

Name: _____

Section: _____

The Sisotim Ritual

"The Dance of New Life"



We had just arrived in the village of Sisotim. The natives were about to begin their ritualistic dance. The interpreter informed us that this ritual was always performed prior to the introduction of new life into the tribe. When the tribe is not undergoing this ritual, the members spend most of their time tending to their daily tasks of hunting, fishing, farming, and preparing for the ritual. While performing these daily activities, the tribe members always appear to be enjoying each other's company.

Now it is time for the dance to begin. There are men sitting down and playing the drums near a raging fire. All of the tribe's people are surrounding the dancers. We watch attentively as each of the tribe's ritual dancers, dressed in colorful robes, form a circle and extend their arms straight above their heads, reaching for the sky. They stand very straight and appear so tall and thin. We look up to see if they are actually touching the sky! As we slowly dropped our heads, we noticed that the number of dancers seemed to double without us even knowing. Meanwhile, on the outside of the circle, another tribe member, dressed in white, is running around them with a long, twirling ribbon. The ribbon is so long and he is running so fast that it appears that he can almost catch the end. He runs faster and faster and starts breathing heavily, but still he continues to run.

The people inside the circle now slowly and gracefully bring their arms down and pair up with one other person by linking arms. They are all smiling as they find a partner, and the people on the outside start chanting. Abruptly, men seem to have appeared out of thin air. The men with glowing body art begin swinging ropes around their bodies as they reside on either side of the center circle of dancers. They moved their ropes in such a way that the ropes actually seemed to be radiating across the entire area. The man with the ribbon appeared to be exhausted from running around the

dancers so rapidly and his ability to twirl the ribbon became noticeably weakened.

All of a sudden, the person with the ribbon runs far away. We can't even see where he went because it is so dark away from the light of the fire. We are anxious to see what will happen next. Now the people that were surrounded by the ribbon have room to move freely. Each pair starts dancing and they appear to be moving towards the middle of the large space. They join in the chanting, which is now so loud we can barely hear the drums. The dancers are dripping in sweat and they are moving every part of their bodies with the music. Finally, all of the pairs of dancers make it to the middle of the open space and arrange themselves into a straight line. Once they are perfectly lined up, the men swinging the ropes begin to delicately wrap them around each person in the dancing pair. While this is happening, the dancers exhibit a look of confusion and nervousness.

After a little while, the tribe members tending to the ropes slowly and gently pull the dancers apart. The once paired dancers look at each other as the men with the ropes slowly pull them to opposite directions. The dancers, with a look of helplessness, even try reaching out towards their partners in the hope that they could once again reconnect, but their distance is too great and it is not possible. Because the dancers no longer have any energy to fight the unrelenting force of the ropes, they all fall to the ground in a very dramatic way. Once on the ground, they look around their new location with an amazed expression on their faces and then dramatically rise, all at the same time. The original pairs of dancers are all so far apart, that they can barely see each other. Here comes the ribbon person again! Wait! There are two of them! Each ribbon person surrounds one of the dancing groups. The dancers in both groups now lift their long arms and reach toward the sky once again. All of a sudden, the dancers seem to disappear, the fire goes out, and the music stops. The leader of the tribe walks into the large group holding a baby towards the sky. This new addition to the tribe was named Mitosia, which means "The daughter." All is calm now as the tribe once again tends to their daily tasks and continues to grow.

Questions:

1. What did the Sisotim people spend most of their time doing?
2. What is the reason for the ritual dance?
3. List the stages of the ritual from beginning to end.

Making Connections:

Directions: For the following questions, try to illustrate how you were able to connect details from the story to the process of mitosis. These questions should be answered after we discuss the process of mitosis.

1. What structure(s) in the cell did the dancers represent? Why?
2. What structure(s) in cell did the ribbon person(s) represent? Why?

3. What structure(s) in the cell did the rope people represent? Why?

4. Complete the following chart by describing the part from the ritual that is representative of the listed stages of the cell cycle and be sure to explain your reasoning.

Stage/Phase	Part From Ritual	Reasoning
Interphase		
Prophase		
Metaphase		
Anaphase		
Telophase		