



Whistle For Protection



Based on stories by Jeanne Pelletier

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This series is a departure from other books about Aboriginal or traditional stories. It includes five stories. As readers go through the series, they will notice that the narrative and artwork gets progressively darker. The series starts with trickster stories, then moves to a Whiitigo and Paakuk story, then jumps to a story about selling one's soul and personal redemption, and finally to a Roogaroo story.

This project came to life from the stories of our Elders, and as such, original transcripts of the stories, prose renditions by Janice DePeel, and biographies of the storytellers and project team are available on the Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture: www.metismuseum.ca/browse/index.php?id=13100

Stories of Our People/Lii zistwayr di la naasyoon di Michif Series:

How Michif was Lost

Chi-Jean and the Red Willows

Whistle for Protection

Sins of the Righteous

Attack of the Roogaroos!

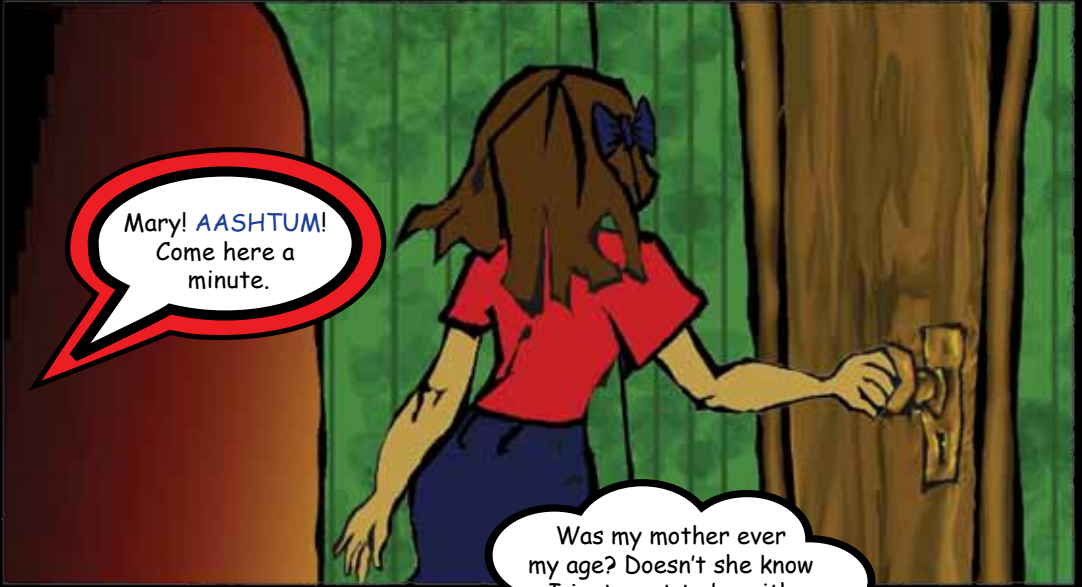


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Goodnight Mom...
Goodnight Kokum! I'm off to
Arcand's barn dance.
Don't wait up!



Mary! AASHTUM!
Come here a
minute.

Was my mother ever
my age? Doesn't she know
I just want to be with
my friends?





Don't you look lovely!



Good grief.



Aw, come on Mom. Don't get all worked up. It's only a jean skirt and a blouse.



Mary gave her Kokum a quick hug, hoping she'd be out the door in an instant, but her Kokum wouldn't let go...



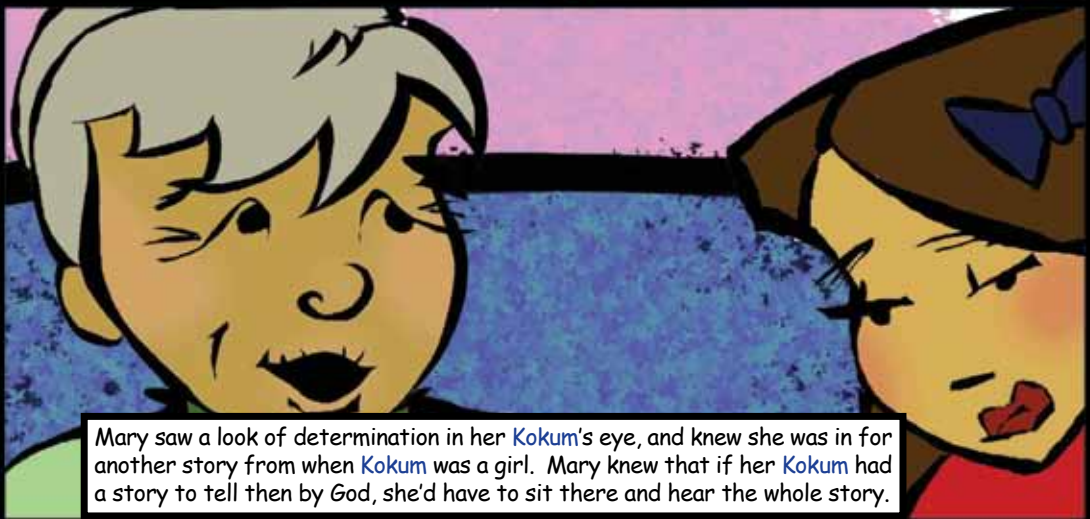
...and with Mary's hand in her iron grip, she pulled Mary down next to her on the chesterfield.



I want you to take this. This saved me from a very bad experience when I was a young girl.



Kokum, nothing is going to happen to me, and I don't need a whistle to protect me.



Mary saw a look of determination in her Kokum's eye, and knew she was in for another story from when Kokum was a girl. Mary knew that if her Kokum had a story to tell then by God, she'd have to sit there and hear the whole story.



When I was your age...



...I was excited to go to dances too.





"I remember one dance that was held at the school. Joe Wilson had died three months earlier, and it was the first celebration since his death."





"Some of the boys took a short cut through the cemetery. They had no respect for the dead. As they passed through the graveyard, one of them hit old Joe's grave with his whip. He laughed, and said 'You come too old man!'"



"The dance was well-attended and everyone was having a good time."



"Just before midnight someone new arrived. The lunch was about to be served so no one noticed him right away."



"However, the stranger noticed the boys who had been in the cemetery earlier. He walked right up to the boy that had whipped his grave."

"The man turned and left the party."



"The young man was scared."



"He was shaking so hard that his teeth were rattling. Some of the people told the young man, 'You better go to the priest, and tell him what you've done. The priest will know what to do.'"



"The next day the boy went to the priest, and told him what he had done. The priest said, 'You have to go to the grave and when you do, take a new baby with you. Go with the baby to the grave.'"



"The boy was lucky. His sister had just given birth a few weeks before, and she allowed her brother to take the baby to the grave."



"Saturday came, and the boy took his sister's baby and walked to the grave. There was old Joe Wilson, standing there waiting."



"He saw the boy with the baby in his arms."

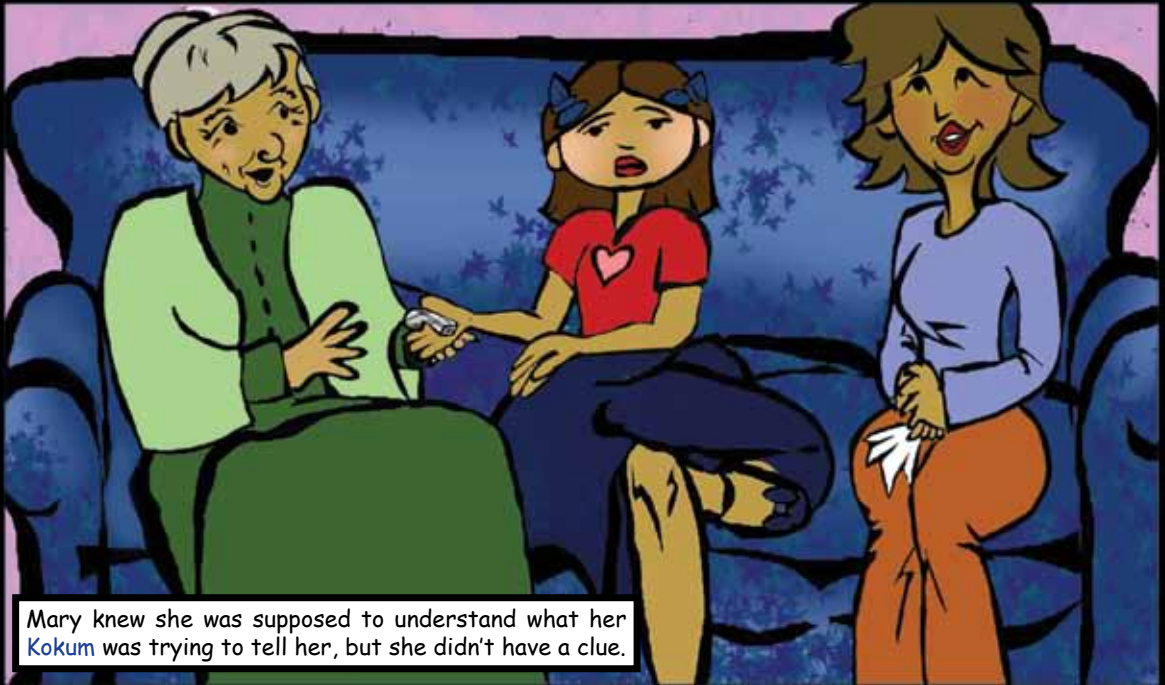


...because if you didn't have this child, I'd do the same thing to you that you did to me.

"Joe Wilson returned to his final resting place and the boy left the cemetery. His sister immediately took her baby into her arms."



"When she did, her brother fell over. He didn't die, he had just passed out because he was so scared."



Mary knew she was supposed to understand what her Kokum was trying to tell her, but she didn't have a clue.



Kokum, my friends wouldn't do that. I don't need a whistle for protection.



What's a Whiitigo?

I'm not done yet. The whistle is not for you to use for protection from your friends. It is for you to use as protection against the Whiitigo.



Don't be patronizing Mary!



Mom, I'm not! You've never mentioned a Whiitigo before Kokum. What is it?



All right, I'll tell you. Only so it will keep you quiet, and I can have some peace.



"When I was a little girl, my Kokum used to tell me this story. One winter she stayed with our family and every night we heard the train whistle blow loudly right at midnight. Just before the whistle would blow, Kokum would tell us this story."

"One calm moonlit night my Kokum told us about **Whiitigos**, cannibal spirits."

When a **Whiitigo**'s hungry, he makes a loud screechy whistle. That sound means the **Whiitigos** are out, and they are hunting. Their hunger can only be satisfied by human flesh. Nothing else will do.



If a **Whiitigo** touches you, it will eat you. If it eats you, then you will become a **Whiitigo** too.



"That's why I gave you this whistle. If you are outside, and you hear a whistle, you blow on this loud and hard."



"Now **Whiitigos** don't just hunt on calm nights, so I want you to always be aware."



"On windy nights you can hear the **Whiitigos** flying around outside. You probably thought it was branches and things being jostled by the wind. It isn't."

"The sounds you hear are the sounds of bony skeletons flying around. They are **Whiitigos** searching for new victims. Some of us Michifs also call them **Paakuks** or **Pakakosh**."





And you know what happens if they touch you?



Just then, a car horn blared.



Mary shrieked and jumped...



...dropping the whistle to the floor.



Kokum laughed as Mary retrieved the piece of metal with the ball inside.

Mary kissed her Kokum on the cheek, and then she was gone.



Tap tap tap!



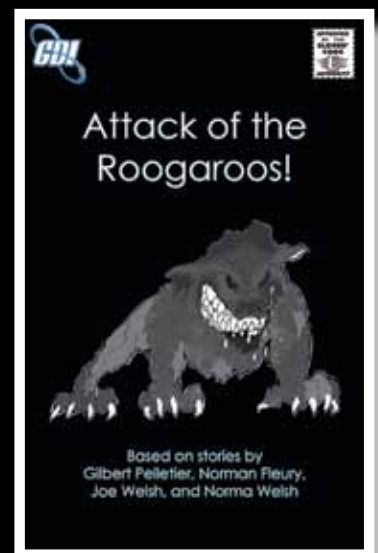
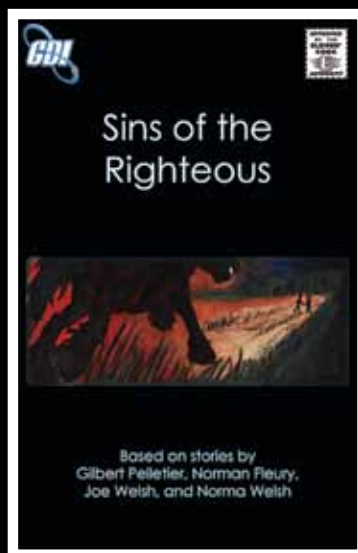
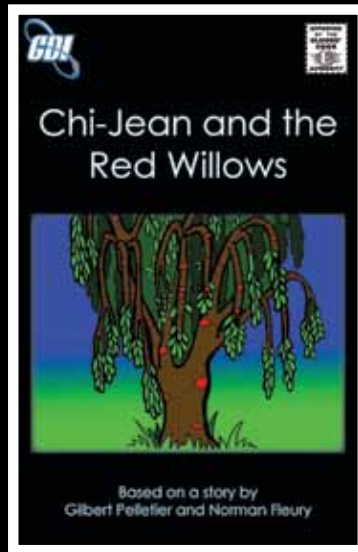
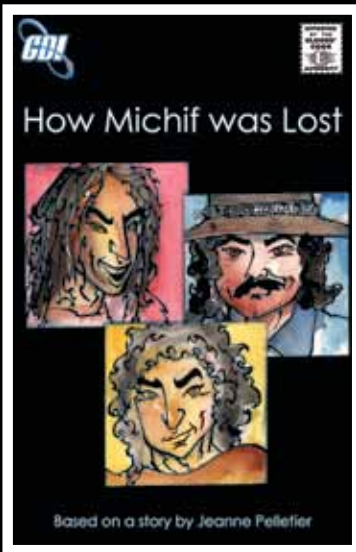
Later that evening, as Mary's mother and Kokum sat on the couch, they heard a loud shrill whistle. They quickly got up and moved to the open window, listening to the broken tranquility outside.



After a moment they heard another shrill whistle. As the moon shone down they saw a shape fly by the window. It was a skeleton—li Paakuk—and clasped between its teeth was a silver whistle.



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Métis stories seamlessly blend characters and motifs from Cree, Ojibway, and French-Canadian traditions into an exciting, unique synthesis. Métis stories are an invaluable treasure because they tell familiar stories in interesting ways while preserving elements of storytelling which have become rare to the Métis' ancestral cultures. The *Stories of Our People/Lii zistwayr di la naasyoon di Michif* series includes stories about the three Métis tricksters (Wiisakaychak, Nanabush, and Chi-Jean), werewolves (Roogaroos), cannibal spirits (Whiitigos), flying skeletons (Paakuks), and of course, the Devil (li Jiyaab). The stories are steeped in Michif language and culture.



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