

SADIE'S SMILE

written and illustrated by
DEBORAH FITZGERALD

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I DEDICATE THIS BOOK ...

To my kiddos, Sammi Jo and Zoe, for drawing and playing with me
while keeping me on my toes and my life full of joy.

To my loving hubby, Steven, for believing in me with all my creative messes
and endeavors and my love of cats.

To all my friends, who cheered me on with encouraging words and hugs.

To my fellow teaching artists, because you inspire me.

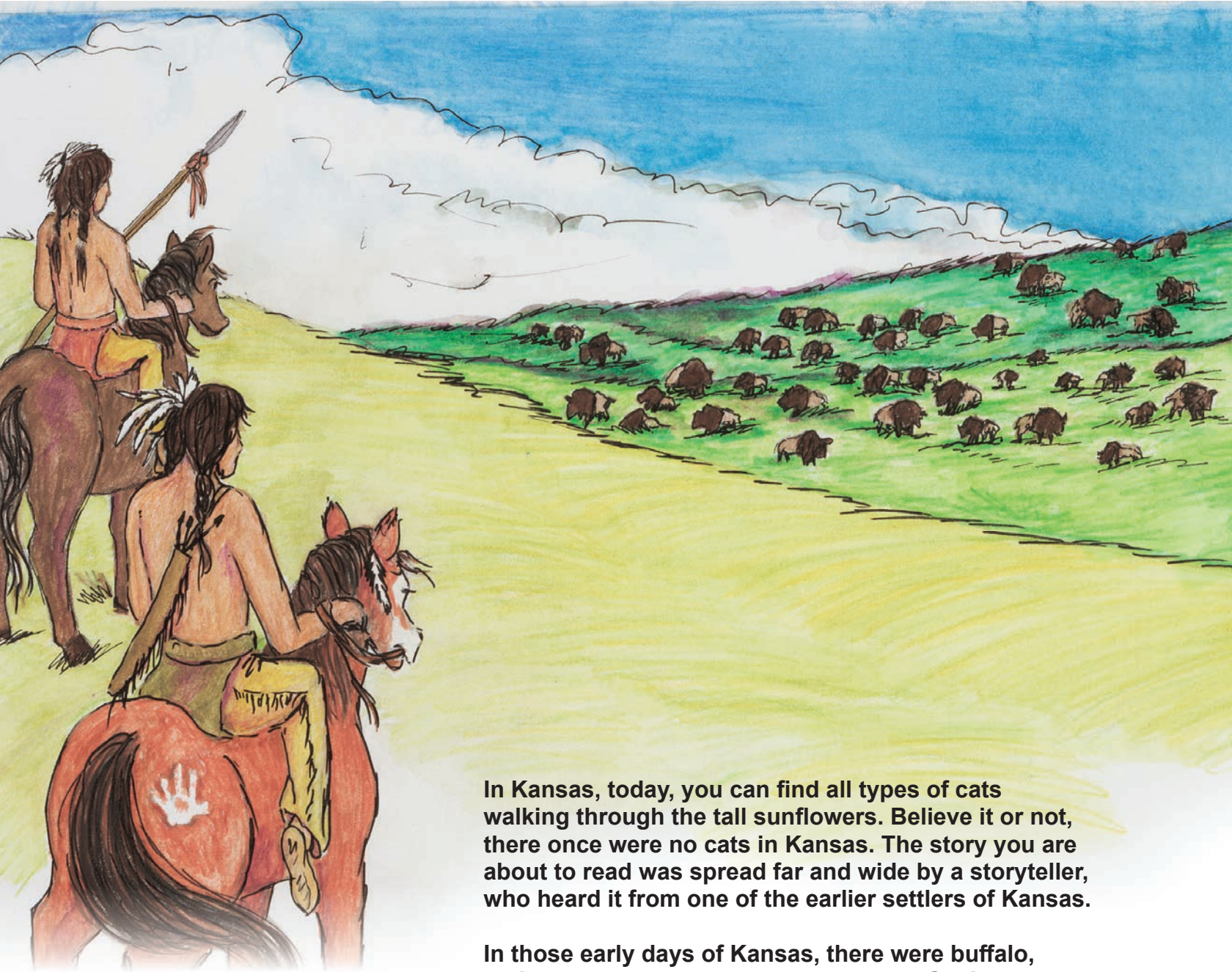
To my MaMa Jo, for encouraging me to be creative and messy while allowing me
to grow into the artist I am and teaching me how to love and care for cats.

And finally, to honor all the loving vets that care for our fur babies.

The following is the list of my fur babies, all of who are present in this book.

Ma Kitty, Bandit, Bernard, Lightfoot, Marlo, Tia, Toni, B.W. Tannie, Kirby,
Wesley, Kalima and Vinnie.





In Kansas, today, you can find all types of cats walking through the tall sunflowers. Believe it or not, there once were no cats in Kansas. The story you are about to read was spread far and wide by a storyteller, who heard it from one of the earlier settlers of Kansas.

In those early days of Kansas, there were buffalo, Indians, settlers and there was Joe and Sadie O'Grady. But there were NO cats anywhere in Kansas. This made Sadie sad when thinking about her sweet kitty. She missed Kitty so much she lost her smile.



The settlers were also very sad, because back east where they came from, there were cats in every home. The cats would catch mice, sit by the fire or curl up in a lap to purr gently. They made a house look cozy.



One day, Sadie O' Grady said, "Joe O'Grady, I want a cat. Miss Jo Leeper wants a cat. The Steward's and the Murphy's want a cat. Why, even Ned Greenfield wants a cat. Darn near all the settlers in Kansas want a cat. But I can't find a cat anywhere in Kansas."



Now it just so happens that Joe O'Grady was a trader.
As a trader, he had an idea.

"I'm heading back east to round up some kitties." Joe watched Sadie's eyes brighten, as he grabbed his hat and kissed her on the cheek. "I will trade them to the neighbors. Then all the houses will look cozy like home sweet home."



He hitched up the wagon to the oxen. “Folks here in Kansas will be happy,” he shouted as he waved farewell to Sadie O’Grady from across the hill.



**Miles of prairie passed before Joe O'Grady finally reached the train station.
He hopped on the train to the river.
Once there he met up with his friend, Jake Bates,
the captain of a riverboat.**

**“Jake, I need to head down the river to catch a train back east.
I need to round up some cats for the settlers, especially Sadie.”**



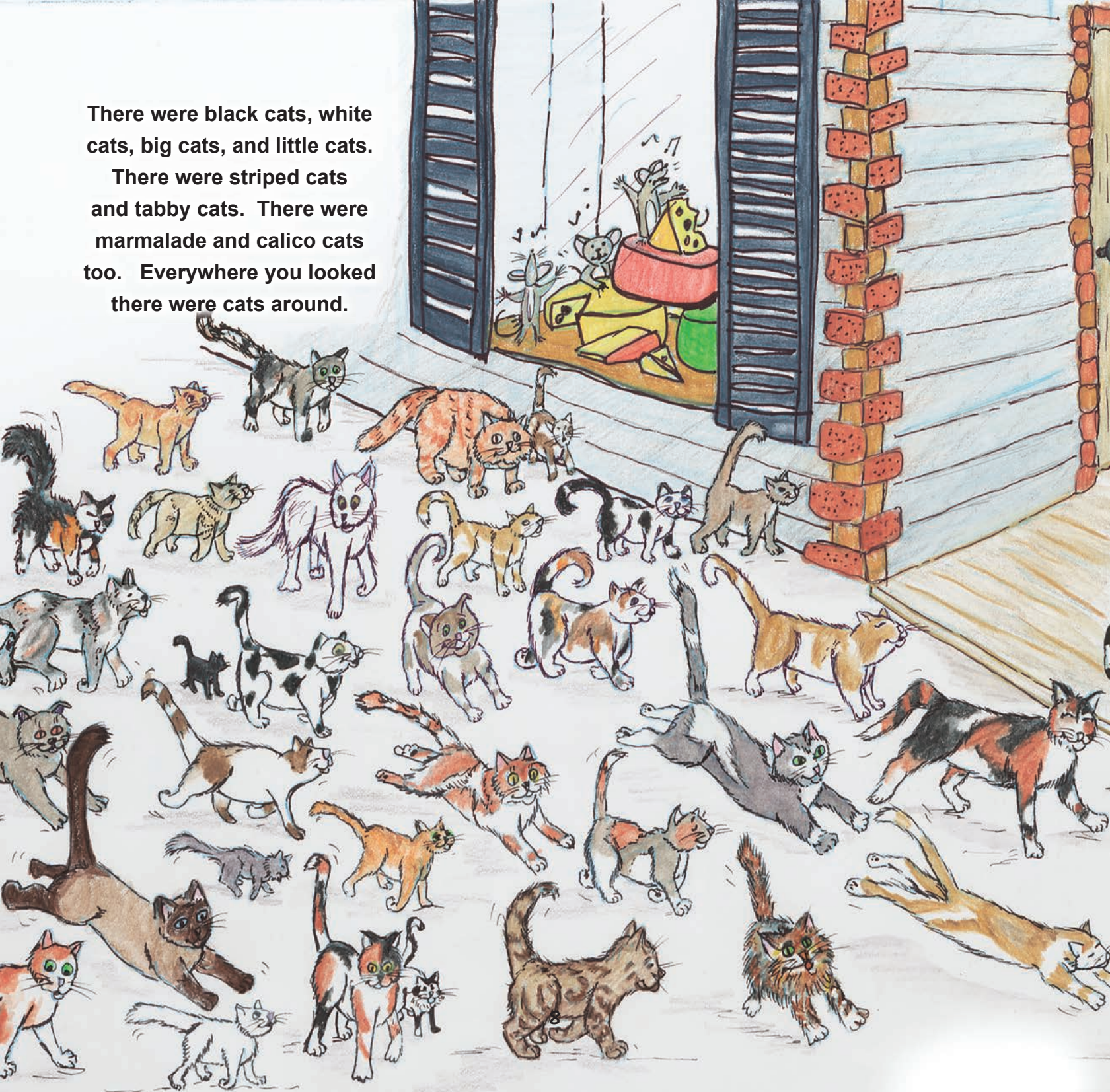
So they floated
down river on
Jake's riverboat
to the train
station. Joe
O'Grady hopped
onto a wagon for
a short ride to the
train station.

Finally, he was
back east
and the town was
full of cats.



There were black cats, white cats, big cats, and little cats.

There were striped cats and tabby cats. There were marmalade and calico cats too. Everywhere you looked there were cats around.







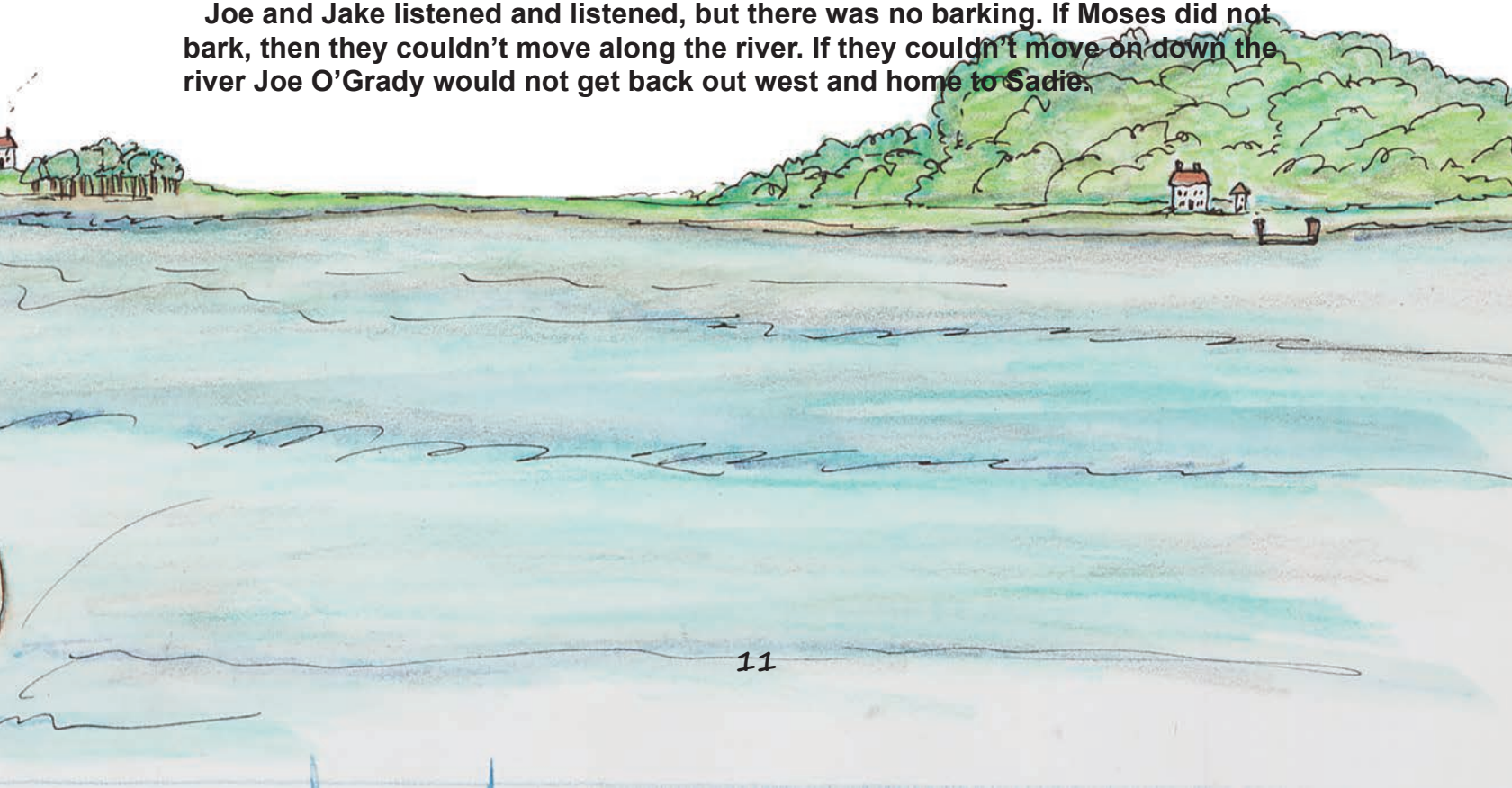
“Joe, we gotta hurry,” yelled Jake. “We hadn’t had much rain in these parts and the river bed is dryin’ up. We could get stuck in the mud until the spring floods. Why, we may never get unstuck,” he added. “Then get a move on, Jake,” said Joe O’Grady.

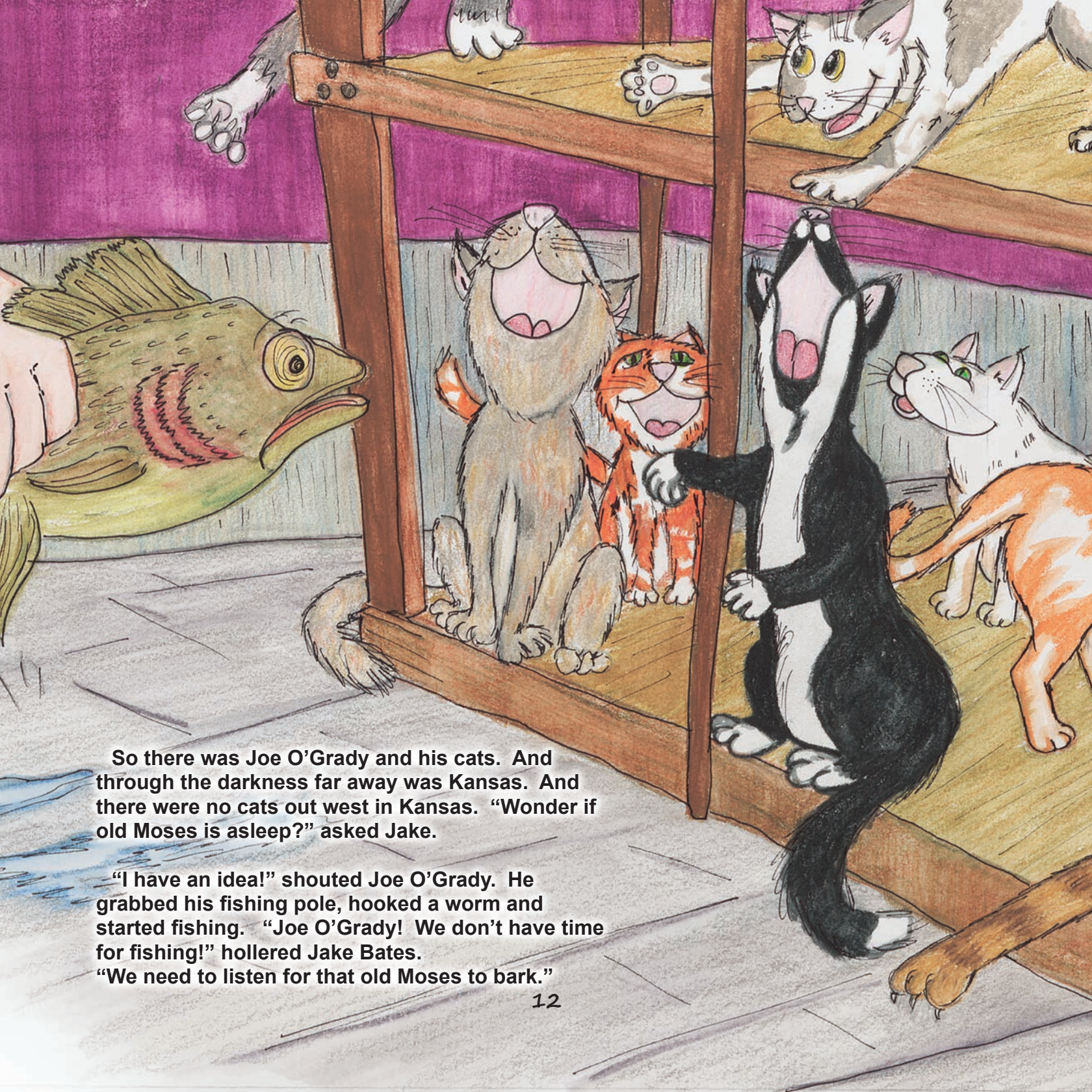
So there was Joe with all the cats. And way far away was home. And there were still no cats in Kansas.

The sun was setting and it was getting mighty dark by now when Joe asked, “Jake, how do you travel the river when it gets so dark?”

“On dark nights, I steer by sound,” he answered as he cupped his ear. I know all the dogs on the river. I just move from dog to dog. Right now we should be hearing a spotted hound dog by the name of Moses. He barks like a bugle when he hears the steamboat.”

Joe and Jake listened and listened, but there was no barking. If Moses did not bark, then they couldn’t move along the river. If they couldn’t move on down the river Joe O’Grady would not get back out west and home to Sadie.





So there was Joe O'Grady and his cats. And through the darkness far away was Kansas. And there were no cats out west in Kansas. "Wonder if old Moses is asleep?" asked Jake.

"I have an idea!" shouted Joe O'Grady. He grabbed his fishing pole, hooked a worm and started fishing. "Joe O'Grady! We don't have time for fishing!" hollered Jake Bates.

"We need to listen for that old Moses to bark."

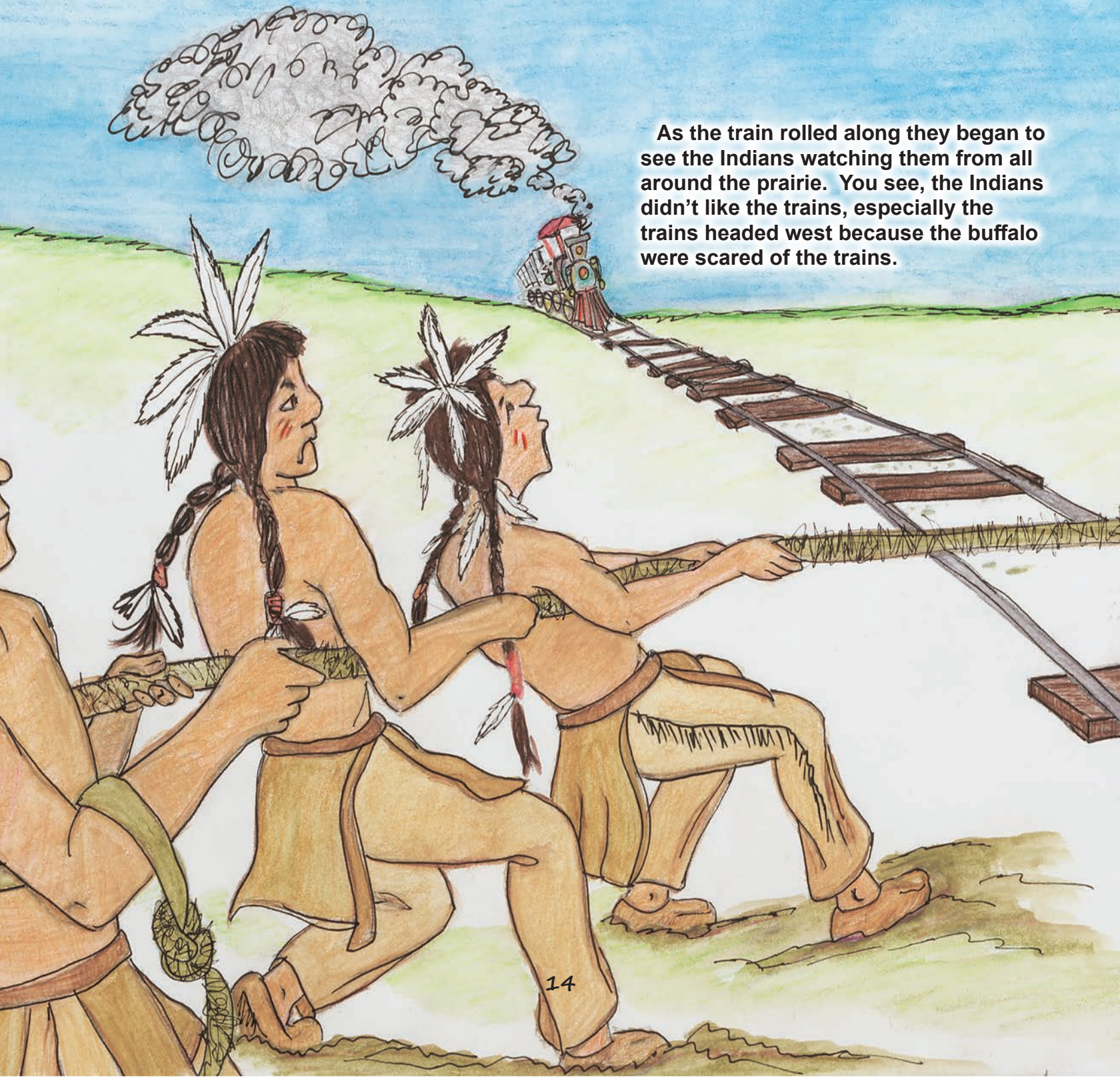


Joe O'Grady kept on fishing. Soon he caught a big trout and quickly showed it to the cats. They started yowling and meowing and all kinds of noises when they saw and smelled the fish. All this noise woke up that old Moses. Then he heard the steamboat and sounded off like a bugle. Bark! Bark! Bark!

"There he is, that good old dog, Moses. We are on the way now, Joe! Let's get this steamboat going!" shouted Jake Bates. Soon all the dogs along the river were barking as Joe's cats made noise until the sun came up in the morning.

As the sun rose in the sky, Joe O'Grady placed the crate of cats on the train and climbed on board with the engineer to head across the prairie where he had left the covered wagon.

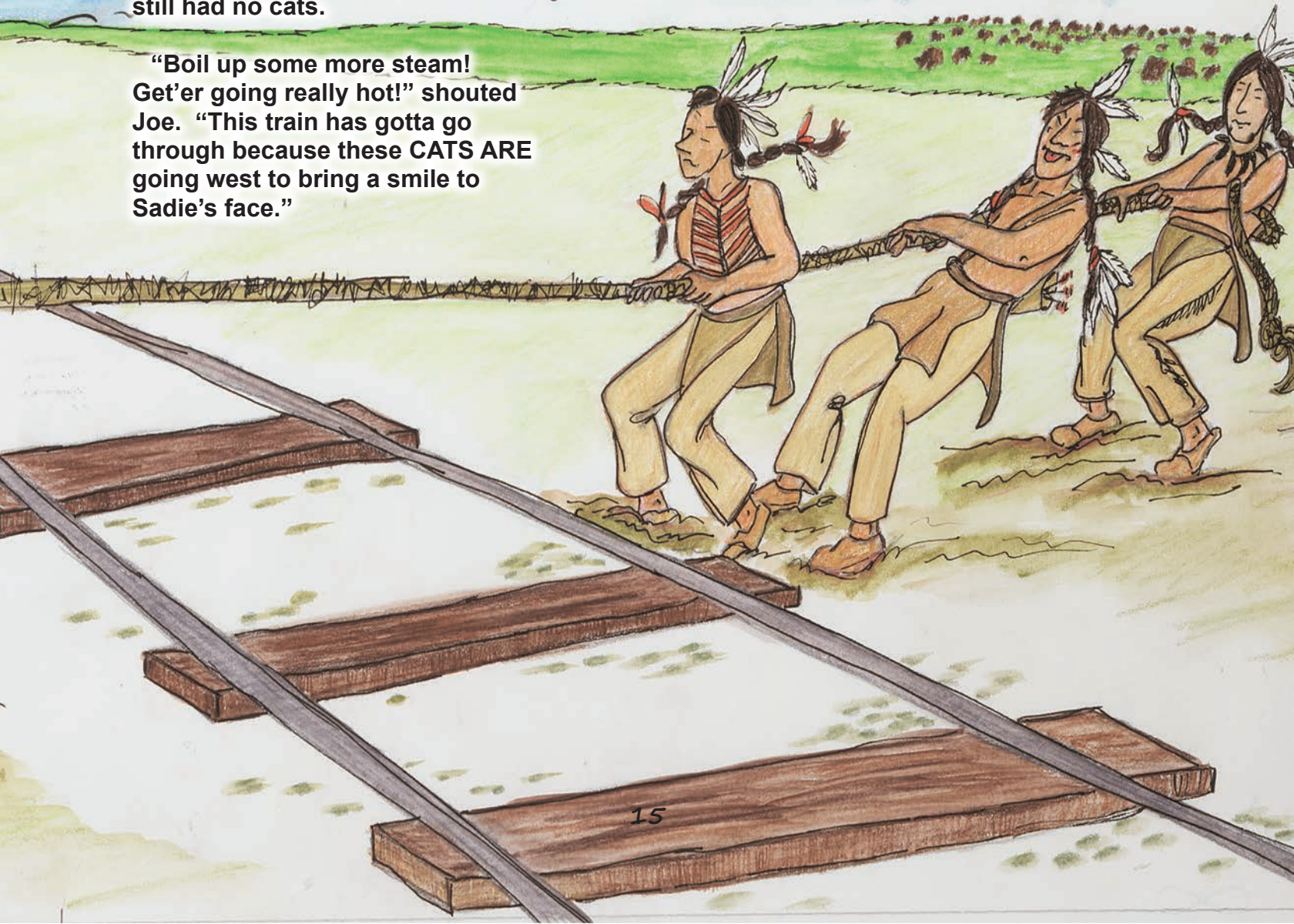
As the train rolled along they began to see the Indians watching them from all around the prairie. You see, the Indians didn't like the trains, especially the trains headed west because the buffalo were scared of the trains.



This made it hard to herd the buffalo so the Indians wanted to stop the train. They made a long rope and stretched it across the tracks and pulled it tight when they heard the train coming.

So there they were, Joe O'Grady, the engineer, the train and the Indians. There were his cats. And still further than your eyes could see were the settlers. Who still had no cats.

"Boil up some more steam! Get'er going really hot!" shouted Joe. "This train has gotta go through because these CATS ARE going west to bring a smile to Sadie's face."

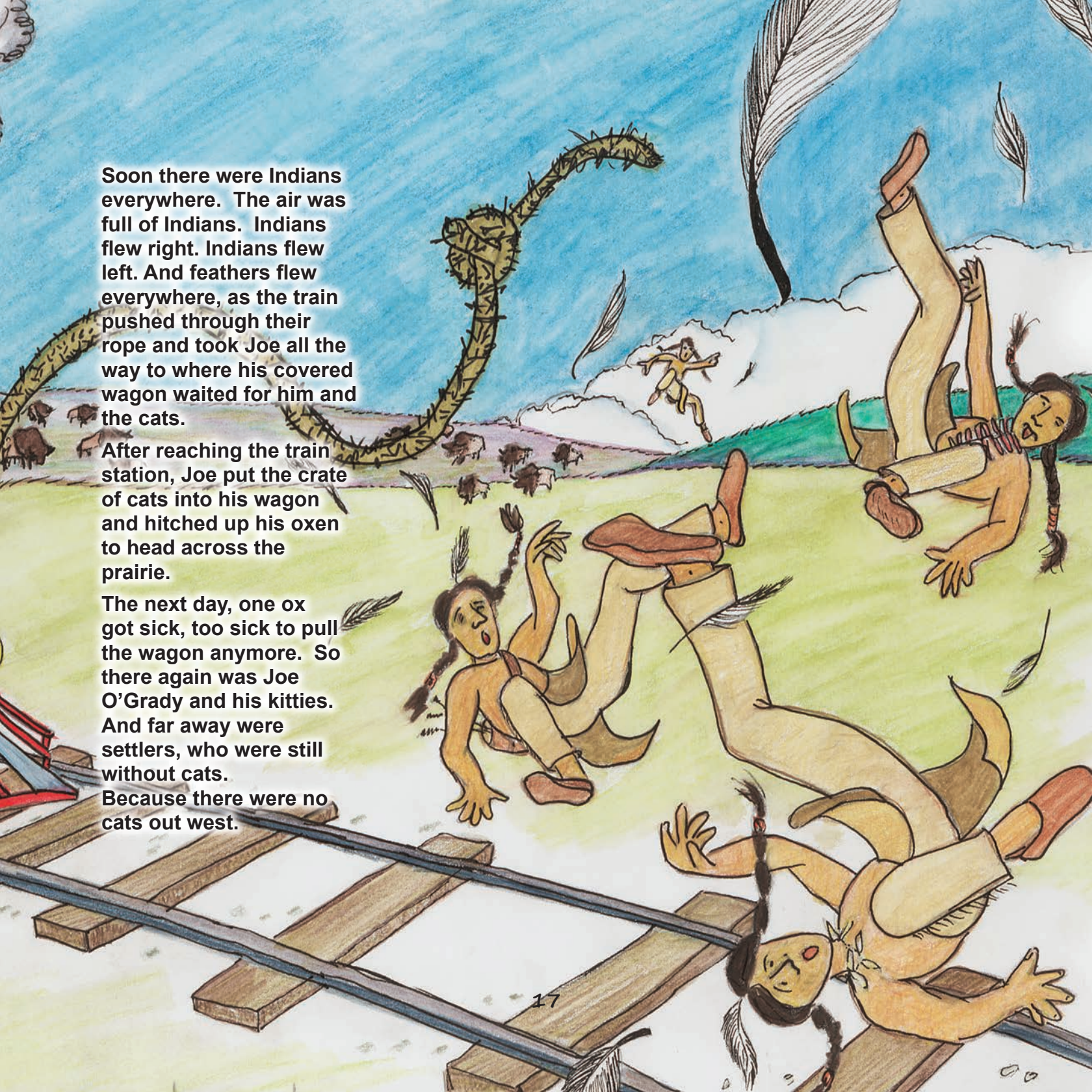




Soon there were Indians everywhere. The air was full of Indians. Indians flew right. Indians flew left. And feathers flew everywhere, as the train pushed through their rope and took Joe all the way to where his covered wagon waited for him and the cats.

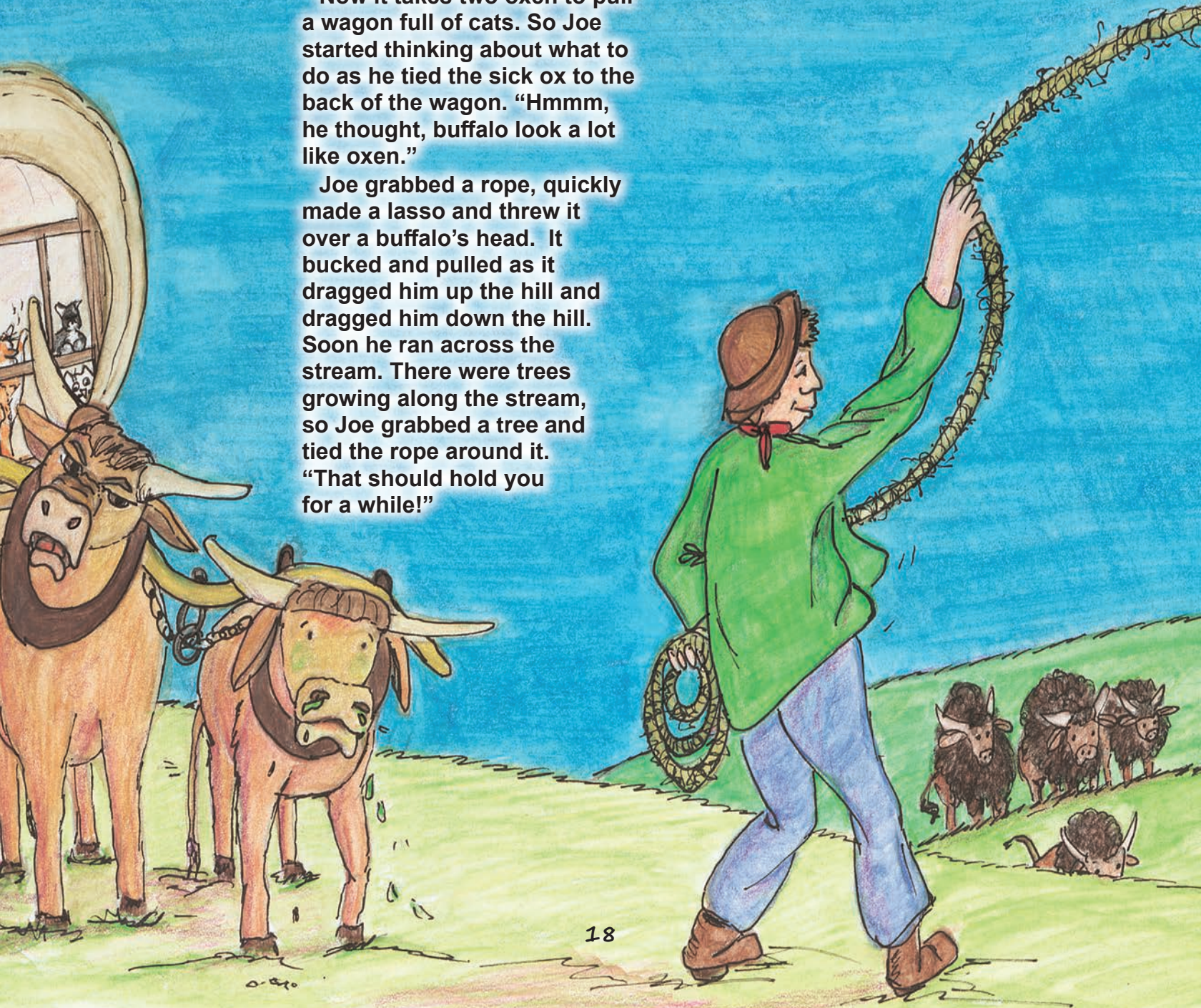
After reaching the train station, Joe put the crate of cats into his wagon and hitched up his oxen to head across the prairie.

The next day, one ox got sick, too sick to pull the wagon anymore. So there again was Joe O'Grady and his kitties. And far away were settlers, who were still without cats. Because there were no cats out west.



Now it takes two oxen to pull a wagon full of cats. So Joe started thinking about what to do as he tied the sick ox to the back of the wagon. "Hmmm, he thought, buffalo look a lot like oxen."

Joe grabbed a rope, quickly made a lasso and threw it over a buffalo's head. It bucked and pulled as it dragged him up the hill and dragged him down the hill. Soon he ran across the stream. There were trees growing along the stream, so Joe grabbed a tree and tied the rope around it. "That should hold you for a while!"





Crack! The tree snapped in two from the strong wild buffalo. Now Joe and the tree went flying across the prairie hills as the branch dug into the ground. As the buffalo ran and ran, he plowed and plowed until there were a hundred and seven acres plowed. Now he was tired. Now, he was a tame buffalo.



Joe just sat there and
smiled. "Well, I'll be...
I have a hundred and seven
acres of good plowed
farmland all ready to plant,
AND a tame buffalo!"
he said as stood up and
dusted himself off.





Joe O'Grady lead the tame buffalo over to the wagon and hitched it up next to the good ox. He checked on the sick ox and patted her head. Then they all traveled the last few miles of prairie to the west where home was waiting. Where Sadie and the settlers lived. Where there still were no cats.





Finally home, Joe O'Grady started trading his cats. He traded to the Murphy's, Miss Jo Leeper, and the Steward's, why he even gave Ned Greenfield a marmalade kitten too. He traded to all the settlers who had no cats.



Soon everyone's house looked cozy, like home sweet home. All the settlers had cats to catch mice, to sit in front of the fireplace, and to curl up on their laps to purr. They were finally happy.

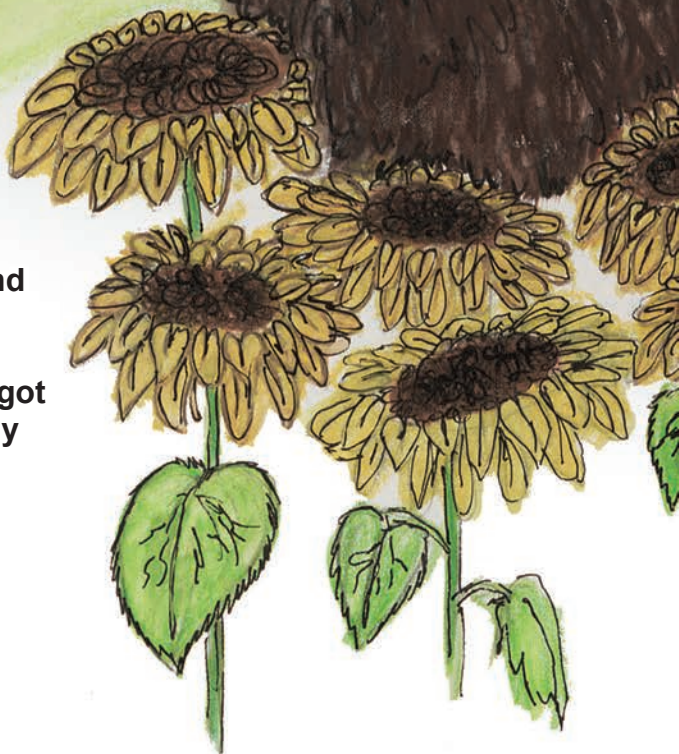





Joe O'Grady was happy too and so was Sadie.
All the settlers had traded seed for the cats.

So he planted sunflower seeds in the hundred and
seven acres that the buffalo had plowed.

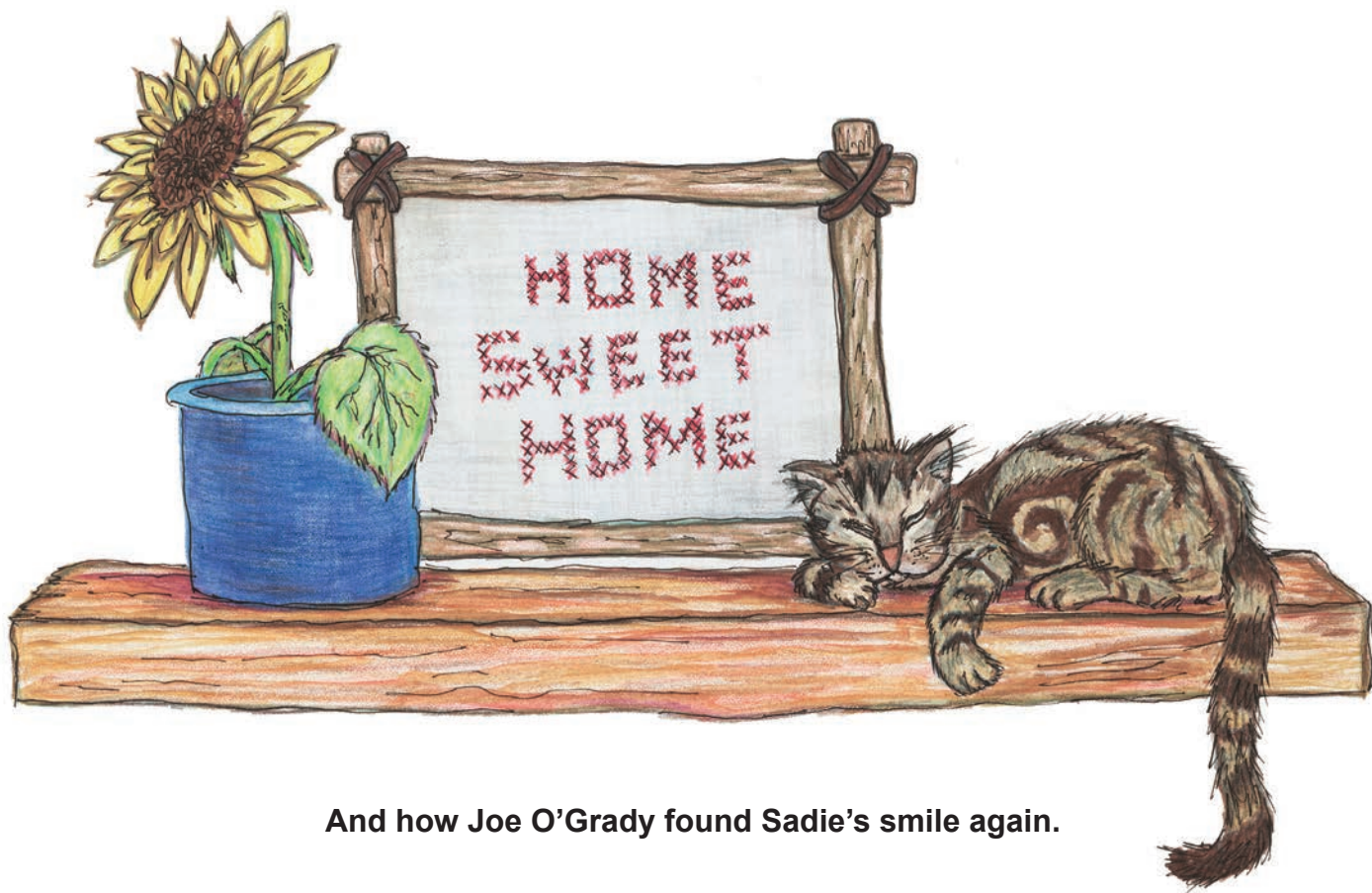
That was how Joe O'Grady and Sadie O'Grady got
a sunflower farm, a tame buffalo, and a little tabby
cat called Vinnie.







So now you know
the story of how
cats came out west.



And how Joe O'Grady found Sadie's smile again.



About The Author

I was born in northern California and transplanted to the Ozark Mountains of Arkansas between two lakes and two rivers. I have traveled and lived many places while accompanying my military husband during his 20 active duty years in service to this country. During that time I have seen many museums, met with numerous fellow artists while raising our family and observing life. I currently live in the Washington, D.C. area with my husband, Steven, and our sweet kitty, Vinnie.

I have a BSE in art education with a focus in drawing from Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, Arkansas and a Master's of Interdisciplinary Studies focused in painting, drawing and crafts from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia. I have taken classes at the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, D.C., where Henry Cole, author and illustrator, was my inspiring teacher.

I have been an art instructor in Fairfax County Public School where I encouraged students to explore ways to express their thoughts in a visual format, which could be drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, and clay or computer arts.

I have always called or thought of myself as an artist. It is almost as if I can hear the pencil or paintbrush calling to me. I would describe most of my work by saying it is full of life's little moments. Observing people and animals has always been enjoyable to me and visually expressing those tiny moments in time has been my area of focus.

It is the lovely, tender, giddy and sad moments that we live in life that tells who we are and how we are all connected with similar moments in our lives shared in this world.



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