

CERTIFIED
ABORIGINAL

JUST A STORY



JUST A STORY

Steven Keewatin Sanderson
Writer and artist

Steven Keewatin Sanderson
Simon Piniel
Liz Bailey
Colors

Tania Willard
Lettering and formatting

Nelson Garcia
Front Cover

Ron Harris
Other covers

Sean Muir
Editor

Healthy Aboriginal Network
Publisher

Anthony Wong
Focus group DVD

This project made possible through funding from the
BC Ministry of Child and Family Development



**BRITISH
COLUMBIA**

The events depicted in this book are intended to be fiction. Any similarity to persons or places, living or dead is purely coincidental and unintended. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any way whatsoever without the written consent of the Healthy Aboriginal Network.

Copyright The Healthy Aboriginal Network
First printing March 2009
Printed in Canada









OK. I GOTTA GO,
ADAM. I'LL SEE
YOU LATER.



OH. OK, BYE.



SARAH, TIME TO
GO HOME NOW.

OK.







ALL RIGHT, ADAM.
IT'S GETTING
LATE. WE BETTER
GET HOME.



WHAT IF
THEY'RE
STILL
FIGHTING?



DON'T WORRY.
WE'LL JUST GO
STRAIGHT TO
OUR ROOMS.





IT'S OK,
NOW.



DON'T WORRY. IT'LL
BE OVER SOON.



DO YOU WANT ME
TO TELL YOU THE
BEDTIME STORY?



YEAH, OK.



OK. LONG AGO IN A KINGDOM
FAR, FAR AWAY THERE WAS A
PRINCE AND A PRINCESS. THEY
WERE TRAPPED IN A CASTLE BY AN
EVIL OGRE AND A WICKED WITCH.





OK, DOES ANYONE KNOW
THE ANSWER TO THIS ONE?
ANYBODY? ANYBODY?
WENDY, MAYBE? WENDY?



NO? ALL
RIGHT.







WELL, YOU'RE LAUGHING ABOUT IT NOW. SO IT CAN'T BE THAT BAD, HUH?

OH, MY GOSH! IT WAS SO HUMILIATING.

OH, I GUESS NOT.



AT LEAST I WASN'T PICKING MY NOSE OR ANYTHING.




I'M NOT KEEPING YOU FROM ANYTHING, AM I?



NO, NO. I'M JUST WAITING FOR MY LITTLE BROTHER TO FINISH SOCCER. BESIDES, I LIKE HANGING OUT WITH YOU.




AND I LIKE HANGING OUT WITH YOU, TOO. BUT I DON'T KNOW, MAYBE YOU SHOULD JOIN SOME AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS. LIKE ADAM.



OH, I DON'T KNOW. UM, IT'S JUST... IT'S JUST... HARD.

I UNDERSTAND IT'S DIFFICULT. LIKE WHEN YOU KNOW AN ANSWER TO A QUESTION BUT YOU'RE TOO NERVOUS TO ANSWER, RIGHT?



IT'S OK TO BE SHY. IT'S NORMAL FOR SOMEONE AT YOUR AGE. IT'S JUST THAT I DON'T WANT YOU TO BE SO SHY THAT YOU MISS OUT ON THE FUN STUFF.





OH, JEEZ.

SORRY, BUDDY.
I DIDN'T MEAN
TO TRIP YOU.















AW, ADAM. IT DOESN'T MATTER. YOU CAN'T KEEP GETTING INTO FIGHTS. YOU'RE GONNA GET KICKED OFF THE SOCCER TEAM.



WELL...



OH, NO. YOU DIDN'T. YOU GOT KICKED? MOM AND DAD ARE GONNA BREAK OUT.



AH, SO WHAT! LIKE THEY EVEN CARE.

















OK, EVERYONE. WE HAVE A FUN ASSIGNMENT TODAY. IT'S CALLED CREATIVE WRITING. IT'S EXACTLY WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE - YOU WRITE SOMETHING FROM YOUR IMAGINATION.




IT COULD BE ANYTHING YOU WANT. IT COULD BE SOMETHING YOU DID OVER THE SUMMER.



IT COULD BE A STORY YOU'VE HEARD.



IT COULD BE A STORY YOU WANT TO TELL.



I JUST WANT YOU TO WRITE SOMETHING THAT IS INTERESTING.



LONG AGO, A PRINCE AND PRINCESS WERE TRAPPED
IN A DARK, EVIL CASTLE IN A FAR AWAY LAND.



LOCKED IN THE HIGHEST TOWER...



THEY WISHED THAT SOMEONE
WOULD RESCUE THEM...



FROM THEIR PRISON.



THEIR CAPTORS WERE AN EVIL
OGRE AND A WICKED WITCH.



THE OGRE AND THE WITCH
WERE CONSTANTLY FIGHTING...



MAKING IT VERY DIFFICULT FOR
THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS TO
THINK OR EVEN SLEEP.



WORST OF ALL, THE OGRE AND THE WITCH WOULD FORCE THE PRINCE AND THE PRINCESS TO EAT DINNER WITH THEM. THE WITCH WOULD TALK CONSTANTLY TO THE PRINCESS, COMPLAINING ABOUT ALL THE OTHER WITCHES.



THIS DIDN'T INTEREST THE PRINCESS.



THIS WOULD MAKE THE WITCH VERY ANGRY AND SHE WOULD SAY TERRIBLE THINGS TO THE PRINCESS.



THE OGRE WOULD GET ANGRY, BECAUSE NO ONE WAS EATING THE FOOD HE WORKED SO HARD TO HUNT FOR.



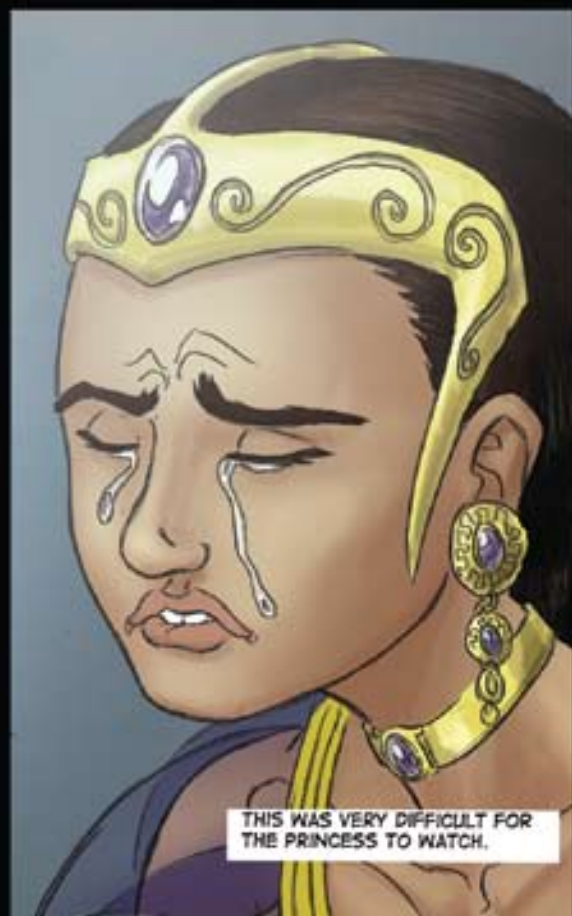
THE PRINCE WOULDN'T RESPOND TO HIM.



THIS WOULD MAKE THE OGRE EVEN ANGRIER. HE WOULD YELL, BANG THE TABLE AND BREAK THINGS.



BUT THE PRINCE WASN'T SCARED.



THIS WAS VERY DIFFICULT FOR THE PRINCESS TO WATCH.

EVERYDAY, SHE WOULD GO UP TO THE TERRACE...



HOPING... PLEADING FOR SOMEONE
TO COME AND RESCUE HER.



THAT A KNIGHT...



IN SHINING ARMOR, WOULD RIDE UP
AND RESCUE HER FROM THIS PRISON.





WAS IT THAT BAD?

NO, NO. IT WAS GREAT. I FOUND IT VERY TOUCHING AND POWERFUL. BUT WHILE I WAS READING IT, I COULDN'T HELP BUT WONDER IF IT WAS MORE THAT JUST A STORY?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?



WELL, SOMETIMES WHEN PEOPLE CAN'T TALK ABOUT THINGS THAT ARE HURTING THEM, THEY FIND OTHER WAYS OF GETTING OUT - THROUGH DREAMS, MUSIC, ART AND SOMETIMES, THROUGH WRITING.



BUT IT WAS JUST A STORY!



THAT MAY BE SO. BUT I STILL NEED TO TALK TO YOUR PARENTS ABOUT IT.



ALSO, I'M CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR ANXIETY. I'M GOING TO ASK YOUR PARENTS IF YOU CAN START SEEING THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR.



OH, I DON'T KNOW. I'M NOT COMFORTABLE WITH THIS.



WENDY, I KNOW THIS MUST BE HARD, BUT NOT ONLY AS YOUR TEACHER BUT BECAUSE I CARE ABOUT YOU, I HOPE YOU TRUST ME ENOUGH TO KNOW I WOULDN'T BE TALKING ABOUT THIS IF I DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD HELP. BELIEVE ME; I WAS JUST LIKE YOU WHEN I WAS YOUR AGE.

REALLY?



YES. I COULDN'T TALK TO OTHERS. I FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO MAKE FRIENDS. I EVEN CHEWED MY NAILS UNTIL THEY BLED. AND TALKING ABOUT IT HELPED.



IT BREAKS MY HEART TO SEE YOU GOING THROUGH THE EXACT SAME THING.



I KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO WISH THAT SOMEONE WOULD RESCUE US AND TAKE US AWAY FROM ALL OUR WORRY AND PAIN. BUT SOMETIMES WE HAVE TO DO IT. WE HAVE TO FIND THE COURAGE IN OURSELVES. AND IT BEGINS WITH TALKING.



DID IT GET BETTER FOR YOU?



YES. YES IT DID. BUT IT TOOK ME TIME. AND IT WILL TAKE TIME FOR YOU TOO. BUT IT GETS BETTER. I PROMISE.



OH, GOD! I'M SO TIRED. SO TIRED OF BEING QUIET.

AND SO WE BEGAN. I GUESS I HAD A LOT TO TALK ABOUT. BECAUSE I TALKED FOR TWO WHOLE HOURS THAT FIRST SESSION WITH LAURA, THE SCHOOL COUNSELLOR.



I JUST SAT THERE AND TALKED AND TALKED AND TALKED. IT WAS LIKE A DAM BURST INSIDE OF ME.



Laura just sat there and listened. She didn't interrupt me or criticize me or tell me what I was saying was wrong. She just listened. It was a nice feeling.



Then she asked about my parents and how their fighting and drinking made me feel.



It wasn't easy to talk about, but I was kind of glad to finally talk about it with someone other than Adam.

WE TALKED ABOUT WHETHER I SHOULD SEE A PSYCHOLOGIST OR THERAPIST OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL, BUT I WAS AFRAID OF GETTING A 'LABEL'. I DIDN'T WANT ANYONE TO THINK I WAS CRAZY OR SOMETHING.



LAURA EXPLAINED THAT LABELS ARE JUST FOR PROFESSIONALS - TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO BEST GET ME HELP. SHE SAID THAT MY ANXIETY WAS A VERY COMMON SIDE-EFFECT OF BEING SO STRESSED-OUT AT HOME. THAT MADE ME FEEL SO MUCH BETTER.



AS WE TALKED, WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA FOR ADAM TO COME.



BUT HE WASN'T TOO THRILLED ABOUT IT.

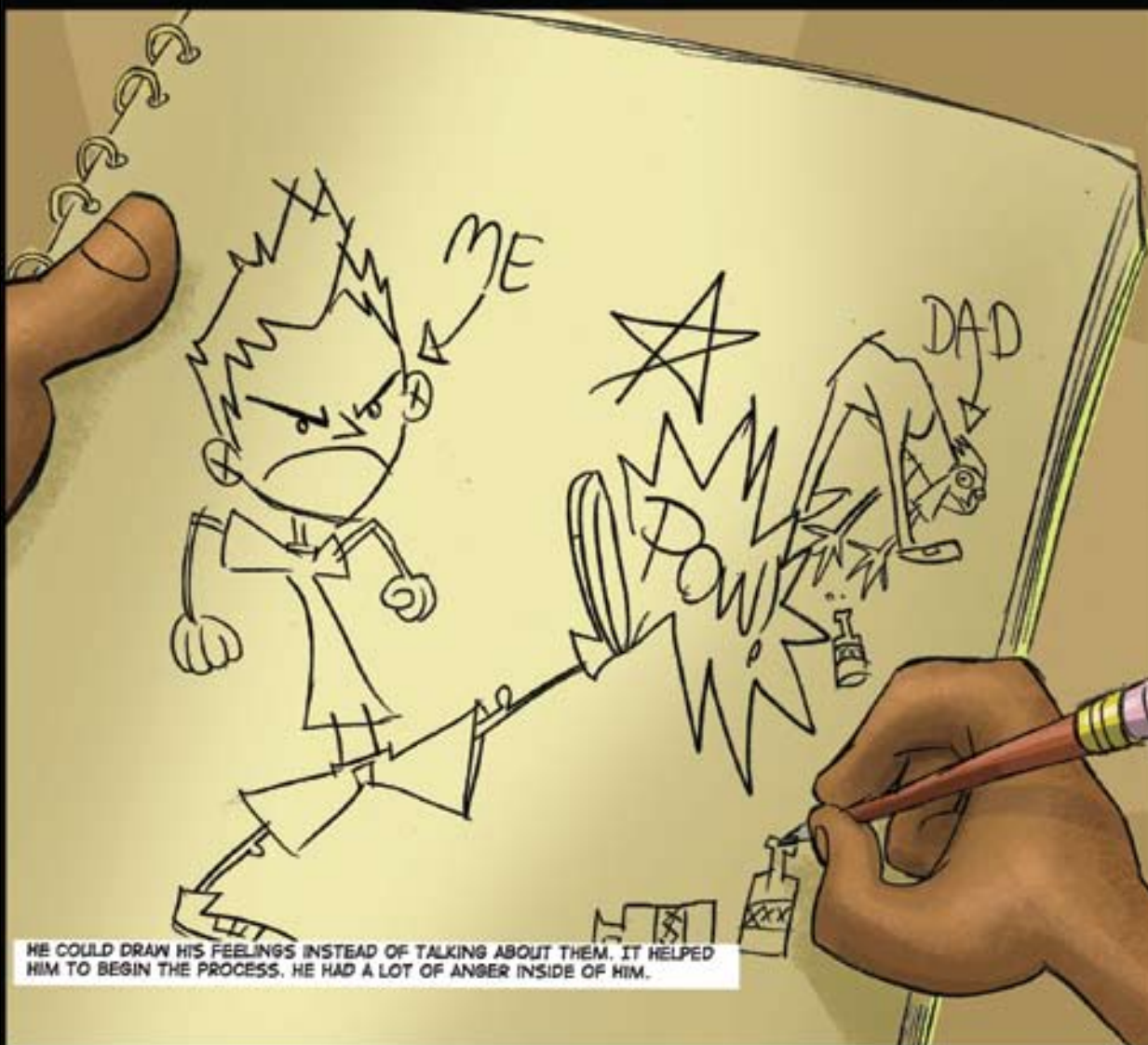


AFTER A WHILE, HE STARTED TO NOTICE HOW MUCH BETTER I WAS DOING, AND HE RELUCTANTLY AGREED.

AT FIRST, HE WAS REALLY RESISTANT. HE SAID IT WAS FOR WIMPS.



HE DIDN'T RESPOND WELL TO JUST TALKING. SO LAURA GOT HIM TO TRY ART THERAPY.



HE COULD DRAW HIS FEELINGS INSTEAD OF TALKING ABOUT THEM. IT HELPED HIM TO BEGIN THE PROCESS. HE HAD A LOT OF ANGER INSIDE OF HIM.

IT TOOK HIM A LONG TIME TO OPEN UP. IT WAS VERY HARD FOR HIM TO SHOW HIS FEELINGS, BUT LAURA FINALLY GOT HIM TO UNDERSTAND WHY HE WAS SO MAD.



HE WAS SO ANGRY WITH OUR PARENTS AND JUST BOTTLED IT UP. IT CAME OUT AS RAGE WHEN HE WAS STRESSED AT SCHOOL.

ADAM DIDN'T WANT TO BE SO ANGRY ANYMORE. IT MADE HIM TIRED AND SAD.



THE MORE HE AND LAURA WOULD TALK, THE MORE HE WOULD LET OUT HIS FEELINGS. AND HE GOT SO MUCH BETTER.



Laura even went to talk to the coach for him and got him back on the team.



HE EVEN MADE UP WITH HIS BEST FRIEND TERRY.



THEY REALLY MISSED EACH OTHER.

IT GOT EASIER FOR ME...



AND I WASN'T AFRAID TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ANYMORE.



MY TEACHER WAS SO PROUD OF ME.



JOEY NOTICED ME AGAIN...



AND THIS TIME I WASN'T CHEWING MY NAILS.



I HAVE FRIENDS NOW. AND ADAM
ISN'T LOSING ANYMORE OF HIS.



I'M HOPING THAT ONE DAY SOON, MY PARENTS WILL START
TALKING TO SOMEONE LIKE MY COUNSELLOR. OUR FAMILY IS NOT
PERFECT. NOTHING EVER IS. BUT WE'RE DOING A LOT BETTER.

EMAIL US TO PREVIEW AND ORDER OUR OTHER RESOURCES



ON THE TURN, a gambling addiction animated short. Based on our comic book, this DVD is about a young woman that learns how to play poker at school. Peer pressure gets the best of her and she learns what it feels like to hurt someone very badly.



LEVEL UP, our staying in school comic book. Terry is contemplating dropping out of school. But before he does, he's asked to spend some time with his cousin Dave, a successful game developer. Rather than lecture Terry, Dave makes the importance of school relatable - he compares education to moving up a level in a video game.



DARKNESS CALLS, our suicide prevention comic, is the story of a teenager who is bullied at school, misunderstood by his teacher and feels socially isolated from his family. He finds one day very overwhelming and considers taking his own life.



AN INVITED THREAT, our diabetes prevention comic, is about a family's realization that the food they eat and make available to their community is not good for them. It's about making healthy decisions now, rather than waiting until it's too late.

6520 Salish Drive
Vancouver, BC V6N 2C7
P 604-876-0243 F 604-876-0248

sean@thehealthyaboriginal.net

BC Incorporated non-profit Society No. S-48530

Vancouver Coastal Region Resources

Aboriginal CYMH Support Services

Vancouver- Urban Native Youth Association	604-254-7732
Vancouver Native Health	604-602-7558
Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society	604-872-6723
Bella Bella- Heilsuk Child and Family Services	250-957-4325
Bella Coola- Health and Wellness	250-799-5809
Sliammon Health	604-483-3009
Sechelt Indian Band Health and Social Development	604-885-9404
Southern Stl'atl'imx Health Society	604-894-0151

CYMH services

Pemberton CYMH	604-894-2091
Powell River	604-485-3722
Gibsons	604-886-5525
Sechelt	604-740-8900
Squamish	604-892-1400
North Vancouver	604-904-4336
Vancouver	604-709-4111
Richmond	604-207-2511

EMERGENCY - 911