

ININÎMOWIN (CREE) / ENGLISH EDITION

KEKWAN ETAKWAK MÎKISÎHK?

WHAT'S IN A BEAD?

KÂKIMASINÂHAHK / WRITTEN BY
KELSEY BORGFORD

KÂKITAPÂSINAHIKET / ILLUSTRATED BY
TESSA PIZZALE

KÂKIKWESKASINAHIKET / TRANSLATED BY
ANGELA SHISHEESH NESTA / AND
DUANE LINKLATER



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etakonak kohkom
wîskotewimawakosiw itipâcimot.

Kohkom always smells of
campfire stories when I wrap
my arms around her.

nimâmâ niwîhtamahk, “anima osani
kihohci isimakosit emîkisistwâwat
môswayâna kâkihosawapasomici.”

Mom explains, “It is because her hands
sew colorful beads all day long onto
smoked hides.”



“nîna nesta niwîmîkისტâhikan,”
titow mâmâ.

“I want to bead too,” I tell Mom.

“kohkom kikakiskinohamak, sâkoc maka
pitama atiht kekwana kâkiskenihten
pwamâsi kiskinohâmasik,” itwew nimâmâ.
“pitama kinatawenitâkosin kici-kiskenitaman
kâhitatocikâtek emîksistâhikaniwak.”

“Kohkom will teach you, but there are some things you
must know before she does,” Mom says. “You need to know
the stories about beading first.”

“oma maka nesta môsak
kitôten kici-mînât cistemâwa
kisehâyawâw ekâkwecimât
kekwaniw,” ekwani esit nimâmâ.

niwîcihik ewîskwepitimaki cistemâwa.

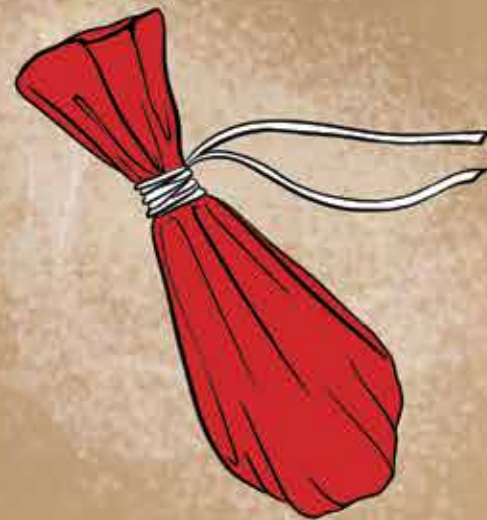
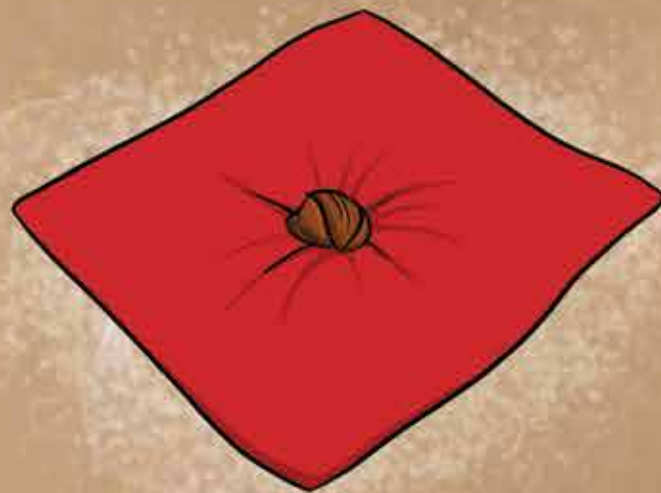
She helps me make a tobacco tie.

“You should always offer tobacco before
asking for something from our Elders,”
Mom tells me.



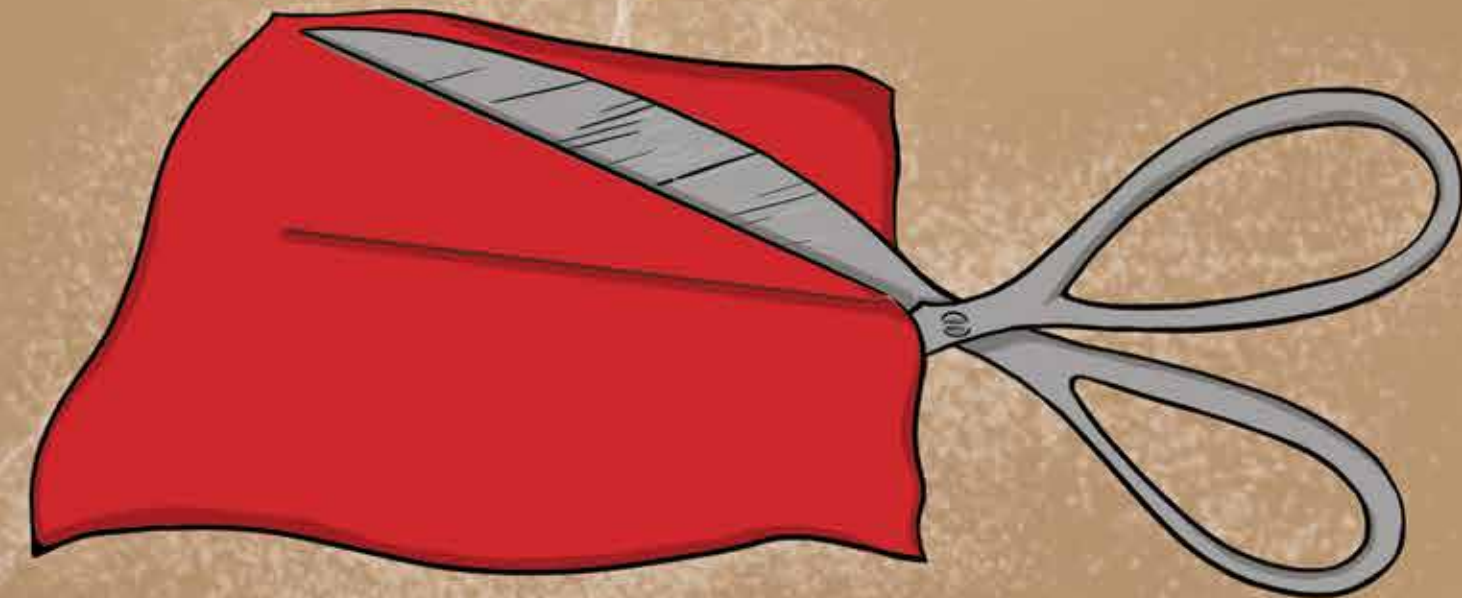
nimâcisenân kamikwak pakwanekis,
ekota esipakitinak cistemaw
niwîcihik, maka nikâwîy etakopitimaki
asikâniyâpîy ehâpacityan,
nitâyamicikan.

We cut up a soft red piece of fabric, put
the tobacco in the center, and while Nii-
gahwee helps me tie it up with a white
piece of yarn, I pray.



“kâhisikiskenihtahk
kohkom niwîhisikiskenihten
ekosi wîhtamâw
kicikiskinohamâwit.”
tatipociskenân

“I want to know what Kohkom
knows, please help her teach
me.”





nipîsiskâkaninana nesta nimôswayâneskisinana,
tatihitotanân kohkom wîkihk, papawahikonân
iskwatemiĥk.

We put on our coats and mukluks, walk to Kohkom's
house, and knock on the wooden door.



kohkom
pâhpikweniw
epîhtikwehisamit.
ininîmow. “wâciye!
ehitwet!”

Kohkom smiles as she
lets us in, greeting
us in Cree. “wâciye!
Hello!”

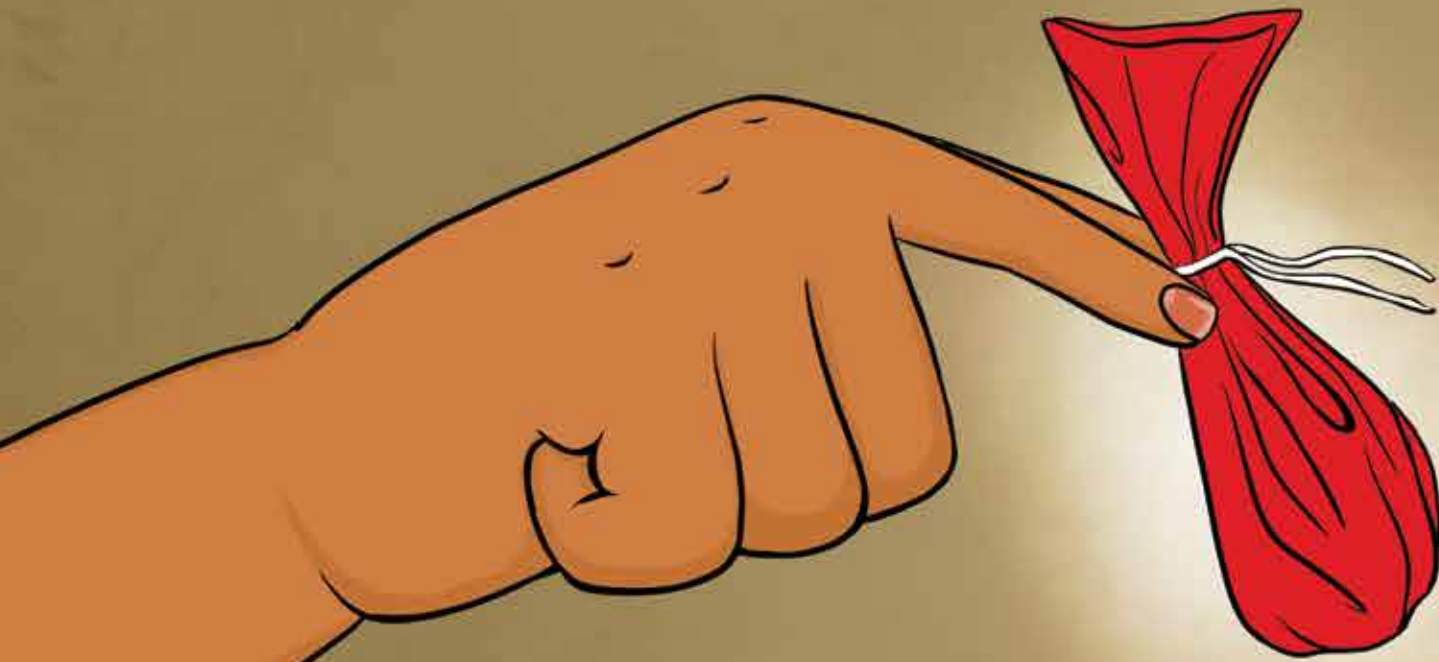


kohkom wîkihk kici-minâkasoniwa ehoswât masikiskwa otiskotekanihk etiket. niminahikonân esikinak minikwakanihk nitatihapinân mîcisowinâtihk eketasakeyâhk.

nimâmâ wehci-ayamit emamatakomot ehitwet, “Tessa kiwîkakwecimik kekwaniw.”

Kohkom’s home is filled by the smell of cedar tea boiling on the stove.
She pours us each a cup and sits down at the table as we take off our coats.





“kohkom kâkiskinohamawin na? kici-
kinihtamîkisistahikeyan?” aspis piko etisi-
sipacistat epitwat opwakitimihk.

Mom urges me forward and I place the tobacco tie in
Kohkom’s gentle hands.

“Kohkom, will you teach me how to bead?” I ask. She closes
her fingers around it and puts it into the pocket of her pants.

nimama nisikimik kici-minimaki cistemawa
kohkom nipakitinimawa ocicikh.



Mom speaks with pride when she says, “Tessa
wants to ask you something.”



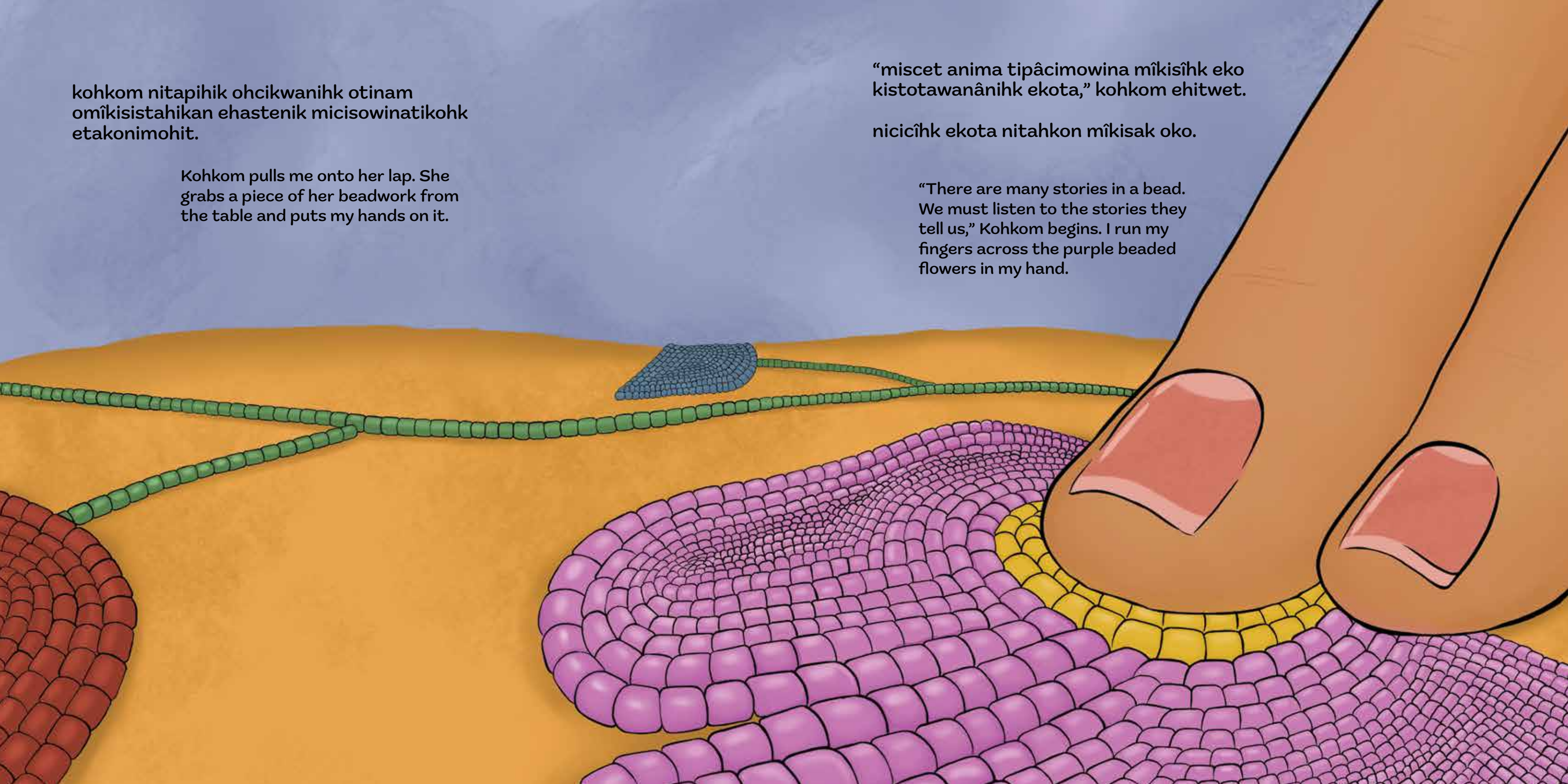
kohkom nitapihik ohcikwanihk otinam
omîkisistahikan ehastenik micisowinatikohk
etakonimohit.

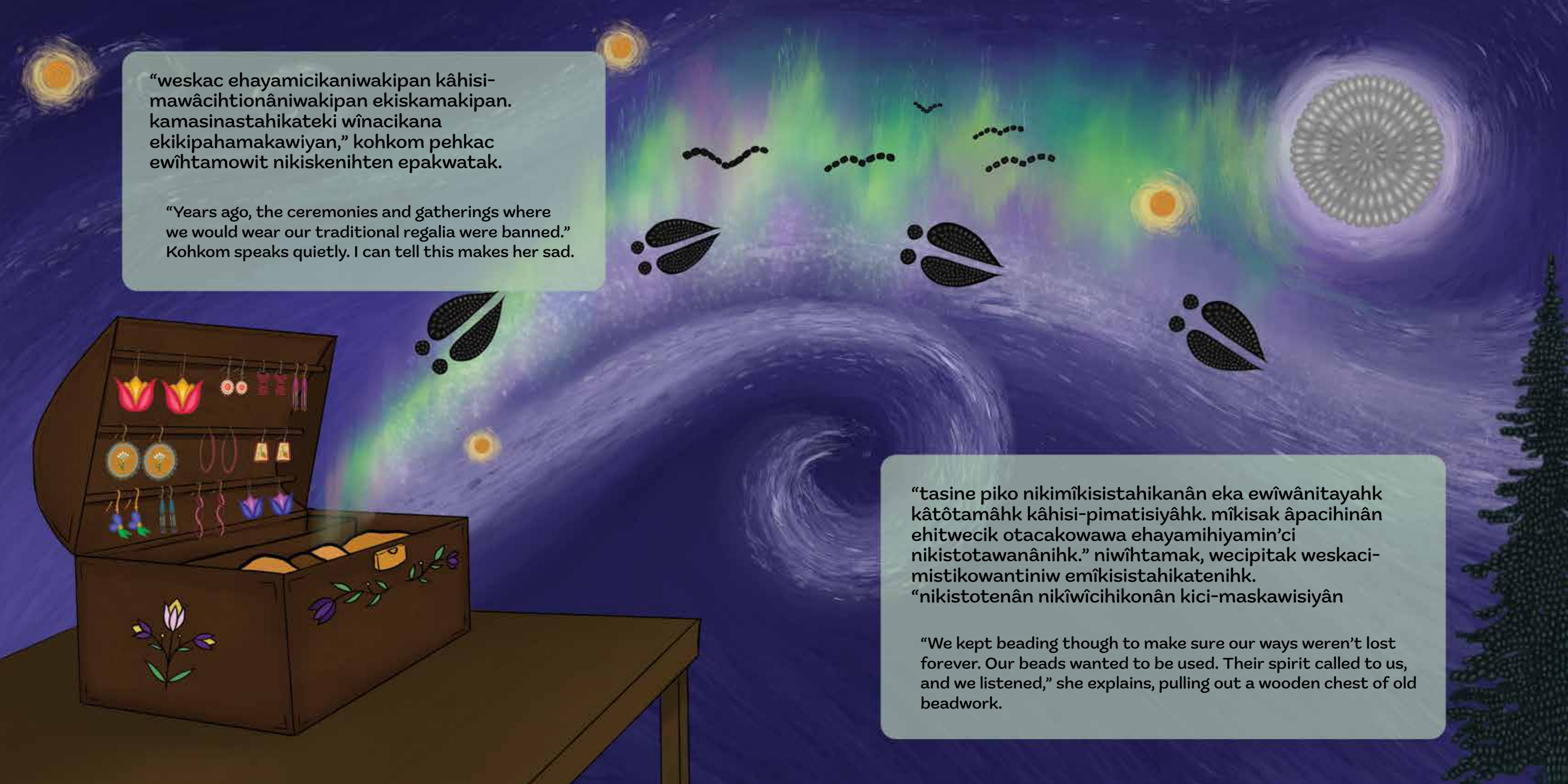
Kohkom pulls me onto her lap. She
grabs a piece of her beadwork from
the table and puts my hands on it.

“miscet anima tipâcimowina mîkisihk eko
kistotawanânihk ekota,” kohkom ehitwet.

niciîhk ekota nitahkon mîkisak oko.

“There are many stories in a bead.
We must listen to the stories they
tell us,” Kohkom begins. I run my
fingers across the purple beaded
flowers in my hand.





“weskac ehayamicikaniwakipan kâhisi-
mawâcihtionâniwakipan ekiskamakipan.
kamasinastahikateki wînacikana
ekikipahamakawiyân,” kohkom pehkac
ewihtamowit nikiskenihten epakwatak.

“Years ago, the ceremonies and gatherings where
we would wear our traditional regalia were banned.”
Kohkom speaks quietly. I can tell this makes her sad.

“tasine piko nikimîkistahikanân eka ewîwânitayahk
kâtôtamâhk kâhisi-pimatisiyâhk. mîkidak âpacihinân
ehitwecik otacakowawa ehayamihiyamin’ci
nikistotawanânihk.” niwîhtamak, wecipitak weskaci-
mistikowantiniw emîkistahikatenihk.
“nikistotenân nikîwîcihikonân kici-maskawisiyân

“We kept beading though to make sure our ways weren’t lost
forever. Our beads wanted to be used. Their spirit called to us,
and we listened,” she explains, pulling out a wooden chest of old
beadwork.



kititaskanesiwiniwak. nikitipacimostakonanak awenikaniwiyak.” kohkom niwâpahtinaman maskisina emîkisistahikateniki wapikwana nesta kotakiya kanitawikiki maskosiya. “kiwapahten na oho? tipacimomakanwa oho anisinâpe ininiwak eko oho omaskisiniwâwa.” niwâpahtamân kâhitwet wesa kohkom omaskisina kamîkisipiteniki

“We listened because they helped us stay strong in our culture. They told stories about who we are.” Kohkom shows me a pair of moccasins with bright beads in the shape of flowers and plants on it. “You see these? These tell stories of the Anishinaabe people, these are their moccasins.”

omaskekowi-waskisina pîtosipiteniwi kâhisinakwaniniki wîna anisinâpewak. ninitoten etipacimostâtakok mîkisak ewâpahtamân kâhispicikaniwak mîkisistahikewinîhk. mîkisak kiwâpatinikonawak awenikaniwiyâhk. wâskikanihk nitisistawin kohkom, kici-kenikok etakonak

I see what she means now because the florals beaded on Kohkom’s Cree moccasins look different from the Anishinaabe ones. I understand that the beads tell us stories, I can see them in the designs of the beadwork. Beads can show people who we are.

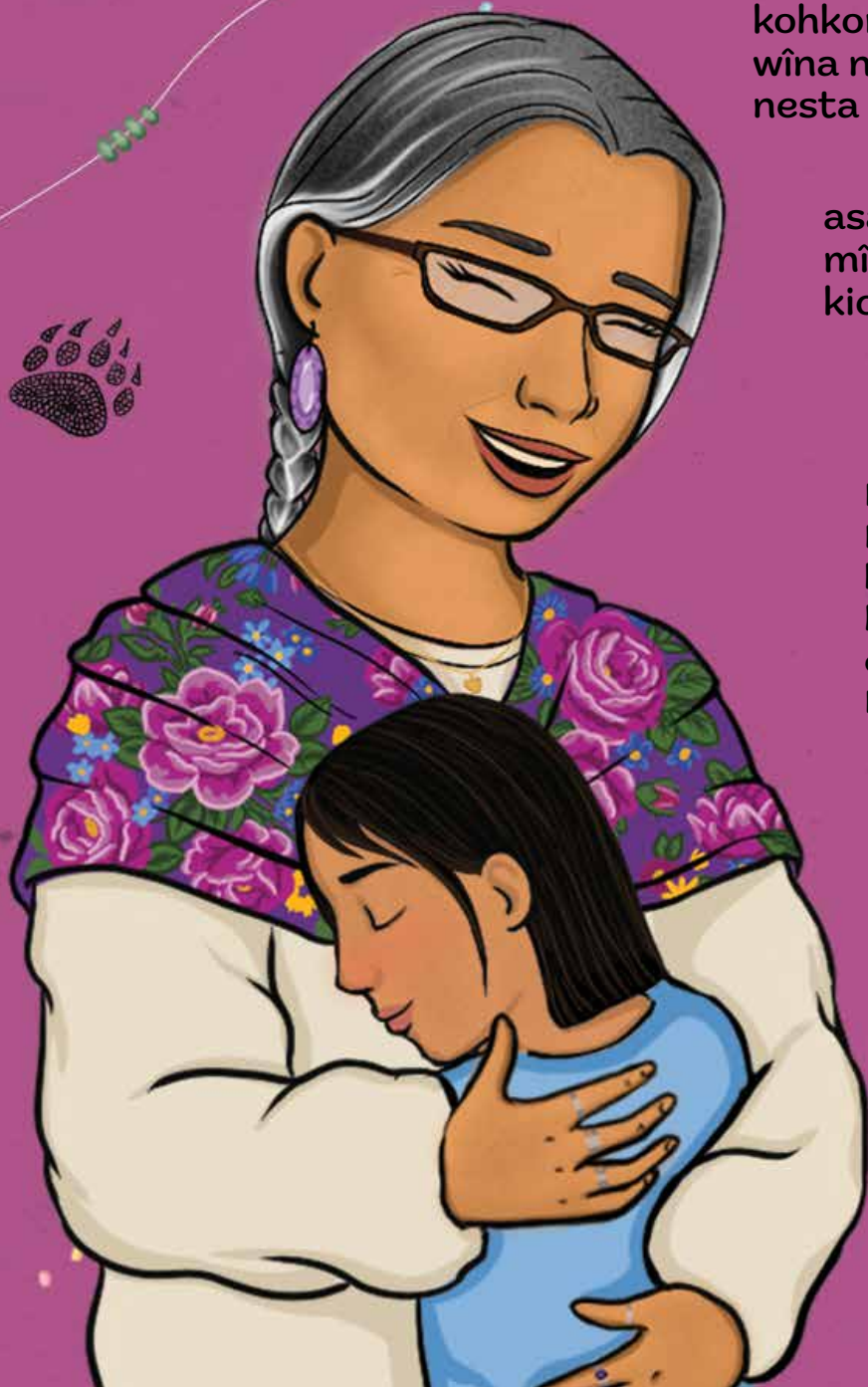


eminakotamototak
pasteniw otipâcimowîna
ekicisâkitâwak.
kohkom nitakonik nesta
wîna nesta ehocipitât mîkisa
nesta ehitwet, “iskwesîs

asay maka kikisktenihten
mîkistahikewin. eko maka
kicitata!”

I snuggle against
Kohkom’s chest,
hugging her tight and
breathing in the smell
of campfire stories that
I love so much.

Kohkom hugs me back
and pulls the beads
towards me, and says
excitedly, “My girl, now
you know what is in a
bead. Let’s get started!”



Kelsey Borgford is Nbisiing Nishnaabe from the Marten clan and Couchie family. She currently resides in Nipissing First Nation, the traditional territory of her people, studying Indigenous Studies at Nipissing University. She previously graduated from both Indigenous Wellness and Addictions Prevention at Canadore College and Native Community Worker, Traditional Healing Methods, at Anishinabek. Borgford writes both fiction and nonfiction and draws her inspiration to succeed from her culture and family.

Tessa Pizzale grew up in North Bay, Ontario. She is currently working on her Bachelor of Fine Arts at Nipissing University. She loves illustrating, painting, or creating different Indigenous crafts, like regalia leather belts, ribbon skirts, and beadwork. Pizzale learned a lot of her craftsmanship from her late kookum, who taught her how to bead, and her nikawiy, who taught her how to sew.

Angela Shisheesh is a Cree translator at the Ojibway and Cree Cultural Centre based in Timmins, Ontario.

Duane Linklater is Omaskêko Ininiwak and currently lives in North Bay, Ontario. He earned a Master of Fine Arts from Bard College and a Bachelor of Native Studies with a focus in Cree language from the University of Alberta. Linklater is a lifelong learner of the Cree language and credits the many Elders, including his kohkom Agnes Hunter, for teaching and sharing the language.

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*"THERE ARE MANY STORIES IN A
BEAD. WE MUST LISTEN TO THE
STORIES THEY TELL US."*

Tessa loves how her grandmother always smells of campfire stories. Mom says it's because Kohkom spends her days sewing beautiful beads onto smoked hides. Inspired, Tessa asks Kohkom to teach her beading, but first she must listen and learn the many stories held in a bead.

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