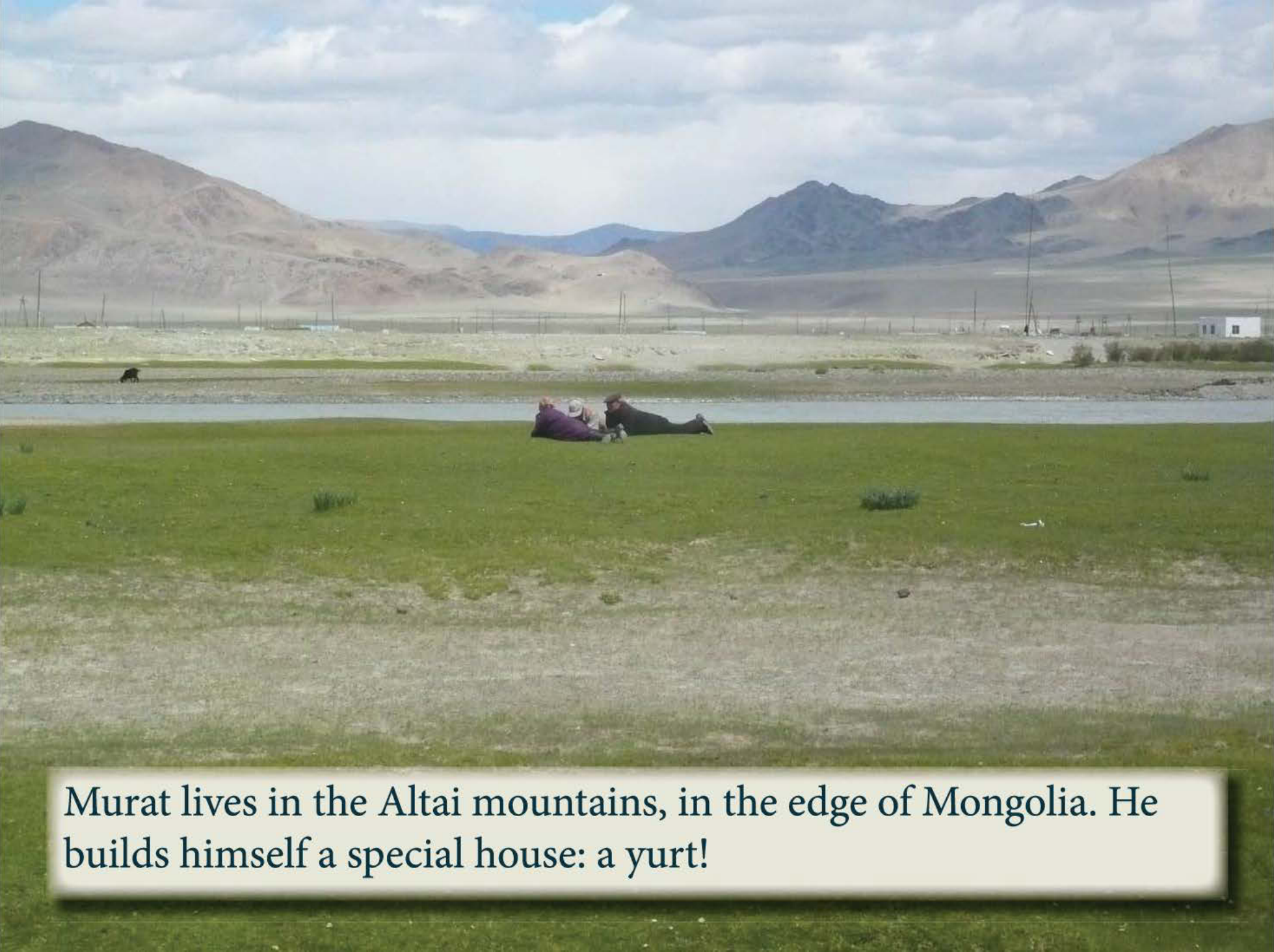


YURT



by Celia Emmelhainz & Namara Brede

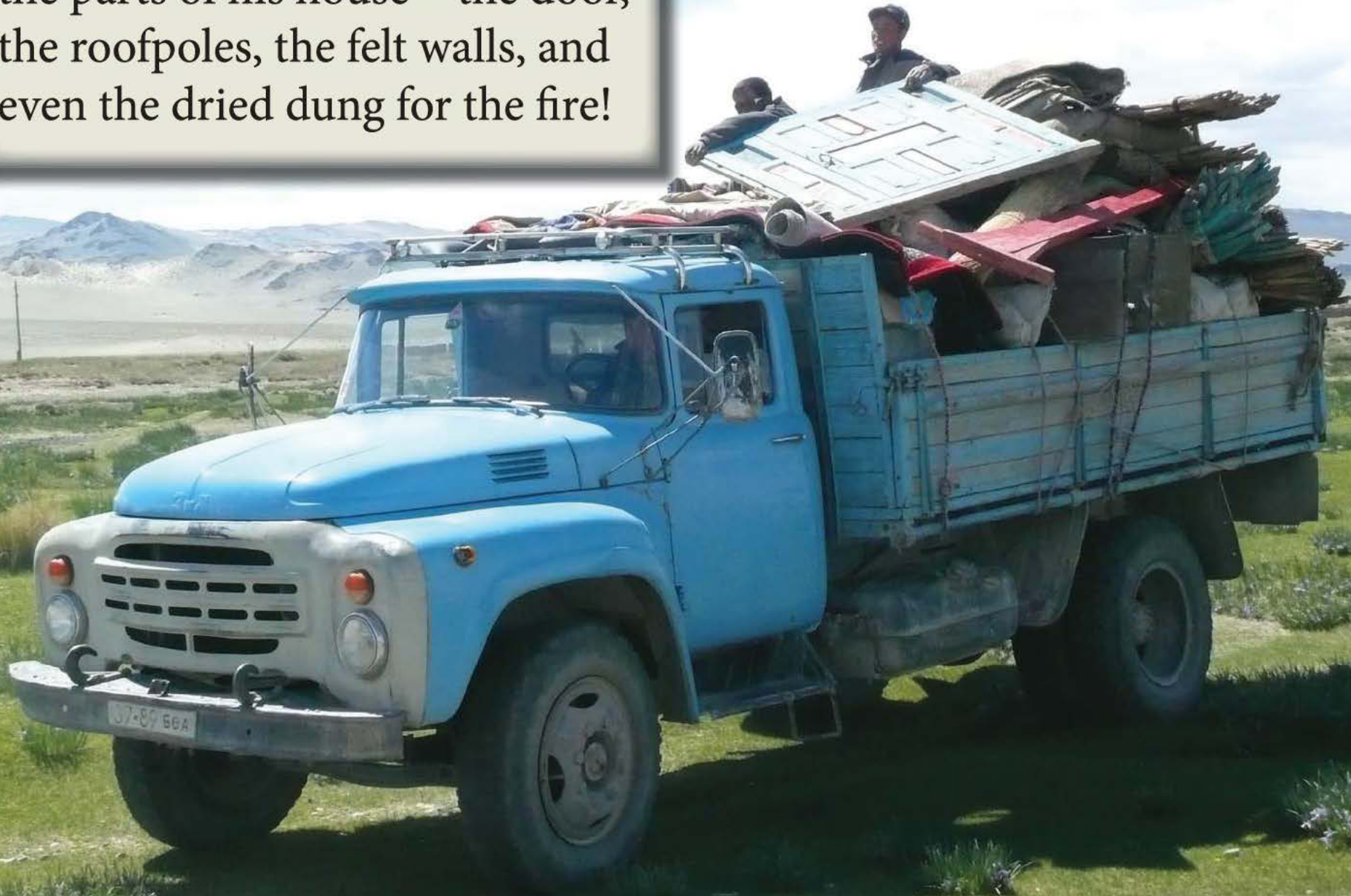


Murat lives in the Altai mountains, in the edge of Mongolia. He builds himself a special house: a yurt!

A yurt is a moveable house. Murat is a Kazakh, and he can move his house whenever he needs. He packs it into a truck, and takes it to a new place.



His friends help him to move all the parts of his house – the door, the roofpoles, the felt walls, and even the dried dung for the fire!



When he arrives, his family and friends help him unpack the truck.





This summer, Marat wants to build his yurt in a valley near his sister's house. On the ground, he sets his shanyrak, the circle of wood that holds his whole house together!

Marat's friend holds up the door to the house.

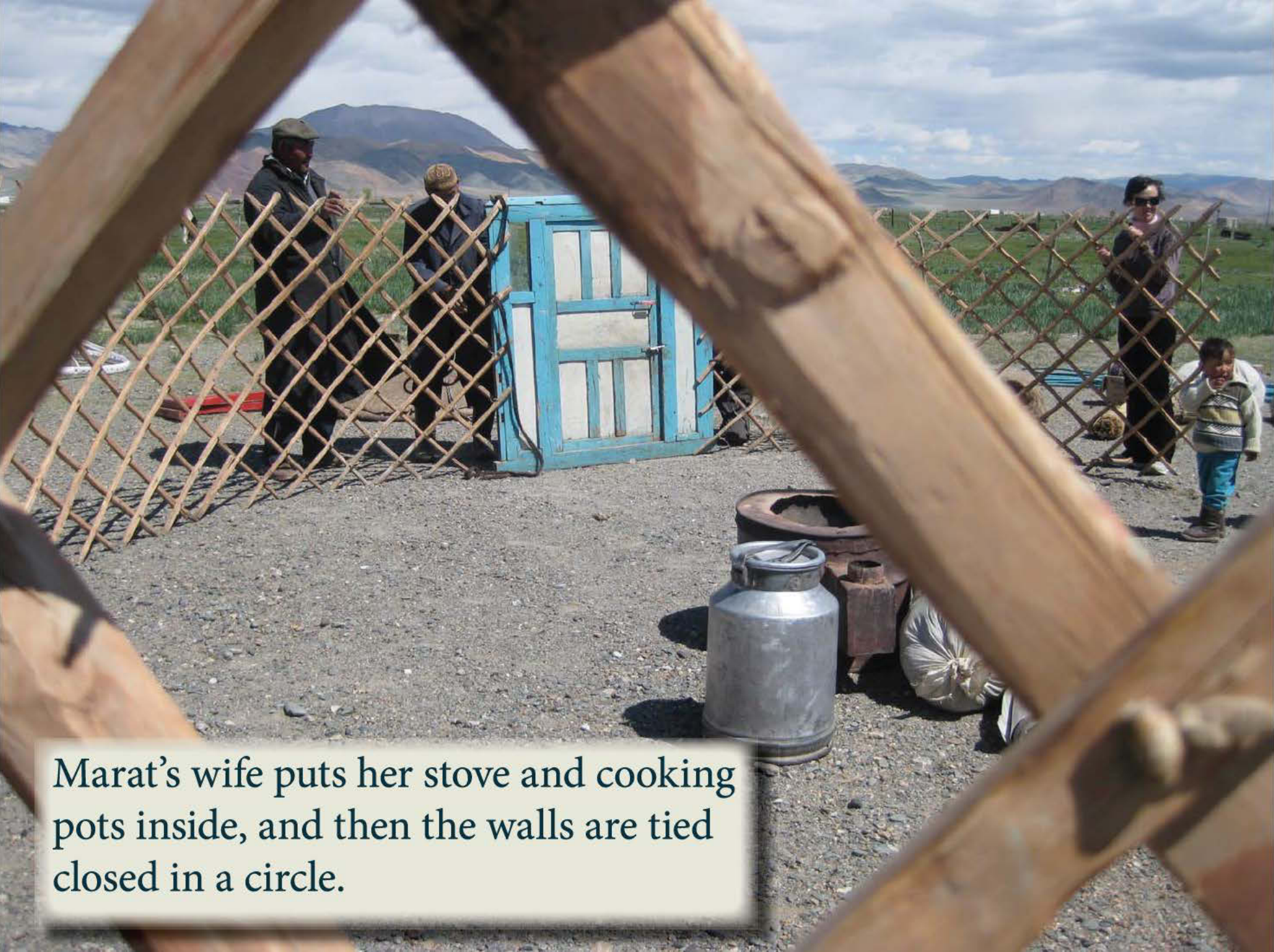




Then, everyone helps to hold up the lattice walls,



While the men tie them together with rope.



Marat's wife puts her stove and cooking pots inside, and then the walls are tied closed in a circle.



Gulum watches her little cousins while the adults work.



And Nurgul wants to help, but she's not old enough yet!

After the walls are tied, the men lift up the *shanyrak* with their roof poles. This circle of wood will go on top of the house.





One by one, people insert blue poles into the edge of the round wooden roofpiece.

They tie each pole to the wooden lattice, so the whole house will stay together.





Other people sort the pieces of the house into piles. Everyone does something different to prepare Marat's house!

After the walls are tied together, the women tie colorful fabric to the roof. You can see the bright colors from inside the yurt.





Next, they lift up the roof cover,



And wrap the house in woolen felt to keep the family warm.

The women throw a felt cover over the roof poles, and tie it down!





The men cover the roof with a white canvas cloth,

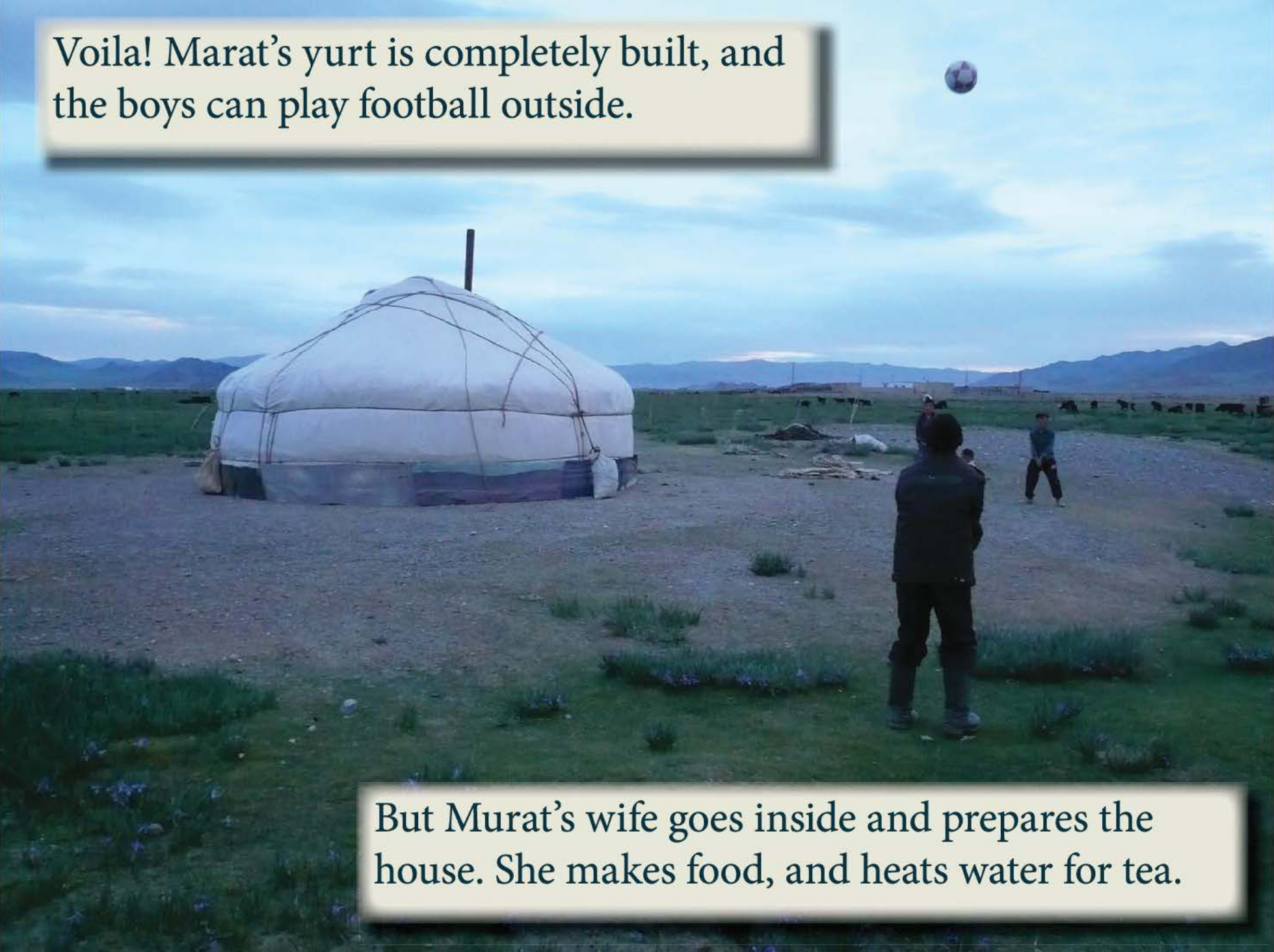
And add a small cover so the house stays warm and dry!



And one last cloth is wrapped around the bottom of the house to keep the rain out.




Voila! Marat's yurt is completely built, and the boys can play football outside.



But Murat's wife goes inside and prepares the house. She makes food, and heats water for tea.

Welcome home, Marat! Marat and his guests enjoy tea and *baursak* inside the yurt they have just built!





It is mid-summer and time to move to a new pasture in the Altai mountains. How do Marat and his family build their yurt?

Photos and text copyright Celia Emmelhainz and Namara Brede; layout by Celia Emmelhainz, 2013. This story describes a yurt built by Mongolian Kazakhs in June 2009. All names are pseudonyms. For more about this research project, visit <http://www.macalester.edu/academics/geography/mongolia/index.html>.