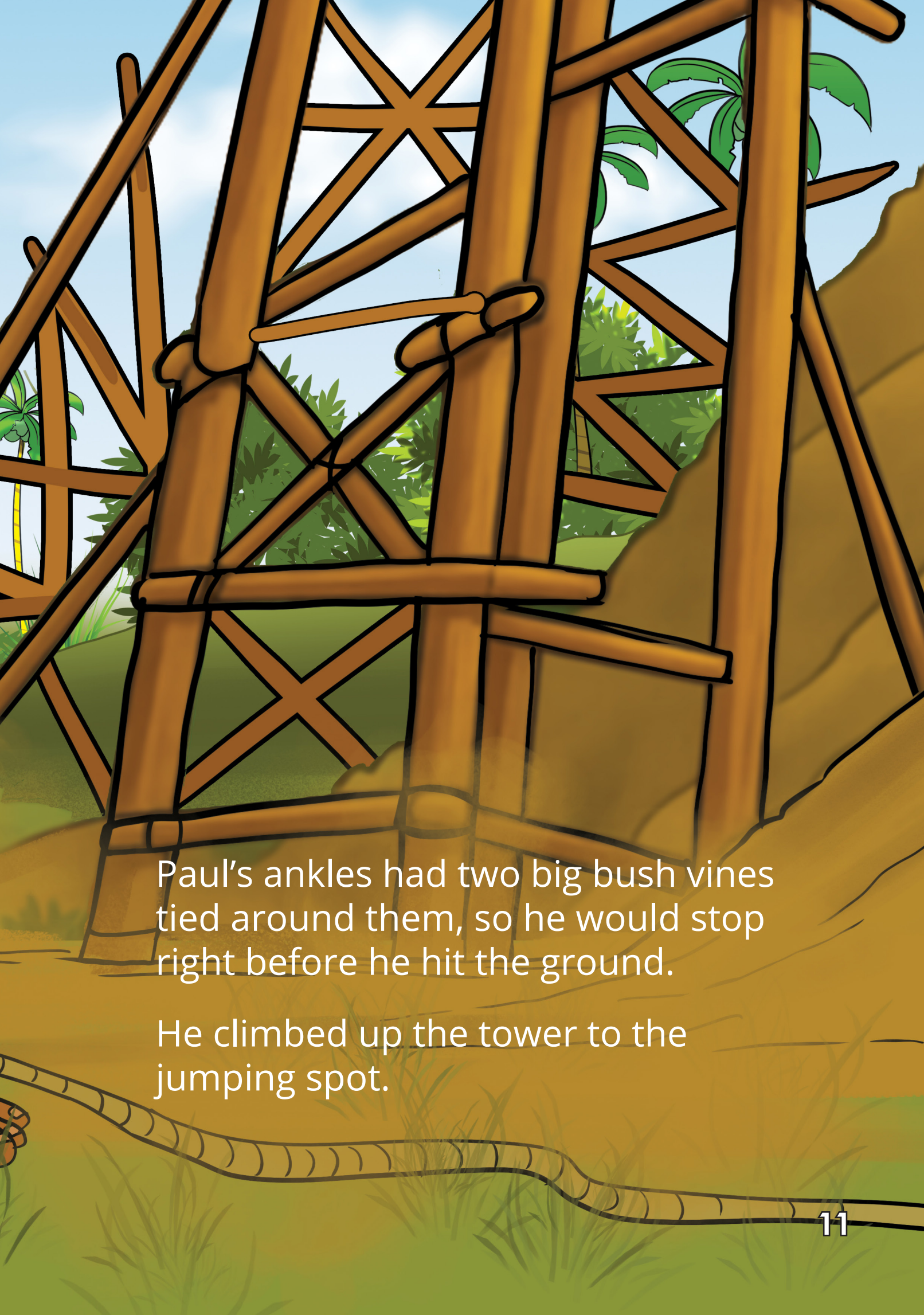
Paul's parents encouraged him to be strong. There were people responsible for taking care of Paul's traditional dress, and he waited for them to get him ready for the jump.

Paul had mixed feelings about the jump. He was scared to do it, but he was also excited for something new, and happy to take part in this tradition. There was a big feast prepared for everyone after the jump.



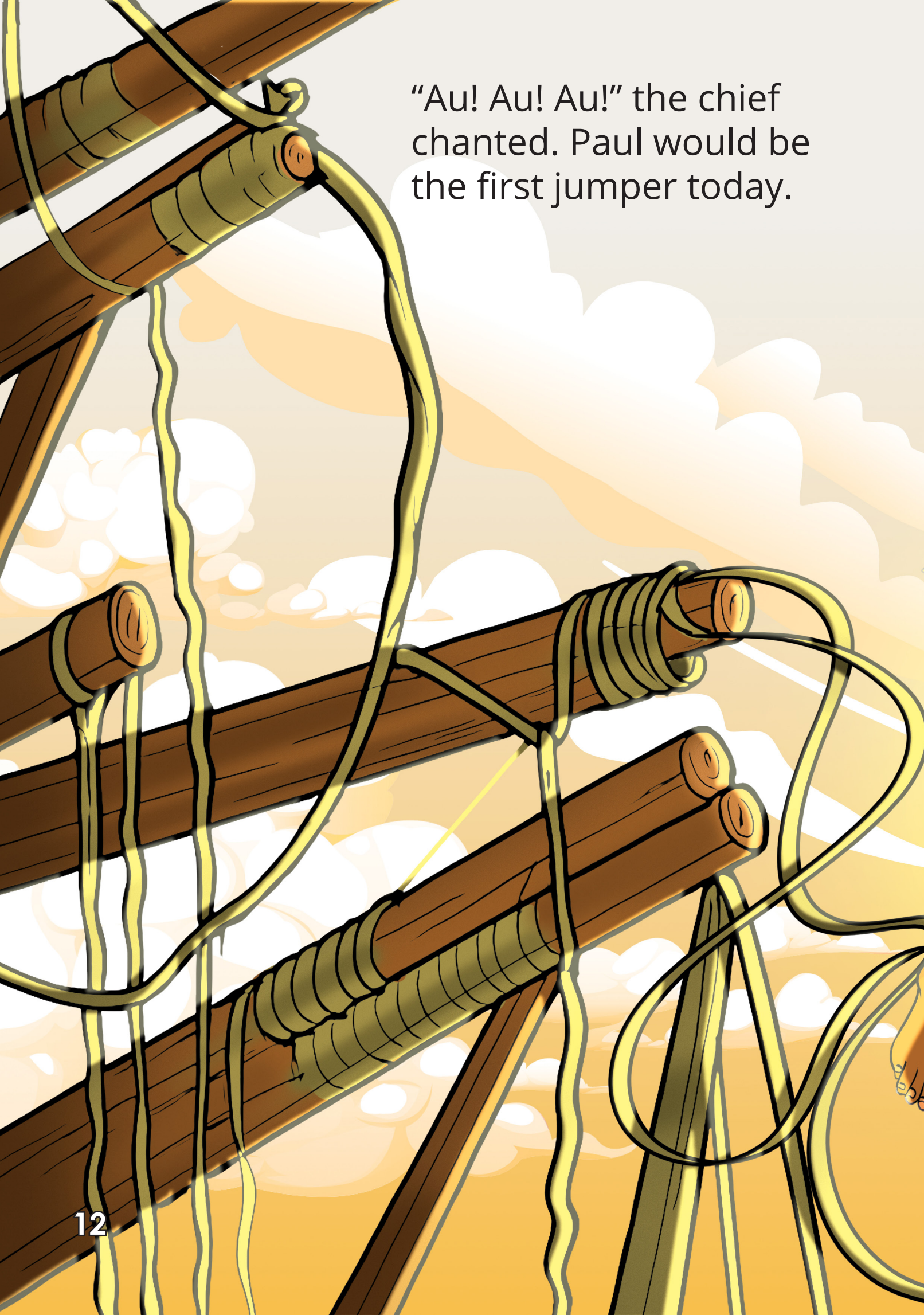






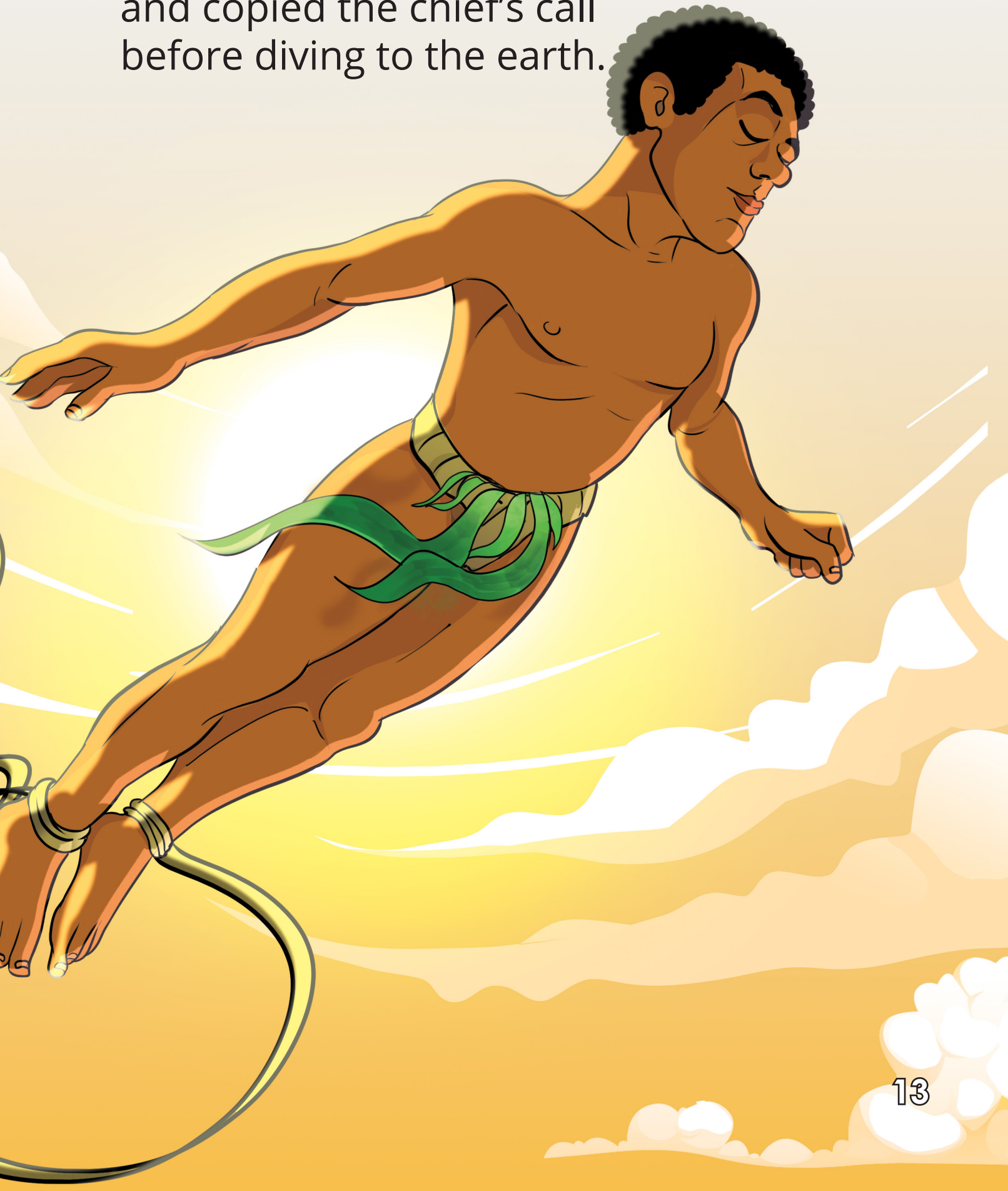
Paul's ankles had two big bush vines tied around them, so he would stop right before he hit the ground.

He climbed up the tower to the jumping spot.

A stylized illustration of a wooden structure, possibly a ladder or a frame, made of brown logs. Yellow ropes are wrapped around the logs and hang down. The background is a warm, orange and yellow sky with soft, white clouds. The overall style is simple and cartoonish.

“Au! Au! Au!” the chief
chanted. Paul would be
the first jumper today.

He stood on the spot where he would jump from and looked to the sky. Paul clapped his hands five times and copied the chief's call before diving to the earth.





“Oh!” cried one of the women. She pointed at Paul, who was hanging upside-down from the vines in mid-air! Now it would be very difficult to get Paul back to the ground. And if he moved the wrong way, he might swing back and hit the tower. Everybody stopped dancing and singing and watched Paul anxiously.



One of the other land divers climbed the tower and pulled Paul back up, cutting the vines as soon as Paul was safe.

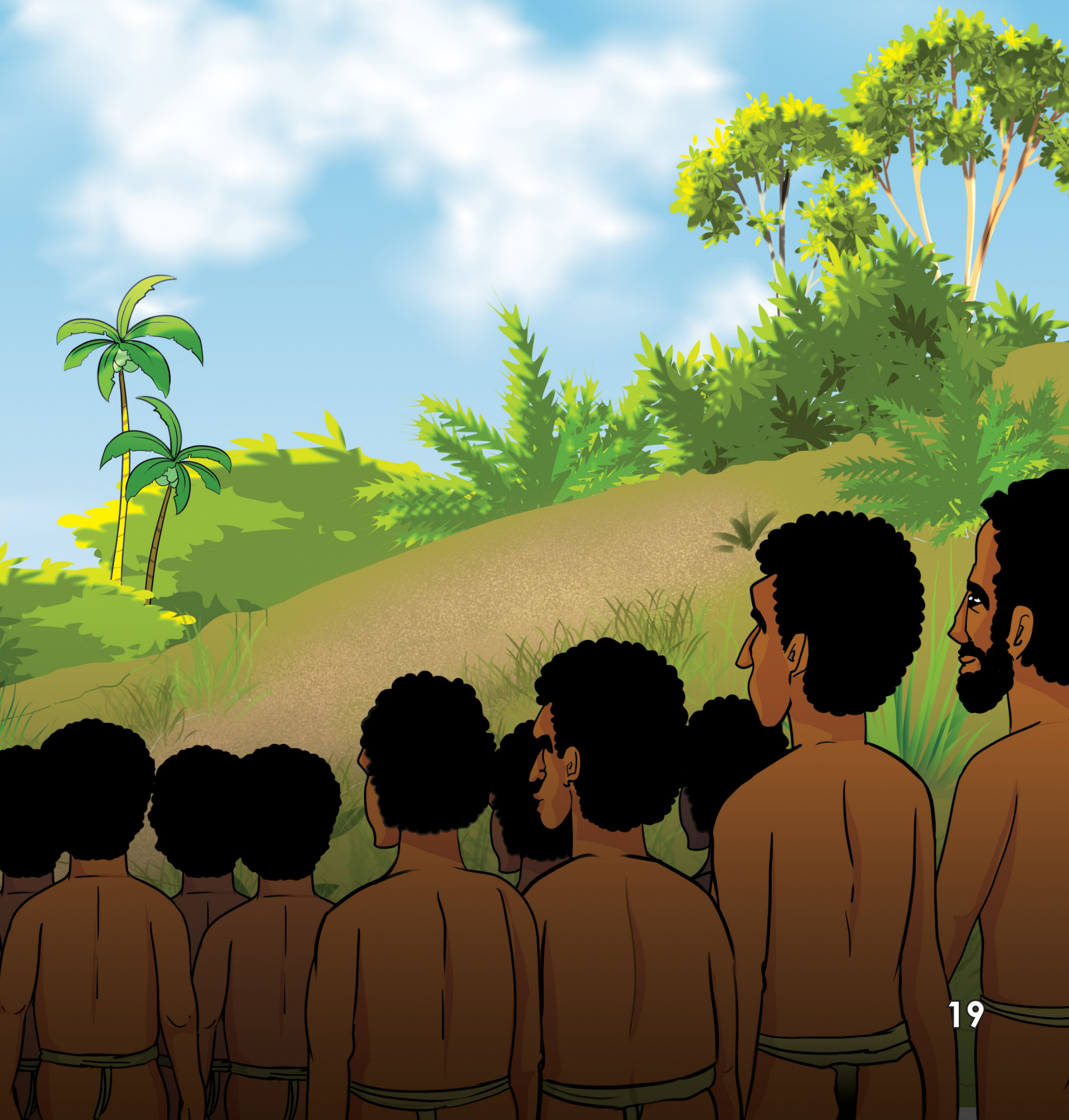


"I believe Paul used the wrong platform," the chief realised, noticing how high up the tower Paul's jumping spot had been.





That mistake had nearly caused Paul his life! Less experienced jumpers should use the lower parts of the tower, because otherwise they could get seriously hurt.





After this huge mistake, Paul was even more scared than before. As the other land divers went, Paul decided he wouldn't be jumping today.



**You can use these questions
to talk about this book with
your family, friends and
teachers.**



What is this tradition called?



**Why didn't Paul touch the
ground after he jumped?**



**How is land diving considered
a rite of passage?**



**What else do you know about
land diving?**

**Try researching or asking someone
about this tradition!**

About the author

Meriam Tumu was born on Efate and still lives there, in Erakor Village. She wanted to share her island's customs with others and so wrote this story, something she also likes to do with family. Her favourite story as a child was about how the island of Pentecost was formed.



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Paul's First Jump

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Save the Children



Original illustrations by Mina Nader

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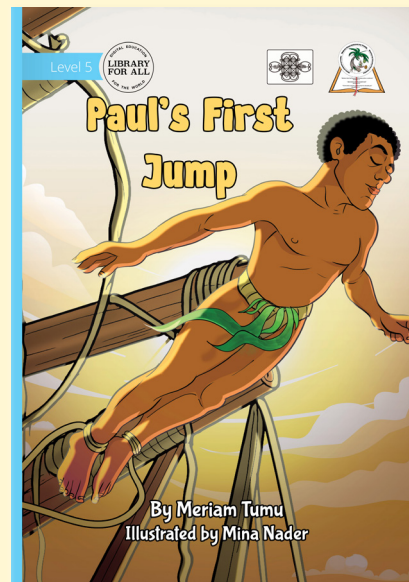
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It's Paul's turn to participate in the land diving tradition, but he accidentally jumps from the wrong platform!



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