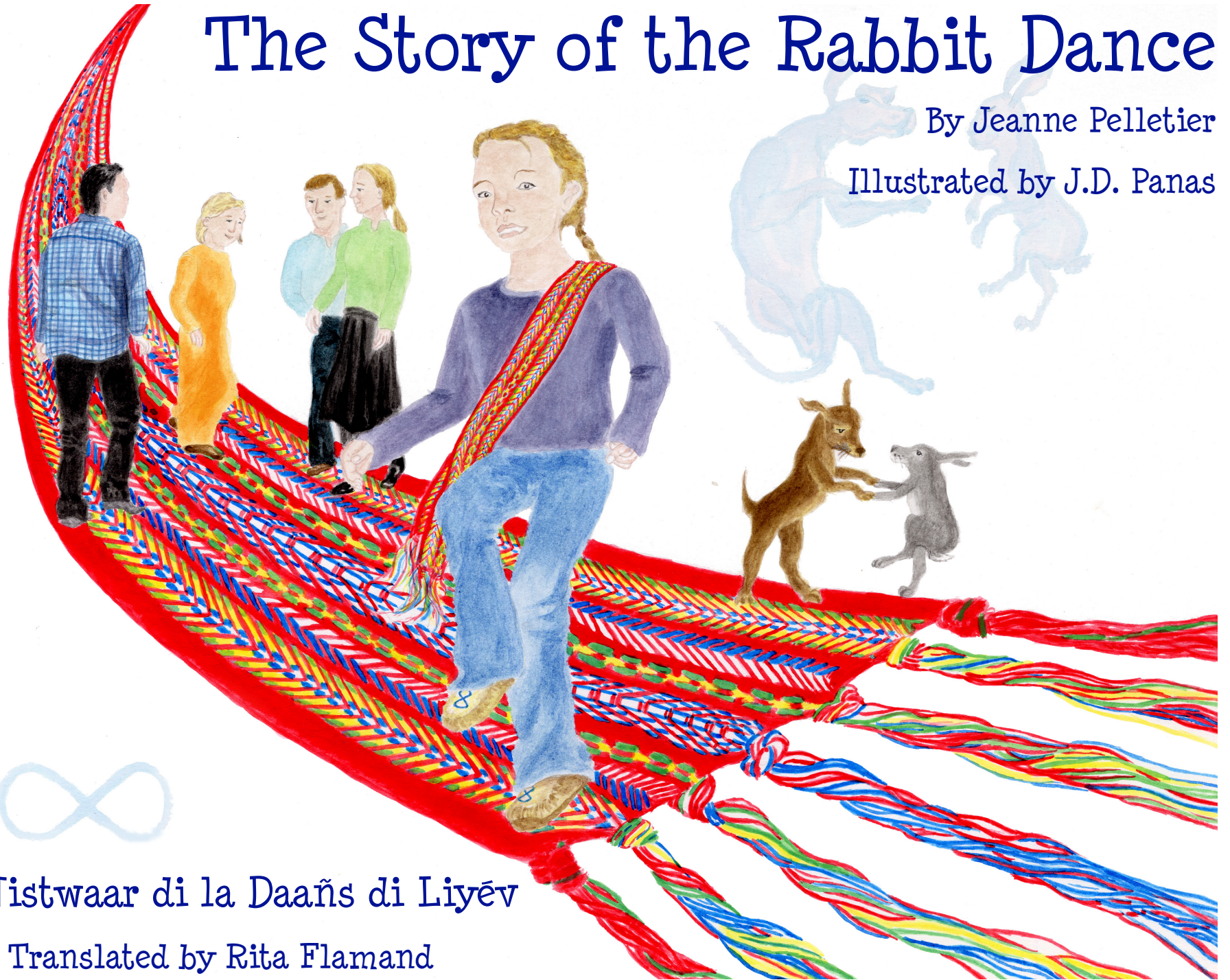


# The Story of the Rabbit Dance

By Jeanne Pelletier

Illustrated by J.D. Panas



Li Nistwaar di la Daañs di Liyēv

Translated by Rita Flamand

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One day, a very long time ago, in a small Métis settlement, there lived a Michif trapper by the name of Jacques.

En fwe ota nashpich kayaash, den pchit vilaazh aeñ Michif saseur kii wiihkiw Zhaak kii ishinikaashoo.





It was almost time for the Métis gathering and his wife Thérèse and their twelve children were all busy doing daily chores.

*Kékaach li taañ takopahin lii Michif kaa maamawiihitochihk, ekwa sa faam Taréz avik dooz sii zaañfaañiwaawa uchayimishiwahk e'ushitaachihk luvraazh kaa ushitaachihk to lii zhoor.*





Jacques was just finishing his cup of tea. He was going to bring home all his traps and snares before the snow was too deep. The river and lakes were almost frozen.

Zhaak ati kiishi minikwew soñ bol di tii. Kahkiyaw sii piizh pi sii koléy wii pe kiiwétataaw chipwaa oshaam ishpaakunakaak. Larivyér pi lii laak kékaach aakwatino.





Today was a very special day. They were getting ready to go to the gathering held every year.

Anuch naashpich kichi itakamikan. Kakwe kiishiitaawahk ewii itotēchihk to lii zaañ kaa maamawiihitochihk.





Friends, neighbours, and relatives gathered from near and far. They would exchange gifts, stories, songs, music, and dance. Everyone would bring food for this special occasion.

“This evening, Thérèse can go ahead to the gathering with the children,” Jacques thought to himself.

Liizamii, liiwezaeñ, piwaakoomaakanak, mishiwepe ototēwahk araa, wahyaw. Kii maamēshkotoonamaatowak lii prezaēn, lii nistwaar, lii shaañsooñ, li mosik pi lii daañs. Kahkiyaw awiyak li maañzhii pētaaw ota kaa kichi itakamikak.

“Si swaarii, Taréz kaa ati niikaaniw kaa maamawiihitok avik lii zaañfaañ.” Zhaak iteyhitam.







Jacques put his cup of tea down and picked up his parfleche bag and .22. He said farewell to his family and was on his way, thinking, "I'll get to the gathering as soon as I can."

Zhaak ati pokitinam soñ bol di tii ati utinam soñ saak parfleche pi soñ veñ deu. Ati itew orovwaar sa famii e'ati wayawiit, ityhitam, "nka ati takushinin kaa maamawiihitok wiipach e'ishi kashkitaayaan."





When Thérèse and the children arrived, everyone at the gathering was having a wonderful time. There was a lot of good food to eat. Old-time Quadrilles were being played and danced.

Jacques was happy as he reached his last trap. “By golly, now I can go dancing,” he mumbled to himself as he started to return home.

Ashpii Taréz avik lii zaañfaañ e'ati takushikihk, kahkiyaw awiiyak moochikitaaw, mishtahi li boñ maazhii chi miichihk. Lii vieu qwadrill metawaanyiwan ekwa niiminaaniwan.

Zhaak miyehitam ishkwach soñ piizh e'ati naatak, “Eh donii! Ekushi ekwa nka ndo niimin,” ati itishoo e'ati kiiwēt.





It would be dark when he reached home, but he would have enough time to go to the gathering because it would last three days. As Jacques started for home he remembered that he would share another fancy jig step.

As he hummed the “Red River Jig” to himself, he began to dance. “Right-left-right,” “1-2-3,” he counted as he did this step four times, each time facing a different direction. He called his new step, “the Four Directions.” When he returned home he cleaned up and started out to the gathering.

Ta tēpi tipishkaayiw ati takushiki wiikiwaak, maaka mishtahi li taañ kaa ayaaw chi ati takushihk kaa mamawiihitochihk akooz trwaa zhoor ta tashii itakamikan. E'ati kiiwēt Zhaak ati naanakatweyhitam taanishi chi ishi miyoshimot la jig.

E'ati nanakamoyishut “la jig di Rivyer Roozh” ekushi e'ati ishi machi niimit “dret-a goosh-dret en-deu-trwaa,” ati akitam e'ati ushitaat oma li paa kaatr few, to lii fwe pahkaan ishi kweshkikaapawiw. “Lii kaatr direksyooñ” ishi nikaatam sa daañs. E'ati takushik wiikiwaak kii pekiishoo ekwa ati shipwetew kaa mamawiihitochihk.





As Jacques came near the big house where everyone gathered, he could hear the wonderful sound of the fiddle playing “Drops of Brandy.” Jacques could see the shadows of the people in the house dancing “la danse du crochet.” He heard the dogs barking and the sharp whistles of the rabbits. “Ah!” he thought, “the dogs must be chasing the rabbits.”

Zhaak araa e'ati tahkoshihk dañ la gro mēzooñ kahkiyaw awiiyak kaa mamawiihtut, petawew li viyeloñ “Drops of Brandy,” e'kitohtchihkeyiht. Zhaak wahpamew lii miirazh di mooñd ē niimiyht “la Daañs di Kroshe.” Petawew lii shiyēñ e mikiyiht lii liyēv e kweshkoshiht, “Hah” iteyitam “kechinaa lii shiyēñ nawashotēwak lii liyēv.”





As he reached a clearing, he stopped very quickly. He moved toward the trees. There he stood and watched in surprise.

He saw dogs of all sizes standing in a straight line. On the other side was a row of rabbits of all colours.

E'ati tahkoshihk anta kaa pashkoyihk, ekushi e'ishi kipichipahiwoht dañ lii zaarb ati ishi kaapawiw, ekota kaa niipawiyht e'ishpiichi maamaashkaa taapishihk.

Wahpamew, lii shiyēñ nanaadaw e'ishpiichikitiyihk mitoni dret e'niipawiyht. Akootii wahpamew lii liyēv nanaaduk lii kuleur añ raañ e'niipawiyht.





Some of the dogs and rabbits were watching the people in the house dancing “la danse du crochet.” The rabbits at the window would tell the rabbits beside them what was happening at the dance so they could relay it to the others at the bottom of the hill. Well, the dogs were kind of lazy so they told each other, “Just do what the rabbits do. Do what the rabbits do.”

Aatit liishiyēñ pili liyēv kanawaapamewak li mooñd didaañ la mézooñ “la Daañs di Kroshe” e’niimiyht. Lii liyēv dañ li saasii ati wiihtamawewak li liyēv akootii e’niipawiyiht taanishi e’itakamikak dañ la daaños, kahkiyaw ati wiihtamaatawahk seusk ishkwaach dañ la beut, abaeñ, lii shiyēñ nawachiko kitimiiwahk, ititowak, “Muchi kashkinawaapamihk lii liyēv, muchi kashkinawaapamihk lii liyēv.”





The dogs would swing the rabbits and would slide-step chasing each rabbit in a figure-eight formation until the dog tagged the rabbit, and all of the dogs had a turn.

Lii shiyēñ kaa kweshkaashimēwak lii liyēv ekwa shooshkoshimo nawashotewahk li liyēv aeñ noombr wit e'ishi kweshkishimoyiht, ikok li shiyēñ e'atimaat li liyēv. Ekwa kahkiyaw lii shiyēñ mēmēshkoch e'tootakihk.





Then the rabbits would take their turn. As they came down the line they turned the dog around and slide-stepped away doing a figure eight formation, until the rabbit tagged the dog.

They would all have a turn. When the music stopped, they too, would stop.

Ekoshi lii liyēv ekwa nishtam chi tootakihk, e'pechishimochihk ekwa e'ati shushkoshimotchihk ati ushitaawak li noombr wit ikok li liyēv e'atimaat li shiyēñ.

Kahkiyaw mēmēshkoch peyakon e tootakihk. Ashpii li mosik e kipichi pahik wiishtawaaw kipichiiwahk.







Jacques was never so happy as he was now. He could go and tell the story of what he had seen. Some people might not believe him, but he would show them how to do this new dance, the “Rabbit Dance.”

And that was the beginning of the “Rabbit Dance.”

Zhame Zhaak ishpiichi miyeyihtam. Ta ndo aachimoo kēkwaay kaa wahpatahk, ino kahkiyaw li mooñd ta taapwētaako, Maaka ta wahpitayēw taanishi chi ishi niimiyēht oma li neu daańs, “la Daańs di Liyēv.”

Ekwa ekushpii kaa uhchi maachipahik la “Daańs di Liyēv.”





Do you know the moral of the story?

No matter who you are, or where you are, we are all equal.

What two things did Jacques teach you?

Ki kishkeyihtenaawaaw chiiñ kēkwaay oma li nistwaar e'kishkinwaamaakēk?

Kiyaam awena kiya kēmaa taade e'ayaayan, kahkiyaw peyakwan ki titeyihtaakoshinaan.

Kēkwaay deu kēkway Zhaak kaa kishkinwaamaashk?





**Jeanne Pelletier** was born in 1940 at Crooked Lake, Saskatchewan, a Métis community. In 1980, she formed a successful dance group for at-risk youth. In 1986, *Steps in time* was created in partnership with the Gabriel Dumont Institute to complement Saskatchewan Education's acceptance of the Métis dance curriculum which she developed. She was honoured with the title "Mrs. Batoche" for her successful efforts to instill cultural pride in young Métis in 1987. In 2005, she was awarded the "Commemorative Medal" for Saskatchewan's Centennial. At present, she teaches Métis dance in Regina at the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program and the Eastview Community Centre.



**Rita Flamand** is a Métis Elder from Camperville, Manitoba. Concerned with the disappearance of her Michif-Cree language, she took courses on how to develop her own writing system or orthography. She has developed, translated or contributed to the following resources: *Michif Conversational Lessons for Beginners*, *Li Minoush: Li Paviyoñ di Michif*, *Li Saennchur Fleshii di Michif*, *Tumaas eekwa la Sharey di Rivyer Ruzh*, and *La Lawng: Michif Peekishkwewin* (Vols. 1 and 2). She is presently finalizing her Michif-Cree orthography.



**J.D. Panas**, a Métis author and illustrator, is from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. She draws a regular cartoon for the *Prince Albert Rural Roots* newspaper entitled *The Farmers* and operates and instructs her own non-profit Tae Kwon-Do club, the Flying Dragon Academy of Tae Kwon-Do Inc. She and her husband Dennis also volunteer for the SaskTel Pioneers in and around Prince Albert.



In this charming story for young children, Métis trapper Jacques witnesses the creation of the Rabbit Dance. Written by Jeanne Pelletier, illustrated by J.D. Panas, and translated in Michif-Cree by Rita Flamand, this book also contains an accompanying narration CD in English and Michif-Cree.



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