

*We Belong With the Water*

Mobility, temporal habitation, rituals, and other 'incidental' elements  
surrounding fish harvesting traditions of Indigenous communities  
in Southern Georgian Bay

-

A Graphic Novel

by

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A thesis  
presented to the University of Waterloo  
in fulfillment of the  
thesis requirement for the degree of  
Master of Architecture

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

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## AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

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*I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis including any required final revisions as accepted by my examiners.*

*I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.*



## ABSTRACT

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For over 200 years, the delineation of the land and subsequent colonial settlement throughout Canada has subjugated and removed Indigenous presence from the land. This includes their constructions, tools, and laws connected to their harvesting practices.

Along the shorelines of Georgian Bay, this colonial violence continues with settler conservation-regulations and policies that assist to commodify the Bay for tourists and cottagers. This has had a profound effect on Indigenous people's access to and sovereignty over the water and surrounding landscape, weakening, and sometimes severing an important relationship with the land. As such, cabins, docks, drying and smoking structures built by Canada's Indigenous people during expeditionary hunting and fishing trips have long disappeared from public spaces along the shoreline. These structures are not only intrinsic to the harvesting ritual but also existed as a way to harvest efficiently, access knowledge, connect oneself to culture, and establish a sacred connection to land and water. This Indigenous occupation of the land for harvesting as well as their use of nets has produced many conflicts between conservationists and cottagers who worry about the stewardship of the land. For decades, cottagers and sport fishers claim that Indigenous rights interfere with generations of wilderness recreation and diminishing fish stocks, perpetuating harmful stereotypes.

The aim of this research is to draw attention to some of the conflicts and challenges Indigenous people face, and in particular, Non-Status and Métis people, when trying to take part in harvesting in the Bay. These classifications of Indigenous people have a particularly fraught relationship with the dispossession of land and harvesting rights since they were never formally recognized by the Federal Government until less than a decade ago. However, their rights remain tenuous since generations live with a profound loss of knowledge linked to their harvesting practices within their communities. Using the format of a graphic novel, I interpret my own experiences and connection to my historic community of the Georgian Bay Métis through a fictional tale of resilience, perseverance, and connection to one's rights. The novel identifies elements that are in fact necessary and not incidental within the fish harvesting ritual and challenge the need to reaffirm Indigenous rights and visibility in spaces that they have been pushed out of for so long. This story not only serves to acknowledge the difficulties Indigenous people face but also the fears and doubts in exerting the rights gifted to us by our ancestors.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I would like to acknowledge the help and support of the many people that surrounded me while producing this thesis. This work would not have been possible without you.

Firstly, I extend my gratitude to Jane. How could I have done this without you? You pushed me in a direction I would have never thought possible. This thesis would not have existed without your guidance, insight, engagement, thoughtfulness, and knowledge. Your intuition and expertise grounded the work, showed me what it could become and how it could extend past this thesis. Thank you for helping me to stay on the path.

To my committee member Marie-Paule. I am so happy that you were able to be a part of this journey. Your repertoire and knowledge of graphic novels was imperative to this process, I cannot thank you enough.

To the other members of my defense panel, my internal reader Andrew Levitt and external reader Andrew Judge. Thank you both for taking the time to read this text and provide your thoughtful insights and questions.

Prior to coming to Waterloo, I was lucky to meet 3 exemplary students who were among the first to make me feel welcome and at home here. The founders of Treaty Lands, Global Stories, Amina, Paniz and Samuel, who helped initiate change and challenge the colonial frameworks upheld by the architectural curriculum at Waterloo. Paniz, thank you for the coffee dates, hugs and chats over the years, your friendship has meant a lot to me during my time here. I cherish these moments and hold them close to my heart. Amina, thank you for your endless generosity. Even when life got bumpy and busy, you always found time to say hello, have a 'quick' chat or sit down for an even 'quicker' chat over coffee.

There are countless other people at Waterloo who made my time here memorable. To my friends from the MA/B and Zoo Studio, especially to those who challenged me, made me laugh, provided valuable critique, and comforted me in times of need, thank you. To the 'RAME' team, Laila, and Margherita, we are forever bonded. I cherish the time we spent together because you both taught me so much; to be a better listener, to trust more and to keep smiling even during the darkest moments. To Tony Kogan, thank you for being a great

friend. I appreciate all the support you have given me over the short time we have known each other. Finally, thank you to all the 2B students I have had the privilege to be a Teaching Assistant for, I enjoyed every minute of it. You all have taught me so much and I take these teachings forward with me. I keep you in my thoughts and look forward to seeing you all go off and do great things.

To my family. First, to my grandparents. To my grandfather, my p'père, who taught me the joy and wealth in the pursuit of knowledge, stories and history. To my m'mère who showed me how to find happiness in life and with food; from growing, cultivating, and sharing in it. Baamaapii. To my mom, where would I be without you? You are more than just a rock; you are my everything. Where would I be without your instruction, edits, guidance, or encouragement? To the 3 great men in my life who raised me. Dad, I have learned so much from you, including the many valuable skills from being out on the water that provided a foundation for this thesis. Arvid, you have sacrificed so much in your life for me, I know I would not have gotten this far without you. Like my grandfather, your passion in the general quest for knowledge, history and in the story of Charles de Langlade helped me to appreciate my ancestors struggles and pushed me to learn more. Pierre, thank you for supporting me in ways no one else could, being my 'devil's advocate' and always being there for me no matter what. To my brother Alex who I have always looked up to and who's opinion I trust. Thank you for supporting me and being there for me at the drop of a hat. To my cousins Jesse and Marcelle-André who kept me going, reassured me, offered me some much-needed advice, and sung my praises when I thought I had nothing left in the tank. To Heather, I do not know of anyone who holds as much compassion as you, thank you for checking on how I am doing whenever we get together. To my uncle Chuck, who snuck in as mother hen these last five years, you have taken such good care of all of us, just as our Lori did. You kept us all afloat, thank you for your wisdom and guidance. To my ma'tante San, I never doubt your love, it is pure and unconditional. I do not know what I would have done without it during the last five years. Thank you for everything you do behind the scenes for us, I see you and appreciate everything you do. To my mon'oncle Dan who showed a great level of interest in my thesis topic and

never stopped asking all the right questions. I cannot mention Dan without also mentioning Andrea and Lauren, who have been great supports during my many years of postsecondary education. Thank you for always being thoughtful and caring towards me. To Justin, thank you for lending an ear, taking the time to check in on me and helping to take care of our little ‘butternut’. You have been a great friend to me over the last couple of years. We are so lucky to have you as a part of our little family. I could not be more grateful. Finally, to my Zak, thank you for kicking my butt when I needed it, being there, encouraging me, supporting me. You were there when I counted on you for advice and whenever I came across a problem that I thought would derail this whole thing. It was just enough. Ch’t’m gros. To Michelle and Luc, thank you for everything you have done for me over the last 3 years, it has not gone unnoticed or unappreciated. I look forward to preparing the most epic meal together when this is all over, I love you both. Je voudrais aussi exprimer ma profonde reconnaissance à ma chère Mimi. Tu restes toujours dans mon cœur, incluent tout tes renseignements durant la longue durée de mes études aussi bien qu’au cours de toute ma vie. Vous donnez l’exemple de l’importance de développer et de démontrer une compassion inébranlable.

I would like to finally extend my appreciation to the Harvesters’ Committee of the Georgian Bay Métis. Thank you to Greg Garratt, the Captain of the Hunt for Region 7, who always made himself available if I had any questions. Thank you for also being a champion and advocate for our rights. Thank you to Richard Boucher who generously shared stories of harvesting with his family and provided reference photos for the graphic novel. Above all, I must acknowledge that without the help of the chair of the harvesters’ committee, Justin Dumont, this thesis would not have been able to adequately preserve the integrity of our community. I am forever grateful for how generous you have been with your time and knowledge you have shared. I am so thankful to have met you cousin and for the time we spend together.

Miigwetch – Marsee - Merci to you all, we paddle forward together.







*This thesis is dedicated to all my relations, my ancestors, and to all the generations who will come after me.*

*For my grandparents, William (Bill) Manley Longlade and Lorenza (Lori) Ezilda-Rita née Blondin who have taught me my most cherished teachings and who continue to support me.*

*To the 'little ones', Lauren, Benjamin and Dawson, they walk with you, with all of us.*

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## INTRODUCTION

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### *Aaniin niijii-bimaadiziig*

Early European surveys characterised Georgian Bay as ‘barren and uninhabited landscape’.<sup>1</sup> However, these characterisations had in fact undermined that this place had been home to many different Indigenous Nations and histories that have spanned hundreds and in some cases thousands of years. Claire Campbell’s book, *Shaped by the West Wind; Nature and History in Georgian Bay*, puts into perspective the Bay’s complicated past and underlines what Graeme Wynn so aptly calls a ‘comforting deception’ that has been created over time and continues to overshadow the ‘contested environmental history’ of this place.<sup>2</sup> There exists a complex legal, spatial and temporal relationship between the land and the water, fish and people from the perspective of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous paradigms and frameworks. Over the last 200 years, Indigenous fish harvest practices and methods of traditional temporal habitation in Georgian Bay have been profoundly disrupted and often halted by settlers and the Ontario government. These practices included building shoreline camps consisting of tents, wigwams and/or shanties during fishing expeditions and various other harvesting traditions such as the gathering of maple syrup and Manoomin (wild rice).

Since contact, European settlers surveyed and mapped the land throughout Canada in order to wield power and dominion over land and its Indigenous people. Georgian Bay, a western bay of Lake Huron, provides an example of conflicts between settlers and Indigenous people over the land and harvesting rights. Surveys of the Bay, which began as a tool for colonial acquisition of the land, would later produce a system of control over the environment and its resources. These practices were not only used to commodify the landscape, but also divide and classify it in a way which allowed the government to put restrictions and policies over areas they deemed worthy of environmental conservation. These conservation strategies as well as the prevalence of cottage ownership in the area, has led the Bay to become a contested ground. Indigenous people of the Bay are placed in direct conflict with an aesthetic paradigm that has been perpetuated by many artists and poets, including the Group of Seven, one that identifies the

Bay as a distinct wilderness; a pristine and untouched landscape of pink granite, limestone bluffs and wind swept jack pines. Over time, this space has been further mythologized into a seasonal retreat, the image of watching sunsets on Muskoka chairs while holding a ‘nice cold one’ etched into our minds.

My own relationship with this place, has many layers. My maternal grandfather was raised in a small town called Penetanguishene located within a peninsula on the shores of Southern Georgian Bay. Although he had moved away to Sturgeon Falls in the early sixties for work, his parents, five older siblings and countless other extended family members continued living in Penetang. Before I was born my mother, who wanted to keep a footing near family and friends that still lived in the area, purchased a cottage near Ossossane Beach on the opposite side of the peninsula. Throughout my childhood, my relationship with this place was relegated to family reunions and spending my summers at the cottage. It was not until I turned 16 that I found out about our true connection to Penetang. My grandfather grew up in a community ‘across the Bay’, meaning across Penetang Bay, opposite from the town along the water’s edge. This community was the vestige of a Métis settlement which had been displaced from Michilimackinac and Drummond Island. Although many others who lived there who were not Métis, my grandfather’s darker complexion and that of his entire family were recognized as indeed ‘Mitifs from across the Bay’.

I was not made aware of my Métis heritage until I was deemed old enough to understand ‘what that meant’. My family explained our ancestry as ‘French-Canadian’ and half Dutch but questions I received in school about my grandfather and mother’s features placed doubt in my mind. This reluctance to accept Indigenous ancestry was and still is common for many Métis and Native people. My grandfather’s family did the best they could to assimilate, like many others, going to church and keeping to themselves. This ensured that the generations that followed would be far removed from any Indigenous culture, especially to those of us who were ‘white passing’. I like many others who are of mixed Indigenous heritage exist in a space that is ‘in between’, with one foot in dominant culture and one foot in another.



I realize that I embody two parallel identities regarding this thesis. On one hand, I spent my summers as a cottager and enjoyed the many privileges that came with it but on the other, as I grew older, I recognized the extent of the disenfranchisement that occurred in my grandfather's community and, by extension my own, as a result of this industry.

Organized into five parts; the thesis draws attention to the conflicts that exist between these two worldviews. Part one examines the historical context regarding property and Indigenous Fishing rights in Georgian Bay. The topic concerning property is an important one since the Anishinaabe and the Métis depended on the land to facilitate mobility to and from harvesting sites and used the shorelines of beaches and rivers extensively to fish. Part two examines 'Incidental structures', the laws surrounding them and their use as a tool of agency for the Anishinaabe and the Métis to provide mobility, knowledge transmission and sovereignty. Part three examines the contemporary challenges Indigenous people face when fishing including the regulations which affect their sovereignty and mobility. Finally, Part 4 and 5 include the methodology and the design intervention of a graphic novel. This graphic novel is the 'meat and potatoes' of this thesis and is a fully illustrated novel that touches on each of these themes. The novel follows an Indigenous person's journey back into the folds of their community which include access to their Elders, their harvesting traditions, stories, and teachings. The story, although fictional, also incorporates the history of my own historic Métis community in Southern Georgian Bay.

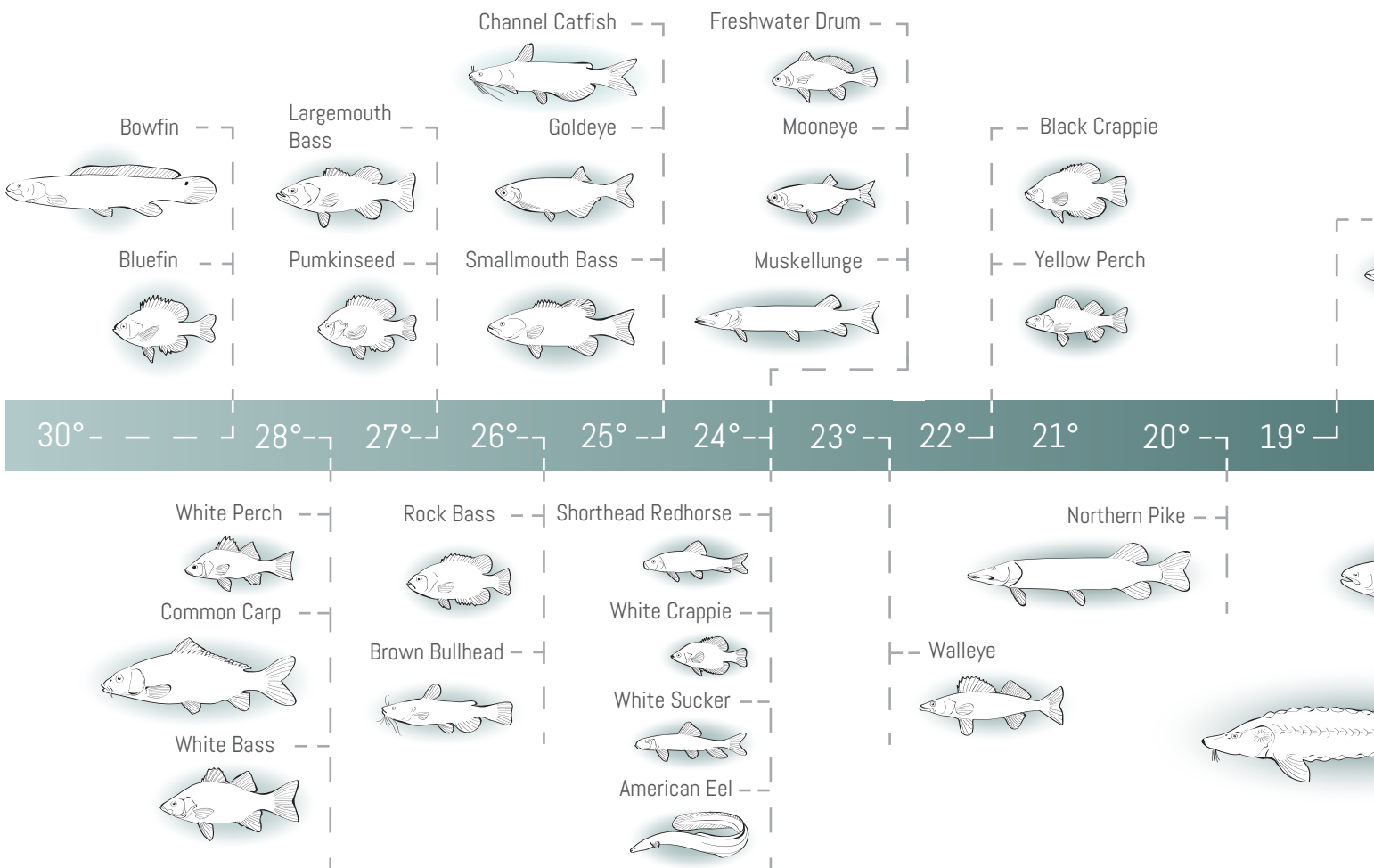
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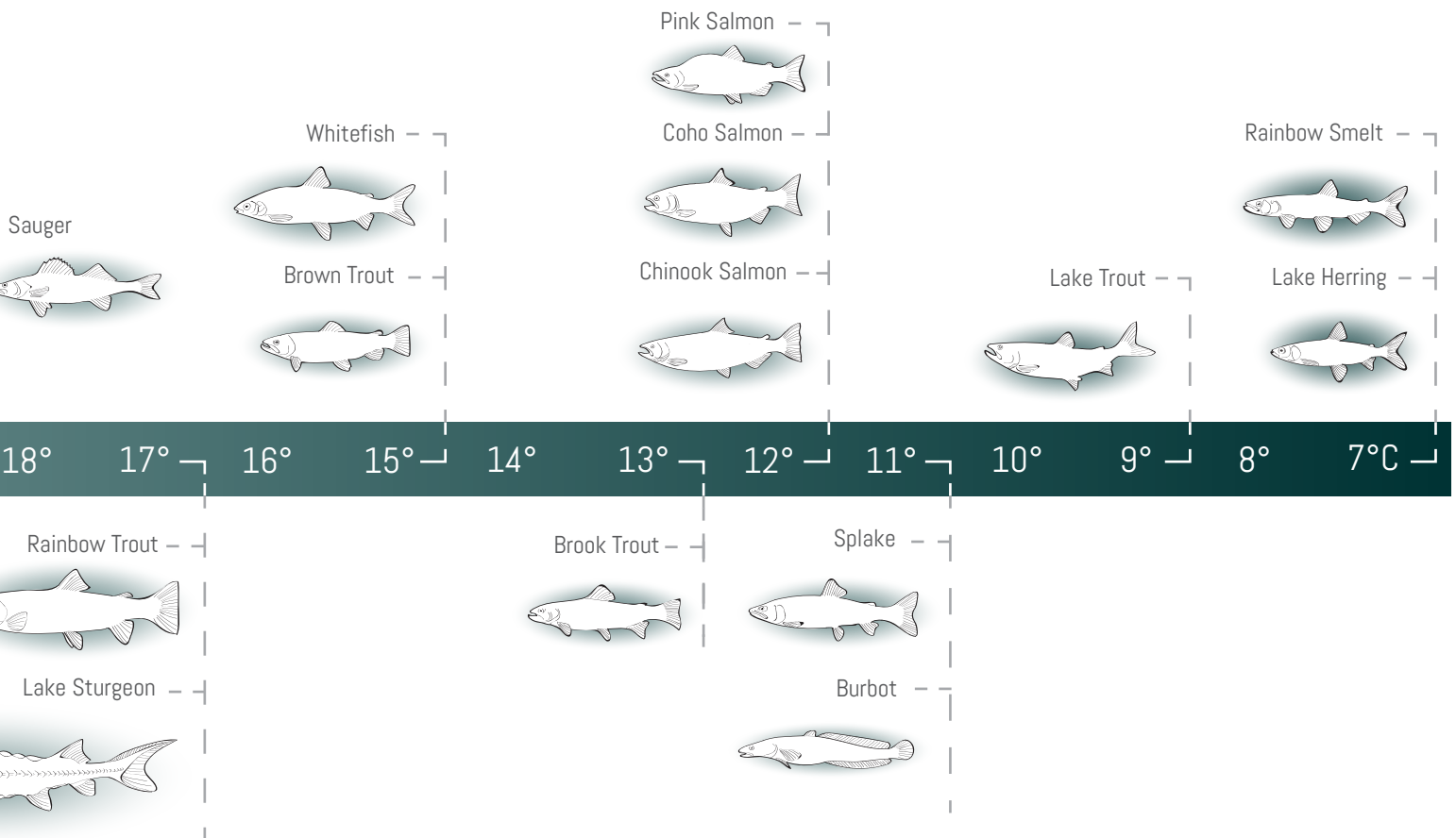
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1 Campbell, Claire Elizabeth. *Shaped by the West Wind: Nature and History in Georgian Bay*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005. p. 35.

2 *Ibid.* foreword, p. xvi.





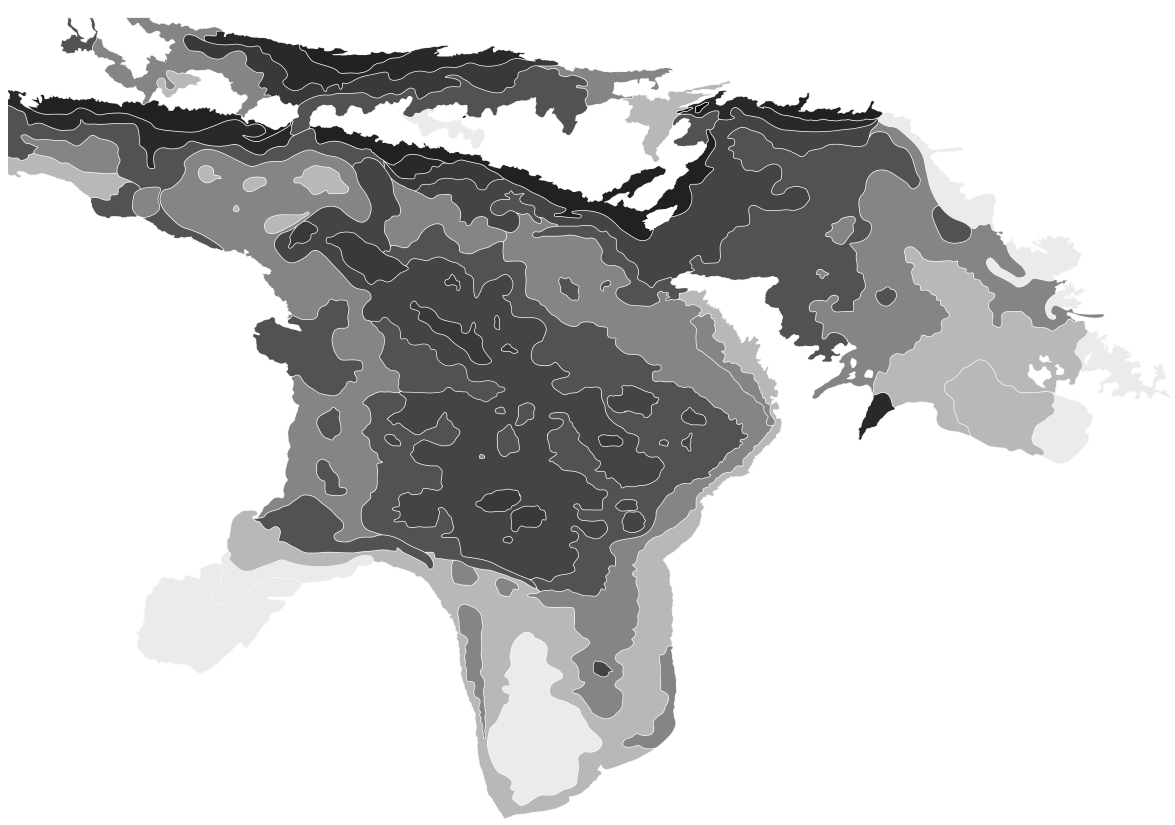
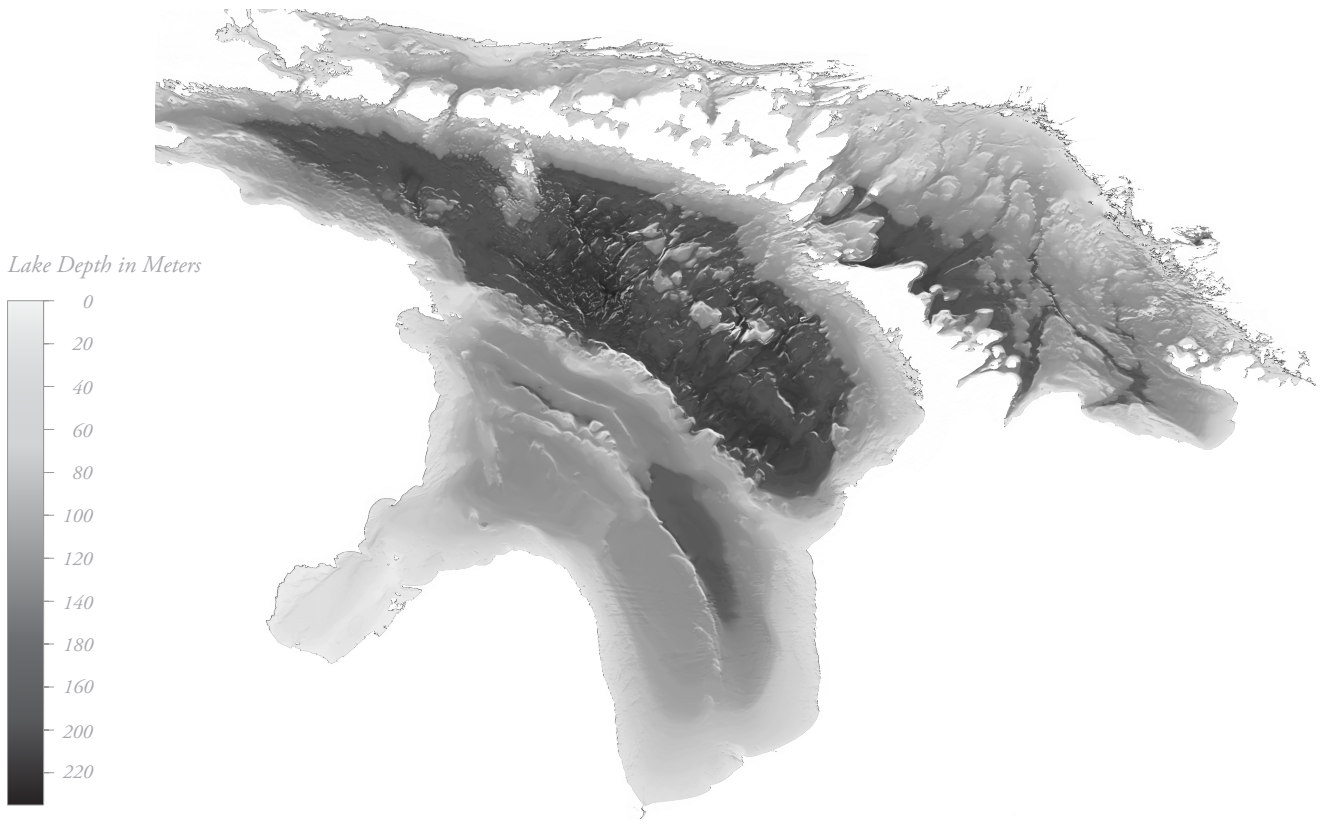


**fig. 0.1** Water Temperature Preferences of Fish in Ontario

**Disclaimer\***

*This chart is not a substitute for the knowledge developed through years of fishing experience. The movements of the fish are also dependent on seasonal migrations, shoreline and lake bed conditions. Please see a Traditional Knowledge Holder for more information.*

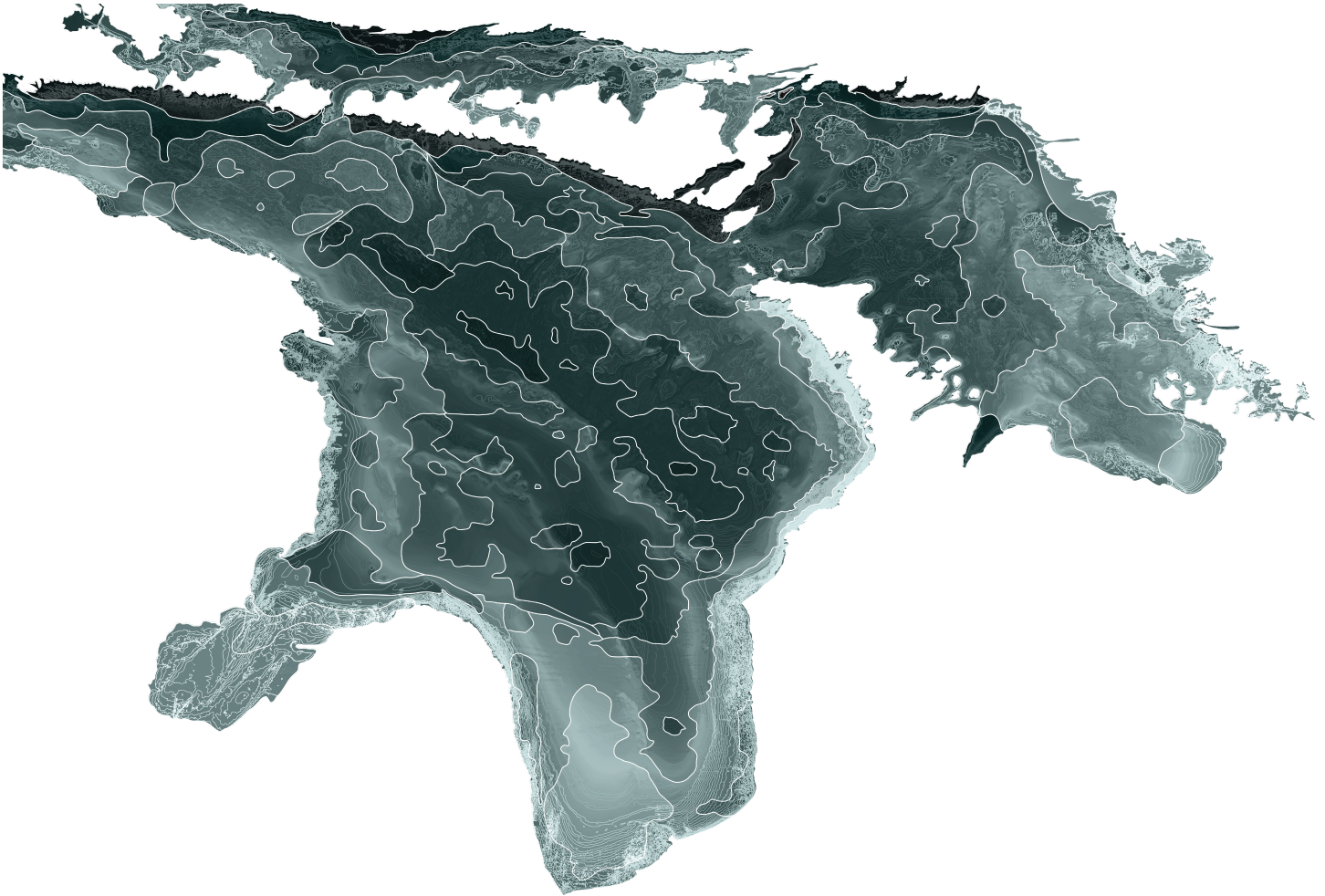
*We Belong With the Water*



*Approximate Surface Temperature of Lake Huron on August 8, 2018*

**Disclaimer\***

*This map provides only surface temperature readings and does not indicate what the temperature is like at different depths. This map is not a substitute for the knowledge developed through years of fishing experience or information that can be obtained from using a fishing thermometer, fish finder with a built in temperature gauge, or by consulting a Traditional Knowledge Holder for more information.*



**fig. 02** Lake Huron and Georgian Bay Bathymetry

**fig. 03** Surface Water Temperature of Lake Huron and Georgian Bay  
Temperature Readings from August 08, 2018

**fig. 04** Surface Water Temperature and Bathymetry Composite Map of Lake Huron and Georgian Bay





PART 1

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WHO'S LAND



## OUR WAYS

*anishinaabe-izhitwaawin*

Harvesting traditions are intrinsically tied to the changing seasons and for Indigenous people are associated with a time of celebration that mark the 'return' of life-giving elements gifted to us by the creator.

For the Anishinaabe these seasons are marked through 13 lunar cycles, many named after important harvesting rituals, indicating times of harvest, preparation or consumption. For the Anishinaabe of Georgian Bay, no matter the season, it was clear it was all about the fish.

According to research conducted by Thoms, fishing for the Anishinaabe in southwestern Ontario was of such significance that many aspects surrounding it permeated their society, culture, economy and harvesting on the land in and around Georgian Bay.<sup>1</sup> During the third moon, *ziissbaakdoke-giizis* or 'sugar moon', women returned to their maple sugar camps for the running of the sap. Once the sugar was made, they went on to collect the inner bark of cedars for the making of fishing nets since it could only be harvested in the spring.<sup>2</sup> This also marked the time when families would return to spring fishing sites.

During the spring and fall, Anishinaabe people from many different territories surrounding Georgian Bay would travel to spawning sites which included many of the large river mouths emptying into the bay such as 'Go Home' and the Nottawasaga in Wasaga Beach. These rivers remain important spawning grounds; the Nottawasaga is still home to over 52 confirmed fish spawning species including the endangered Sturgeon and possibly 20 more.<sup>3</sup> The shallow waters found along the islands and shorelines of Georgian Bay's many beaches were also excellent environments to throw nets from during spawning periods and have been documented as inhabited and harvested by the many nations of the Anishinaabe since time immemorial and post-contact by the Métis. Spawning periods can vary from one species to another but typically in the southwestern region of the Bay the spring run can last anywhere from mid March to mid July and the fall run from mid September to late May. The custom of keeping with the seasons, migrating at particular times of the year from camp to camp, required Indigenous people to keep more than one 'residence'.

Harvesting fish this way allowed for the development of an extensive knowledge of spawning sites and timeframes for different species of fish.

This level of knowledge about fish is displayed through various elements that link Anishinaabe culture to their environments. These included the range in the methods and tools used for fishing such as nets, weirs and spears needed for the variety of fishing environments frequented. In addition, the Anishinaabe language, anishinaabemowin, being verb-based, provides an additional layer of understanding to words and names since it highlights the relationships between different elements. This knowledge base can be demonstrated through the culturally distinct understanding that the Anishinaabe had about trout.<sup>4</sup> The Anishinaabe recognized many different trout types. They were differentiated by name, place where they could be caught as well as the amount of fat carried around their bellies which dictated their use. One trout in particular, Pugwash-ooāneg (the red trout), has been documented to only be found far beyond Georgian Bay in Lake Superior in a place called Pays Plat.<sup>5</sup> The knowledge about fish and their habitats would not have been possible without being able to travel to different sites which in turn required a great deal of mobility for these activities to occur.

This level of mobility and freedom related to harvesting traditions was and continues to be critical for many Indigenous people. Indigenous legal traditions, which existed pre-contact, organized their commercial economies, social and political structures to allow for this mobility and in turn foster a meaningful engagement and relationship with the land. Any colonial assumptions that Indigenous people had no pre-contact concept of property or laws are false. In fact, evidence shows that Indigenous people created agreements between nations and families, establishing territorial boundaries which were strictly adhered to, especially those linked to harvesting.<sup>6</sup> These boundaries were marked using different landscape features such as rivers and sometimes even by blazing trees.<sup>7</sup> In the case of the islands within the Bay, these spaces were also 'owned'/taken care of/watched over by individual Anishinaabe families.<sup>8</sup> The women would travel



*fig. 1.0 Ojibway Indian woman and two girls with loaded canoe heading for blueberry camp.  
Photograph by Ronald Reed, 1920.*



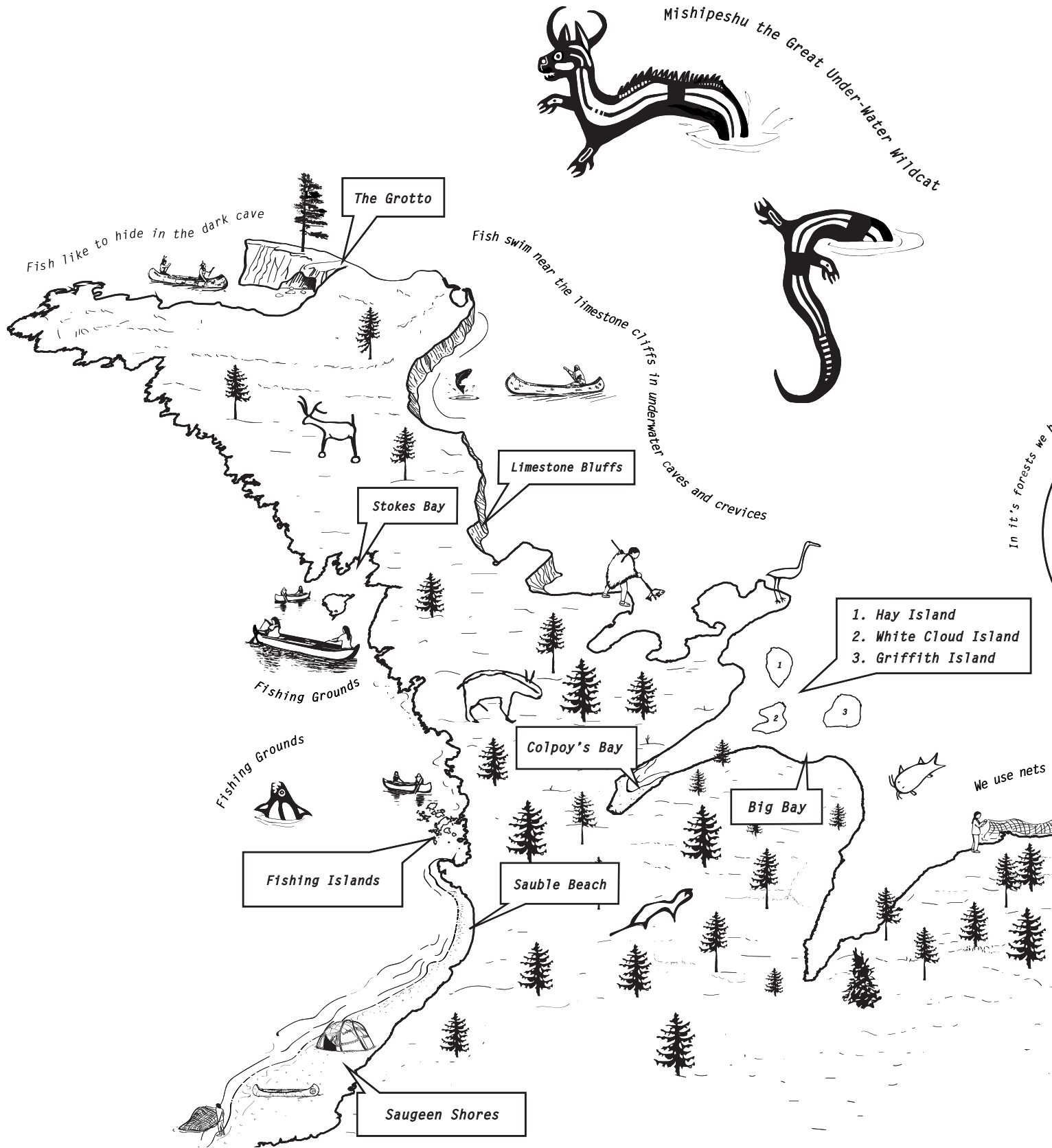
**fig. 1.1** *Maude Kegg with wiigob. Mille Lacs.*

*Photograph by Monroe P. Killy, 1946.*

to them during the spring and fall with their children, to fish from its shores using spears or nets made of cedar writhes. The men would in turn leave fishing sites during the spring and fall before the runs ended for their family hunting grounds.

The practice of Indigenous mobility would be forever changed upon the signing of one document, the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which was responsible for initiating guidelines to secure the land for European settlement. The goal was to extinguish Aboriginal title through land purchases and signing of treaties with the Crown. Following the signing of treaties, Canada's colonial settler policies were enacted on the land to create a manifold of colonial institutions, including reserve lands, residential schools and laws that would work together to further dispossess Indigenous people of the land. These laws and policies include those which criminalized Indigenous fishing methods and traditions, undermining Indigenous freedoms and mobility. Today, these same laws and systems hinder the rights of Indigenous people to be mobile thereby restricting the harvesting practices that once defined their way of life.

Mishipeshu the Great Under-Water Wildcat



Fish like to hide in the dark cave

The Grotto

Fish swim near the limestone cliffs in underwater caves and crevices

Limestone Bluffs

Stokes Bay

Fishing Grounds

Fishing Grounds

Fishing Islands

Saugeen Shores

Colpoy's Bay

Sauble Beach

Big Bay

- 1. Hay Island
- 2. White Cloud Island
- 3. Griffith Island

In it's forests we h...

We use nets



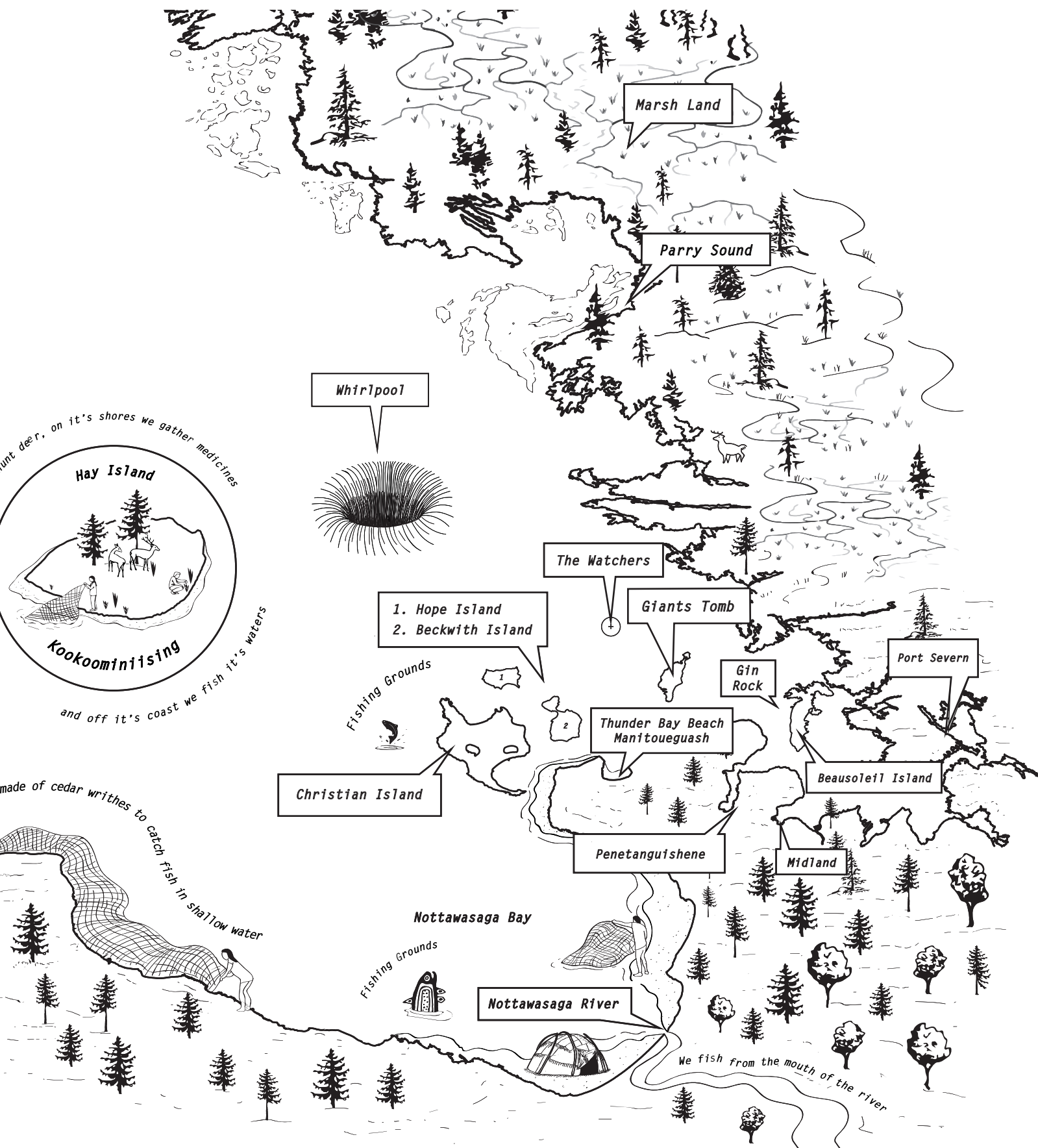


fig. 1.2 Fishing Grounds, Georgian Bay  
Pre Contact Map of Thesis Focus Area

YOUR WAYS

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*Post-Contact Paradox*

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 required that the unceded territories or “hunting grounds” of Indigenous people must be acquired by the Crown through land cessions documented through a series of agreements called treaties.<sup>9</sup> In total there would be 11 treaties signed for the surrounding land of Georgian Bay. Each document defines the boundaries of land being surrendered to the Crown, areas set aside for the creation of reservations and some even establish payments to be made to the tribes who entered them. These lands, including the islands that they had long cared for, were to be held in trust by the Crown in order to protect the rights of the Indigenous Tribes and that of the Chiefs that signed the agreements.<sup>10</sup> The treaties were thought to be intended to protect the rights to their traditional territories, permitting them ongoing access to their traditional fishing and harvesting grounds when in fact they were put in place to extinguish Aboriginal title. Some treaties such as the Robinson-Huron treaty are explicit in their promise that Aboriginal peoples could continue to hunt and fish throughout their ceded territory. Even though boundaries were drawn in space, recorded on paper; it still did not prevent others to encroach within Indigenous territories, whether they had ceded their rights to the land or not, and exploit the resources which were to be shared or for governmental powers to infringe their rights.

With the boom of the commercial fishing industry (starting in 1830) Ontario’s provincial government passed the Fisheries Act in 1858, which allowed individuals to purchase leases to fish from the islands and smaller bays in Georgian Bay. These were of particular interest to both local and foreign fishermen in order to establish fishing stations with exclusive fishing rights.<sup>11</sup> These fishing stations would serve as a home base where fisherman could dry nets and salt fish. Since most islands in the early 19th century belonged to the Crown following the signing of treaties, access to the islands was generally obtained through Crown licenses of occupation and required that the fisherman respect the rights of Indigenous fishermen. What followed were decades of conflicts between Indigenous and non-Indigenous commercial enterprises due to the am-

biguity of the rightful ownership of these exclusive fishing rights. In an enquiry with the government, the Anishinaabe asserted that when they ceded their 'ownership' of these islands it did not mean that they surrendered their inherent and exclusive rights to fish there.<sup>12</sup> In the case of the Chippewa of the Nawash and the Saugeen First Nation, band members asserted that they had never ceded their exclusive rights to inhabit their islands. In the past, the Saugeen tried to protect them from invading fishers by burning any non-native fishing stations placed upon them.<sup>13</sup> Even so, the appropriation of Indigenous fishing grounds continued. Relations worsened when the government failed to clarify their jurisdiction to manage these conflicts and enforce native fishing rights which they promised to protect during treaty negotiations.<sup>14</sup> External fishing enterprises, such as those coming from the United States, had the resources and the men to pressure Indigenous fisherman away from their harvesting grounds as was in the case of the Saugeen. One particular case brought forth to government authorities describes Saugeen fishermen being driven away from the 'Fishing Islands'.<sup>15</sup> Conflicts continued for decades, escalating to the fishing wars of the 1990's between settler fishers and the Saugeen commercial fishing enterprises even though their rights were protected. In 1995, the Saugeen even reported that their nets were being tampered with, that their boats were being burned and/or vandalized, young people were even beaten and stabbed.<sup>16</sup>

The Fisheries Act and subsequent amendments had a devastating effect on Indigenous fishing traditions during, as well as after the commercial fishing boom.<sup>17</sup> The rules privileged sport fishing and commercial fishing above all other forms. For example, fishing during spawning seasons became illegal. The act also forbade the use of certain nets and later all nets without the possession of a commercial fishing licence.<sup>18</sup> This meant Indigenous fishers had to adopt the use of a rod to catch their fish or be subject to fines. Any nets found without licences or set illegally were destroyed by game wardens.<sup>19</sup> For the Anishinaabe, nets and spears were integral to being able to fish for their subsistence. Nets provided the ability to catch more fish at one time and could be set and left in order to allow

HARPER'S MAGAZINE ADVERTISER.

# "THE GEORGIAN BAY TRIP"

INCLUDES  
30,000 ISLANDS, POINT-AUX-BARIL,  
MANITOULIN ISLAND, SAULT STE  
MARIE AND MACKINAC ISLAND.  
THE BEST FISHING AND CAMPING  
CHARMING SCENERY.  
COMFORTABLE STEAMERS.  
HEALTHFUL CLIMATE.  
Tours of Great Lakes via Northern Navigation Co  
in connection with  
Grand Trunk Railway System.

THE LEGAL LIMIT CAUGHT IN 90 MINUTES,  
GEORGIAN BAY.

FOR INFORMATION ADDRESS  
**G.T. BELL**      **C.H. NICHOLSON**  
General Pass. & Ticket Agent.      Traffic Manager  
Grand Trunk Railway System      Northern Navigation Co.,  
Montreal, Que.      Sarnia, Ont.

**GRAND  
TRUNK  
RAILWAY  
SYSTEM**

*fig. 1.3 Harper's Magazine Advertisement of  
"The Georgian Bay Trip". 1907.*

fishers to take part in other harvesting activities. In places where nets could not be set such as in the case of the honeycombed shores, spears were used which were also subsequently banned.<sup>20</sup>

All the while, tourists from Canada and the United States started to flock to the area; establishing recreational fishing clubs, cottages and shoreline hotels which advertised fishing expeditions throughout the Bay.<sup>21</sup> During the first couple of decades of the 20th century, Indigenous fishing shanties coexisted with the cottagers on the Bay's many Beaches. However, since the beginning, tourists saw the land as an endless resource to exploit. By the 1920's, following the attention of the Group of Seven, even more people wanted to possess a piece of this famous landscape. Increases in recreational fishing by tourists and cottagers would play a significant role in the decline of the commercial fishing industry.<sup>22</sup> As the number of cottages increased along the shoreline of beaches, including the recreational activities which accompanied them, fish stocks depleted, and the presence of Indigenous fishing shanties also declined.

The consumer culture that undergirded family cottaging in Ontario experienced a boom following Second World War, producing a greater demand for cottage lots. Surveyors were therefore tasked by the government to number all the islands in the Bay and subdivide many into parcels to be sold.<sup>23</sup> They were also instructed to quantify their aesthetic qualities, which helped to commodify them when advertised for purchase. These divisions in the landscape made by these surveys and plans to sell off the islands continued to reflect a different relationship with the land, one which promoted its possession by non-Indigenous people—as well as a romantic, non-Indigenous conception of “nature” based on sensorial gratification. This commodified relationship with the land continued and produced the cottage country we know today, usurping one which was centered on its care and harvest by its Indigenous people.<sup>24</sup>

The arrival of new technologies such as aerial photography in the 1920-30's would bring significant changes to how land, property and existing boundaries were drawn, resulting in many conflicts.<sup>25</sup> Since the initial surveys were

inevitably subject to human error, this meant that only 20,000 of the 30,000 islands were represented.<sup>26</sup> The 'discovery' of these new islands through this new technology in conjunction with the increasing demand for property in the Bay caused increasing pressure on the surveying departments of Indian Affairs and the province. What would follow is a complicated and often politically charged time in history, though which people of means and influence did whatever they could to acquire land in the area.<sup>27</sup> Individuals could send in their own hand-drawn surveys to whomever had jurisdiction (DIA or the Department of Land and Forests) and apply for private patents.<sup>28</sup> In the case of Hay island, in 1899 the Indian agent at the time had transferred ownership from the Chippewas of the Nawash First Nation to his daughter to develop it as a cottaging site for her family.<sup>29</sup> This island which had been used for gathering medicines, fishing, and burying the dead has not yet been returned to its Indigenous people.<sup>30</sup>

Cottagers often praise the lineage of their property; that a grandparent or great grandparent purchased the land many years ago and so they have as much right as anyone to determine how they exist upon it. I am not suggesting that this narrative isn't valid but rather that these stories are a part of the dominant culture and are prioritized over others which have been excluded for over two hundred years. This is due to many Canadians being unaware that many of these lands, and in particular, the islands of Georgian Bay, were in fact Unceded lands which belonged to First Nation people and were entrusted in the care of Indian Affairs. Many of these lands were unlawfully sold or leased to settlers without the consent of the First Nations they belonged to; effectively they were stolen.

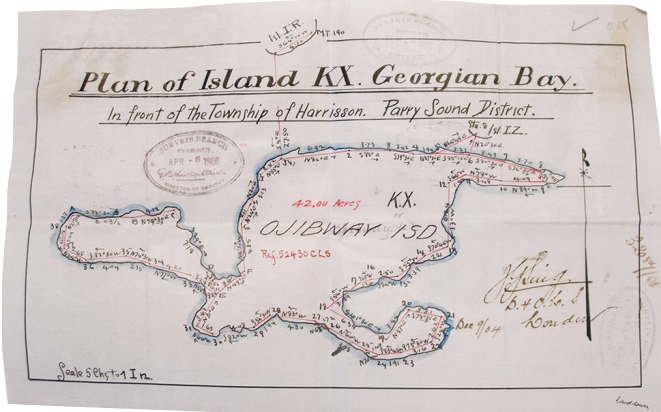
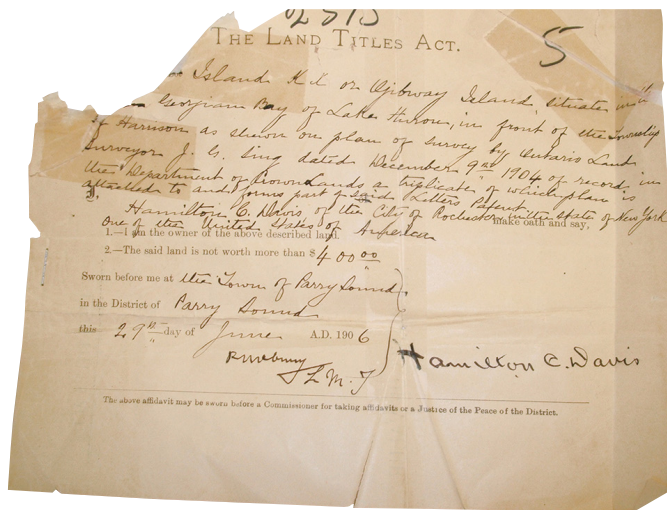
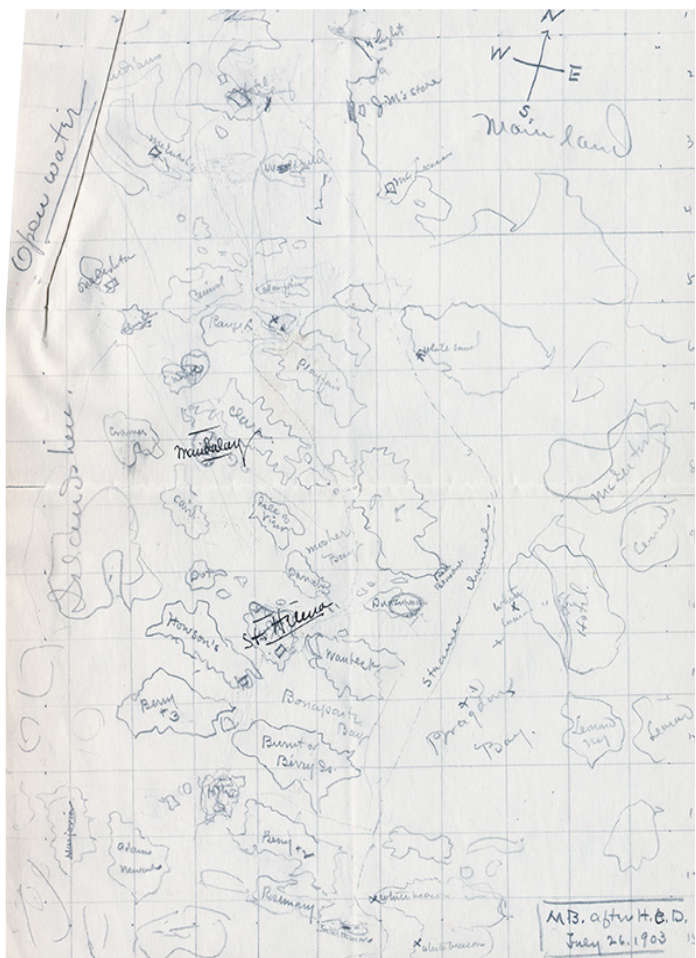


fig. 1.4 Survey map by Hamilton Davis of island archipelago south of the Pointe au Baril lighthouse, 1903.

fig. 1.5 Island KX, later known as Ojibway, surveyed by J. G. Sing in 1904.

fig. 1.6 Hamilton Davis's patent for Ojibwe Island from the Crown

SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN

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*The Georgian Bay Métis*

In the case of the Métis in Georgian Bay, many of them are the descendants of those who were displaced from Drummond Island to Penetanguishene from 1828 to 1864. Some were offered “free land grants” for having served alongside the British in the war of 1812 upon settling there. These lands were secured through the Penetanguishene Purchase. Soon after arriving, the Métis of Drummond Island found out that the lands were in fact not “free” land grants but came with many stipulations by the government regarding how the land was to be used and cultivated.<sup>31</sup> Drummond Islanders who were not offered land grants, but wanted to stay within the community, ‘squatted’ along the shoreline where the property lines were blurred. Settlers on the other hand were given up to 200 acres of land, mostly for the purpose of homesteading and farming.

Unlike their First Nation brothers and sisters, the Métis did not enter treaties. The Métis, being of mixed ancestry, disrupted the defined legal colonial categorization of “Indian” vs. “White”.<sup>32</sup> This question of race led to a lack of recognition that the Métis were in fact a distinct people. The federal government used this rationale to dispossess them of their rights, land and heritage and essentially shirk their fiscal responsibilities to them. This reasoning was expressed by the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, John A. Macdonald in 1885; “if they are Indians they go with the tribe; if they are half-breeds, they are whites”.<sup>33</sup> Many Métis did not want to categorize themselves as either white or Indian. This legal conundrum left many with the only choice of assimilating into the dominant culture and the politics that went with it.

The government also forbade First Nation people from gifting or selling lands to the Métis during treaty negotiations. This was demonstrated through the Robinson treaty negotiations in the case of the Sault St. Marie and Georgian Bay Métis population of Penetanguishene.<sup>34</sup> Recordings of the Robinson treaty negotiations show that First Nations did in fact want to either gift the land or lease it to allow the Métis to have their own tract of land to call their own. However, the law at that time forbade them to do so unless the ‘half-breeds’ declared themselves of Indian status and put an end to their ‘ambivalent squatter



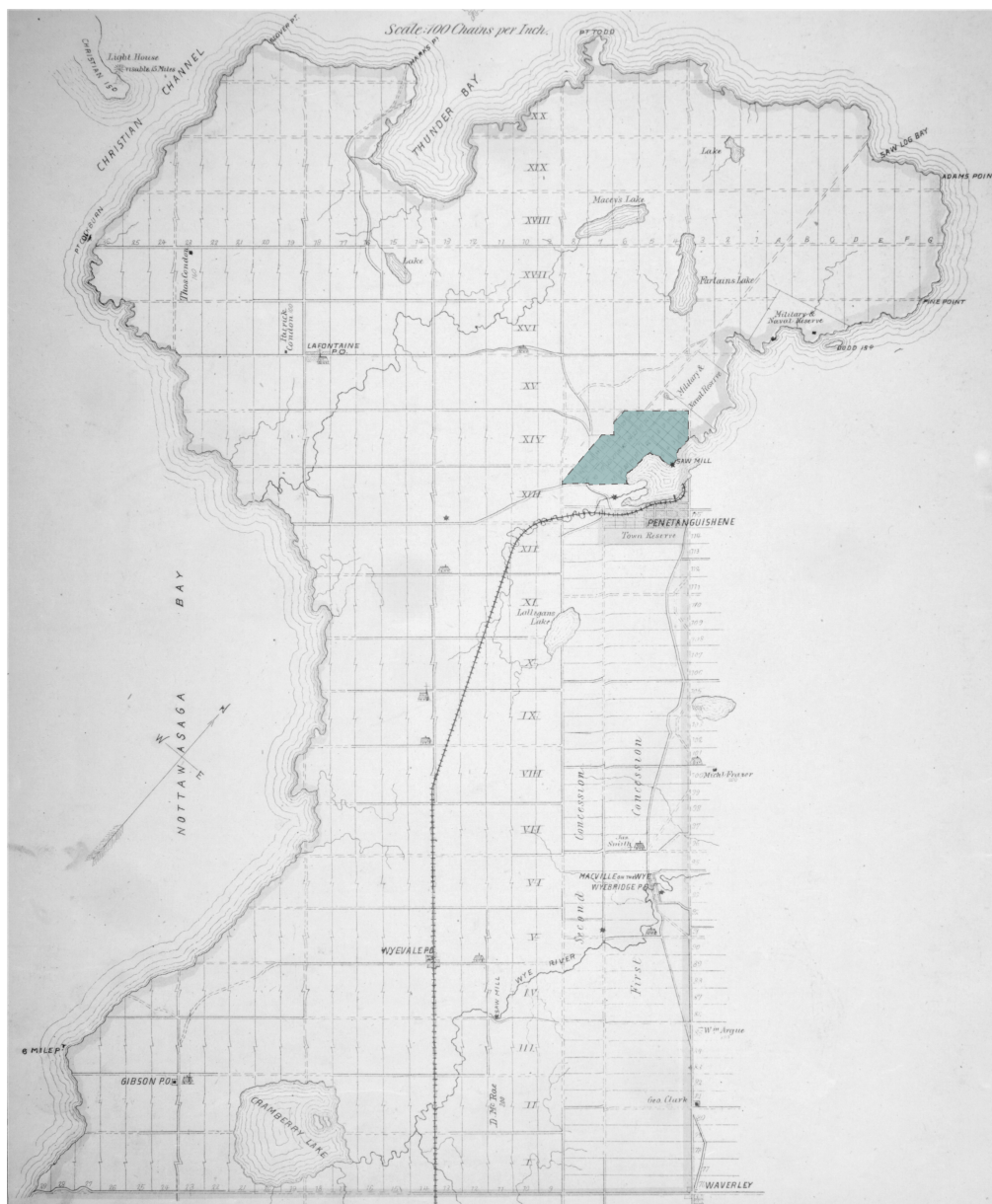
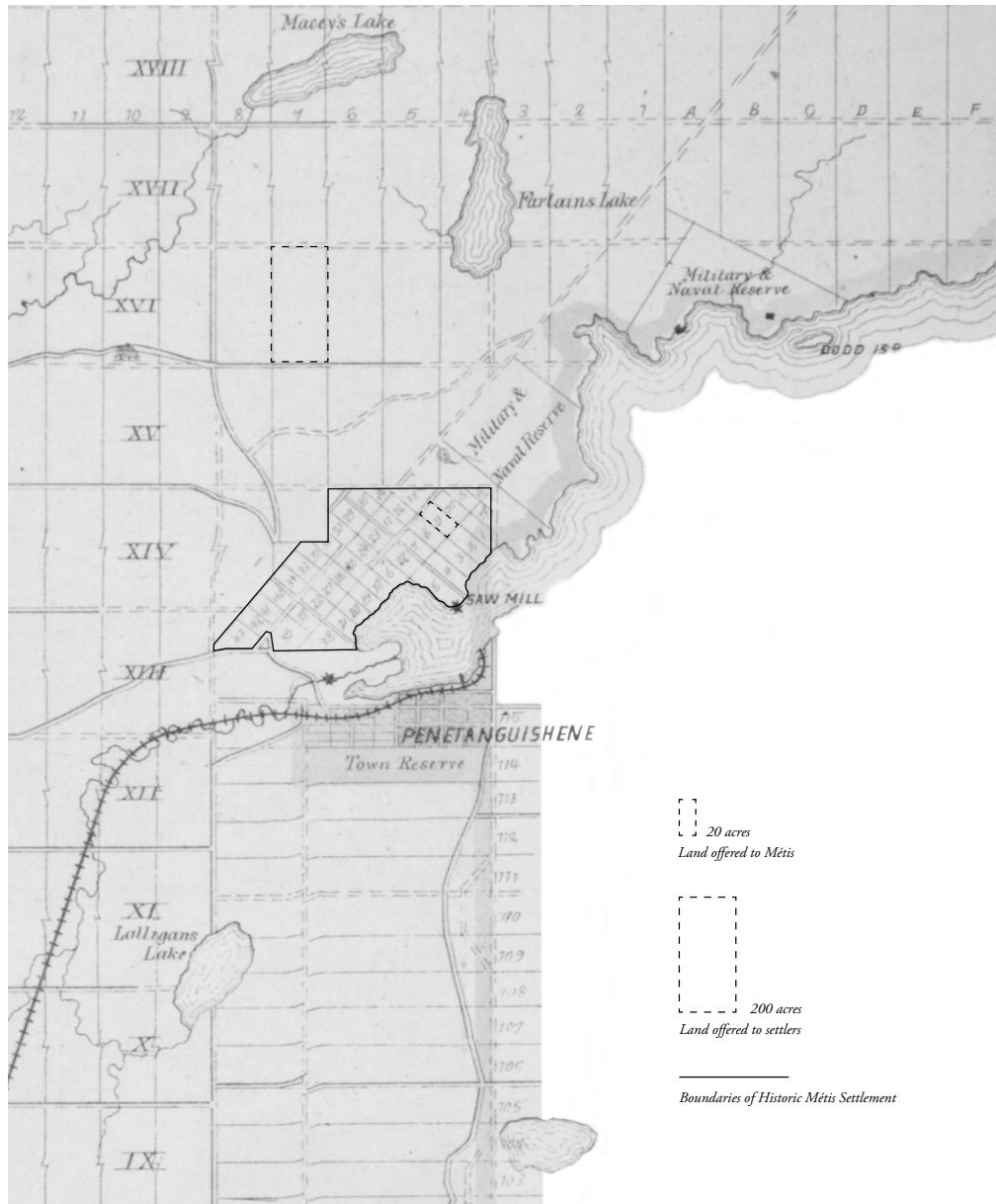


fig. 1.7 Map of Tiny Township, Simcoe County, Ontario, 1880  
Indicating Location of Métis Land Grants



**fig. 1.8** Map of Tiny Township, Simcoe County, Ontario, 1880  
*Métis and Settler Land Plot Comparison*

status'.<sup>35</sup> Later, once municipalities formed, taxes were enforced and those Métis who could not afford them lost possession of their lands to the township.<sup>36</sup> This prompted a petition signed by the Métis of Penetang which called for the government to provide them with harvesting rights and other annual gifts like those given to their First Nation brothers and sisters to help alleviate their impoverished state and retain their lands. Their pleas however remained unanswered which allowed municipalities to force out those who could not pay the new levies, effectively breaking up communities. In order not to lose the land they were 'given' they had to find employment to afford the taxes. This shift to a sedentary lifestyle and having to pay taxes meant that the Métis could no longer continue living a harvest-based existence. Many Métis fishers from the late 19th century into the late 20th century were also employed in lumber mills or worked as guides. These guides were responsible for taking care of settler tourists on fishing trips which meant navigating the waters, setting up camp, making fires and collecting firewood. Many of these men and their families were forced to live on the margins of society, along the shoreline until incoming settlers eventually drove them out. These circumstances are all too similar to the heartbreaking history surrounding road allowance communities of the Métis in the West.<sup>37</sup>

It is important to note that the Métis way of life was profoundly altered by this change, firstly because the Metis harvesting rights were not recognized by the Crown. Secondly, because they did not enter into treaties, as they did not live on reserve land and therefore had to pay taxes on the land they inhabited. Treaties provided a layer of protection for First Nations because some did acknowledge their inherent harvesting rights within the agreement itself. Lastly, in order to pay the taxes they had to find employment which capitalized on their strengths; those linked to harvesting. The relationship Métis had with harvesting was therefore no longer was linked to what the Anishinaabe call, *Mino-bimaa-diziwin*, living a good life, but one that was dependent on making a living wage in order to survive. First Nations were in some way protected because some treaties did acknowledge their inherent harvesting rights within the agreement itself.

Historically the men in our communities travelled to fish and to hunt and built camps away from home just like their First Nation brothers and sisters. Once the rules set by the Fishing and Game Commission came into place only some managed to acquire licences and establish their own fishing camps. When the commercial fishing boom ended, the fishing lifestyle was no longer a viable means to make a living, severing for many in the community what used to be an important relationship with fishing. Furthermore, the injustices suffered through the assimilative practices of the Federal Government have, for many Métis, severed them from certain traditions linked to the practice of harvesting taught to us by our Anishinaabe mothers, including ceremonies, stories and languages.

Today a formal harvesting agreement exists between the Métis of Georgian Bay and the Ontario government however they still do not yet support erecting incidental cabins often required with traditional harvesting practices dependent on systems of seasonal harvest such as fishing and hunting. The solution that Métis in my community have resorted to is to rent a cabin which can become quite costly to do so for extended periods of time. The difficulty in trying to build as a cabin for the purpose of harvesting for a season is also not strictly a Métis issue but also one that affects First Nations people in the area. First Nations can still construct cabins on reserve land, but some are not able to build one on crown land due to the restrictions of their treaty agreements. It is also not clear if people have been successful in applying to build a cabin for the purpose of harvesting with the MNRF (Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry). Some people have built cabins without the necessary permissions from MNRF and succeeded in not having them removed. This required them to fight for their rights in court to ensure their inherent rights were upheld. Overall, the issue is still a common one, not being able to camp on Crown Land and build a cabin restricts Indigenous mobility, and effectively extinguishes a way of life.



The law says you can't stop us from harvesting and fishing from the island. We belong here too.



Get on a line Affair this

Tobermory

The Grotto

Cape Hurd

Limestone Bluffs

Lion's Head

Stokes Bay

RESERVE

We belong here too.

Get out of here, you Indians can't fish wherever you please. If we need to pay to use the dock so will you, one way or another.

1. Hay Island
2. White Cloud Island
3. Griffith Island

Fishing Grounds

Colpoy's Bay

Fishing Grounds

Fishing Islands

Warton

Big Bay

Sauble Beach

Southampton

Owen Sound

RESERVE

Port Elgin

Saugeen Shores

out of here! We have  
presence from Indian  
ers to fish from  
island.



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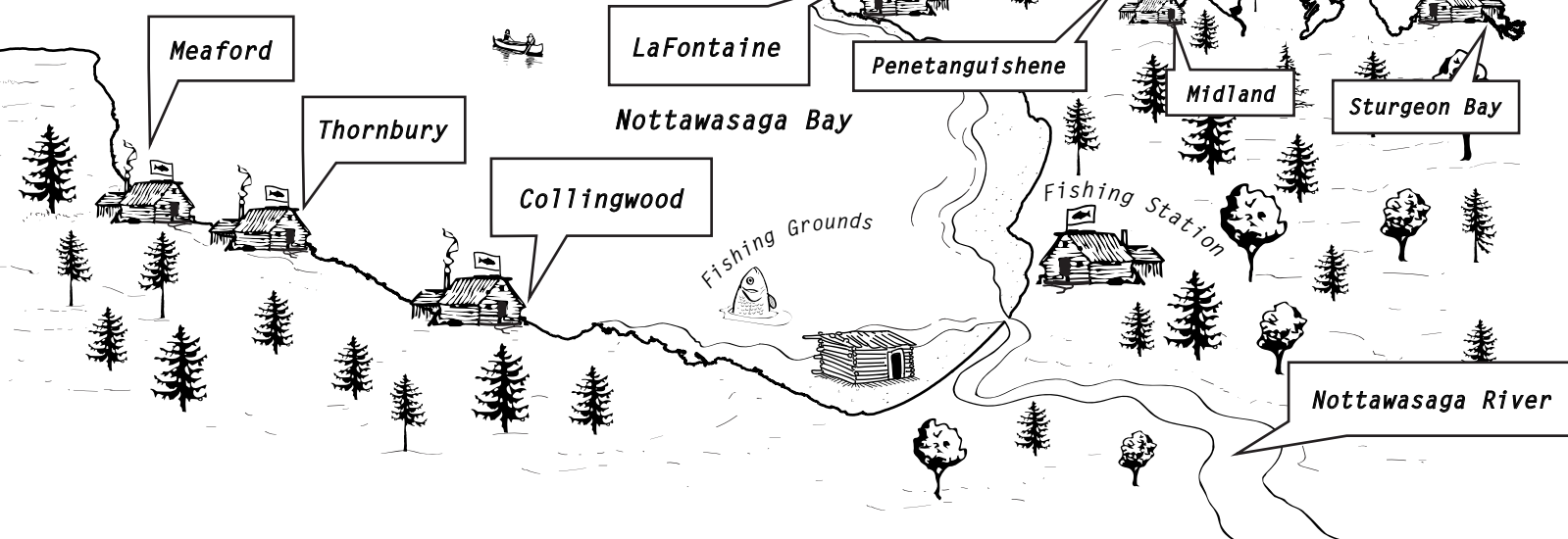


fig. 1.9 Class of Cultures, Georgian Bay  
Post Contact Map of Thesis Focus Area

ENDNOTES - WHO'S LAND

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13. *Ibid.* p. 241
14. Edwin C. Koenig, "Native fishing conflicts on the Saugeen-Bruce Peninsula: perspectives on resource relations past and present." (PhD diss., 2000) p. 86, 106, 115
15. *Ibid.* p.106.
16. *Ibid.* p. 109, 159-160. Michael J. Thoms, "Ojibwa Fishing Grounds: A history of Ontario fisheries law, science, and the sportsmen's challenge to Aboriginal treaty rights, 1650-1900." (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2004), p. 241, <https://doi.org/10.14288/1.0091924>.
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18. Micheline Marchand, Daniel Marchildon, "From the Straits of Mackinac to Georgian Bay: 300 years of Métis history, Report on the origins and evolution of the Penetanguishene area Métis Community." *Moon River: Moon River Métis Council*, 2006. p. 136.

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20 Michael J. Thoms, "Ojibwa Fishing Grounds: A history of Ontario fisheries law, science, and the sportsmen's challenge to Aboriginal treaty rights, 1650-1900." (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2004), p. 52, <https://doi.org/10.14288/1.0091924>.

21 James P. Barry, "Georgian Bay: An Illustrated History." (Erin, Ontario: Boston Mills Press, 1992), 195,202,212. Note: Hotels included the Bellevue, Ojibwe and Penetanguishene Hotel, these hotels advertised leisure fishing expeditions. These were often led by Indigenous guides who had a great knowledge of the land and water.

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PART 2

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'INCIDENTAL' ELEMENTS





THE RULE OF LAW

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*Determining Incidental*

In 1992, John Sundown, a Cree Indian, a member of the Joseph Bighead First Nation party to Treaty No. 6, travelled far away from his home to the nearest area of crown land, Meadow Lake Provincial Park Saskatchewan, in order to gather food for the coming year. Mr. Sundown knew he had to get to work, since would need somewhere comfortable to stay for the duration of the hunt. He didn't just need a place to sleep, he needed somewhere to hang the carcass (to protect it from predators), skin it and harvest the meat. He also needed a home base to smoke fish from. Mr. Sundown then proceeded to cut down 25 mature white spruce trees in and used them to build a one-storey log cabin, approximately 30 feet by 40 feet. Much to his surprise, upon receiving a visit from a park's official, he was told that he had violated many rules of the park. Mr. Sundown didn't understand how this could be possible since his treaty rights allowed him to harvest food on land that is occupied by the provincial Crown, including Meadow Lake Provincial Park.<sup>1</sup> He explained to the parks officer that he needed the cabin while hunting, both for shelter and as a place to smoke fish and meat and to skin pelts. This method of hunting is defined as "expeditionary", a process in which hunters set up a base camp for some extended period ranging from overnight to two weeks. Each day you leave your camp to hunt or fish, then return to the base camp to perform various tasks. This may or may not include dressing meat, cleaning fish, smoking fish or game and preparing hides. This practice had been established as something that other members of his Nation had performed since before European contact.

In the end, Mr. Sundown was charged with two violations of the Parks Act in the Province of Saskatchewan.<sup>2</sup> The first, cutting down trees and constructing a cabin for smoking fish and drying meat without a disposition or necessary permissions such as a work permit. Although the park didn't question Mr. Sundown's right to hunt, they argued that the Cabin he built wasn't incidental to the act of hunting.<sup>3</sup> The word "incidental" is a word usually used to define what is normally secondary, auxiliary or subordinate to the principal activity or object. However, in this case, the word 'incidental' was taken from the precedent

setting case *Simon v. The Queen* and was defined as “activities which are reasonably related to the act, of hunting in order to make them effective.” During the case *Simon v. The Queen*, it was held that “the right to hunt to be effective *must* embody those activities reasonably incidental to the act of hunting itself”.<sup>4</sup> The case found that travelling with the requisite hunting equipment to the hunting grounds and subsequently building shelter like a cabin was reasonably related to the act. Other arguments in favor of Simon were that was the hunting grounds (Mistohay Lake) were far from the respondent’s permanent home, that he had a longstanding practice of hunting at that lake, and had previously used a cabin near that location. This precedent setting case was used as one of the main arguments made in favor of Mr. Sundown. The park, on the other hand, argued that Mr. Sundown had other means of obtaining shelter other than by building a permanent cabin and “that treaty rights should be balanced with the province’s interest in the orderly development of resources”.<sup>5</sup>

According to the Parks Regulations, 1991, R.R.S. c. P1.1, Reg. 6, 41(1), no person shall: occupy; undertake research on; alter; use or exploit any resource in, on or under; or develop; park land without a disposition.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, no person shall construct or occupy a temporary or permanent dwelling on park land without permission. These regulations reference two violations stipulated in the Sundown case. The first, is exploiting a resource on park land or the cutting of trees to build the cabin and the second, constructing or occupying land without a permit or other necessary permissions. These regulations can be viewed as problematic for several reasons. Firstly, since it can be quite difficult to bring in building materials to a remote site, procuring and cutting down trees would be necessary for the cabin’s construction. Second, historically Indigenous people would use what was available to them; using the wood from trees on a site allows for a certain sharing of traditional building knowledge and subsequently allows Indigenous people to live with and on the land. Thirdly, purchasing and transporting materials may be impossible for certain individuals who may not have the means to; this brings in an important argument from a socioeconomic dimension.

Thankfully, the judge for the Sundown case found that there was no evidence of “material incompatibility between the Province’s intended use of the lands within the Park and the impeached activities” and so he dismissed the appeal with respect to cutting the trees.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the judge found that the provincial regulations in issue were in direct conflict with the treaty. According to section 88 of the Indian Act, the government must give way to “the terms of any treaty”.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, it was determined that the rights of Mr. Sundown were protected under Treaty No. 6 and therefore permitted him to build a cabin as a reasonable incidental activity to his right to hunt. The judge explained his ruling as cited:

“A hunting cabin is, in these circumstances, reasonably incidental to this First Nation’s right to hunt in their traditional expeditionary style. This method of hunting is not only traditional but appropriate and shelter is an important component of it. Without a shelter it would be impossible for this First Nation to exercise its traditional method of hunting and their members would be denied their treaty rights to hunt.”<sup>9</sup>

Although this case was crucial in establishing an important precedent for incidental structures for this particular community, it should be noted that these situations are handled on a case by case basis and therefore, the ruling for other First Nation including other Indigenous groups will be different depending on the applicable treaty (if there is one) and if the person can demonstrate evidence that their community was engaged in expeditionary hunting or fishing.

In Ontario, the MNR provides a document which outlines the procedures for Incidental buildings on public-land.<sup>10</sup> This document showcases the paternalistic relationship that the government still shares with Indigenous people, infringing on their rights to sovereignty. The procedure for reviewing a proposal for an incidental building is as follows; 1. determine a person’s eligibility, 2. consider criteria for the location approval (includes natural resource





fig. 2.0  
Section of a Shoreline Campsite

conservation, safety and other public interests such as land management and protected area objectives) and 3. select conditions that apply to the construction and location of the building (issuance of a work permit). One step which I find most problematic references determining eligibility. The procedure requires an Aboriginal person to provide: “evidence that the Aboriginal community is engages in ‘expeditionary’ or other activities (e.g. hunting or fishing) requiring a shelter, “an explanation of the relationship between the proposed incidental building and the person’s Aboriginal treaty rights” and “support from the Aboriginal community with which the applicant may be affiliated” (e.g. Band Council). Reading these ‘pre-screening guidelines’ brings to the surface a number of questions. Firstly, what if the Aboriginal person in question isn’t affiliated with a community, lives off reserve or are non-status? Second, what kind of evidence would someone have to provide in order to prove that they are engaged in the process of hunting or fishing? Thirdly, how does one begin the process of explaining the relationship between incidental buildings and a person’s Aboriginal treaty right?

According to the rules and regulations of the parks, an Aboriginal person cannot apply to build an incidental structure if they are not affiliated with a community (First Nation or another recognized group such as the MNO and their historic communities). This rule was most likely made to make sure that ‘not just anyone’ with Indigenous ancestry can apply. However, this eligibility criteria are quite limiting to ‘non-status Indians’. A person without status is an individual who for whatever reason is not registered with the federal government or is not registered to a band which signed a treaty with the Crown. If a person does not hold treaty rights or is not affiliated with a community, they would in fact not be allowed to apply. This further demonstrates a continued act of dispossession, both material and spiritual. Having not gone through the process myself, I cannot confirm what type of evidence or documentation is required or deemed appropriate to prove that your community was historically engaged in an expeditionary hunting or fishing practice. Would evidence such as oral histo-



Subject <b>Incidental Buildings on Public Land (Interim)</b>		Policies <b>PL 3.05.01 PAM 4.02.01</b>	Page 1 of 5
Compiled by - Branches Lands & Waters Ontario Parks	Sections Land Management Planning & Research	Date Issued October 4, 2006	
Replaces Directive Title n/a	Number n/a	Dated n/a	

**1.0 Introduction**

This procedure provides direction to Ministry staff on the consistent implementation of the PL 3.05.01 and PAM 4.02 Incidental Buildings on Public Land (Interim) policy. This procedure may also be shared with other persons and organizations, in order to assist them in understanding how the Ministry seeks to consistently apply the policy.

This procedure shall be applied in situations where: 1) a work permit application for an incidental building has been received; or 2) where an Aboriginal person or community has inquired about the possibility of constructing an incidental building, but has not used the work permit application.

This procedure will also serve as a basis for the development of an alternative process (i.e. consensus arrangement) with an interested Aboriginal community, as provided in Section 3.3 of the policy.

Other proposed uses (e.g. institutional use, commercial venture) of public land by an Aboriginal person or community beyond an incidental building, will be reviewed by the Ministry on a case by case basis, consistent with other Public Lands Act directives (e.g. PL 4.02.01 Application Review and Land Disposition Process Policy and Procedure) and relevant Ontario provincial park and conservation reserve policies, procedures and management planning documents, where the proposed other uses of public land are situated within a provincial park or conservation reserve.

**2.0 Procedure**

The following steps are to be followed by Ministry staff when reviewing a proposal for an incidental building:

1. determine an interested party's eligibility to construct an incidental building;
2. consider criteria for the location approval including natural resource conservation, safety and other public interests or land management and protected area objectives; and
3. select conditions that should apply to the construction and location of the building, via the issuance of a work permit.

**2.1 Step 1 – Pre-Screening to Determine Eligibility to Construct an Incidental Building:**

Prior to requesting that an Aboriginal person or community submit a work permit application, Ministry staff will request the following information from the person to assess the eligibility of the person to construct an incidental building on public land:

- intended use and location of the proposed building;

*fig. 2.1 Policy and Procedures concerning Incidental Buildings on Public Lands  
Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry*



*fig. 2.2* "Four Native men lunch in their fishing shack." 1945.



ry from Elders be permitted? Or would it be exclusive to photographic evidence, historical texts or journals etc.?

Regarding the last rule for eligibility, I do not believe it is by any means a simple feat to explain the relationship between incidental buildings and a person's treaty right. From what I have determined from the Sundown case, it seems that for every community who has taken part expeditionary hunting or fishing practices, unequivocal evidence must be provided to support their claim for their rights to be upheld.

In the end, the MNR retains the right to refuse to approve a person's eligibility to construct an incidental structure if the person does not fit within their established criteria. Although the Sundown case is used as a precedent to establish an Aboriginal person's right to hunt or fish, MNR still requires determining on a case by case basis whether a building is 'reasonably incidental' to the exercise of that individual's right. These regulations contribute a cycle of dispossession, denying the right for Indigenous communities to move toward greater autonomy and self-determination. The guidelines set by the MNR impose additional 'hoop jumping' humiliation which involves providing evidence and determining a person's Aboriginal rights. It is well known that many different First Nations and Métis necessarily lived a nomadic existence linked to their hunting and fishing traditions.<sup>11</sup> Although one can understand the need for environmental protection due to the potential of sites being in proximity to habitats critical to the survival of threatened or endangered species; where is the balance? What about the survival of Indigenous people, culture, traditional ecological knowledge, language and subsistence harvesting?

The phrase 'existing Aboriginal rights' must be interpreted within a contemporary dialogue to permit their evolution over time as well as the recital of rituals, ceremonies and traditional practices which include the existence of the structures which house them. Those in positions of power such as judges, law-enforcers as well as architects should examine the historical and contemporary realities surrounding treaty rights and constitutional rights by the Indige-

nous group in question when observing and/or when helping to facilitate these rights. More importantly, members from these professional practices should examine how the treaty right has and continues to be exercised in built form. Indigenous people, communities, rituals, and practices must be recognized for their importance and place in contemporary societies and not just connected to the vestiges of the past.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the legal definition of ‘incidental’ undermines the cultural significance of fishing and hunting cabins and their role to Aboriginal people. Ultimately these structures should be viewed as tools which provides an important point of contact, connecting the practice of fishing in proximity to the water as well as a place for knowledge gathering, sharing, the rituals, and the sacred.

*Identifying what is Necessary*

Many First Nations and Métis communities throughout Canada have historically and contemporarily used shelters for processing fish and game during fishing and hunting expeditions. Building a shelter for processing game is not only a traditional practice but also necessary for an Indigenous community's subsistence<sup>13</sup> and connection to their cultural identity. A hunting or fishing cabin does not just provide a means for shelter but can also be used as a tool and a space for passing down important knowledge to future generations in a community. The making of the structure itself can also be used as a teaching opportunity which can include tool making, woodworking and perhaps traditional ways of building.

What many do not recognize when making the argument against Indigenous people building hunting/fishing cabins on crown land is that the structure is not cottage. These structures are not designed to be seasonal retreats used for the purpose of recreation but solely used as a tool when taking part in expeditionary harvesting. As determined through the *R.v. Sundown* case, these 'incidental' cabins do not exist to assert a proprietary interest in the land, they exist only for the purpose of harvesting.

In accordance with the Sparrow test, a criteria which determines whether governmental infringement on Aboriginal rights (that existed prior to the 1982 Constitution) is justifiable. This means that treaty rights can be infringed upon by provincial legislations necessary for conservation, including those which stipulate the restriction of building cabins if required to preserve habitats.<sup>14</sup> As stipulated by Kent McNeil, how could this be possible if treaty rights are protected against provincial laws by section 88 of the Indian Act?<sup>15</sup> Conundrums aside, it appears that the rules surrounding building on crown land for the purpose of exercising a treaty right are unclear. Currently the The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNRF) of Ontario permits people to camp in designated areas on crown land for 21 days and only by using a specified "camping unit" for shelter.<sup>16</sup> It appears, based on the information on the MNRF website that if an Aboriginal person would like to build a cabin on crown land, they would be

required to apply for a work permit.<sup>17</sup> Regulations indicate that no person shall be permitted to cut down trees or collect wood for the purpose of building. The MNRF therefore provides the ability to purchase a building products licence for one year in order to use sawlogs from Crown land to build a structure.<sup>18</sup>

However, upon contacting the MNRF, they have informed me that they are currently not issuing any permits for building incidental cabins. I was also instructed to contact my Captain of the Hunt and receive support from my community before applying if the opportunity to apply is ever renewed.<sup>19</sup> Although the MNRF could not provide a reason why they had stopped issuing incidental cabin permits, an article published in 2011 provides some clues. The article, published on 1310 news, indicated that the Ministry of Natural Resources attempted to issue a stop work order to two Aroland First Nation members who were in the process of building a hunt cabin on Comb Island back in 2003. The case eventually went to court and after a second appeal from the province it was abandoned, thus 'clearing the way for First Nations members to built hunt cabins on Crown land without permits'.<sup>20</sup> Although things appear to be positive for First Nation people who are a part of a treaty where does that leave Métis communities that have been recognized by the provincial and federal government? Currently, it is unclear if or when our community will possess the opportunity to build a structure for the purpose of transferring knowledge to our next generations. Although the current legal framework does not support the practice of building a cabin for harvest, it is my hope that one day it will.

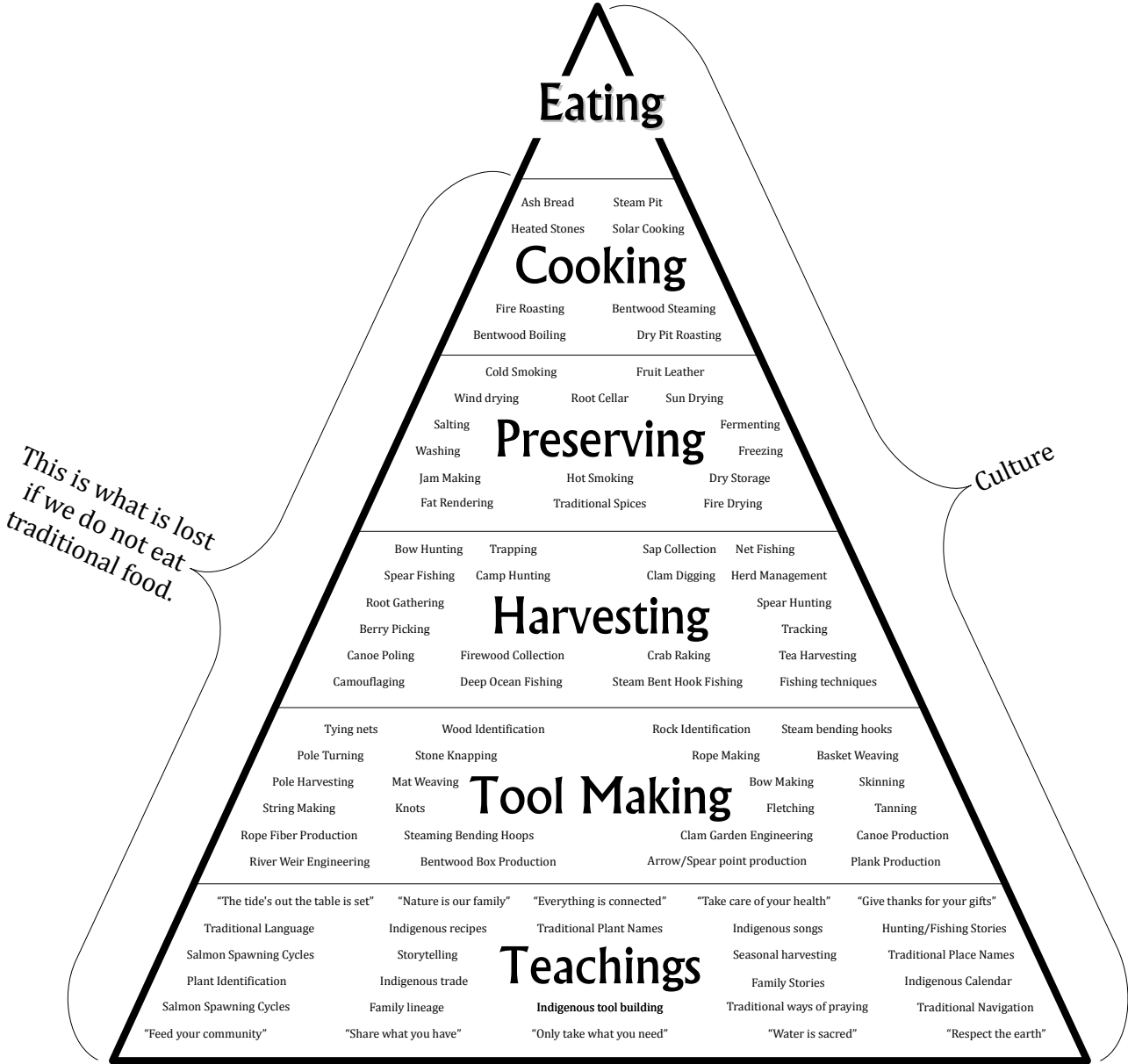
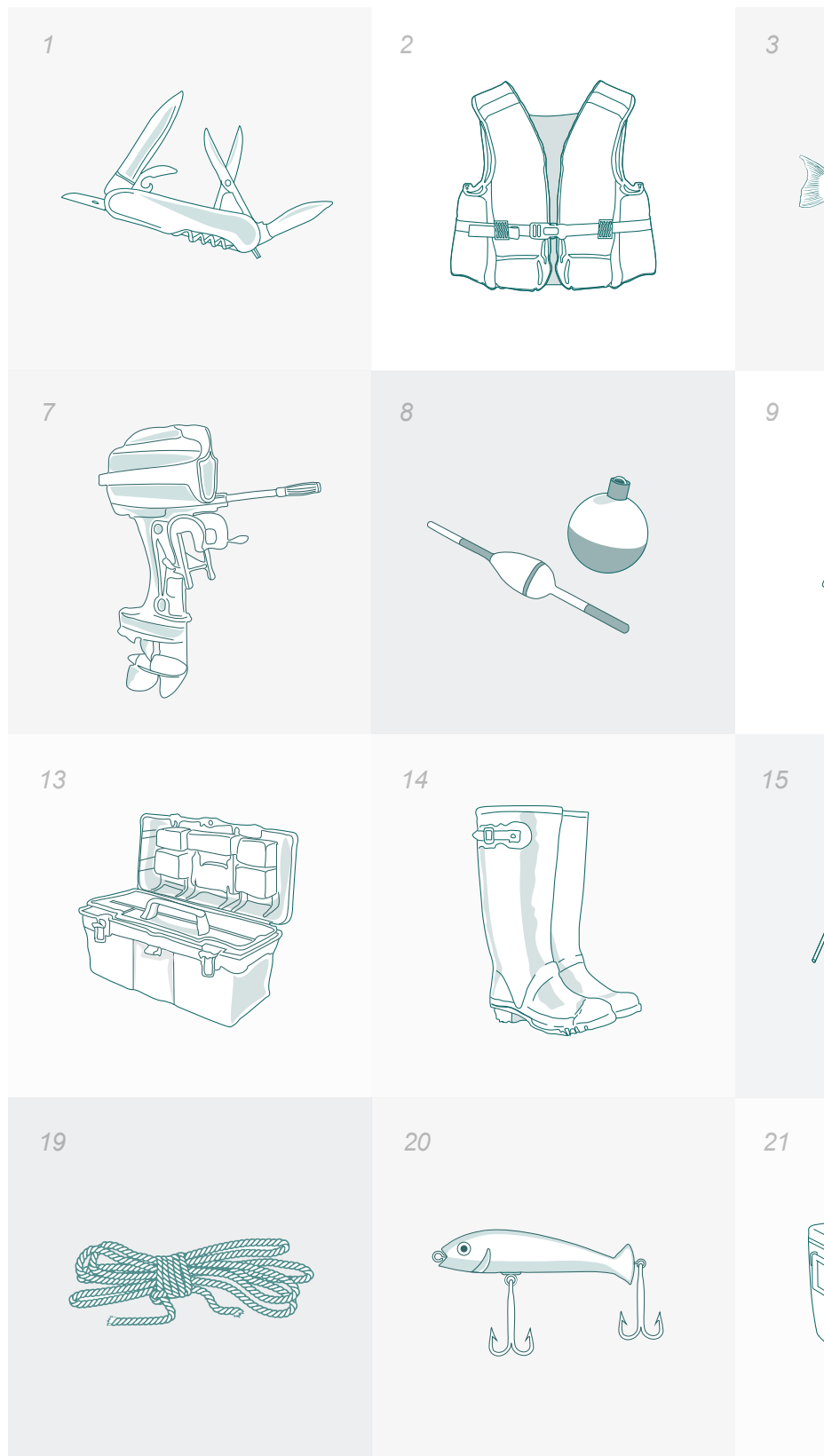
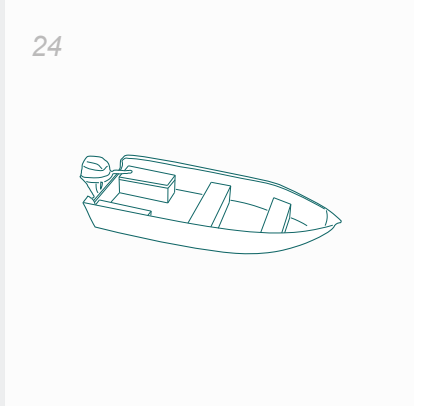
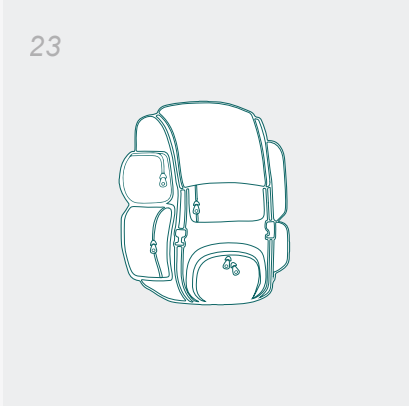
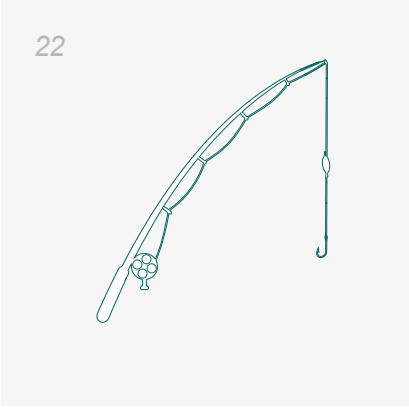
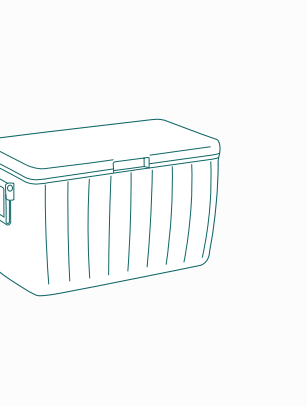
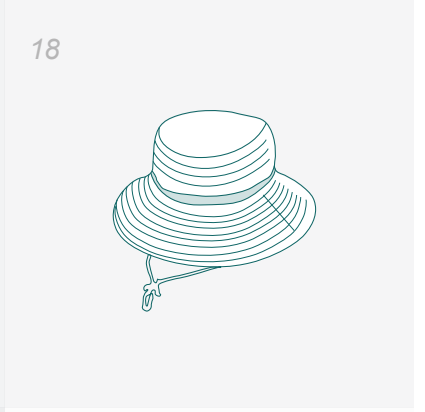
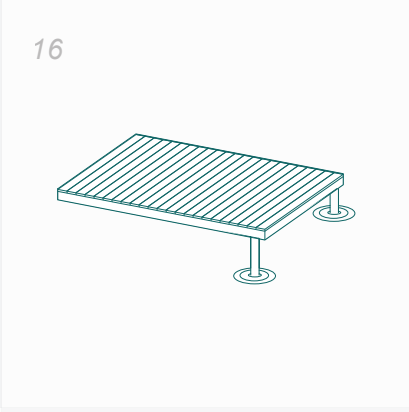
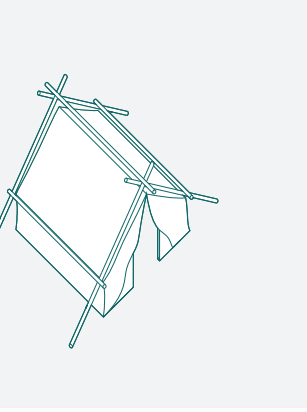
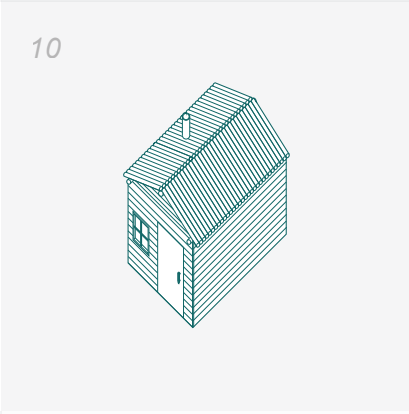
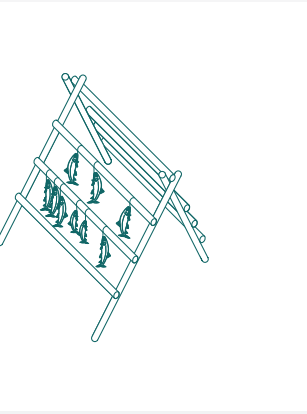
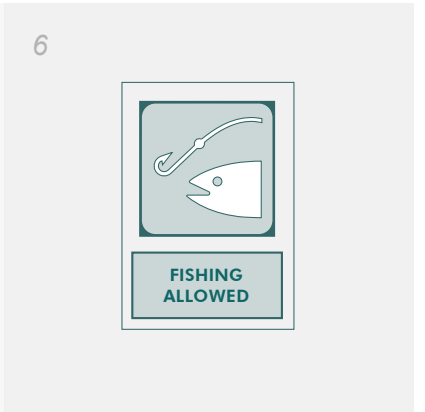
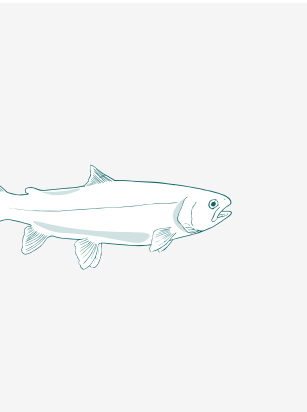


fig. 2.3 Why is Eating Traditional Foods Important? Traditional Food Production Fosters Culture  
Coast Salish Traditional Foods Diagram by Jared "Qwustenuxun" Williams

- 1 *Multi-Tool Pocket Knife*
- 2 *Lifejacket*
- 3 *Brook Trout*
- 4 *Landing Net*
- 5 *Bait Pail*
- 6 *Fishing Allowed Sign*
- 7 *Outboard Motor*
- 8 *Fishing Floats*
- 9 *Fish Drying Rack*
- 10 *Cabin*
- 11 *Nylon Fishing Line*
- 12 *Leech (Bait)*
- 13 *Tackle Box*
- 14 *Rubber Boots*
- 15 *Canvas 'Trapper' Tent*
- 16 *Dock*
- 17 *Single Barb Fishing Hook*
- 18 *Hat*
- 19 *Rope*
- 20 *Lure*
- 21 *Cooler*
- 22 *Rod*
- 23 *Backpack*
- 24 *Boat*



**fig. 2.4** *Incidental Objects Diagram*  
 These objects are meant to indicate and challenge people's conceptions on what can be in fact necessary when fishing for one's subsistence or that of their community.



ENDNOTES - INCIDENTAL ELEMENTS

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1 Treaty No. 6 is one of 11 numbered treaties concluded between the federal government and various First Nations between 1871 and 1923. The area ceded covered much of central Alberta and Saskatchewan. In exchange for the land, the federal government provided or made a commitment to provide the bands with reserves, schools, annuities, farm equipment, ammunition, and assistance in times of famine or pestilence. Hunting, fishing and trapping rights were also secured and it is clear from the record of the negotiations that the guarantee of these rights was essential for the First Nations in their acceptance of the treaty.

2 Government of Saskatchewan. The Parks Regulations, 1991. P-1.1 REG 6. 1991 p. 31. (Retrieved Nov 2nd) <http://www.qp.gov.sk.ca/documents/english/regulations/regulations/p1-1r6.pdf> Note: It should be noted that laws regarding incidental or auxiliary structures exist across the country and although they can vary from province to territory, they are invariably similar.

3 R. v. Sundown, (1999). 1 S.C.R. 393, 26161, Cory J. 1. (Accessed on October 15, 2018). <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/1687/index.do?r=AAAAQA-Oc3RhdHVzIGluZGlhbnMB>

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. "Incidental Buildings on Public Land (Interim)1", PL 3.05.01, PAM 4.02, Land Management Planning and Research (2006), Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.



11 Micheline Marchand, " Les Voyageurs et la Colonisation de Penetanguishene (1825-1871), La colonisation française en Huronie." Sudbury: La Société historique du Nouvel-Ontario, Doc no. 87, 2007. p. 23. <http://www.metisnation.org/media/452244/settlement%20of%20penetanguishene%20by%20micheline%20marchand.pdf> Note: From my own community for example, journals as transcribed by Micheline Marchand indicate that in 1832, many Métis residents missed a visit from a Reverend M. Bennett since; "At present, all our residents are for the most part gone fishing or are off to tend to some other occupation". I know from stories told by my grandfather that his great uncle would leave when 'la vwenne' (oats) were short and return once the oats were tall, just over knee height (approx. 18-24 inches). Depending on the variety, oats grow to full length (40-60 inches) in approximately 60 days. This means the oats grow approximately 1-1.5 inches a day. My knee height is 20 inches so we could assume it could take anywhere up to 14-20 days for the oats to grow to that length. My thought was... where did they go for 2-3 weeks? Can you prove they didn't build something to provide shelter? Even so, any evidence of a structure is long gone now.

12 Peter, A. Stevens. Decolonizing Cottage Country. Feb, 22, 2016. (Retrieved on November 5th) <http://activehistory.ca/2018/02/decolonizing-cottage-country/>. Note: Peter A. Stevens is a writer, historian, analyst, and educator at York University where he has taught History, Canadian Studies, and Professional Writing.

13 Fikret, Berkes. Subsistence Fishing in Canada: A Note on Terminology. *Arctic*, 1988, vol. 41, no 4, p. 319. Note: Subsistence, is a term described as meaning "what one lives on". This word has been identified as the most appropriate when referencing Aboriginal harvest practices; recognizing that a substantial part of the catch often goes to other households and into the inter- and intra-community trade networks.

14 McNeil, Kent. "Treaty Rights, the Indian Act, and the Canadian Constitution: The Supreme Court's 1999 Decisions." *Canada Watch*. Volume 8, Numbers 1-3 (2000), p. 45.

15 Ibid.

16 Government of Ontario. Camping on Crown Land. 2012-2019. (Retrieved on February 5th 2019) <https://www.ontario.ca/page/camping-crown-land>. Note: “camping unit” under the MNRF policy means equipment used for the purpose of outdoor accommodation and includes a tent, trailer, tent-trailer, recreational vehicle, camper-back and any watercraft equipped for overnight accommodation

17 Ministry of Natural Resources Ontario. Lands and Waters Ontario Parks Incidental Buildings on Public Land (Interim). October 4, 2006. p. 5.

18 Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Crown Land Work Permits. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/crown-land-work-permits>. Note: Upon contacting the MNRF, they indicated that they are not currently issuing building permits for structures on crown land and therefore one can infer that the building product licence is also most likely unavailable.

19 A Captain of the Hunt is assigned/elected for each region of the Traditional Harvest Territories within Ontario and is mandated by the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) to have full authority over the Métis harvest in their respective region.

20 1310 News Staff, "Way cleared for aboriginals to build hunt cabins on Crown land without permits", 1310 News, March 2, 2011, <https://www.1310news.com/2011/03/02/way-cleared-for-aboriginals-to-build-hunt-cabins-on-crown-land-without-permits/>





PART 3

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CONTESTED GROUND



## CLASH OF CULTURES

*Environmental Decision Making and Sovereignty*

In the mid 20th century, the Ontario government became increasingly concerned about the province's natural conservation and so surveys were completed to include elements which the government viewed as worthy of protection. In 1959, the Wilderness Areas Act was passed by Ontario's legislature and called for the protection of sensitive habitats and environments. The Wilderness Act was conceived with a specific philosophy as put forth by Howard Zahniser: 'humans should be guardians not gardeners.'<sup>1</sup> In "*Controversial Issues in Adventure Programming*", Howard Welser argues that the wilderness experience has been adversely affected by human intervention, preventing us from experiencing nature in a 'historical context' of 'how it used to be'.<sup>2</sup> Tourists, hikers and nature lovers alike often pair the notion of wilderness with a "historical absence of human impact" and its susceptible "spoilage" due to that impact.<sup>3</sup> This standard is expressed within the works of the Group of Seven which treat the wilderness of Georgian Bay as a pristine entity; devoid of human presence, when in fact societies with organized political structures had been living there for thousands of years.

This hegemonic wilderness paradigm is problematic because it excludes the existence of Indigenous people within it by putting legislative barriers around Indigenous sovereignty, including building. Preserving this idea of wilderness experience is therefore dependent on limiting the use of land, one that minimizes the existence of permanent or temporal human constructions, including fish shanties and fishing camps belonging to Indigenous people. Traditions such as harvesting require land and access to places which have been altered over the years due to conflicting ideals of how nature should be experienced. Recreational activities surrounding cottage culture such as sport fishing, boating and swimming on the shorelines of smaller bays and beaches within Georgian Bay have significantly altered natural habitats for fish and plants. Effectively, these changes in relationship with the land and the water have contributed to the erasure of Indigenous presence from these spaces for the purpose of harvesting.

In his article “*Decolonizing Cottage Country*”, York University historian Peter Stevens, explores the complicated history between Indigenous traditional harvesting measures and the direct conflict which exists within the subject of outdoor recreation in Canada.<sup>4</sup> Stevens asserts that First Nations (and the Métis) were “frequently erased from landscapes that settlers associated with wilderness recreation”.<sup>5</sup> The islands and beaches once inhabited by Indigenous fisherman along with their shanties were now populated by a sunbathing crowd and waterfront cottage owners who enjoyed a private beach paradise. Increases in private property ownership and changes in land use is only one side of the issue. Designated areas of conservation have also affected Indigenous people’s relationships with many different harvesting practices such as temporarily inhabiting and building on islands and beaches during hunting and fishing expeditions, cultivating wild rice fields and gathering plants along the shoreline.

For example, the existence of tidal like changes which occur in dynamic beach environments like those found in Georgian Bay have been defined as sensitive environments requiring environmental protection, according to the Ontario Government.<sup>6</sup> This delineation of the land by identifying areas of environmental concern, have since created laws and restrictions prohibiting anyone from disturbing these spaces. This includes building within them and altering the landscape in any way to protect the shoreline from erosion as well as it’s sensitive habitats.<sup>7</sup> These divisions and classification of land for conservation have also added a level of bureaucratic difficulty for Indigenous people. Today, one must apply for an “*Incidental Structure Building Permit*” to be able to build a small shack or cabin on crown land/unceded or treaty territory.<sup>8</sup> In addition to the many rules stipulating the location of the cabin (to make sure it won’t disturb these sensitive areas), one must also indicate what the cabin will be used for, indicate all parties that will use it and also prove their eligibility by showing evidence that their Indigenous community has historic ties to the practice of seasonal harvesting patterns which required building a cabin.<sup>9</sup>

Even though Indigenous harvesting rights are protected under the 1982



Constitution in Section 35 (and in the case of wild rice, a specific act exists which protect rice harvesting) there can be many conflicts encountered when trying to uphold them.<sup>10</sup> In the case of the wild rice fields, a great number of cottagers banded together to have the rice removed from the water claiming that it interfered with generations of wilderness recreation such as swimming and boating.<sup>11</sup> The shanties were a similar issue; cottagers and residents surrounding the Bay probably claimed that they were eyesores, hazards and took up space where tourists and cottagers liked to frequent, affecting the potential of the local economy and safety of others. As a result, First Nation people thinking they were well within their rights to build cabins in their traditional territories, faced the prospect of having them torn down or be subjected to fines. Many were even brought to court after finding out that they needed special permissions to build.<sup>12</sup>

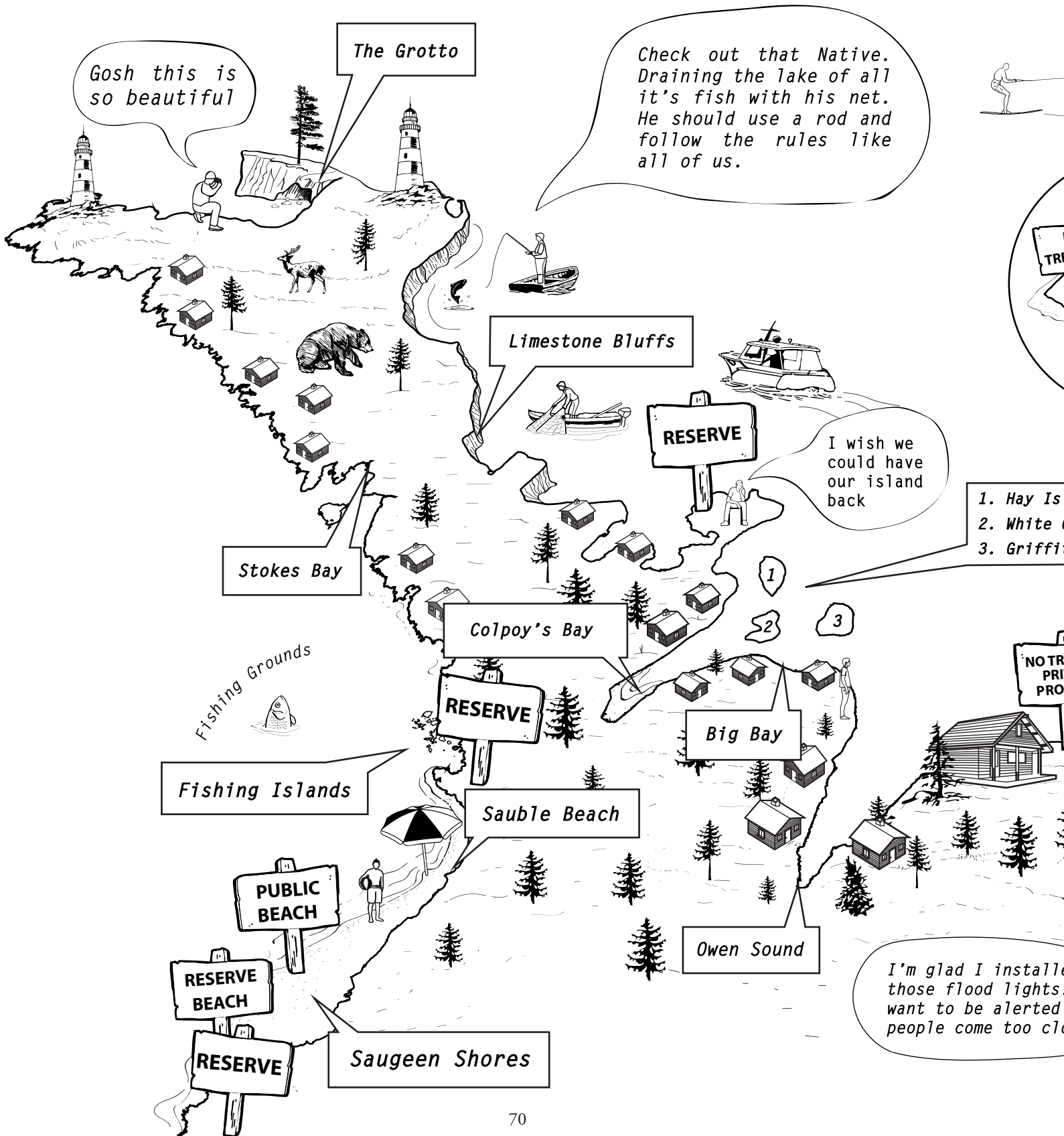
The Ministry of Natural Resources is responsible for the management of Ontario's provincial parks, forests, fisheries, wildlife, mineral aggregates, Crown lands and waters. In turn, this makes them responsible to accommodate the existence of seasonally used camps and docks on crown land/unceded territory in a sustainable way that does not interfere with conservation initiatives and sensitive habitats. Ultimately, these practices should not be inhibited because it infringes on the constitutional rights of Indigenous people throughout the Bay that still rely on the land and the water for their subsistence. Furthermore, these practices help reinforce a temporal knowledge of the fish and a close relationship with the land, a connection which is central to these Indigenous communities. Edwin C. Koenig, a member of the Chippewas of Nawash First Nation, describes in his thesis the use of fishing cabins within the Williams Treaty territory at Rabbit island (deep in the bush between Honey Harbor and Moon River) in the early 2000's.

“We followed the fish. When I fished with my father we started in the spring, and by June we moved toward Rabbit Island. Then we'd move

again, to Cove of Cork. You know where to set ... When fish were getting scarce there, we'd move over again toward the lighthouse. It took about two and a half hours to row from the Harbour where the government dock is now to the lighthouse. At six in the morning the water is calm so we would row along the shore. We had a fish camp, two shacks, at Rabbit Island and anyone could stay there if they got stuck. They could come back the next morning.”<sup>13</sup>

Indigenous people have altered the landscape in a way which sustained them since time immemorial but have for generations been excluded from the conversation surrounding wilderness conservation. This showcases the ongoing violence that the province enacts upon the landscape, giving the government complete sovereignty over the land and water, and marginalizing the knowledge and expertise of Indigenous people. It achieves this by putting stringent regulations on where First Nations and Métis people can exist, build and harvest depending on treaty agreements and contemporary harvesting agreements. In John Burrows' earlier work entitled *“Living between Water and Rocks: First Nations, Environmental Planning and Democracy”*, he touches on the difficulties Indigenous people have faced regarding their sovereignty concerning environmental decision making.<sup>14</sup> He describes the condition in the Bay as a ‘legal geography of space’ which has been constructed by ‘federalist structures’ meant to “organize, separate, and allocate water and rocks in a manner which promotes unequal distributions of political influence.”<sup>15</sup> The act of building these seasonal cabins on islands and shorelines fall under this political influence. As a result, a great deal of knowledge has been lost by making traditions such as fishing expeditions and gathering medicines more difficult or often impossible.





Gosh this is so beautiful

The Grotto

Check out that Native. Draining the lake of all it's fish with his net. He should use a rod and follow the rules like all of us.

Limestone Bluffs

RESERVE

I wish we could have our island back

- 1. Hay Is
- 2. White
- 3. Griffi

Stokes Bay

Colpoy's Bay

RESERVE

Big Bay

Fishing Islands

Sauble Beach

PUBLIC BEACH

RESERVE BEACH

Owen Sound

I'm glad I install those flood lights. I want to be alerted when people come too close

Saugeen Shores

RESERVE



fig. 3.0 Class of Cultures, Georgian Bay Post Contact Map Thesis Focus Area

ENDNOTES - CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

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- 9 *Ibid.*

10 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, As it Happens, "Wild Rice Harvesting Causes Uproar on Pigeon Lake, Ontario." CBC News. August 26, 2015. <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/as-it-happens-tuesday-edition-1.3203220/wild-rice-harvesting-causes-uproar-on-pigeon-lake-ontario-1.3203499>. Rhiannon Johnson, "Cottage Country Conflict over Wild Rice Leads to Years of Rising Tensions." CBC News. November 12, 2018. Alon Weinberg, "Wild Rice of Reconciliation: Harvesting new relationships at Grassy Narrows First Nation", August, 2012. <http://freegrassy.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/rice-harvesting-free-grassy-edit.pdf>

11 Drew Hayden Taylor, "Cottagers and Indians". Toronto: Tarragon Theatre, 2019. Note: "Cottagers and Indians" explores this marginalization of Indigenous communities in relation to their wild rice harvesting rights. His piece focuses on the tensions regarding traditional water usage between cottage country owners and Indigenous people. The play brings this controversy to light by exploring the conflicts occurring between Indigenous man wanting to restore traditional rice fields and a disgruntled cottager who notices the presence of the fields encroaching into her children's swimming area off her dock. The story is based on true events.

12 Beatrice Britneff, "First Nations trapper suing Parks Canada for tearing down hunting cabin", iPolitics, February 5, 2018. <https://ipolitics.ca/2018/02/05/first-nations-trapper-suing-parks-canada-tearing-hunting-cabin/>. Brandi Morin, "Fort Chip trapper says he's standing up for Treaty rights after officials tear down cabin in national Park", APTN National News, January 15, 2016, <https://aptnnews.ca/2016/01/15/fort-chip-trapper-says-hes-standing-up-for-treaty-rights-after-officials-tear-down-cabin-in-national-park/>. R. v. Sundown, (1999). 1 S.C.R. 393, 26161, Accessed: October 15th, 2018. [https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc\\_csc/en/item/1687/index.do?r=AAAAAQAOc3RhdH-VzIGluZGlhbnMB](https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc_csc/en/item/1687/index.do?r=AAAAAQAOc3RhdH-VzIGluZGlhbnMB)

13 Edwin C. Koenig, "Native fishing conflicts on the Saugeen-Bruce Peninsula: perspectives on resource relations past and present." (PhD diss., 2000), 124.

14 John Borrows, "Living between water and rocks: First Nations, environmental planning and democracy." *U. Toronto LJ* 47 (1997): 417-468.

15 *Ibid.* 420.







PART 4

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METHODOLOGY



## METHODOLOGY

*Indigenous Methodologies: A Brief Overview*

When doing research with Indigenous communities within an institutional setting there is a term that is mentioned at length in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholarship: decolonizing or Indigenous research methodologies. During the “Questioning the Canon” lecture series held at the University of Waterloo School of Architecture, Lori Campbell discussed that these methods and procedures, when doing any Indigenous research or with Indigenous communities, should be centred around the four R’s of Indigenous methodologies which are: Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity and Responsibility.<sup>1</sup>

Seeking out knowledge especially with Indigenous communities and individuals must be done in a ‘good way’ while being aware of the implications that the research has. It is also especially important to ensure that the work is relevant and has a benefit to the community. In order to learn from Indigenous communities and people it is also critical to go and talk to them directly, to visit, to listen and learn with our ‘whole bodies’. There is no substitute for this type of knowledge gathering. As an Indigenous person, we are told by Elders how vital it is to take the time to visit with them and listen the stories and knowledge they look to impart. These oral teachings and stories are the methods used by our communities to disseminate knowledge and pass it along to the next generations.

When I began my thesis, I set off to explain Indigenous fishing rights in the most didactic way, through diagrams. My methods intended to make things clearer concerning the complicated and often controversial subject of these rights when in fact the diversity of issues present for every community in Georgian Bay is so vast that it would take a lifetime to get to know each of their realities and stories. In addition, it is important to recognize that Indigenous fishing rights and treaty rights (if applicable) are not same for every group or individual. The diagrams were also problematic because they did not prioritize or illustrate Indigenous ways and laws over non-Indigenous ones. Overall, what my initial diagrams could not provide for the thesis was shape, purpose and meaning to the research topic. This is because the many conflicts and issues fac-

ing Indigenous people's harvesting rights are not neatly packaged and measured through statistical or relational analysis but instead exist in the hidden realities and stories shared among members.

Some of these stories have been brought to life by Indigenous artists and writers. Examples of these include the play "Cottagers and Indians" by Drew Hayden Taylor and in Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's and Amanda Strong's short stop-motion animation film "Biidaaban". The play *Cottagers and Indians* is based on true events that focus on the tensions between Curve Lake First Nations and cottagers in Pigeon Lake, Ontario surrounding the re-emergence of Indigenous wild rice harvesting. The play brings to light the conflicts between an Indigenous man wanting to restore traditional rice fields and a disgruntled cottager who complains that the fields are encroaching into her children's swimming area off her dock.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, in Simpson's film, the protagonist Bidaaban seeks to reclaim the Nishaabeg practice of harvesting the sap from maple trees.<sup>3</sup> The twist is that Bidaaban seeks to do so in an urban suburb. Throughout their journey, Bidaaban encounters mechanisms of private property ownership and tools of surveillance in an attempt to inhibit them from gathering the sap. Accompanied by their shapeshifting friend Sabe who provides help and reassurance, Bidaaban is able to remain steadfast in their attempts. These stories reminded me that many of conflicts Indigenous people face trying to exert their rights are invisible. They appear in the racist remarks, mechanisms of property, perpetuation of stereotypes and other types of violent acts directed at Indigenous harvesters. The stories also showcase the level of courage and resilience needed to succeed in reclaiming these harvesting traditions.



*fig. 4.0* Screen capture of the animated short film *Biidaaban*, 2018, by Amanda Strong.  
Based on the writings of Leanne Betasamosake Simpson.

*Creating a Graphic Novel*

**fig. 4.1**

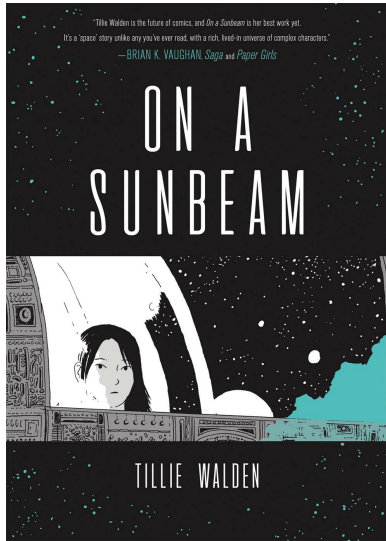
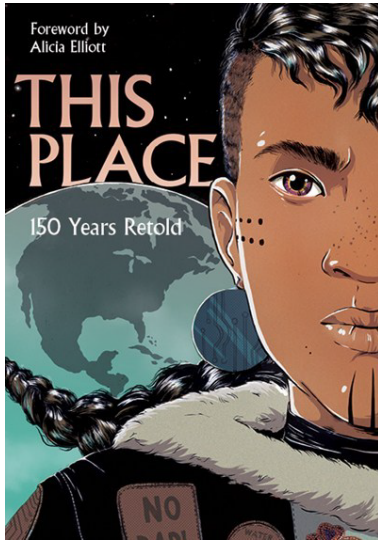
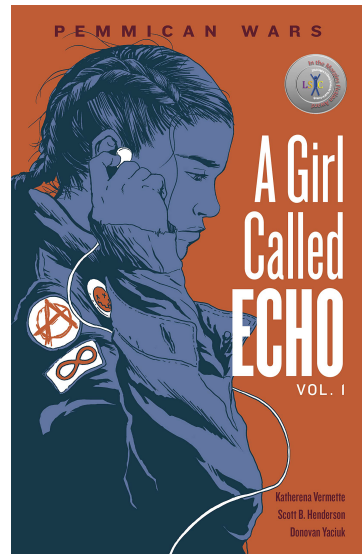
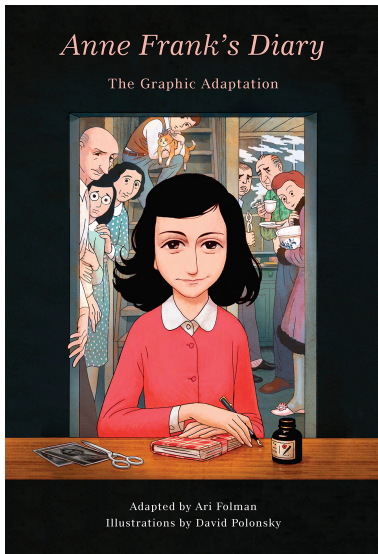
*Book covers of precedents*

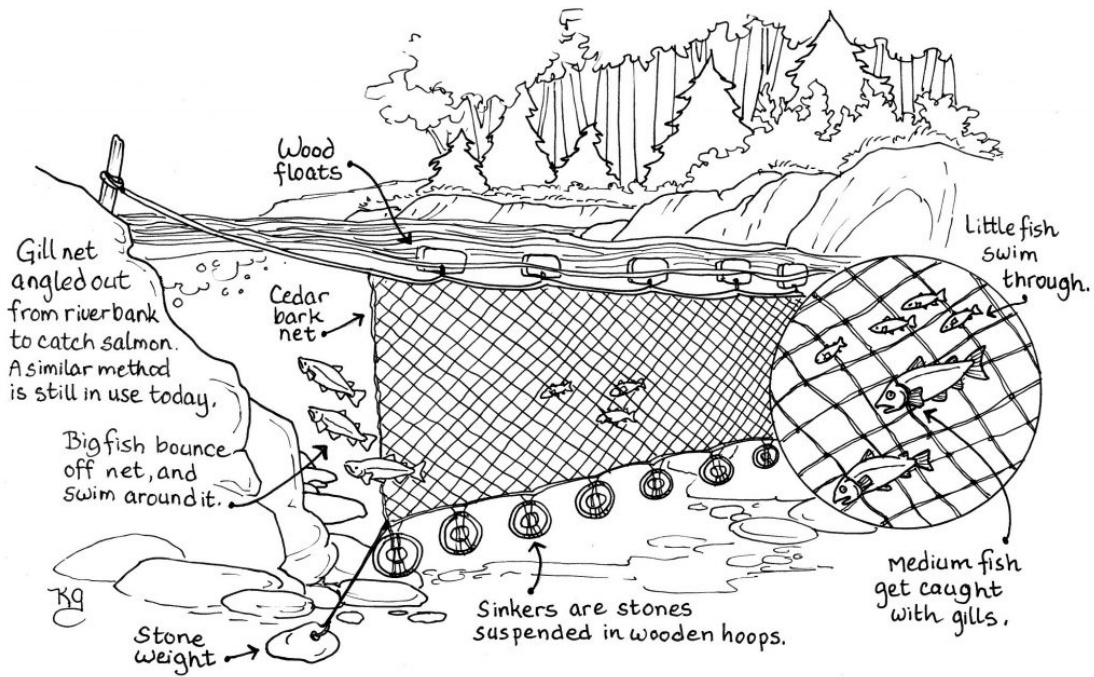
1. *Anne Frank's Diary: The Graphic Adaptation*
2. *Speak: The Graphic Novel*
3. *A Girl Called Echo, Vol. I*
4. *This Place: 150 Years Retold*
5. *On a Sunbeam*
6. *Blankets: An Illustrated Novel*
7. *Roly Poly: Phanta's Story*
8. *Wild Flower*

Since I was already familiar with the struggles of my own historical community, I chose to narrow my field of research to the Métis of Georgian Bay. Drawing on my own experiences, those of my family, as well as stories that I have heard from members of the community I decided to use this knowledge and incorporate it into a fictional, illustrated story, a graphic novel. This format would allow for these stories to be told, using the flow and the composition of the page to bring life and meaning to it. Once I set off on communicating my thesis through this lens, there were two major questions I was concerned with. Firstly, how does one illustrate and write a book and second what would serve as the content of the book? Prior to this thesis I had a very limited knowledge of graphic novels. The only book I was exposed to thus far had been *Blankets* by Craig Thompson in my undergraduate English class at Guelph where the format was barely discussed.<sup>4</sup> This book is autobiographical in nature and focuses on the strict religious upbringing of the author, his early teenage years and a formative teenage relationship. The artwork in the book changes in artistic perspective frequently and takes on a very dreamlike quality through its different vignettes, textures and scenes, all in black and white. Not all the pages are constrained by the typical format of frames and boxes of the graphic novel but instead flow organically, sometimes into full spreads. The book is deeply personal, and the quality of Thompson's artwork showcases a great level of care and fluidity.

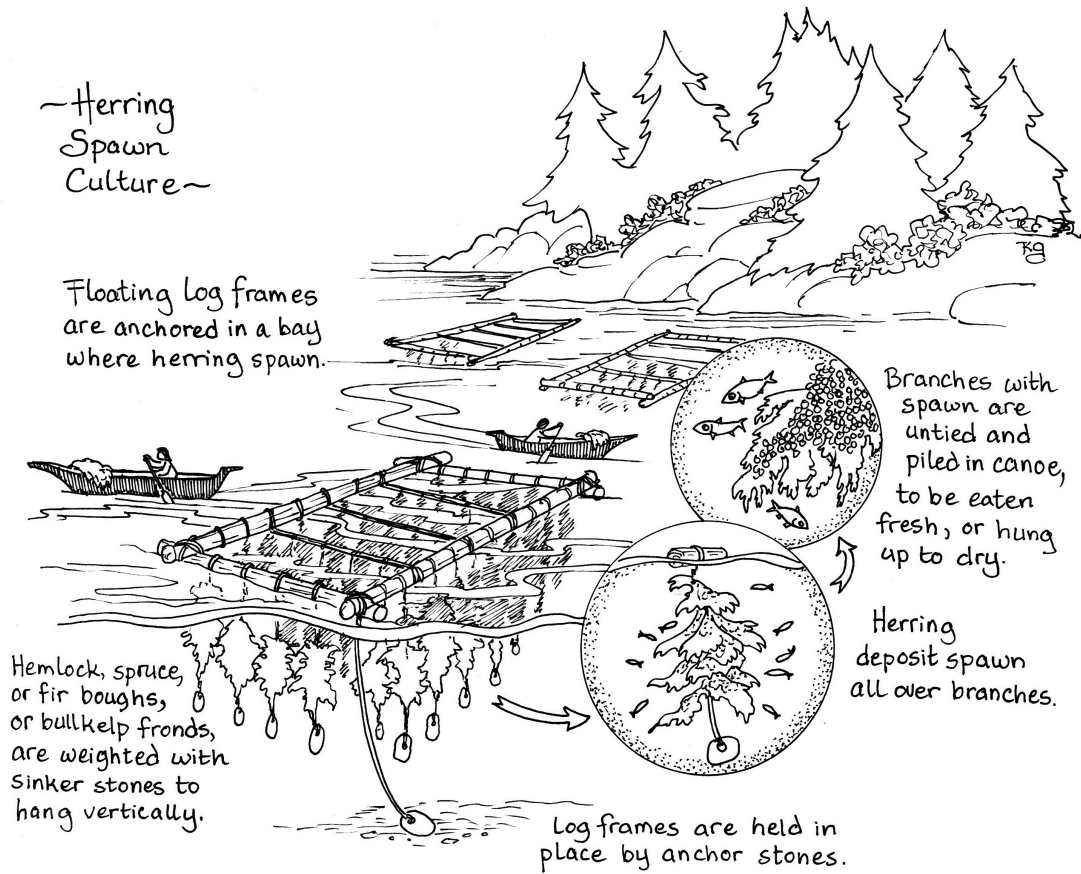
In learning how to illustrate a graphic novel I decided to read a slew of precedents. Reading a variety of different novels became my point of departure in understanding how to utilize this method of storytelling including trying to find a style I preferred. It was imperative that I also include graphic novels which contained Indigenous narratives. Stories I read included the anthology "This Place: 150 years retold", "Surviving the City" and the series "A Girl Called Echo" (vol.1&2).<sup>5</sup> I not only wanted to learn about what other Indigenous illustrators/designers were up to but also how they interpreted various Indigenous themes and narratives including those linked to harvesting. These stories were written by members of different Indigenous communities across turtle Island.







~ Herring  
Spawn  
Culture ~



Ultimately, even with access to many graphic precedents as reference, it would take months of drawing to find my own style and workflow. Over time, as with many things, practice gave way to a certain intuition regarding the page composition and perspective, utilizing full spreads wherever needed. Some of my spreads were inspired by Karen Gillmore's illustrations of traditional Coast Salish fishing methods and aquaculture in the book "Knowing Home: Braiding Indigenous Science with Western Science".<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, early on I recognized that I lacked a considerable amount of knowledge concerning harvesting traditions and sites that harvesters in my own community no doubt knew more about. In order to create drawings with a richer context both within the drawing itself as well as in the captions which accompanied them, I realized I would have to learn more.

**fig. 4.2**

*Gillnet Fishing Across a Channel*

*Illustration by Karen Gillmore.*

**fig 4.3**

*Herring Spawn Culture*

*Illustration by Karen Gillmore.*

**fig. 4.4**  
Exerpts from  
Craig Thompson's  
'Blankets'  
p.182-183





A hand-made QUILT...

It must have took you FOREVER!

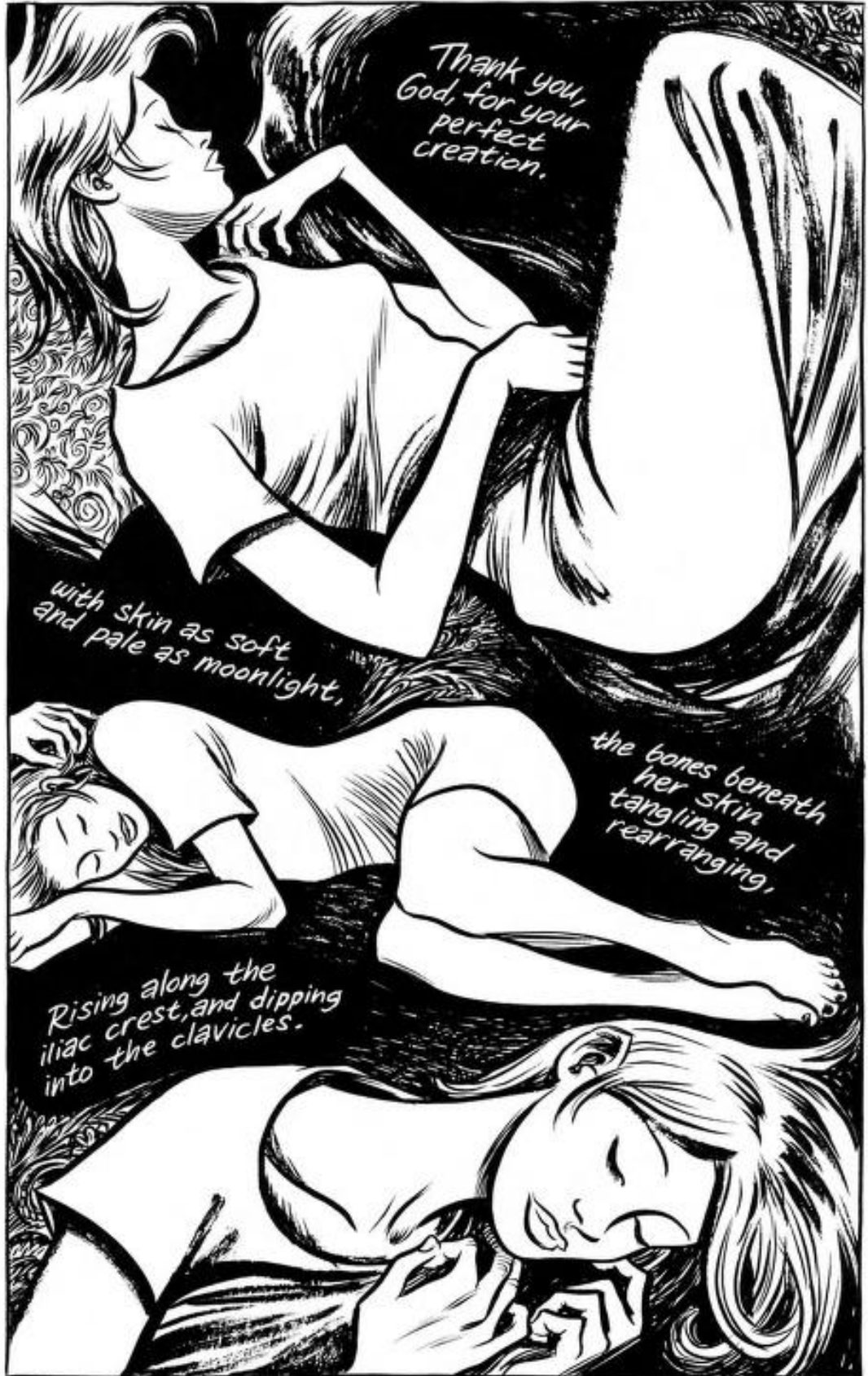
I love this cut of fabric.

They're all patterns that remind me of you.

This patch is from my spit-stained baby blanket.

Wow!

**fig. 4.5**  
Exerpts from  
Craig Thompson's  
'Blankets'  
p.309-310



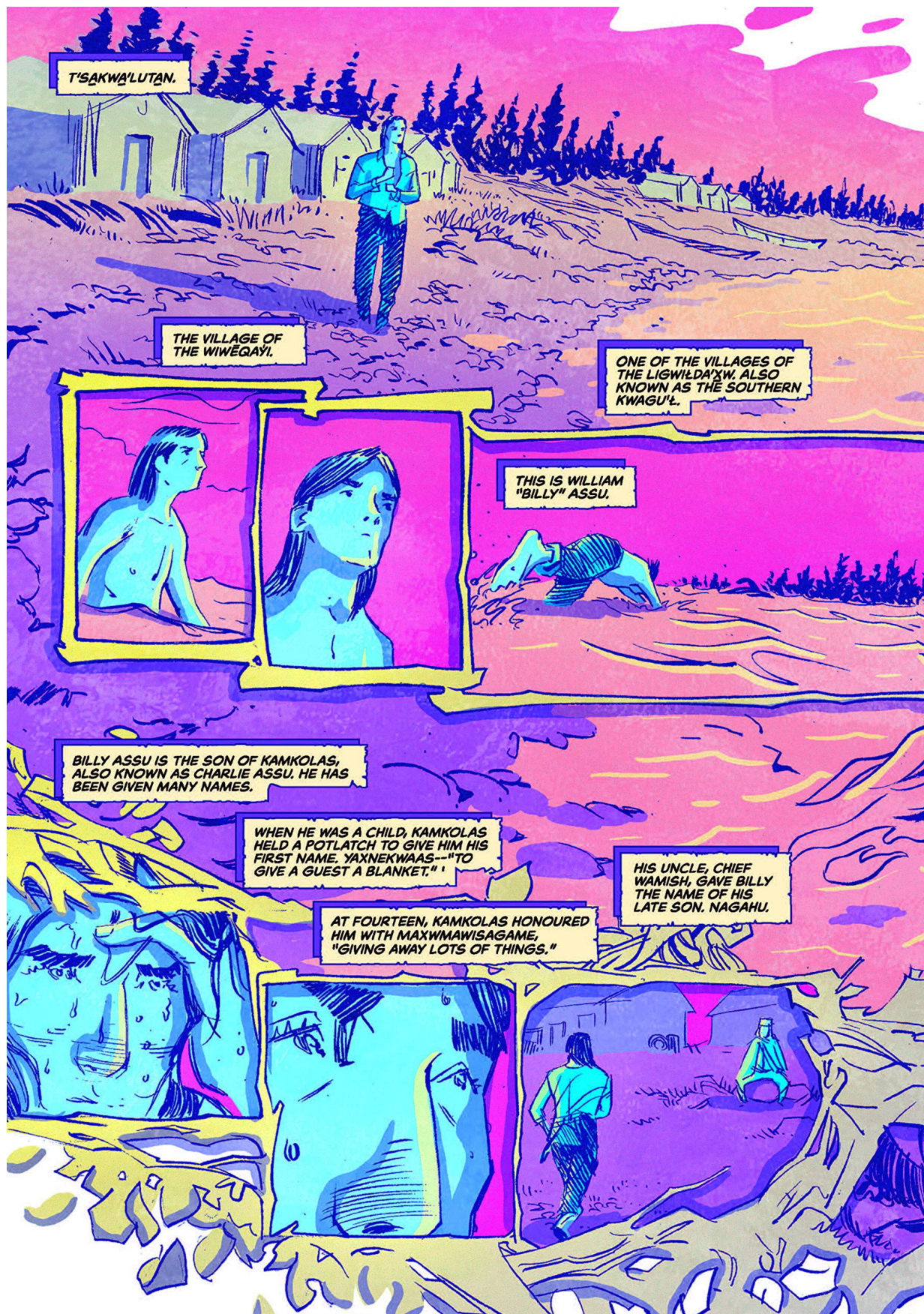


Thank you  
for the RHYTHM  
of her movements

curling--  
sprawling

Her contours  
lapping like  
waves around  
the  
BLANKETS

fig. 4.6  
Exerpts from  
Sonny Assu's  
'Tilted Ground'  
p. 32-33



T'SAKWA'LUTAN.

THE VILLAGE OF THE WIWEGAYI.

ONE OF THE VILLAGES OF THE LIGWILDA'XW, ALSO KNOWN AS THE SOUTHERN KWAGU'L.

THIS IS WILLIAM "BILLY" ASSU.

BILLY ASSU IS THE SON OF KAMKOLAS, ALSO KNOWN AS CHARLIE ASSU. HE HAS BEEN GIVEN MANY NAMES.

WHEN HE WAS A CHILD, KAMKOLAS HELD A POTLATCH TO GIVE HIM HIS FIRST NAME, YAXNEKWAAS--"TO GIVE A GUEST A BLANKET."

HIS UNCLE, CHIEF WAMISH, GAVE BILLY THE NAME OF HIS LATE SON, NAGAHU.

AT FOURTEEN, KAMKOLAS HONOURED HIM WITH MAXWMAWISAGAME, "GIVING AWAY LOTS OF THINGS."





HE WILL BECOME ONE OF THE MOST RESPECTED AND INFLUENTIAL 'PASA\* CHIEFS IN LIGWILDA'XW HISTORY.

FROM KWAK'WALA:  
\*POTLATCH.

WHEN NAGAHU DIED,  
WAMISH ADOPTED BILLY,  
SO HE COULD GROOM  
HIM AS THE NEXT CHIEF  
OF THE WIWEQAYI.

BILLY HAS BEEN GOING THROUGH  
AN INTENSE TRAINING PERIOD,  
MASTERING THE COMPLEXITIES  
OF KWAGU'L SOCIETY AND  
CEREMONIAL LIFE.

«TODAY,  
WE ARE GOING  
TO MEET WITH  
THE ELDERS. THEY  
WOULD LIKE TO HEAR  
YOU SPEAK OF THE  
ORIGINS OF OUR  
PEOPLE.»\*



\*TRANSLATED  
FROM  
KWAK'WALA.



*The Storyline and it's Contents*

The goal for the content of the novel was to touch on various themes which included the historical context of the Métis in Georgian Bay. This includes the traditional harvesting methods, the relationship between government conservation authorities and Indigenous fishers as well as the relations and conflicts between the cottaging industry and non-Indigenous fishers with the Métis. Many elements of the book, as previously mentioned, draw on my family's story. Evidence of these 'real-life elements' are used throughout the book and are referenced in the appendix at the end of the graphic novel. The book is not autobiographical in nature but aspects of it touch on an alternate reality that I or many of my family members could have experienced if we had stayed within the community. I should also note that re-establishing informal relationships with kin from my historic community was the gateway to the entire project. Without these crucial connections with current members of the Region 7 harvesting committee, this project would not have been possible. This meant that I spent some of my time going on fishing trips, talking to Elders, and having images and videos sent to me over email of harvesting expeditions.

It was important for the story to include a protagonist who is somewhat removed from fishing. Not only did this reflect my own reality but that of many other Indigenous people, geographically and/or culturally removed from our communities. The story also had to incorporate the contemporary struggles that exist when trying to reintegrate into the fishing harvesting tradition that this community is known for. Showcasing the protagonist gathering all the elements necessary to fish was also crucial in understanding the struggle in trying to take part in it. This included access to a boat to provide the element of mobility needed to fish in a variety of habitats as well as access and a connection with people that hold knowledge important to fishing. Once these elements were identified as central to the story, the next step was to come up with a storyboard.

The first step was to identify the protagonist's motivation to take up fishing and something to trigger it. The trigger of the story was for Jay to discover that fishing was a part of her family's history in finding pictures of her grand-

father, a champion for Métis fishing rights which she had a limited relationship with and died when she was a young child. Jay's motivation to take up fishing like her grandfather once had exists in two parts; one was her family's previous relationship with fishing and the second had to do with her family's socioeconomic position. Jay finds out through her mother that her family used to fish but for some reason, most likely having to do with the death of her grandfather, now have a limited connection to it. Hearing her mother's fond memories of fishing in earlier years leads her to want to reconnect her family to this practice. Lastly, since money in her family is tight, they rely heavily on a diet consisting of processed foods and so Jay identified fishing as a means of a sustainable, alternative food source.

The story intentionally follows a Métis person who is not fortunate to have grown up with a family that placed an onus on a connection to land and the teachings that go along with that. Through Jay's journey, the reader witnesses how important Elders and Knowledge Keepers are for someone to learn and develop a harvester's skill set that can one day be passed down to future generations. Another barrier to harvesting that the story touches on is a financial one. Many may not possess the financial means to be able to access harvesting areas from an urban environment or purchase the tools needed to travel to traditional harvesting sites like a boat. It is typical for those with a connection to harvesting to rely on a larger community for support and resource sharing. Without this relationship a fundamental barrier exists for Indigenous people removed from these support structures. Through Jay's tenacity, resourcefulness and a 'quest to find out more' attitude she establishes a connection to a Métis harvester and is able to borrow an old boat from a neighbour. In developing the relationship between her and the harvester and gaining the ability to be mobile on the water, Jay finds out more about being Métis, their fishing rights and the history of dispossession known to so many other Métis communities across the country including her own.

Taking all of that into consideration, Jay is able to succeed in her quest due to many elements that she had no control over, her location and the ability to access traditional knowledge holders. The story would have been over quickly if these features had been absent. This is unfortunately the reality of many Indigenous people throughout this country, including myself, far removed from our Knowledge Keepers, traditional territories and consequently the traditions that come with having a relationship with the land. Jay's story is a reflection on some of the struggles related to taking part or re-integrating oneself into harvesting. The story does not however, touch on some of the more nuanced toils of re-indigenizing oneself which can include feelings that lead to imposter syndrome, conflicts with one's identity, and a fear from 'othering' oneself. There also can exist a fear of exerting certain rights such as fishing with a net or fishing outside of corresponding seasons within your traditional territory (for Métis, with a harvesting card) due to potential negative interactions with conservation officers or non-indigenous fishers.

The story intends to show to people who are of Métis or First Nations ancestry that it is never too late to learn or take up a tradition that you may be removed from, like fishing. This includes access to our stories, languages, traditional and contemporary methods of catching fish and teachings taught to us about and by the land and the water. My intent is not to push all Indigenous people to 're-indigenize' themselves but to show that the option to do so is there. The reality is that many Indigenous people grow up without a support structure that links us to these traditions and may also lack the ability to take it up. This 'dream' is fulfilled in the book, in which a place is created to provide this opportunity for a connectedness and access to the tools to support us along the way.

ENDNOTES - METHODOLOGY

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- 1 Campbell, Lori. "Practice in Education". Lecture, Questioning the Canon, Cambridge, March 12, 2018.
- 2 Taylor, Drew Hayden. "Cottagers and Indians" (Toronto: Tarragon Theatre, 2019).
- 3 Strong, Amanda. Betasamosake Simpson, Leanne. "Biidaaban". 2018. (Canada: Spotted Fawn Productions)
- 4 Thompson, Craig. *Blankets: an illustrated novel*. San Diego: Top Shelf Comix, 2003.
- 5 Assu, Sonny. et al. *This Place: 150 Years Retold*. Winnipeg: HighWater Press, 2019. Spillett-Sumner, Tasha. Donovan, Natasha. *Surviving the City, Volume 1*. Winnipeg: Portage & Main Press, 2019. Vermette, Katherena. *A Girl Called Echo: Vol I*. Winnipeg: Portage & Main Press, 2017.
- 6 Snively, Gloria. Williams, Wanosts'a7 Lorna. *Knowing Home: Braiding Indigenous Science with Western Science, Book 2*. British Columbia: University of Victoria, 2016. p. 106, 108.







PART 5

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PARADISE LOST



## CONCLUSION

*Onigitchigewin*

For over 200 years an underlying political and social violence has been enacted by colonial powers that continue to systematically erase Indigenous people from the landscape. Initial surveys in Canada made it possible to exploit the land and its waters, including those of Georgian Bay, allowing governmental powers to commodify the landscape, monetize its resources, divide up the land for purchase and effectively assert control and dominance over it. These cadastral surveys and the rules and regulations that come with a common law grid system, from an architectural and cultural perspective, these cadastral surveys and the rules and regulations inherent in a common law grid system, subvert Indigenous laws, geographies, knowledge, land use and the stories which correlate to them. John Borrows explains this perfectly in that “the culture of the common law has imposed a conceptual grid over both space and time which divides, parcels, registers, and bounds peoples and places in a way that is often inconsistent with Indigenous participation and environmental integrity.<sup>1</sup> This goes back to the initial belief held by colonizers; that the lands were barren and untended and that unregulated and ‘indiscriminate free fishing’ led to a savage, unindustrious lifestyle.<sup>2</sup> These values and the regulations which came with them, ignored and undermined Indigenous laws which exist to promote a reciprocal relationship with the land, and maintain that the land depends on our participation with it. As a result of that forced social control, today an Indigenous presence is missing from the fabric of our communities. Restoring this presence is the way forward.

Indigenous placemaking is reconciliation.

Whether you are First Nation or Métis, there still exist many barriers which hinder the management of harvesting spaces. such as the ability to built ‘incidental’ structures for shelter when fishing and hunting. If you are camping on crown land, in most places, the law allows you to camp there for 21 consecutive days, so what is the issue? On crown land, an Indigenous person must abide by rules and regulations when camping unless their community has been able to prove that an activity such as harvesting timber without a licence or building a cabin has existed at the time of first contact with Europeans and for

Métis communities, prior to the time of effective control. Many communities do not possess sufficient proof of these activities. This leaves the responsibility of asserting these rights and even being prepared to fight for them, often in court, to Indigenous people. Inherent rights to harvest on the land and water has, since colonization, been regulated by non-Indigenous governments. This leaves it up to the responsibility of Indigenous people to assert these rights and even be prepared to fight for them, often in court. We cannot return to a time prior to colonization, settlement, and the privatization of lands. So how do we move forward? The hope is that reciprocal relationships can be created and better managed between Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments to facilitate harvesting traditions. The goal should be to ensure that these traditions continue to exist and be taken up by those who wish to do so before that important connection is gone forever.

As for me, I have still so much more to learn. I must acknowledge that novel I created is only the first step in a long journey. I had hoped that the book would integrate a less cursory knowledge of harvesting and be able to demonstrate a more detailed understanding of fishing for one's subsistence. This includes fishing in variety of different habitats and identifying what species of fish liked to inhabit each of these environments, but this was not possible given my inexperience. I could have read all the books I wanted; nothing could substitute the teachings from my lived experiences with harvesters in my community. I recognize that there are many barriers to harvesting for one's subsistence and I lived those realities when trying to take part in this tradition. Although I had re-connected with members of my community and was able to meet people from the Harvesters Committee, I still lived two and a half hours away from my traditional harvesting territory. Furthermore, if I didn't have a cottage nearby. I wonder where I would have stayed? Could I have camped in a tent alone out on the land? Sure. Could I have done it without a boat? Probably not. However, what if there had been an alternative? What if there was a place where harvesters could reside together that didn't require you to pool your resources to rent a

something like a cottage much like many of the visitors who come to the Bay to fish for sport. Until then, harvesters like the ones from my community organize in small groups and rent these spaces throughout the Bay. A privilege which can only be achieved by a select few.



*fig. 5.0*  
*"Dressing moose meat at a rental cottage near Pointe au Baril"*  
*Region 7 Harvesting Committee, 2019.*  
*Photograph by Richard Boucher*

ENDNOTES - CONCLUSION

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1 John Borrows, "Living between water and rocks: First Nations, environmental planning and democracy." *U. Toronto LJ* 47 (1997): p. 430.

2 Michael J. Thoms, "Ojibwa Fishing Grounds: A history of Ontario fisheries law, science, and the sportsmen's challenge to Aboriginal treaty rights, 1650-1900." (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2004), p. 228, <https://doi.org/10.14288/1.0091924>.







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## APPENDIX

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*fig. 6.0*

The image of Jay's grandfather that you see come up throughout the book (first in chapter 2 and once again near the end) was inspired by a picture of my great-grandfather who had been a guide (mainly Georgian Bay, Lake Huron and Lake Superior), a fisherman, a lumberman and a boatbuilder on the great lakes.

He is seen holding 9-10 fish which appear to be bass.

*See pages 179 and 319.*



*fig. 6.1*

Jay's home is inspired by the house my Aunt Florence (my grandfather's sister) used to live in on Champlain road in Penetanguishene before her passing. The house is located accross the bay on the land offered long ago to the Drummond Island Métis.

The house had 3 bedrooms, one bathroom, a basement, living room and small kitchen.

*See pages 153, 154, 206.*



*fig. 6.2*

*fig. 6.3*

The inspiration for the dock located near Jay's home, across from her neighbour's is that of a dock that exists in that exact spot. The top image is a screen shot from Google Street View back in 2012. The bottom one is from 2018.

My grandfather describes that there always used to be a dock managed by an aunt or a cousin across from my Aunt Flo's house. Since the Bay on that side is quite marshy, the dock acted as a bridge to the water to fish or to swim off of. I last visited the dock in the summer of 2019, where I found it hidden within the sumac and tall grasses. The sign reads; "Not a private dock" and invites anyone to use it.

*See page 212.*





*fig. 6.4*

This photograph was taken at the partially submerged dock in the summer of 2019.



*fig. 6.5*

*fig. 6.6*

Both images were used as reference in chapter 6. Both images are of the same beach; Southhampton Beach located along lake Huron, over a hundred years apart. The first image was taken in 1910 while the second right below was taken back in 2010.

The images provide a clear contrast in the use of the beach during these two different time periods. Today, we still see the existence of tourists and the boardwalk.

*See page 263.*



*fig. 6.7*

The house used for the sequence in Chapter 6 is my grandfather's first home across the bay from the town of Penetanguishene. He described its construction as simple, a one room home with a loft to sleep in which had one to two mattresses; one for the children (of which there were 6 at that time) and one for his parents. It had no insulation, a small porch on the side, a clothesline and a small out-house in the yard. The outside was clad in a pine board with a cedar shake roof. He would have been about 3 years old in this picture.

In the book, I pictured men in the turn of the century talking in secret about their rights which they knew they should be entitled to. The sequence plays tribute to the signing of the petition by over 30 Métis who petitioned the crown for the same benefits which had been made available to their First Nations brothers and sisters.

*See page 264.*



**PRIVATE PROPERTY**  
The ENTIRE area between the water and every home is Private Property. Please use only the Public beach area.  
**THANK-YOU!**



**PRIVATE BEACH TO WATER'S EDGE**  
**NO TRESPASSING**

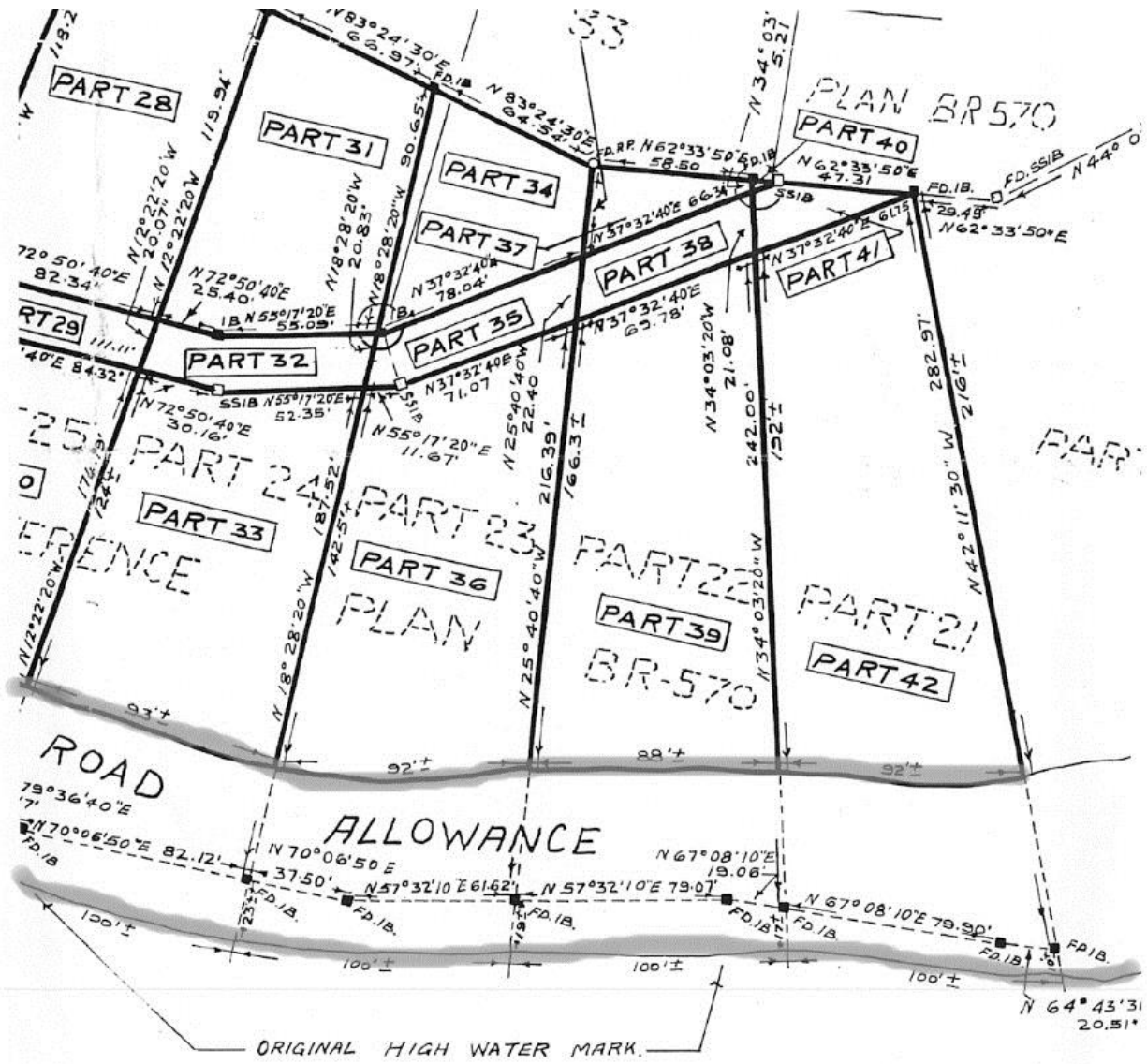
*fig. 6.8*

*fig. 6.9*

The images were used as reference in chapters 5 and 6. These signs can be found all over the beaches surrounding Georgian Bay.

Often accompanied with fences, they. Many residents feel that these barriers have no place along the beach since they impede the ability to walk along the water's edge. This has sometimes led to disputes between shoreline property owners and has led to many fences being vandalized. In one particular instance in Balm Beach, Ontario, residents set a fence which blocked residents from walking along the beach to the public beach as well as its amenities. The fence was eventually torn down and replaced with a rope barrier.

*See pages 240 and 271.*





*fig. 7.0*

This photo was used as reference in Chapter 5.

*See page 241.*



*fig. 7.1*

Some of the smoking structures in Chapter 2 and 7 were adapted from images retrieved from Shingwauk Kinomage Gamig's facebook page (Shingwauk University).

*See page 280.*



*fig. 7.2*

This woodcut was used as reference in Chapter 5. Entitled the Red River Jig, this image was published in Harper's New Monthly Magazine in 1860, it was noted that "Mr. Cameron explains that in his day the dancers were more sedate than they appear here."

*See page 230.*



*fig. 7.3*

*fig. 7.4*

*fig 7.5*

*fig. 7.6*

These series of image are captured from a video of the Region 7 harvesters fishing with gill nets in a channel near Pointe au Baril in Georgian Bay.

The video inspired the spread at the beginning of Chapter 7. This video was sent to me by Justin Dusome, chair of the Harvester's Committee in Region 7.

*See pages 274-275.*





GRAPHIC NOVEL

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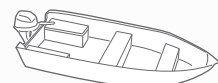
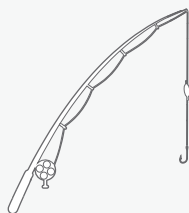
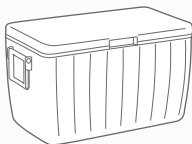
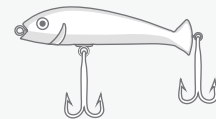
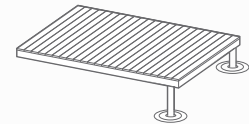
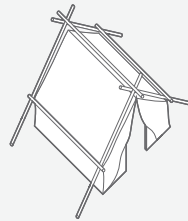
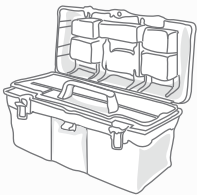
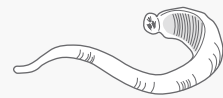
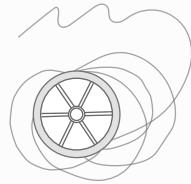
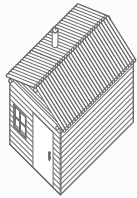
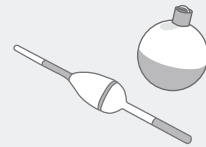
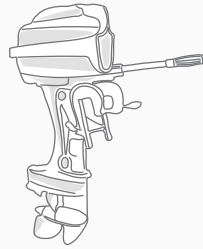
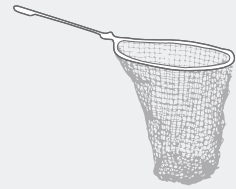
WE BELONG WITH THE WATER





*we belong with the Water*

*Written and Illustrated by Dani Kastelein*







# *we belong with the Water*

*Written and Illustrated by Dani Kastelein*





*Pour mon P'père*



## *Paradise Lost*

*My grandfather would never admit that he has a spiritual connection to the water. When asked to recall his first memory it is of looking out the window of his childhood home and observing fondly the sparkling water of Penetanguishene Bay. Born in a small cabin in 1931, along the shoreline of this small township within Georgian Bay in Ontario, he calls this place 'Paradise Lost'. Throughout the years, he has described the water of the Bay as something both beautiful and dangerous, this dark black thing that changes with the seasons as if it has a mind or life of its own. He has reminded us many times just how dangerous, by sharing stories of the countless drownings that occurred while he lived there.*

*At first glance, Penetanguishene doesn't appear any different from the other surrounding townships: such as Parry Sound, Owensound or the Muskokas, which make up the recognizable landscape of the windswept pines and granite outcrops of central Ontario's cottage country. However, when asked about his connection to this place, my grandfather will amaze you with details concerning the glacial moraine which butts up to Penetanguishene Bay, its biodiverse marshland as well as the existence of his small community 'across the Bay'. These are the types of details you will hear from someone who made his career as a history and geography teacher, of which he had been for 30 years.*

*Another thing he would mention about this place was the distaste the townspeople had for the 'Maudits Mitifs' (Goddamn Half-breeds). I would come to know that these racist remarks were directed at people like my grandfather. My grandfather was born Métis, the term we use today to refer to one of the three recognized groups of Aboriginal people in Canada (along with The First Nations and the Inuit). However, he tells me that back then that that term wasn't used by Métis people and besides, they didn't talk about race if they could avoid it.*

*My grandfather's father was many things; a guide, a boat builder and a fisherman on the Great Lakes. He took care of tourists who employed him to take them on fishing trips which meant navigating the waters, identifying where fish could be found, setting up camp, making fires and collecting firewood. I always admired these men who knew so much about the water, about how it moved and what lay beneath it's surface.*

*My grandfather is what many would call 'lucky'. A man by the name of Colonel Phillips sponsored him to pursue higher education, the only person in his family to do so. In the late 50's he left his beloved town, got married, had children. He didn't live the same reality as his ancestors before him; having to live off the land and the water. This fact never bothered him; he was happy to pursue other things in life.*

*My ancestors faced persecution for who they were and their way of life. The church and government did its best to convert, assimilate, and subvert its subjects. In fact, it was mandatory for everyone in the community to attend church at least once a year. My grandfather has told me that his father did just that, although in his heart, he knew that he did not want to go at all.*

*I often think long and hard if history had been different, would my grandfather's thoughts and knowledge of this place be the same? If colonial powers had not interfered with the Métis way of life, would we still speak our languages, practice 'la Grande Medicine' or Anishinaabe spirituality, know the words to our songs, harvest and live off the land? My grandfather would shrug and tell me this loss is part of our reality and anyway he never liked the smell of fish so he doesn't think it would have mattered.*

*Up until recently the area of Penetanguishene was home to my many of my great-aunts and uncles, countless cousins (many I have never had the pleasure of meeting) and numerous kinship ties. With the passing years, my great aunts and uncles' children left the small town for better opportunity, for work or for love as many others often do. Their children would never come back.*

*Before this happened, my mother in her infinite wisdom decided we needed a place to keep us all together and allow for a place for us to gather as a family. So, in 1984 she purchased a small one story cottage near Tiny Beaches road in Tiny Township; 20 minutes from Penetanguishene.*

*I never could understand why I felt this connection to this place. Upon returning to Penetang, I would make a point to first run to the water, which was up the street, and perform a quiet ritual. Removing my shoes, I would walk into the water to my ankle and say a quiet prayer. I thanked the world that everything was as it was and that the water had not moved or gone away.*

*Indigenous people today, like myself, have been alienated from our ancestral territories for generations, with our cultural land-based teachings sometimes far removed from our everyday lives. I never thought I was any different from anyone who calls this place home. I belong in this world just as my ancestors have before me, with one foot in the settler world and one in another. More and more I learn about the lives we lived before colonization. I picture the shoreline across the Bay of the town of Penetanguishene stippled with the shanties of the Métis which lived on the fringes of society and the law.*

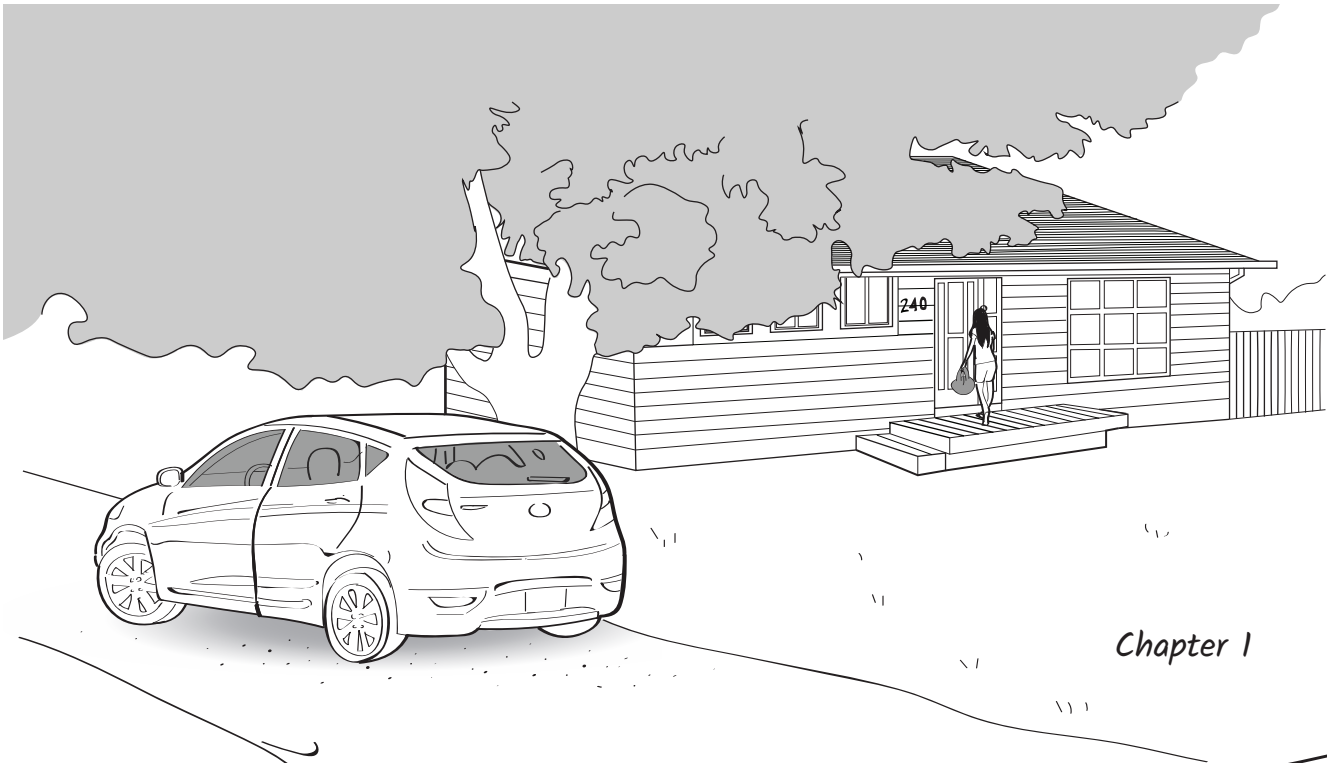
*When people tell me that the Métis aren't the only group in the world to have suffered, been colonized, stripped of our rights and lost pieces of one's culture, it diminishes that loss. A loss so profound, it goes to the core of who we are as a people. Marcus Garvey expressed the belief that people are like trees and that their roots encompass their knowledge of their history, origin and culture. Without these roots the tree would die, producing a dead people.*

*Today we are still here, trying to reconnect to what has been lost. I try to remind myself that I shouldn't dwell in the injustices which have affected our communities, but to use the strength and knowledge of our ancestors to propel us into the future. This work, and the work of many within the Métis Nation will serve our future generations to find a way back to our communities, our stories and traditions. I hope that this book will help some of us back to those things and most of all, the water, because we belong with it.*

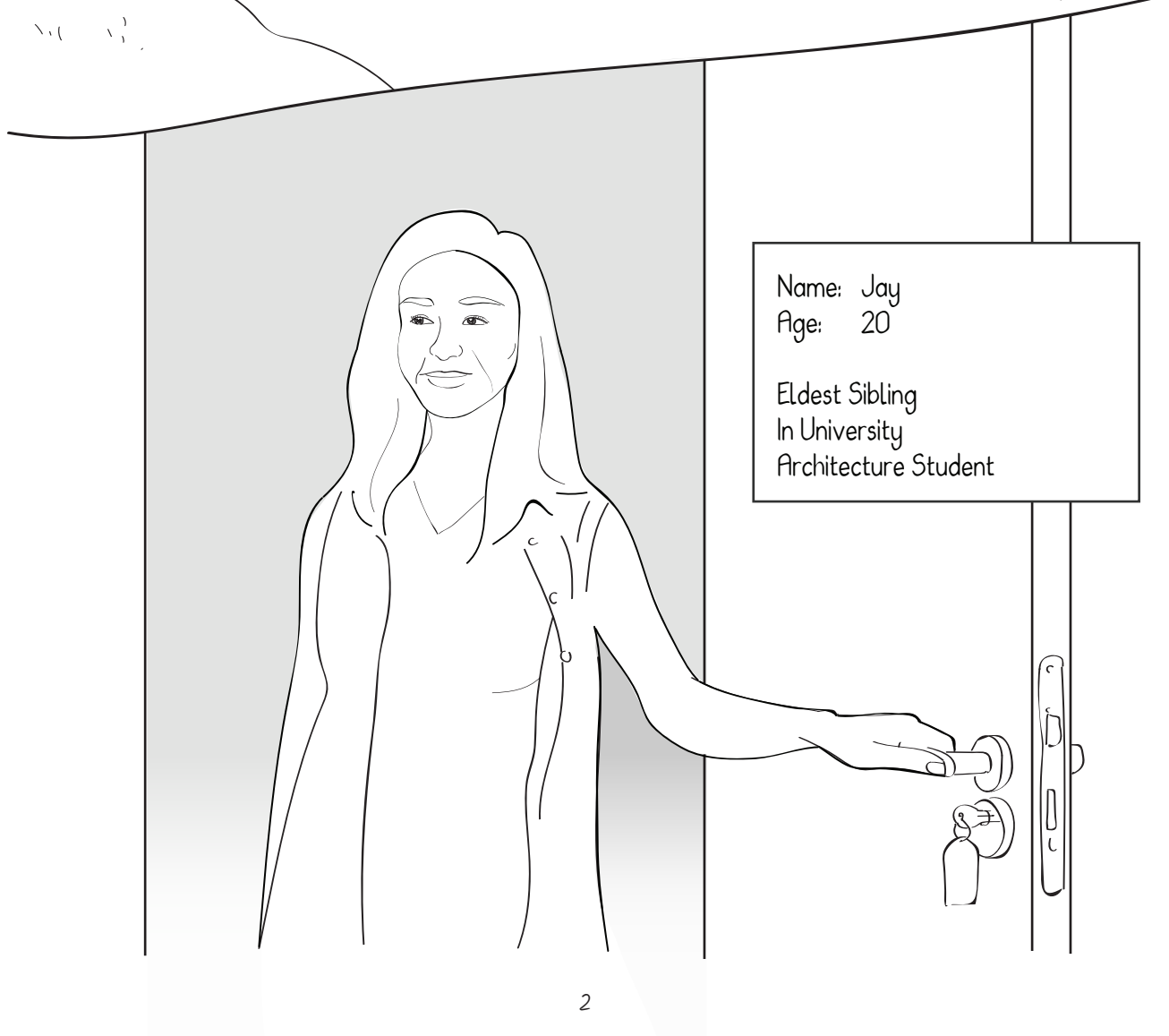
*- Dani Kastelein (Longlade)*







Chapter 1

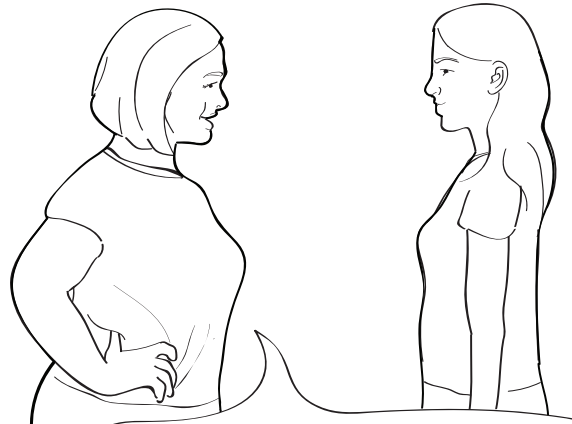






The roads weren't too bad. Where's Nib?

She's gone to a sleepover, she should be back in the morning.



It's so nice to have you home. How were the last day of classes?

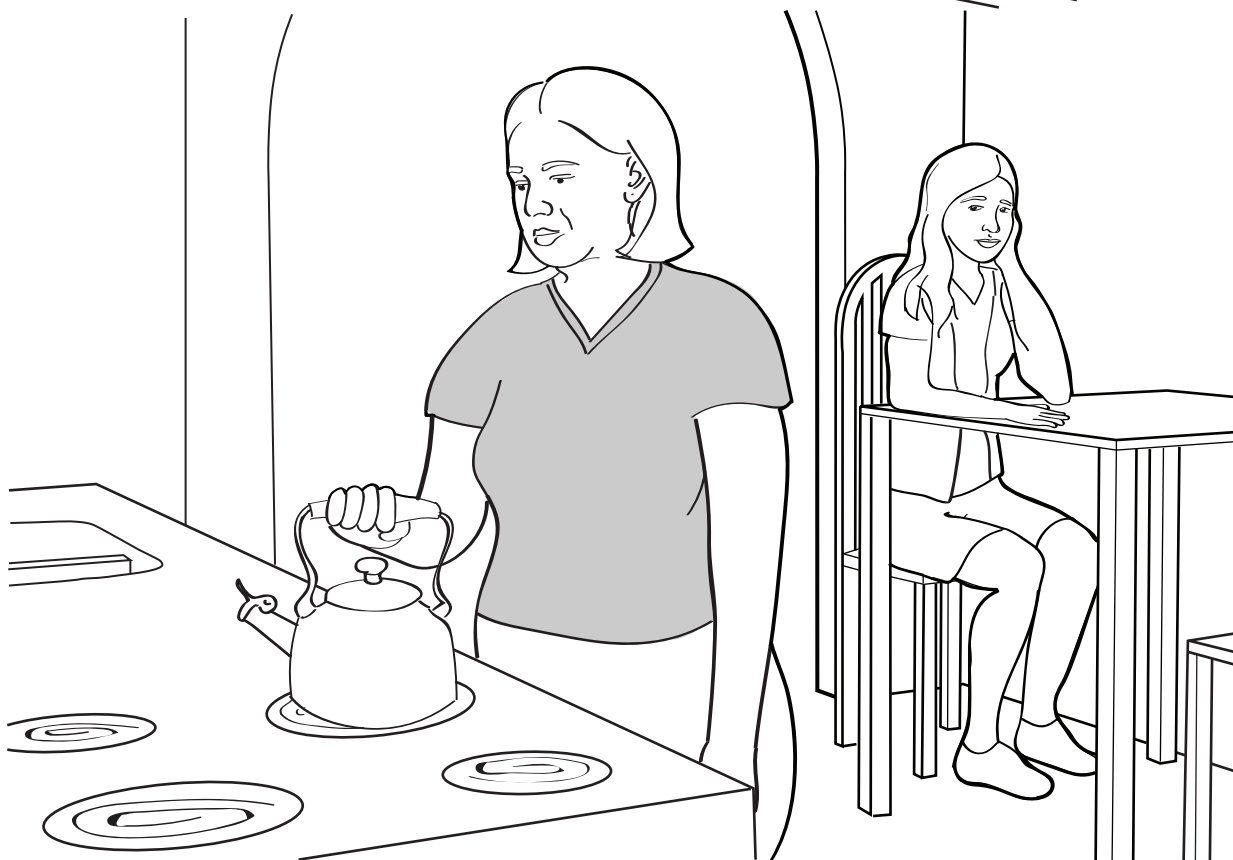


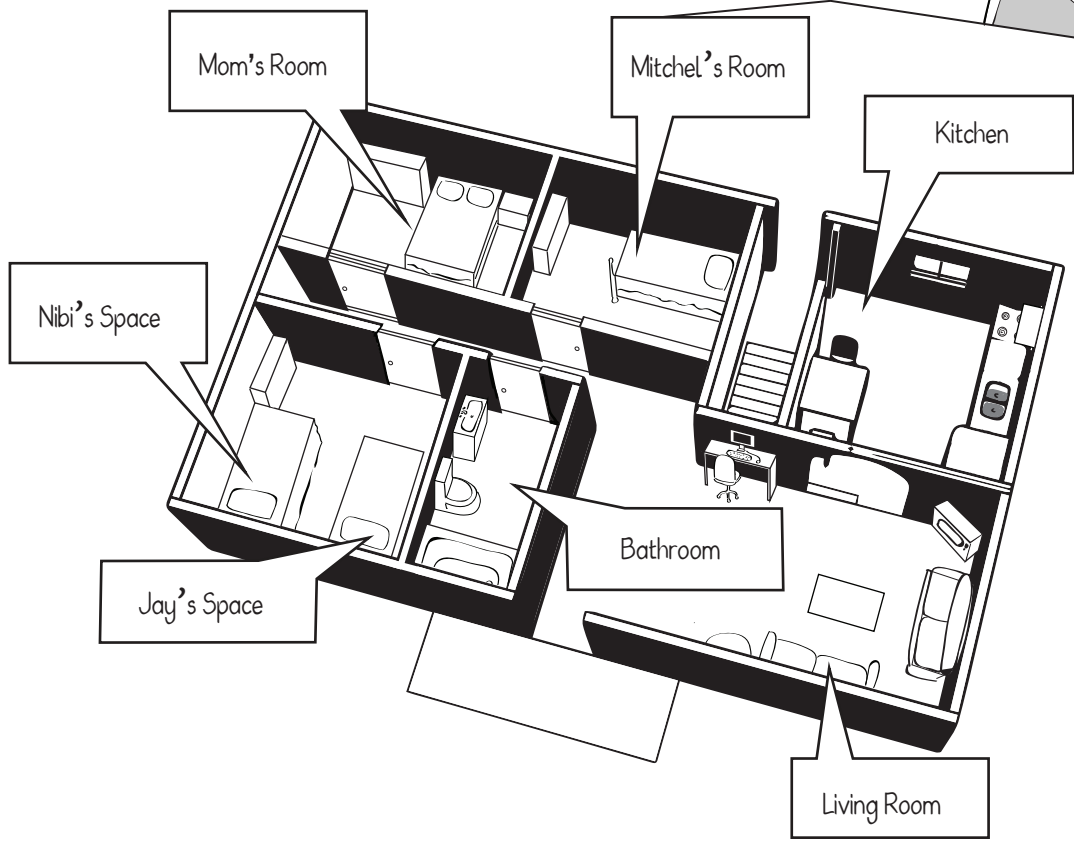
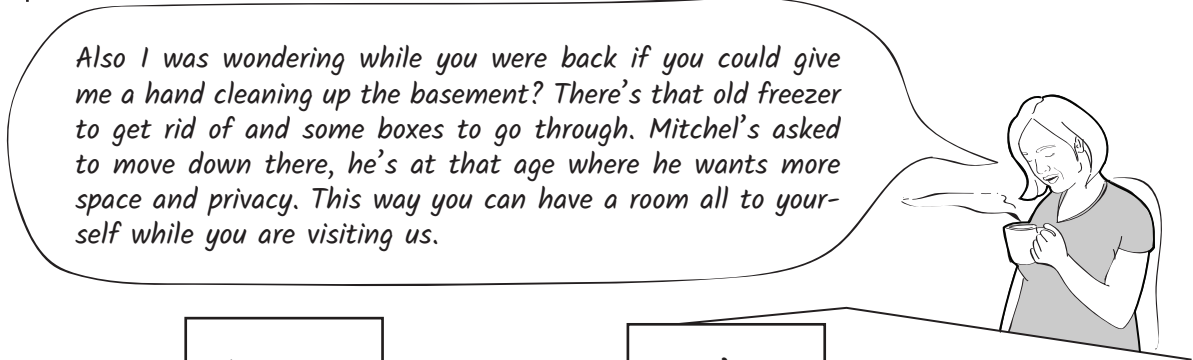
Everyone was pretty tired but excited it was over. I think my presentation went ok.

*I'm sure you did great.  
Why don't you go ahead take a seat?*

*Did you want some tea?*

*That'd be great, thanks Mom.*





*He should be able to give you a hand with organizing and moving some boxes in the morning.*



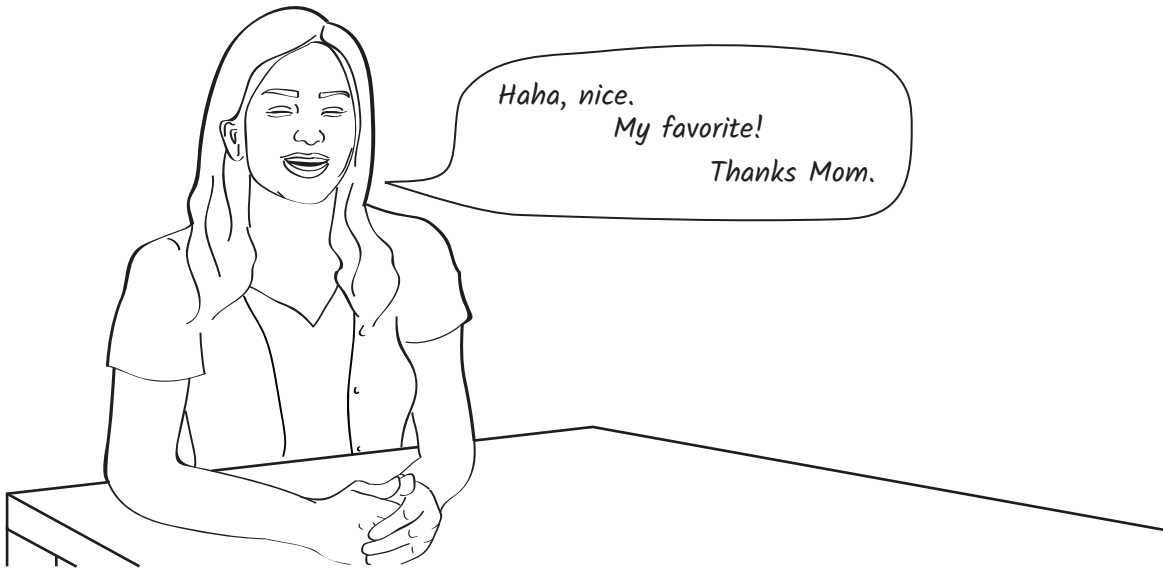
*That's going to be a big job.*

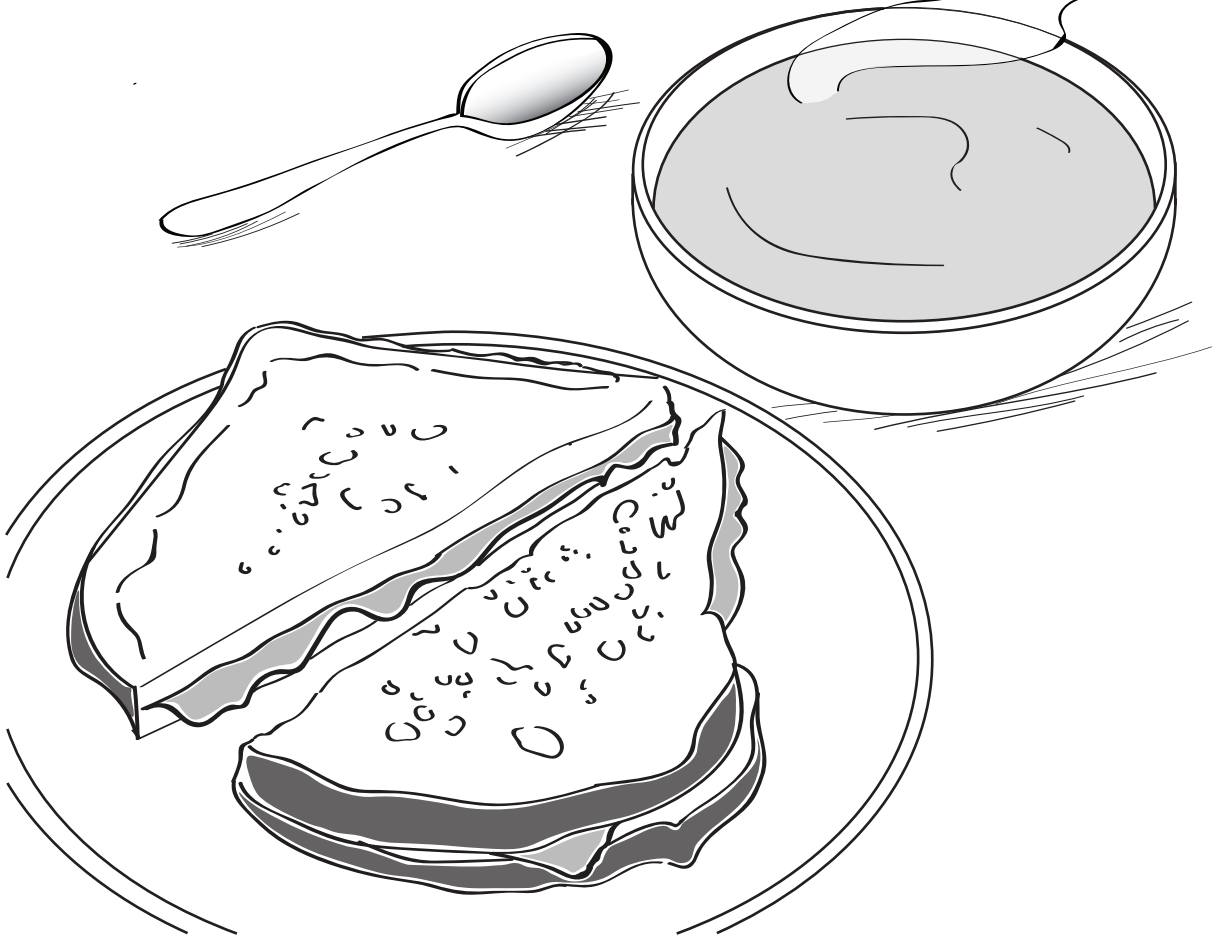


*However long it takes, that's ok. He'll move in once you both have it done.*

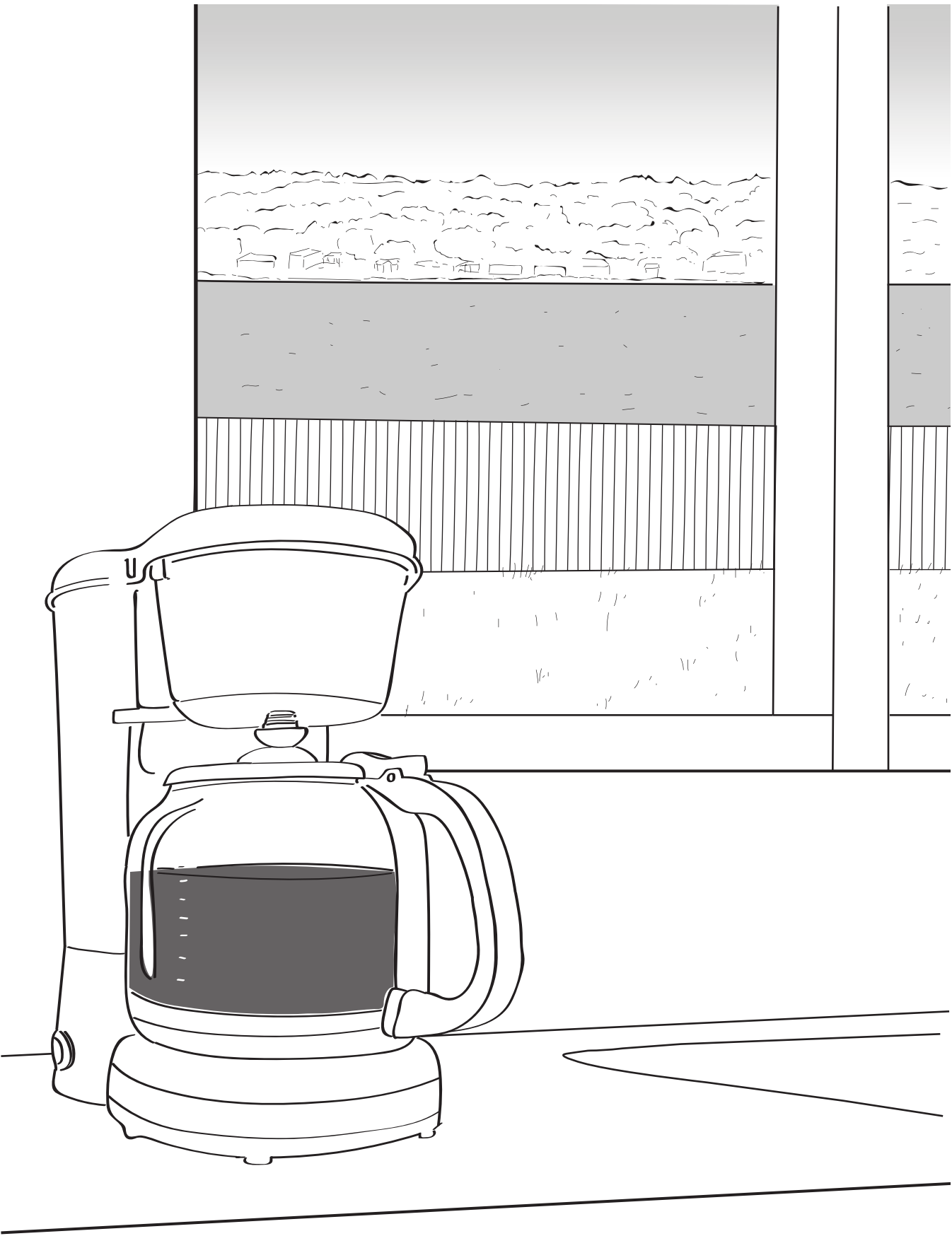









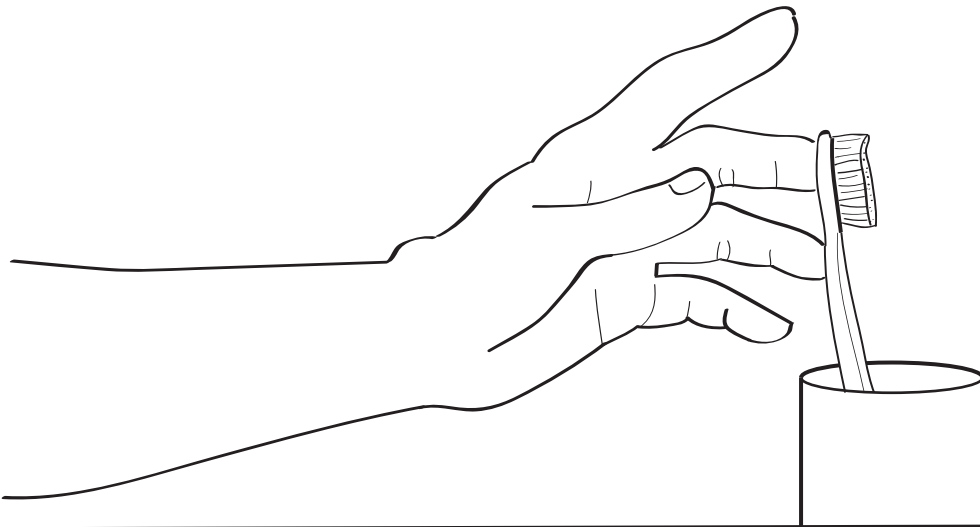




*The next morning...*



12



Name: Mitchel  
Age: 16  
Middle Child  
In High School  
Works part-time at the Bait Shop

A panel showing a young man with a mustache brushing his teeth. To his right is a text box with his name, age, and other details.

What? You don't you say hi to me anymore?

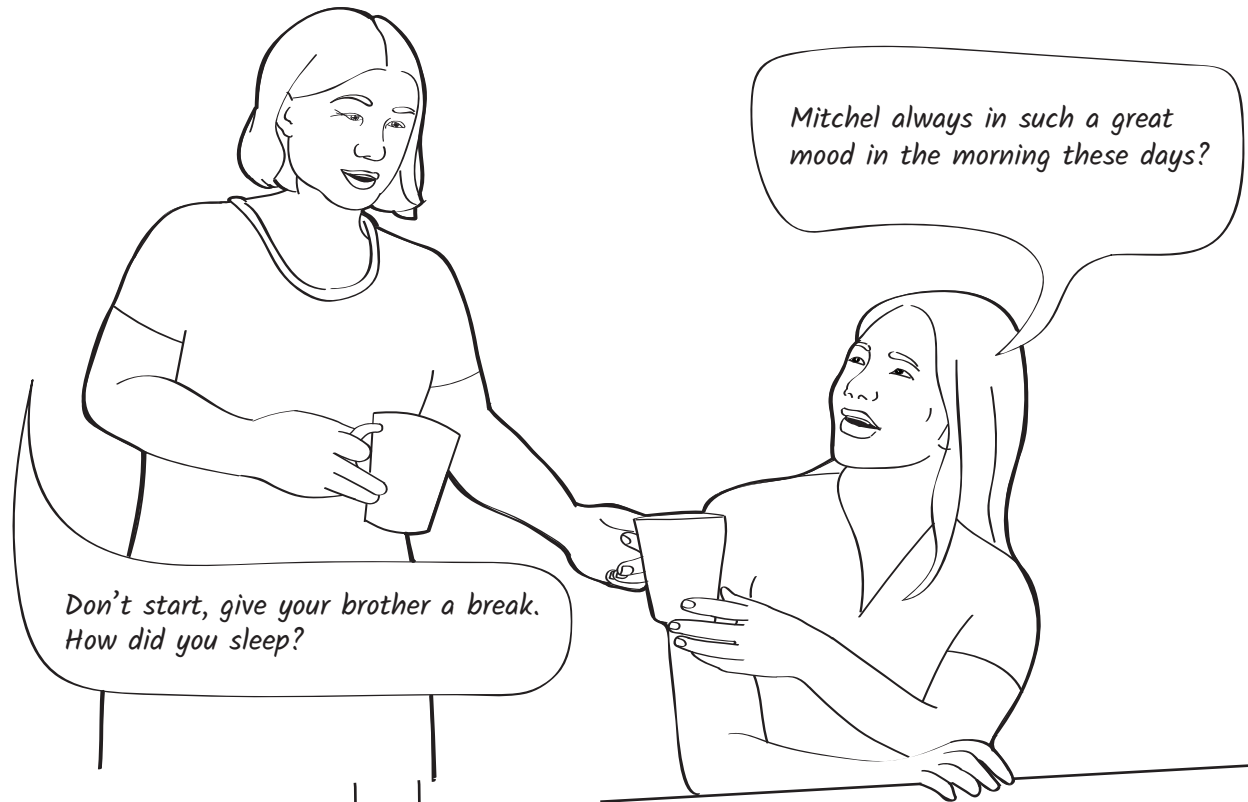
I just woke up.

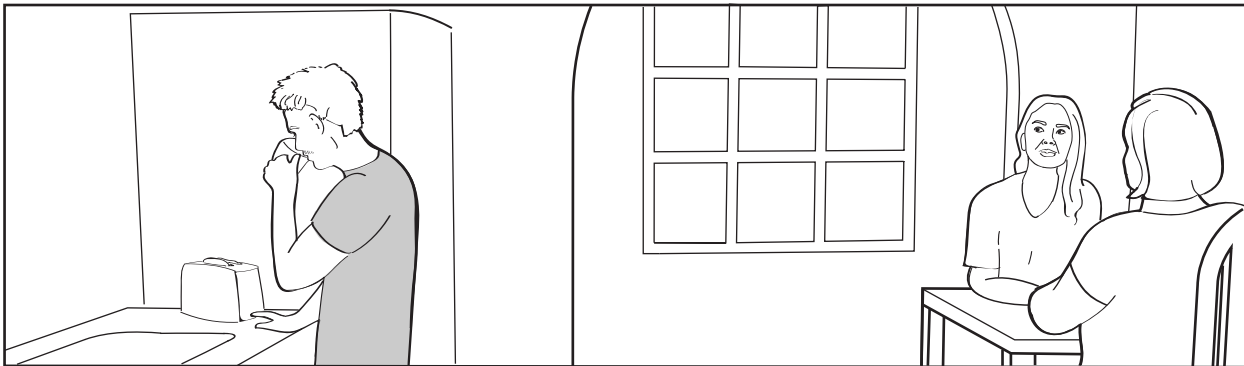
And? I haven't seen you since Easter.

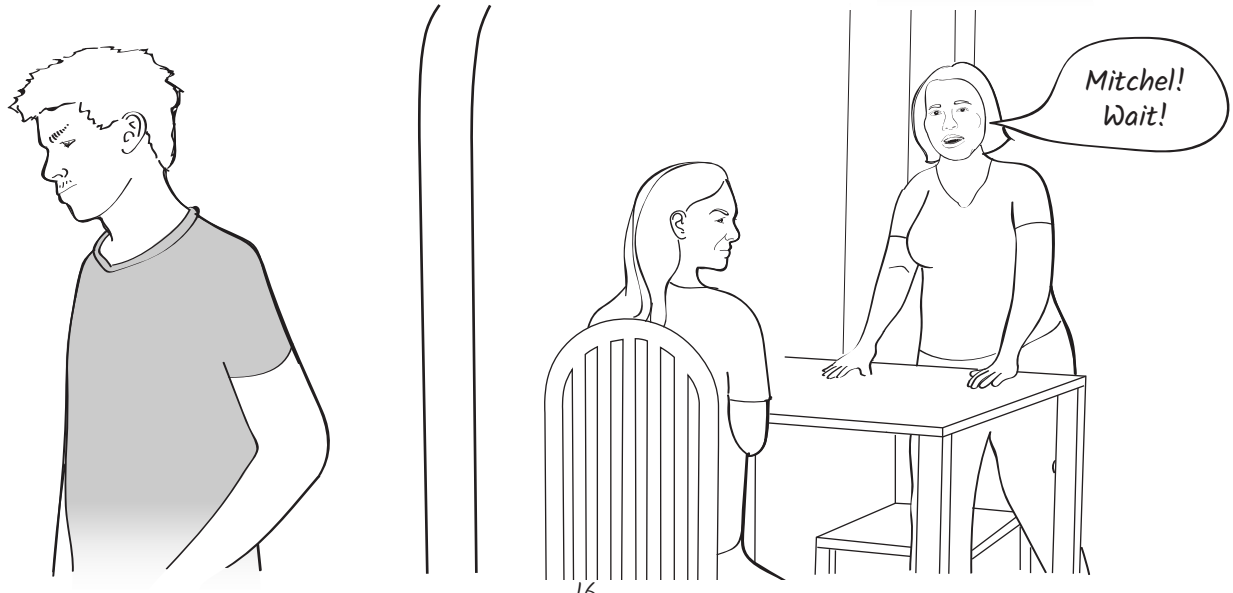
A panel showing Mitchel talking to a woman. Three speech bubbles contain their conversation.

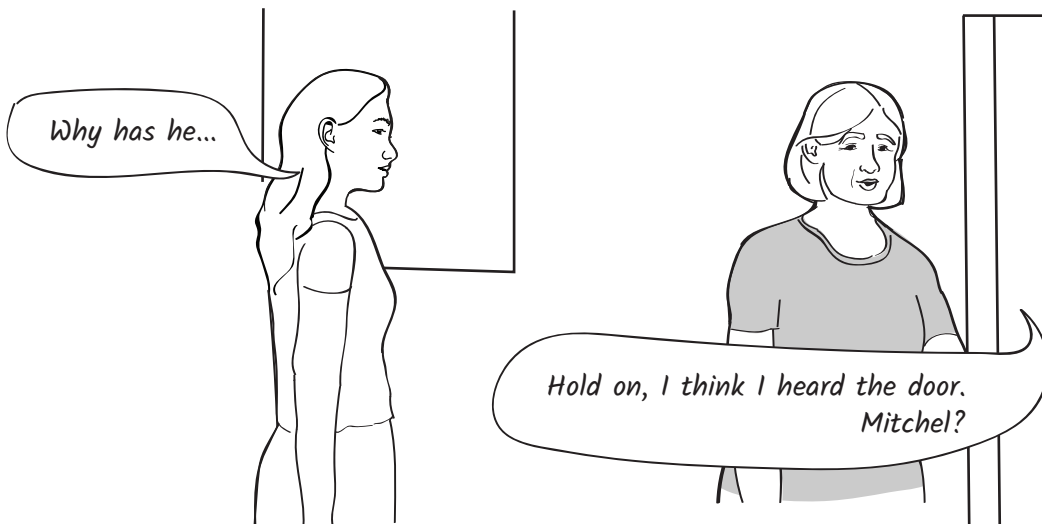
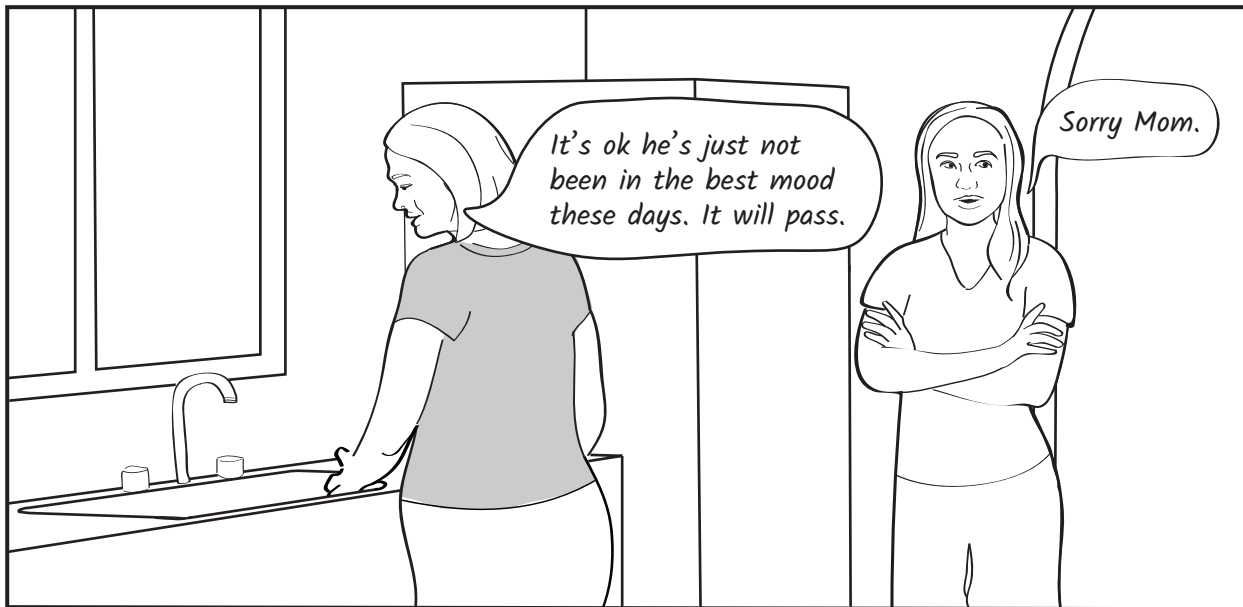
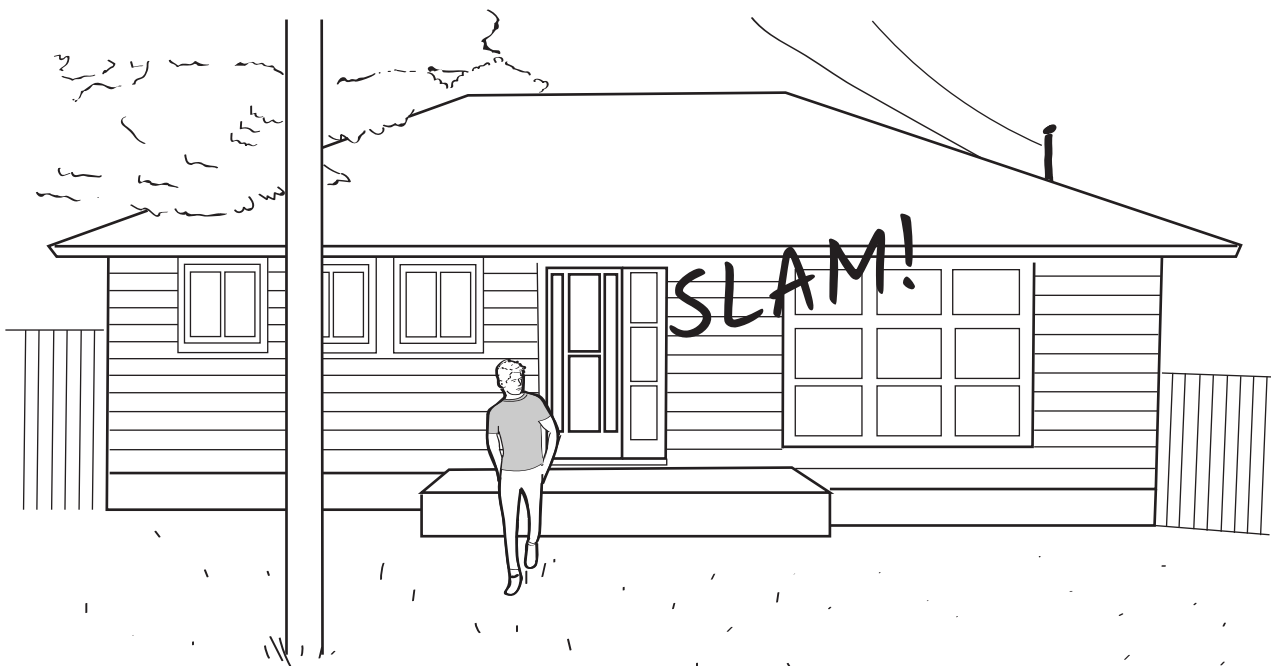
Hi.

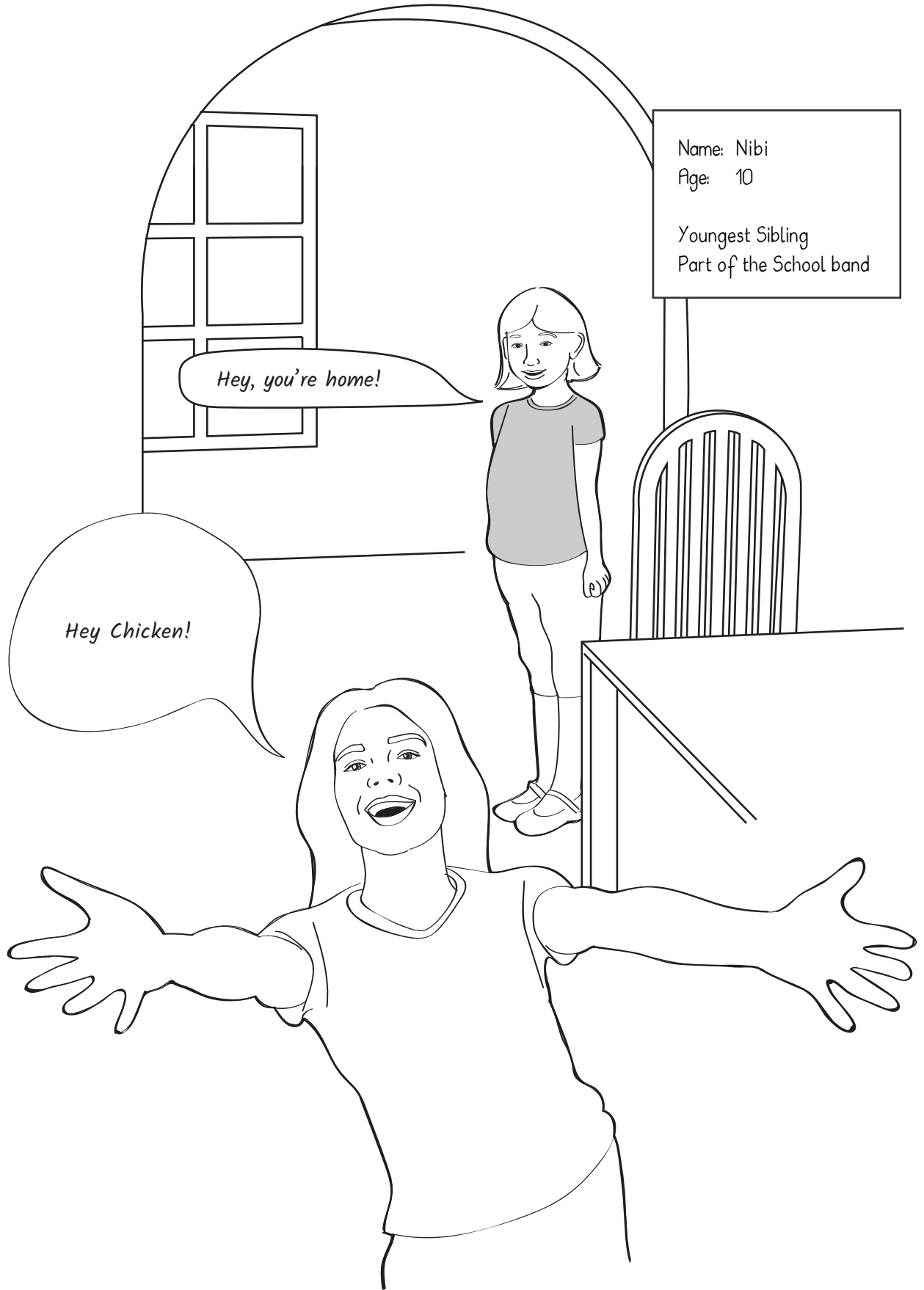
A panel divided into two scenes. The left scene shows Mitchel in profile saying "Hi." The right scene shows a woman brushing her teeth in a bathroom, with Mitchel's reflection visible in the mirror.











Name: Nibi

Age: 10

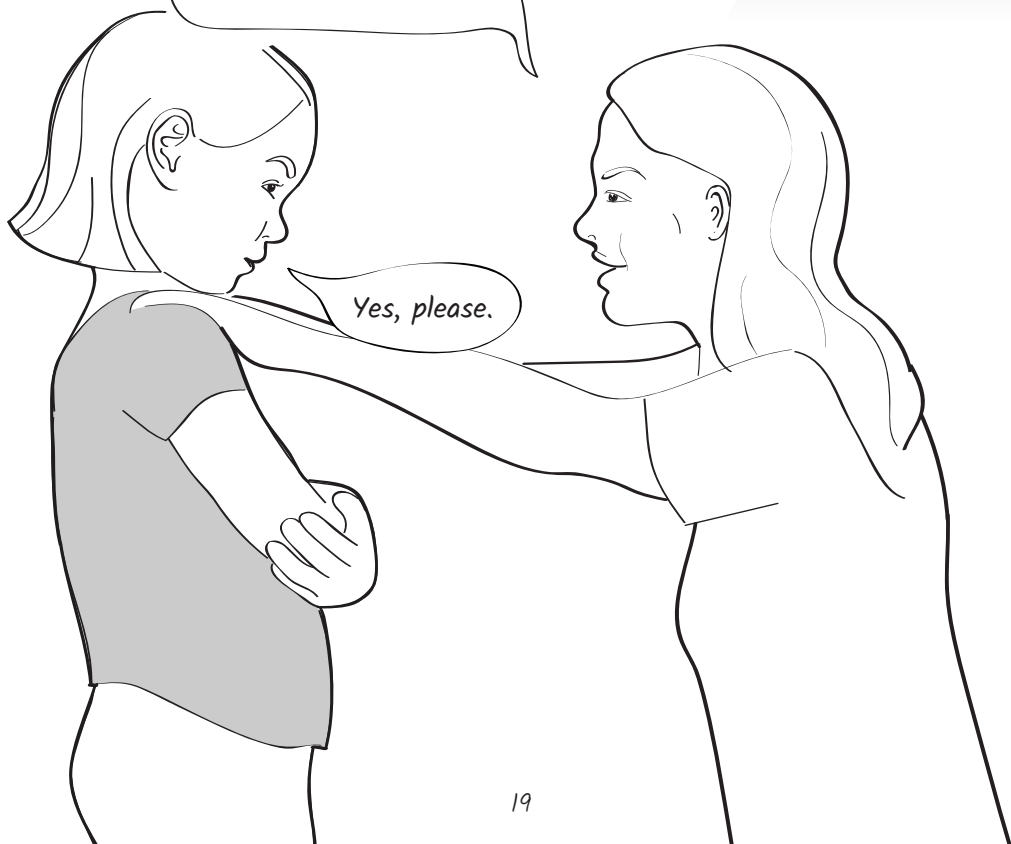
Youngest Sibling

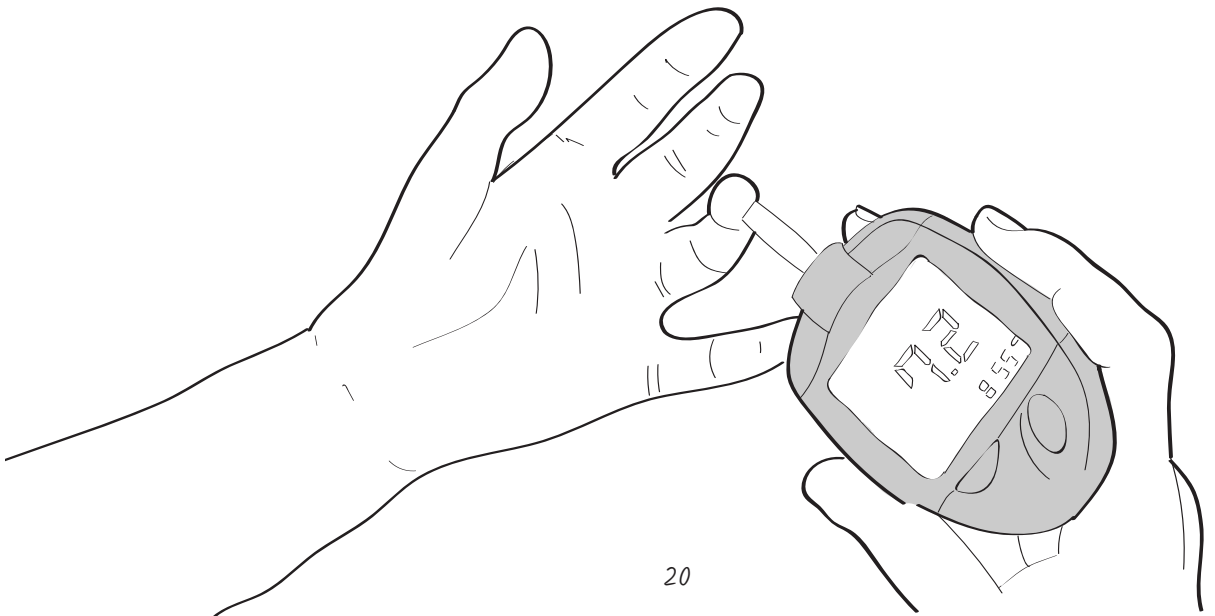
Part of the School band

Hey, you're home!

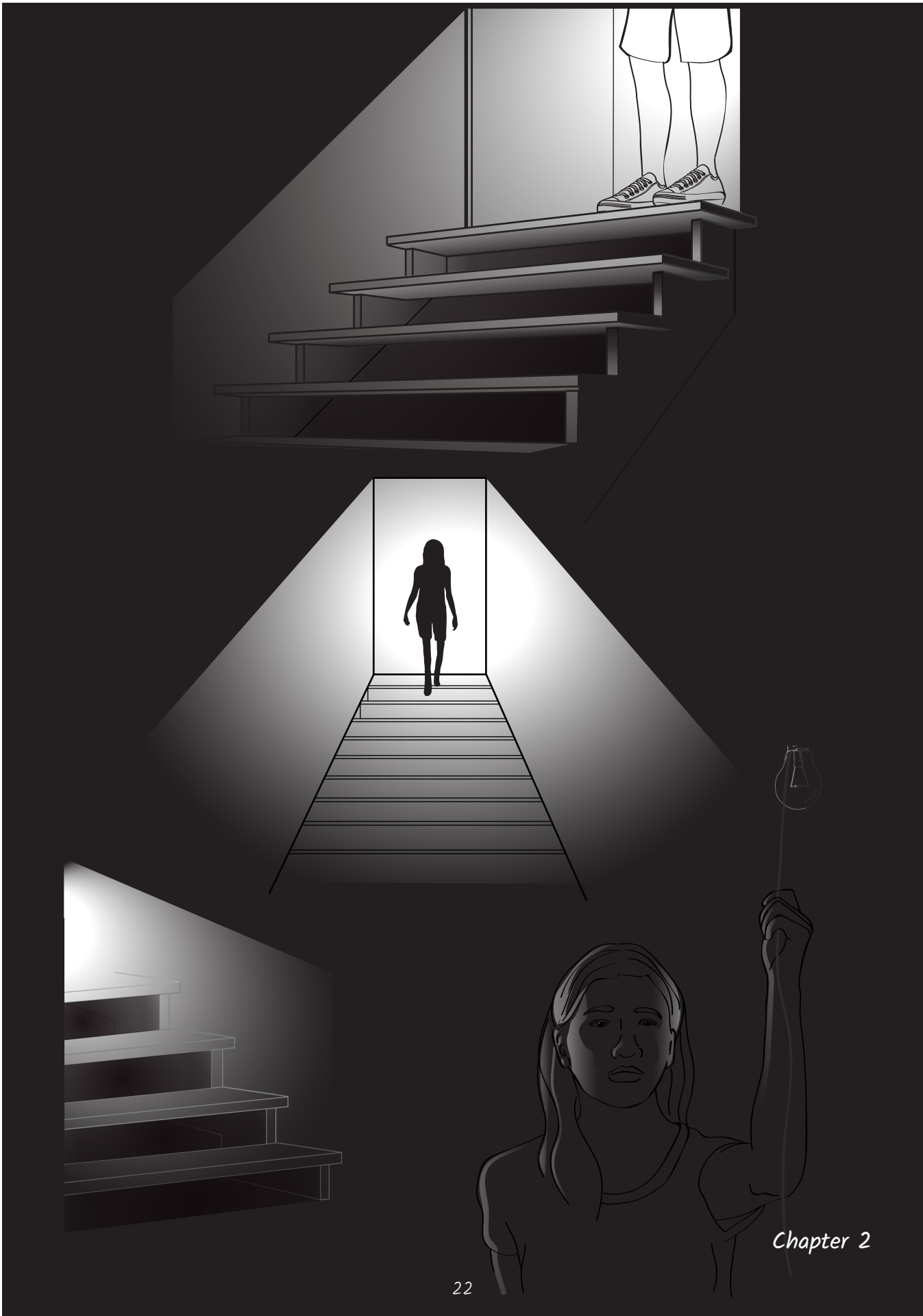
Hey Chicken!



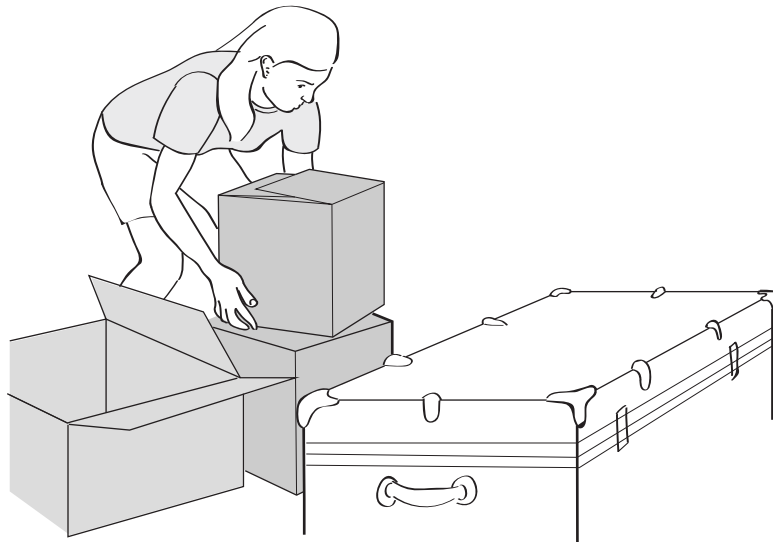
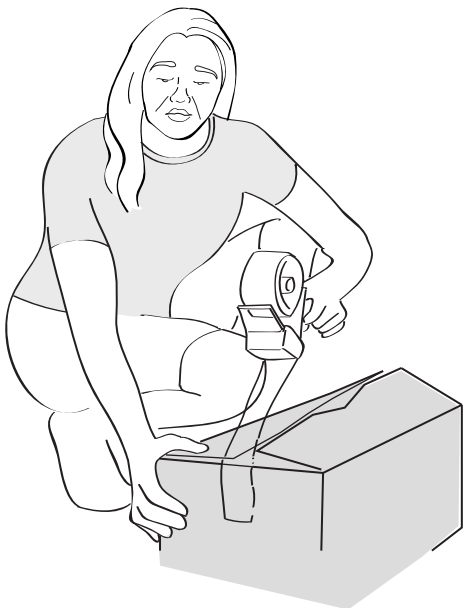
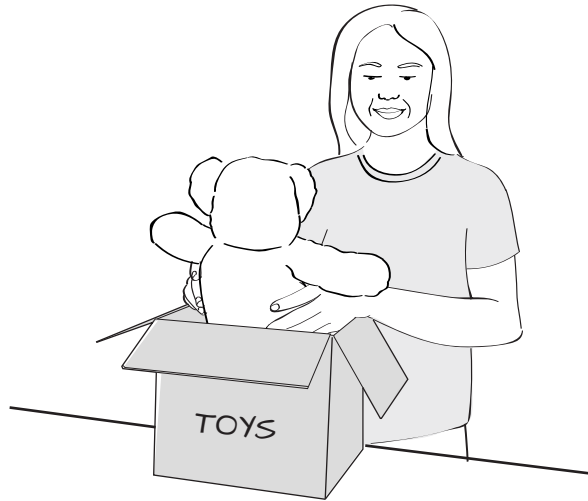
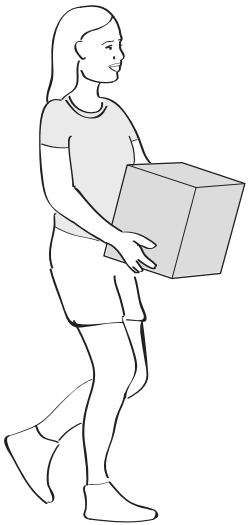
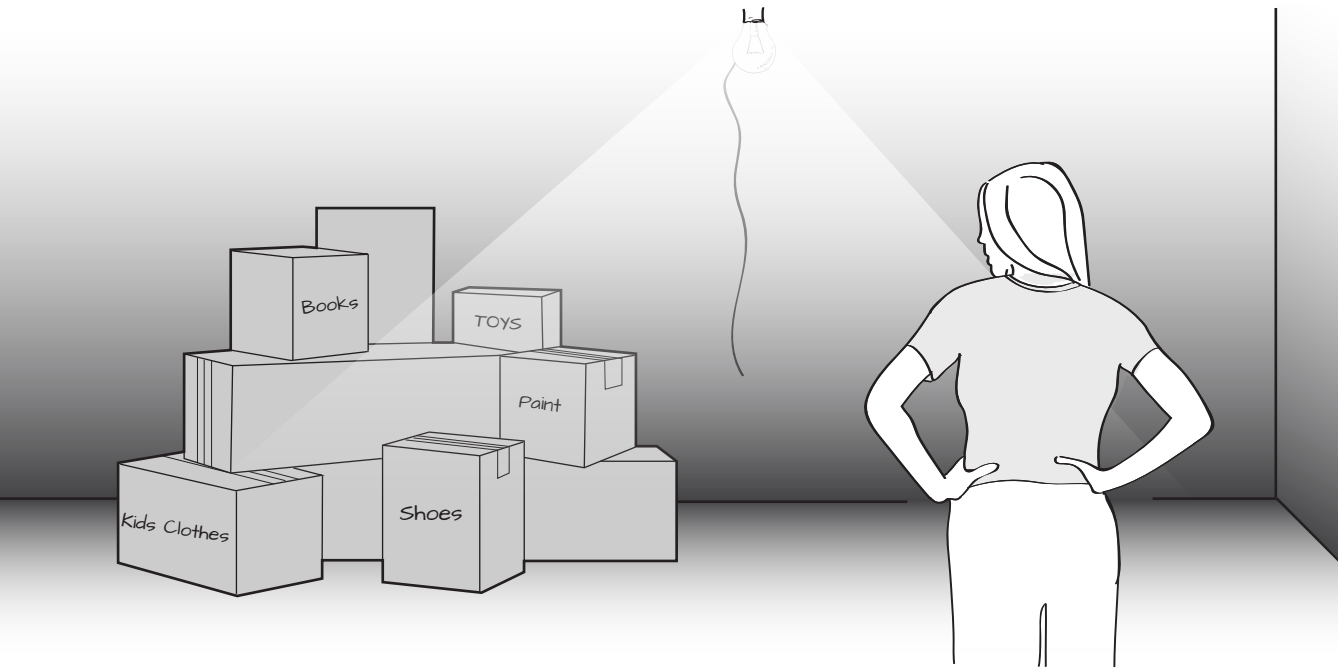


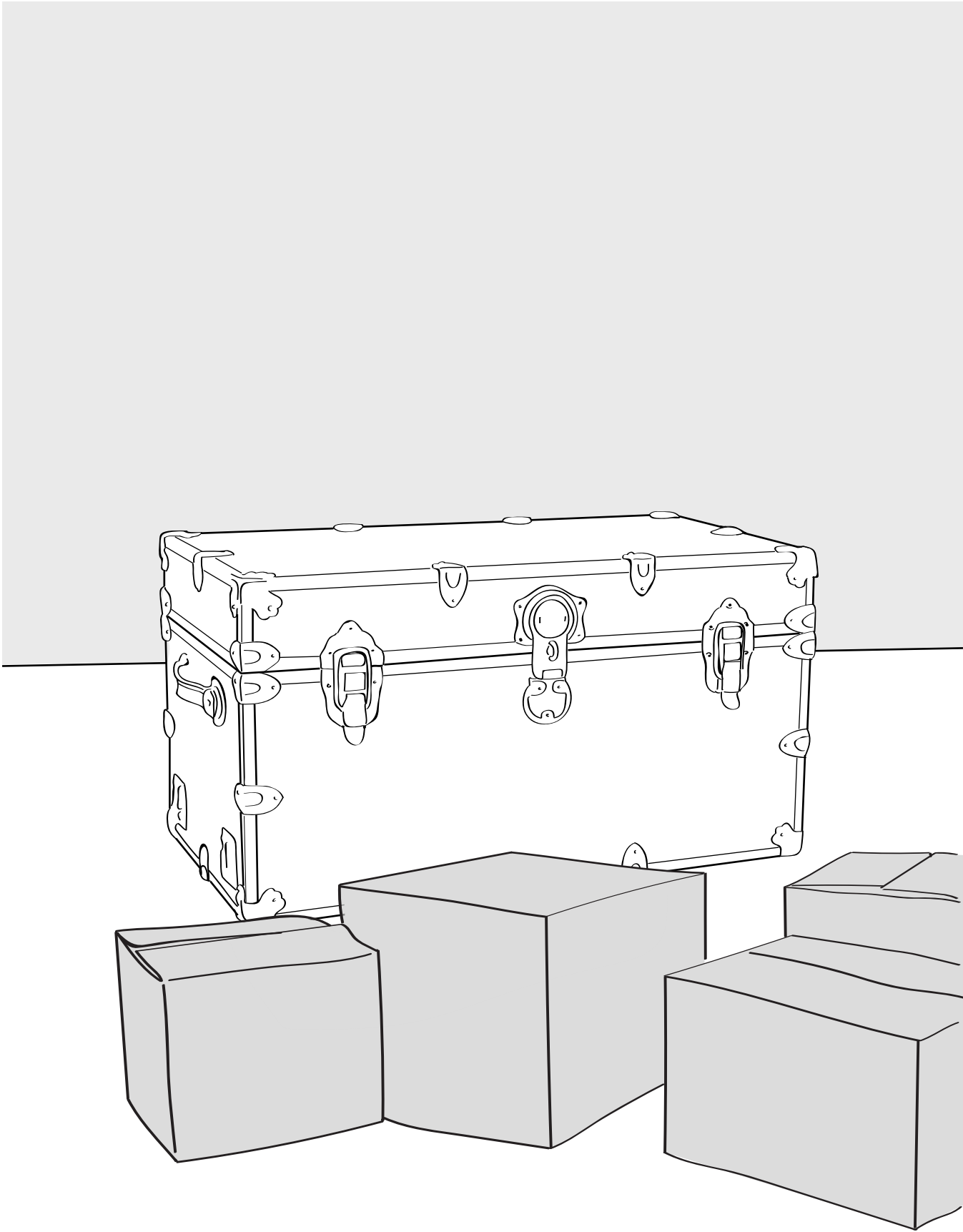


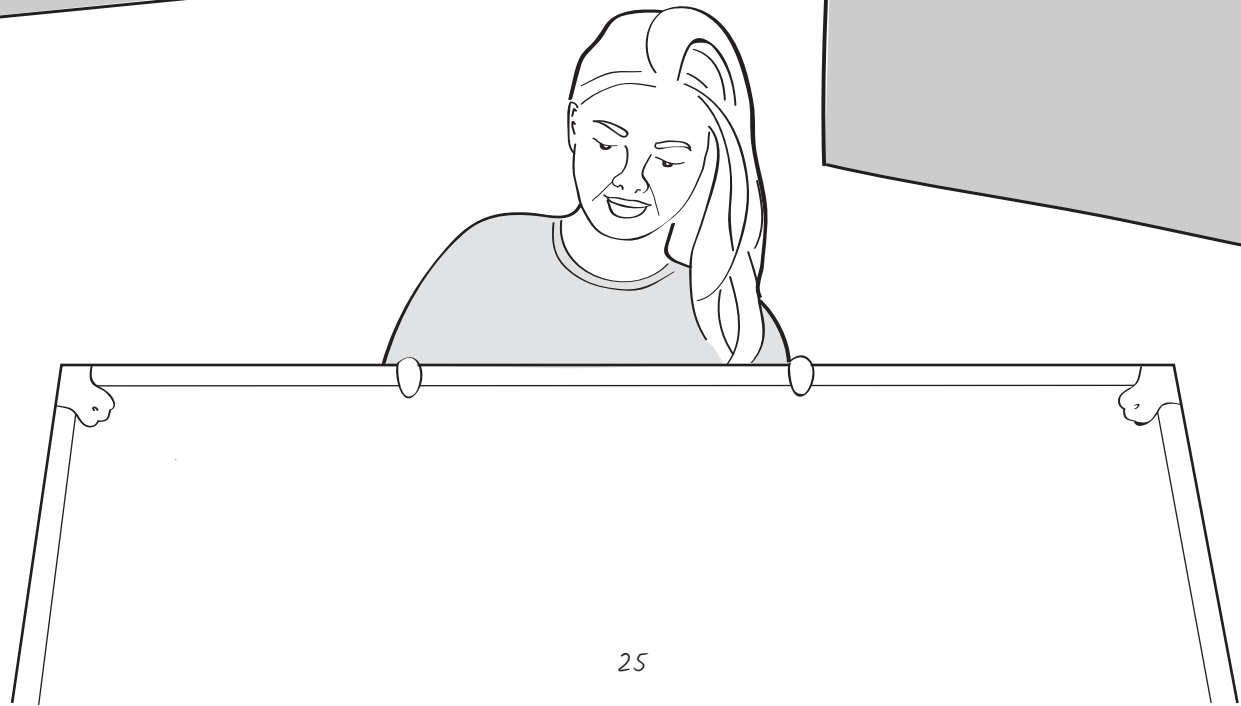
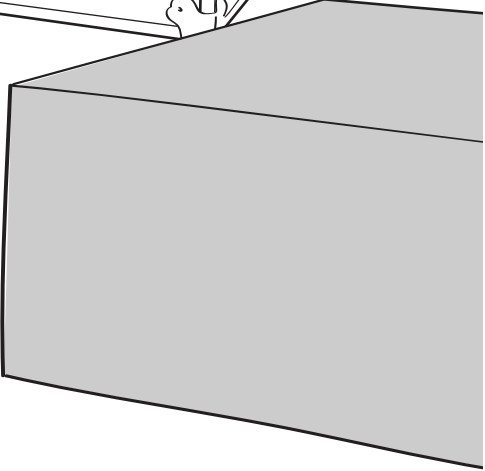
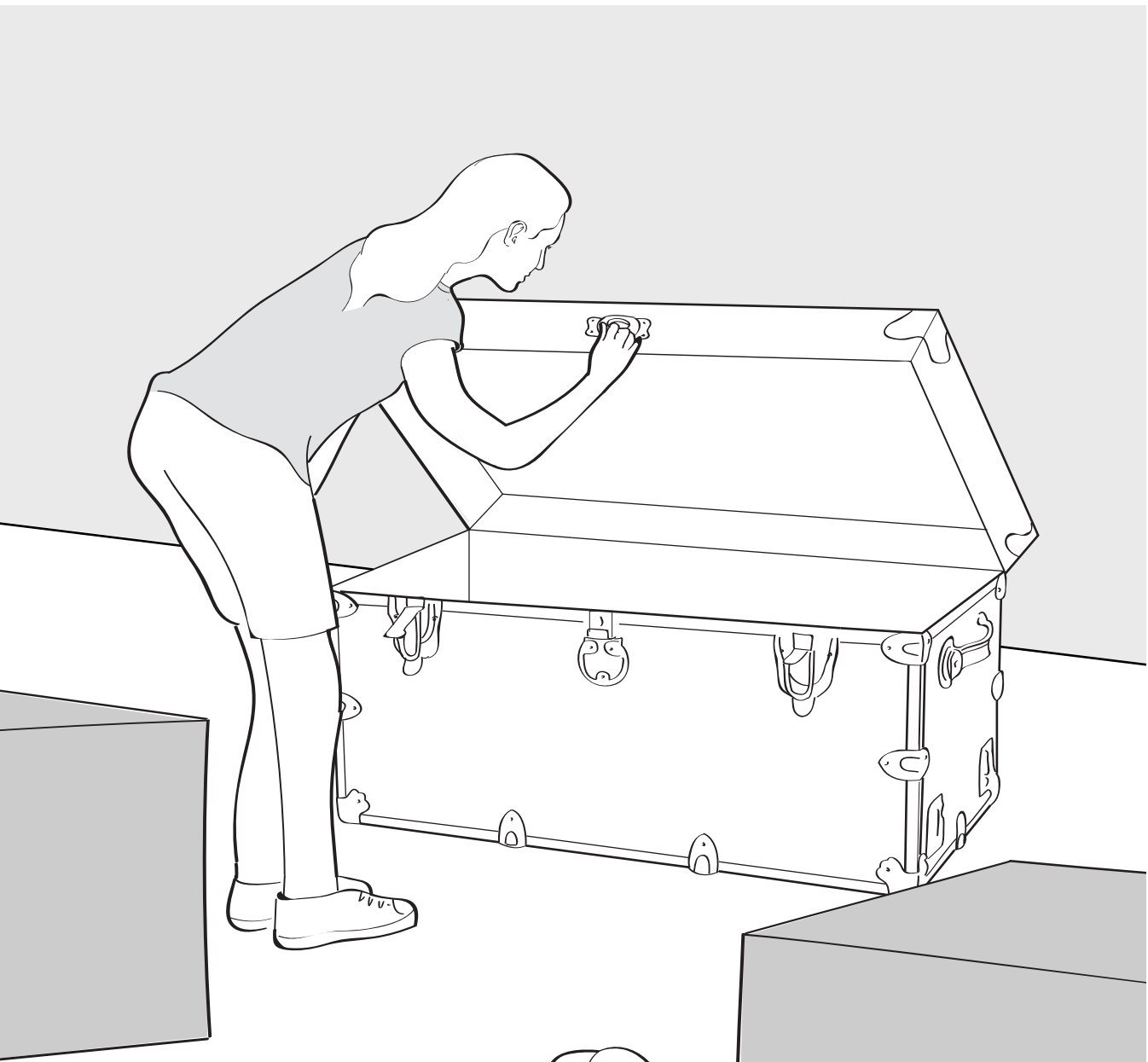


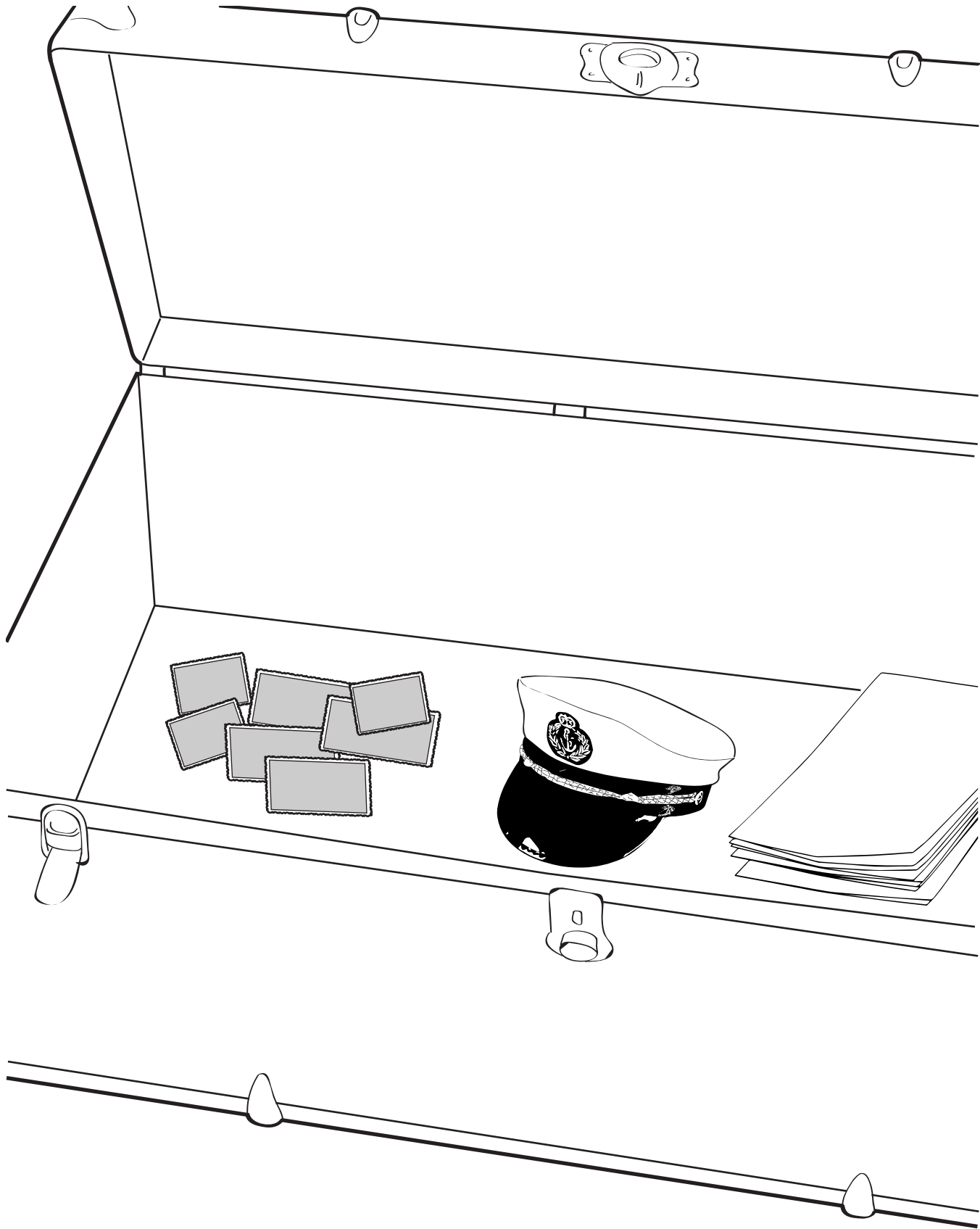


Chapter 2

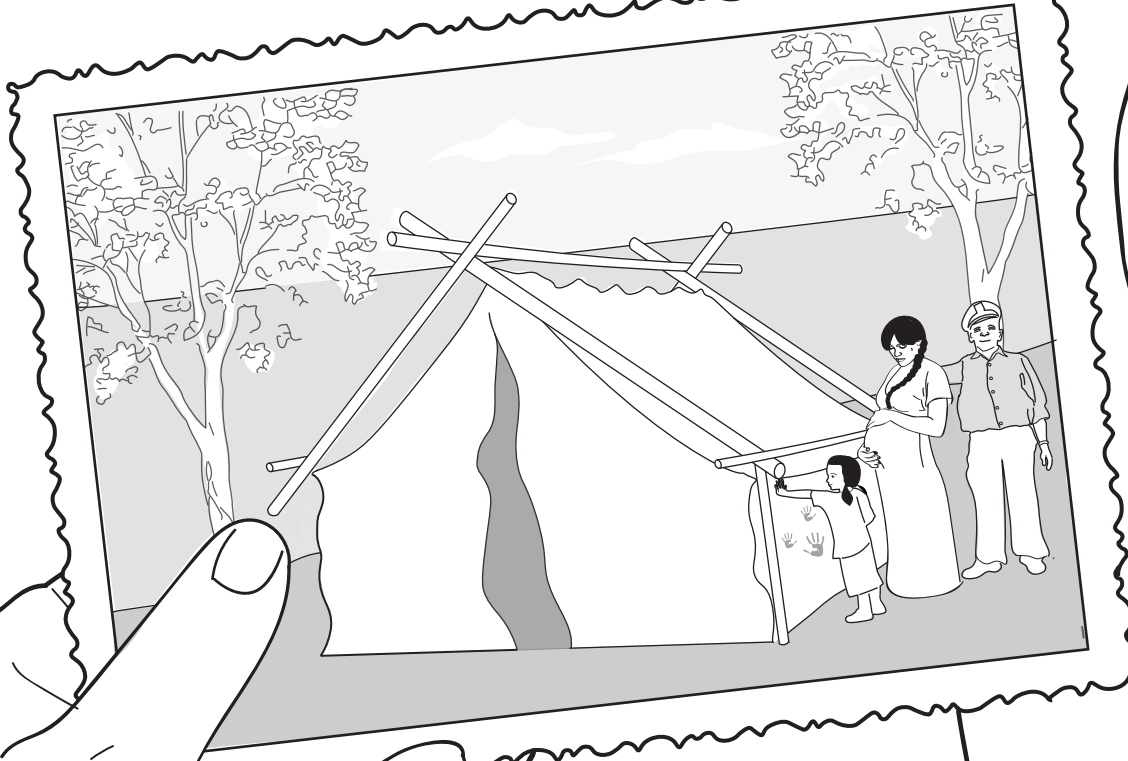
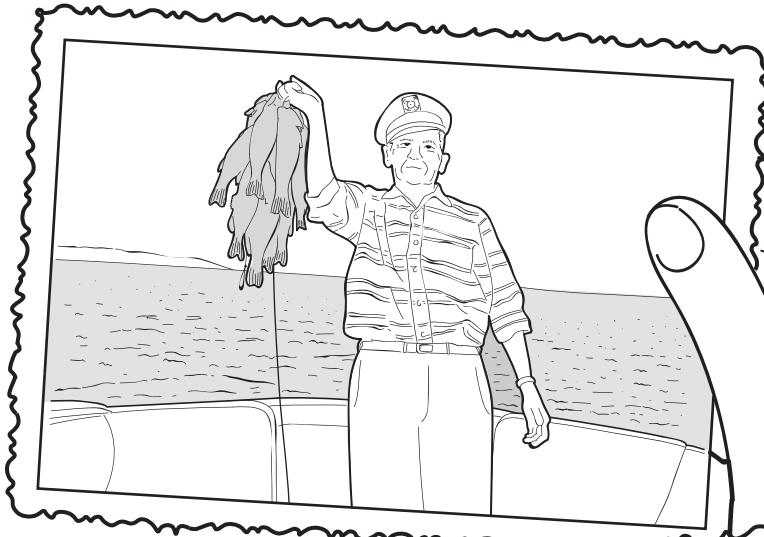






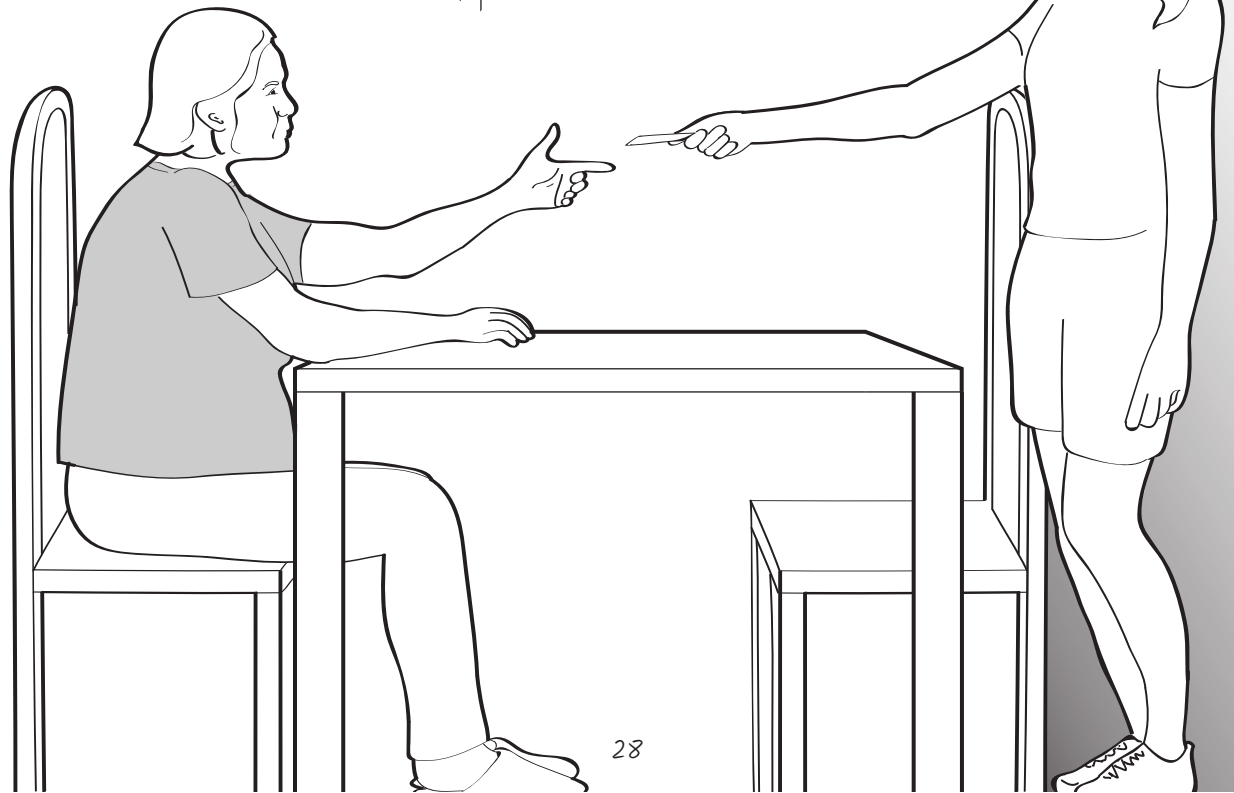








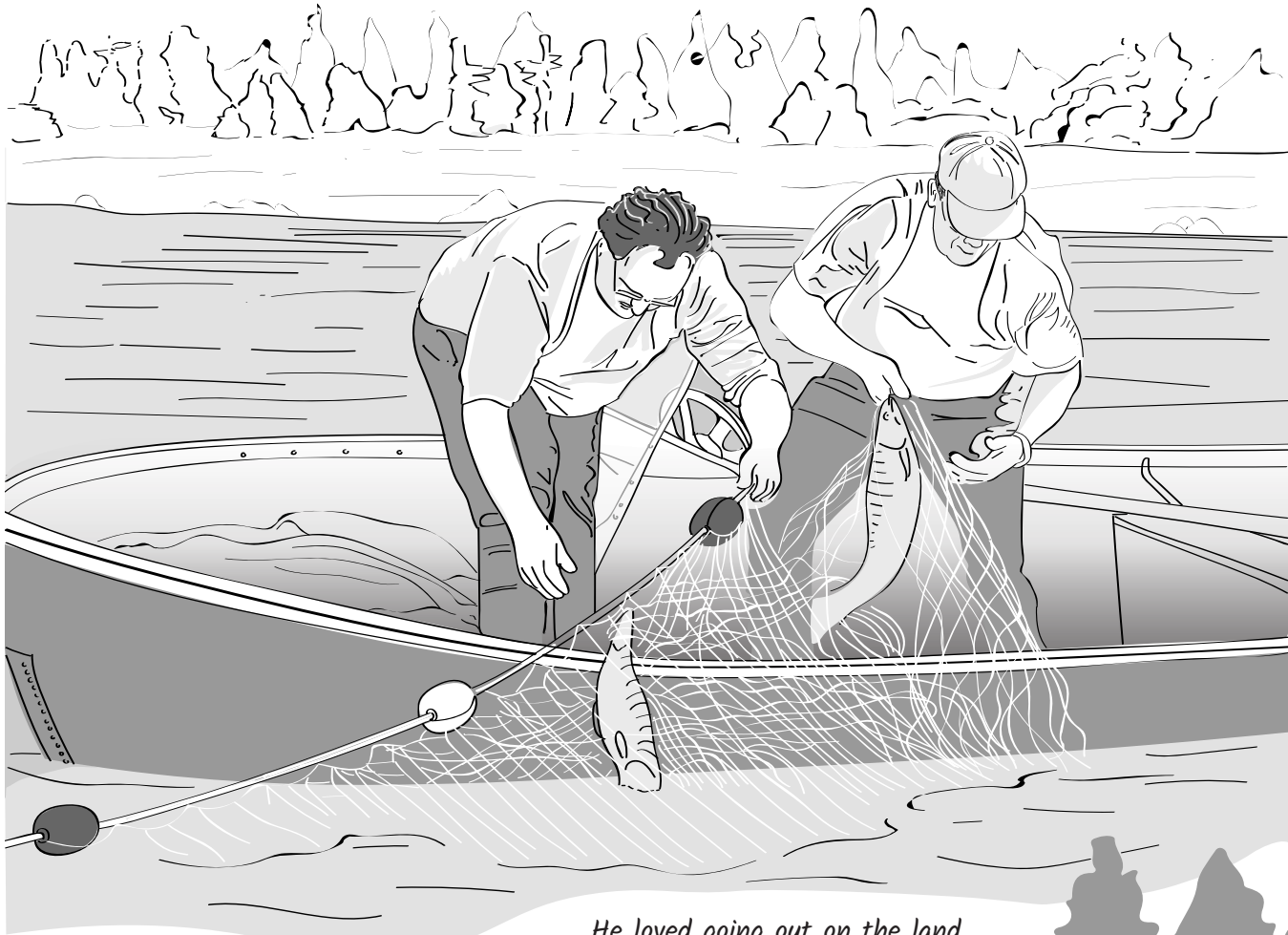
Hey mom? I found an old trunk in the basement. There were these pictures and some other things in there.





*I forgot we had these.*

*That's your grandfather standing  
beside you and me. I was pregnant  
with your brother then.*



*He loved going out on the land during the spring and fall to fish with his friends and cousins.*



*He would bring back  
enough fish to fill our  
freezer for months.*



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*We camped out and the women would clean the fish and distribute it amongst the families*

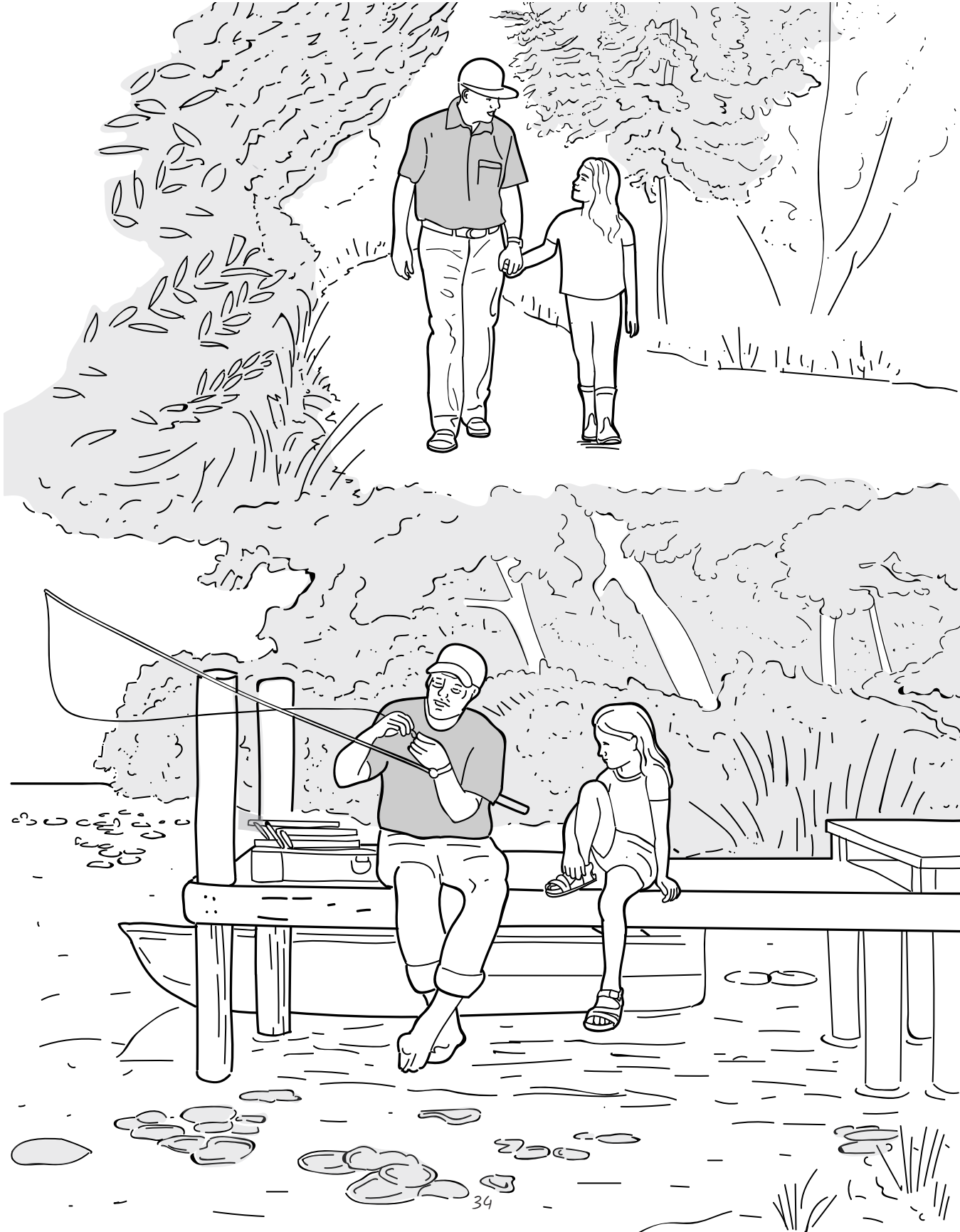


*We would even smoke some on the fire when we were hosting a feast.*



*I miss those days.*

Thinking back on her childhood, even though Jay had very few memories of her grandfather, they were happy ones.







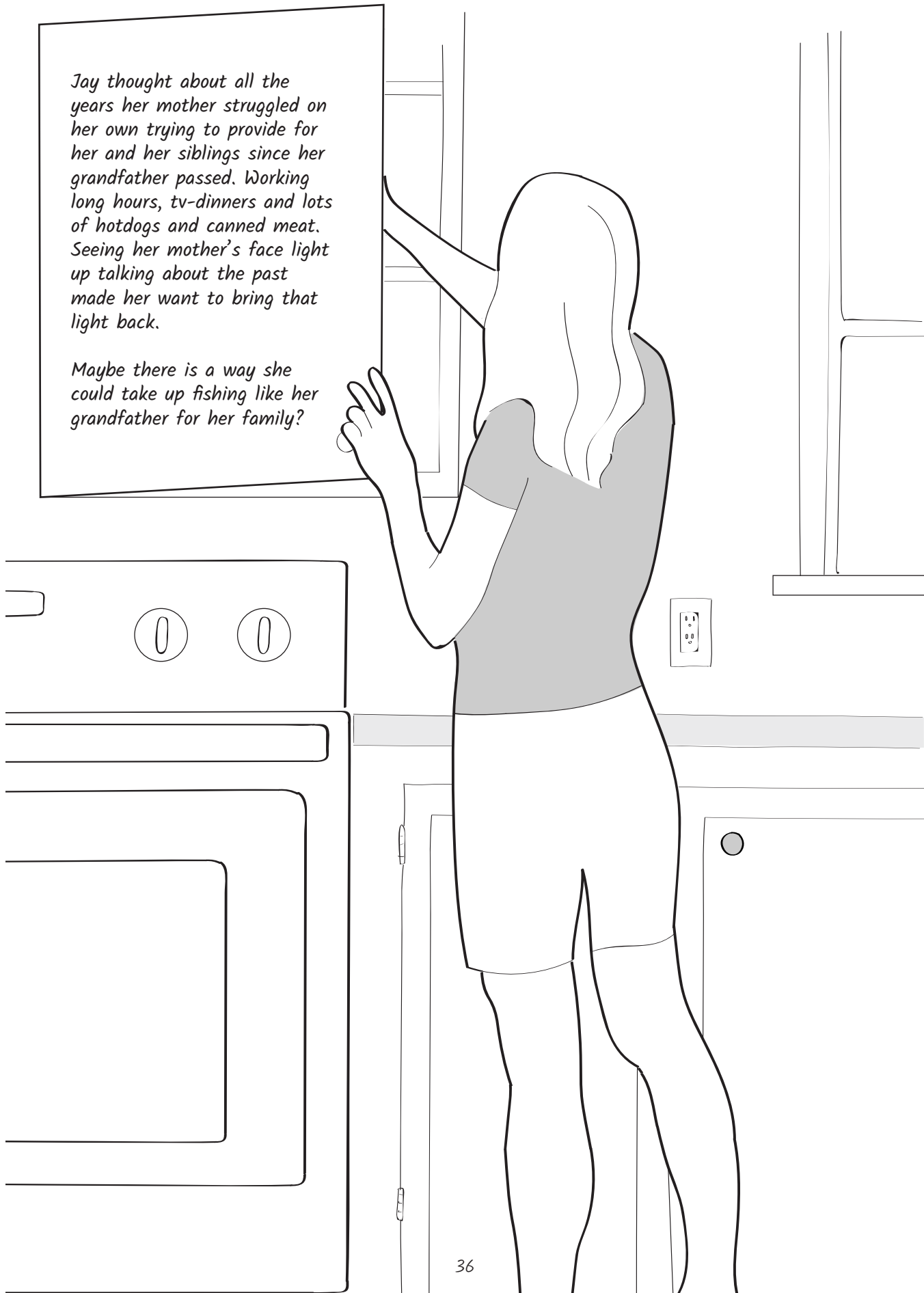
*If they were lucky enough to catch something...*



*...it meant they could bring it home and share it with the family*

*Jay thought about all the years her mother struggled on her own trying to provide for her and her siblings since her grandfather passed. Working long hours, tv-dinners and lots of hotdogs and canned meat. Seeing her mother's face light up talking about the past made her want to bring that light back.*

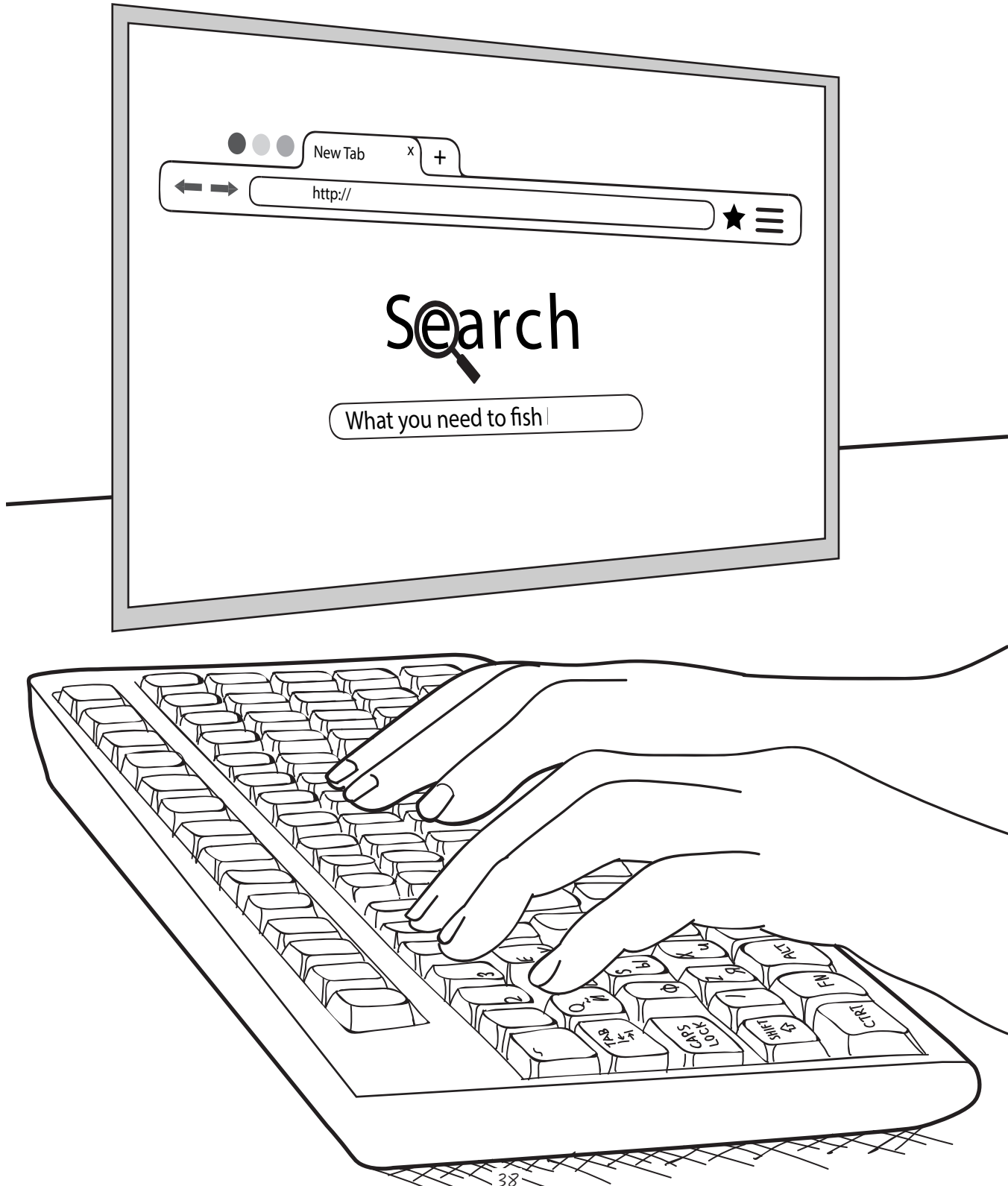
*Maybe there is a way she could take up fishing like her grandfather for her family?*





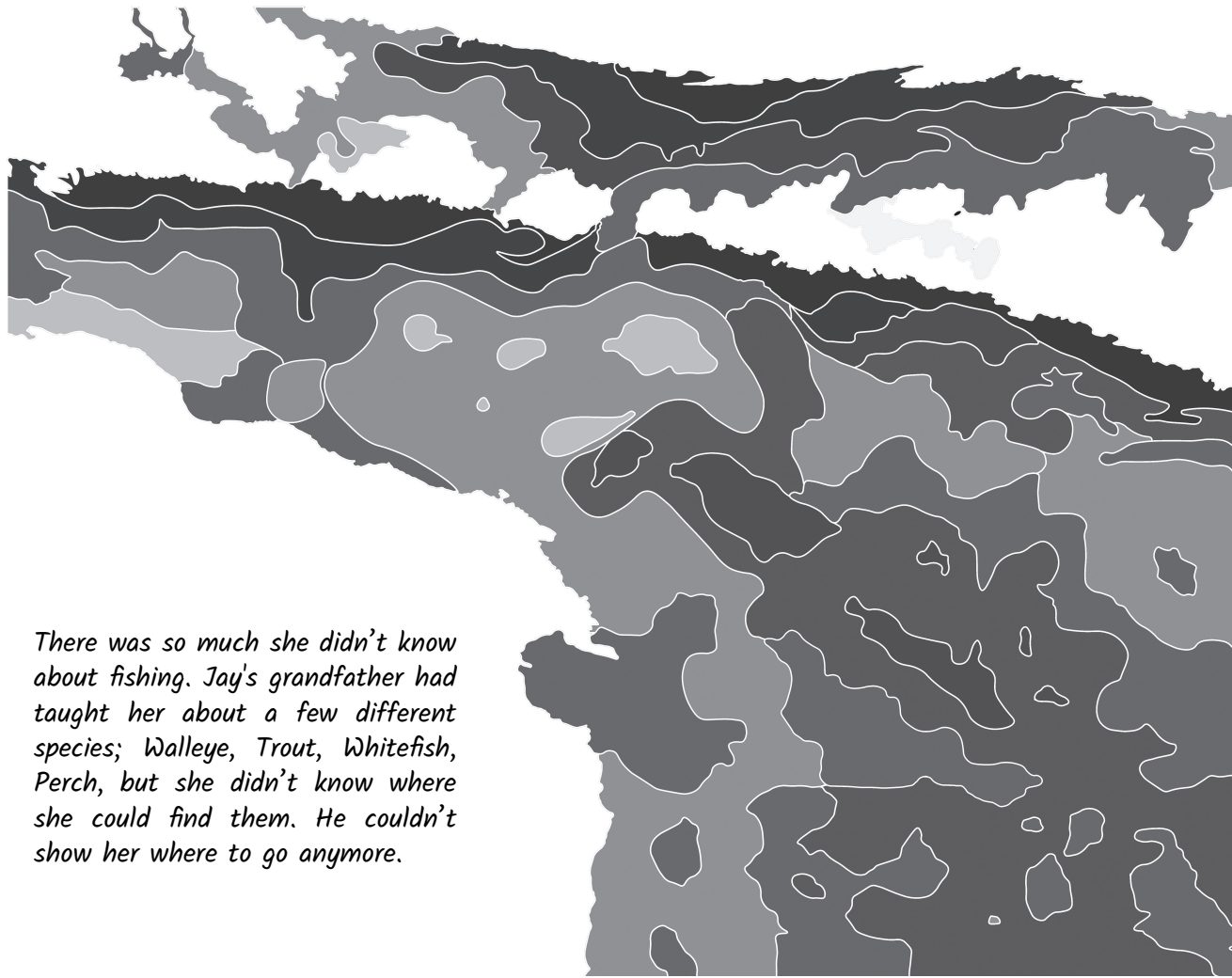
Wouldn't it be great if she could surprise her mother with a freezer full of fish instead of the packaged food that lay in her cupboards? She could bring back those fried fish suppers. After all, how hard could it be? Luckily, she had the entire summer to learn how.

*After dinner, Jay brushed up on her limited knowledge of fishing.*

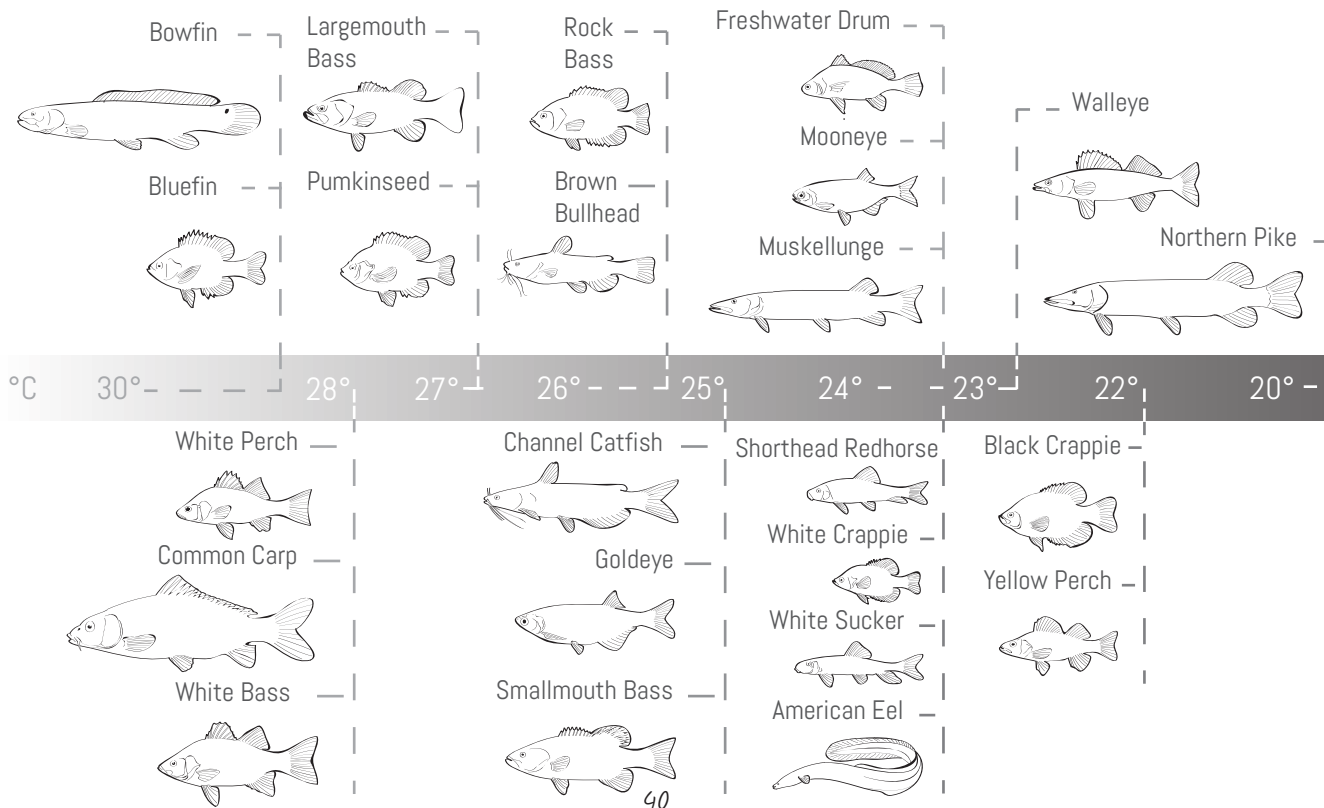




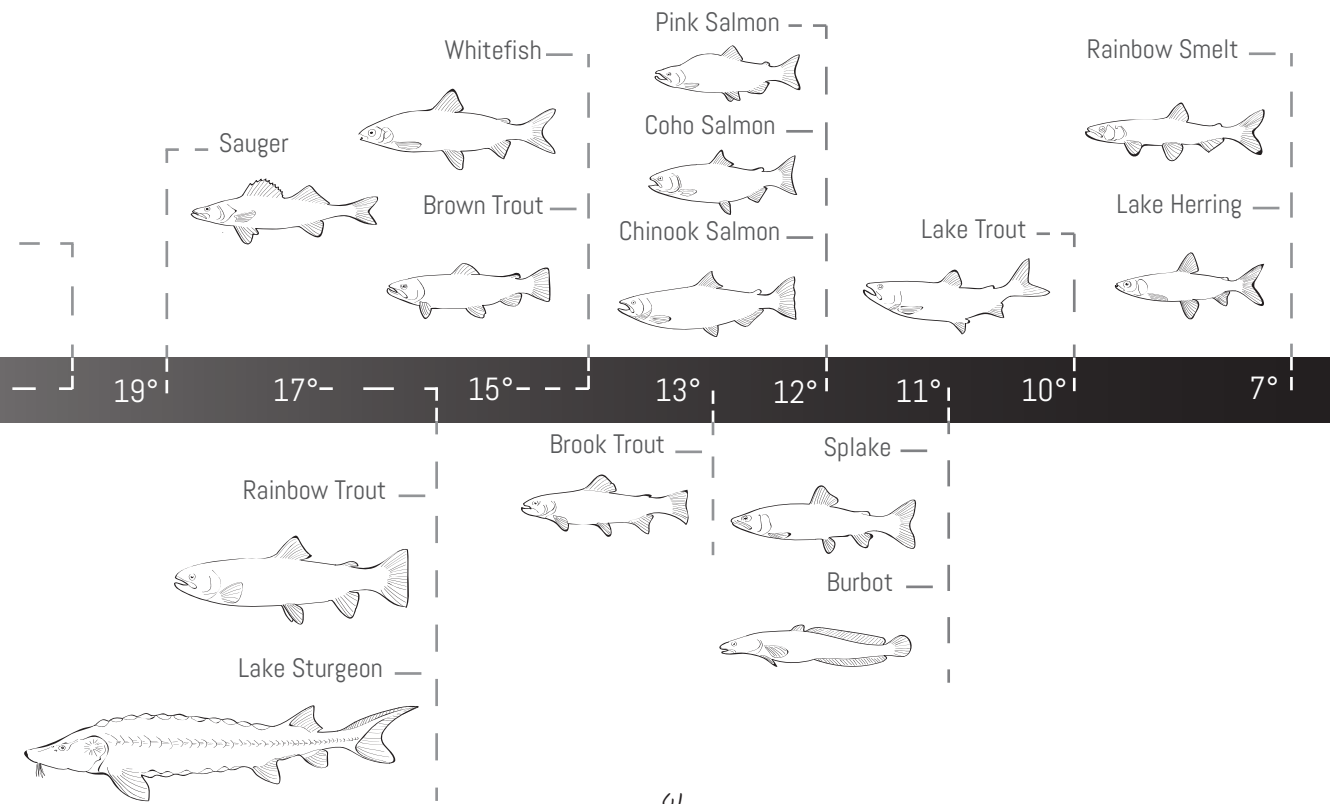
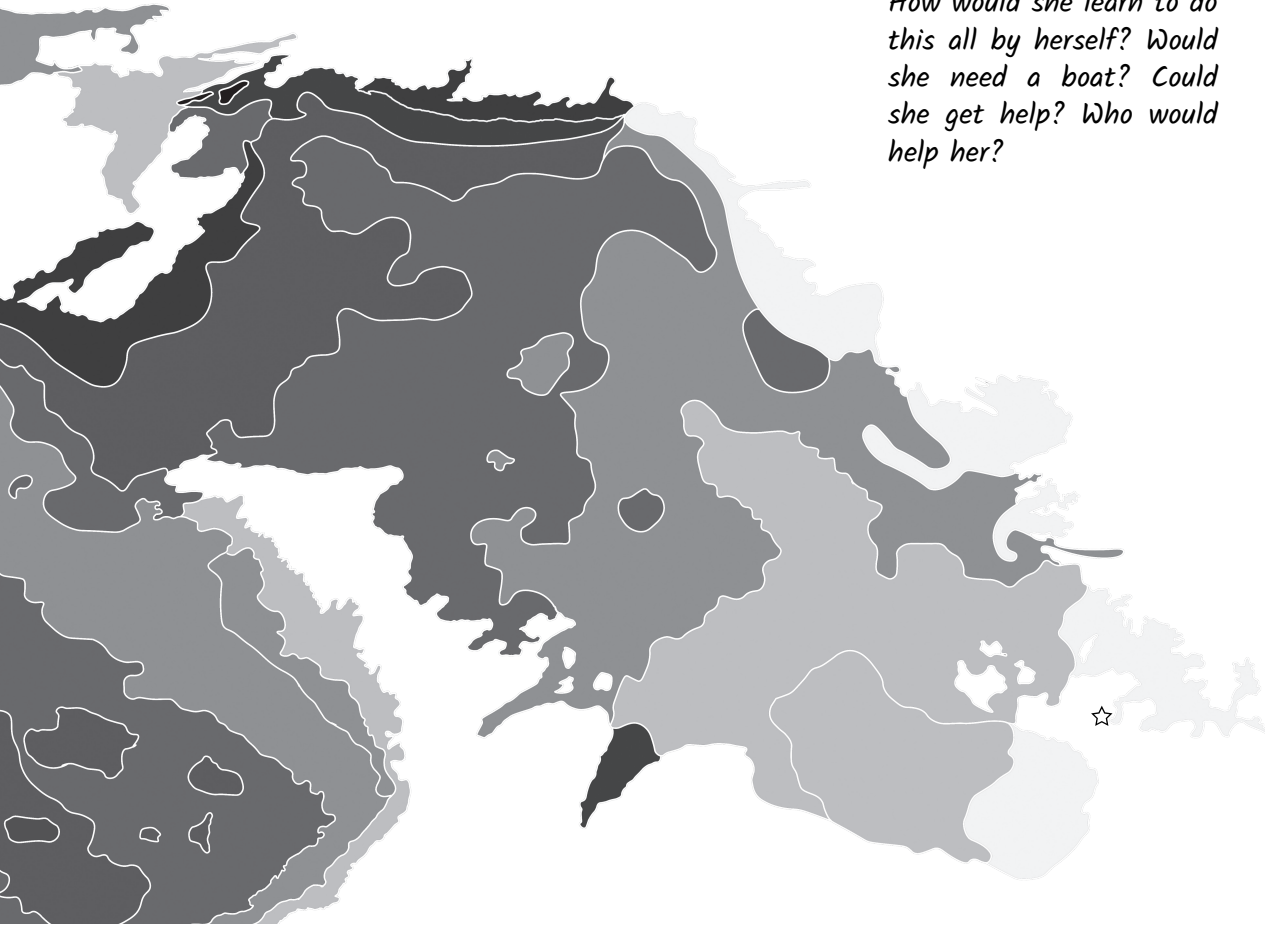
*She was worried about all of the things she would need to get her hands on and how much it was going to cost.*



*There was so much she didn't know about fishing. Jay's grandfather had taught her about a few different species; Walleye, Trout, Whitefish, Perch, but she didn't know where she could find them. He couldn't show her where to go anymore.*



*She felt overwhelmed. How would she learn to do this all by herself? Would she need a boat? Could she get help? Who would help her?*



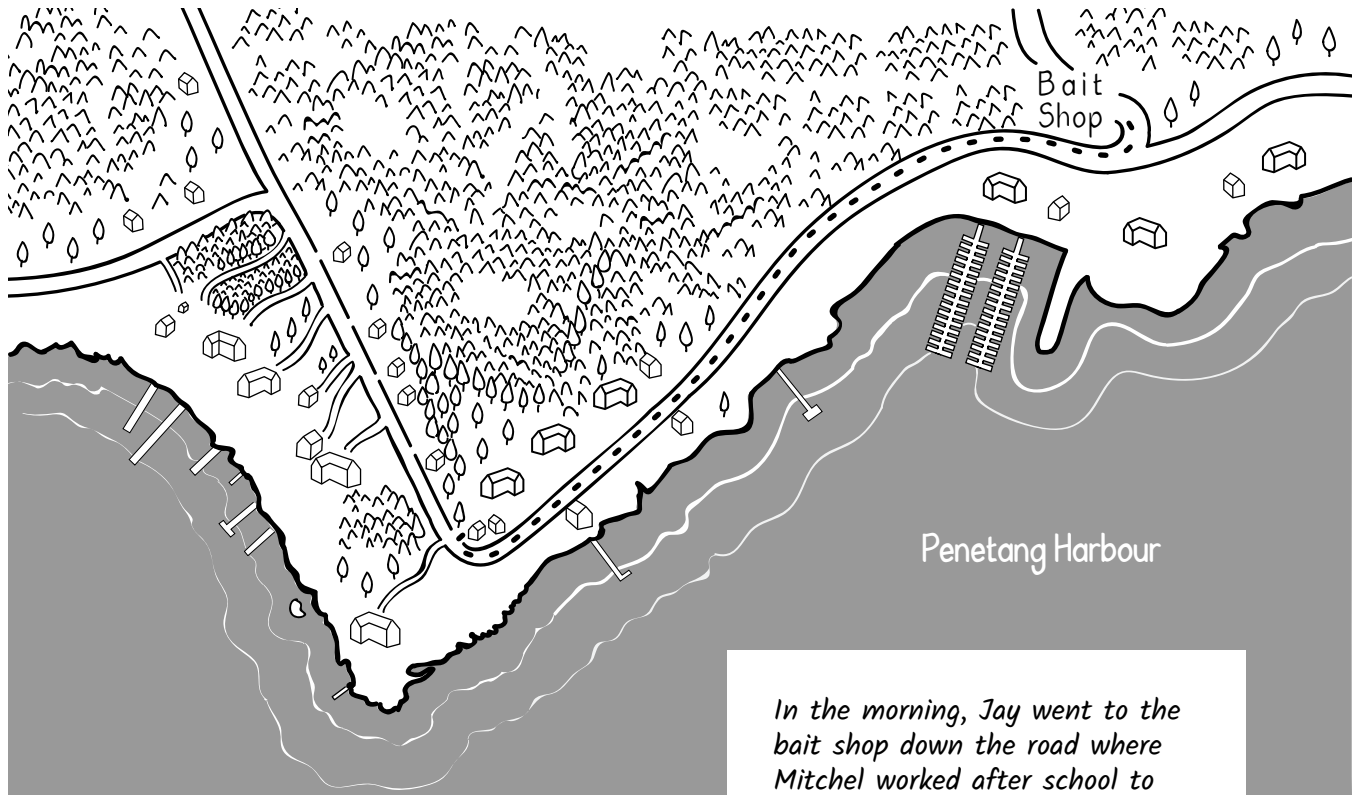
*Jay knew that it would be worth it in the end.  
She was looking forward to see her mother's excitement,  
not to mention she also had her siblings to think about.*





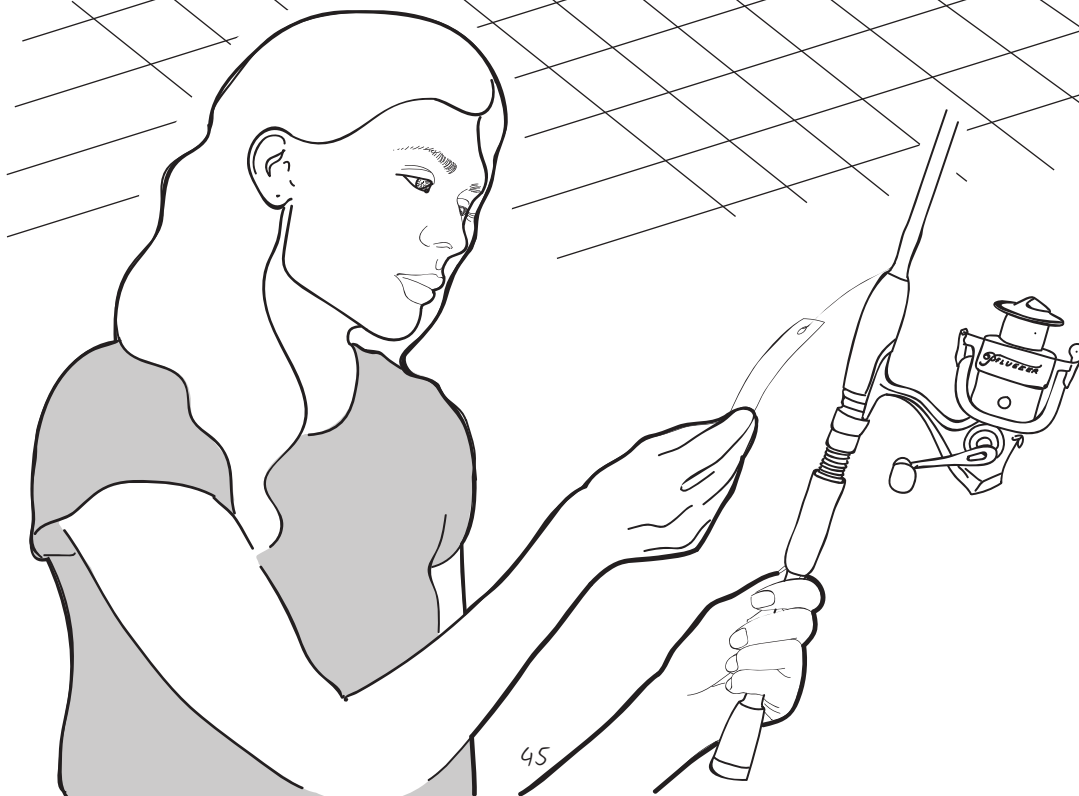


*She often found herself worried about them.*



*In the morning, Jay went to the bait shop down the road where Mitchel worked after school to buy a fishing rod.*







*I didn't realise that these were so expensive...*

*How can a fishing rod cost so much? I might have to find a cheaper one somewhere else.*

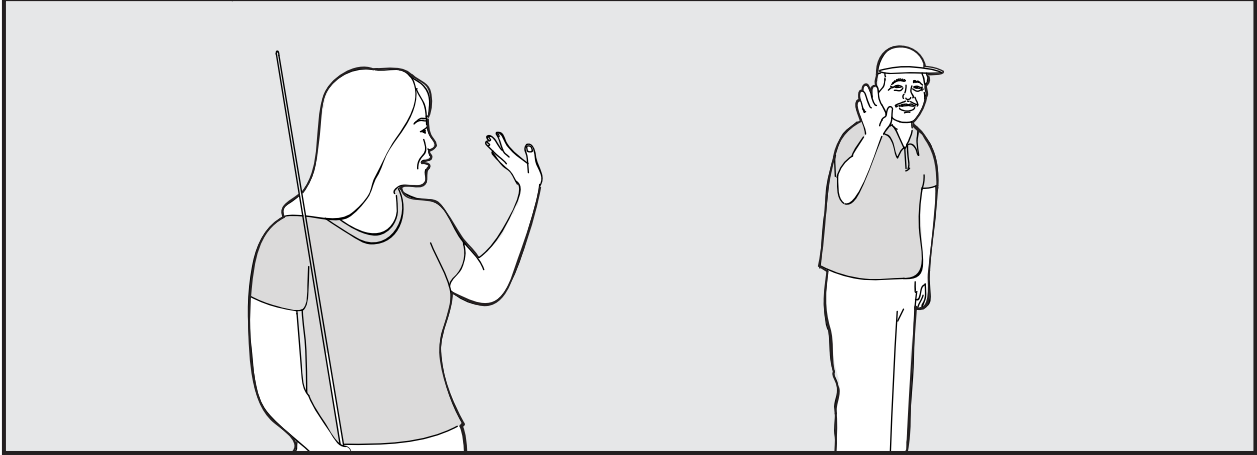
*Discouraged Jay left the store before Mitchel could notice she was there. She would have to find one second hand or purchase one a little less fancy than others could afford.*



*Hey, you must be Mitch's sister.*







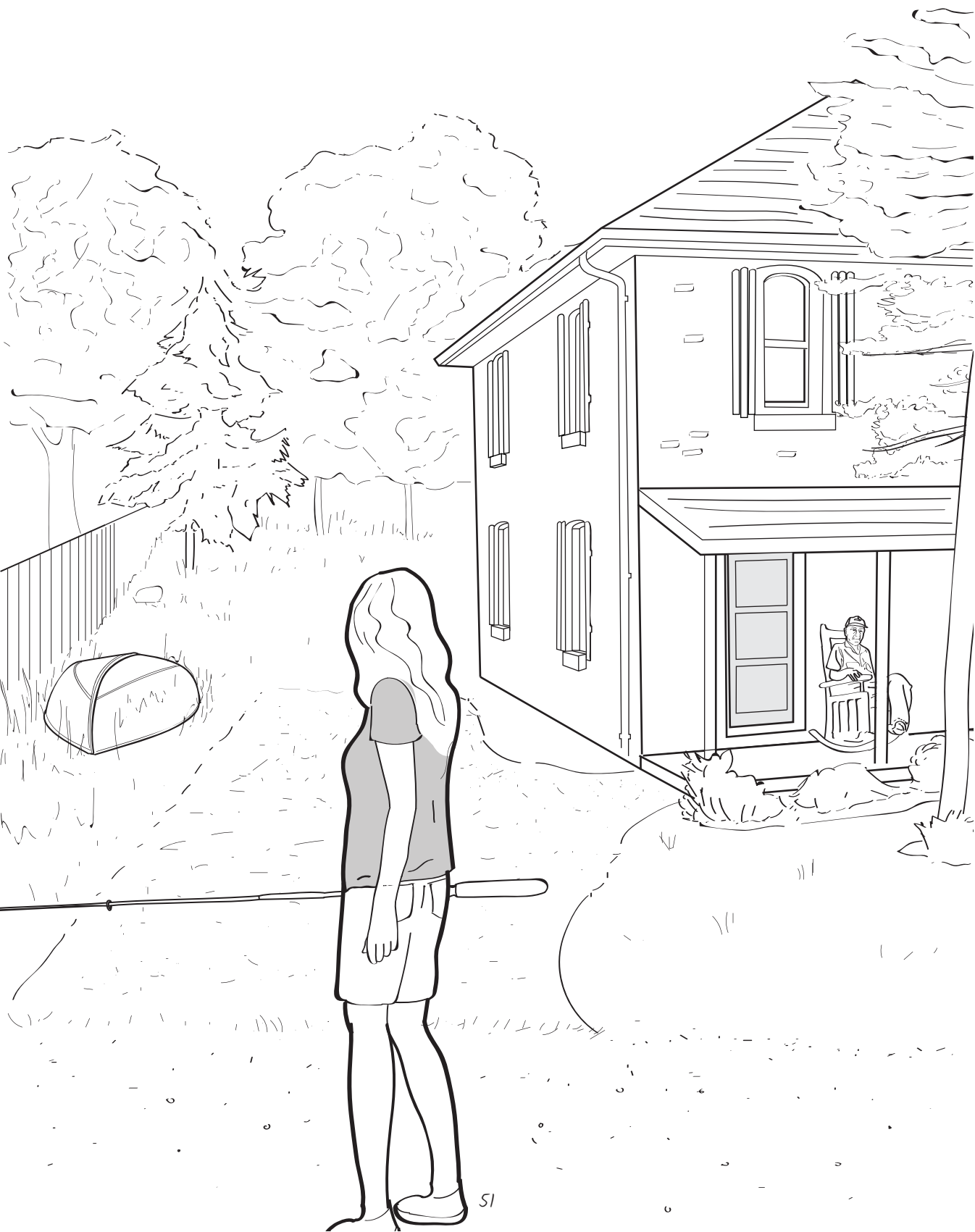
*How can fishing with those nets even be legal? They catch so many fish. I've seen it.*

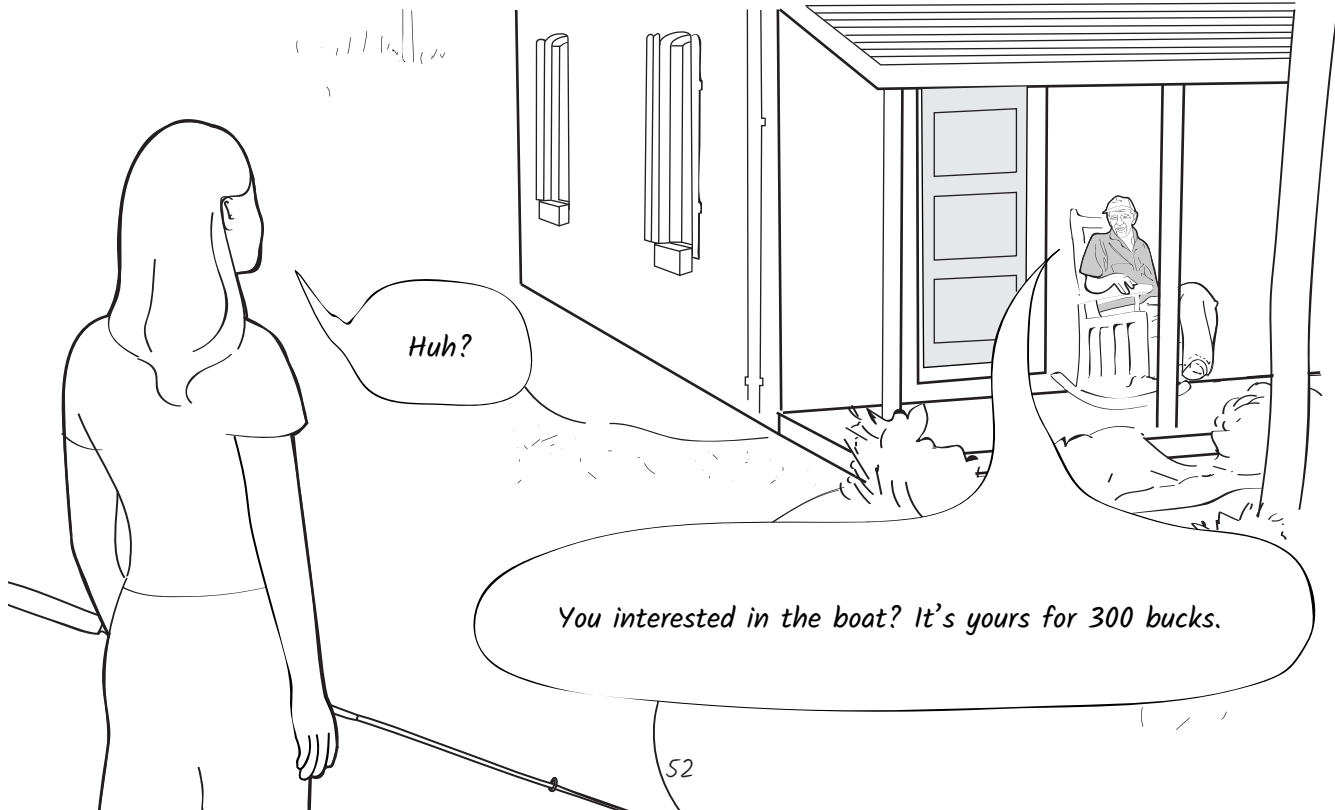
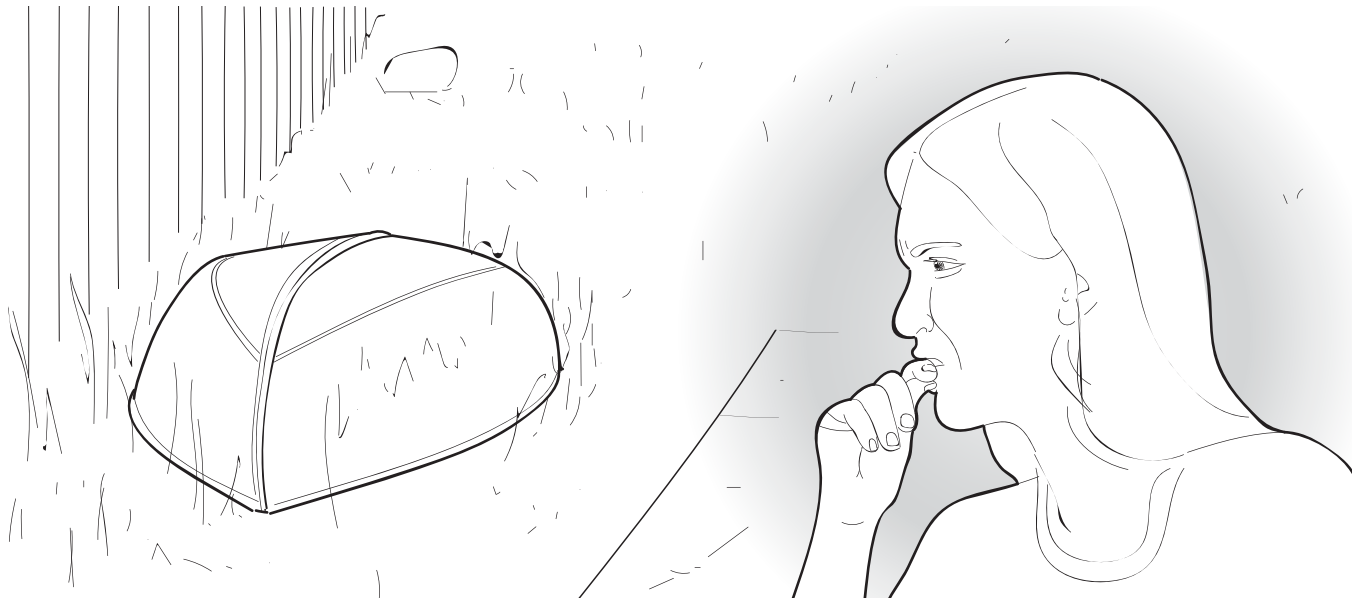
*They shouldn't have different rules than us. They should be treated like everyone else. Native rights are killing our fish stocks, did you know they are allowed to fish in spawning areas?! Soon there wont be enough for everyone else. It's so selfish.*

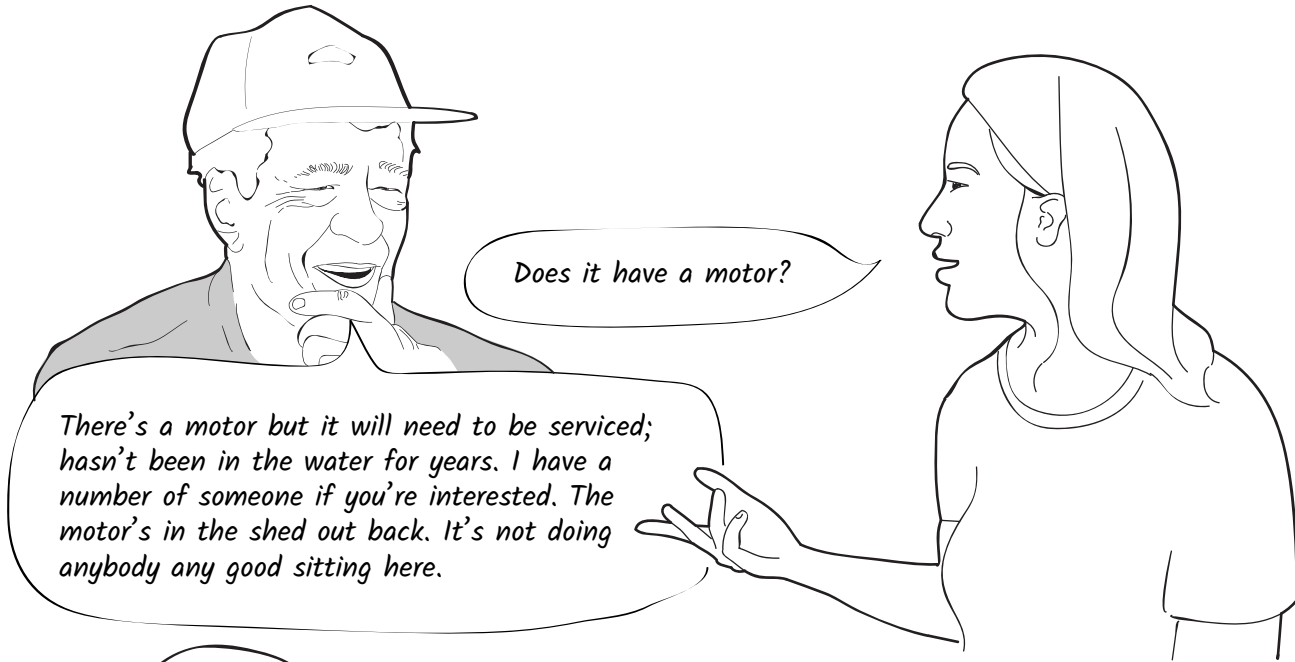






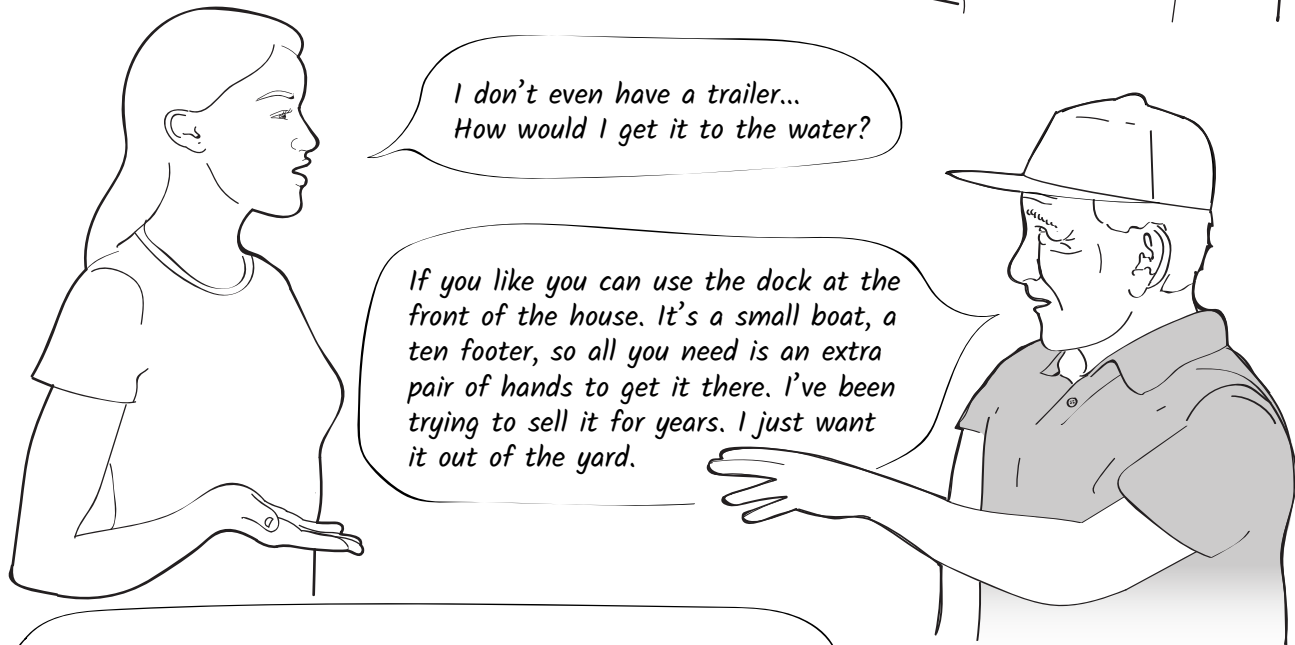






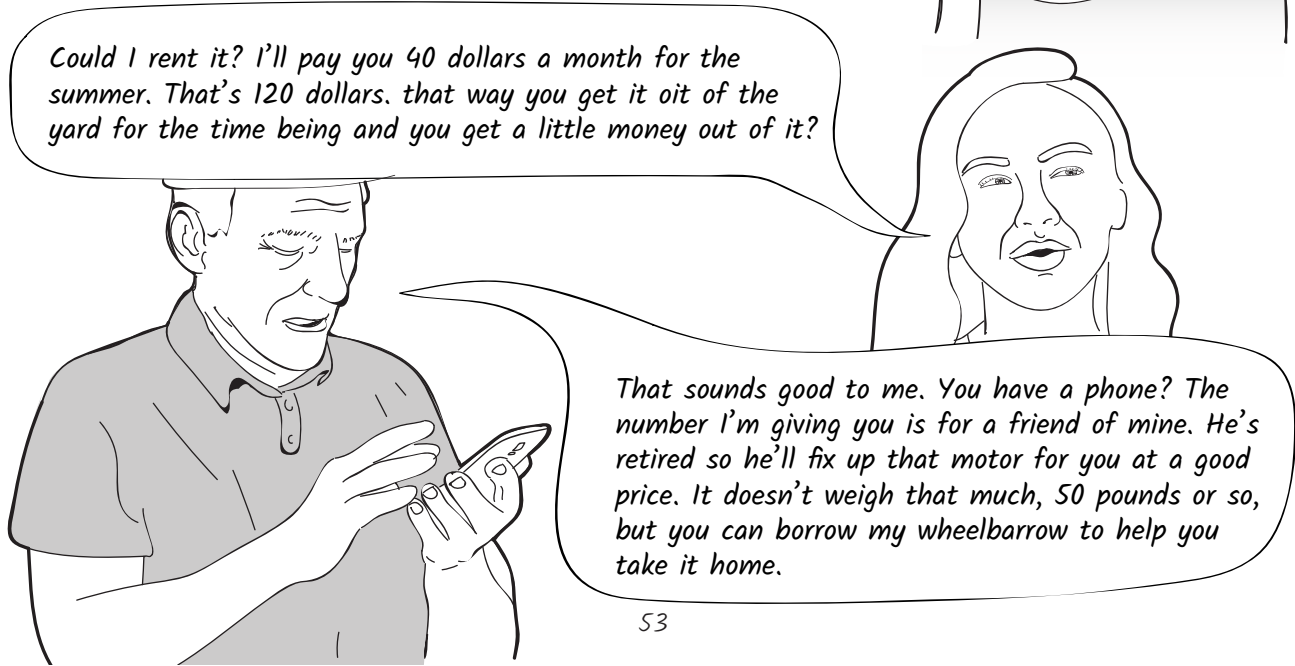
Does it have a motor?

There's a motor but it will need to be serviced; hasn't been in the water for years. I have a number of someone if you're interested. The motor's in the shed out back. It's not doing anybody any good sitting here.



I don't even have a trailer... How would I get it to the water?

If you like you can use the dock at the front of the house. It's a small boat, a ten footer, so all you need is an extra pair of hands to get it there. I've been trying to sell it for years. I just want it out of the yard.

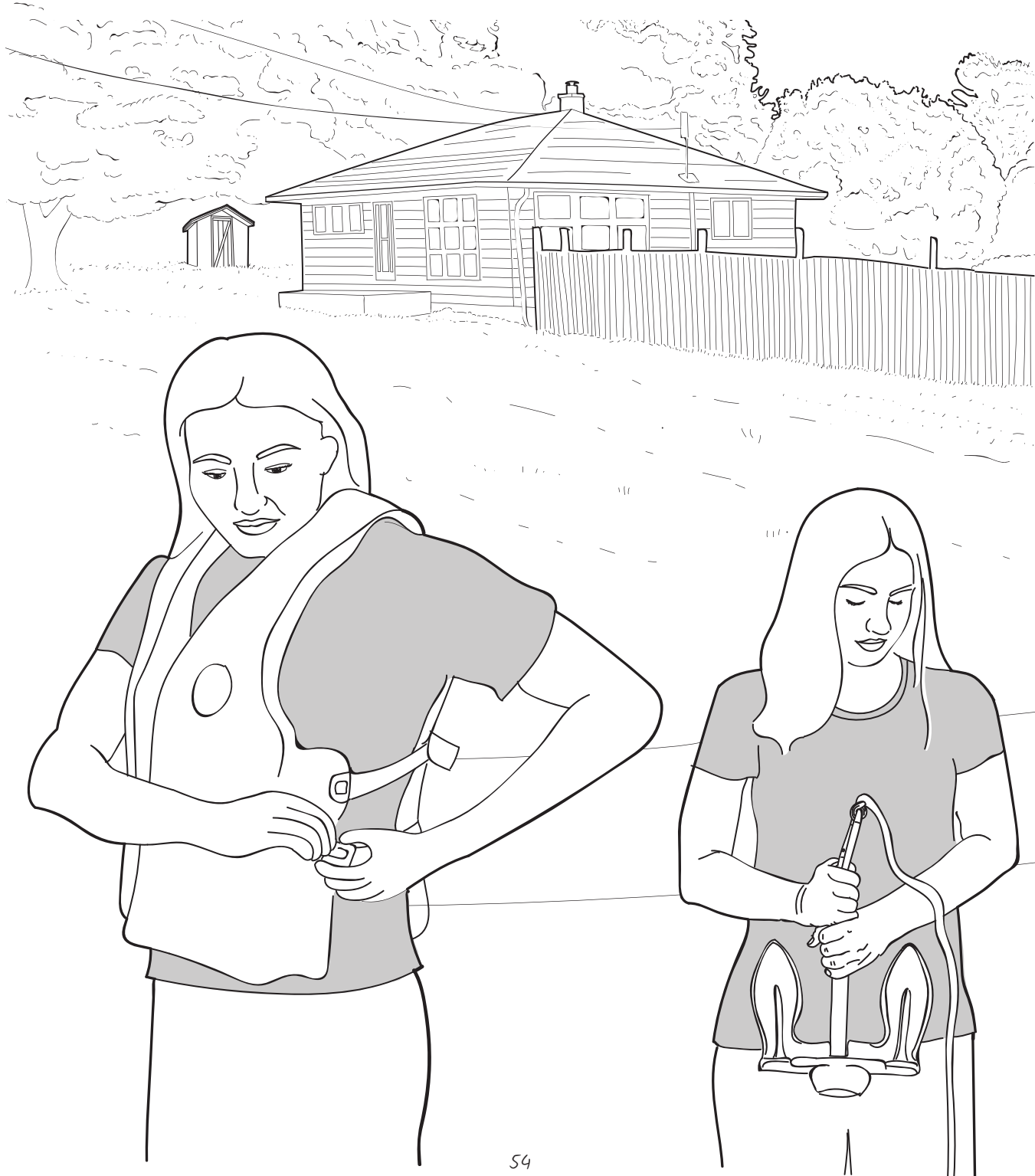


Could I rent it? I'll pay you 40 dollars a month for the summer. That's 120 dollars. that way you get it out of the yard for the time being and you get a little money out of it?

That sounds good to me. You have a phone? The number I'm giving you is for a friend of mine. He's retired so he'll fix up that motor for you at a good price. It doesn't weigh that much, 50 pounds or so, but you can borrow my wheelbarrow to help you take it home.

For the remainder of the day, Jay continued to gather the things that she needed to fish out on the water. The more she researched it seemed like there was still so much to learn and do. She still had to apply online for a boating licence, get a lifejacket, rope, anchor and a cooler to keep the fish fresh.

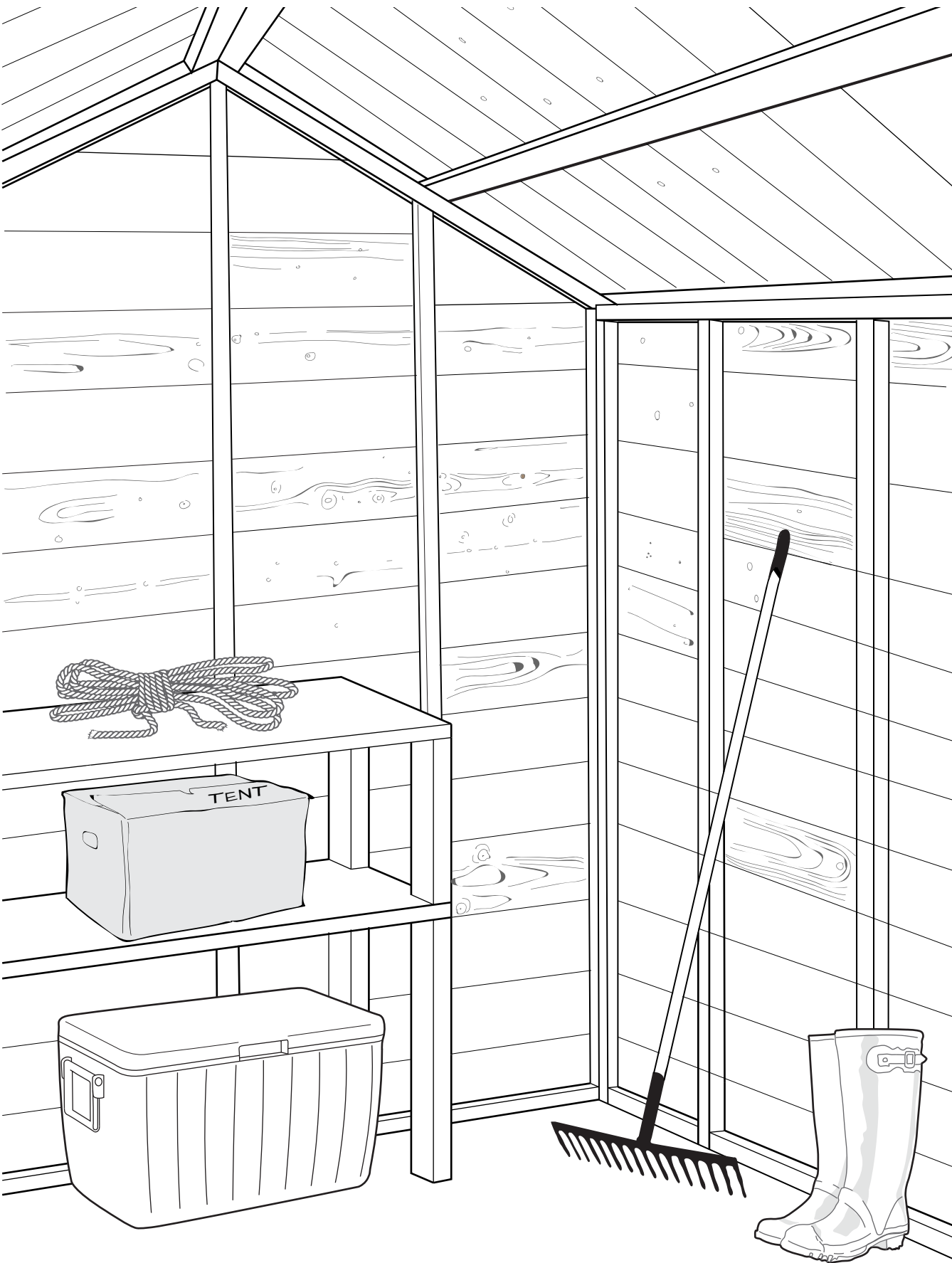
She still didn't know where to go or how she was going to be able to navigate on the water. There were no roads, no signs, no familiar landmarks. This was complete uncharted territory, with no one around to show her the way.





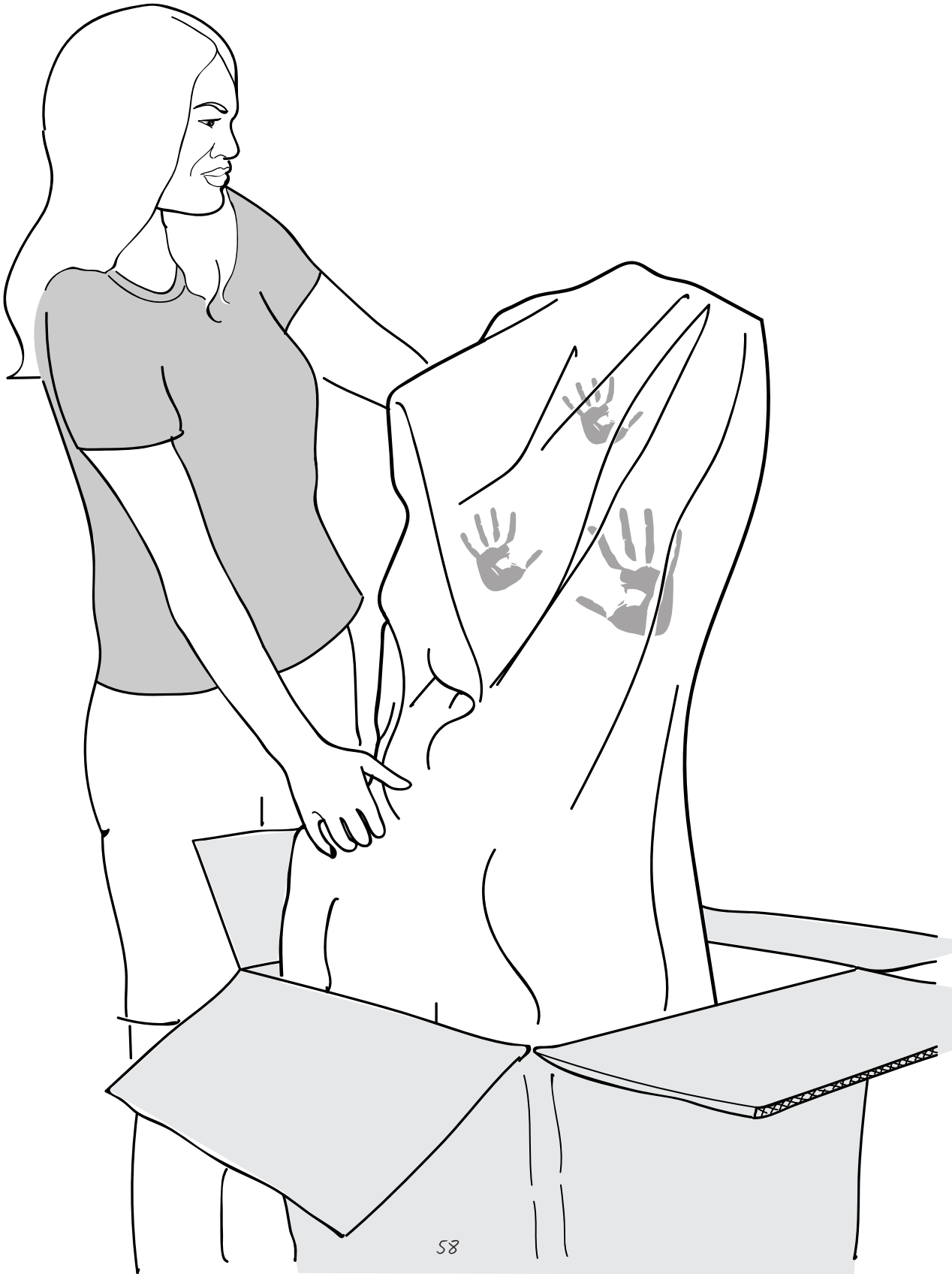
*But with a little luck...*



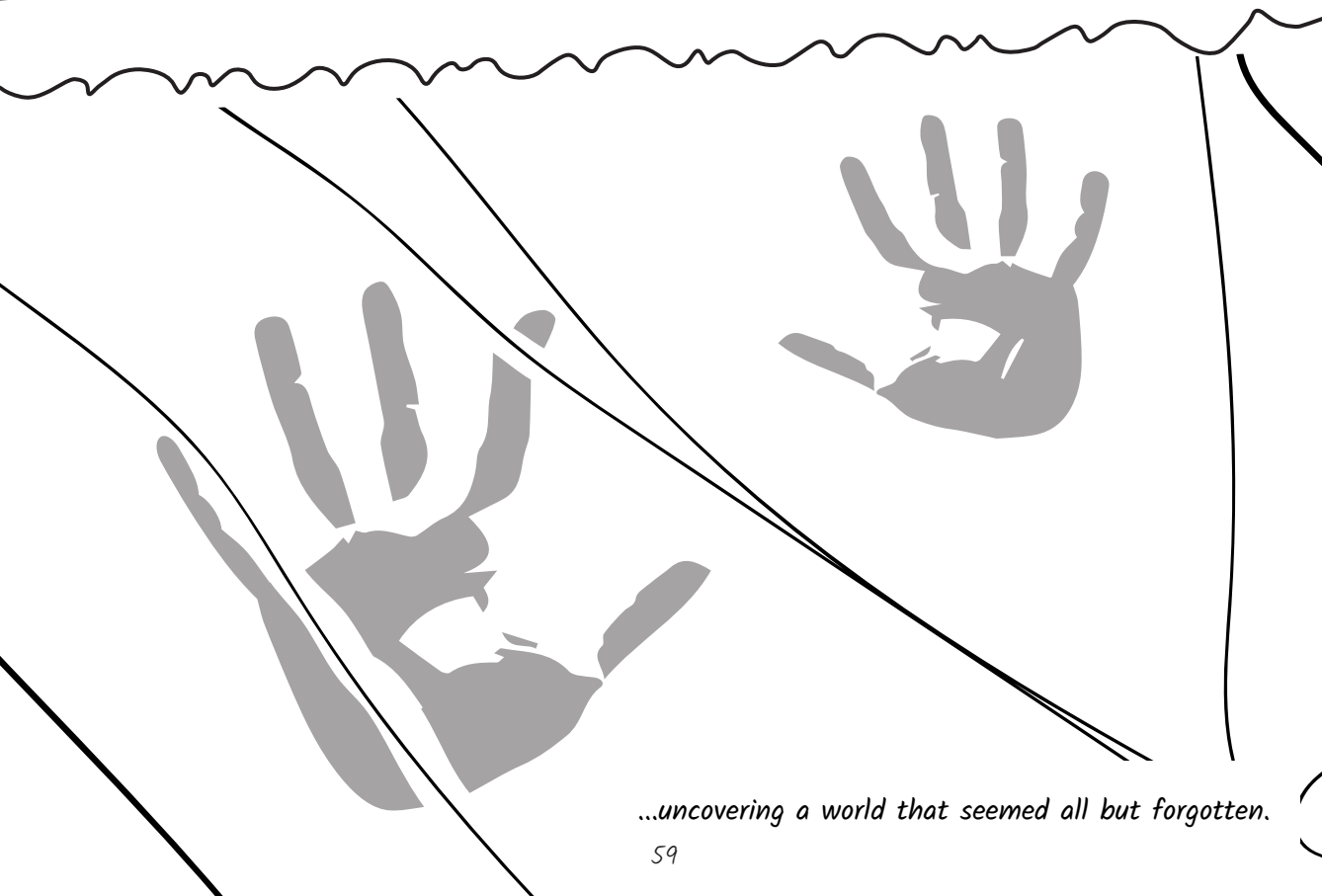


*Jay managed to find some of the things she needed all around her hidden in plain sight around the house and in the shed out back.*

*She also started to discover traces of a past once unknown to her...*



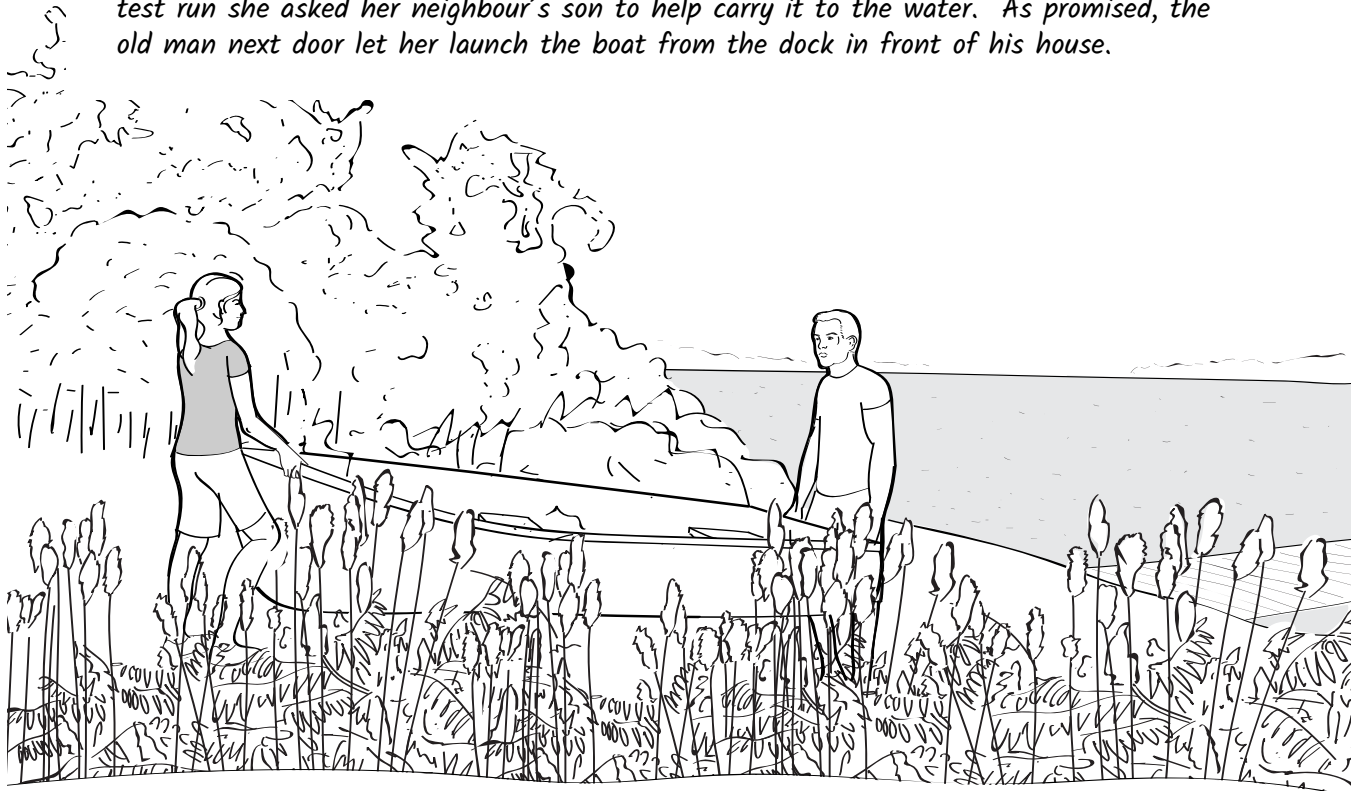




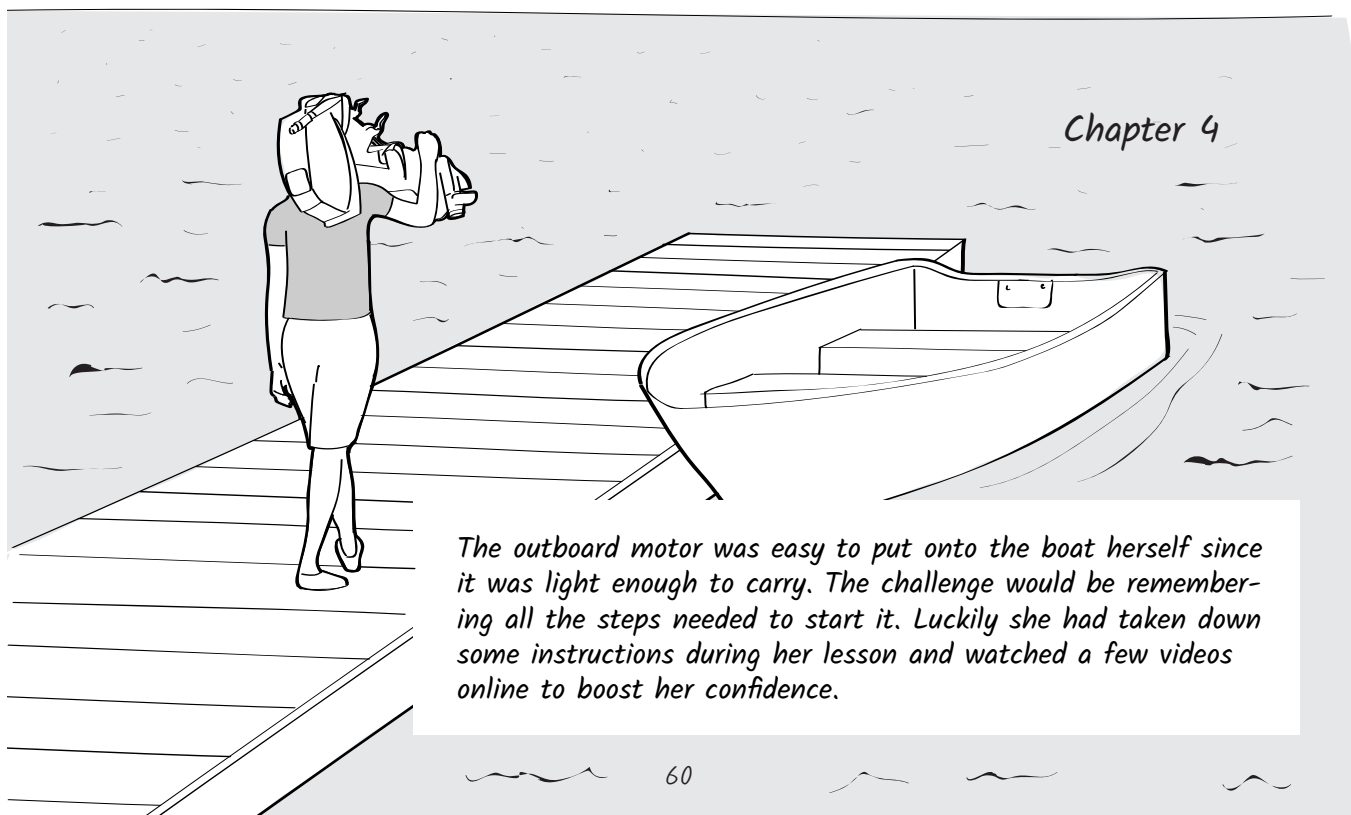
*...uncovering a world that seemed all but forgotten.*

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Within a week Jay had purchased a new fuel tank and serviced the motor for the boat. She even got a quick lesson on how to start it. Once she was ready to go out on her first test run she asked her neighbour's son to help carry it to the water. As promised, the old man next door let her launch the boat from the dock in front of his house.

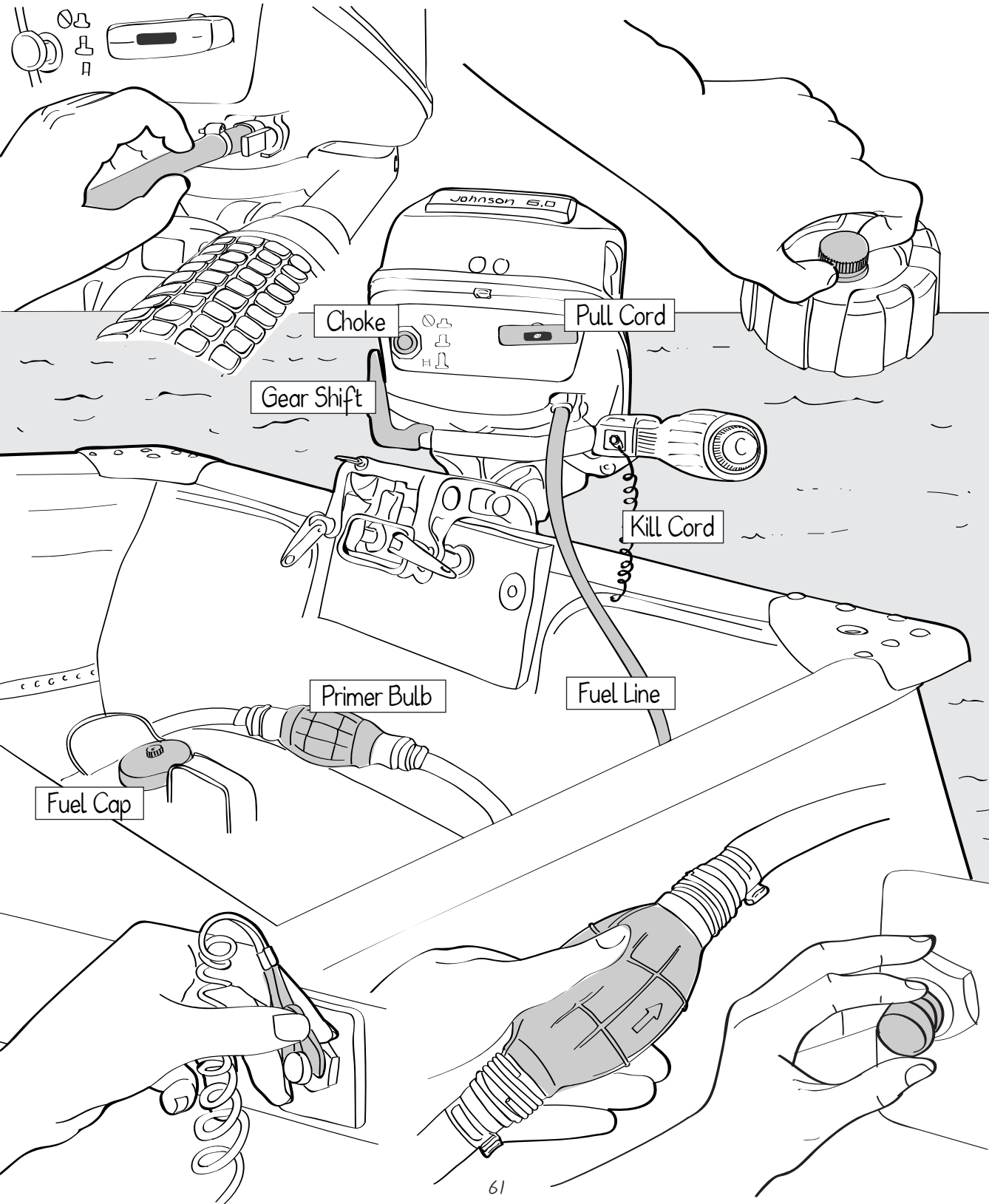


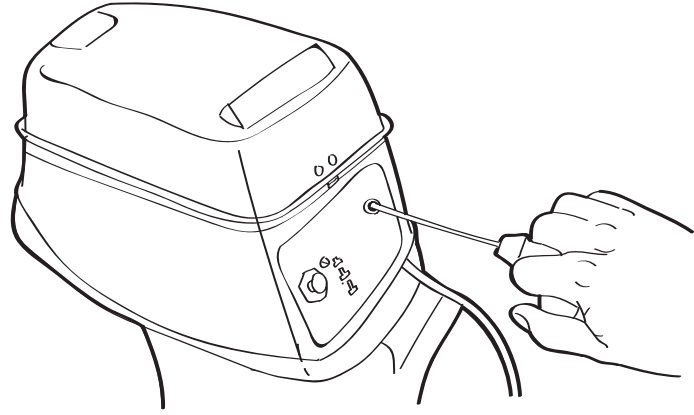
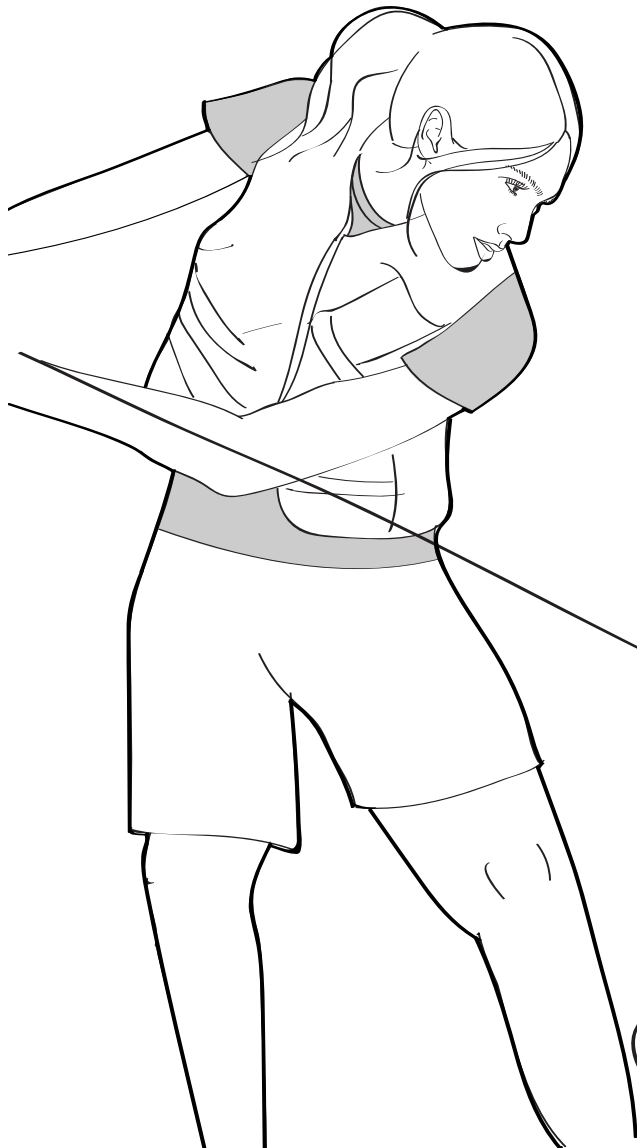
It wasn't a perfect system but without a dolly she couldn't push the boat to the water herself. She would also have to pull up the boat onto shore when she got back and wait for help to carry it back home.



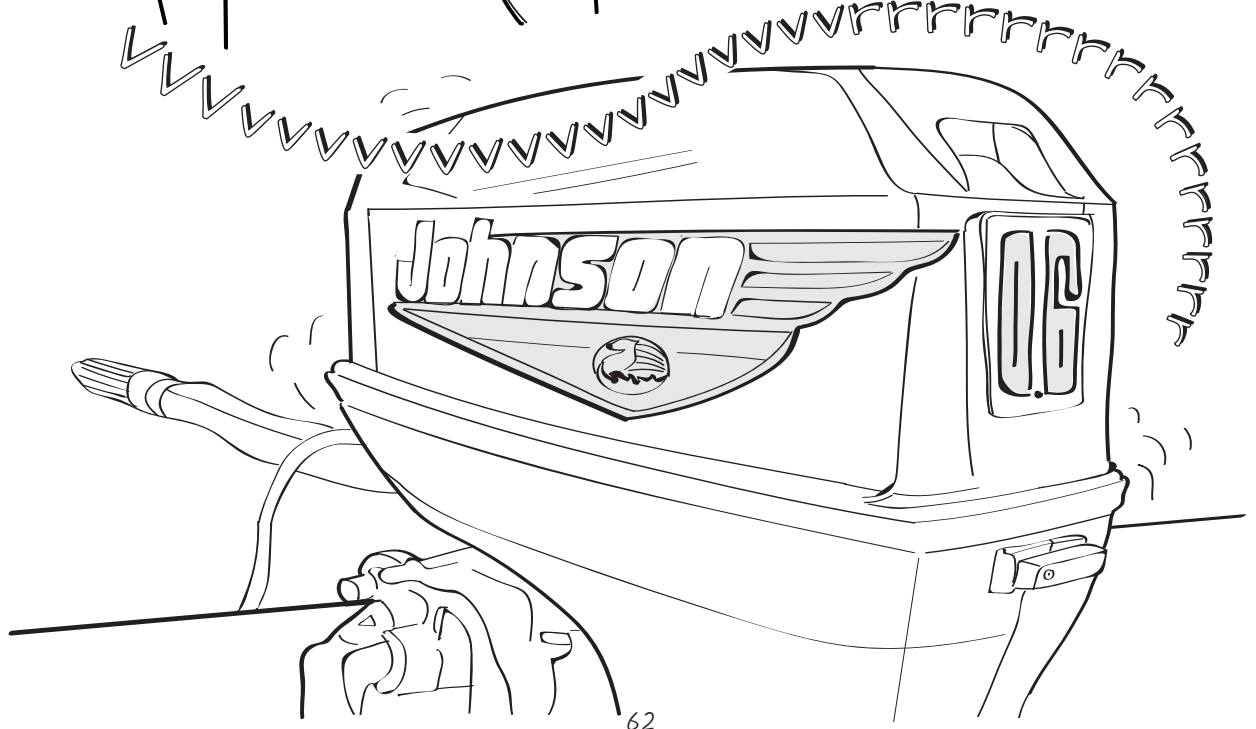
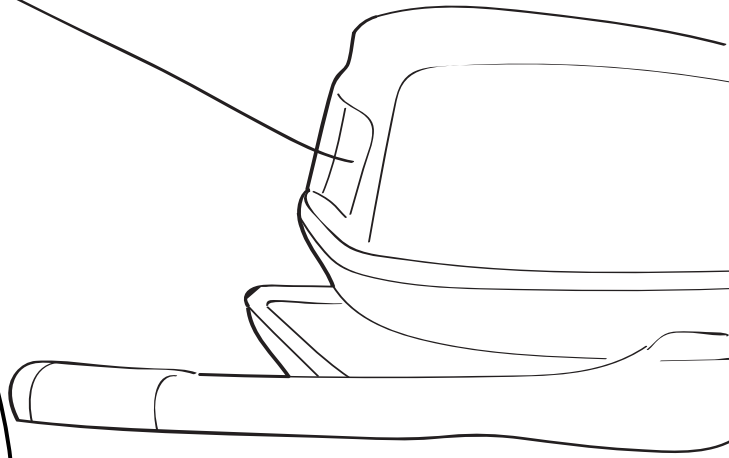
The outboard motor was easy to put onto the boat herself since it was light enough to carry. The challenge would be remembering all the steps needed to start it. Luckily she had taken down some instructions during her lesson and watched a few videos online to boost her confidence.

First she clipped in the hose for the fuel into the motor, let the air out of the gas tank by loosening the valve on the fuelcap. She then placed the kill cord onto the motor and put the gear shift, located at the motor's left side, pointing upwards into Neutral. Finally she pulled the choke out for the motor and pumped the fuel line bulb until it was firm. All she needed to do now was pull on the cord and put the choke back in.

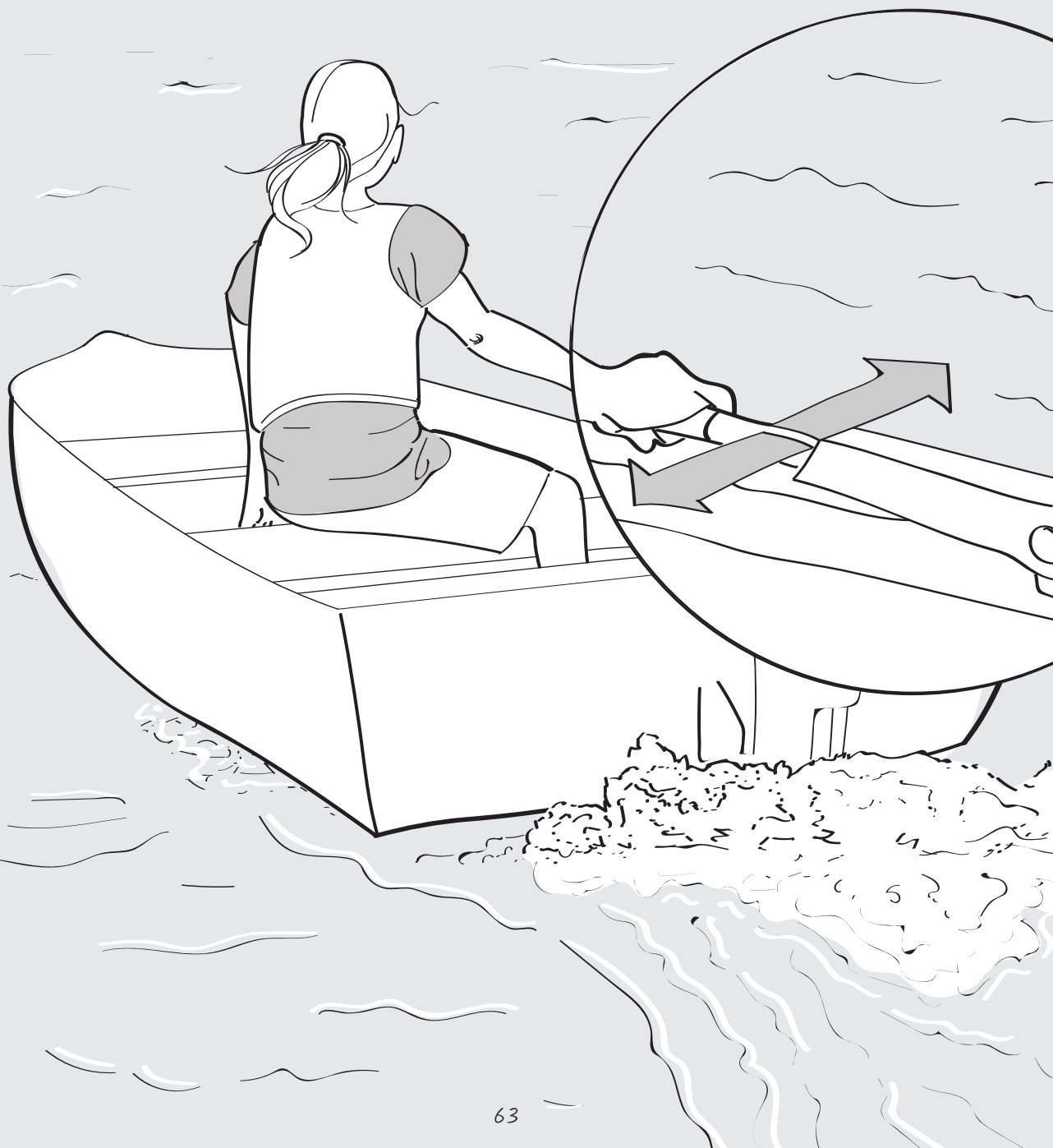




*After many failed attempts, she finally got a good pull in and the motor started to shake and sputter to life.*

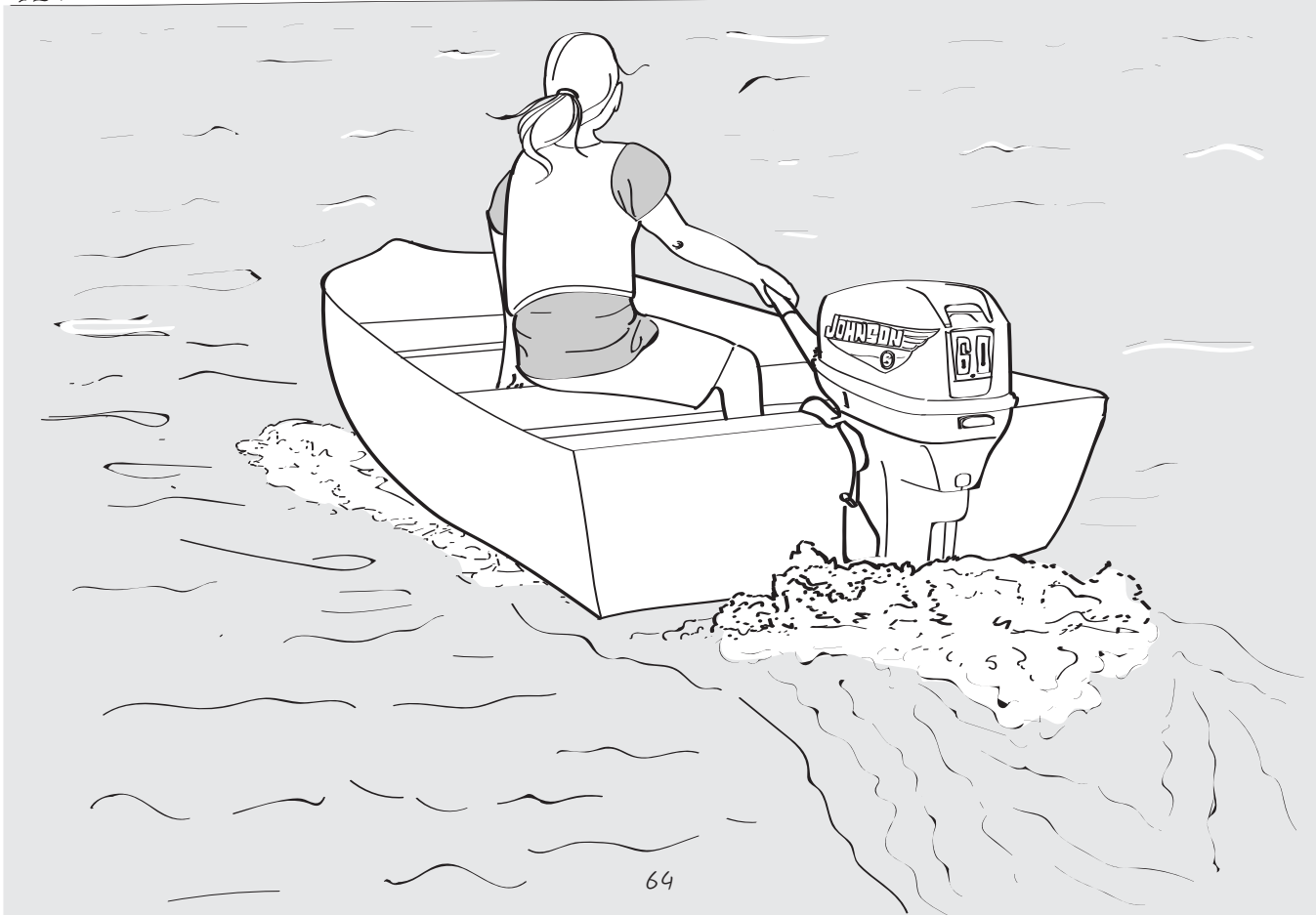


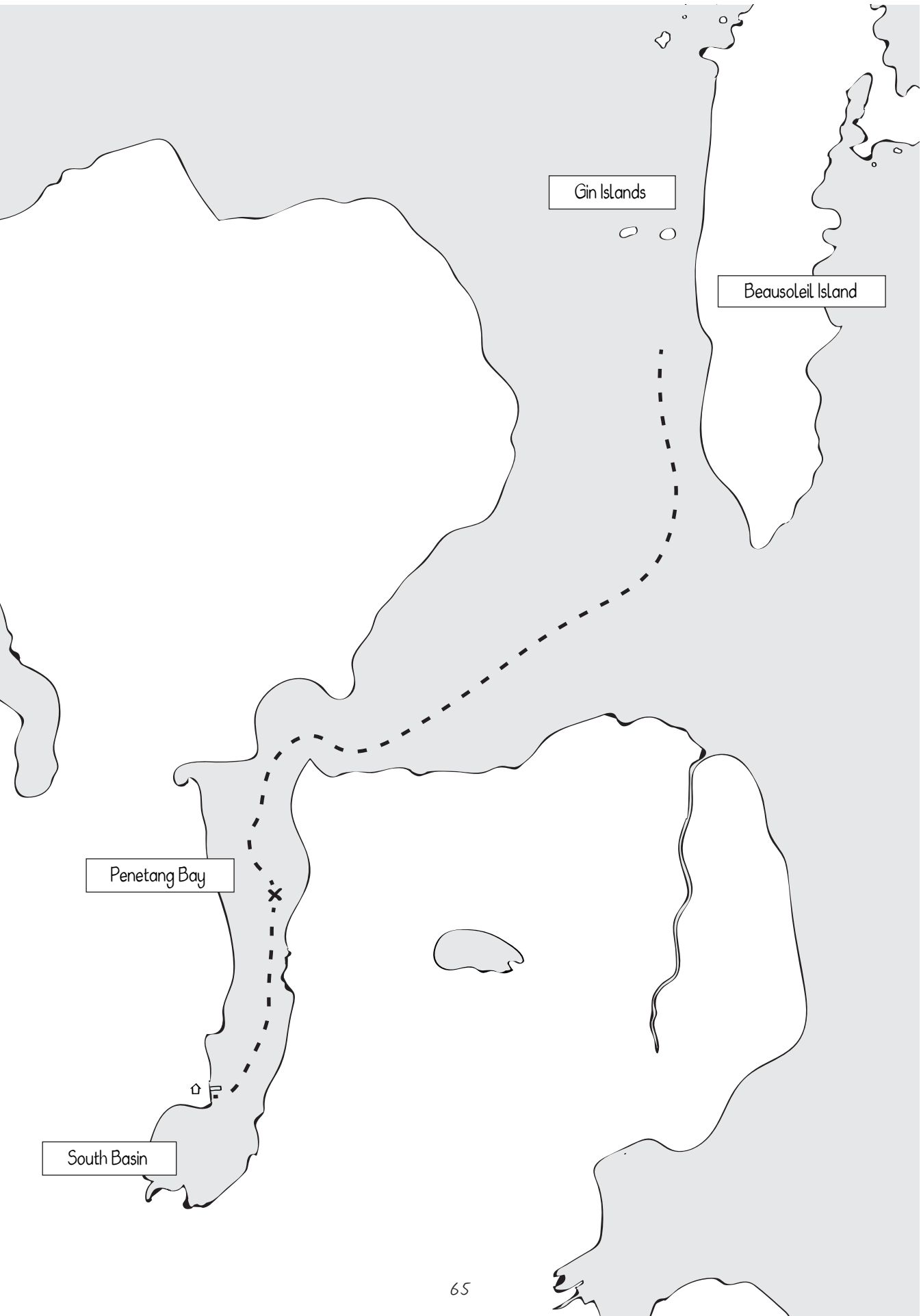
*...and once she got the hang of steering  
she was ready to finally set off.*



*On the water Jay was presented with the same burning question that had been worming it's way around her head for weeks now. Where was she to go now?*

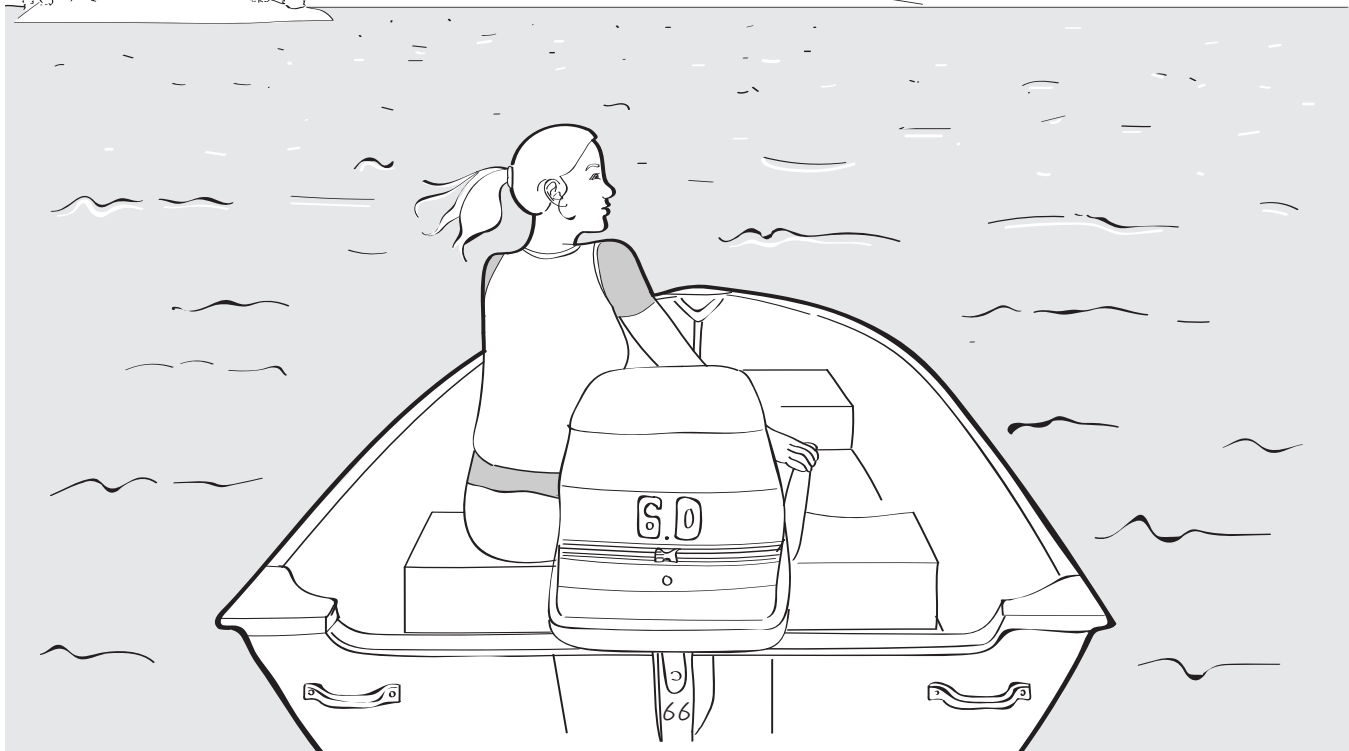
*According to her research the closest fishing spot outside of the Bay was Beausoleil island. So she decided that she would drive out there until she saw other fisherman around. After all, it made sense that if there are fisherman there are probably fish?*







*Once out of the Bay, Jay not only felt a sense of accomplishment but also longing. As the water stretched out endlessly before her in this great unbounded space she wished her grandfather was here to show her where to go.*





*In the distance she could see Giants Tomb, an island with a infamous legend many in the area were familiar with.*



*Kitchikewana, the son of the Great Spirit Manitou, rejected by the woman he loved, became enraged and carved out the bays from Matchedash Bay up to Jay's own bay of Penetang. Before dying of a broken heart and laying himself to rest he scattered 30,000 rocks within Georgian Bay. This became the islands we knew today. Giants Tomb became his final resting place where you can still make out the profile of his body.*

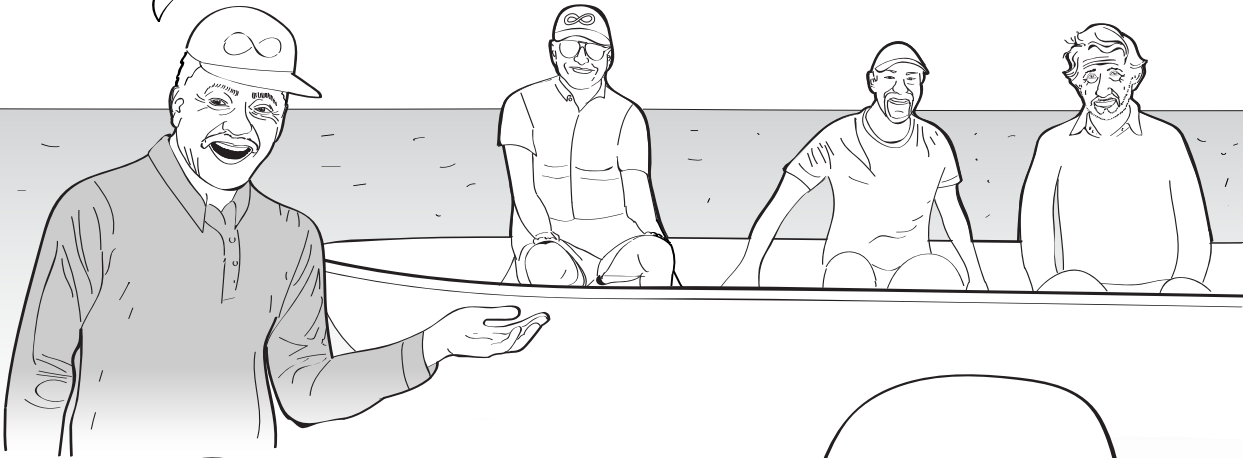


*Hey, that boat looks familiar.*

*Hey I recognize you... Jay!  
Lovely to see you finally out  
and about.*

*Hello Gary!  
Nice to see you again*

*Guys this is Jay, Billy's granddaughter. Jay these are my fellow harvesters; George, Eric and Rick*



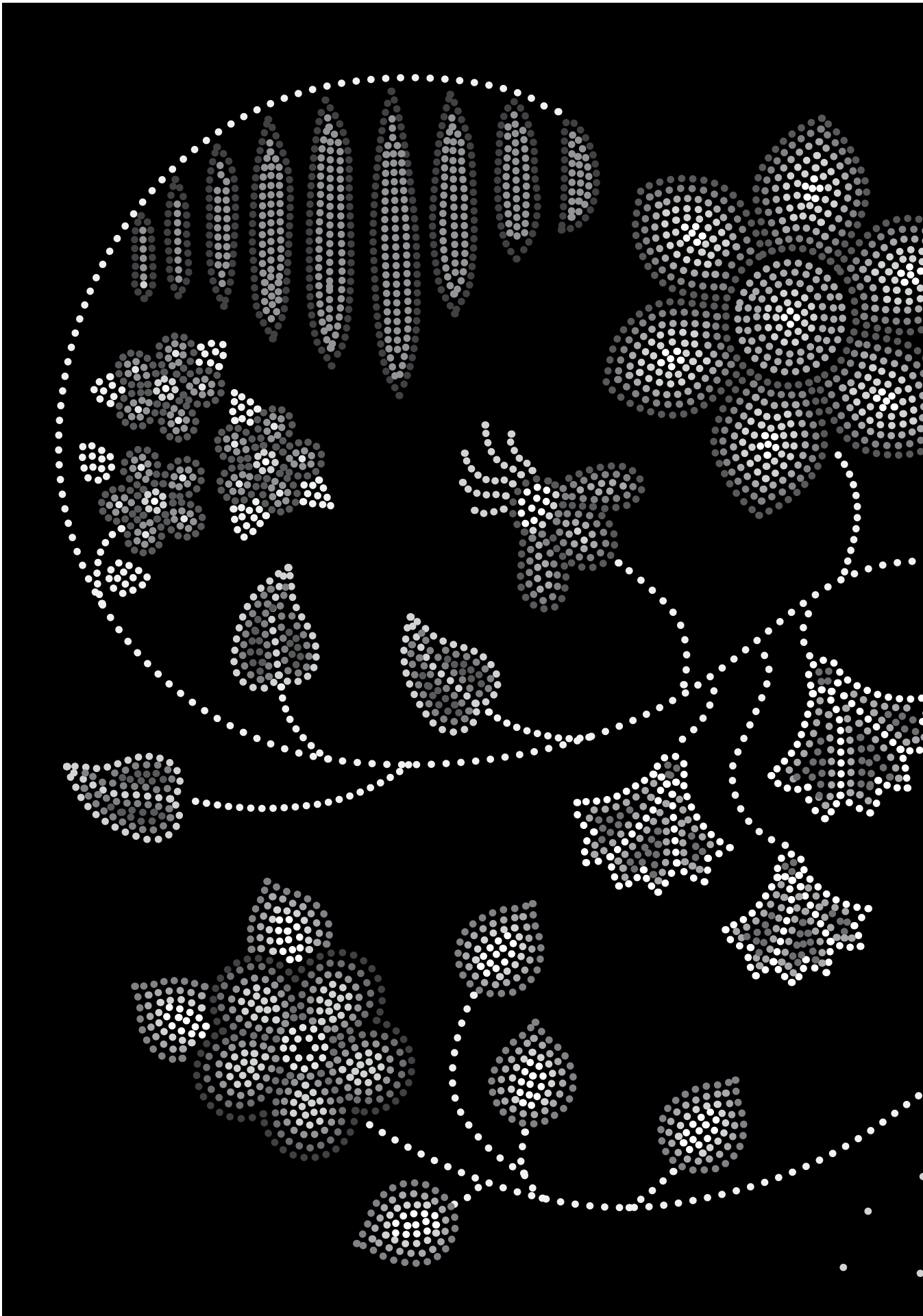
*Harvesters?*

*Yes, that's the short answer but to be more precise it means is that we are rights bearing, Métis Fisherman.*

*I've heard of the Métis but what do you mean by rights bearing?*

*Your mom has never told you?*

*No, why would she?*



*The Métis are more than just the product of an intermarriage between European settlers and our First Nation mothers. We have and continue to rely on the gifts provided by the land and the water. Our rights protect our ability and those of our future generations to continue to harvest; to gather food, medicines and knowledge. This knowledge breathes life into our communities, traditions, stories and even into our flowered beadwork.*



All of us in our group are descendants for the Drummond Islanders who were displaced after the war of 1812 down to Penetang. We made our homes here, we had no choice but we continued to be caretakers of the land. We fished, worked in the lumber yards, the shipyards and trap lines. Anywhere that would give us work.

They called us 'les Mitifs de l'autre bord de la Baie', the Mitifs from the other side of the Bay.



We? As in all of you?



Yes and... so was your grandfather.



Rick...



What do you mean?



Your grandfather was Métis, a harvester, a guide, a skilled fisherman. Someone who fought for our rights to belong here with the water. He was a friend.

*For the rest of the afternoon Jay learned more about the harvesters relationship to her grandfather while watching them set up their nets. She heard many stories. Some were about fishing, some were about arguments with other fisherman, and others about supreme court cases which fought for their harvesting rights.*

*Jay had expected to learn more about fishing that day and hopefully catch a few Walleye but received an entirely different education.*





*That sounds great actually.*

*Are you usually up early?  
We meet here at around 6 am.*

*I could do that*

*Ok great, see you then*

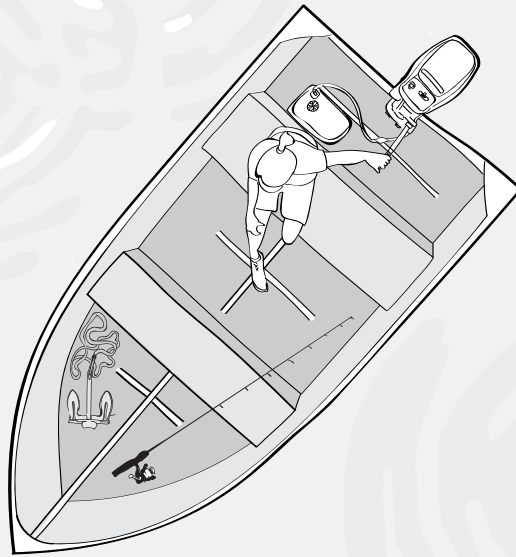
*On her way back home, Jay tried to remember if her grandfather had ever mentioned anything about harvesting rights or being Métis.*

*She wondered if she should bring this up with her mother. What would she say? Did she know about any of this? She must of known.*



*As she came back to the dock where she had launched earlier that morning she tried to remember how she had felt out on the water with the horizon a soft line in the distance, impossible to determine exactly where the water and the sky met.*

*She realized in that moment that everything she had known about her identity and her family's past was changed forever. Her eyes were open to a new truth and there was no coming back from that.*





Hey where have you been all day?

Just catching up with Darren from next door.

Chapter 5



Hey mom? I was just at the bait shop the other day and I met this man, Gary, he said he knew your dad.

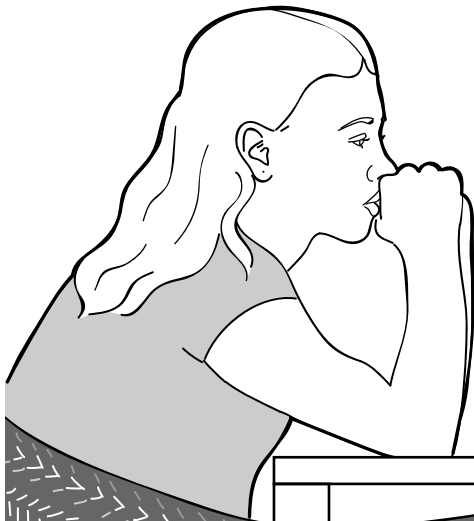
Oh ?

What were you doing there?

I was going down to see Mitchel. Anyways... Well we got to talking and he mentioned that grand-dad was Métis and rights bearing...



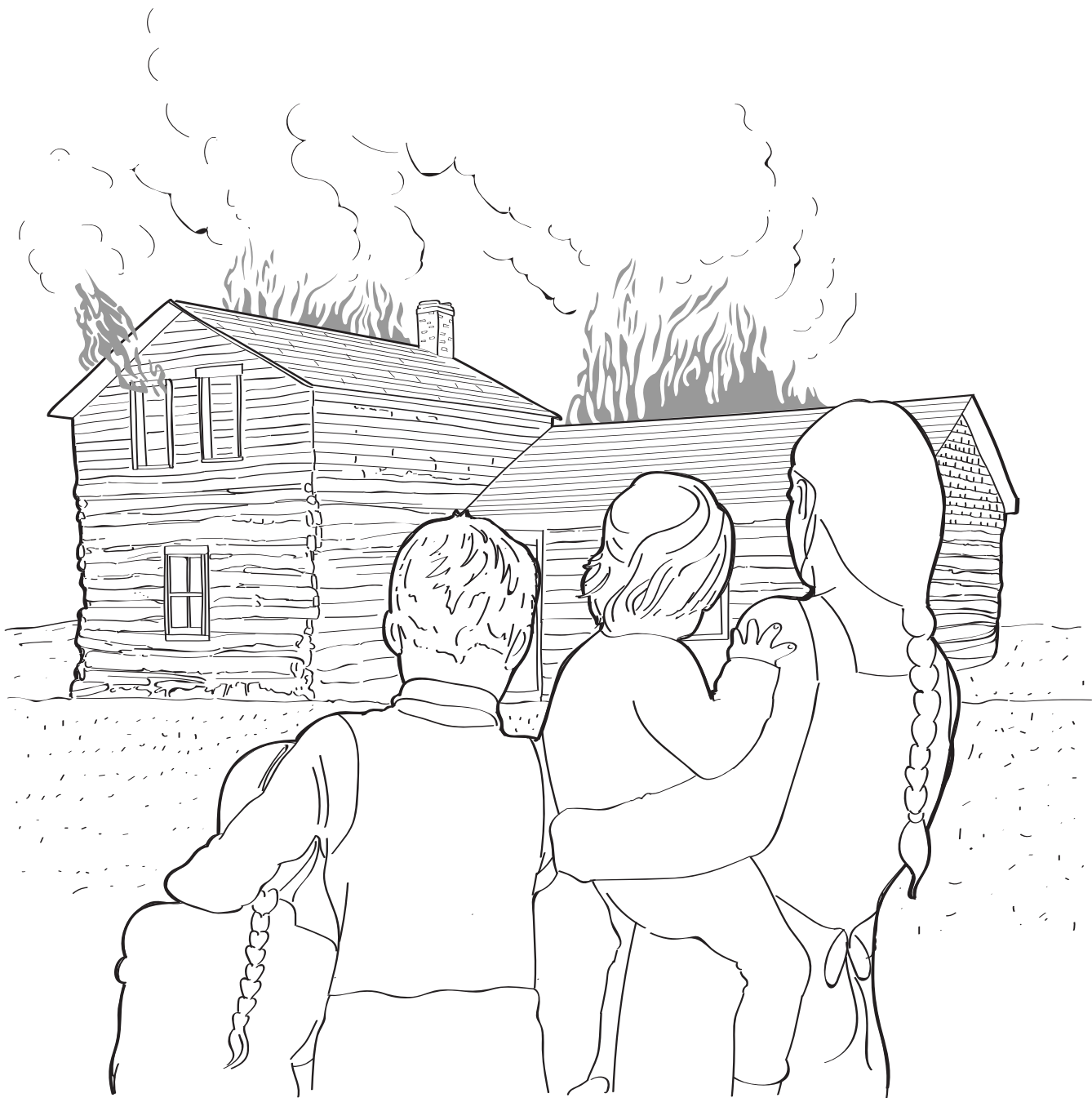
He's been trying to get Mitchel to go fishing with him and his friends. They are bent on keeping these 'traditions' alive that are long dead that we need to move on from. Your brother needs to focus on his job to help save money for school, not ruffling feathers on the water because they want to fish with nets. It's not worth it. Everyone else out there fishes with a rod. That guy needs to keep his nose out of our business and stop filling your heads with romantic ideas about having different rights than everyone else just because he is Métis. He should follow the rules like everyone else.



*Jay understood where her mom was coming from. She had overheard people at the dock angry and upset about Gary and his nets. Was she afraid that Mitchel would get harrassed at his job? Was this also why her mother hadn't told them they were Métis?*

*That night, Jay spent hours looking up articles on the Métis. She found articles that described them as 'the Forgotten People' who lived in communities all across Canada, harvesting from the land during and after the fur trade. They wore colorful sashes and sometimes adorned their dress; coats, mittens, mukluks, pants, vests and bags with elaborate beadwork. They also loved getting together for feasts and celebrations accompanied by fiddle music.*

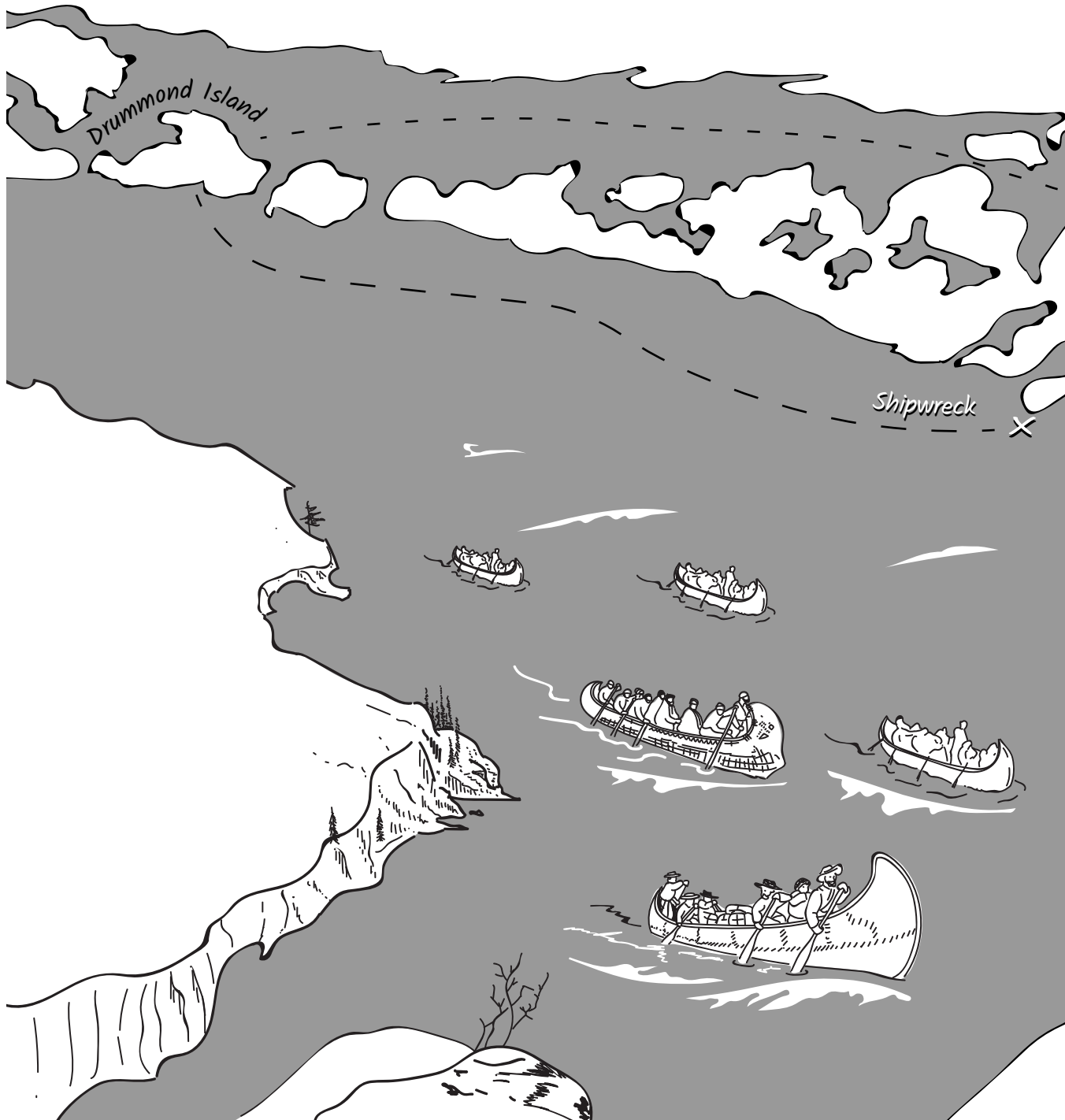




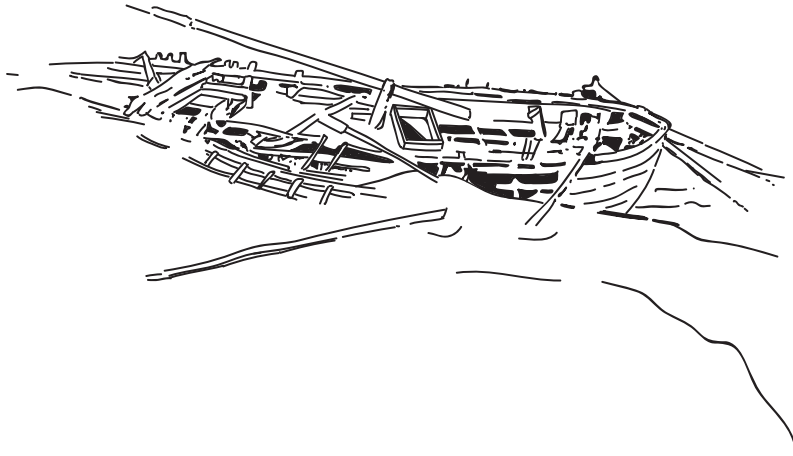
*What was also revealed was a dark past. Throughout Canada they suffered prejudice, were isolated and excluded from both the "white" way of life, and other Aboriginal communities. Many were forced from their homes to make room for settlers to live on and farm the land.*

*The Métis long suffered discrimination and violence for the color of their skin, the languages that they spoke and for their lifestyle of trapping, trading and living off the land. Since the government didn't recognize the Métis as an Aboriginal group, they were not granted any right to any land for their communities. For 150 years they have been oppressed and disenfranchised of their culture and land.*

Jay dug deeper about the Métis in Georgian Bay. She found that they possessed their own unique historical context to that of the Métis in western Canada. The Drummond Islanders that Gary had spoken to her about the day before were Métis who lived on Drummond Island, and were displaced after the war of 1812 to Penetanguishene. In 1828 they had all been forced to migrate there and offered plots of land, along the water to live on.

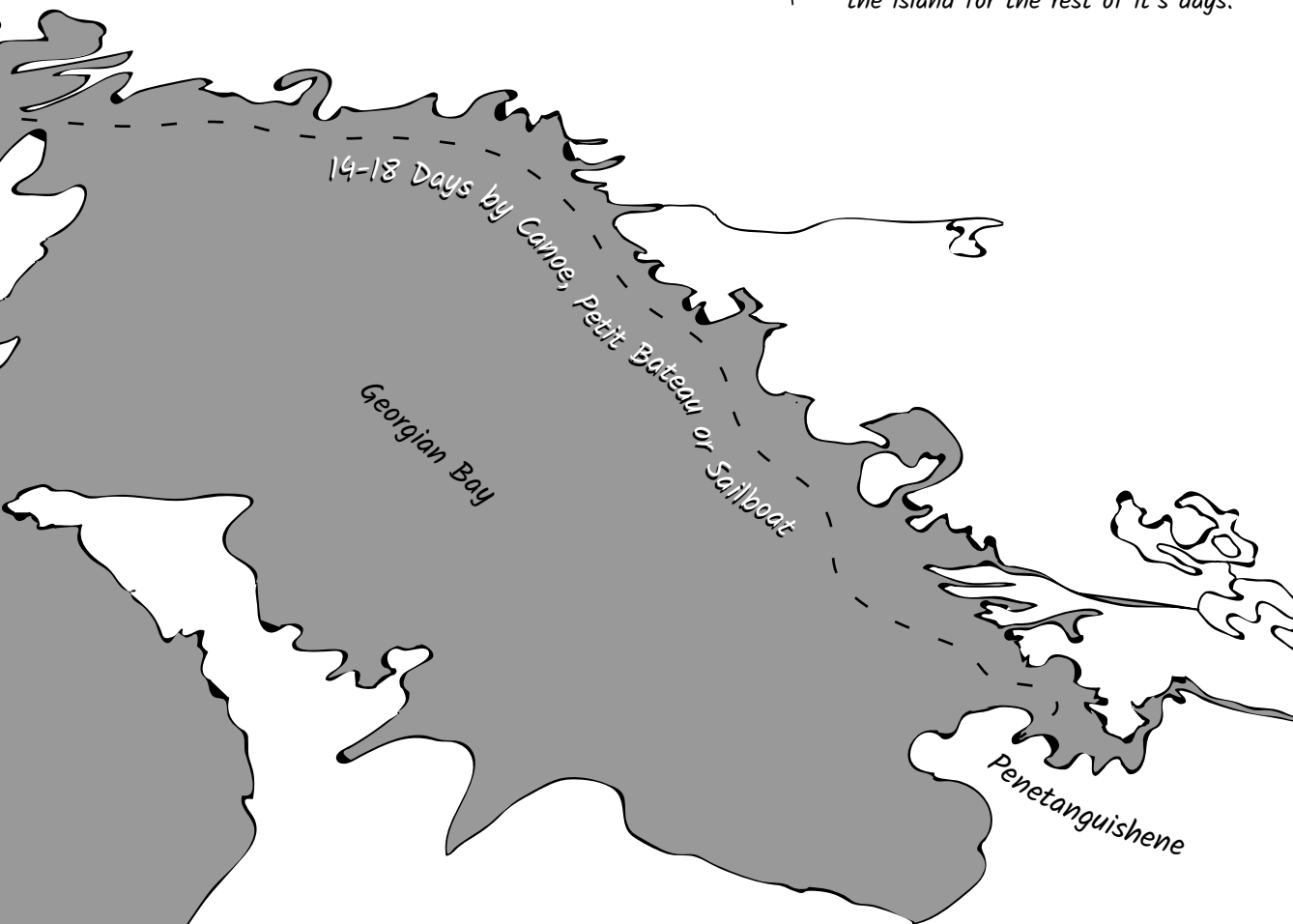


✕ *The Alice Hackett  
Schooner  
Shipwreck*



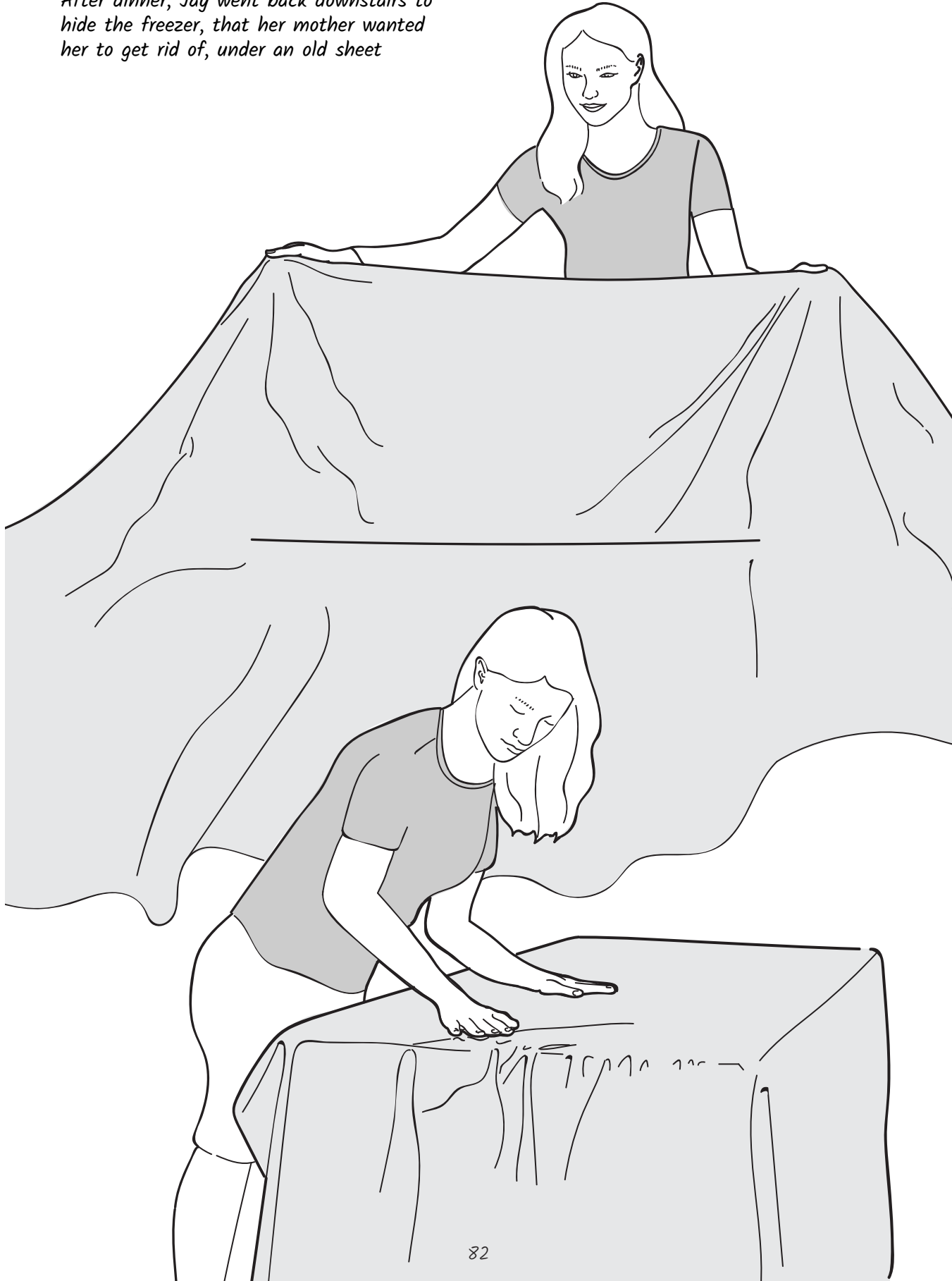
*October, 1828, over 30 passengers, livestock and 13 barrels of whisky and rum were transported by boat to Penetanguishene when a strong wind caused the ship to crash on the southern tip of Fitzgerald Island (Horse Island).*

*All 13 barrels were saved along with all passengers and one white horse which swam to shore and lived on the island for the rest of it's days.*



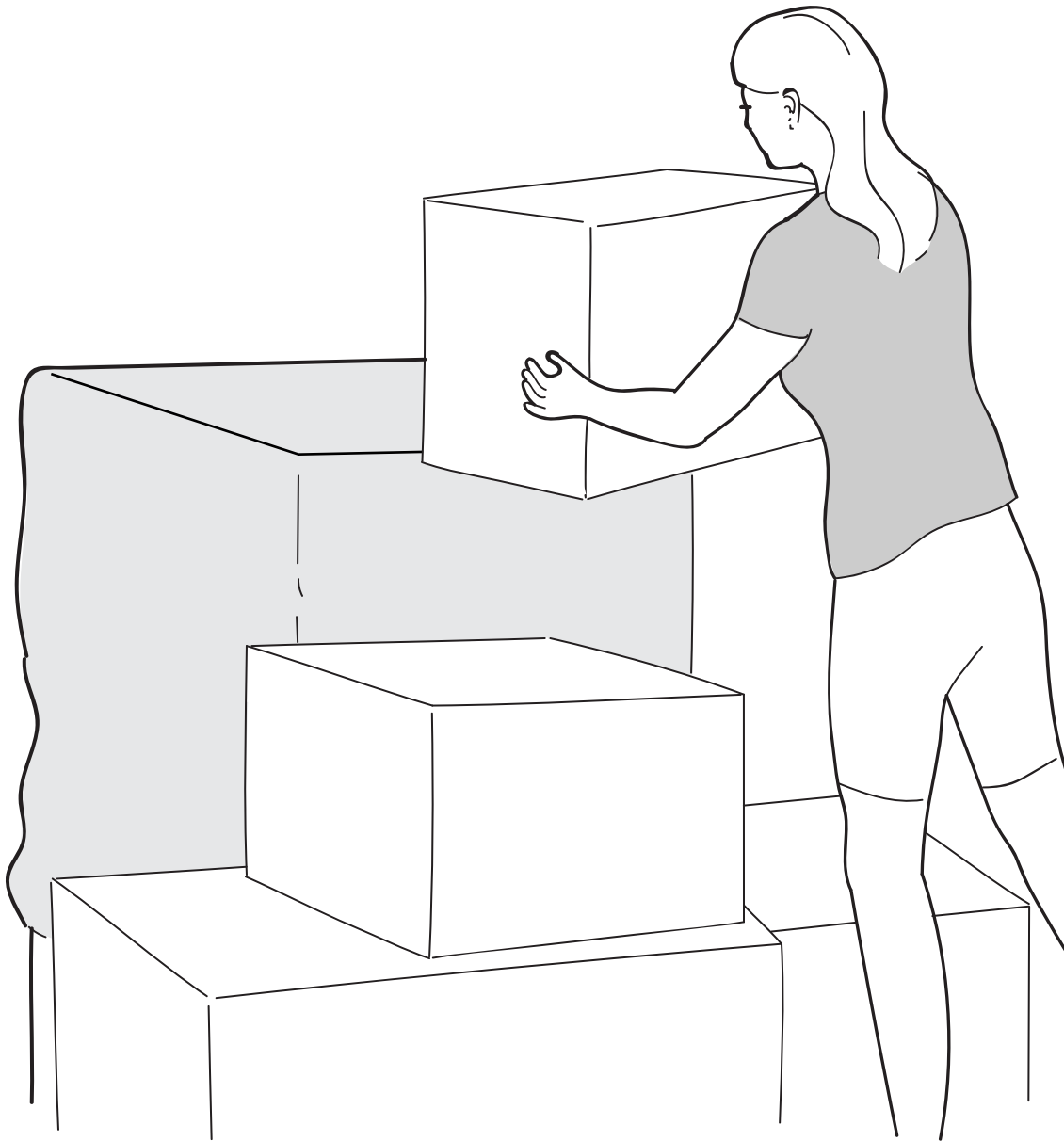
*Jay knew where her mother stood on the question of Métis rights but she still wanted to know more. She also worried about how her mother would feel if she knew that she had been going out to fish with Gary and the others herself.*

*After dinner, Jay went back downstairs to hide the freezer, that her mother wanted her to get rid of, under an old sheet*



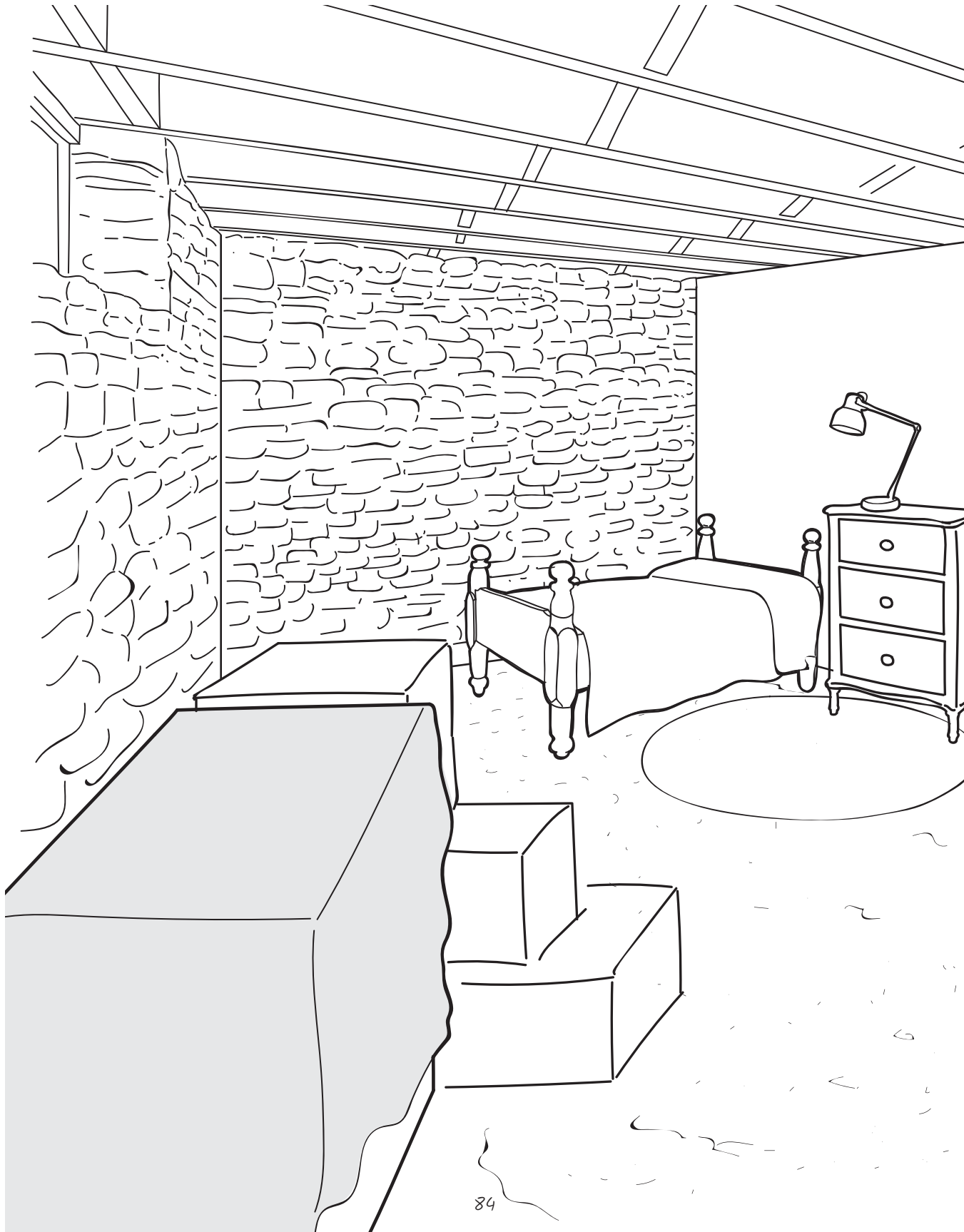


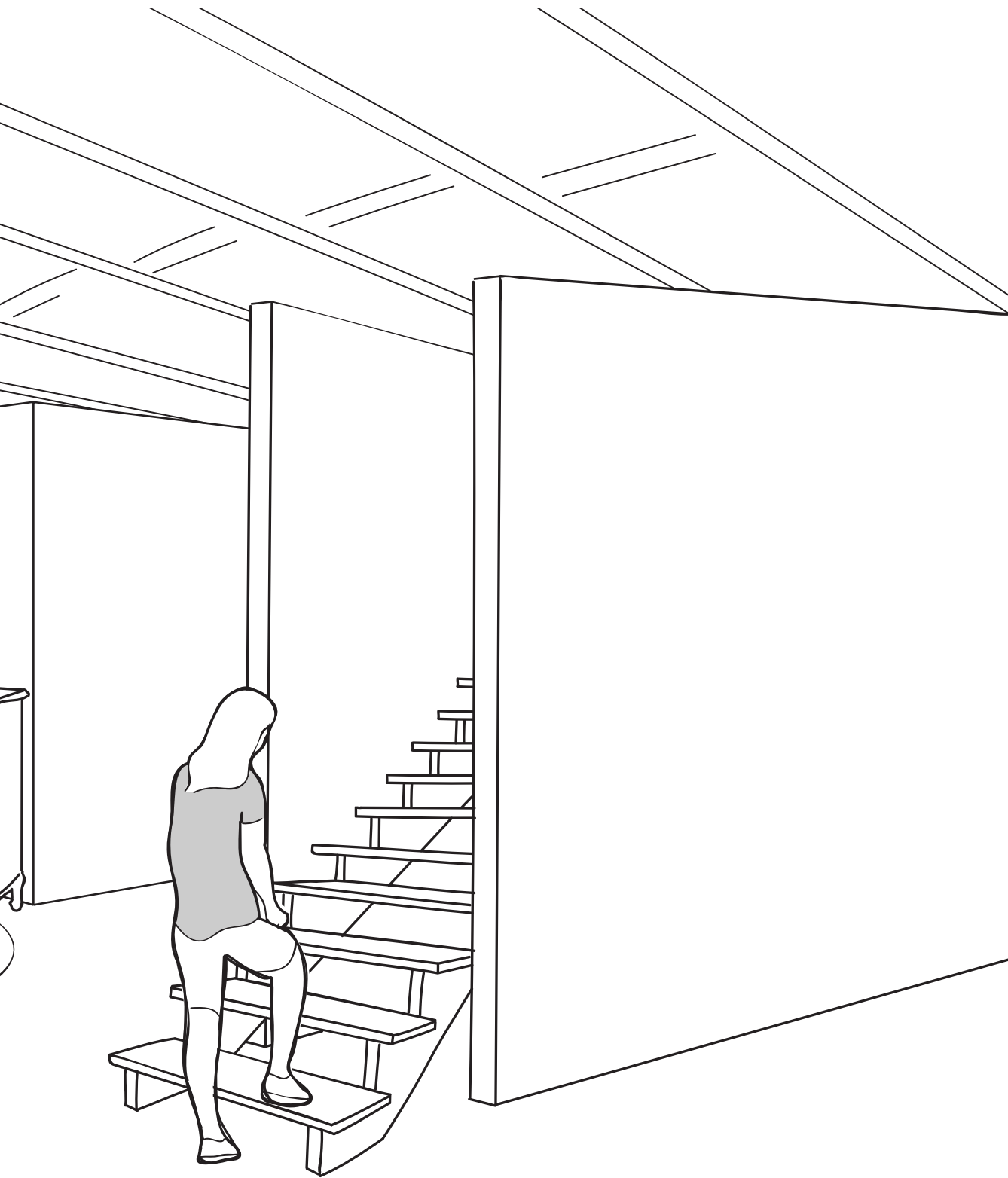
*and piled boxes on one side to block it off from Mitchel's space.*



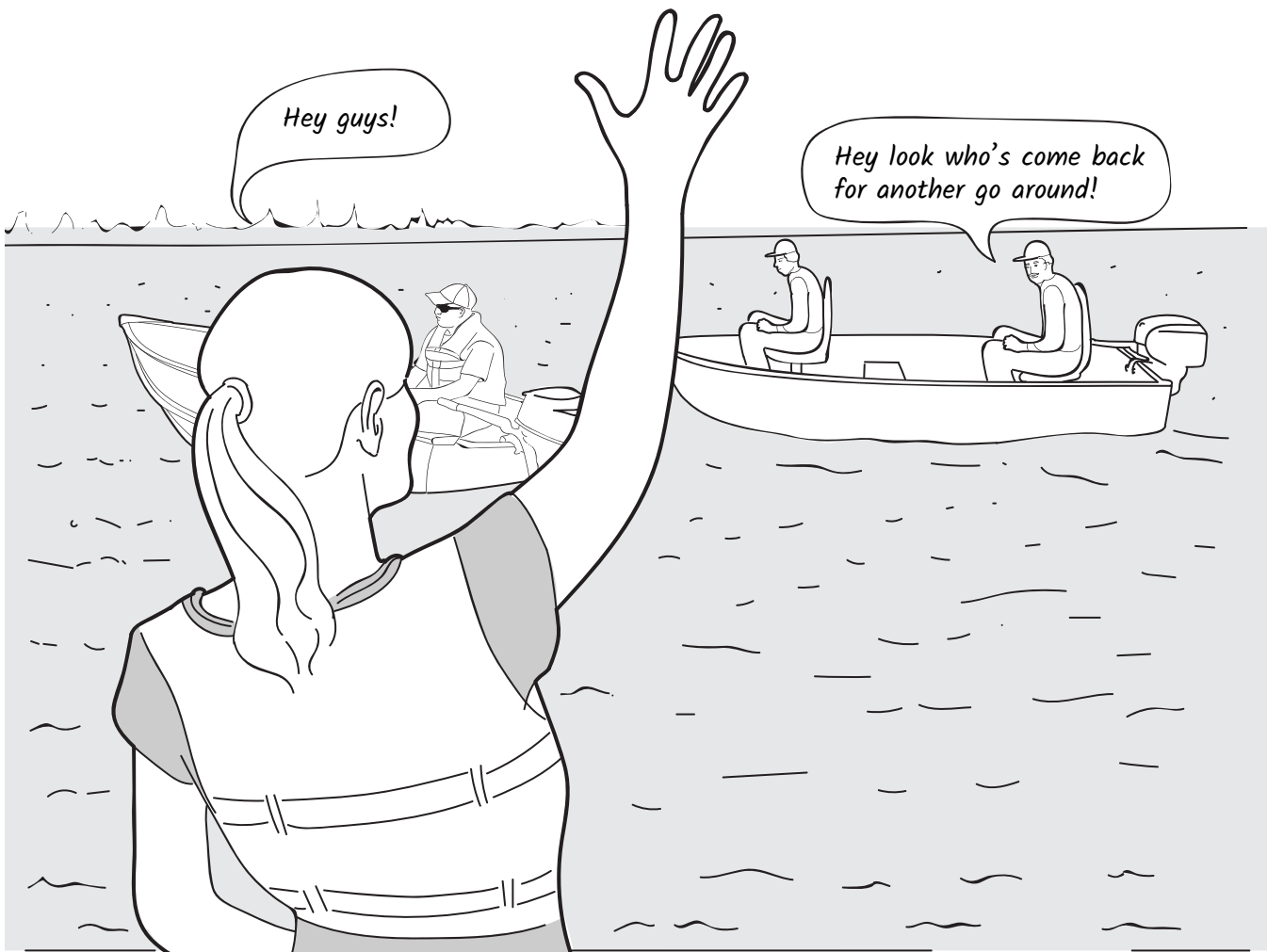
*She couldn't let her mother or Mitchel know what she was doing. Not yet.*

*She knew her mother probably wouldn't want her spending any time with the harvesters but Gary and his friends were her best shot at learning about the Métis. She couldn't have her mom find out and stop her from going to meet with them.*



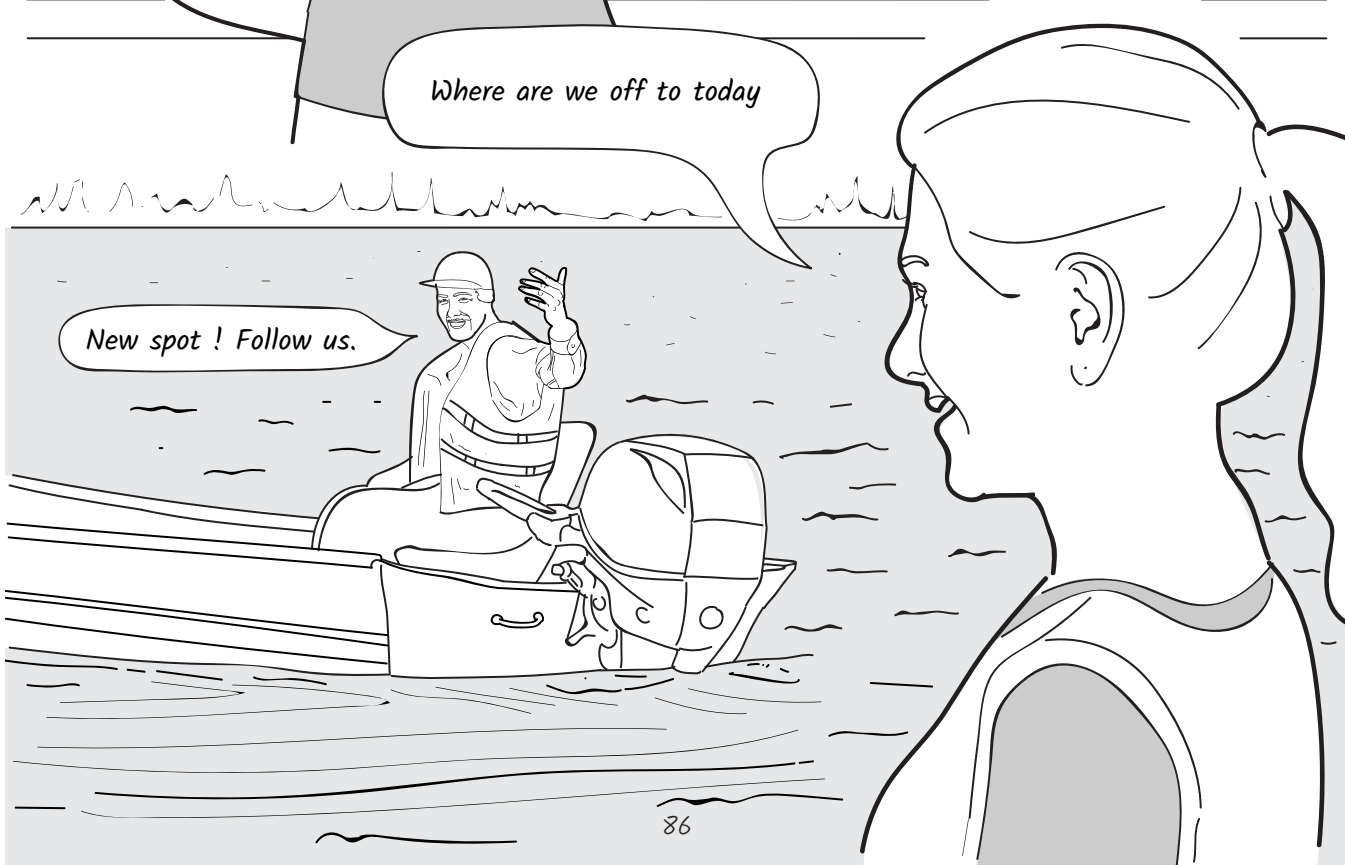


*So the next morning she would go back out with the fisherman in the hopes to find out more.*



Hey guys!

Hey look who's come back for another go around!



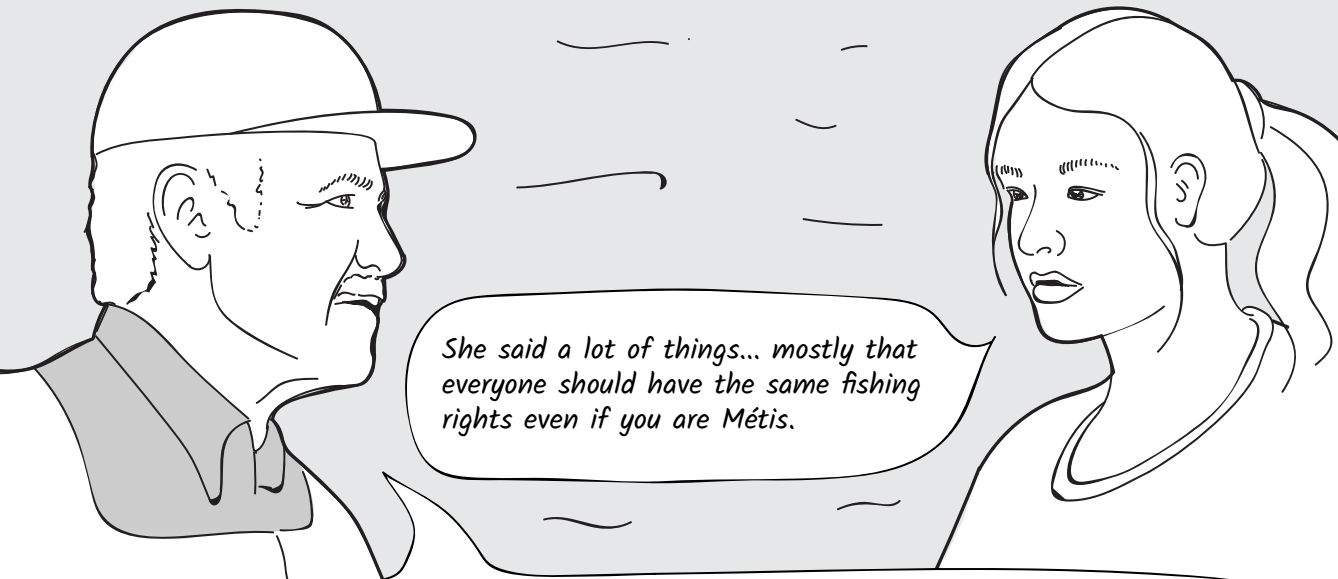
Where are we off to today

New spot ! Follow us.



Hey Gary, so I asked my mom about what we talked about yesterday.

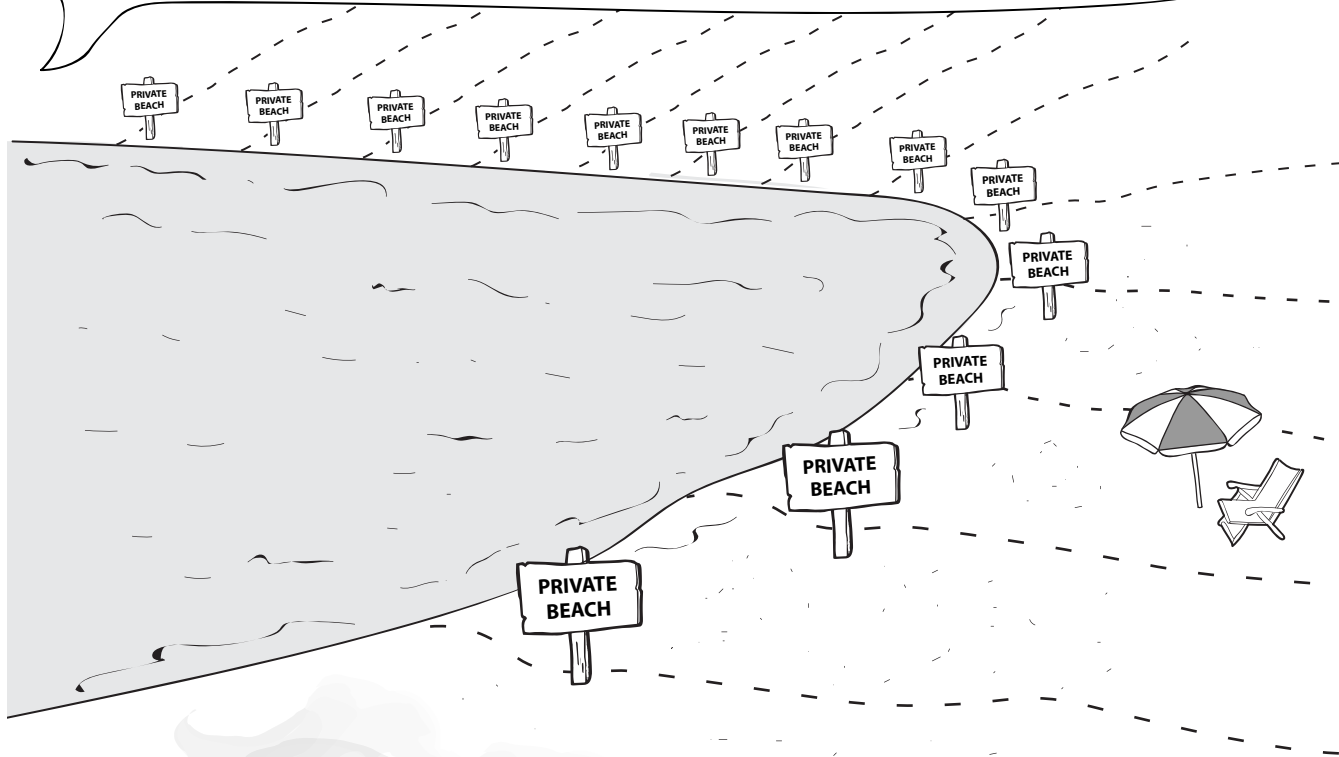
Oh yeah?



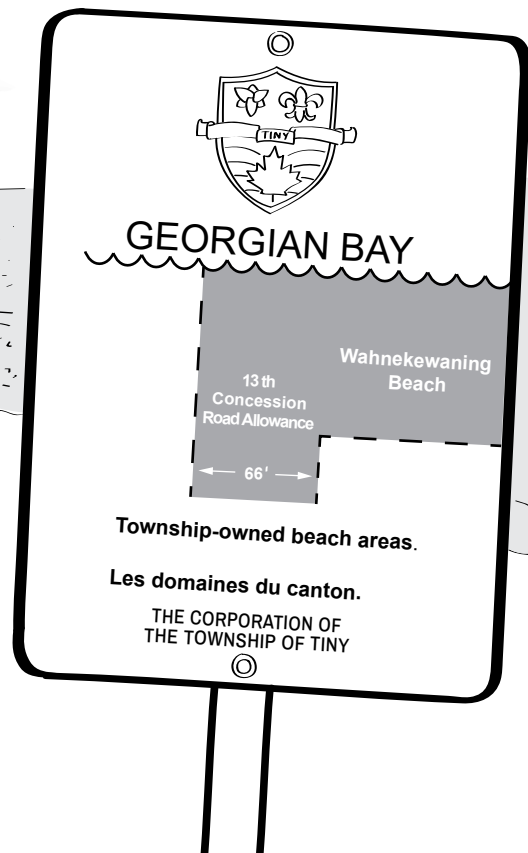
She said a lot of things... mostly that everyone should have the same fishing rights even if you are Métis.

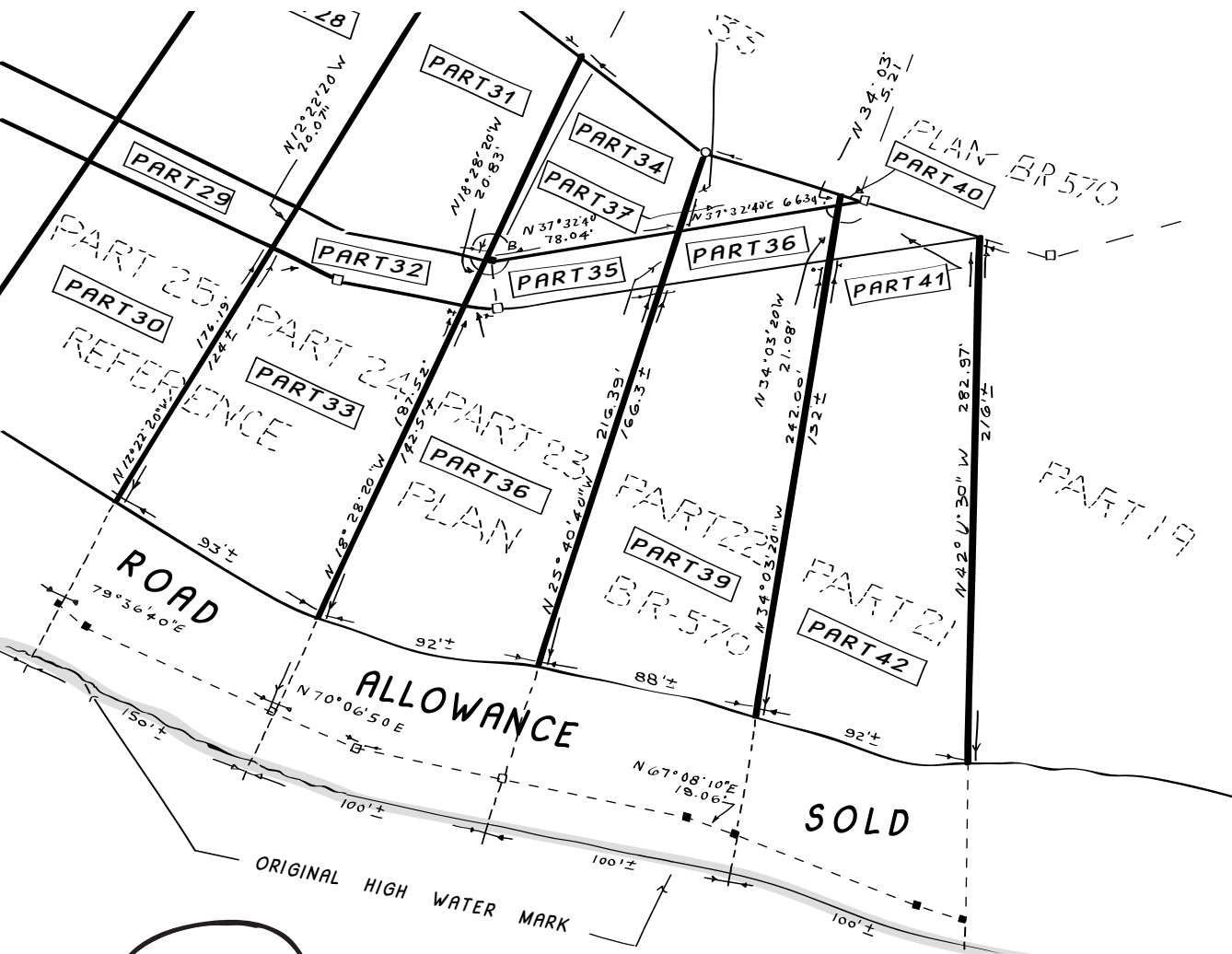
I hear this a lot, that net fishing is unfair for everyone else. I understand where this comes from but what your mother and many others should recognize is that when we are fishing with nets we aren't fishing for sport, we are fishing for our sustenance. The right for us to fish for this purpose, is recognized by the government.

Besides, there is something that connects us to this place and the water and it's not because you or I grew up near here. Our existence is about our relationship with the land and our knowledge of it through language and stories. When I look out to the Watcher Islands or walk down Thunder Bay Beach; I see the places where members of our community used to fish and live in like our Anishinaabe mothers before them. I know because those stories survived.



As you know, we no longer occupy these spaces like our ancestors did. Many of these beaches are now transformed with signs and fences showing us which spaces are public or private. In many of them it feels like you can't go anywhere without arousing suspicion and fear.



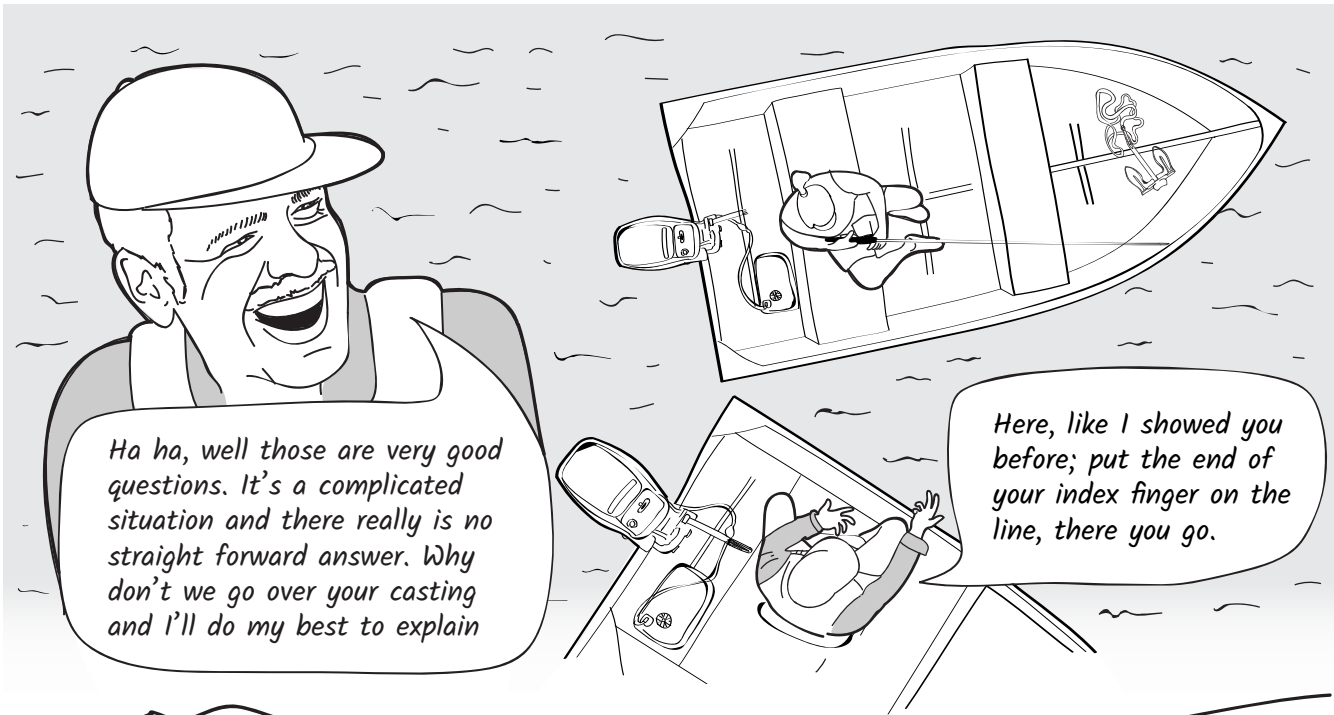


I think the resentment and fear people have with our net use is connected to the changes in how these spaces are managed.

Can I ask something?

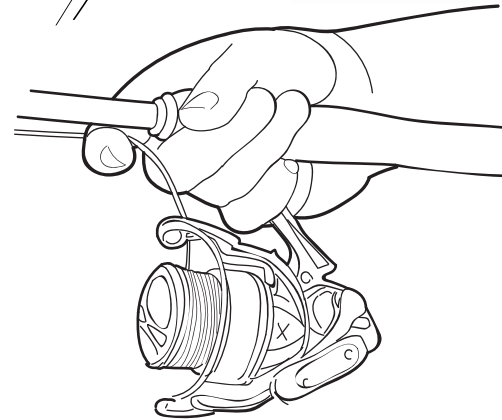
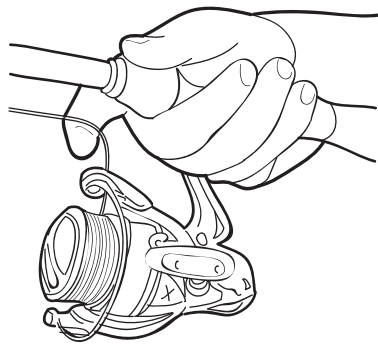
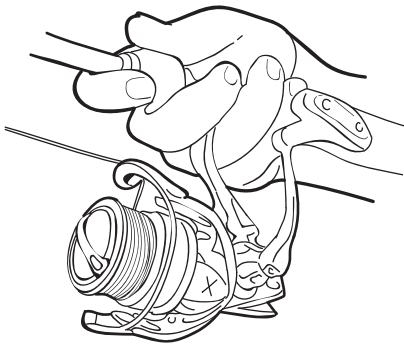
Sure thing, Shoot.

Have the Métis always fished with nets? If so, why do people have an issue with it now?

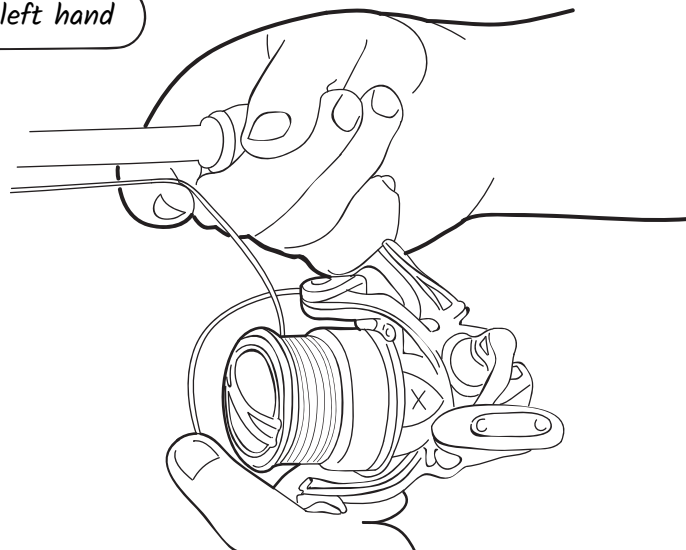
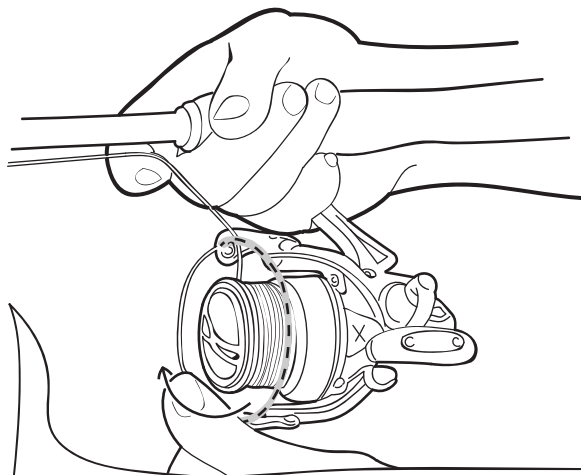


*Ha ha, well those are very good questions. It's a complicated situation and there really is no straight forward answer. Why don't we go over your casting and I'll do my best to explain*

*Here, like I showed you before; put the end of your index finger on the line, there you go.*

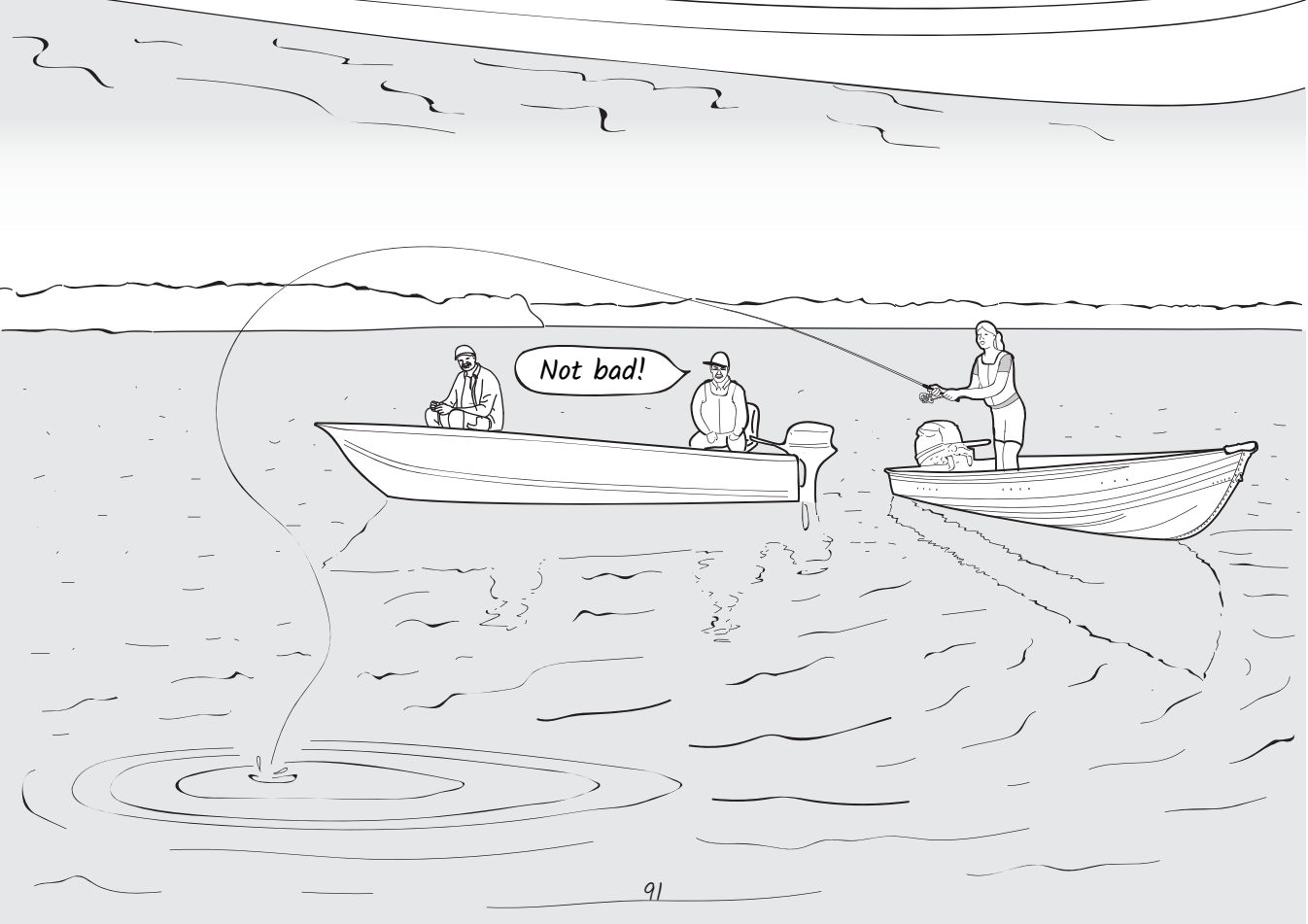
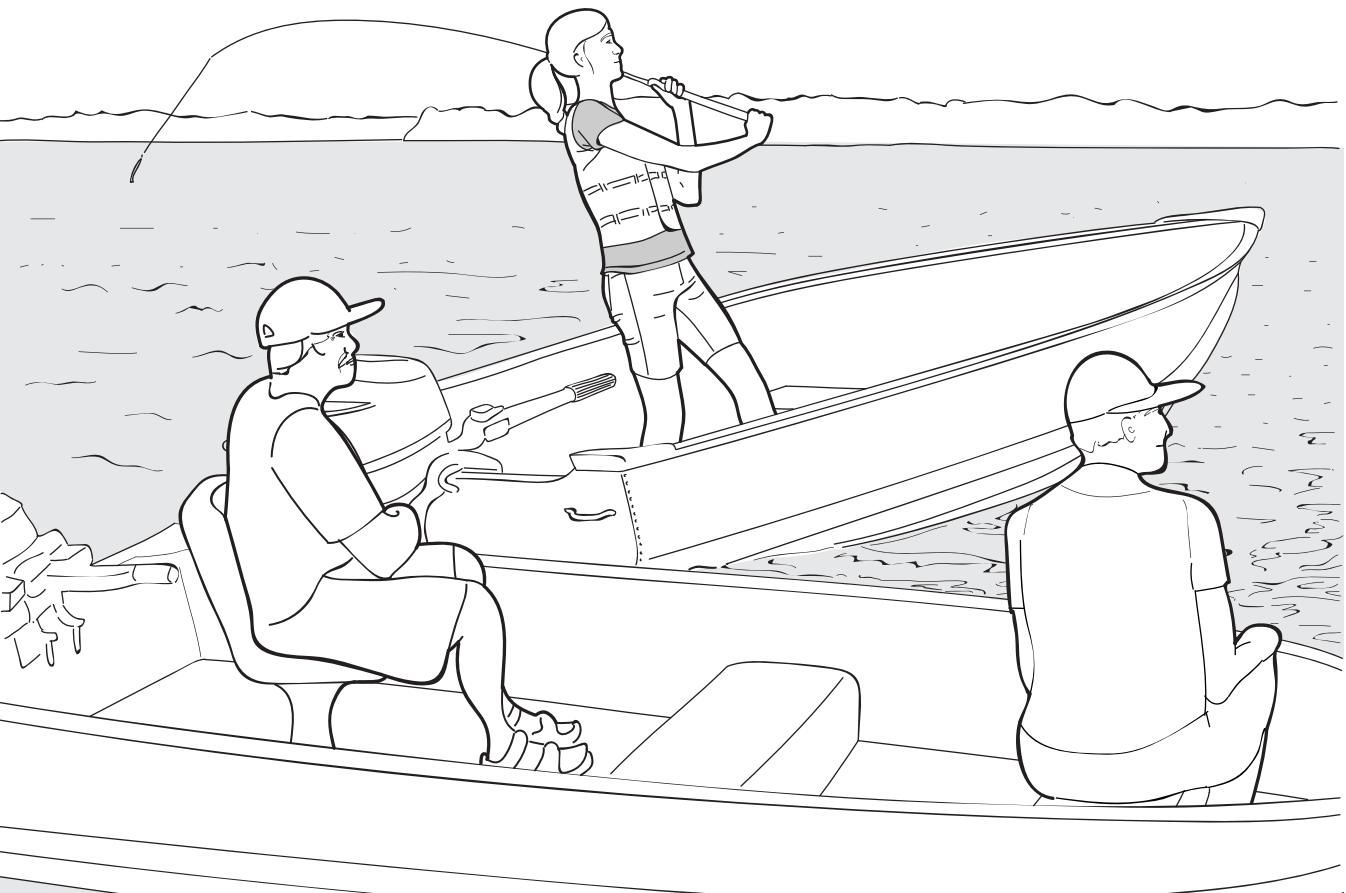


*Now, engage the bail with your left hand*



*Ok now, take your rod over your head, swing it back and when you swing it back forward, pull your finger off the line in one quick motion once your rod is at a 30 degree angle.*

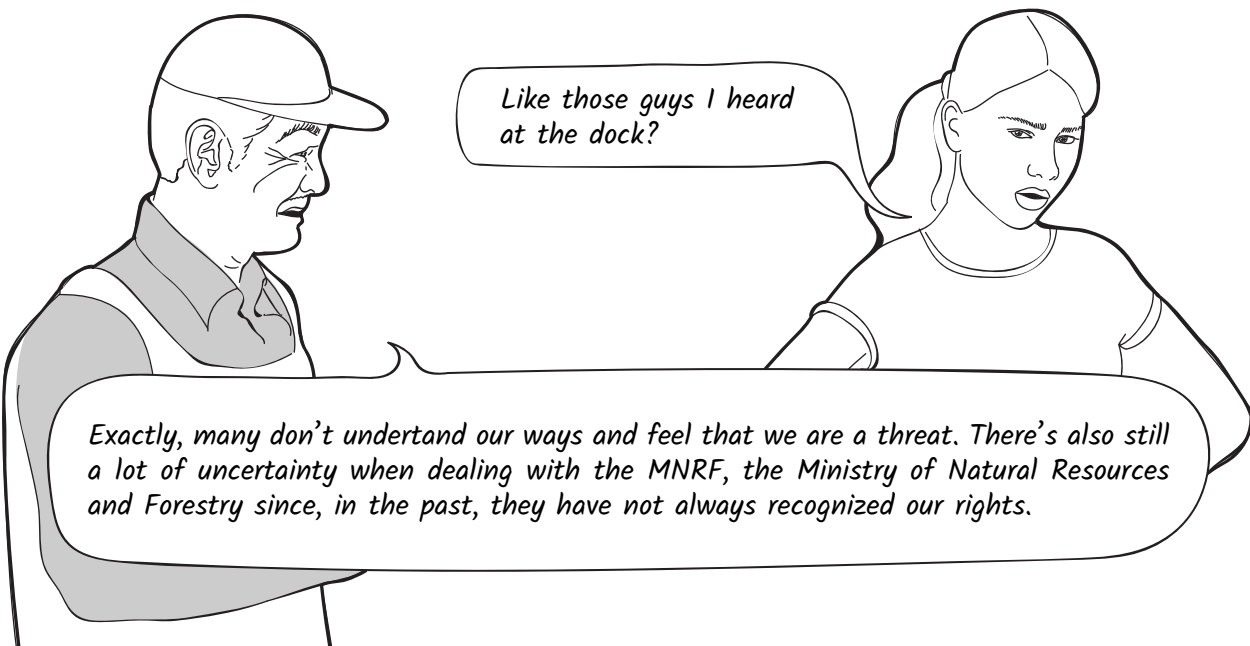




*Alright, where do I start? First Nation people and the Métis used nets up until newcomers and the government wanted to manage and control the way they fished. They saw traditional ways of fishing such as spearing, net use, night fishing and fishing in spawning grounds as uncivilized and we were told that we had to now fish in more civilized ways. Many believed that our ways were a danger to sport fishing as well as the ecology and well being of the fish.*


*The government passed a law that forbade all people from fishing with nets unless they had a commercial licence. If officials caught an Indigenous person fishing with nets or selling fish without a permit they could confiscate our nets and our fish. For many years we were not able to fish traditionally and only just regained the ability to. Even so, there are still people who descriminate against us due to the many sterotypes that still exist about Indigenous people and fishing.*



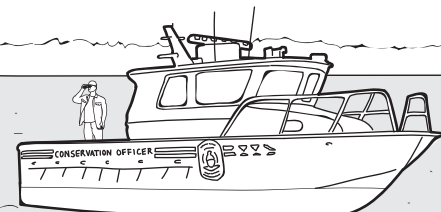


Like those guys I heard at the dock?


Exactly, many don't understand our ways and feel that we are a threat. There's also still a lot of uncertainty when dealing with the MNRF, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry since, in the past, they have not always recognized our rights.



Hey do you see the boat over there?



Yeah it's the MNRF, they've been watching us for a while



It sounds like things are better now that you have your rights recognized at least?

Things are certainly better but there are still other elements that affect Métis harvesting rights. Even though we signed a harvesting agreement for our communities in Ontario back in 2016 with the provincial government, there is still a long way to go.

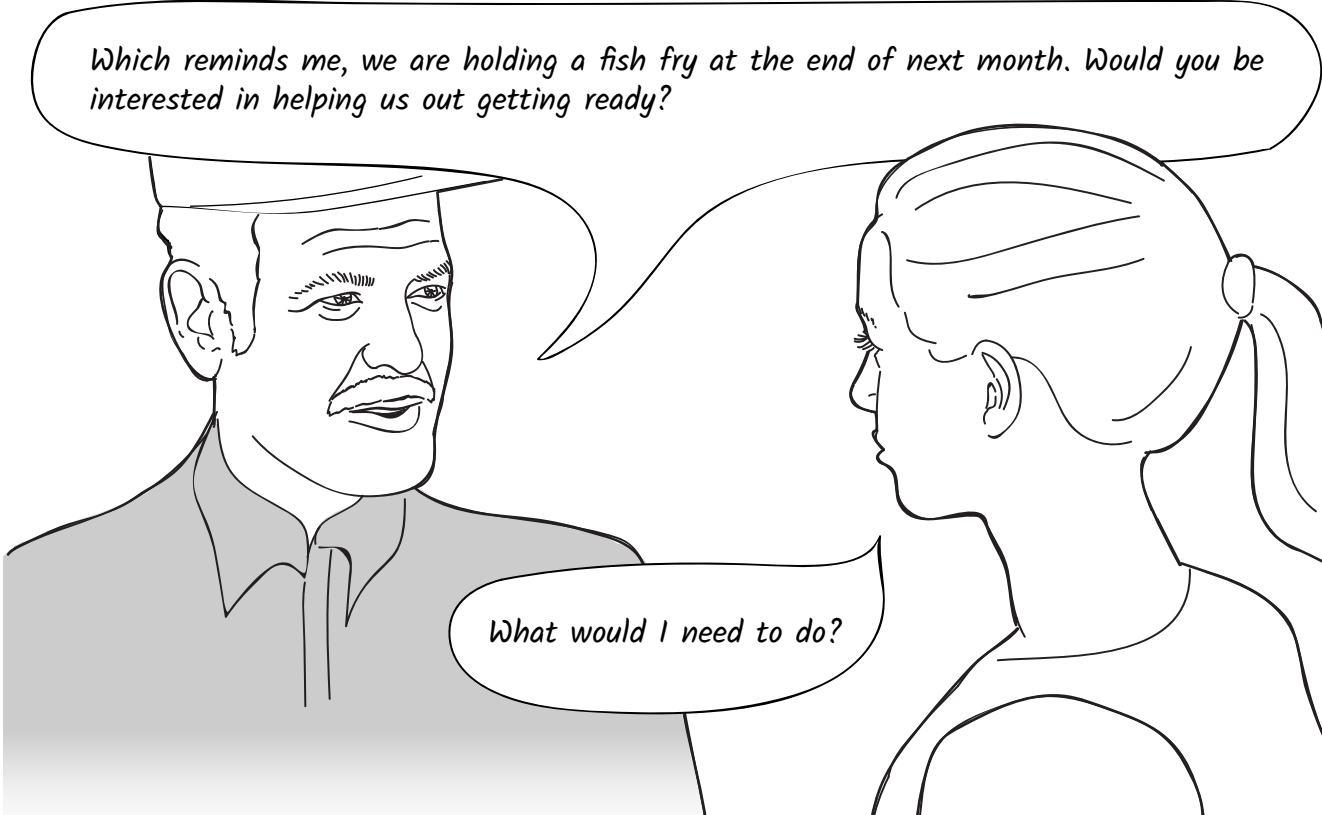
One of the most important things to consider is mobility. We still don't have permission to build more permanent shelters in the areas we harvest in or the ability to harvest outside our traditional territories. If we want to camp while harvesting we have to do so on crown land. An increase in private property and lack of crown land in areas we want to harvest sometimes makes this difficult. So, over the last few years, the boys and I have rented private lakefront cabins or cottages. It can get pretty expensive but what other choice do we have?




*There's so much I didn't know. I feel like I've been in the dark about all of this my entire life.*

*You still have lots of time to learn.*


*These are your rights too. If you are ever interested in not just watching us set nets you can apply for your harvesting card. It is your right if you choose to do so. A harvesting card would let you fish with a net and participate in any harvesting we do beyond fishing. It's up to you, no pressure.*




*Which reminds me, we are holding a fish fry at the end of next month. Would you be interested in helping us out getting ready?*




*What would I need to do?*



*'Big Man' probably wouldn't mind some help getting the fish ready the next time a big catch comes in. Here's his address and his phone number for you to get in touch. He lives with his wife in town.*



*Ok, that sounds great. Will I need to bring anything?*



*I don't think so, just yourself. In any case he will let you know.*

*And so that evening, Jay brought the boat back to shore and called up the guy Gary called 'Big Man' to offer a hand preparing fish for the upcoming fish fry. She realized in that moment that she didn't even know how to clean a fish. Quietly she admitted her lack of experience and after a short pause she could hear a hearty laugh on the other line. The man only had one thing to say before saying goodbye.*



In the next week Jay got a call from 'Big Man' that a big catch had come in and for Jay to come on over.

Chapter 6

Hello Jay!  
Come on in.

Did you want some tea  
while we work?

I just made it, it's cedar tea.

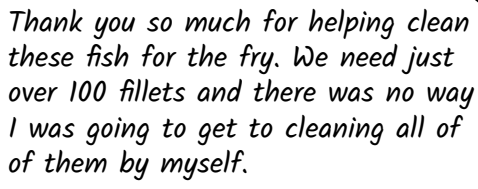
Uh. Sure. How do you  
make tea out of cedar?

*Cedar Tea ~ giizhik-aniibiish*

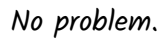
1. Simmer 2 cups of fresh and washed cedar leaves in 4 cups of boiling water.
2. Let sit for 10 minutes until the water becomes a golden color.
3. Strain the cedar leaves from the water.
4. Sweeten with maple syrup, or honey to taste (optional)

\* Do not exceed 2 cups per week

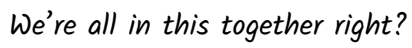




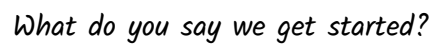
*Thank you so much for helping clean these fish for the fry. We need just over 100 fillets and there was no way I was going to get to cleaning all of them by myself.*



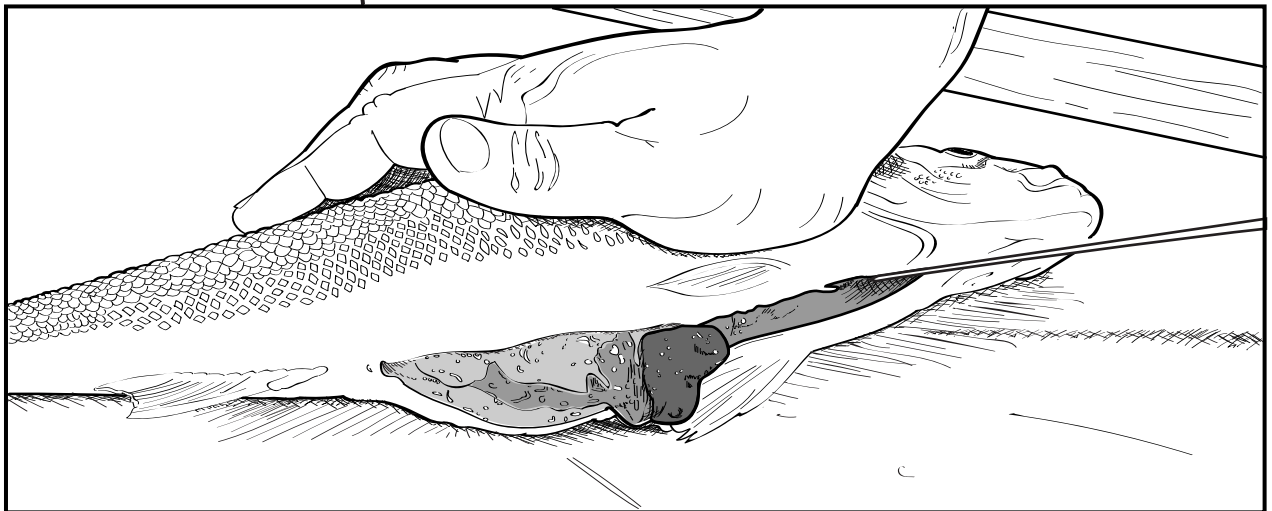
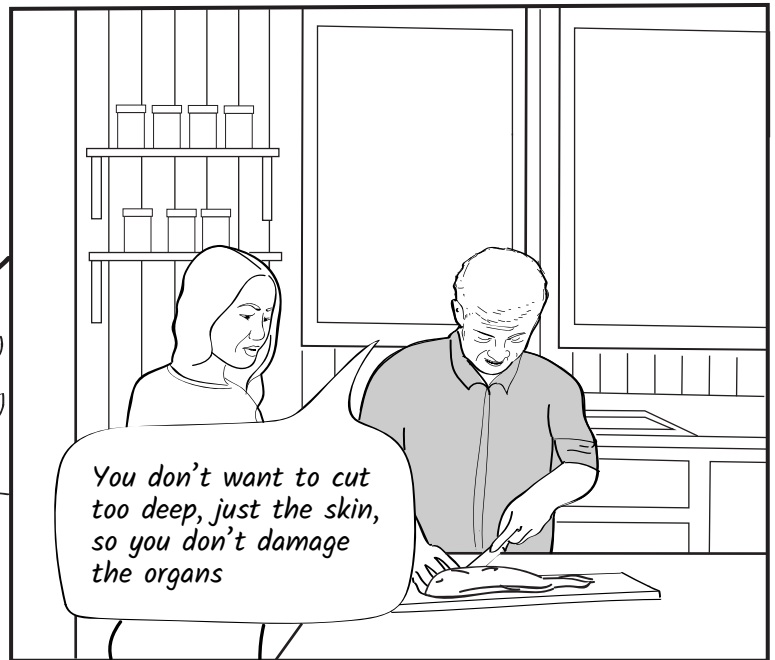
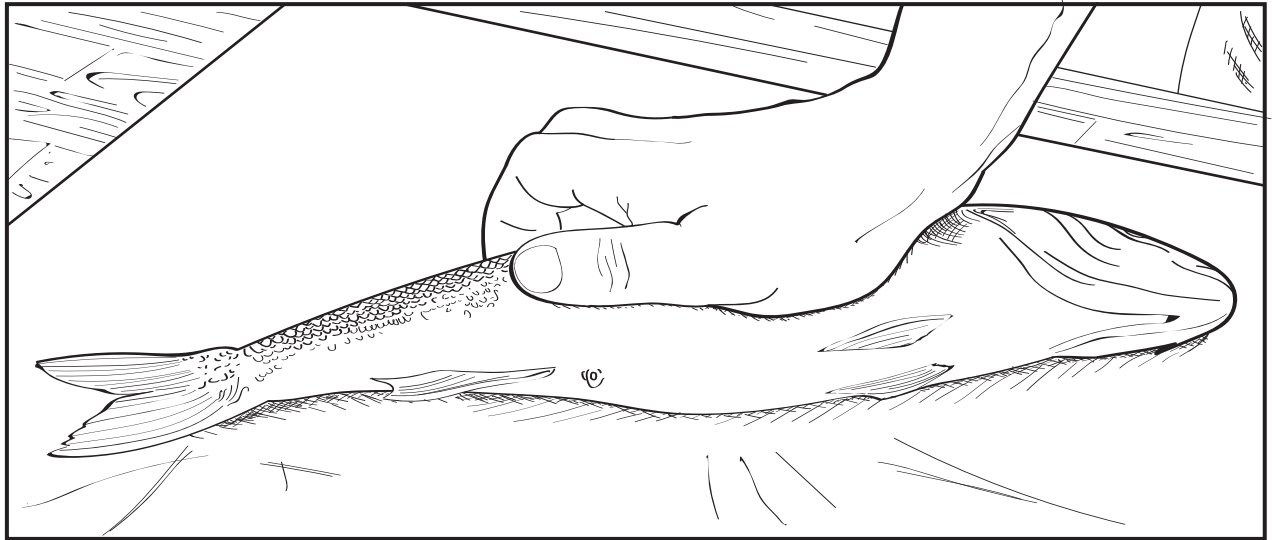
*No problem.*



*We're all in this together right?*

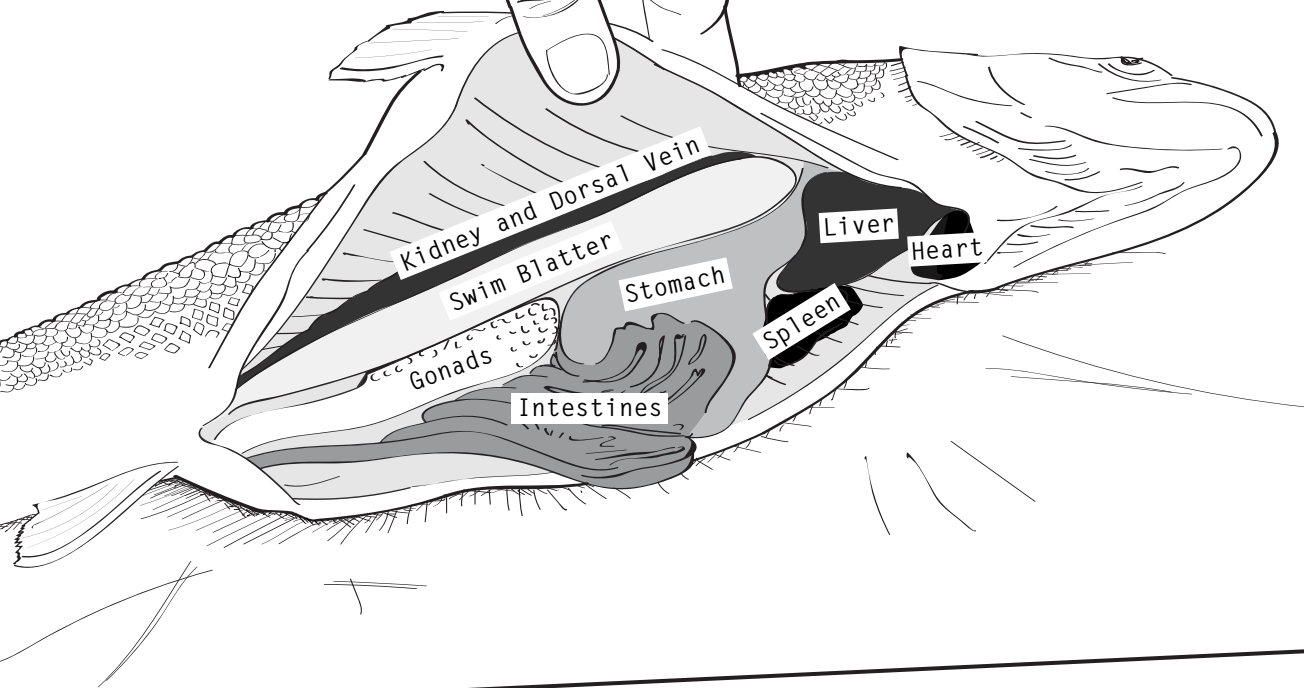


*What do you say we get started?*



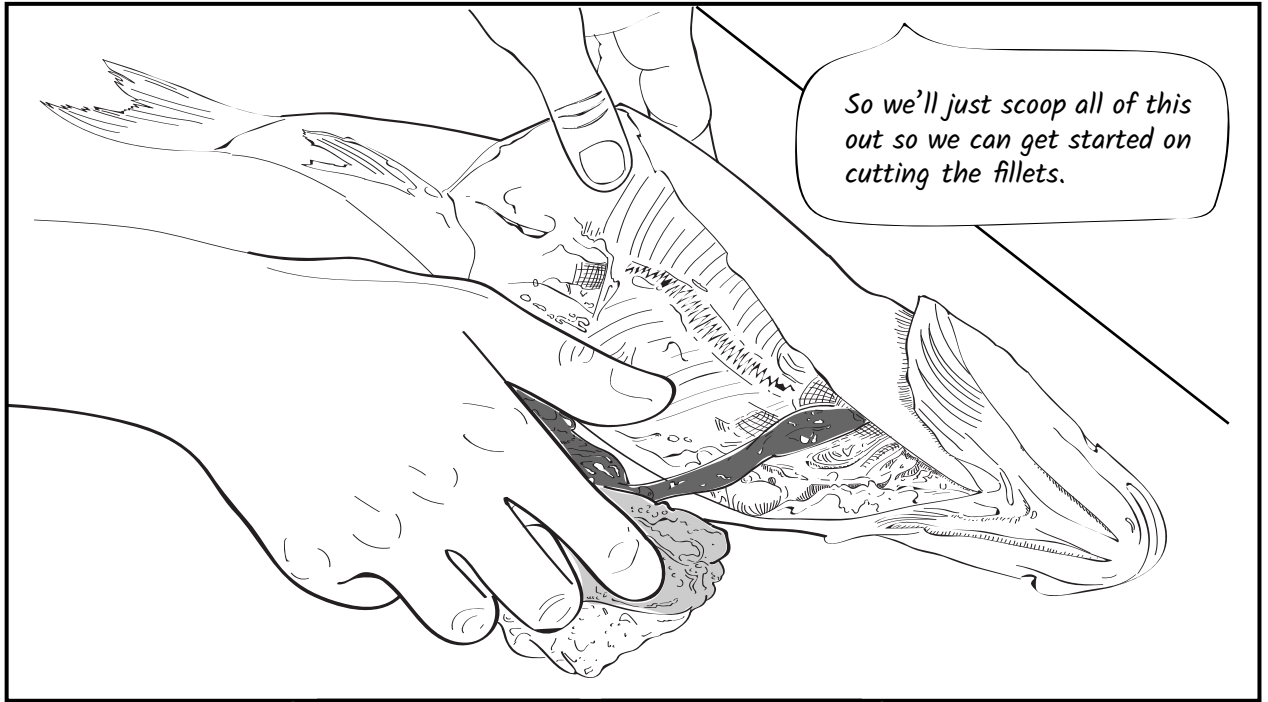
There was a time when nearly all of the organs wouldn't go to waste. With increasing levels of chemicals in the water, like mercury, it's now impossible. We used to depend on the nutrients in many of them for our health.

The **liver** especially is a great source of vitamin A.



The **heads** are an excellent sources of protein and vitamin B and good source of calcium. You can throw them in soups.

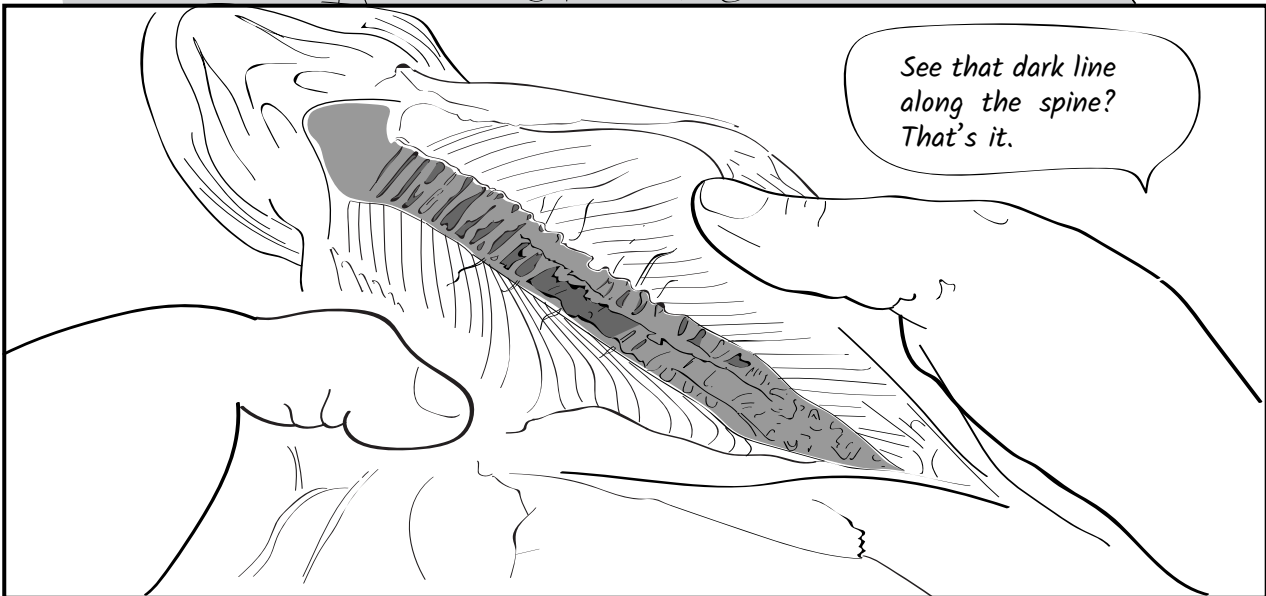
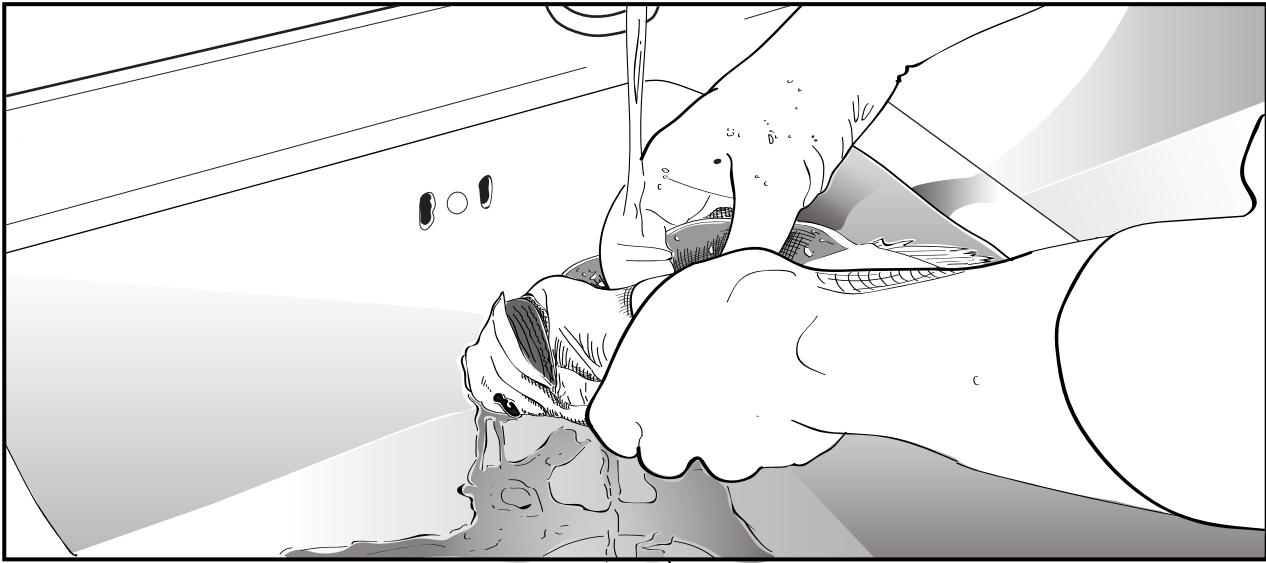
Sometimes you may even get a surprise and the fish is a female. Her **eggs** are a great source of vitamin A and C.

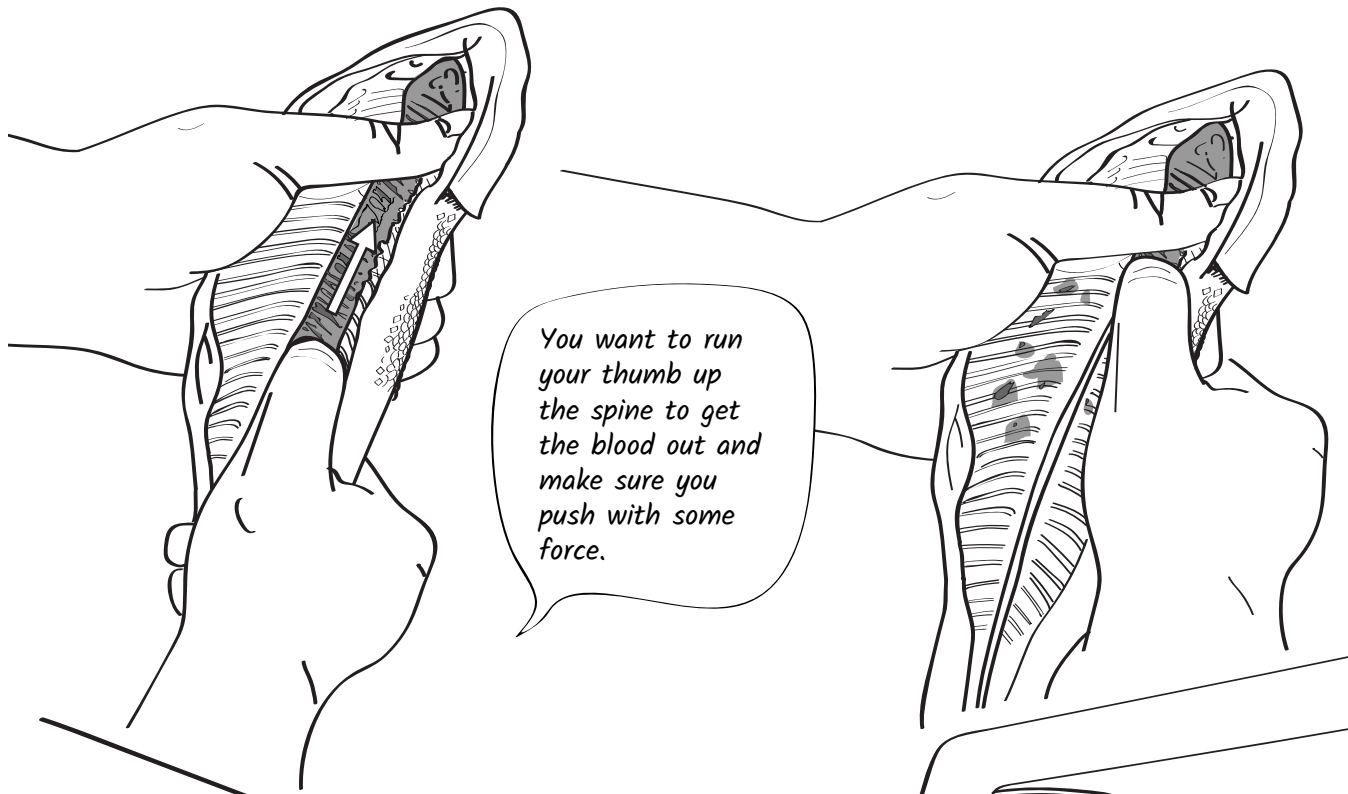


*So we'll just scoop all of this out so we can get started on cutting the fillets.*



*But first, let's bring this to the sink so we can finish cleaning it out.*





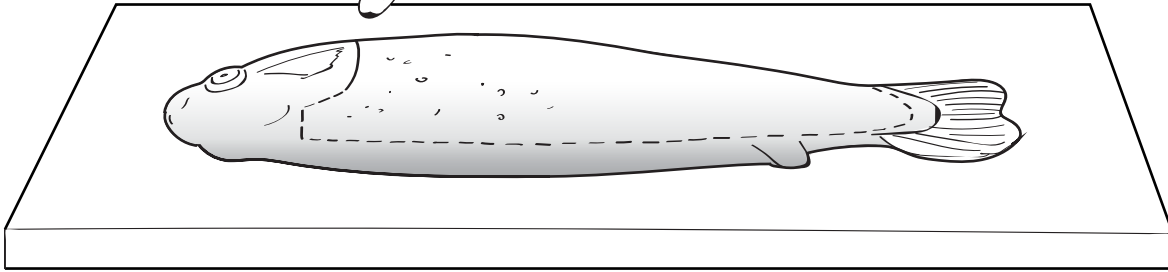
You want to run your thumb up the spine to get the blood out and make sure you push with some force.



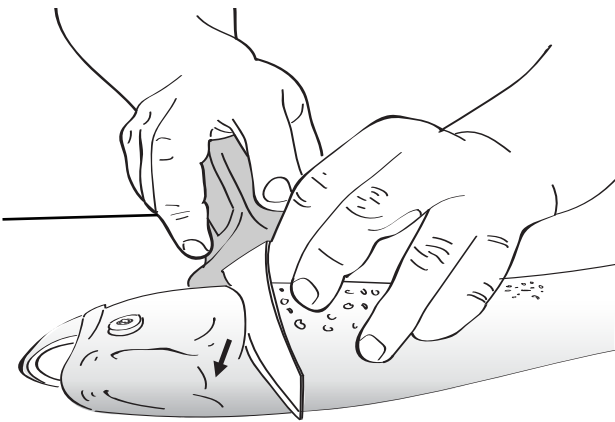
Then just clean out the blood under some water and..

See all clean!

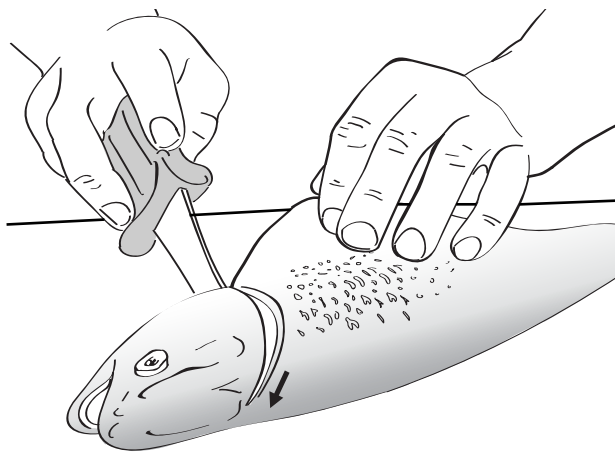
Then you want to cut the filet.



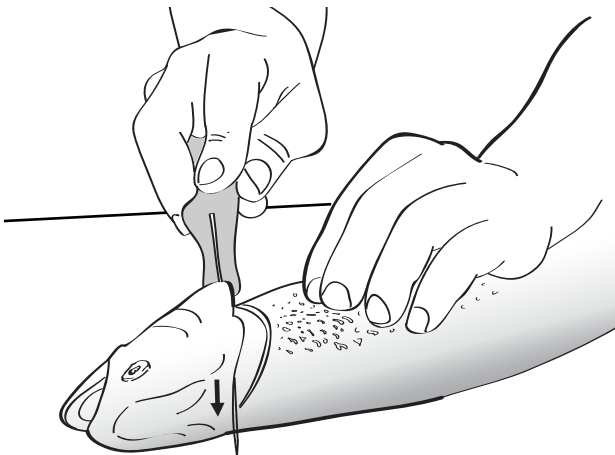
Notice how I'm cutting diagonally under the gill?



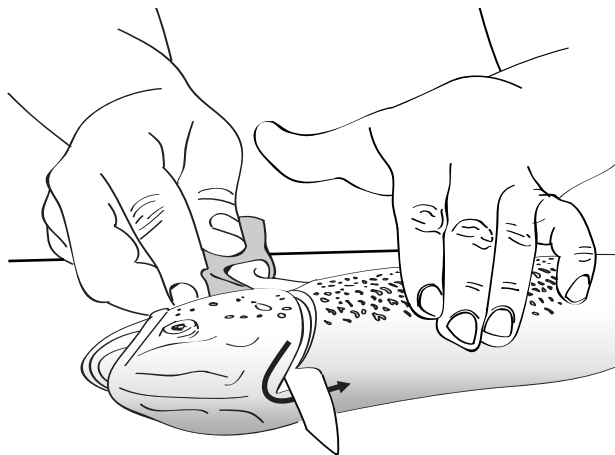
You want to make sure you cut deep around it.



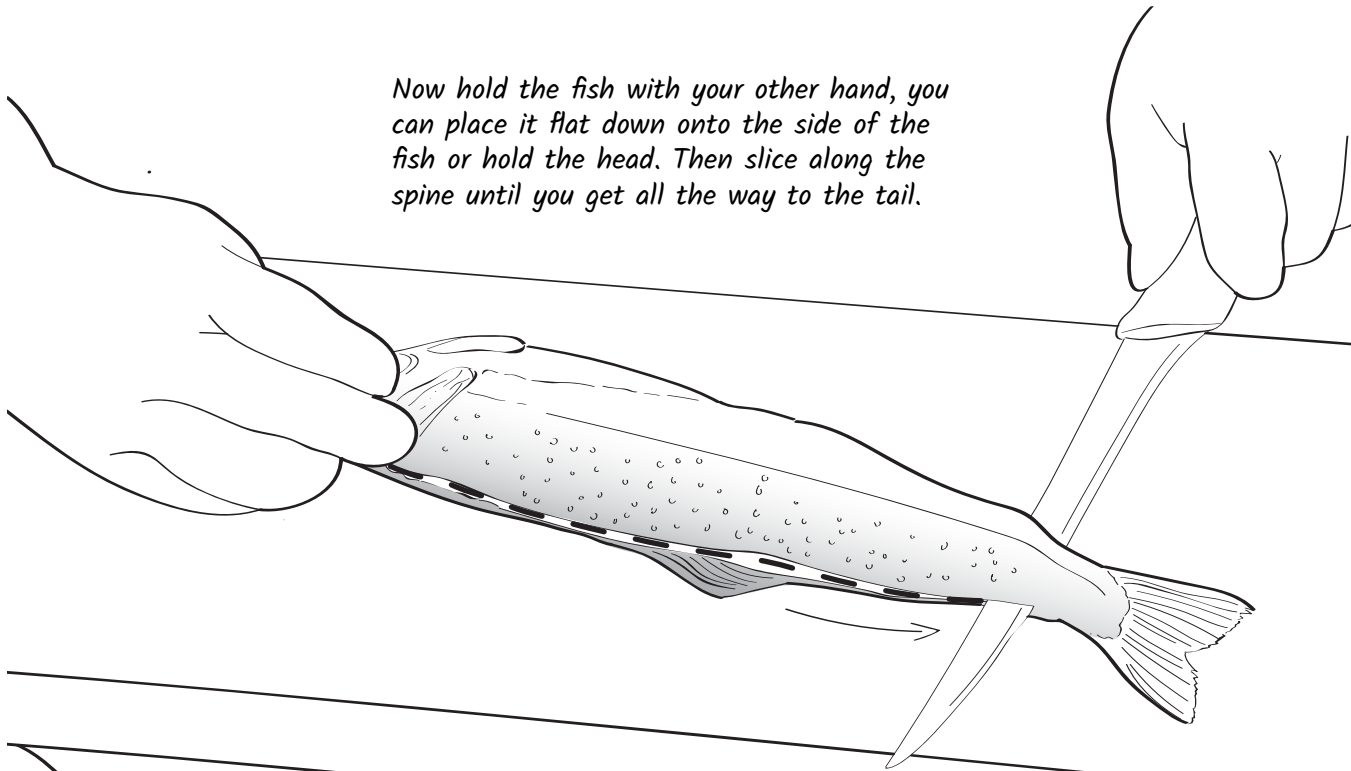
Then cut straight down all the way to the spine.



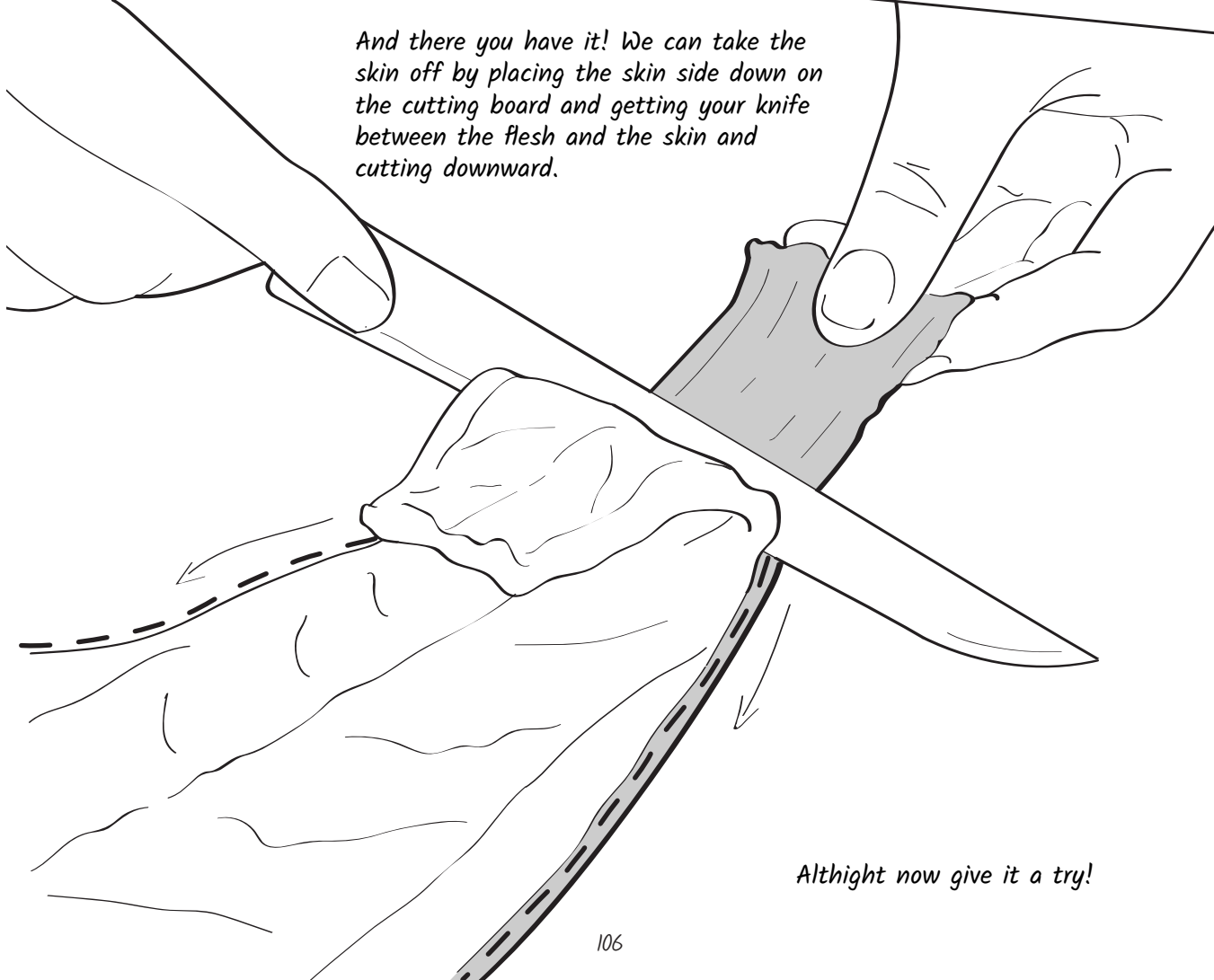
Finally twist your knife around so that the blade is facing towards the tail.



Now hold the fish with your other hand, you can place it flat down onto the side of the fish or hold the head. Then slice along the spine until you get all the way to the tail.

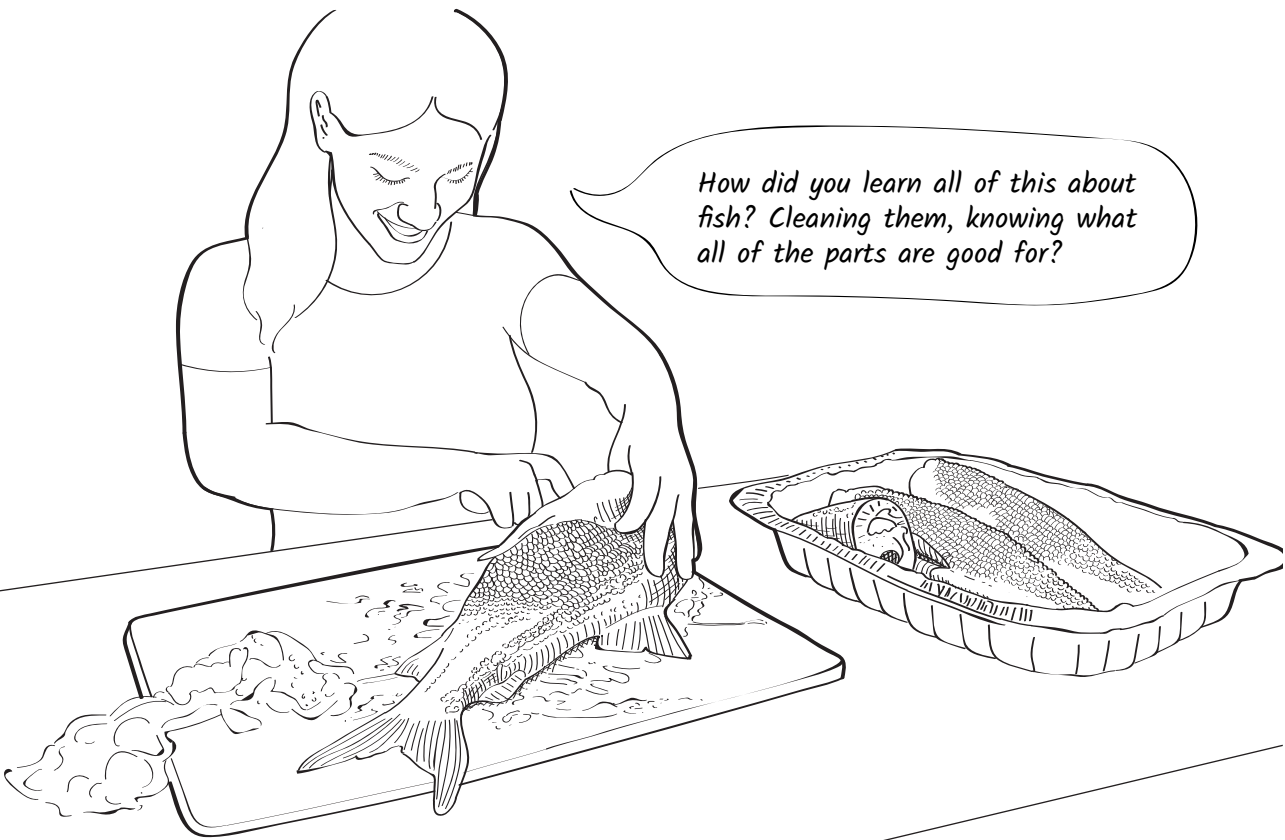


And there you have it! We can take the skin off by placing the skin side down on the cutting board and getting your knife between the flesh and the skin and cutting downward.



Alright now give it a try!

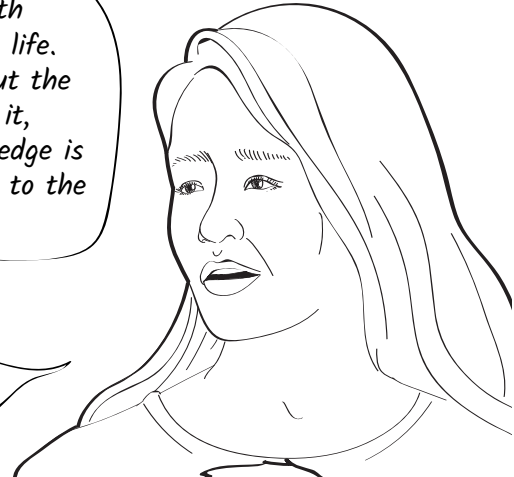




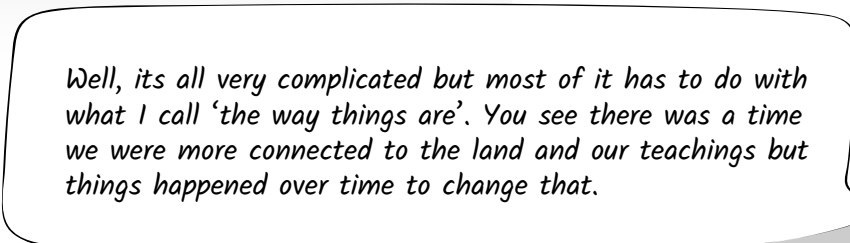
*How did you learn all of this about fish? Cleaning them, knowing what all of the parts are good for?*



*My father taught me along with other knowledge holders in my life. It's so important to know about the things we eat, how to process it, their benefits... but this knowledge is no longer getting passed down to the younger generations.*



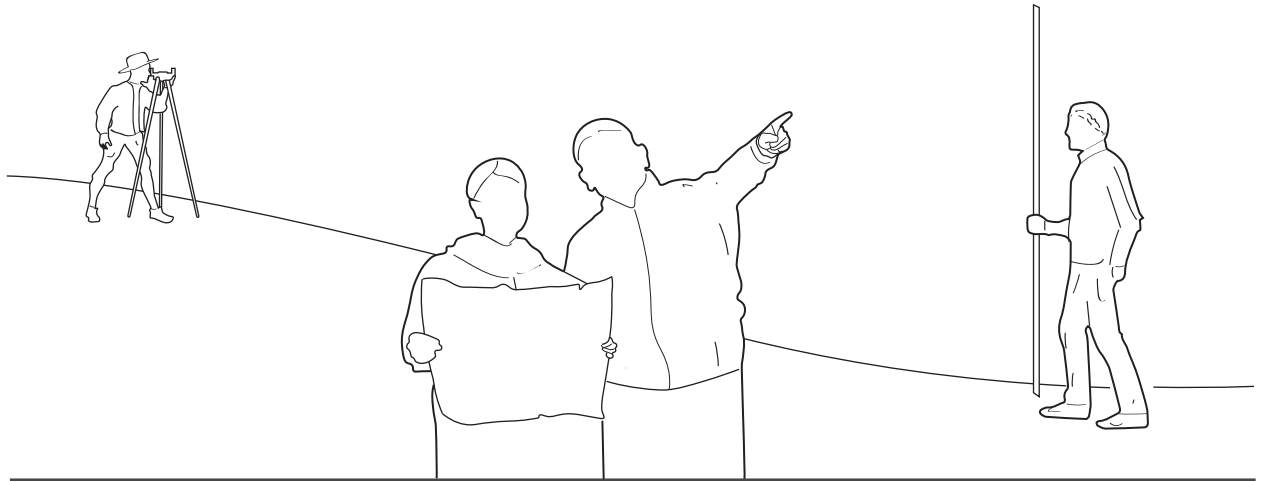
*Why is that??*



*Well, its all very complicated but most of it has to do with what I call 'the way things are'. You see there was a time we were more connected to the land and our teachings but things happened over time to change that.*



Before Canada was a country, newcomers wanted to come and live here. They surveyed the lands, made detailed maps of the landscape.

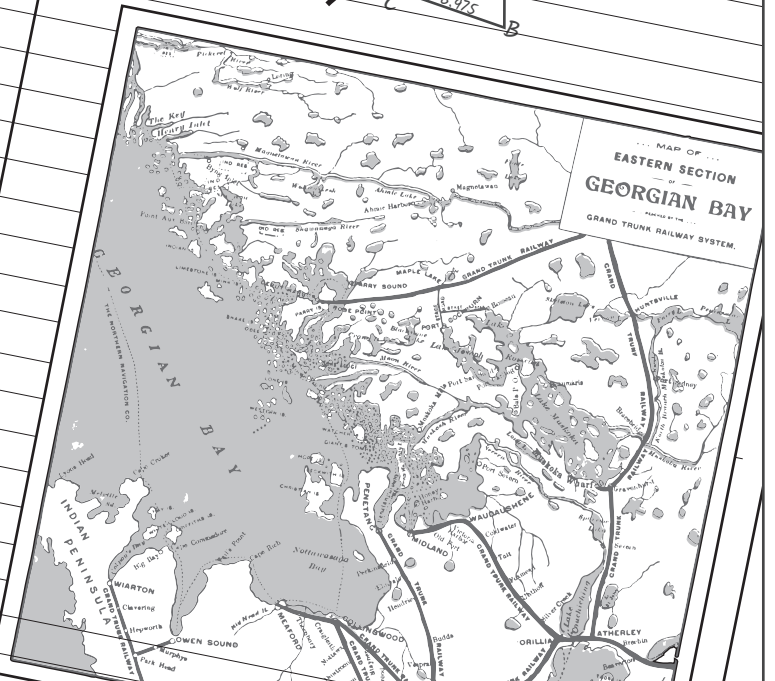
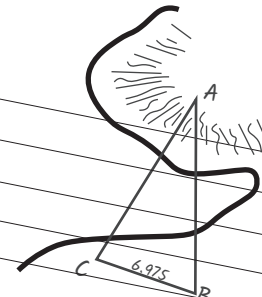


This activity seemed innocent enough, but eventually it became clear what the newcomers wanted. To buy the land from 'the Indians'.

I left camp on the other side of the lake with Adam, Fred Beatty and a dog team driven by Alfred who left me at the M-60 Camp where I dined, returned to Camp M-53 where I remained all day on January 4th. Ellis Lewis came down to claim a dog team, and took my outfit up to M-12. I remained all day starting work to connect my point on the camp survey with my survey point at the mouth of the bay.

I did this by getting on a ridge about camp and running south like this. From the Point! the peak at the ridge (see page 56) I was able to connect this point with the camp as C, B, being on a open grassy flat. The B and found as follows

A	80° 15' 30"	B	260° 15' 00"
	160° 31' 30"		340° 31' 30"
A and found as follows			
	88° 03' 00"	B	268° 02' 30"
	176° 06' 30"		326° 02' 30"

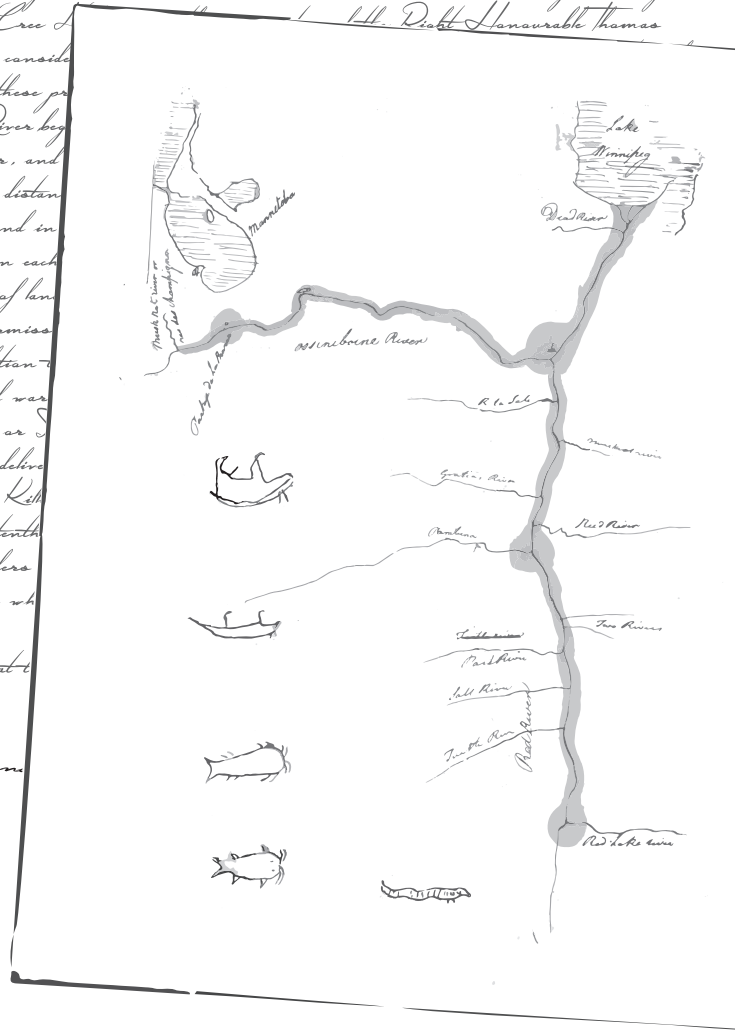


However, the Natives didn't see themselves as 'owning' the land they were its caretakers. So, they decided to sign agreements called treaties to make sure that they could continue to share the land and the ability to hunt and fish for future generations to come.

This Indenture, made on the eighteenth day of July, in the fifty seventh year of the reign of our Sovereign King George the third, and in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and seventeen between the undersigned Chiefs and Warriors of the Chippeway or Sautaux Nation and of the Kikistons or Cree Indians, on the other part Witnesseth that for and in consideration of the sum of one thousand dollars, the said Chiefs have given, granted and confirmed, and do, by these presents, a tract of land adjacent to Red River and Ossiniboyne River beginning at the mouth of Red Lake River, and called Riviere des Champignons, and extending to the distance of one mile from Fort Daer and also from the Great Forks and in that distance back from the banks of the said rivers, on each side of land, to have and to hold forever the said tract of land to the said Chiefs, with the consent and permission of His Majesty's Majesty's pleasure shall be known.

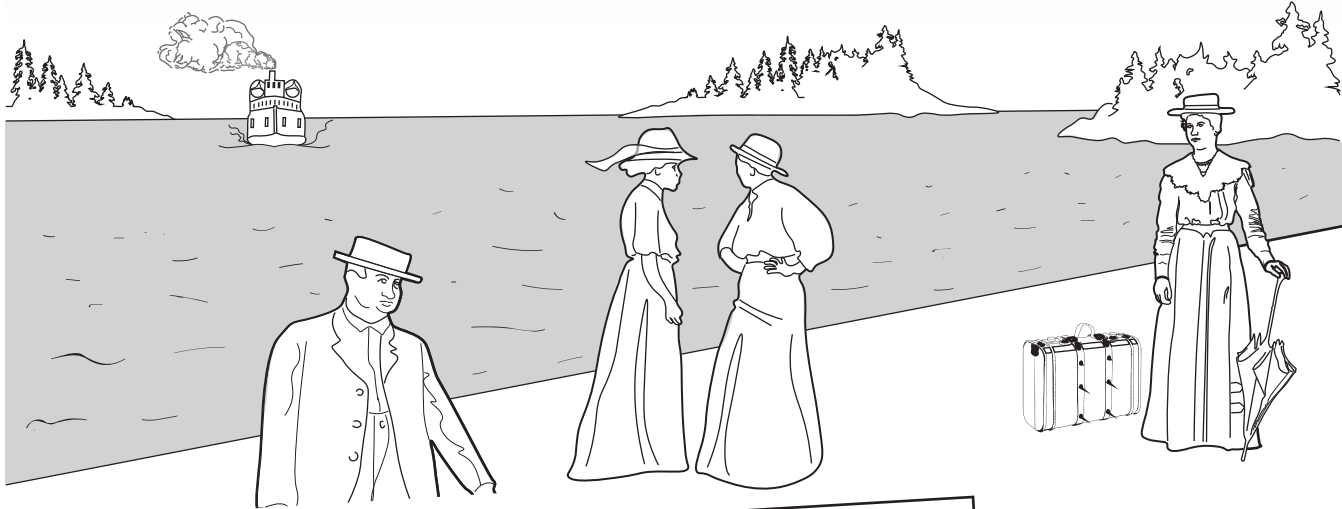
Witness my hand and seal this 18th day of July 1763.  
 Thomas Bird  
 Attorney captain  
 MacDunnell  
 de Larmier  
 interpreter

mache Whescab  
 hi's mark  
 Sa Sonont  
 Maehkadderichan  
 hi's mark  
 Sa Robe waine



Little did the First Nations know, treaties were created to sever the ties that they had to the land so that the newcomers could possess it, extract what they wanted from it for profit, and sell it.

People came from far and wide to this place...



**"THAT GEORGIAN BAY TRIP"**

INCLUDES  
30,000 ISLANDS. POINT-AUX-BARIL.  
MANITOULIN ISLAND. SAULT STE  
MARIE AND MACKINAC ISLAND.

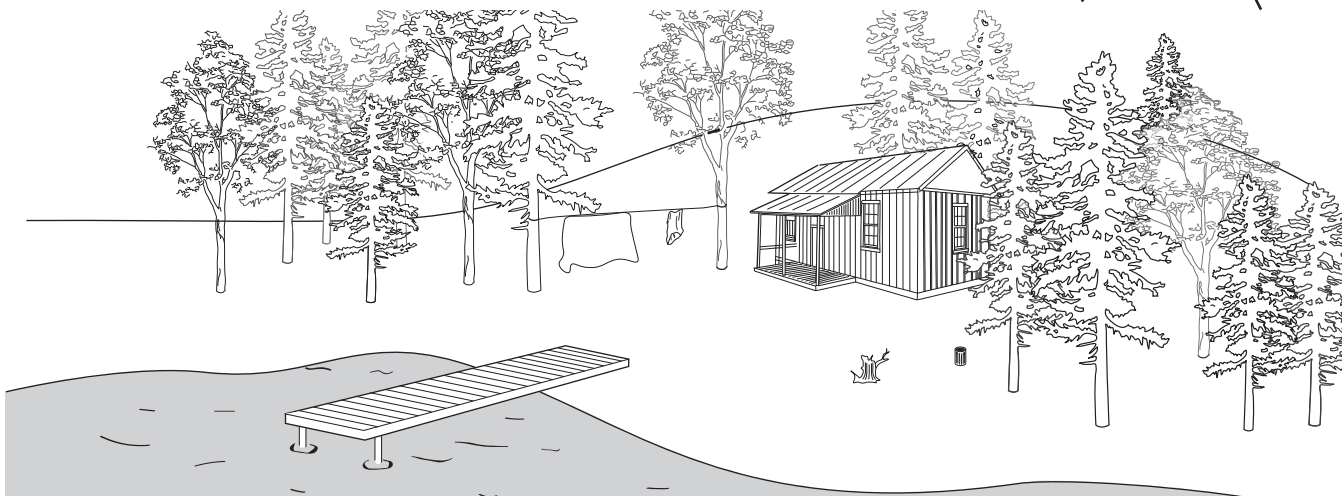
THE BEST FISHING AND CAMPING  
CHARMING SCENERY.  
COMFORTABLE STEAMERS.  
HEALTHFUL CLIMATE.

Tours of Great Lakes via Northern Navigation Co.  
in connection with  
Grand Trunk Railway System.

LEGAL LIMIT CAUGHT IN 90 MINUTES

GRAND TRUNK

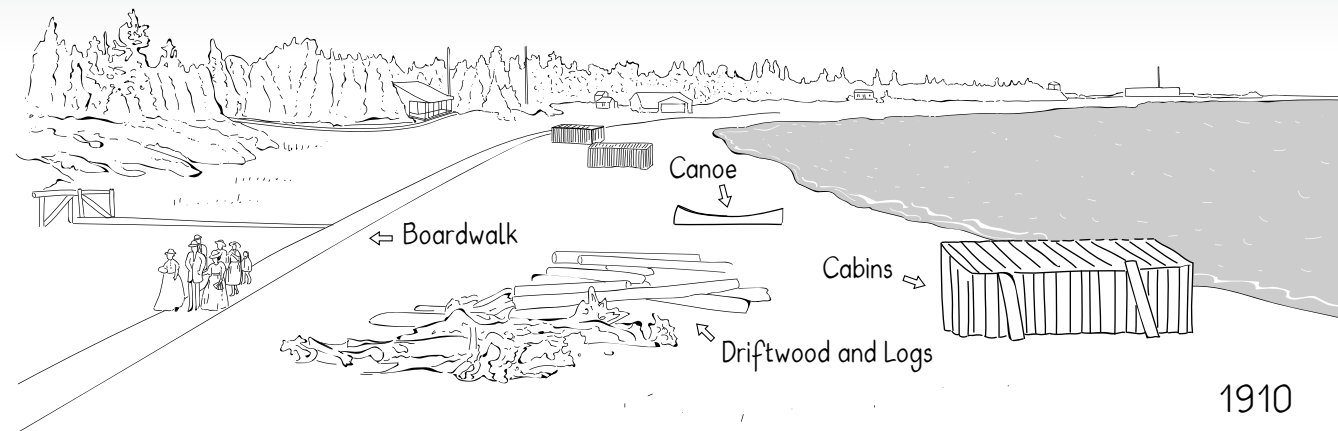
...to come fish and enjoy Georgian Bay's landscape

A hand is shown pointing to the advertisement. The advertisement features two men in a boat holding up a large net full of fish. A sign on the boat says 'LEGAL LIMIT CAUGHT IN 90 MINUTES' and another sign says 'GRAND TRUNK'. The background of the ad shows a landscape with trees and a building.

and to buy their own piece of it to build their homes and cottages.

There was a time when the tourists, First Nations and Métis coexisted in the same space in and around the Bay. During the peak commercial fishing days; fishing shanties, wigwams and birchback canoes could be found along the beaches all around the bay. Tourists could look upon them while walking along the boardwalk or basking in the sun.

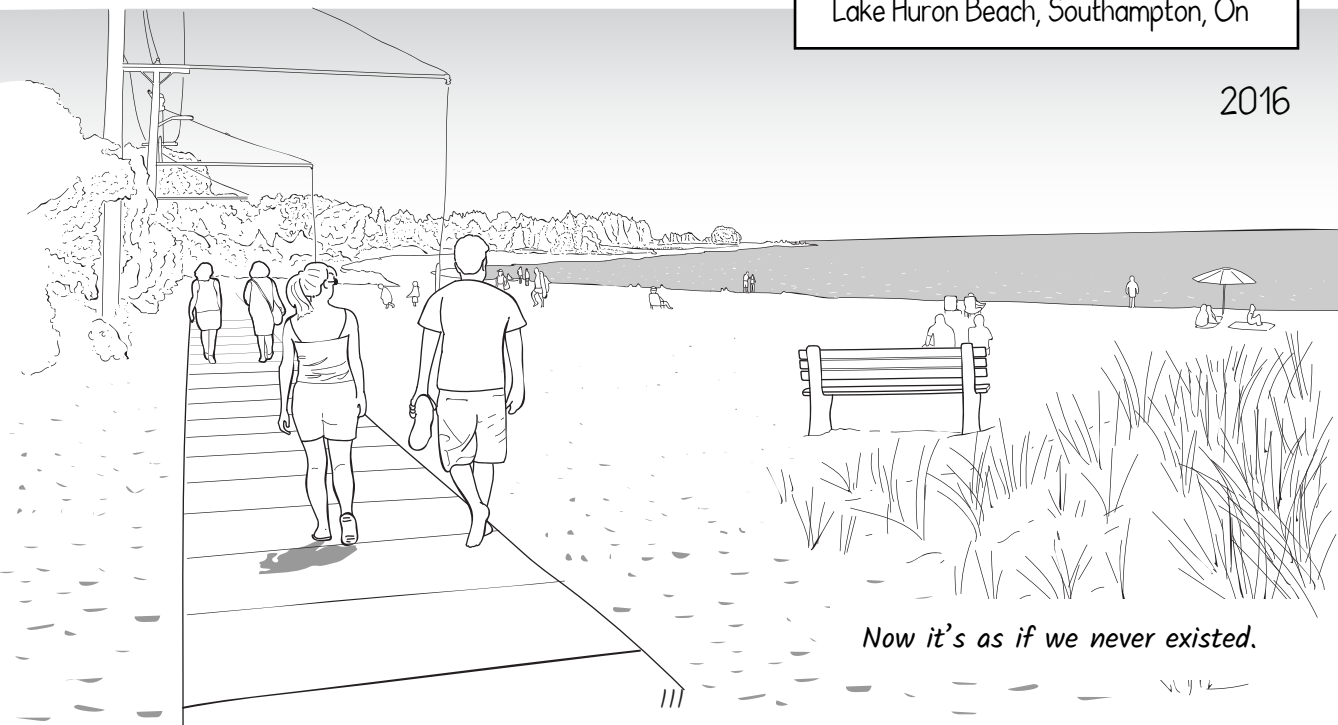
They say that when the fishing industry died that the cabins and canoes disappeared along with it... but we know that fishermen needed shelter to fish before settlers even arrived here. You see, Indigenous fisherman would need to follow the fish to places where they would spawn like rivers and beaches. We had our own laws and guidelines, our own relationship with the fish and knowledge of them. Our communities would follow the fish over great distances and in doing so needed places to rest and store their catch.



1910

Lake Huron Beach, Southampton, On


2016



Now it's as if we never existed.

*My grandfather told me stories about when everything was secret. The power that the government had on our people was great; their rules changed our way of life.*

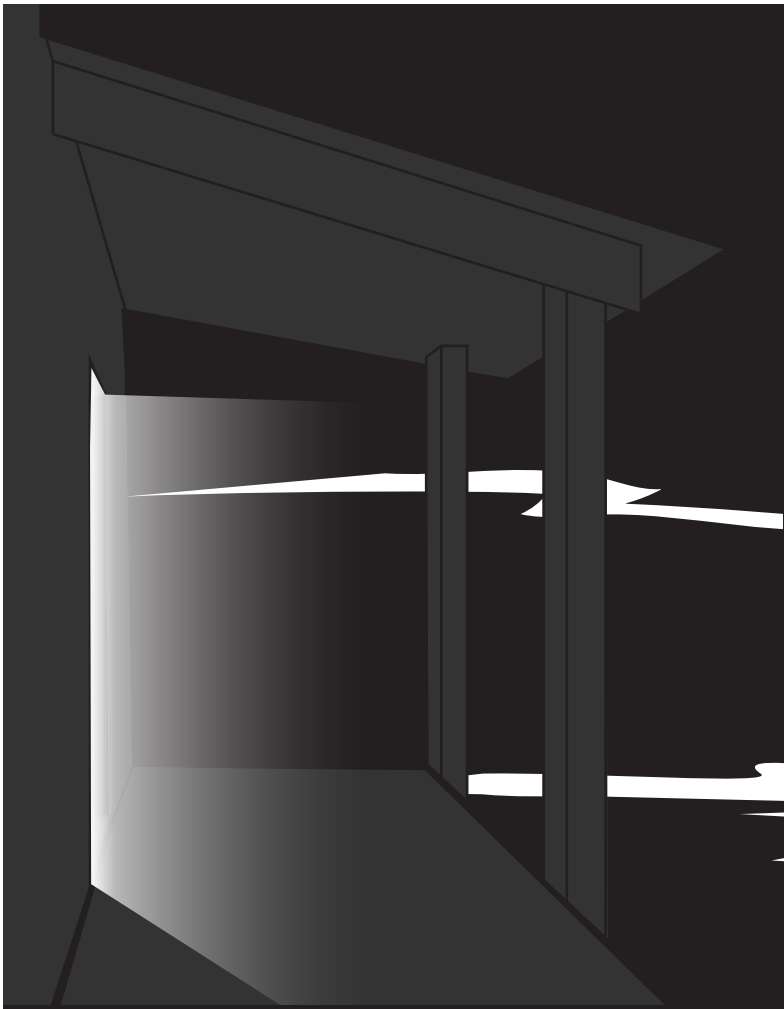




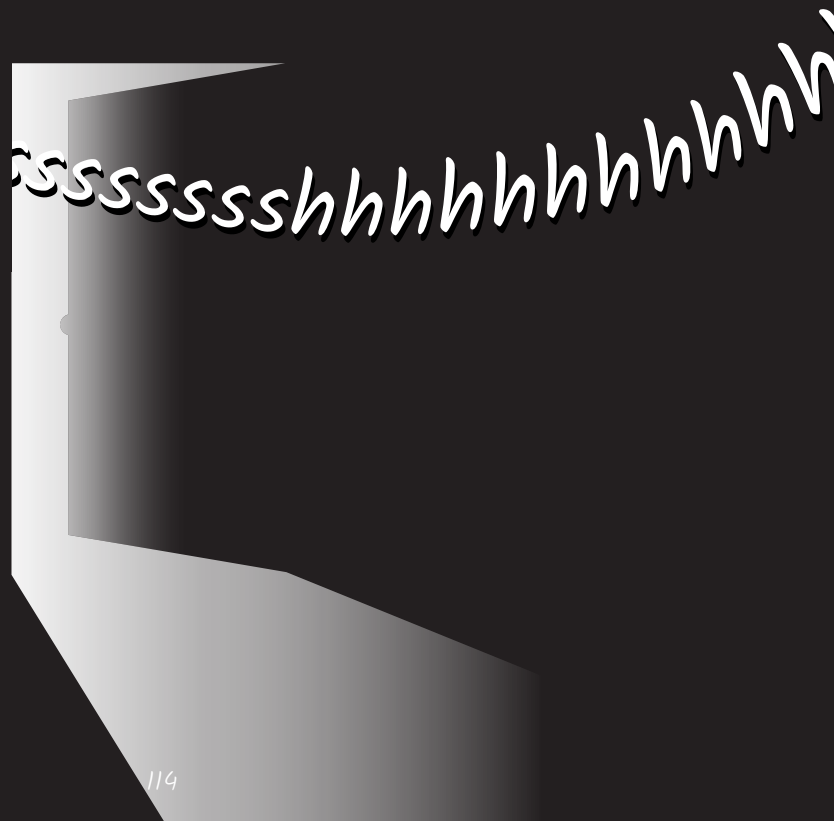
*You see, the Métis around the Bay never occupied a bounded tribal territory. Back when our ancestors lived in the small community by the water, we were called squatters, living in small wooden shanties. We were considered 'sauvages'. The white settlers never understood our ways. They called us wild and uncontrolled.*

*We couldn't enter treaties and so land wasn't reserved for us. We had to buy the land or leave our communities.*

*What does land have to do with fishing?*



*Well, fishing and harvesting are tied to the land and the knowledge of it. Harvesting rights also go hand in hand with land. That's why treaties are so important to First Nations because the words and the maps help settlers to recognize Indigenous rights to harvest on the land. In the end, however, many of these agreements were not honored by the government. The government also denied Métis rights so we were forced to adopt settler colonialist systems such as land ownership and fishing licences.*





hhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh




*It's ok they're one of us*

*What's so bad about that?*



*Well, when the Crown made it an obligation to obtain a fishing licence in order to fish, not all fisherman were granted a licence. Many Métis and First Nations continued fishing secretly or under the cover of night even though it was illegal for them to do so. The 'overseers' would come upon the 'illegal fishers' and confiscate their nets, the fish they caught and fined the men who were caught fishing. Many of us abandoned that life because we couldn't fish 'legally' without a licence. So we adopted new diets, new lives.*

Owning land also put us in a difficult position. It meant we needed to make money to afford the taxes on the land. Many of the Métis had to find work to do so. Since they were adept at trapping and fishing and so chose occupations which complimented those skills. Once fishing and trapping no longer were a viable means to make money, it pushed many of us away from traditional harvesting practices.



We can't go on living like this. We need to fish. Let's petition his Majesty, have him honor our rights.

If we had rights from the beginning, we wouldn't have had to pay fines, taxes or buy land. We would have had the choice to continue living off the land. Maybe the community of Métis that lived 'the other side of the Bay' would still be here today.

*I wish we had the resources to provide more opportunities for learning about our culture and the land. To relearn what has been lost. The council has talked about one day purchasing or acquiring land for the community near the water but that's still in the works.*



*Oh so you don't have a place where people can learn these things year round?*



*No we don't and that's part of the problem.*

*We started to run youth camps in the summer. We teach them the knowledge of the land and how to live in the bush. I wish it was something we ran more often. Our future generations should be connected to these things.*



*That's really cool. Where is the camp held?*



*It's held on an island, we rent a youth camp*



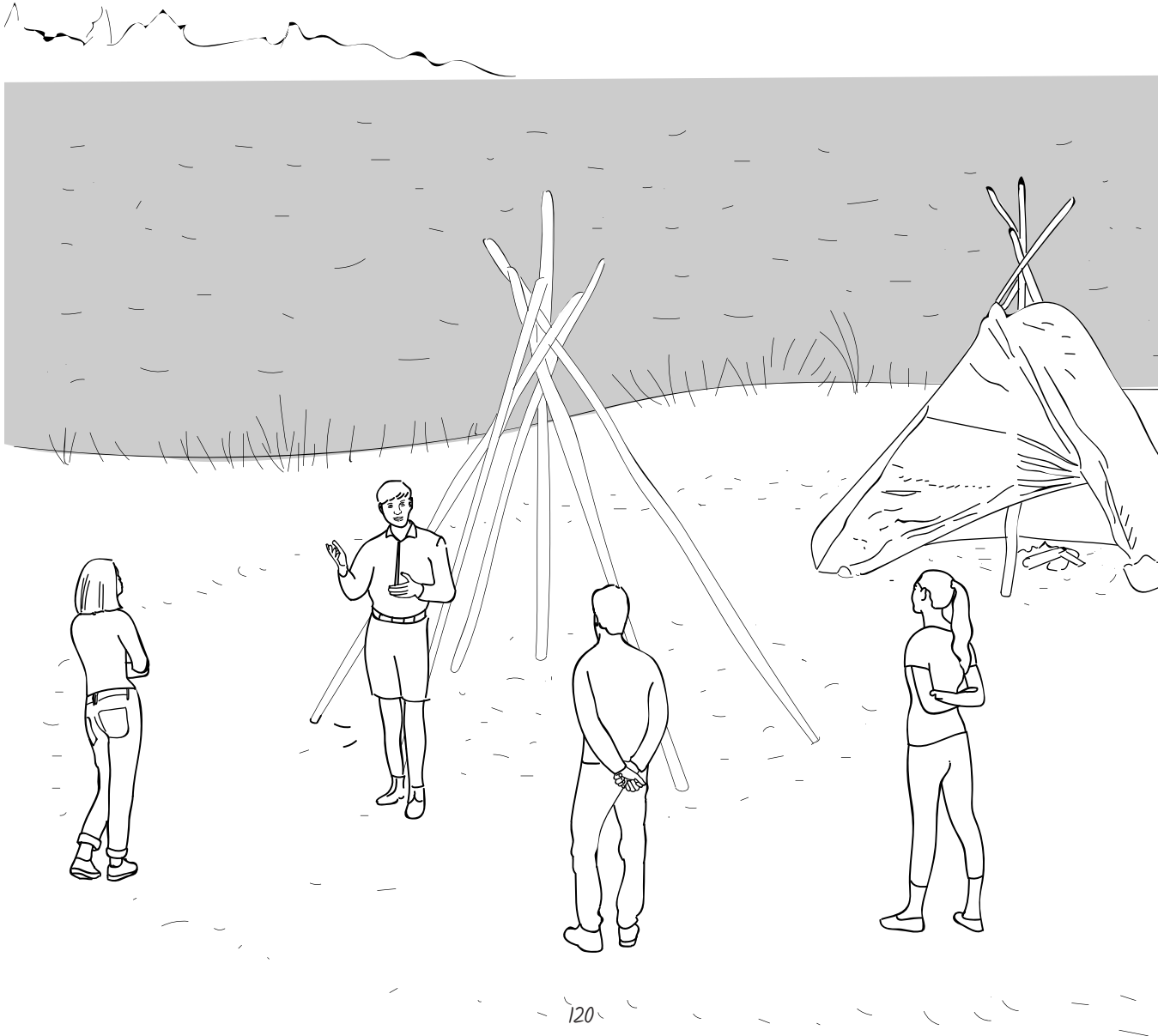
*We don't have a plan yet but we would like to one day have our office or community centre down near the water in Penetang Bay. A space where all of us can gather.*



*Jay realized in her talks with Gary and Big Man that the same issues kept coming up. That there was a great amount of lost knowledge in their community as a result of assimilation, discrimination and fear. She also saw a clash between their ideas about having a relationship with the land and how space was treated in her hometown.*

Jay loved the idea of a place where people could come learn these valuable skills. A place where knowledge could be shared and celebrated. Where there were no fences and everyone was welcome.

Jay tried to imagine what this space would look like and what would occur there. Maybe one day the Métis would finally have a place that they could come together and be visible as a people, re-engage with the land and foster a new relationship with it.

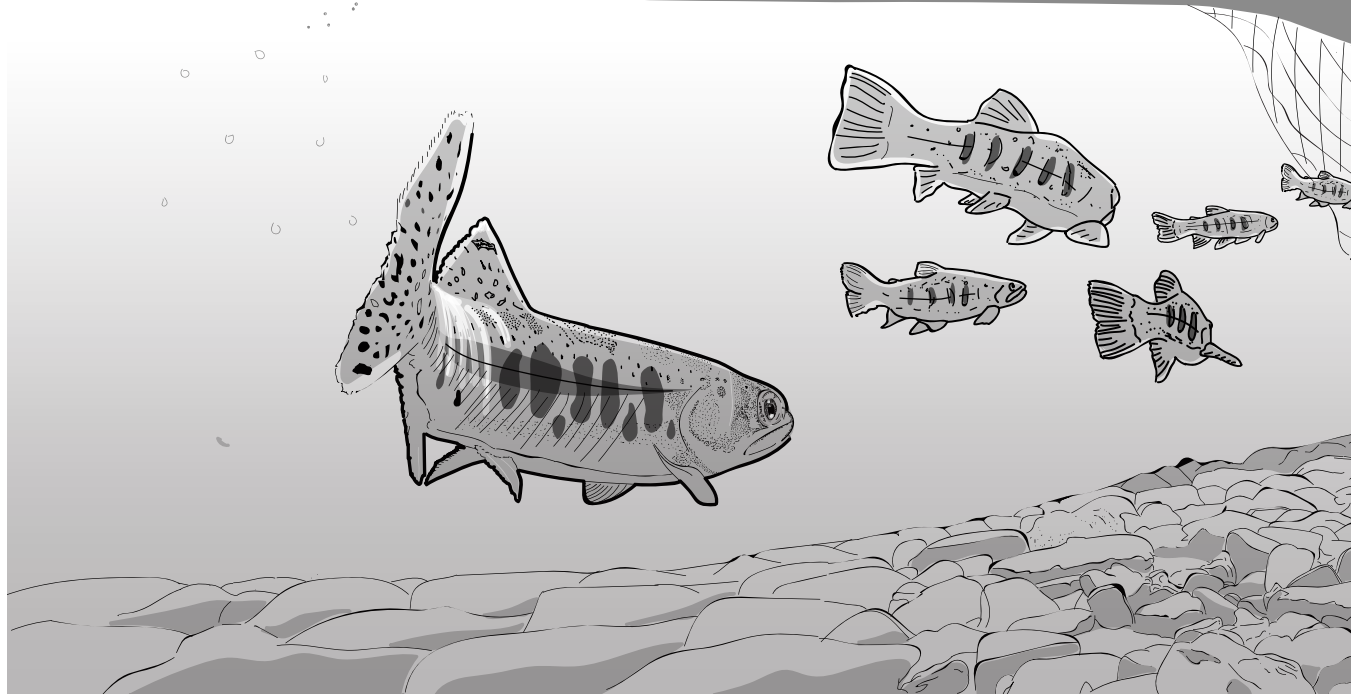




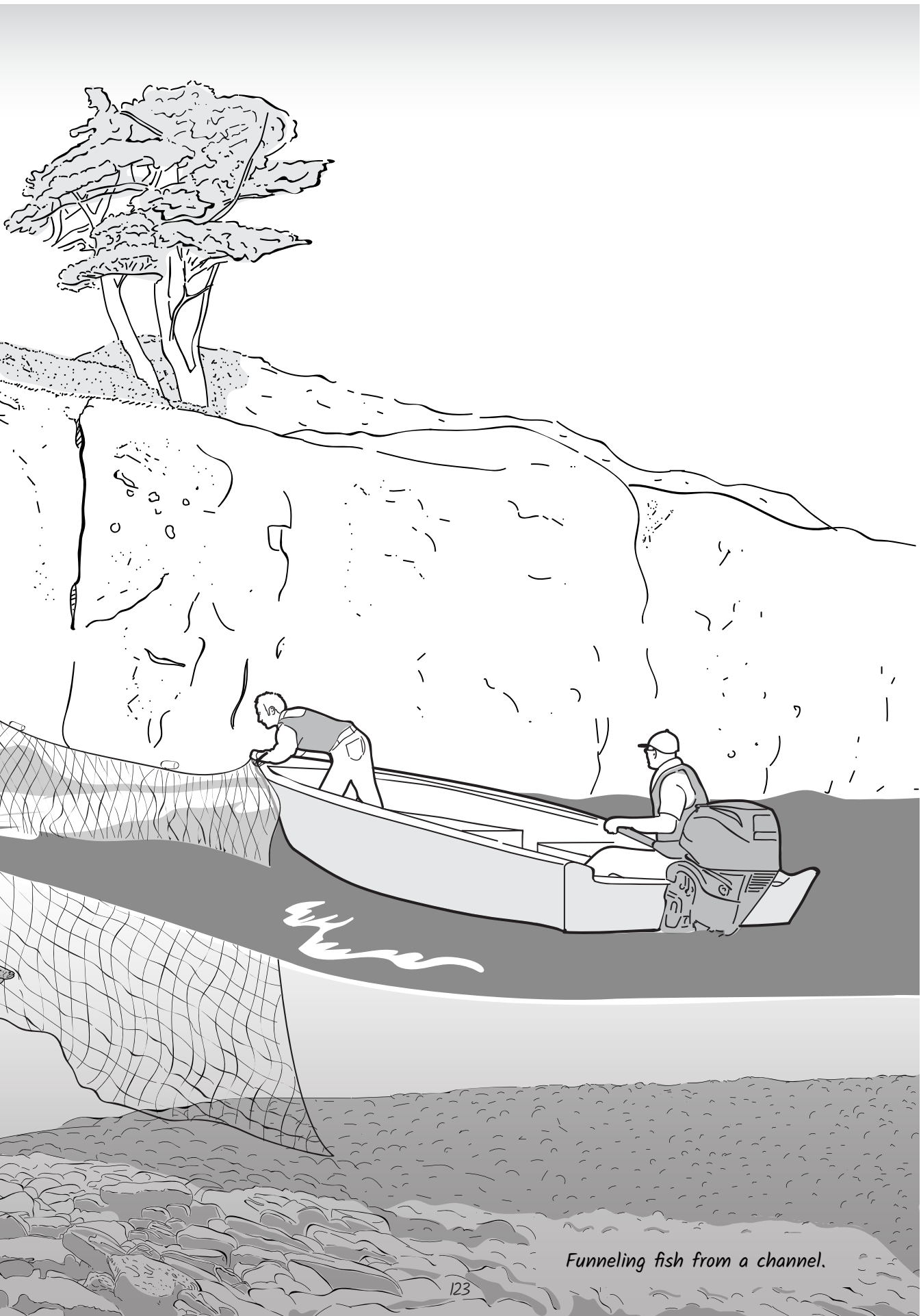
Jay spent the next few weeks with the harvesters, watching how and where they fished.



Chapter 7





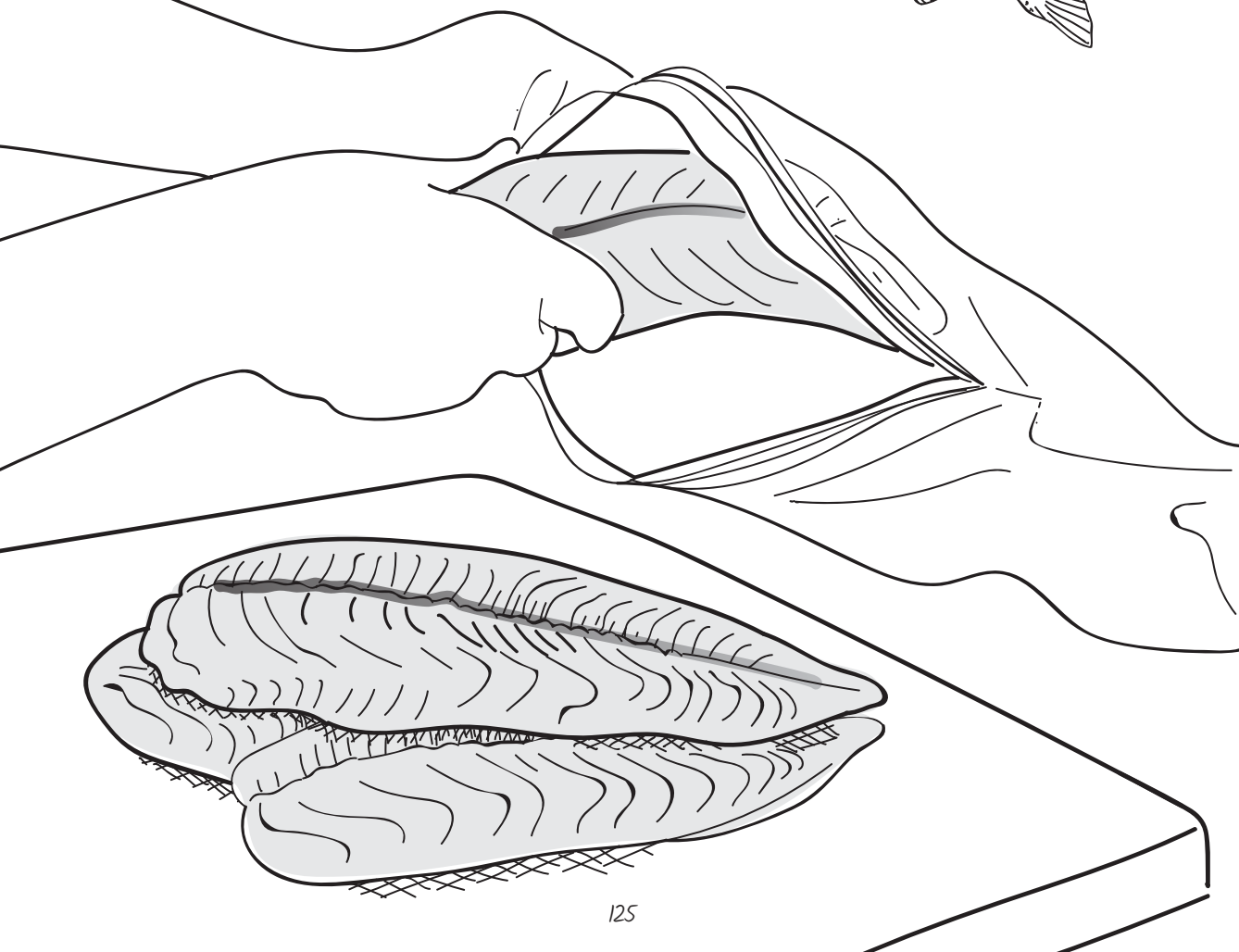


*Funneling fish from a channel.*

*Untangling and setting nets, pulling fish out of them.*



*She also kept visiting 'Big Man' who let her use his kitchen to clean the fish she caught so that she could continue keeping her fishing adventures a secret from her family.*



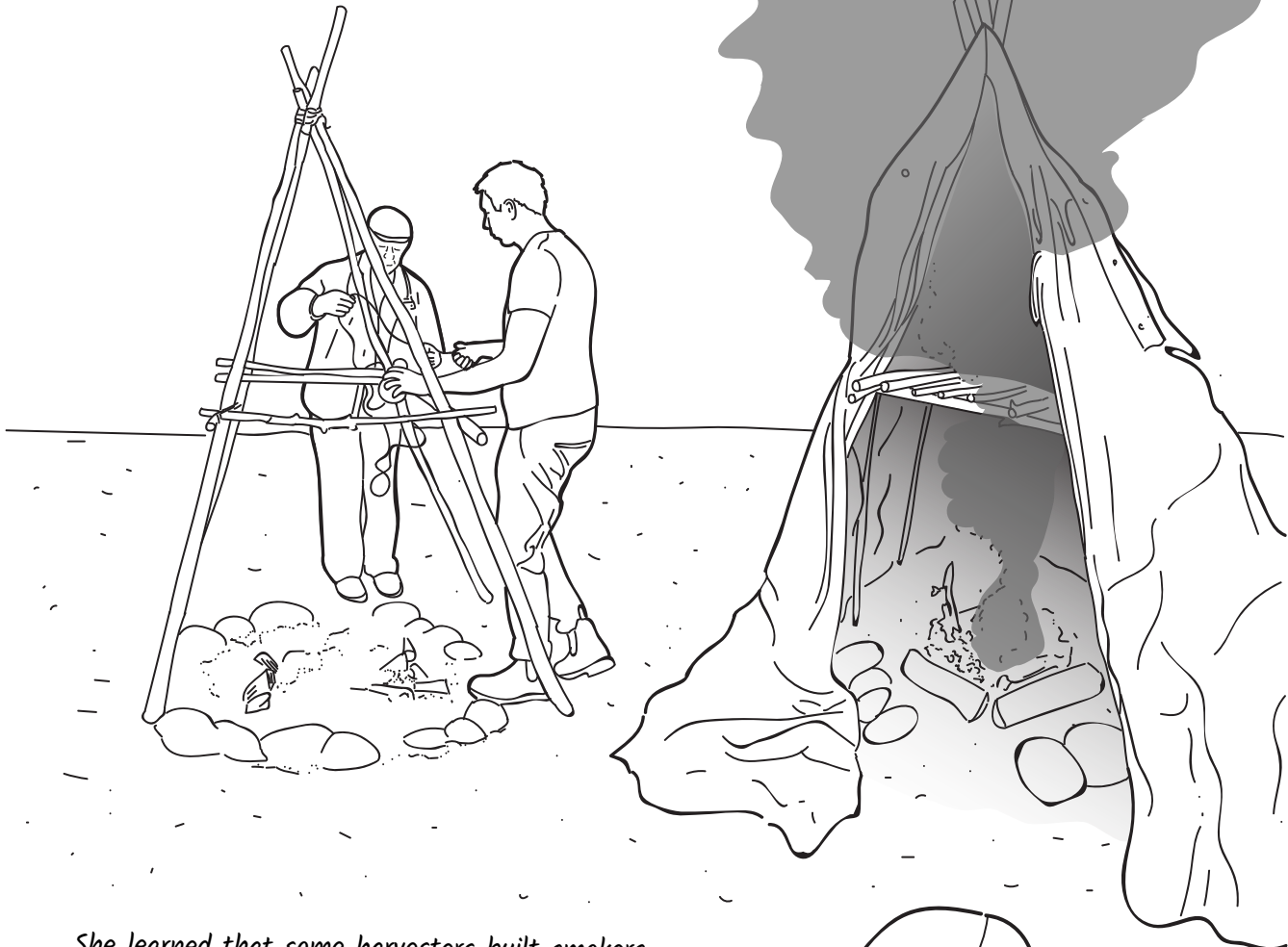
*On the water, Jay started to see things from a different vantage point. She saw that many people with shoreline property altered the edge of the water. Others like the harvesters depended on the water but also its edges in a different way.*



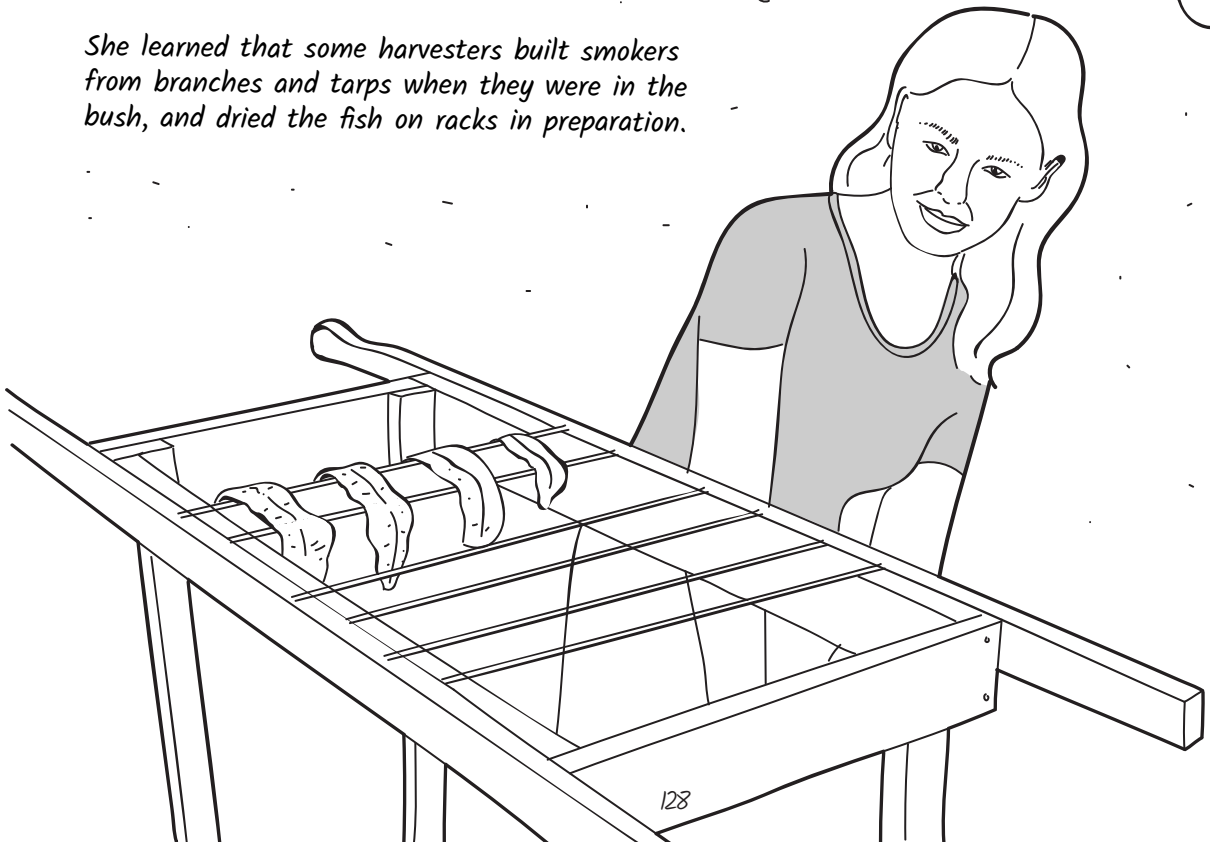
Over the summer, Jay got to know just how much, by learning about useful shoreline plants; where to find them, what they looked like and what they were used for.

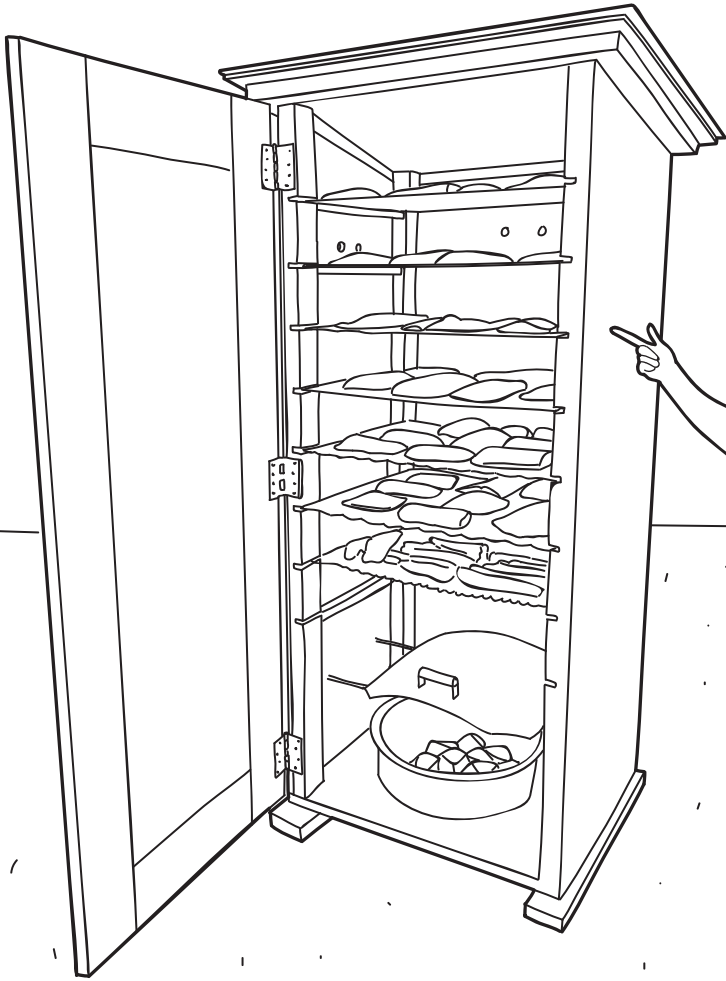


*She also learned many other valuable skills like different smoking techniques.*

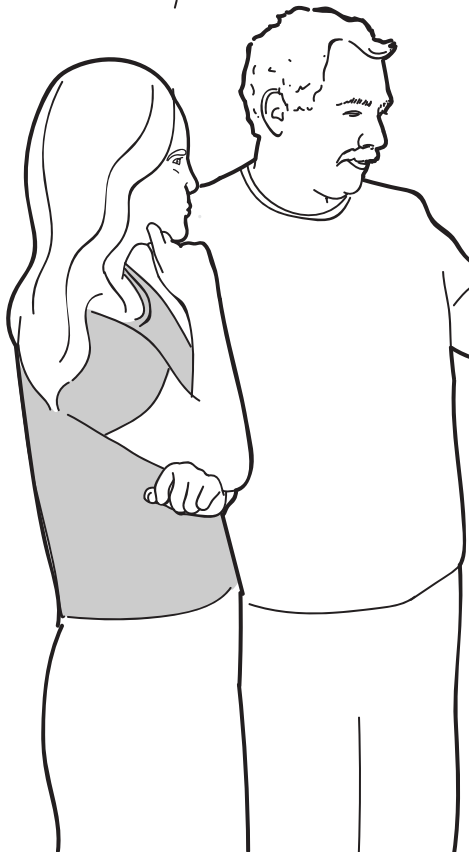
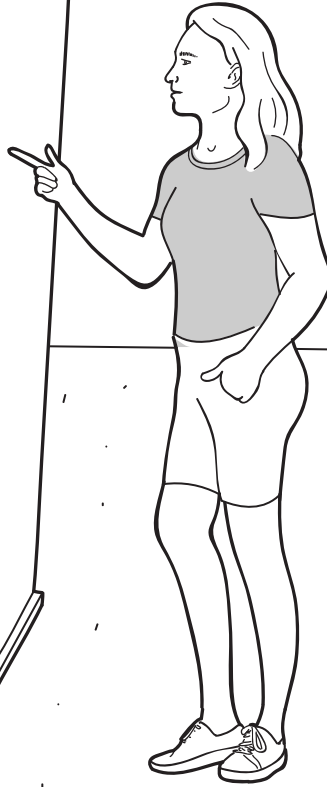


*She learned that some harvesters built smokers from branches and tarps when they were in the bush, and dried the fish on racks in preparation.*

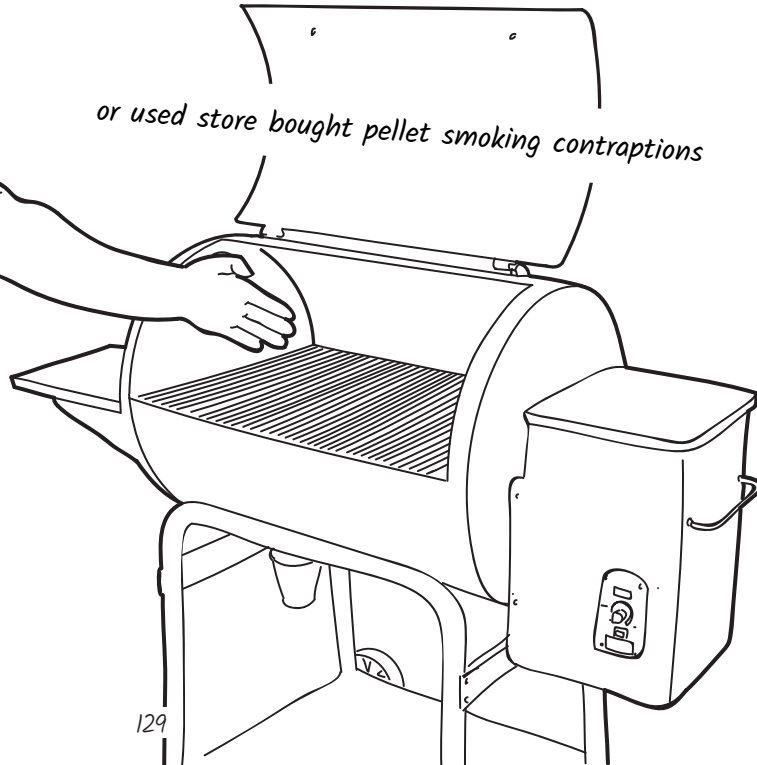




*Others had made fancy wooden boxes*



*or used store bought pellet smoking contraptions*



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*Jay noticed that her relationship with the land started to change the more time she spent with the harvesters. Things that seemed inconsequential now held new meaning. She felt like she had been awakened to a new way of being and knowing about this place, her home.*







What is it?

It's tobacco

Like the stuff you find in cigarettes?

This is a little different. It's medicine.

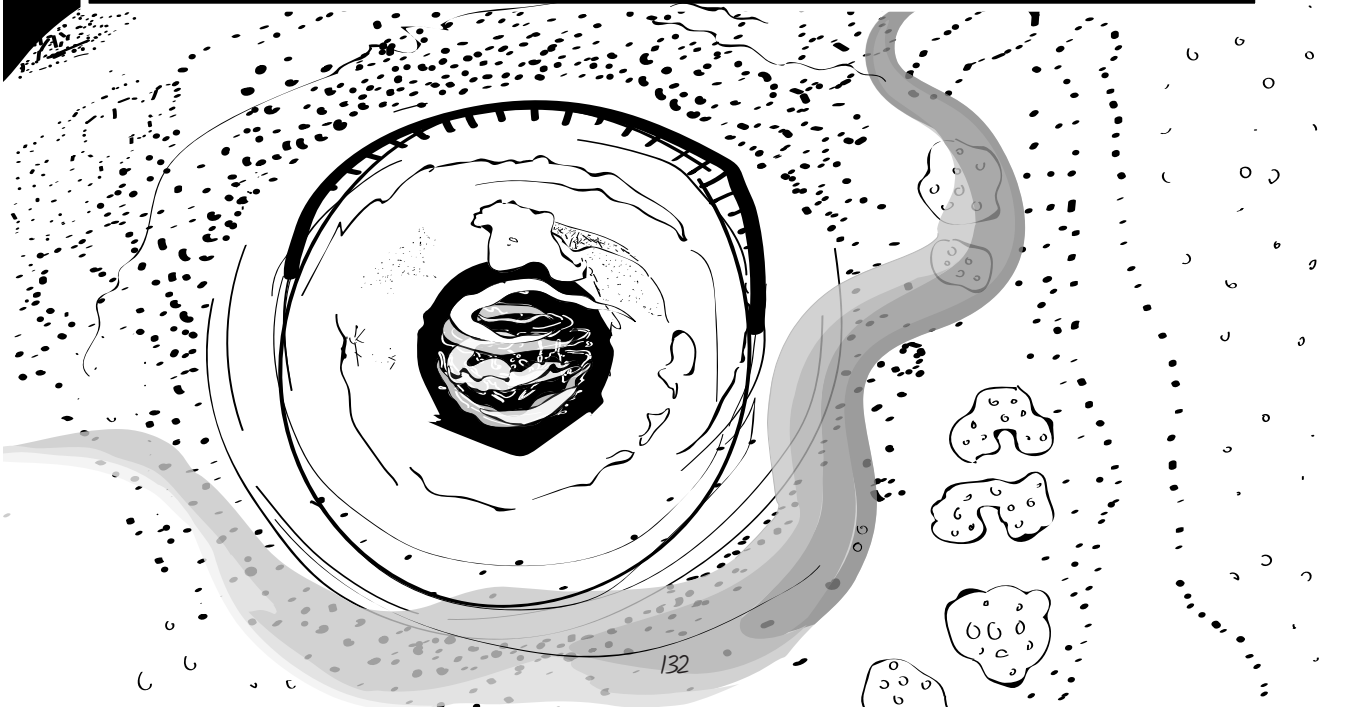
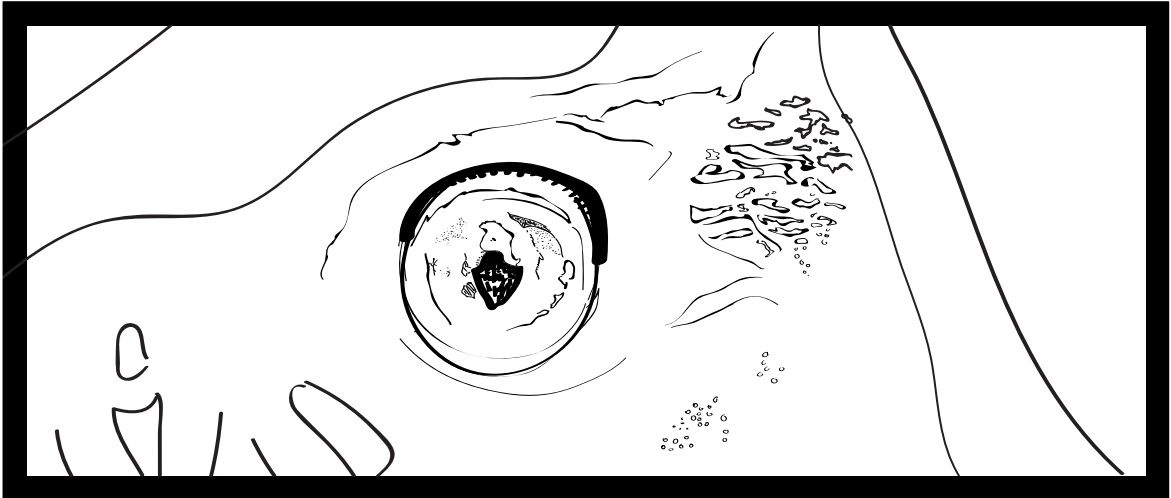
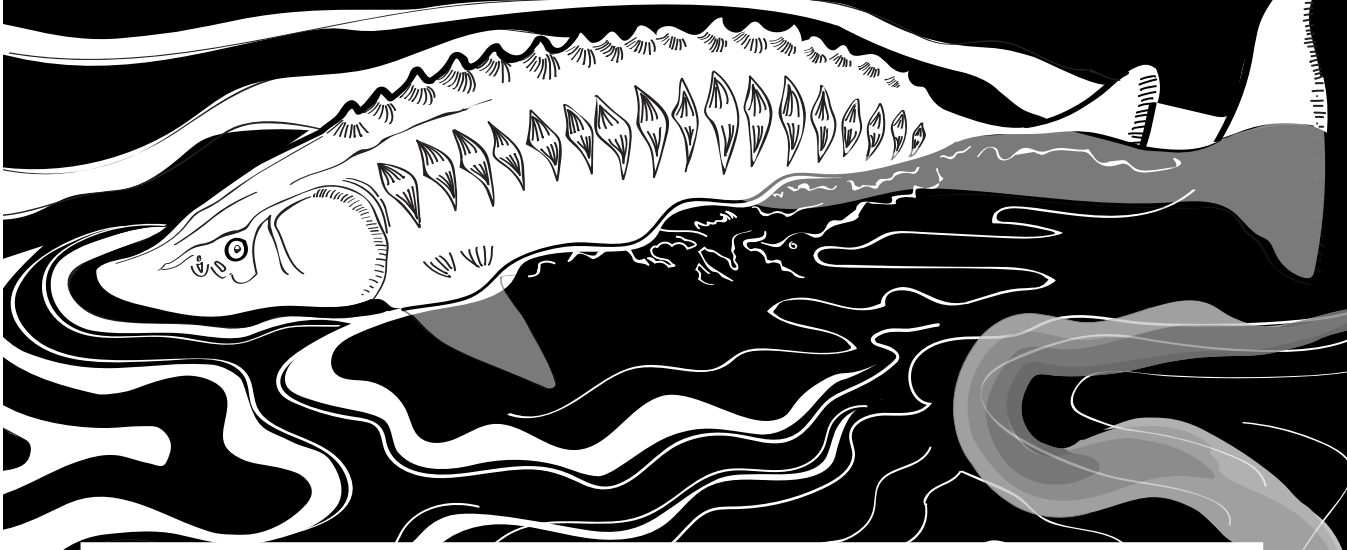
When you take from the land; you can offer it in gratitude. It's a way to say; thank you.

If you ever want to repair a relationship you can offer it to say I'm sorry.

You can offer it to someone to say thank you, to ask for guidance, or when seeking knowledge.

You can use tobacco for so many things. Too much to tell you all in one day.

*Gary also told her about the connection we all have to the water and that it is home to many spirits.*





*That the water itself has spirit and needs to be respected as well as all of the living beings that rely on it. Water, he said, is life; while life is the blending of the spirits, nature and people; all connected by the big mystery.*

Jay thought about all of the things she had learned this summer and how lucky she was amidst the lost knowledge of the Métis in the Bay that 'Big Man' had talked about. People were made to discard all a whole system of knowing and being over another. Things like;



*Community with family and kin*

*Plant Medicines*

*Food Preparation*

*Spiritual Connection with the Land*

Most of all she was intrigued about her chat with Big Man. She couldn't get the idea of having a space for people in the community to pass along knowledge out of her head. Jay brought these things up with Gary and he had lots to say about it.

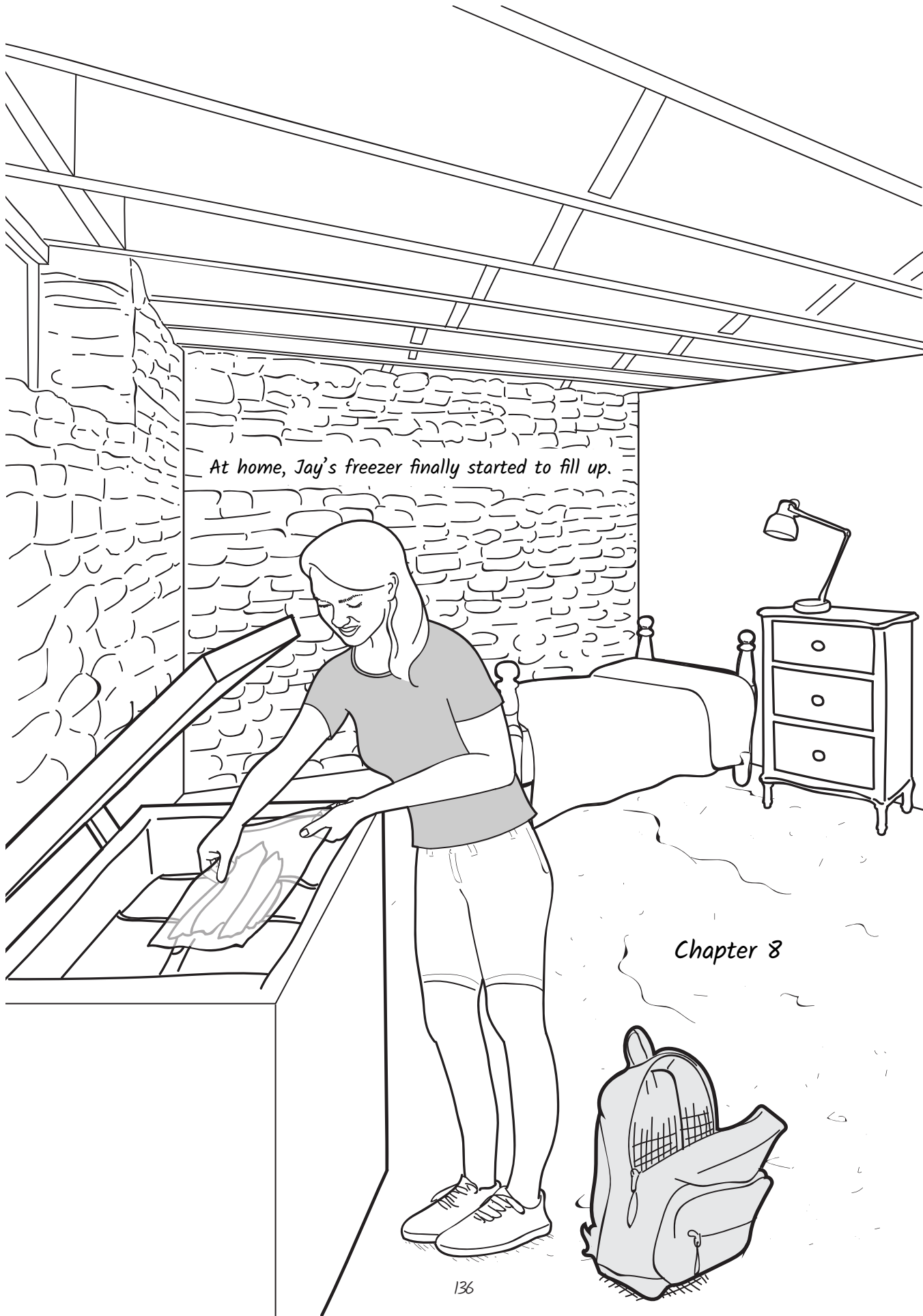


*People from all over come to possess this land and the edges where the water meets it. They want to control it, not learn from it.*

*'Big Man' is right. We deserve somewhere everyone can gather. Sure, there's our council building, the Native Centre downtown, the community centre, and the curling club that we can rent but there isn't a place for everyone to come and learn from the land near the water; a place where for many years we have been pushed out of.*

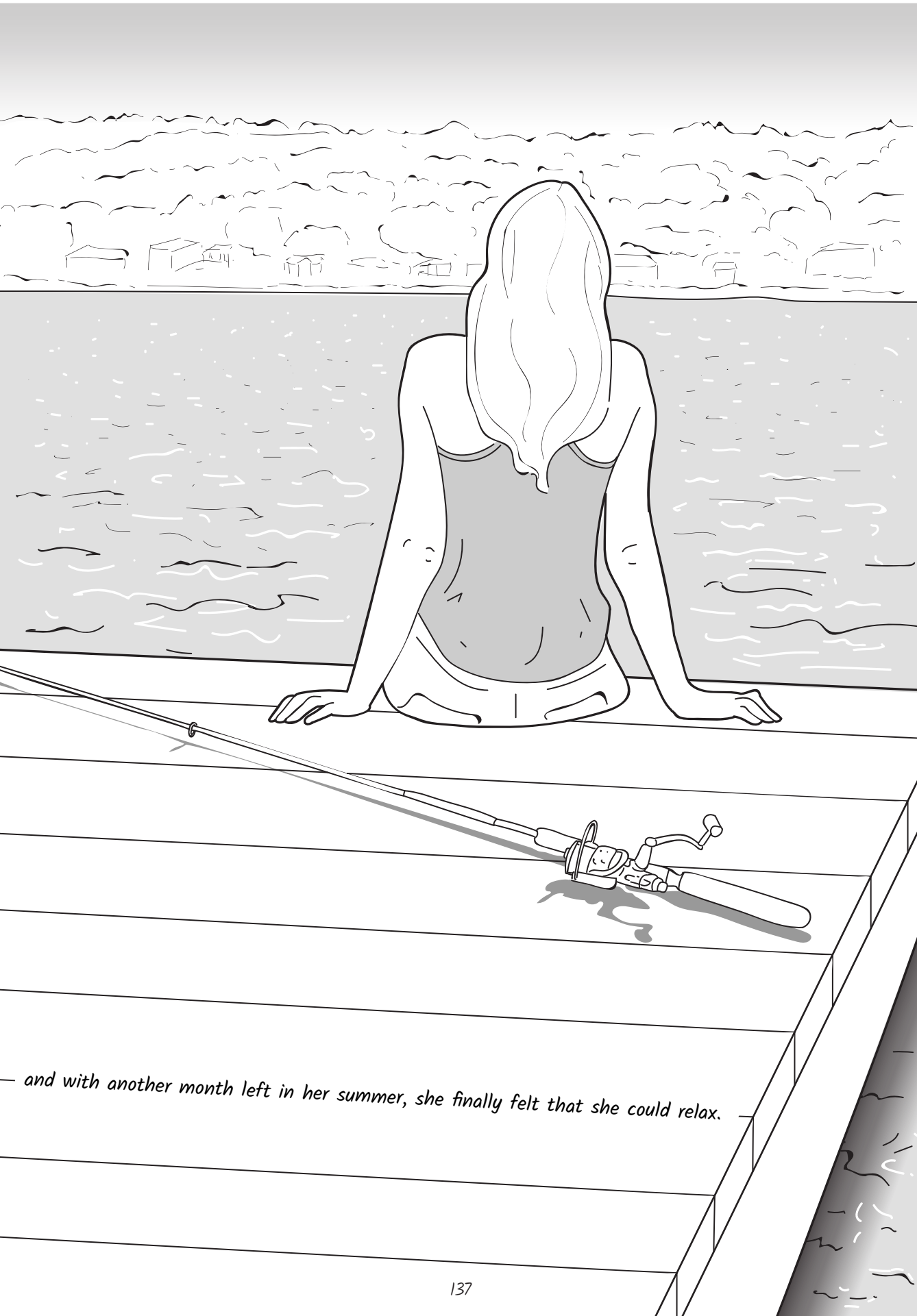


*One day, there will be such a place.*



*At home, Jay's freezer finally started to fill up.*

*Chapter 8*



— and with another month left in her summer, she finally felt that she could relax.



What are you doing here?

Mitchel!

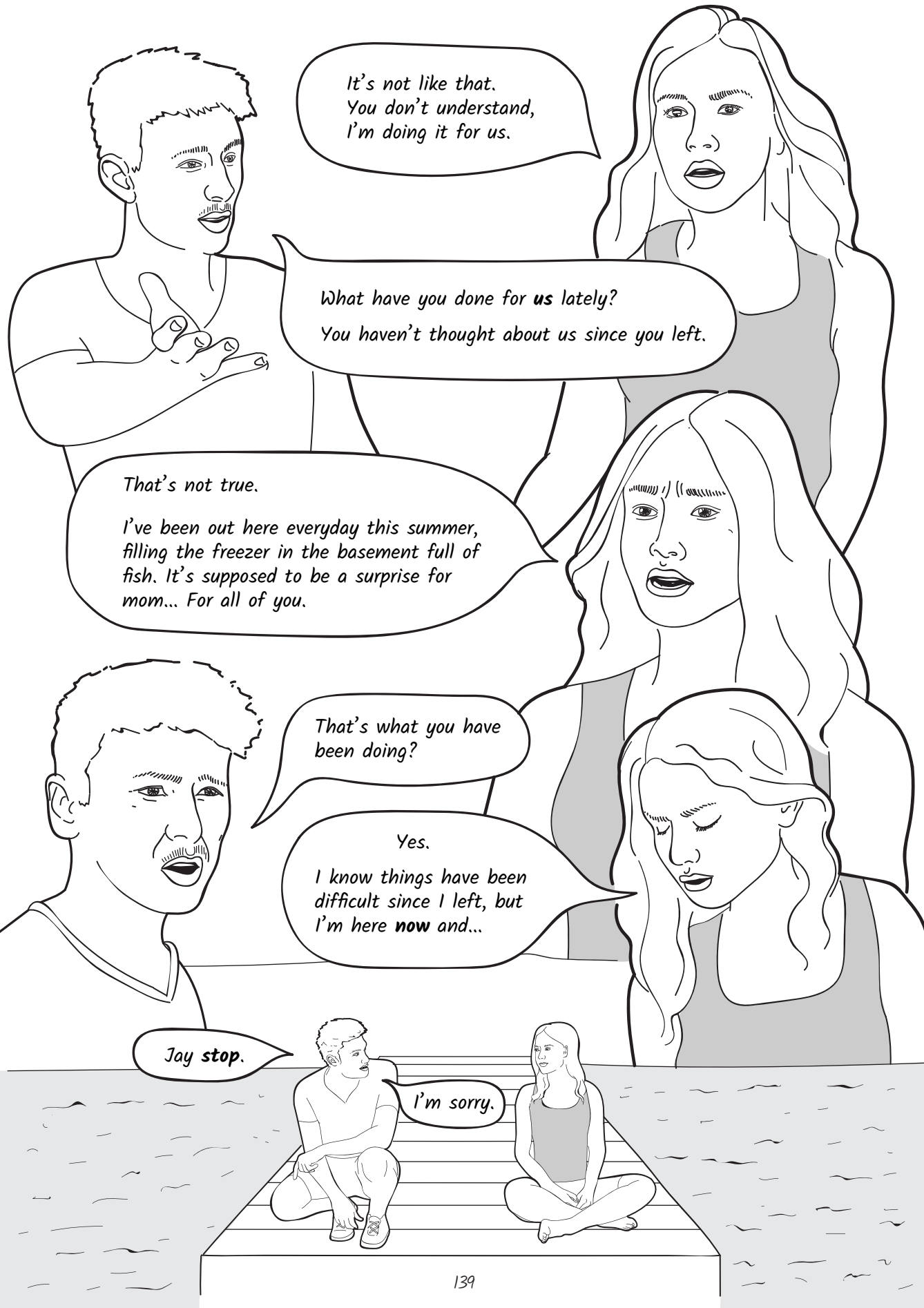
Wait.. Is that?  
A fishing rod?

Hold up. So I've been here working everyday trying to help out mom and you've been out here fishing?

Fishing **has** been work.  
I get up early in the morning to go out with Gary to...

That crazy old man!?  
I can't beleive you got roped into his bullshit.





It's not like that.  
You don't understand,  
I'm doing it for us.

What have you done for *us* lately?  
You haven't thought about us since you left.

That's not true.  
I've been out here everyday this summer,  
filling the freezer in the basement full of fish. It's supposed to be a surprise for mom... For all of you.

That's what you have  
been doing?

Yes.  
I know things have been  
difficult since I left, but  
I'm here **now** and...

Jay stop.


I'm sorry.

*Together Jay and Mitchel sat in silence for a time. Eventually, Jay got up the courage to recount her summer adventures from the knowledge gathered to the history that was uncovered.*




*Jay told Mitchel about their grandfather, and shared with him pictures, the history of their community, the fish.*

*She had missed sharing with him what she was up to, her thoughts and troubles.*



*So there's a fish fry at the end of the summer.  
We should all go. You, Nib, Mom...*



*I don't know if we can convince her to  
but we can try.*

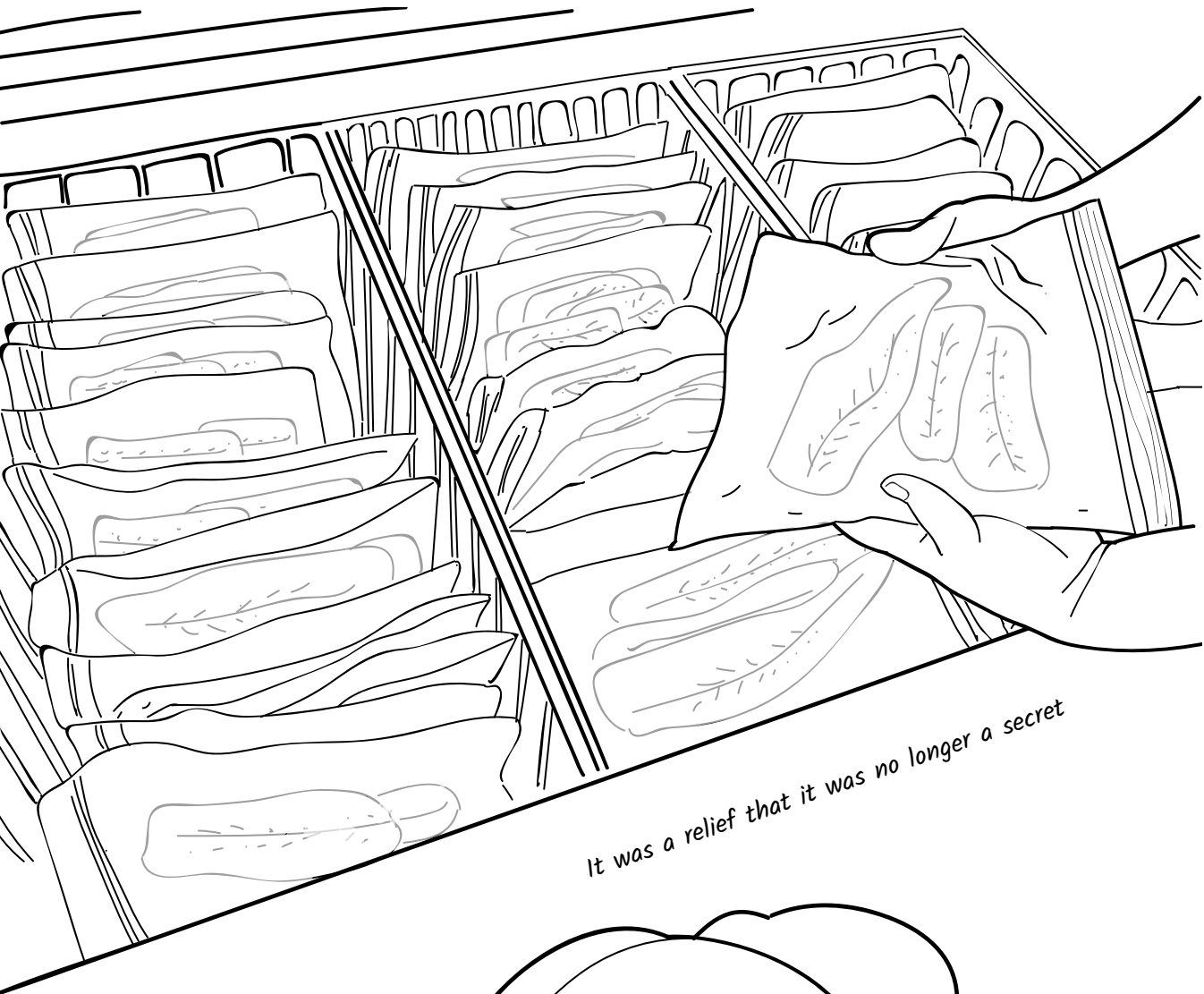


*Hey Jay?*

*I'm happy you are home.*

*That night, Jay came clean to her mother. The freezer, the boat..  
Her connection to the harvesters.*





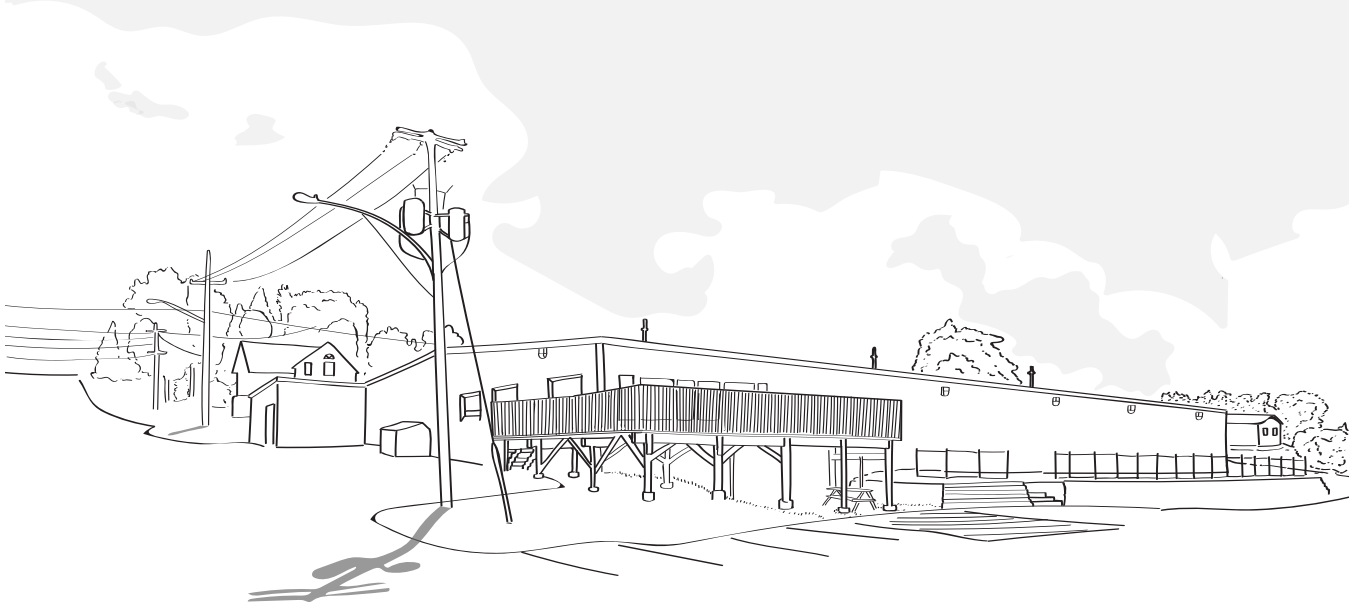
*It was a relief that it was no longer a secret*

*Thank you*



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*Finally, the day of the fish fry came.*



*The Métis Council had rented out the local curling club near the water for the occasion.*



*Jay's mother came around and put her prejudices behind her.*



*So did Mitchel.*



*They were all accepted with open arms.*

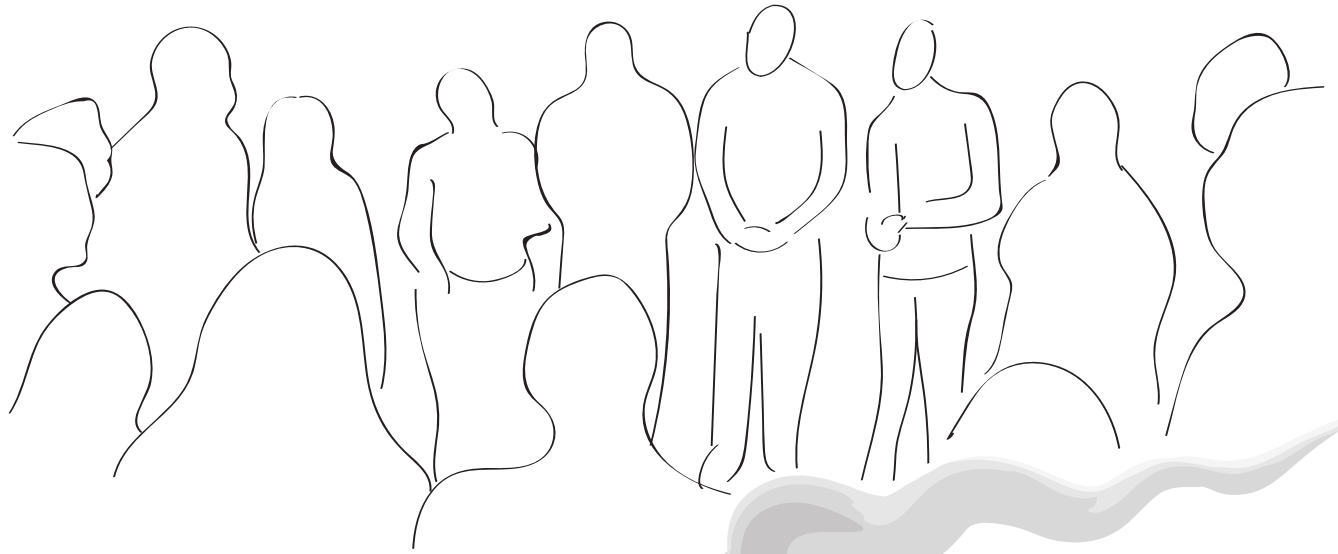
*Jay watched on with Gary people of the community coming together to share in the feast that the harvesters had worked so hard to put together.*



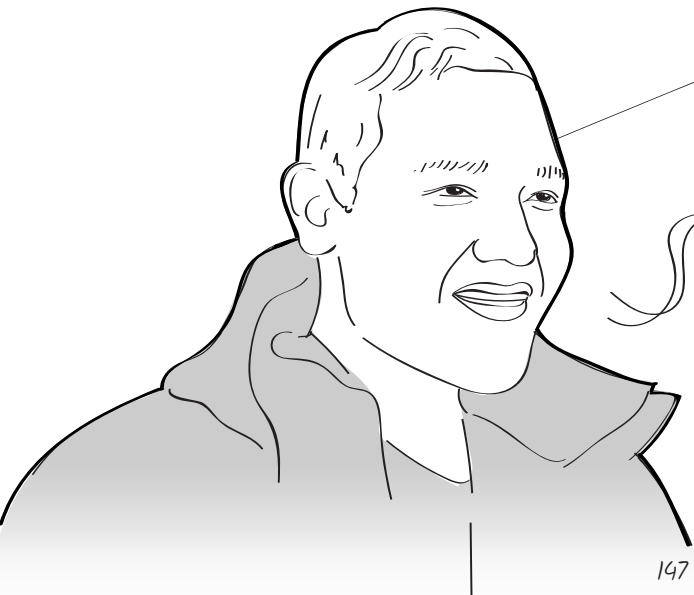
*She continued to talk with Gary about his dreams for a space. When 'Big Man' showed up and joined in on the conversation soon others joined in as well.*



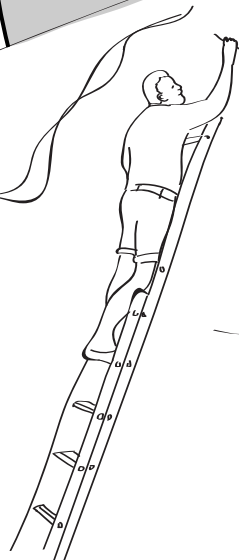
Next thing she knew a larger circle of people gathered to share their ideas about a future space what each person from the youngest to the wisest of elders envisioned.



*I see a great gathering circle with a fire.*



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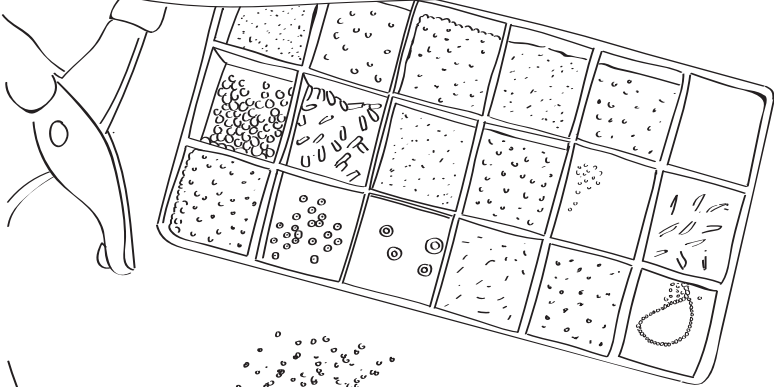
*I see myself painting a mural to show our story.*



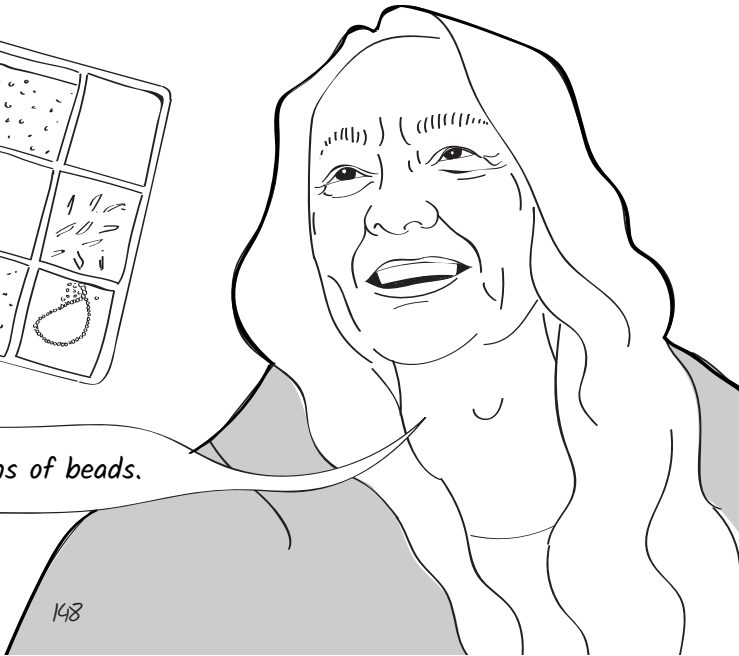
*I see a walking path to a garden filled with medicines*



*I see people dancing with a fiddler on a stage outside*



*I see a table with mountains of beads.*



*Even Jay's mom piped up from the crowd*



*Even Mitchel and Nibi had something to say*



*We should have docks with boats to rent.*

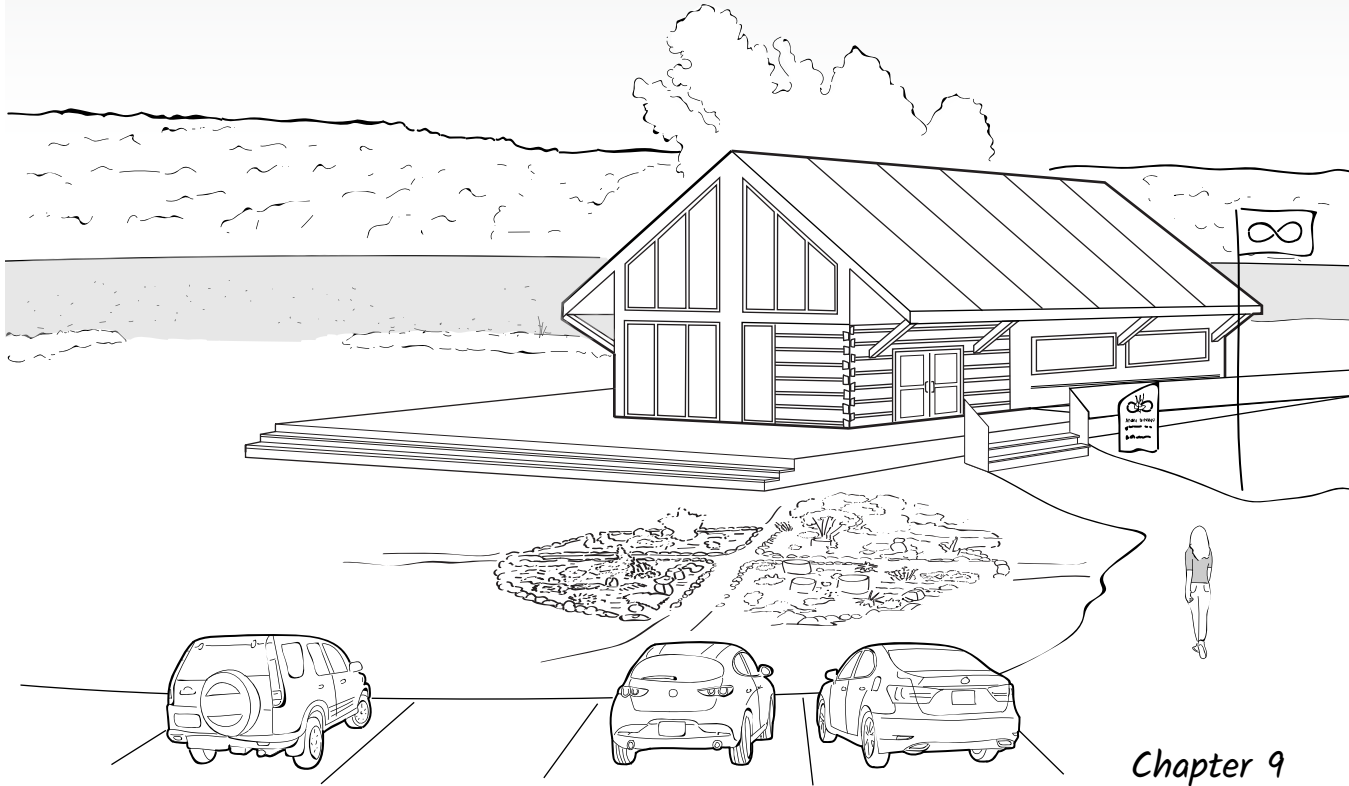
*Maybe Mitchel can sell bait there*

*Finally it was Jay's turn to say something.*

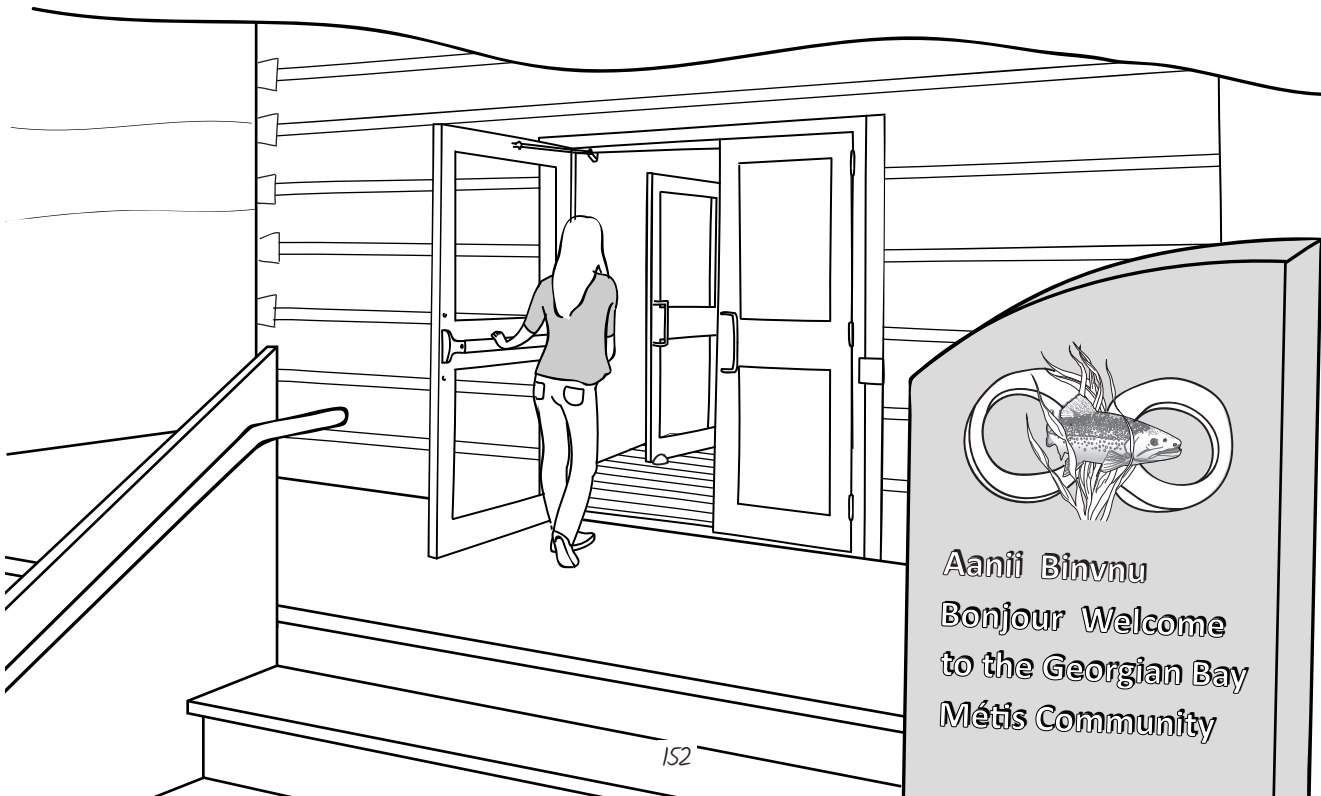


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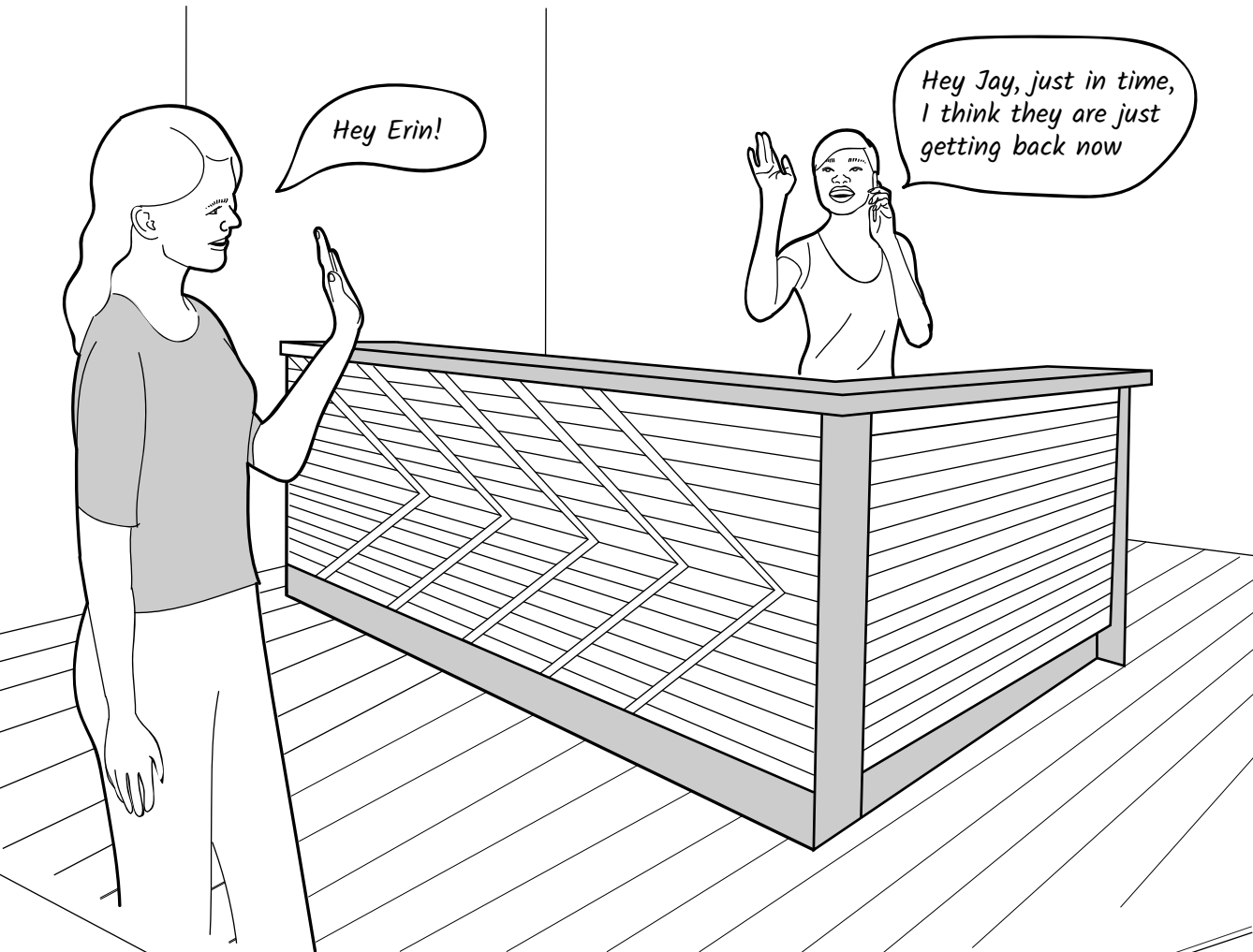
15 years later...



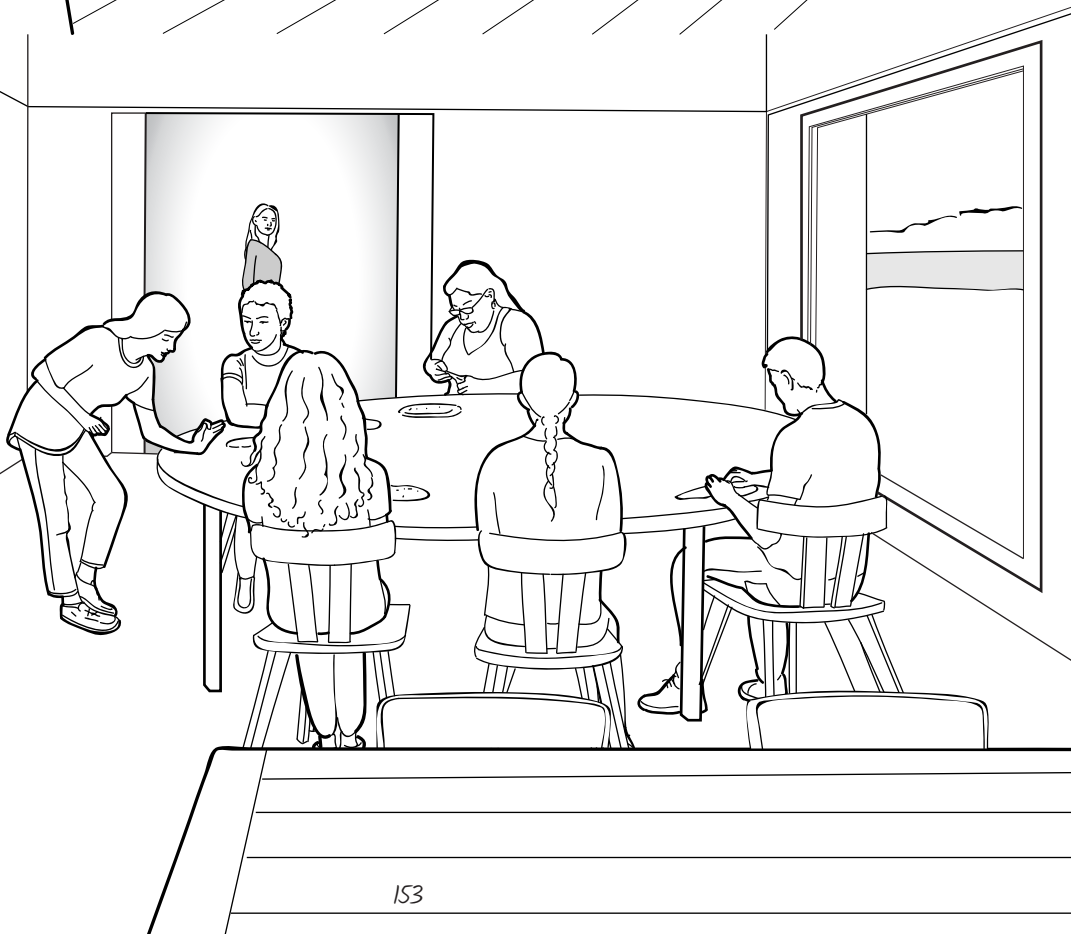
Chapter 9

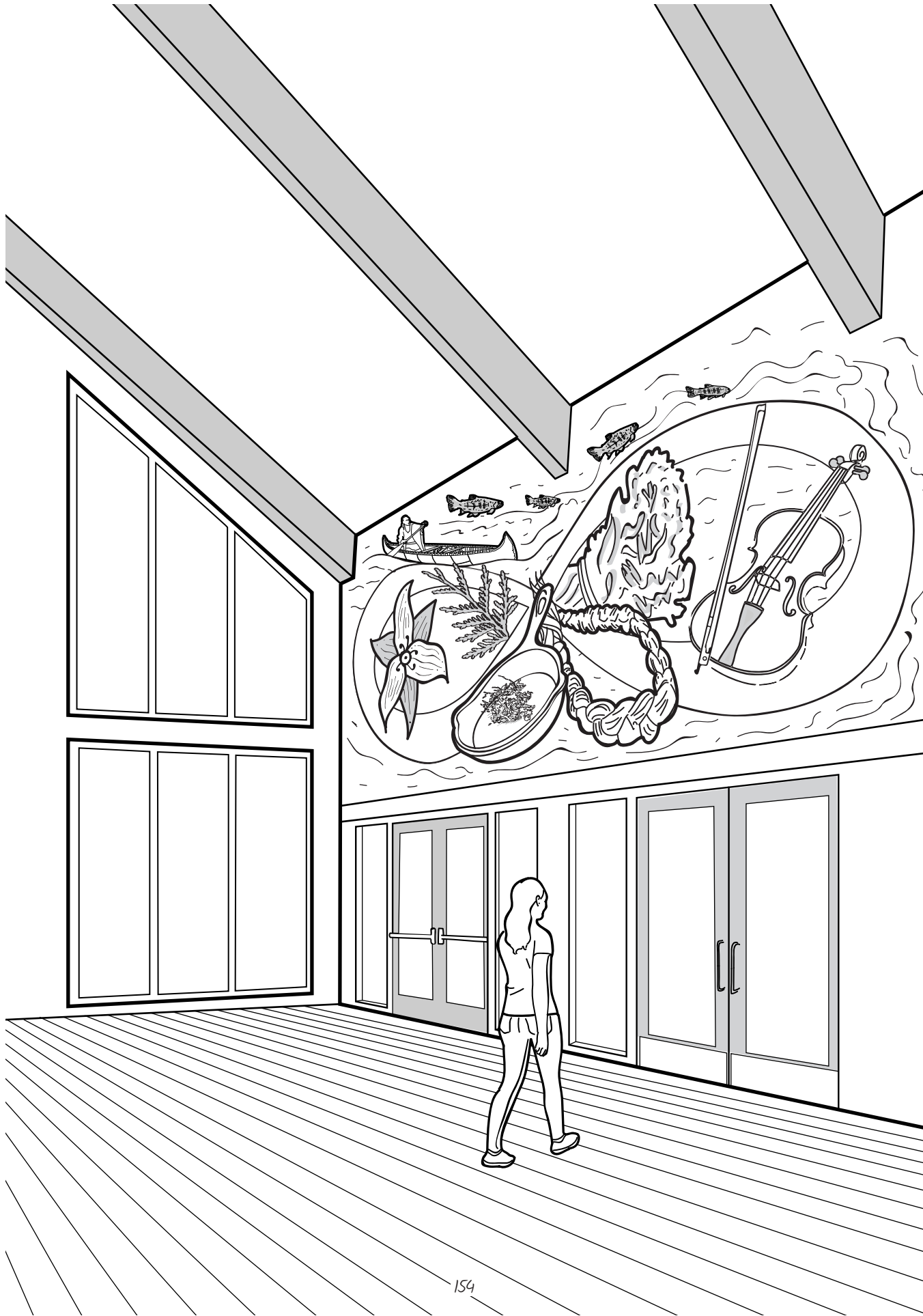


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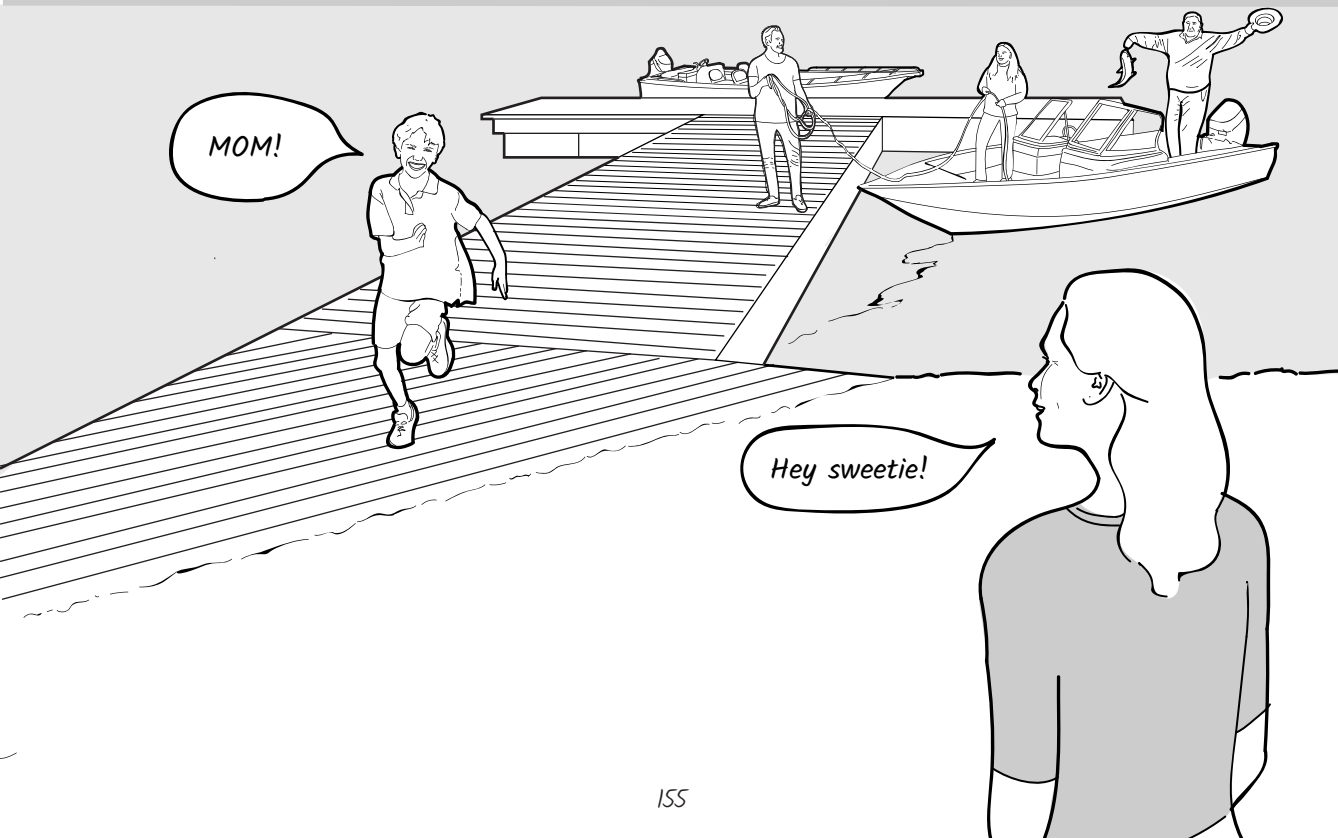


Today's Workshop  
Mocassins (Pt 3)







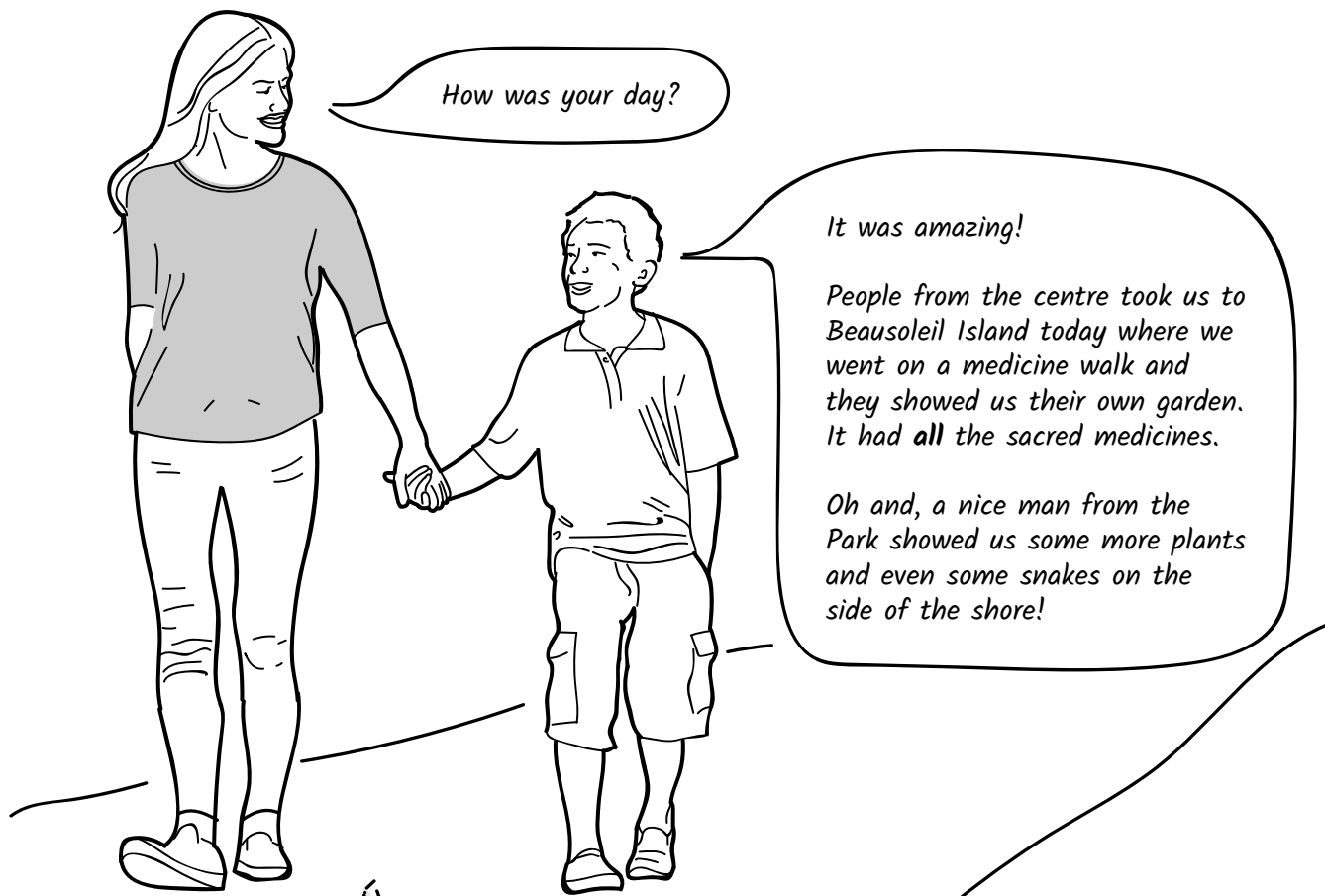






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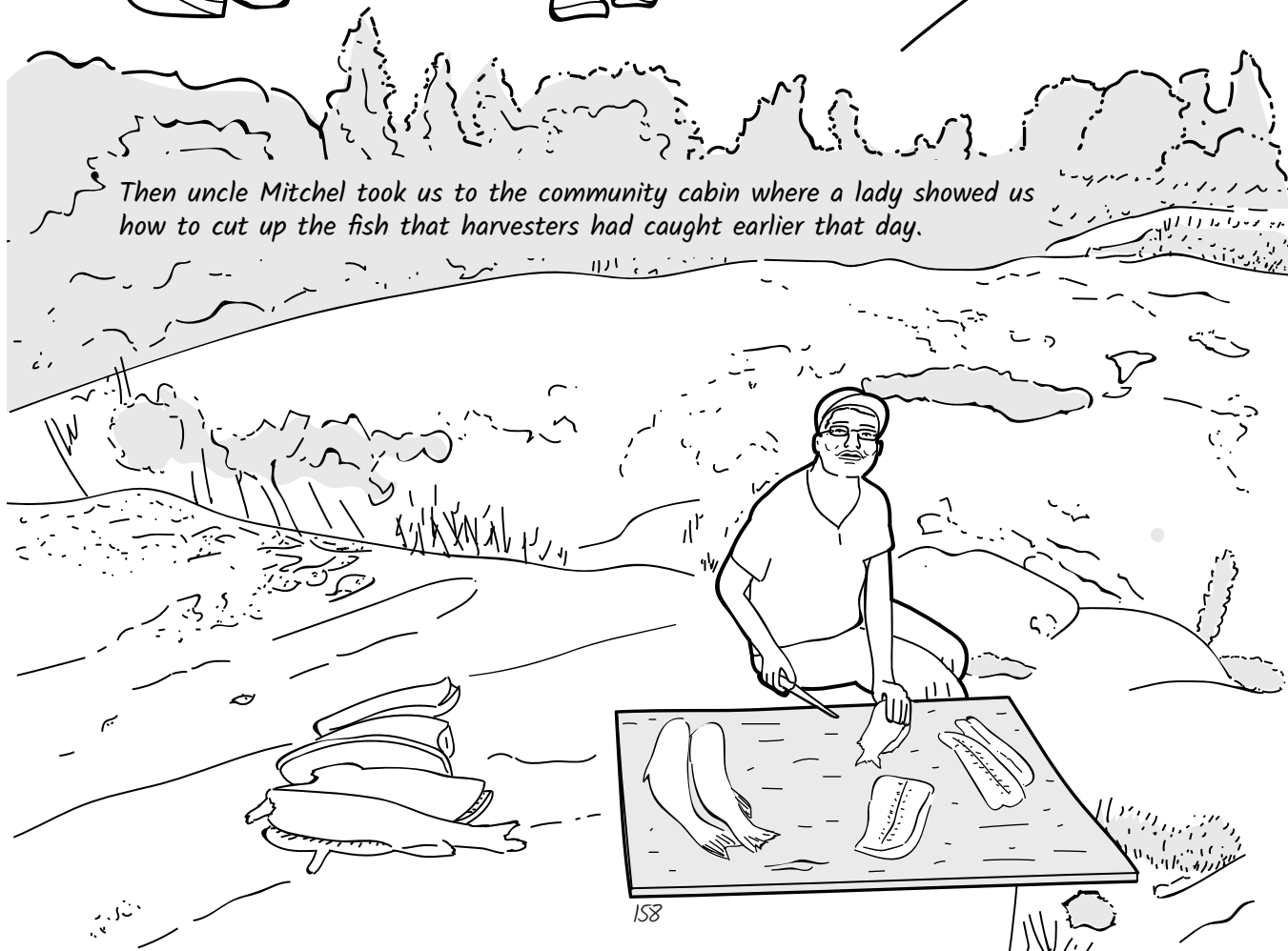


How was your day?

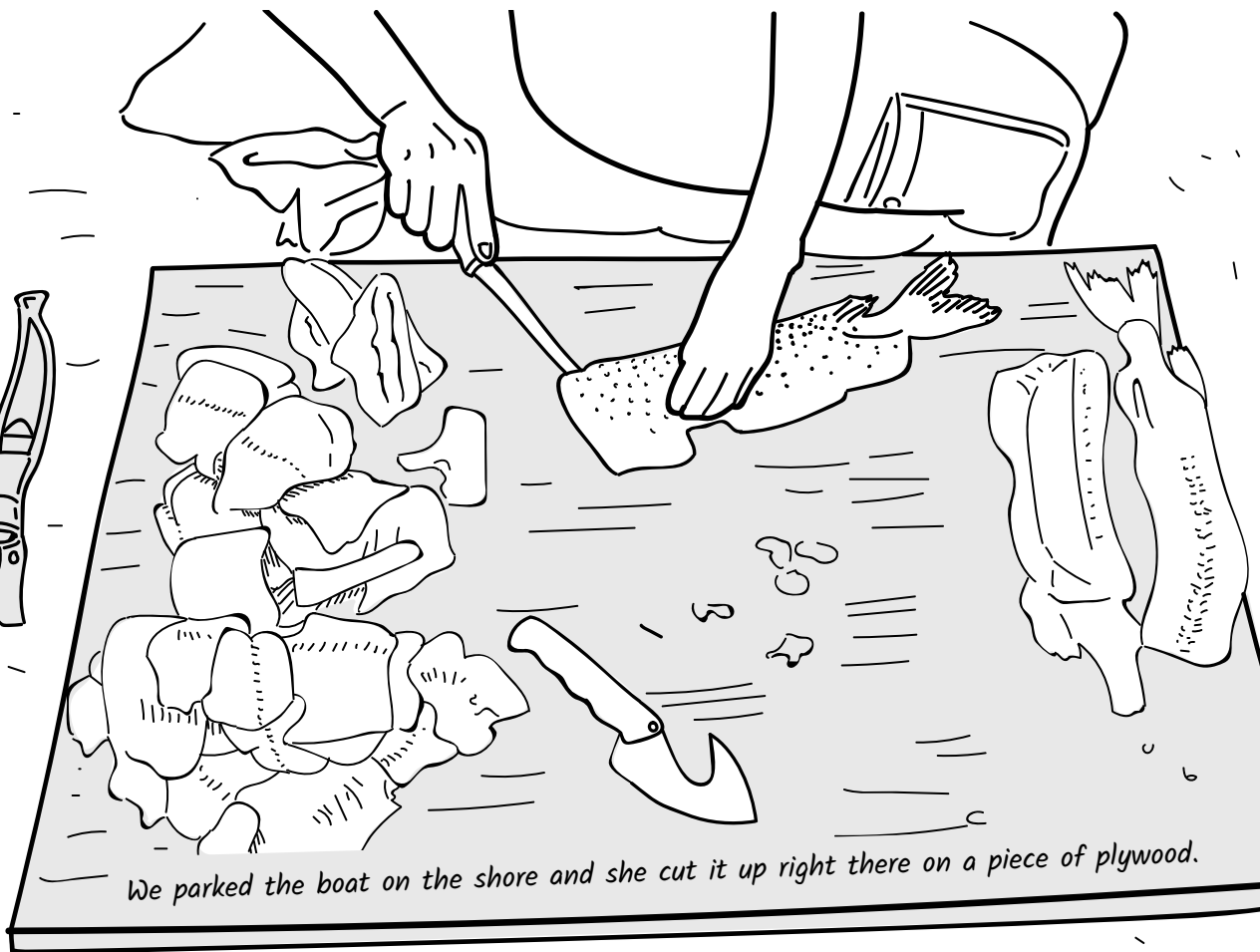
It was amazing!

People from the centre took us to Beausoleil Island today where we went on a medicine walk and they showed us their own garden. It had **all** the sacred medicines.

Oh and, a nice man from the Park showed us some more plants and even some snakes on the side of the shore!



Then uncle Mitchel took us to the community cabin where a lady showed us how to cut up the fish that harvesters had caught earlier that day.



We parked the boat on the shore and she cut it up right there on a piece of plywood.

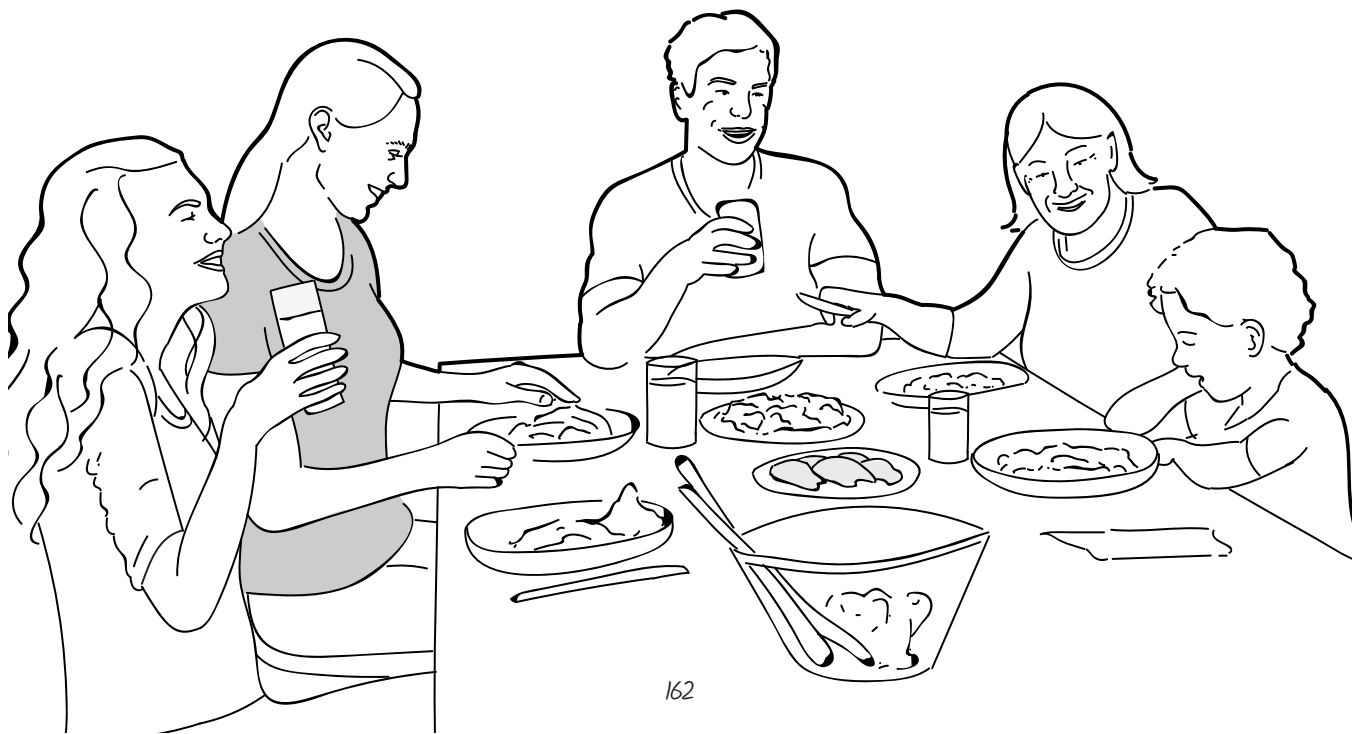
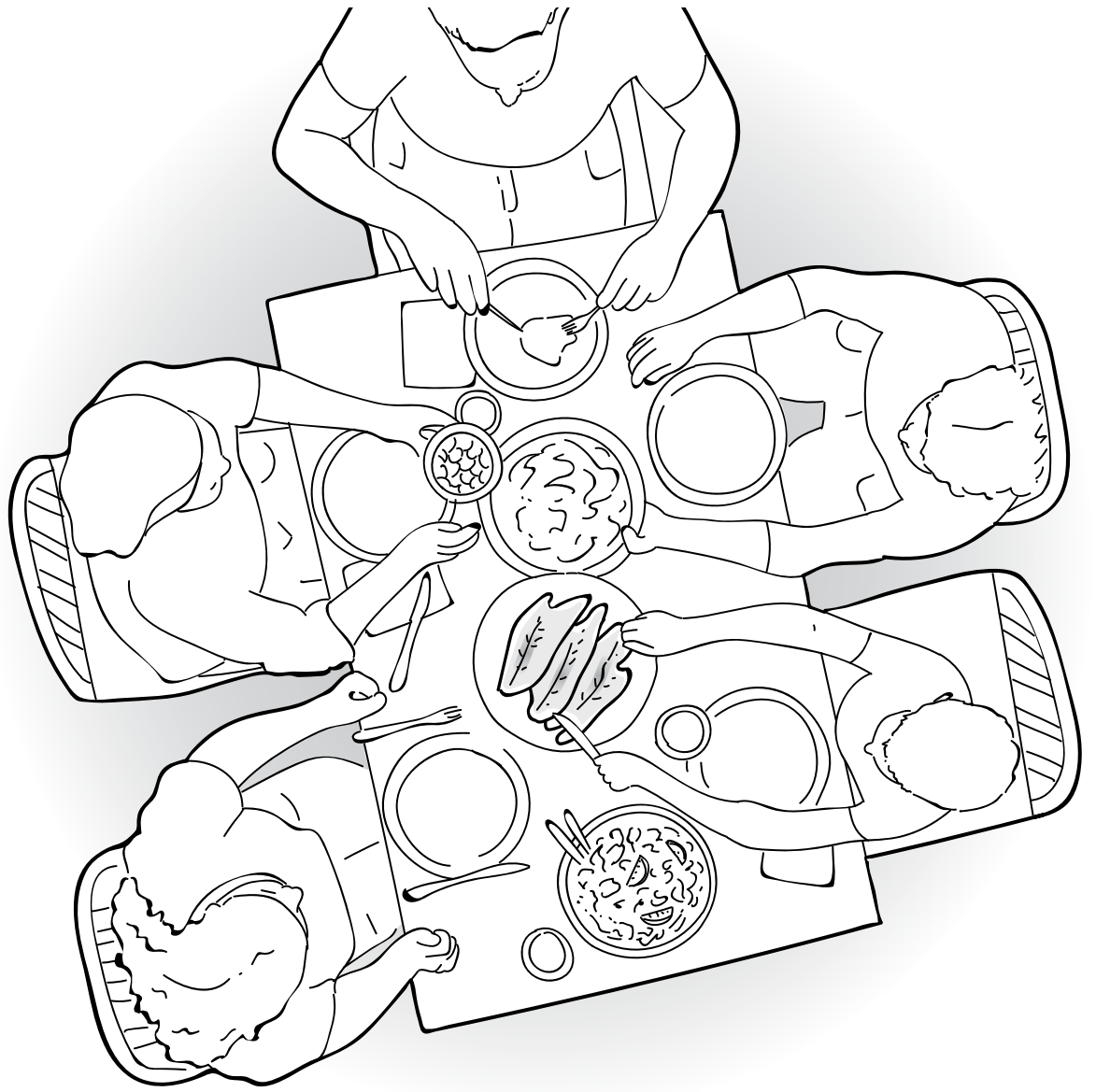
We should hurry, Mémère and Auntie Nibi are expecting us at the house, they are getting food ready for us.

Is Uncle Mitchel coming?

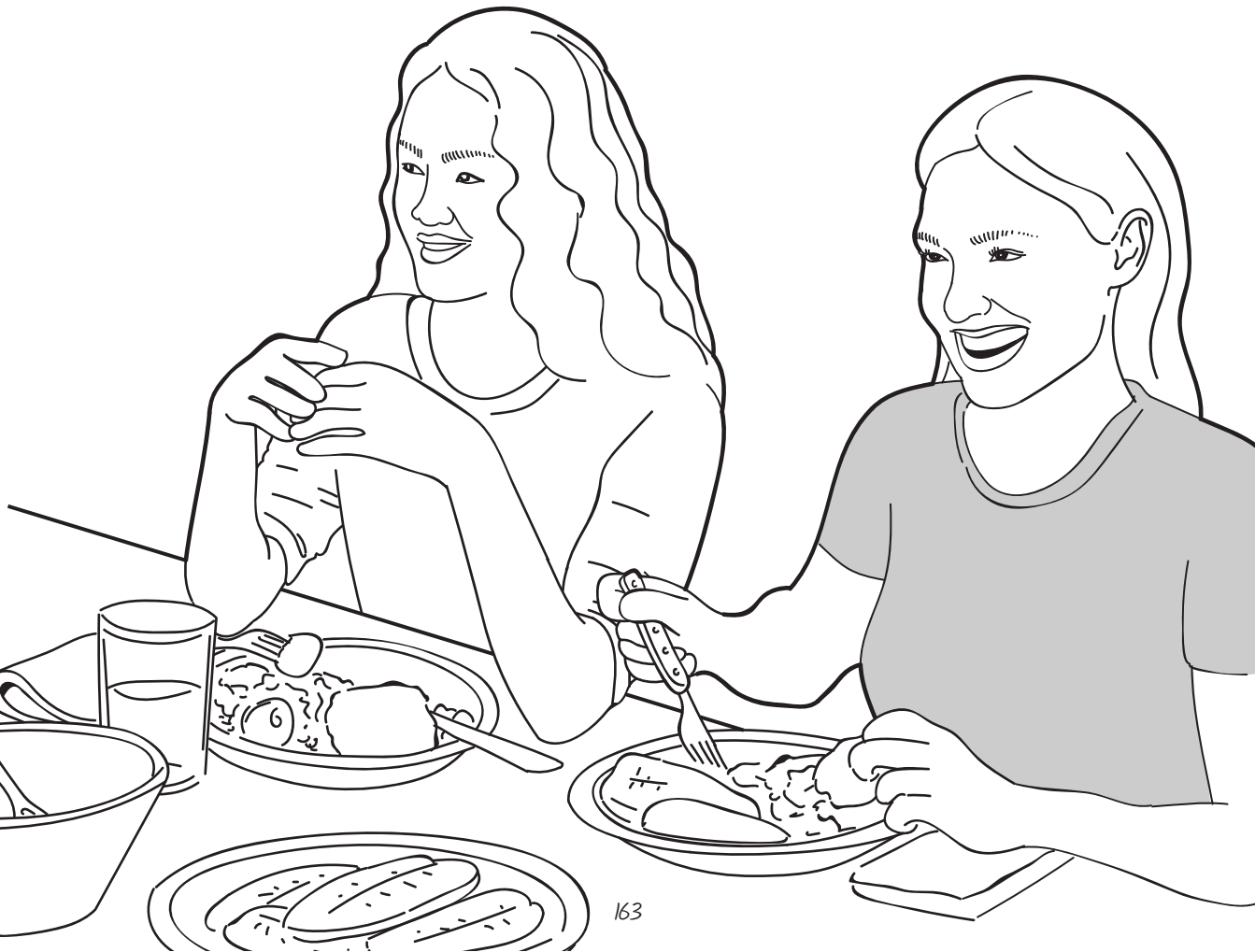
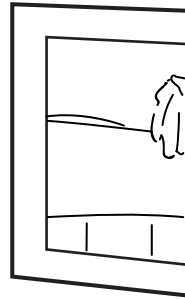
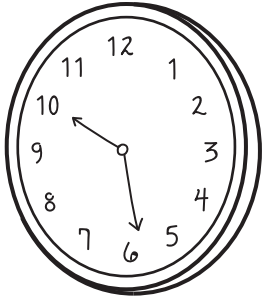
Yep I think so.











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