Thomas stood in the yard and looked up at a big dark cloud. He could see lightning in the distance. It would probably rain soon. All week the weather had been sunny and warm. Now it was Saturday—no school, no karate practice, no piano lesson—and he really wanted to spend the day playing outside.

“Why can’t I stay outside?” he asked his mom. “I don’t mind getting wet.”

“It’s not the rain I’m worried about,” she told him as they went inside. “Lightning is dangerous, and the storm is coming closer.”

“How can you tell?” Thomas wondered.

“Lightning causes thunder,” his mom replied, “but it takes time for the sound of the thunder to reach us. When you see lightning, count the seconds until you hear the thunder. For every five seconds you count, the lightning is about one mile away.”

During the storm, they counted seconds from seeing the flash of lightning to hearing the bang of thunder. Thomas learned something new and had fun with his mom.
Chores

Louisa looked at the chores list. It was her turn to fold the laundry. That was the chore she disliked most. How could she get out of it? Louisa saw her brother J. B. in his room. “J. B., would you like to make some money?” Louisa asked.

“What’s the catch?” asked J. B.

“I’ll pay you 50 cents to fold the …,” Louisa stopped. She remembered that she had spent her 50 cents yesterday. “Never mind.”

Next Louisa saw her sister Grace pouting in the living room.

“I got the worst chore on the list today,” said Grace. “I don’t like dusting furniture!”

“Dusting furniture isn’t bad. I have to fold the laundry! That’s the worst!” Louisa said.

“I don’t mind folding laundry,” said Grace. “Anything but dusting!”

The two girls looked at each other. They both smiled. As Grace folded the laundry, Louisa hummed and dusted.
It is the end of June in Wainwright, Alaska. The whole village has come together for Nalukataq. This is the celebration of a good whale-hunting season. The people are glad that the whaling crew has returned.

The event begins with visiting and a big feast. Then there are games, followed by music and dancing that go late into the night. One of the games is the blanket toss. In fact, the celebration is named for this event.

The nalukataq is a large round blanket made from walrus or seal skins. It has heavy rope handles. First, about 15 people come together around the blanket. They lift it up. Then a person stands in the middle. The people holding the blanket toss and catch the person. The first jumper is always the captain of the crew that killed the whale.

The tradition comes from long ago. The blanket toss was once used in hunting. While a hunter was high in the air, he could see into the distance to find whales.
The Marshall family lives on a big farm. It has eight hundred acres. An acre is about as big as a football field. There are three children in the family. David is twelve and Marcia is ten. Their little sister, Katie, is eight years old. In the spring their family plants seeds. They plant potatoes, sweet corn, and other vegetables. The children all help with the work.

Many new subdivisions have been built around the farm. David thinks all the houses look all the same. Marcia feels sorry for the families in those houses. She knows the children do not have much room to run around.

Sometimes Katie thinks about what it would be like to live in a big neighborhood. She thinks that she would like to have lots of playmates.

David and Marcia both want to be farmers someday. Katie thinks she would like to try something different.
My family lives in a little village in Africa. Every Saturday we go to town to sell our head scarves. Mama makes the scarves. Sometimes I help. They are the very best scarves you can buy.

Papa pulled the cart into the market as the sun came up. My sister Fusi and I laid out the scarves. It was not long before customers stopped by to look. A woman and her daughter bought two. Soon we began to sell many more.

At ten, drummers set up near us. As they played, Papa and Fusi danced. Mama and I clapped along.

Later, one customer had me turn around and around. She was looking at the scarf I was wearing that I made myself. She bought my scarf! It was a good market day. I am looking forward to next Saturday.