**The Right Step**

**1** Mika was dressed in her outfit for the powwow. Her jingle dress was beautiful—red, with rows of silver metal cones sewn along the top and bottom. When she moved, the hammered metal cones jingled cheerfully.

**2** Mika loved the dance and its history. The jingle dress dance was originally a dance of healing in the Ojibwa culture in the early 1920s. After World War I, it spread to other tribes, as people wanted to help soldiers heal who were returning from the war. Today was the first time Mika would take part in the jingle dress dance at a powwow.

**3** Her sister Aponi sat in the kitchen, with her swollen ankle propped up on a chair. She admired Mika's dress and said longingly, “I wish I were dancing with you today.”

**4** “Me too,” Mika answered.

**5** “Why are you so nervous?” Aponi asked.

**6** “The dress brings too much attention. I get so flustered that I can’t even stay on beat,” Mika answered. “How do you dance so well with everyone watching?"

**7** Aponi frowned and then said, “When I hear the drums, I don’t listen with my ears. I listen with my skin, my heart, and my soul. I’m not thinking about the audience but about the music and its purpose. What are you thinking about?”

**8** “Everyone looking at me. But I know that the jingle dress dance is about dancing for those who can’t. That's what I should be thinking about.”

**9** Aponi grabbed a small drum that was laying on the table. “Exactly. So close your eyes and listen.”

**10** Aponi began to play. Mika could feel the rhythm. Her toes wanted to tap, but she held still, hands on her hips, as she had been taught.

**11** Then Aponi drummed faster. “Now begin. Step with one foot and follow it with the other. Respect the music, and let yourself be a part of it. You’re one more jingle in the song.”

**12** Mika began to move in a zig-zag pattern, one foot and then the other, lightly bouncing. Immediately, thoughts crowded into her mind: She looked silly. She would trip. People would laugh. She pushed them all away and let the drumming carry her feet up down, up down, right on the beat.

**13** Her dress jingled exactly in time with the drum. Ching, Ching, Ching. The sound was beautiful.

**14** She stopped suddenly, eyes popping open. “I did it!”

**15** “I knew you could do it once you danced to the music and not to your fears.”

**16** That afternoon at the powwow, Mika did not look at the crowds or worry about what anyone thought. She focused on the drumming, letting the beats lift her feet. Whenever fear started to creep in, she pretended she was back home in the kitchen with her sister.

**17** After the final drum beat, her heart felt as cheery as the jingling of her dress—a dress she knew she would be wearing many more times in the future.

**Coconut Crabs**

**1** The coconut crab is an unforgettable sight because of its gigantic size and strange behavior. This crab can grow to weigh more than a newborn baby. It eats many types of food. However, the creature is named after its favorite food: coconuts.

**2** A young coconut crab stays safe by finding an empty shell along the shore and living inside it. Surprisingly small when young, the crab grows amazingly fast. As it becomes an adult, it grows too large to fit into a shell. By this time, though, the body of the coconut crab has already begun to harden. When this happens, the crab no longer needs a shell for protection. Without a shell coconut crabs can grow much bigger than any other type of crab. The world’s largest crab needs quite a bit of food.

**3** The coconut crab does not have a nose to sniff for food. Instead, the coconut crab depends on its antennae, which stick out from its head. Just like an insect, the coconut crab uses its antennae to pick up a scent in the air.

**4** Using antennae makes finding coconuts easy, especially cracked ones that are lying on the ground. The crab’s strong claws can break through the thick shell of the fruit. Sometimes the crab gathers coconuts in a remarkable way. Some people say they have seen the crab climb a coconut tree to cut down its meal. One crab was noticed carrying its prize back up the tree to drop it until the coconut finally broke open on the ground below.

**5** After the meal, the crab tunnels into the sand and sleeps underground. There it is protected from the extreme heat during the day. The crab stays awake during the night when the weather is cooler. This is the perfect time to catch a glimpse of the large and unusual creature gathering its favorite food.