



Meera is a young girl that feels like no one understands her like music does, and because of this she struggles to make friends. Embark on a musical adventure around the world with Meera and her new friend Carlos. Learn about non-western music and how individuals can make connections because of music. This book aims to spark an interest in ethnomusicology and encourage inclusivity and empathy in children.



My name is Maya Zahir, and I am a senior at Barrington High School in Illinois. I started playing the classical flute at the age of 6, and since then my passion for music has only grown. My passion for music and it's amazing ability to connect individuals is what inspired me to write this book. I hope you all enjoy!

Meera's Musical Adventure Around the World

Written and Illustrated by Maya Zahir



Acknowledgements

To the young readers, may this book bring you joy, spark a fulfilling interest in cultural music, and inspire empathy for all the individuals around you.

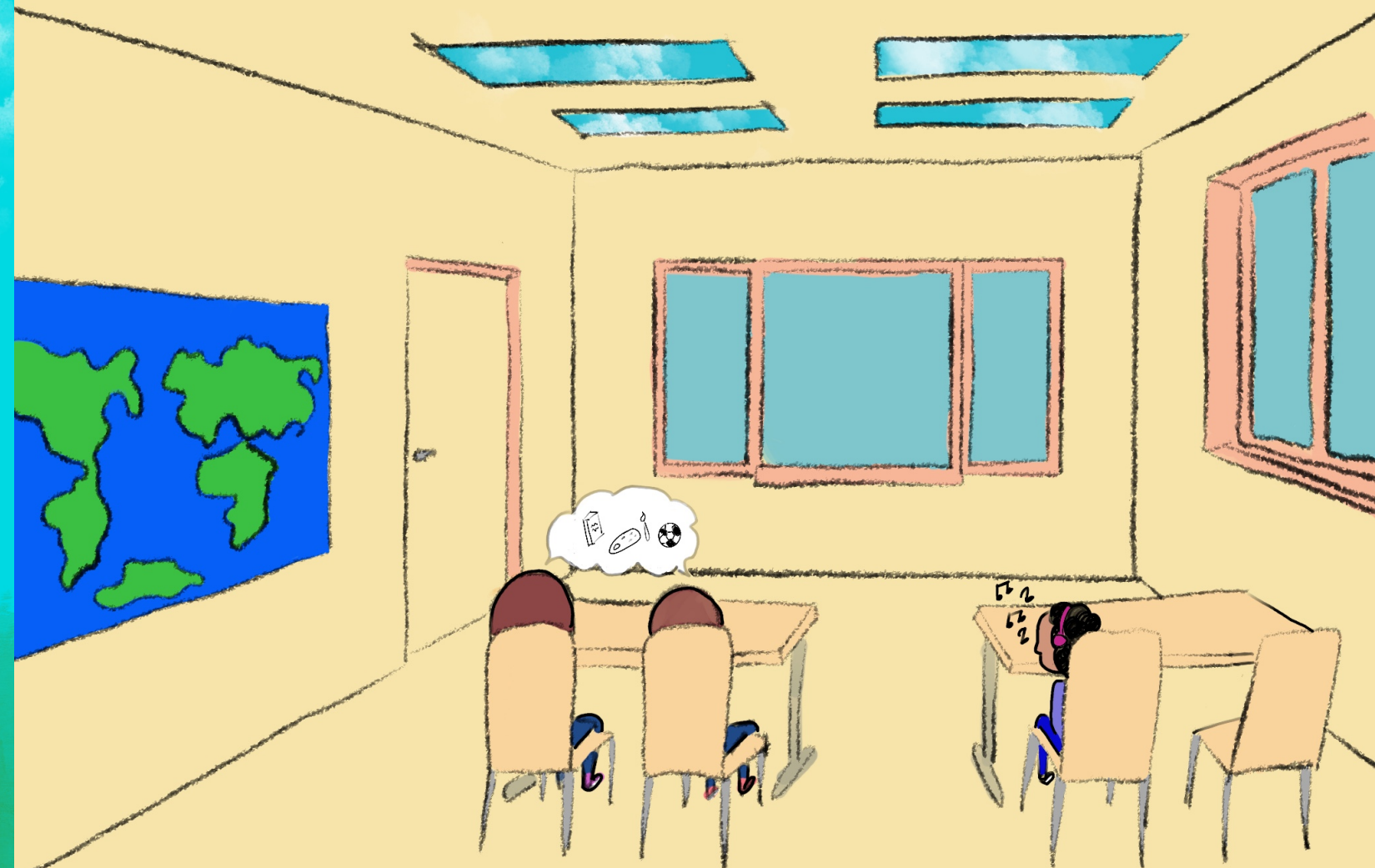
Thank you to all those who supported and believed in this book. A special thanks to all the teachers that inspired my love for music. Your contributions have made this journey an incredible and rewarding experience.

Warmly,
Maya Zahir

Meera is a young girl who feels like she doesn't fit in with the other kids at school.



While all the other kids play during recess,
she listens to music by herself. Music became
Meera's best friend.



Even when she tries to make friends, she doesn't
know what to talk to them about.



One day, she hears a unique melody coming from the basement of the school. She follows the sound into an old music storage room and cracks open the door. Inside, she sees a boy from her school playing a drum in a rhythm she has never heard before.

The boy catches her gaze and turns around to face her.

"Hi! What're you doing down here?" He says.

"I heard your drum playing; I've never heard anything like it," she says shyly.

"It's not any regular drum. It's a subidor! My grandpa taught me how to play it. He learned how to play when he was growing up in Puerto Rico!"



Meera's eyes become wide. She wants to learn more about this interesting instrument, but she doesn't want to intrude. "That's really cool... I guess I'll leave you to it!"

“Wait!” He exclaims, “Would you like to play it?”
Meera jumps at the chance and sits on the other side of the subidor. She starts playing, trying to imitate the boy.



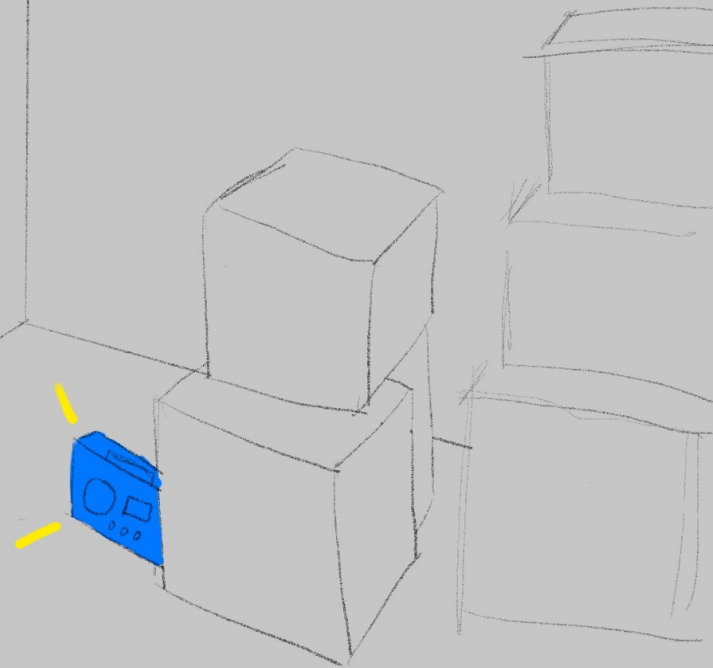
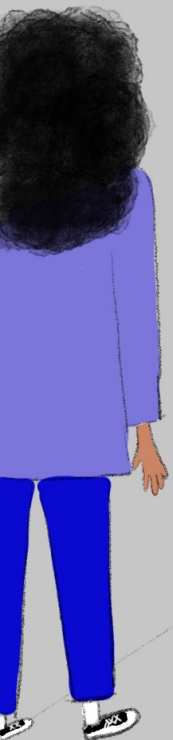
“What is your name again? My name is
Carlos, I just moved here!”

“My name is Meera. Do you know anything
else about the subidor?”

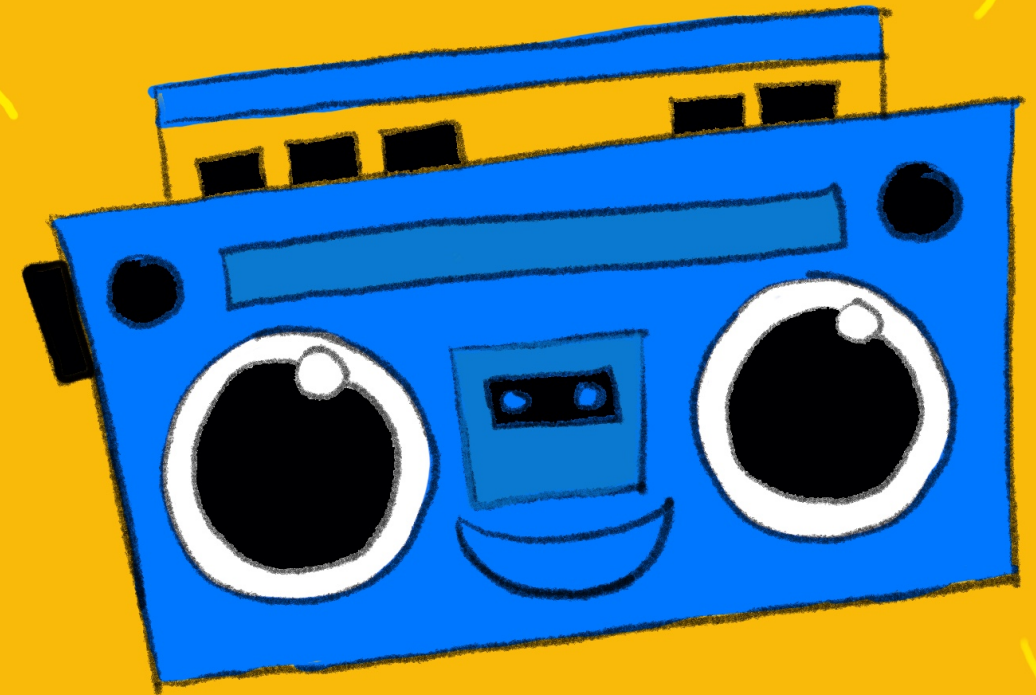
“Yes! It is used to play Bomba music! It’s a
very important part of Puerto Rican culture.

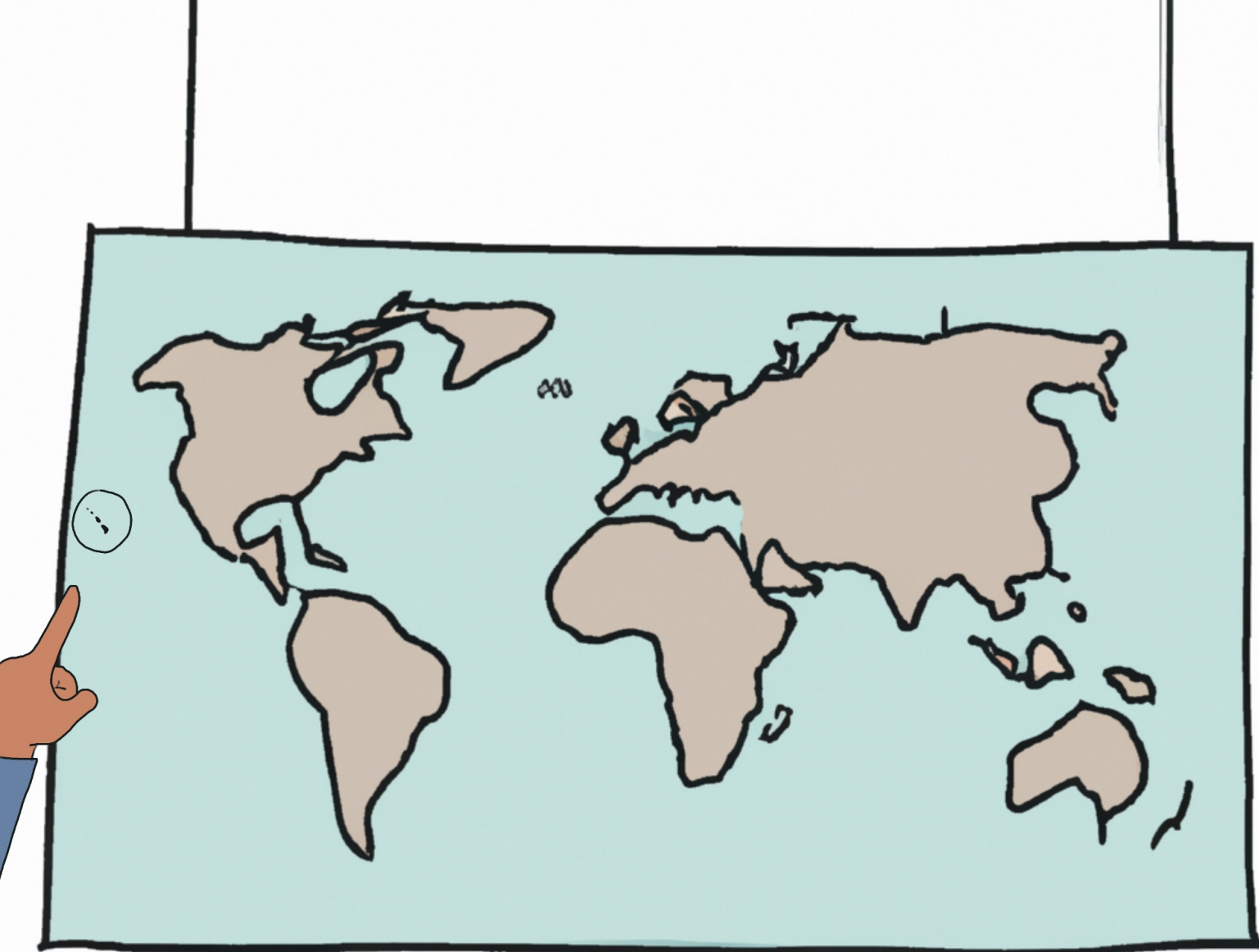
My grandpa says that when he and his
friends were growing up, they played bomba
all day long and made new friends every day
because of it!” Meera had never met anyone
that loves music as much as she does, and
she was very excited.

All of a sudden, Meera spots a weird looking radio in the corner of the room. She picks it up and there is a flash of light.

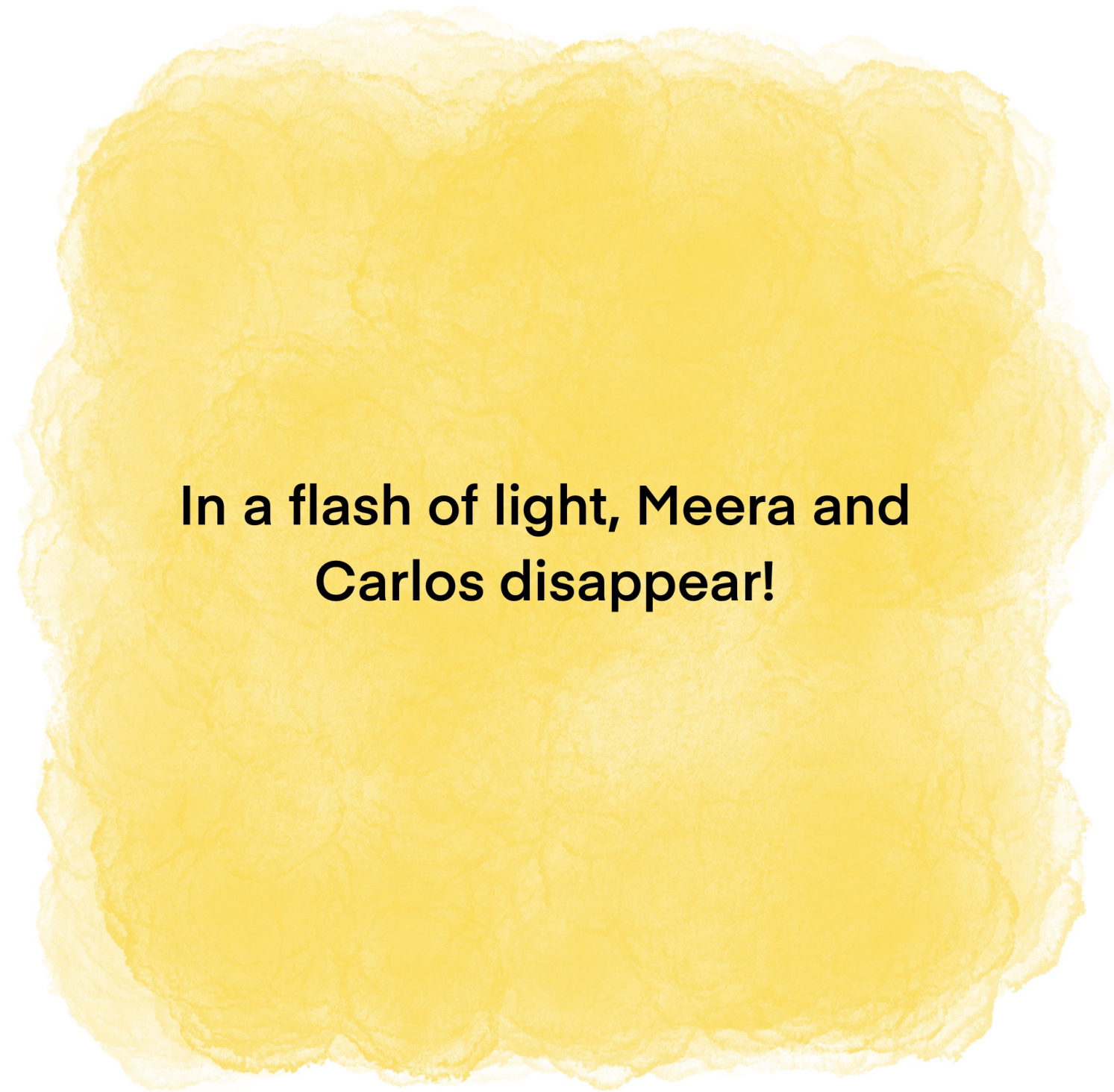


"Hello! My name is Benny the Boombox! I am a magical boombox that can transport you to any part of the world to listen to music."





Meera and Carlos exclaim with joy.
"Wow! This is amazing! Where should we go first?"
Meera looks at a world map hanging on the wall,
"How about Hawaii?"



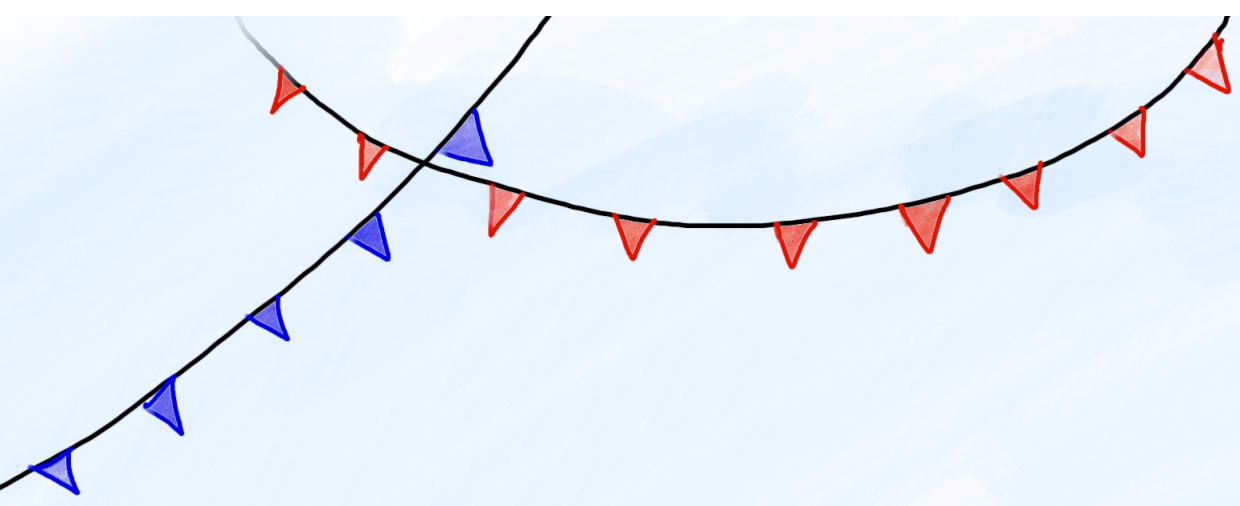
**In a flash of light, Meera and
Carlos disappear!**

Meera and Carlos are now on a beach in Hawaii! They listen to a group of musicians playing a traditional Hawaiian luau song.



Meera and Carlos observe how all the people of Hawaii come together at luaus to celebrate their culture and heritage.





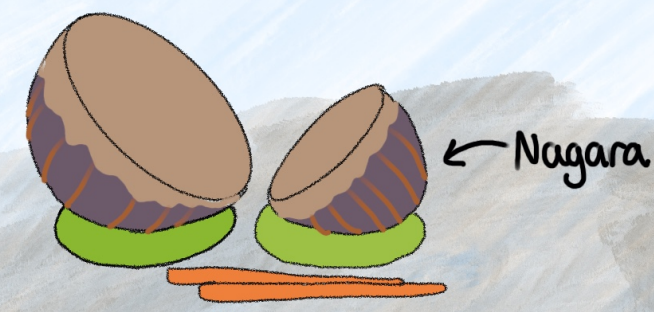
After a while Carlos says, "How about we travel East to Asia!"

"Yes! We can visit the country my parents come from! Benny, take us to India!"

In a flash of light, Meera and Carlos are in Lilapur, India. They are watching a classical form of Indian dance called Bhavai.



Meera and Carlos observe how the people of Lilapur are dancing and singing to show their emotions and tell stories.



Next, they travel to Nigeria where they listen to Juju music.

Carlos asks Meera to dance, and together, they join the large crowd of people, enjoying a culture very different from their own.



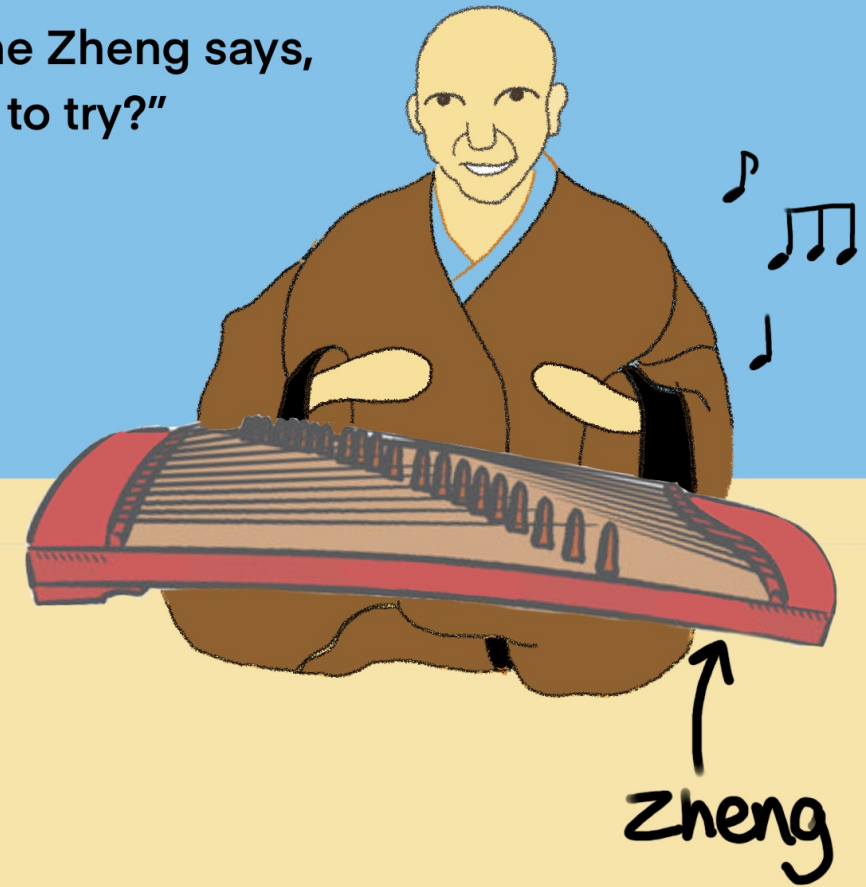


Meera and Carlos then visited Henan, China where they listened to traditional folk music played by the zheng.

"Wow! This reminds me of a harp, but it's different!"



The old man playing the Zheng says, "Would you like to try?"



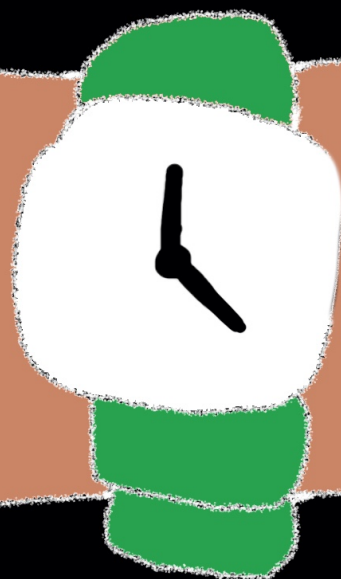
Carlos jumps at the opportunity, attempting to play a tune on the challenging instrument. Meera winces at the sounds made by Carlos and the Zheng, but the old man says, "Very nice job, I hope you will come back to learn more!"



Carlos and Meera travel to so many different countries, and they learn about so many different cultures along the way.



"Oh no! Look at the time! Recess is about to be over. We should go back" Meera says, pointing at her watch. Carlos and Meera are very sad to have to go home, as their adventure must now come to an end. "Benny, please take us home," Meera says.



In the last puff of light, they are returned to the basement of the school.

"Wow, I can't believe how much we learned!" Meera exclaims.

"I know! And I am so glad we have become friends, Meera. I have never met anyone who loves music as much as I do."

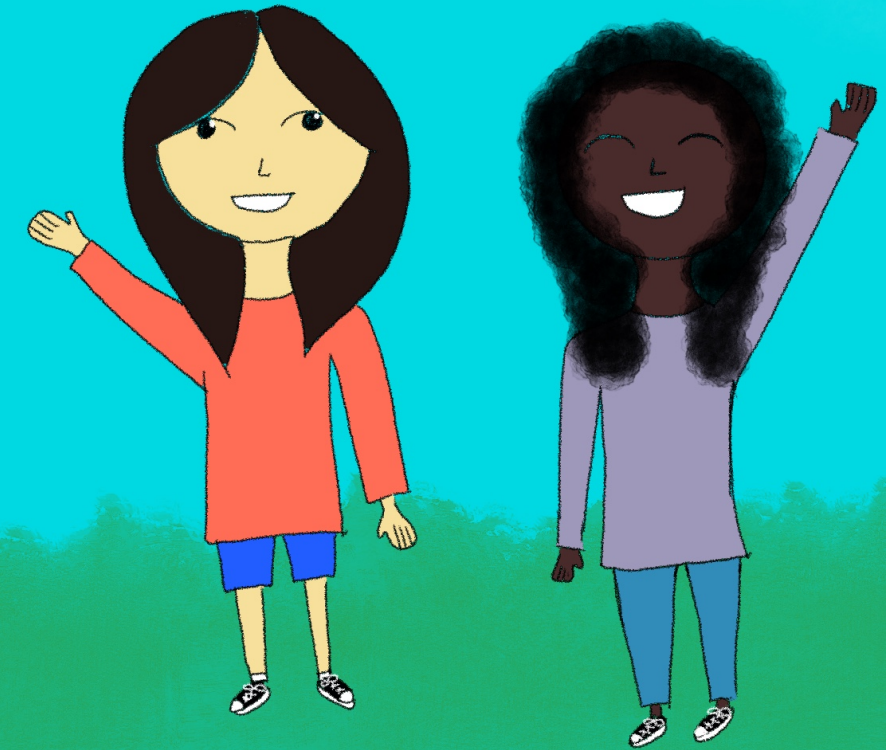


Meera and Carlos return to recess, and they start talking about their musical adventure around the world.



Their classmate Evelyn overhears them talking about the zheng and chimes in, "I know how to play that instrument! My mom and dad both taught me!"

Another classmate says, "and did I hear you talking about Juju music? That is my family's favorite dance music from my country of Nigeria!"



Soon Carlos and Meera are talking about their adventure to their whole class, finding out that so many of their classmates know about the music they were able to experience.



Meera realizes that she is able to connect with so many of her classmates now that she knows about their cultures' music. All along, Meera didn't have to change herself, she just had to learn.

Because of music, Meera is no longer lonely, and she is able to talk about her shared love of music with all her classmates.

The End

