

Set against a background of totem poles and majestic mountain scenery, this famous legend of the Tsimshian Indians of British Columbia tells how the mountain goats took their revenge on the men of Temlaham for breaking the law of the hunt. The dramatic story is given visual excitement by the glowing collages of one of Canada's outstanding illustrators.

ILLUSTRATED BY ELIZABETH CLEAVER. RETOLD BY WILLIAM TOYE.

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# The Mountain Goats of Temlaham

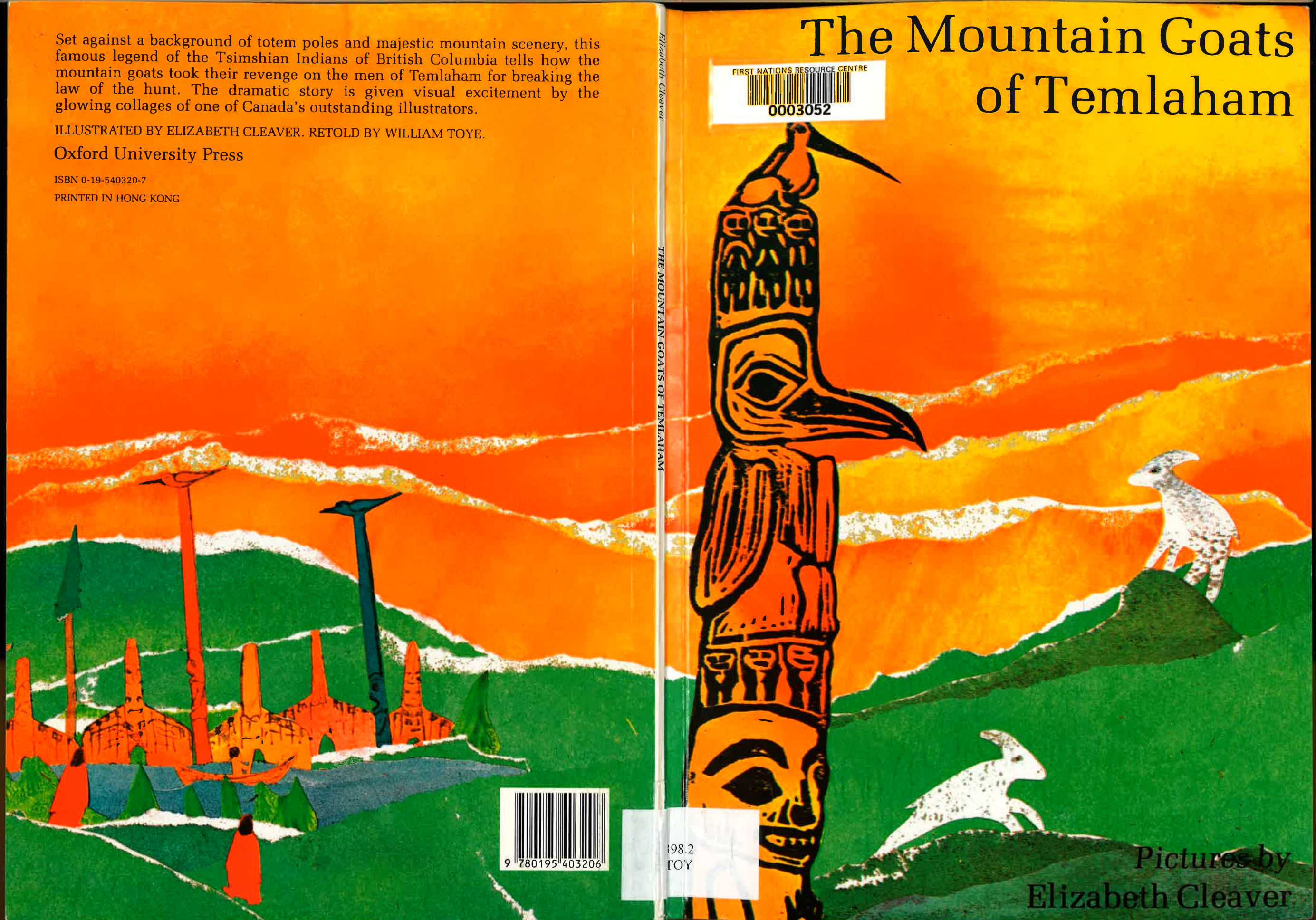
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Elizabeth Cleaver

THE MOUNTAIN GOATS OF TEMPLAHAM



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# The Mountain Goats of Temlaham

Pictures by  
**ELIZABETH CLEAVER**  
Retold by William Toye

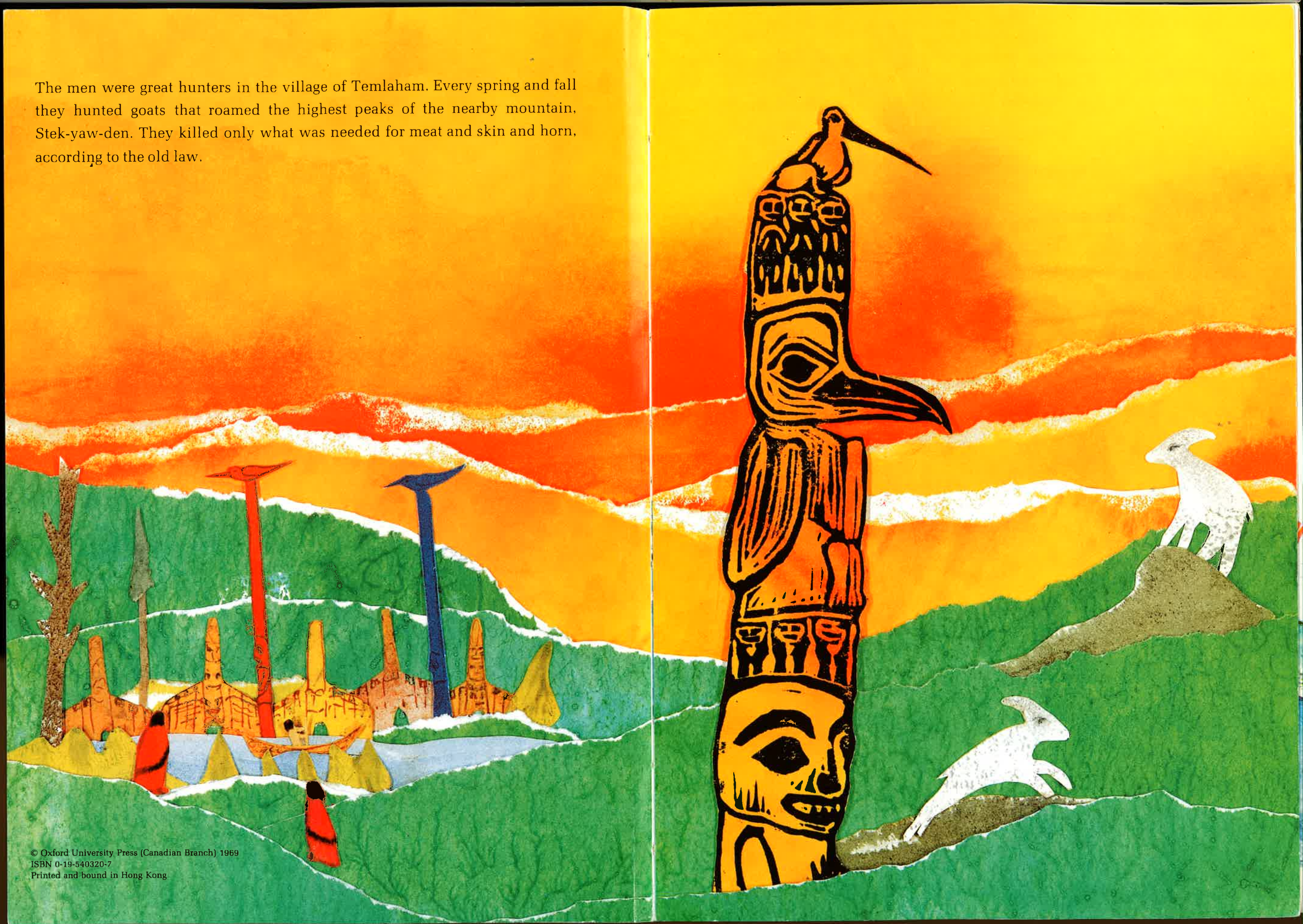
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The men were great hunters in the village of Temlaham. Every spring and fall they hunted goats that roamed the highest peaks of the nearby mountain, Stek-yaw-den. They killed only what was needed for meat and skin and horn, according to the old law.





But there came a time when the hunters turned wasteful and greedy. They killed the goats for sport and left behind bones and meat and carcasses strewn over the ground. The goats mourned the needless killing of their brothers and were angry.



The children took it to the village fire. But they did not let the kid warm itself in peace. The children prodded and pushed it so close to the flames that its fur and skin were seared and it yelped with the pain.



Then they threw it into the water again.



Their shouts and harsh laughter were heard by Raven Feather, a young boy of the village. When he saw the struggling kid he ran to the river and pulled it from the cold water. Ashamed for his people and their cruelty, he wiped the kid dry and comforted it until it became calm in his arms. With red ointment he rubbed the burns on its face and legs and around its eyes. Then he carried it far outside the village to the foot of the mountain.

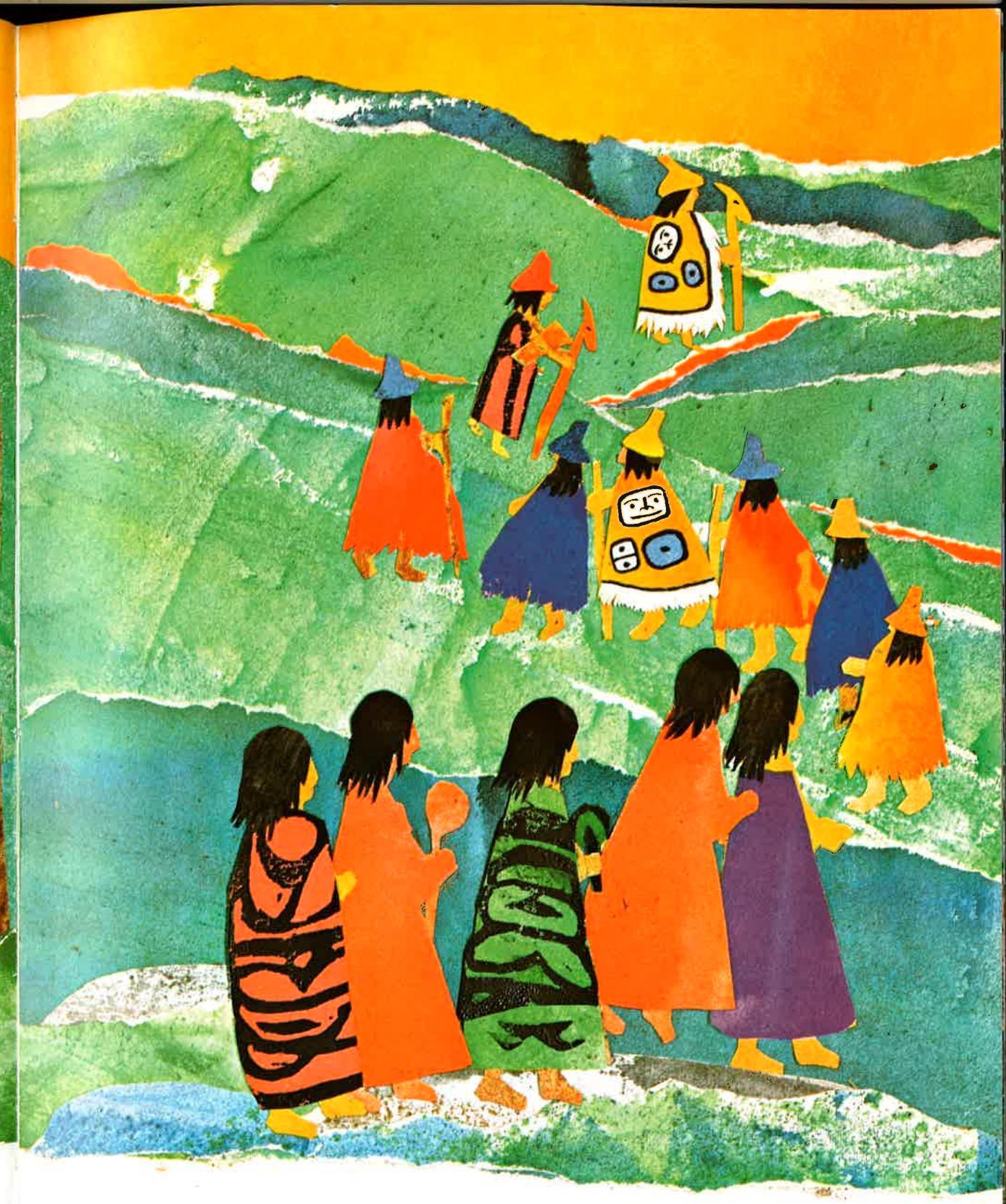


As he put the kid down, he whispered, "Now you are free, little one." And the animal disappeared into the forest.

After the cruel treatment of their young brother, the goats of Stek-yaw-den resolved to punish the Indians of Temlaham.



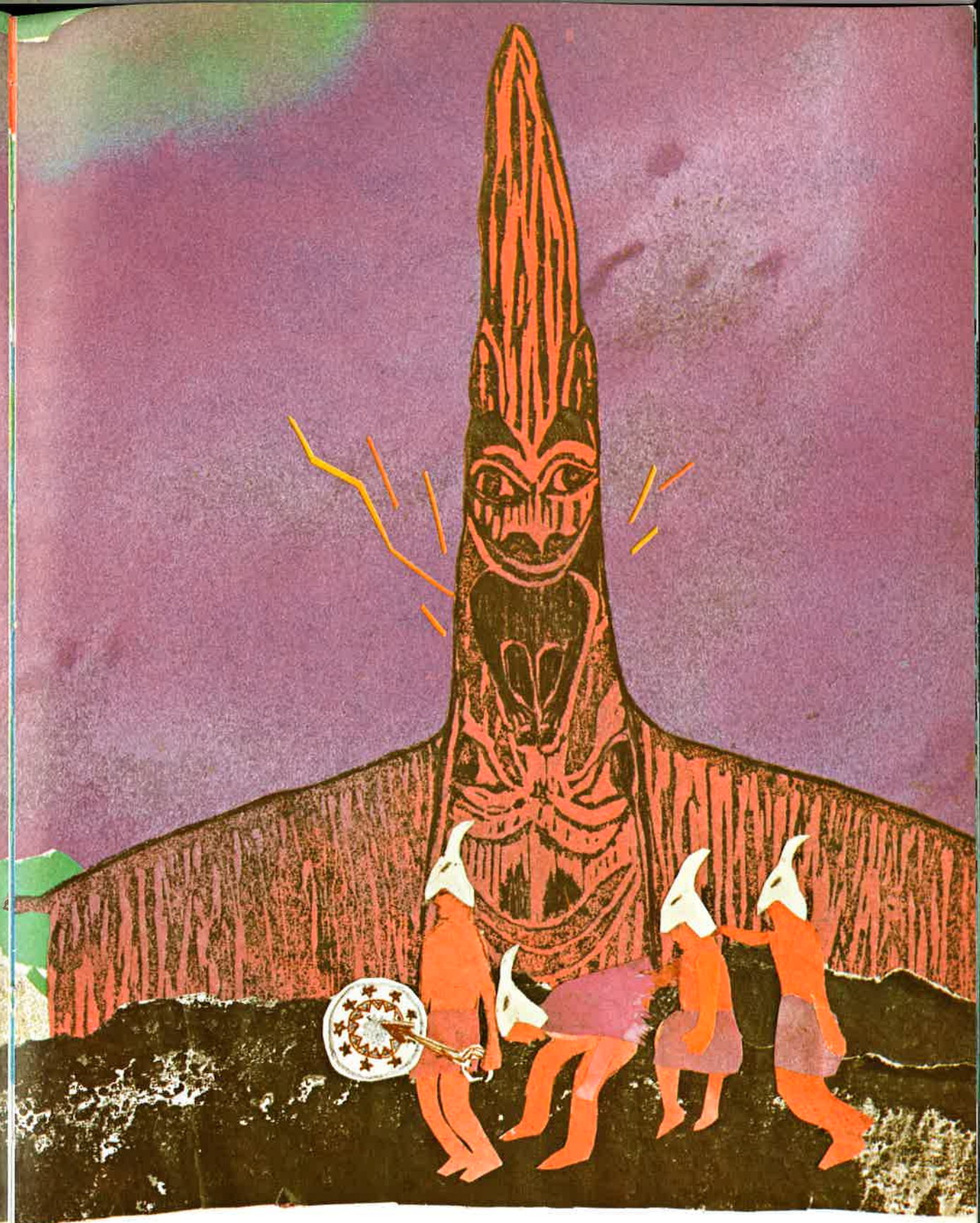
As the summer was nearing its close, before the great fall hunt, four strangers cloaked in white goatskin appeared in the village of Temlaham. They were messengers who had come to invite the Temlahams to a feast high in the mountains. Their invitation was gladly accepted.



The next day the people of the village dressed in their finest robes. In a long procession they followed the messengers into the forest and up the steep sides of the mountain Stek-yaw-den.

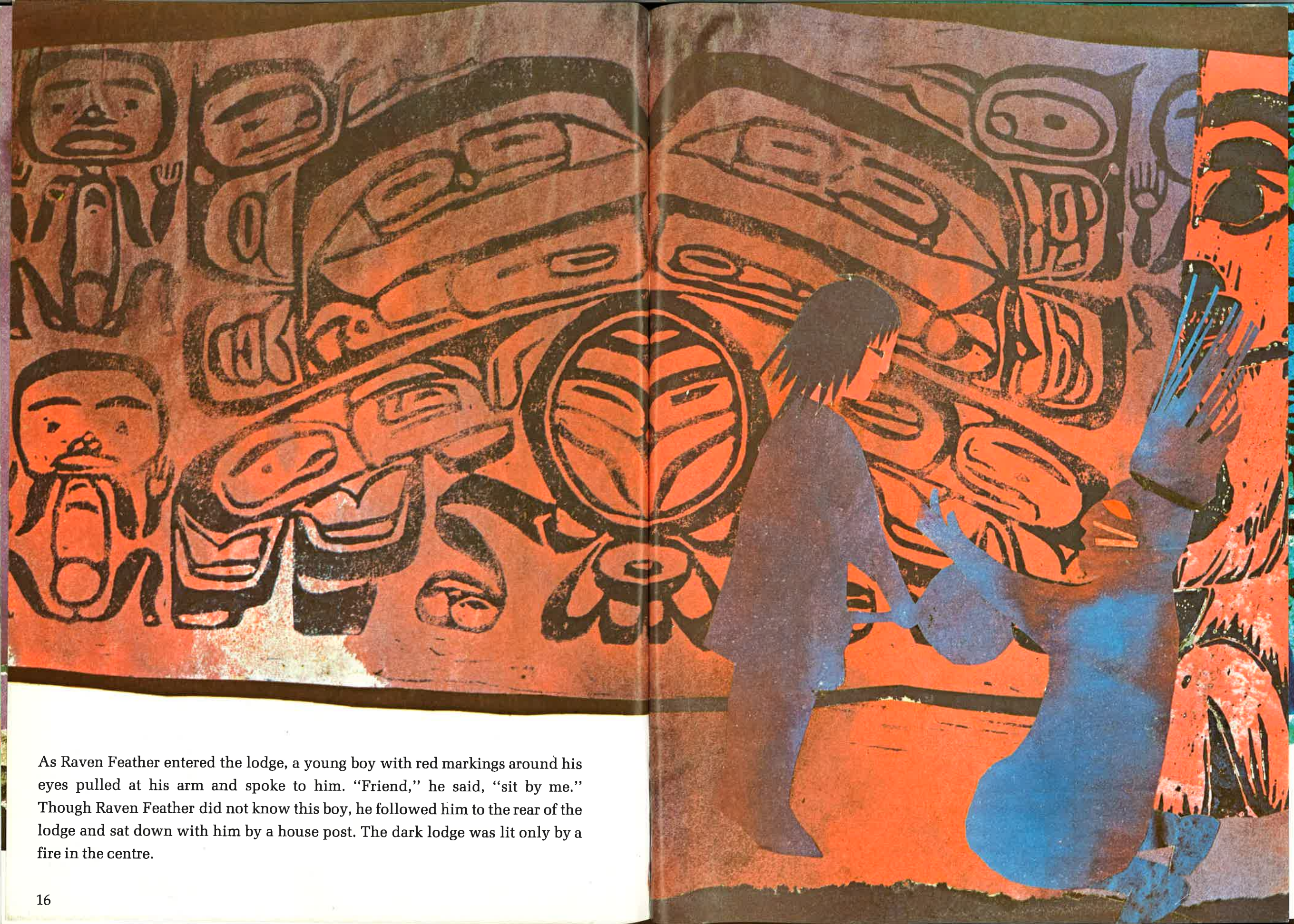


It was the middle of the night when they saw ahead of them sparks pouring from the smoke-hole of a lodge perched on the edge of a cliff. In front of the lodge



four singing and dancing figures with goat headdresses welcomed the people of Temlaham, who followed the dancers into the lodge for the feast.





As Raven Feather entered the lodge, a young boy with red markings around his eyes pulled at his arm and spoke to him. "Friend," he said, "sit by me." Though Raven Feather did not know this boy, he followed him to the rear of the lodge and sat down with him by a house post. The dark lodge was lit only by a fire in the centre.



The ceremony began. First there was chanting and singing. Then the chief of the goat people stood up. He wore a painted mountain goat mask with one horn. He began to dance and as he danced he chanted: *yi yi ye a ha aaa... my hoof makes the mountain tremble.*

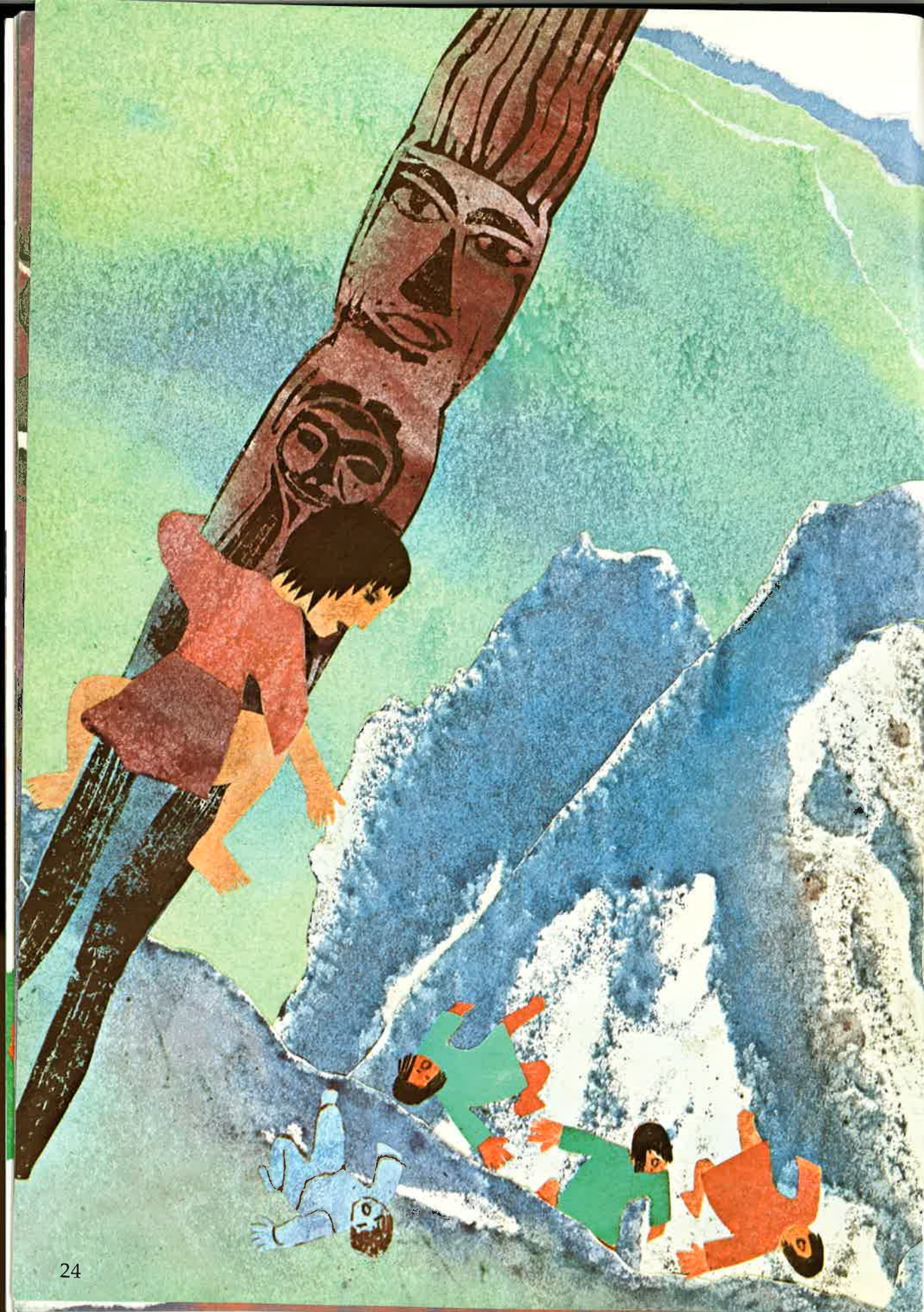
His body leapt and twisted like the flames of the fire. The dancing seemed to cast a spell over the Temlahams. They did not move or make a sound.



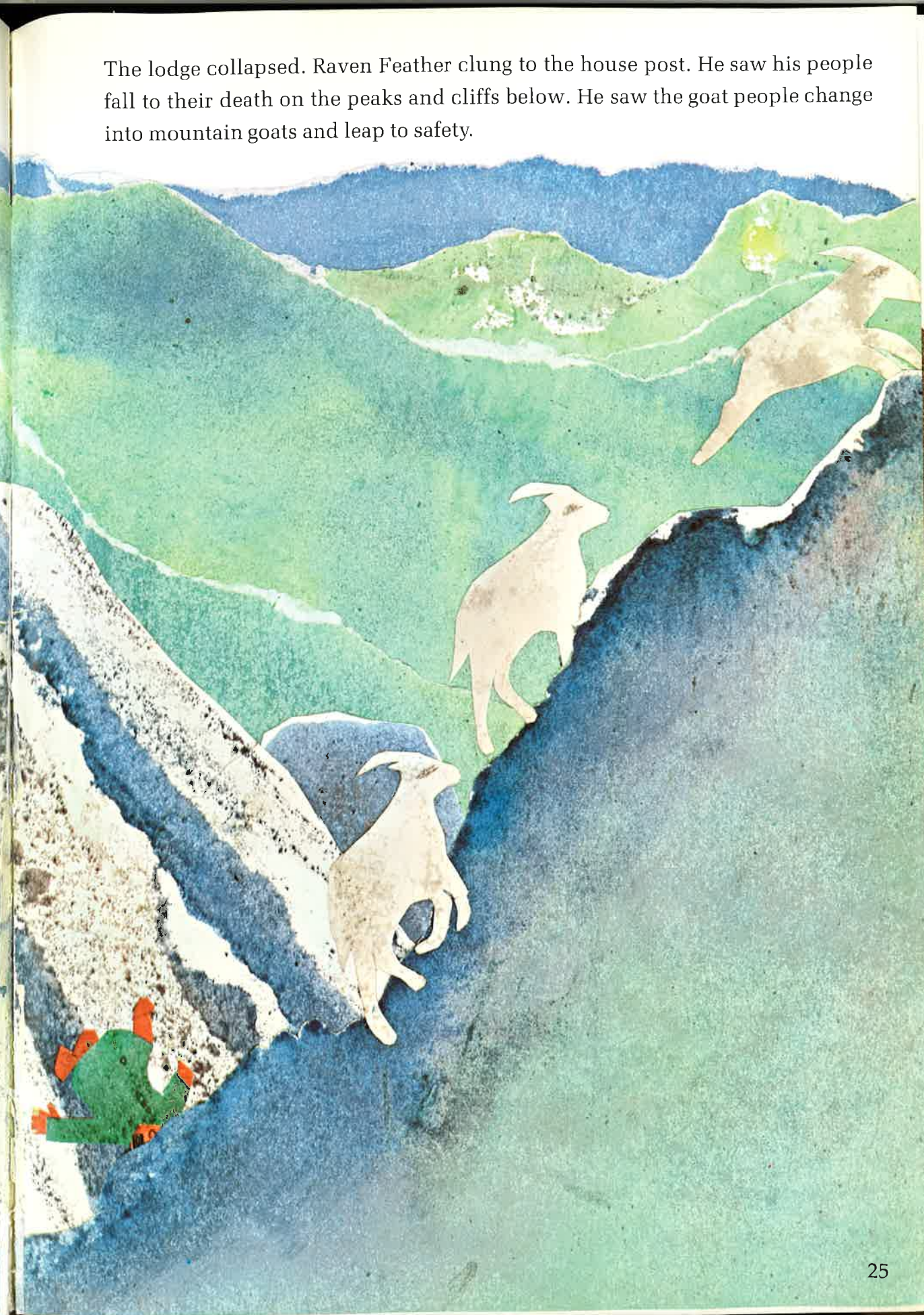
The chief's painted mask changed into a goat head and his whole body became that of a mountain goat. The Temlahams watched in frightened silence. The dancing goat stamped its hoofs and the lodge trembled. Suddenly a sharp crag thrust its way through the floor and the goat chief leapt upon it. Now the Temlahams screamed with fear.



The goat sprang from the crag and kicked at a wall of the lodge.



The lodge collapsed. Raven Feather clung to the house post. He saw his people fall to their death on the peaks and cliffs below. He saw the goat people change into mountain goats and leap to safety.





Raven Feather was alone on the sheer side of the mountain. He began to cry with fear.

"I am still with you, friend, don't be afraid." It was a young mountain goat speaking. It had red marks on its face and legs. Raven Feather recognized the goat, now grown, that his people had mistreated.

"Your people have been punished by my brothers for hunting the mountain goats cruelly and wastefully," the goat said. "But you saved my life when they tormented me. Now I will help you."

"I cannot climb down," cried Raven Feather.

"Don't be afraid," said the goat. "Put this on," and he handed him a goatskin cloak. "When I leap, you follow."



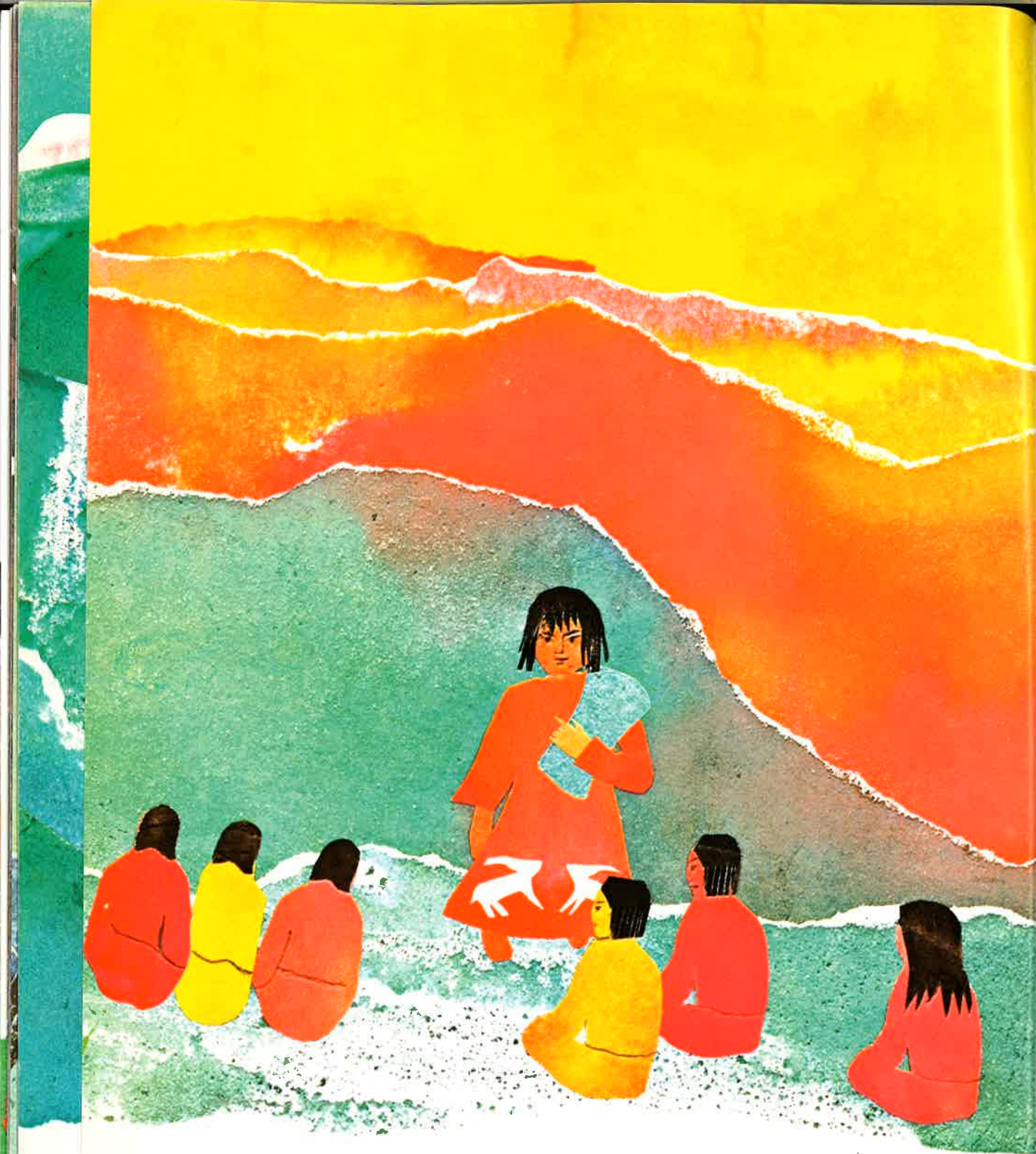
Raven Feather did as he was told. The goat plunged down the cliff. Terrified, the boy shut his eyes and dropped into air. As he landed and scabbled on the rocky surface and plunged again he felt he had turned into a goat. He lost his fear. As his friend leapt from crag to crag, so did he until he finally reached the bottom of the mountain.





Raven Feather found himself on a trail he knew. He turned to thank the mountain goat for helping him down the mountain, but his friend was gone. Sadly he walked back to Temlaham to tell the old people and the children—the only ones who had not gone to the feast—of the mountain goats' revenge.





Raven Feather became a wise teacher of his people and often told his tale to them. When the boys became hunters themselves, they never forgot the old law of the goat hunt. To remind his children and his children's children, Raven Feather took the one-horned mountain goat as his family crest and had its likeness carved into many things.