

PLAINS CREE/ENGLISH
EDITION

OKĀWĪSIMĀW OMĒKIWIN

AUNTIE'S REZ
SURPRISE

ASKIHKĀNIHK OHCI

OMASINAHĪKĒW / WRITTEN BY HEATHER O'WATCH

OTĀPASINAHĪKĒW / ILLUSTRATED BY ELLIE ARSCOTT

OTITWĒSTAMĀKĒW / TRANSLATED BY DOROTHY THUNDER



ADVANCE READING COPY
UNCORRECTED PROOF

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

tk

Copyright text © 2023 Heather O'Watch
Copyright cover and illustrations © 2023 Ellie Arscott
Edited by Jordan Wheeler
Translated by Dorothy Thunder

Printed and bound in Canada

Second Story Press gratefully acknowledges the support of the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts for our publishing program. We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Book Fund.



Conseil des Arts
du Canada

Canada Council
for the Arts

Funded by the Government of Canada
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada

Canada

Published by
Second Story Press
20 Maud Street, Suite 401
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
M5V 2M5
www.secondstorypress.ca

Special thanks to Dr. Jean Okimâsis, honorary founder of the Cree Literacy Network, and to Dr. Arok Wolvengrey, Professor of Indigenous Languages at First Nations University of Canada. And to Arden Ogg, Director of the Cree Literacy Network.

OKĀWĪSIMĀW OMĒKIWIN ASKIHKĀNIHK OHCI

AUNTIE'S REZ SURPRISE

OMASINAHIKĒW / WRITTEN BY HEATHER O'WATCH

OTĀPASINAHIKĒW / ILLUSTRATED BY ELLIE ARSCOTT

OTITWĒSTAMĀKĒW / TRANSLATED BY DOROTHY THUNDER



ADVANCE READING COPY
UNCORRECTED PROOF

Second Story Press

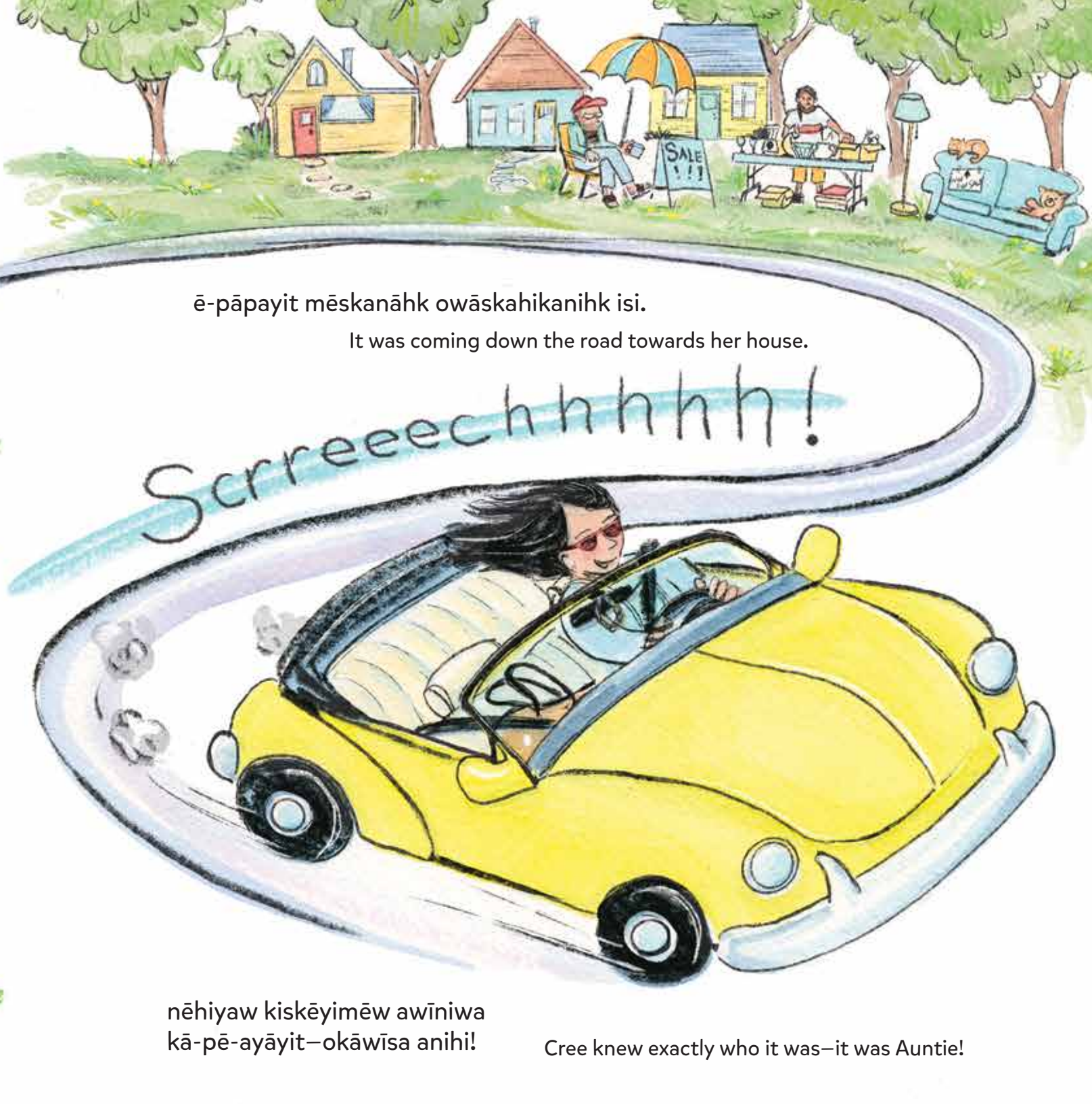
ispī nēhiyaw ē-kīsi-kīkisēpā-mīcisot, pēhtam kīkway kā-nakayātahk.

As Cree finished her last bite of breakfast,
she heard a familiar sound.



ē-pāpayit mēskanāhk owāskahikanihk isi.

It was coming down the road towards her house.



nēhiyaw kiskēyimēw awīniwa
kā-pē-ayāyit-okāwīsa anihī!

Cree knew exactly who it was—it was Auntie!

ē-pēhtākosit sēhkēs
ē-pē-takopicikēt ita kā-nakīhk
ēkwa iskwāhtēm yōhtēpayin
ēkwa kipipayin.

The noisy car pulled into the driveway
and a door opened and closed.



“tānisi! nitapisc-āyisim, tānisi?” tēpwēw
okāwīsimāw ē-mēkwā-pētāstamohtēt itē
kā-nakīhk.

“tānisi, my little one, tānisi!?”
(Hello! How are you?),”
Auntie shouted as she
walked up the driveway.



“namōya nānitaw, okāwīsimāw,”
naskomēw nēhiyaw. tāpwē
ē-kī-sōhkatoskātahk nēhiyaw
onēhiyawēwin.

“namōya nānitaw (I am good),
Auntie,” Cree replied. Cree had
been working on her Nehiyaw.



okāwīsimāw kākikē atamiskawēw nēhiyawa ē-nēhiyawēt.

Auntie always greeted Cree in nēhiyawēwin.

okāwīsimāw tahkonam omisi-sōniyāwiwat, owiyāpicikēwasākay,
ēkwa mistikowat ē-sākaskinēyik ohci kayāsi-kitohcikēwini-CDs
ēkwa masinahikana.

Auntie carried her big purse, a second-hand jacket, and a
box full of old CDs and books.

“wahwā, tānite māka kahkiyaw
ōhi ē-otinaman kīkwaya?!”
kakwēcihkēmow nēhiyaw
ē-kanawāpahtahk Auntiewa
ē-ispastāyit pītos kīkwāsa.

“Holeh, where did you get
all this stuff?!” Cree asked as
she looked at Auntie’s pile of
knick-knacks.

ē-cīpotōnēt, okāwīsimāw
itwēw, “nētē tasi
wiypicikēwi-atāwākēwinihk!”

Pointing with her lips, Auntie
said, “Over there at the
garage sale!”



“tinē! kitāpowakēyihtēn cī ayisiyiniw ē-nōhtē-wēpinahkik
ōhi?!” itwēw okāwīsimāw ē-mēkwā-tahkonahk mistikowat
ē-asiwatēyiki Elvis CDs. “wāh, ē-miywāsiki ōhi!”

“Tenay! Can you believe people wanted to get rid of
these?!” Auntie said while holding up the box of Elvis
CDs. “Wah, they’re in good shape!”

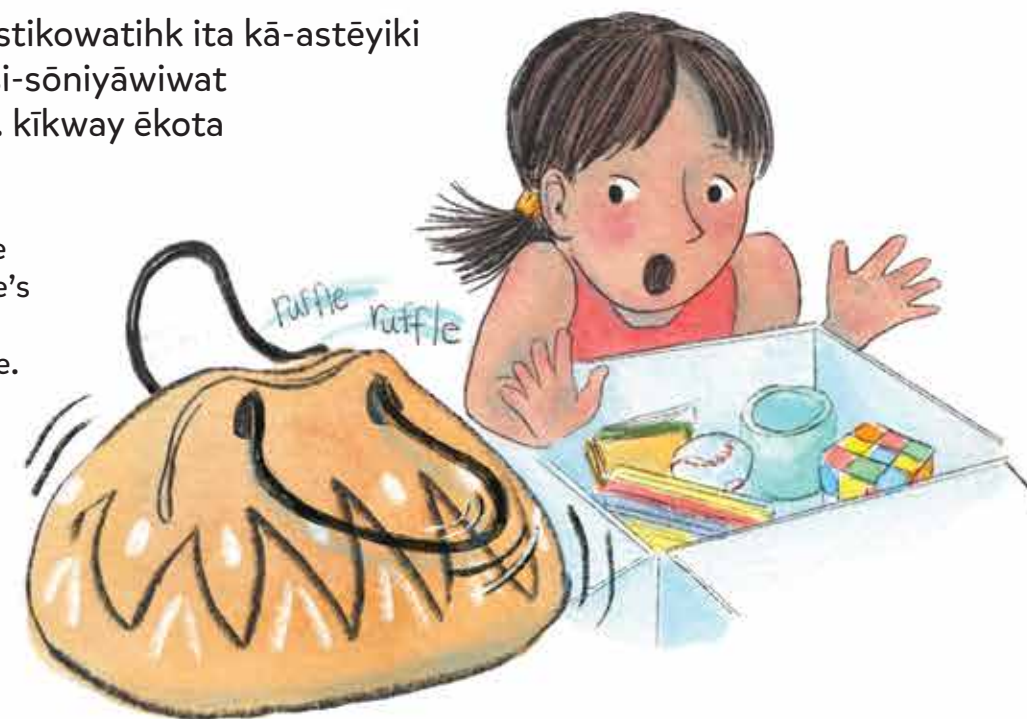


nēhiyaw cīhkēyihtam ispī okāwīsimāw
ē-āh-atāwēyit kīkwāsa wiypicikēwinihk
ohci. tāpiskōc māna okāwīsimāw kākikē
ē-miskahk takahki-kīkwaya.

Cree loved when Auntie brought
surprises from the garage sales. Auntie
seemed to always find the coolest stuff.

nēhiyaw ē-na-nitonikēt mistikowatihk ita kā-astēyiki
kīkwāsa, okāwīsimāw omisi-sōniyāwiwat
kā-māci-waskawipayiniyik. kīkway ēkota
ē-asiwatēyik.

As Cree looked through the
box of knick-knacks, Auntie’s
big purse started to move.
There was something inside.





“ᐃᐃ! okāwīsimāw, kisōniyāwiwat
waskawipayin!”

“Eeee! Auntie, your purse
is moving!”

okāwīsimāw pāhpiw ēkwa itwēw, “āha,
tāpwē nitānis. ēwako nimēkiwin...
kīkwāy anima kititēyihētē.”

Auntie laughed and said, “Aha, yes
my girl. That’s my surprise...take a
guess what it is.”

nēhiyaw
nōhtē-kiskēyihām.
kīkwāy ētikwē?

Cree was curious.
What could it be?

“ē-pimātahk cī?”
kakwēcīhkēmow.

“Is it alive?” she
asked.

“āha,” nanamiskwēyiw
okāwīsimāw.

“Aha,” nodded Auntie.



kīkwāy ēkota kā-asiwatēk
sōniyāwiwatihk kīhtwām
waskawipayin.

Whatever was inside
the purse moved
again.

nēhiyaw kakwēcimēw Auntiewa, “ē-kī-otinaman cī nēte tasi kā-wiyāpicikēhk?”

Cree asked Auntie, “Did you get it from the garage sale too?”

okāwīsimāw pāhpiw ēkwa itwēw, “namōya, nitānis, askīhkān tasi ē-ohcīmakahk.” nawac ēkwa nēhiyaw ayiwāk nōhtē-kiskēyihtam.

Auntie laughed and said, “No, my girl, it came from the rez.” Cree was even more curious now.



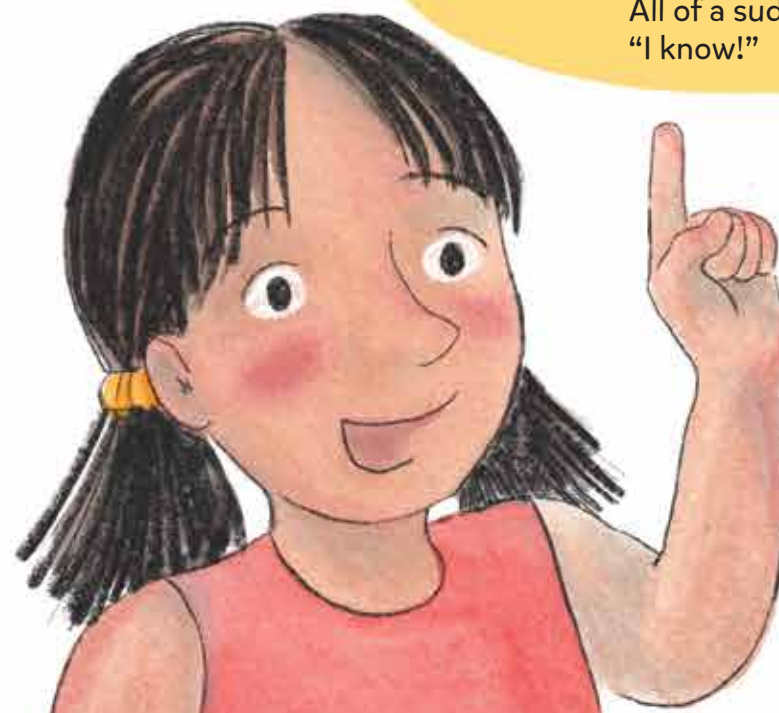
kīkwāy poko kā-asiwasot Auntiewa osōniyāwiyatīyihk pē-sākastāw ē-apisāsiniyik, ē-sāpopēyik okot.

Whatever was in Auntie’s purse poked out its small, wet nose.



sisikoc nēhiyaw kā-tēpwēt, “nikiskēyihtēn!”

All of a sudden, Cree shouted, “I know!”



“hmm...kīkwāy ētikwē poko?” cihcīkistikwānēw nēhiyaw. “kīkwāy askīhkān ē-ohcīmakahk ēkwa ē-ayāt ē-apisāsiniyik ē-sāpopēyik mikot?”

“Hmm...what could it be?” Cree scratched her head. “What comes from the rez and has a small wet nose?”



“kīkwāy kititēyihtēn?” kakwēcimēw okāwīsimāw.

“What do you think it is?” Auntie asked.

“amisk ana!”

“It’s a beaver!”



okāwīsimāw misi-pāhpiw iyikohk ē-wīsakāhpit,
“hā-hā-hā-hā! wahwā, nitānis, namōya ana
amisk. kīhtwām pakwanawēihcikē.”

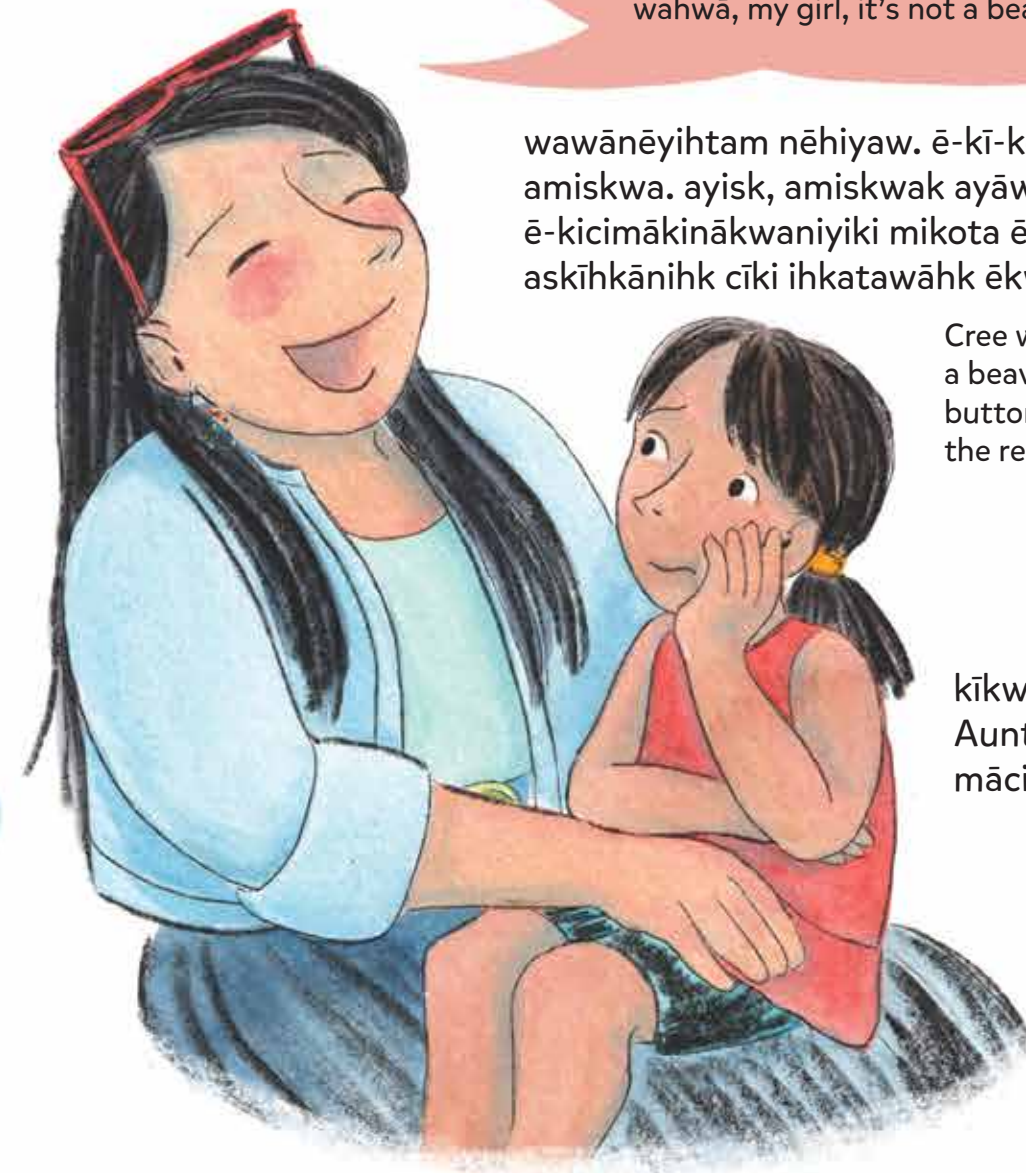
Auntie let out a big belly laugh. “HA-HA-HA-HA!
wahwā, my girl, it’s not a beaver. Guess again.”

wawānēihtam nēhiyaw. ē-kī-kēhcināyēyimāt
amiskwa. ayisk, amiskwak ayāwak ē-apisāsiniyik
ē-kicimākinākwaniyiki mikota ēkwa ka-kī-miskawāwak
askīhkānihk cīki ihkatawāhk ēkwa cīki sīpīhk.

Cree was puzzled. She was sure it was
a beaver. After all, beavers have small
button noses and can be found on
the rez near sloughs and rivers.

kīkwāy ētikwē poko kā-asiwasoyit
Auntie osōniyāwiwatihk
māci-pa-pasoyiwa.

Whatever was in Auntie’s purse
started to sniff.



Sniff
Sniff

“hmm...” itēyhtam
kīhtwām nēhiyaw.
kīkwāy
ē-ma-miyāhcikēt,

“Hmm...” Cree thought
again. What sniffs,

sniff
sniff

ēkwa ē-ayāt
ē-kicimākinākwaniyik
mikot, ēkwa askīhkān
ē-ohcīt?

has a button nose, and is
from the rez?



“wacask cī?” kakwēcihkēmow.

“A muskrat?” she asked.



Auntie kāwi misi-pāhpiw. “kīhtwām
pakwanawēyihcikē,” itwēw.

Auntie’s big belly laugh returned.
“Guess again,” she said.

sōniyāwiwatihk ohci nēhiyaw pēhtam nēmowin.

From inside the purse Cree heard
a growl.



nēhiyaw ohkwākan wāsihkopayiniyiw.

Cree’s face lit up.

“nikiskēyhten, okāwīsimāw, nikiskēyhtēn
kīkwāy ana!” tēpwēw nēhiyaw ēkwa
kwāskohtiw ē-mōcikēyihk.

“I know, Auntie, I know what it is!” Cree
shouted and jumped in excitement.



“askīhkān acimosis
ana!” itwēw nēhiyaw
ē-misi-pāhpiwinākosit.

“It’s a rez puppy!” Cree
said with a big grin.

“āha, tāpwē, nitānis, ēkotowa ana,”
itwēw okāwīsimāw ē-kwayakonāt
ē-osāwinākosiyit acimosisa ē-kikiskamiyit
mihko-tāpiskākan omisi-sōniyāwiwatihk
ohci.

“Aha, yes, my girl, it is,” Auntie said as she
picked up the brown puppy with its red collar
from her big purse.

“māka...tānisi ē-isi-nākatēyimiht
askīhkān acimosis?”
kakwēcīhkēmow nēhiyaw.

“But...how do you take care
of a rez puppy?” Cree asked.

okāwīsimāw itwaham ita
nēhiyawa ka-apiyit mohcihk.

Auntie motioned for Cree
to sit on the ground.

“āstam ōta, api.”
“Come here, sit.”

nēhiyaw nahapiw
pēskis acimosisa
ē-cīhcīkwahtamiyit
oyiyīkicihcīsa.

Cree sat as the
puppy nibbled
at her fingers.



“kiwāhkōmākaninawak ōki,”
māci-itwēw okāwīsimāw. “kayās
ē-kī-wīchācik kitayisiyīnīminawa ispī
kā-miyopayiyit ēkwa kā-kwātakihtāyit.

“These are our relatives,” Auntie began.
“Long ago, they helped our people get
through good times and bad times.

“kiwīchikonawak ka-nīmāyahk, ēkwa
ēkā ka-kitimahikawiyahk.

“They helped us carry food, and
they kept us safe from harm.

“wīhtawakāwāwa ēkwa okotiwāwa
āpacihtāwak ka-nanahihtahkik ēkwa
ka-nihtā-pasocik.”

“Their ears and noses make them
good listeners and smellers.”



okāwīsimāw otinam
sakāpihkinikan osōniyāwiwatihk
ohci ēkwa akwamohtāw acimosisa
otāpiskākaniyihk.

Auntie took a leash from her purse
and attached it to the puppy's
collar.



“ēkā kāh-owāhkōmākanimāyahkik,
ka-wanisininaw ēkwa ka-kaskēyihētēnaw.
poko ka-kihēcēyimāyahkik.

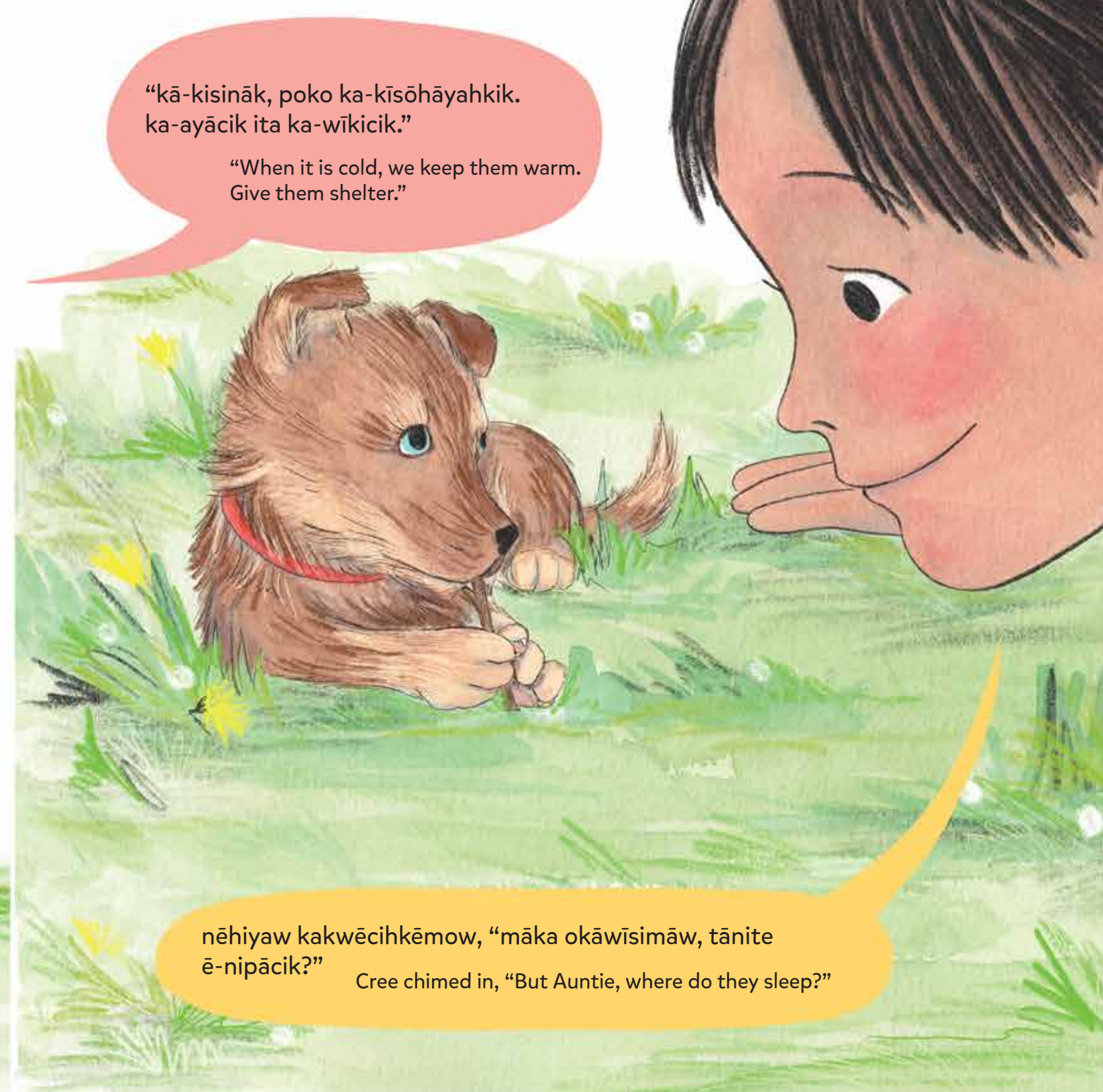
“Without these relatives, we would be
lost and lonely. We need to respect them.

“ispī kā-kīsēyihitamāhk ka-wīkimāyahkik
ōki kinēwokātēw-wāhkōmākaninawak,
poko ka-kisēwātītawāyahkik.
kā-nōhtēhkatēcik, ka-asamāyahkik.

“When we decide to live with these four-
legged relatives, we must be kind to them.
When they are hungry, we feed them.

“kā-kisināk, poko ka-kīsōhāyahkik.
ka-ayācik ita ka-wīkicik.”

“When it is cold, we keep them warm.
Give them shelter.”



nēhiyaw kakwēcihkēmow, “māka okāwīsimāw, tānite
ē-nipācik?”

Cree chimed in, “But Auntie, where do they sleep?”

“pīhcāyihk wāskahikanihk ita
ka-māwaci-miyo-ayācik. ēkwa
poko kākikē ka-pimohtahāyahkik,
tāpiskōc kiyanaw kā-pimohtēyahk.
māka poko ka-kēhcināhoyahk
ēkā kiwāhkōmākaninawak
ka-kwāhtohtēcik ēkwa
ka-wanisihkik,” itwēw okāwīsimāw.

“Inside the house is the most comfy
for them. And we should always take
them for walks, just like we go for
walks. But we need to make sure our
relatives don’t wander off and get
lost,” Auntie said.

“ayisk, askīhkān ē-misāk,
ē-katawasisik ayāwin.”

“After all, the rez is a big,
beautiful place.”

okāwīsimāw kitāpamēw
anihi askīhkān acimosisa,
ēkwa nēhiyawa omisi itēw,
“tānisi kē-isīyihkātāyahk
kitoski-wāhkōmākaninaw?”

Auntie looked at the rez puppy
and said to Cree, “What are
we going to name our new
relative?”

“hmm...tānisi dog
ē-itwēhk kā-nēhiyawēhk?”
kakwēcīhkēmow nēhiyaw.

“Hmm...how do you say dog in
Nehiyaw?” Cree asked.

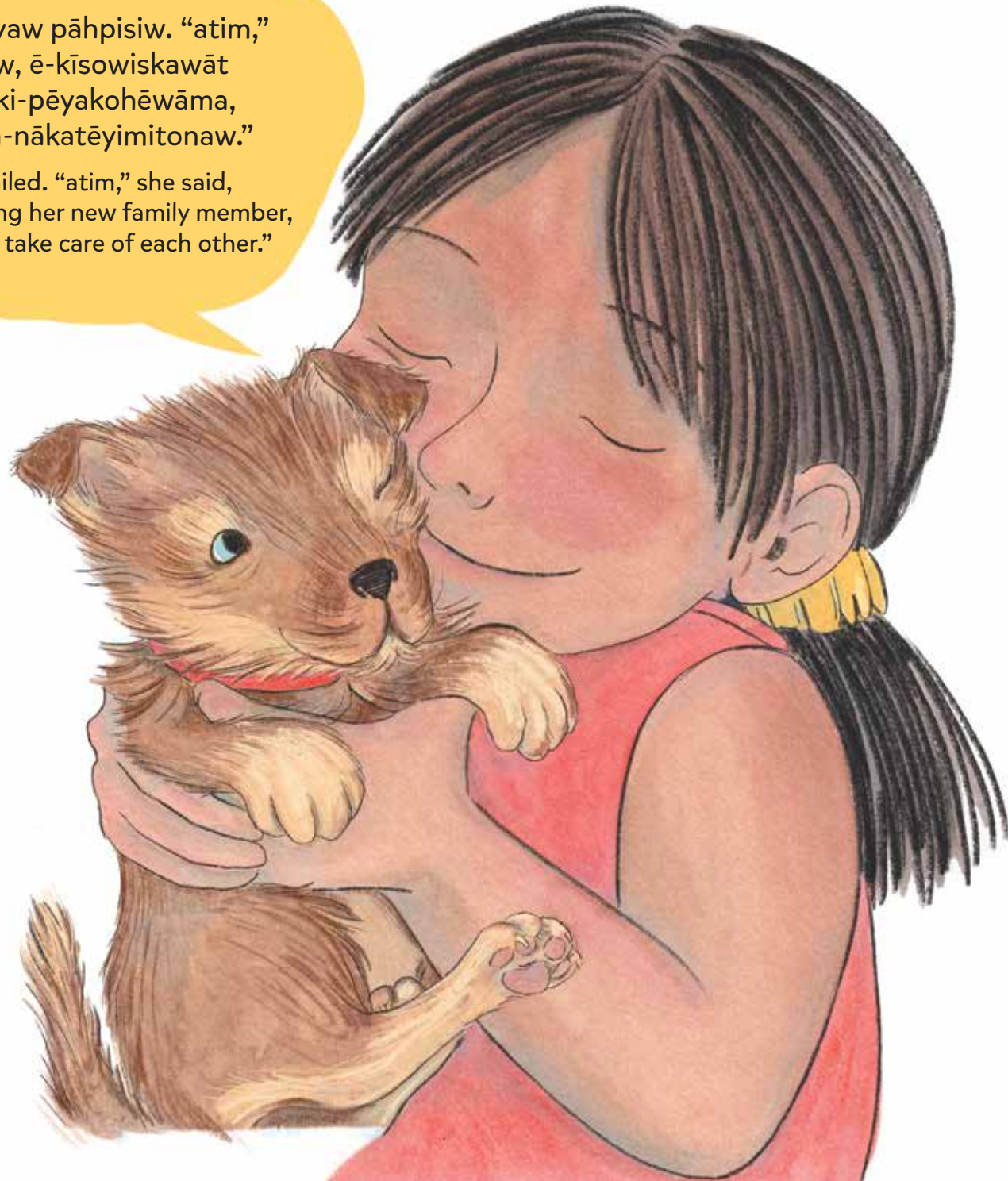
“atim,” itwēw okāwīsimāw.

“atim,” Auntie replied.



nēhiyaw pāhpisiw. “atim,”
itwēw, ē-kīsowiskawāt
otoski-pēyakohēwāma,
“kika-nākatēyimitonaw.”

Cree smiled. “atim,” she said,
snuggling her new family member,
“we will take care of each other.”



Heather O'Watch asinīwipwāt ēkwa nēhiyaw iskwēw, Okanese First Nation ohci, ēkotē ē-ayāk nēwo-tipahamātowaskīhk. oskana kā-asastēki, kisiskāciwanihk ē-wīkit. Heather miywēyhtam ta-kiyokawāt opēyakohēwāma, owāhkōmākana, ēkwa niyānan otēma.

Heather O'Watch is a Nakota and Nehiyaw woman from Okanese First Nation, located in Treaty 4 Territory. She lives in Regina, Saskatchewan. Heather enjoys spending time with her family, relatives, and five dogs.

Ellie Arscott namōya iyiniw (mōniyāw) otāpasinahikēw ē-kī-ohpikit ōcēnāsīhk Ontario ita ē-ayāwāt mihcēt pisiskīwa—piyēsīsa, minōsa, wāposwa, ēkwa atimwa! nistam otāpasinahikēwin ohci, *Night Walk*, kī-kīspinatam SCBWI Canada East Crystal Kite. *okāwīsimāw omēkiwin askīhkānihk ohci* ēwako ēkwa nēwāw kā-kī-tāpasinahahk masinipayiwi-masinahikana. Ellie ē-wīkit sākāstēnohk Tkaronto asici opēyakohēwāma ēkwa mīna pēyak pisiskīwa, Frank minōs.

Ellie Arscott is a non-Indigenous illustrator who grew up in a small Ontario town with a lot of pets—birds, cats, rabbits, and dogs! Her illustration debut, *Night Walk*, was awarded an SCBWI Canada East Crystal Kite. *Auntie's Rez Surprise* is her fourth illustrated picture book. Ellie lives in east-end Toronto (Tkaronto) with her family, including one pet, Frank the cat.

Dorothy Thunder opaskwāwiyniwiw (nēhiyawiskwēw), wāskicōsiyinihāhk, kisiskāciwanihk, ohci ēkwa ē-kī-wīcihtāsot ē-masinahahkik, *Beginning of Print Culture in Athabasca Country*, ē-kī-mēskotasinahamihk cahkipēwasinahikēwin ohci ākayāsīmowin isi. amiskwaciwāskahikanihk wīkiw asici onāpēma, Jason, otawāsimisiwāwa, ēkwa mīna nisto atimwa mētoni kā-otamihikocik. Dorothy sākihtāw nēhiyawēwin ēkwa miywēyhtam ka-mātinamākēt misiw itē.

Dorothy Thunder is Plains Cree (nēhiyawiskwēw) from Little Pine First Nation, Saskatchewan, and a co-author of the book, *Beginning of Print Culture in Athabasca Country*, which has been adapted from Cree syllabics to English. She lives in Edmonton with her husband, Jason, their beautiful children, and three awesome dogs who keep them very busy. Dorothy is passionate about the Cree language and loves to share it widely.

“TĀNISI!
NITAPISC-ĀYISIM,
TĀNISI?”

okāwīsimāw kākikē atamiskawēw nēhiyawa
ē-nēhiyawēmototawāt kā-pē-kiyokēt. kā-takosihk
okāwīsimāw kī-pētāw mēkiwin ē-kātāt osōniyāwiwatihk,
namōya nēhiyaw ka-kī-pēhow ka-wāpahtahk. nistam
pakwanawēyihcikēwin? askīhkānihk ē-ohcīmakahk.
mēkwāc nēhiyaw ē-kakwē-kiskēyihthk kīkwaya ōma,
sōniyāwiwat māci-waskawipayin!

“TĀNISI! MY LITTLE ONE, TĀNISI!”

Auntie always greets Cree in Nehiyaw when she comes
for a visit. When Auntie arrives with a surprise gift hidden
in her bag, Cree can’t wait to discover what it is. The first
clue? It’s from the rez. As Cree tries to figure out what it
might be, the bag starts to move!

Winner of the
Second Story Press
Indigenous Writing
Contest

September 2023 For ages 6-8

Publicity contact: emma@secondstorypress.ca

For Canadian orders: UTP 1-800-565-9523

For US orders: Orca Book Publishers

1-800-210-5277

ISBN: 978-1-77260-345-3

\$21.95



Second Story Press



9 781772 603453