

Swift Fox All Along

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Swift Fox's belly
fills with butterflies.

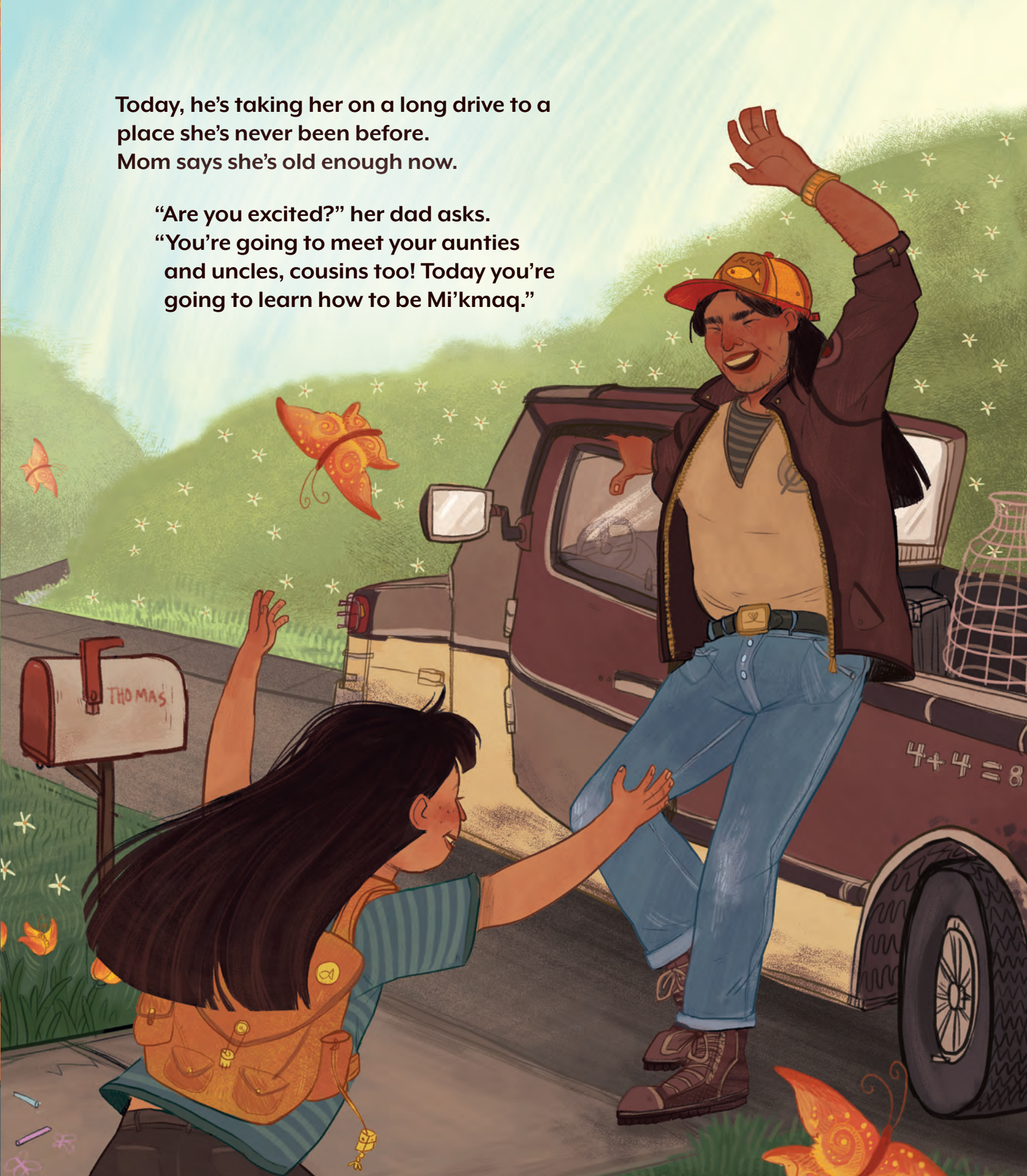



Usually, if her dad visits,
they go for ice cream or to the park.
Most of the time her big sister comes, too.
But not today.



Today, he's taking her on a long drive to a place she's never been before. Mom says she's old enough now.

"Are you excited?" her dad asks.
"You're going to meet your aunties and uncles, cousins too! Today you're going to learn how to be Mi'kmaq."





Dad says he's proud to be Mi'kmaq.
But what does it mean?

Swift Fox eyes the red bundle in the
back seat. "What's Mi'kmaq?"

"It's who you are! From your eyes to
your toes. It's what's inside you."

"It's how you walk, talk,
and think." Her father winks.

Swift Fox already knows how
to walk and talk. And how
does she "think Mi'kmaq"?

The butterflies in her
belly get bigger.



Before long, her dad pulls into a driveway. “We’re here!”

Swift Fox swallows hard to keep the butterflies from getting out. “Dad, I don’t want to go in. I’m scared.”

“It’s okay, Swift Fox, it’s who you are!
They’re your family. They’re a part of you.”





“What if they don’t like me?”

**“Wha-sa-matta-with-ya, child?
Don’t worry! It’ll be fine.”**

Before she can say anything else her dad nudges her into the house.

Swift Fox looks around the room.

She notices a red bundle like
the one her dad has in his car.

She wonders what's in it.



Author's Note

I grew up off-reserve. My parents separated when I was a young girl. When my dad would visit, he'd gift me all sort of Indigenous trinkets in a way to pass along some shadow of a Mi'kmaq identity.

My father attended the Shubenacadie Residential School at the same age I was when he took me to the reserve for the very first time. He lost his language and much of his culture but not his spirit. Even though he couldn't pass on Mi'kmaw words or specifics, he connected me and my siblings to an identity in hopes we would latch onto it.

I am very proud of who I am and I'm learning to walk, talk, and think a little more Mi'kmaq with each passing year.

Rebecca Thomas



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