

Kīwēk

(Go Home)

by
Curtis Peeteetuce

© Curtis Peeteetuce

814 20th St West
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0Y3
306.281.6717
curtispeeteetuce@gmail.com

Synopsis

When two children find and play a magical board game, they release a world of fun and adventure. They quickly learn the only way to finish the game is by learning and remembering the Cree language.

About The Game

A team game. They roll dice and move in sequence. Actors are welcome to select audience members to participate. The objective is to translate and make it home.

The high stakes of the game becomes the narrative for the actors and audience. The throughline or motivation is to get our actors home. They can only do so with help from the audience and their memory of the Cree their kohkom taught them. Therefore, finishing the game is a communal effort.

Setting

Present day

Characters

Kim - Cree male, 10 yrs old
Adrian - Cree male, 8 yrs old
Mr. Smith - male, teacher
Candace - female, family friend
Mr. NoMoreCree - male

Scene 1

A back yard. A boy enters and begins interacting with the audience.

Kim: tānisi kahkiyaw? I said... TĀNISI KAHKIYAW? Kim nitsiyihkason. nīya ohci asinīy ospwakān askihk. kinistotin cī kahkiyaw? namoya? Eee. pako tahakamik pikiskwēyak oma ka-nēhiyawēwin. wacistakac! Err.

Adrian: (O.S.) In English I said!

Kim: Okay Kim, relax. Hi everyone. Name's Kim. Kim Eagle. I'm from Stone Pipe First Nation. Our family's the biggest on the reserve. So I moved to the city. I live with my cousin Adrian, my kohkom Maggie and our dog Hector. Err, Hector. As if. Adrian just picks the worst names.

Adrian: (O.S.) Not even.

Kim: But right now, we're gonna play a game: Hot or Cold. In Cree it's "kisitē ahpo cī tahkayaw?" But we call it Hot or Cold 'cuz Adrian's is just starting to learn Cree. I already speak it.

Do you guys wanna play too?

Awesome. I'm gonna just hide his toy right here. Ekosi. Don't say anything or the game is over and we have to start again. Adrian's coming in right away so help him find the toy by shouting hot or cold. Okay? *Audience responds.* Okay shh. Adrian.

Enter Adrian with eyes closed.

Adrian: Can I open my eyes now?

Kim: Aha.

Adrian: Holy just lots of people here.

Kim: Tapwē. And we're all gonna play Hot or Cold together.

Adrian: Really? Holy.

Kim: Ready? Hide your eyes.

Adrian: Sounds good in the hood. You know it, poet. Bring it by the dozen, cousin.

Kim: Adrian!

Adrian: Ok.

Adrian looks around.

Adrian: Am I hot or cold?

Kim: *With audience.* Cold.

Adrian: Cold?

Kim: *With audience.* Yes.

Kim wanders the stage area while playing with the audience.

Kim: Nope. Cold, super cold.

Adrian: Like snow or like space?

Kim: Like Mr. Freeze.

Adrian: Holy, just real cold, holy.

Kim: You know how to speak in Cree?

Adrian: No.

Kim: You should learn.

Adrian: Why?

Kim: Cree is our language. Did you know that?

Adrian: Oh.

Kim: You should learn. Then we can play games in Cree.

Adrian: Nuh uh. I can't learn. I'm no good at Cree.

Kim: You can. I know you can.

Adrian: I can't.

Kim: You're smart.

Adrian: Really? Like Einstein or like the wisdom of our great ancestors?

Pause.

Kim: For now we'll do it in English. Hey. You're getting warm now.

Adrian is near the toy.

Kim: Warm. Warmer. Warmest. Hot!

Adrian: Like fire or lava?

Kim: The sun. Pīsim.

Adrian: Holy, just real hot, holy.

Adrian looks closer as Kim fights excitement. Adrian finds the toy. It's his action figure.

Adrian: FOUND IT! YES!

Kim: Good one, Adrian. I knew you could do it. Let's play it in Cree now.

As they start to play, a principal and lady enter.

Mr. Smith: Adrian, Kim.

Kim: Yes, Mr. Smith.

Mr. Smith: Hi. This is Candace. She's a friend of your family.

Kim: I remember. You visit kohkom sometimes.

Candace: Yes. Hi.

Mr. Smith: She and I would like a word with you two please.

Adrian: Okay.

Kim: What's this about?

Candace and Mr. Smith look at each other.

Mr. Smith: It's about your kohkom...

End Scene.

Scene 2 - A Game

A new place. Kim and Adrian enter with Candace.

Candace: Ok, here we are. Do you both have your suitcases?
Good. Come on in. It's okay, come on in.

Both Adrian and Kim are quiet.

Candace: You remember the social worker we talked with today?
She said it's okay for you to stay here for now. Your
grandma is sick and unable to take care of you.

The room has two single beds.

Candace: But it's going to be okay. Before I forget, this has
both your names on it. From your grandma. Here you go.

She places an item on one of the beds.

Candace: I'll see you in the morning. Good night.

*Candace leaves. Adrian wanders the room, looking out a window.
Kim looks for her pajamas in her suitcase.*

Adrian: I don't wanna move back to the reserve. I like it
here.

Kim: Me too. The reserve is so boring.

Adrian: What's gonna happen anyways?

Kim: Kohkom will get better. But it looks like she'll be in
the hospital for a while.

Adrian: Whaat? So you mean, we're like never going home? Back
with kohkom?

Kim: She's sick. I don't know what it is but I can tell its
going to take time.

Adrian: Man, that's not cool, fool. Unreal, we can't seal a
deal-

Kim: Adrian!

Adrian: Sorry.

Adrian holds the item left by kohkom.

Kim: What is that?

Adrian: I don't know.

Kim: Open it.

Adrian: No, you open it. I'm going to play games.

Kim: Fine.

Adrian puts on headphones & plays with a portable gaming device. Kim opens the item. In an instant we hear a drumbeat followed by a chorus of voices speaking in Cree. The sound suddenly fades out.

Adrian: What in the world was that?!

Kim: I don't know. It looks like...a game.

Adrian: What is that?

Kim: Looks like a sort of...dice.

Adrian: Weird symbols. What does *that* say?

Kim: It's Cree. atamiskatowinawaw. "Kiwēk" oma metawewkamihk isihkatew.

Adrian: And that means?

Kim: Greetings. This game is called Kiwēk. Kiwēk means 'go home.'

Adrian: How do you know?

Kim: Auntie used to say it to us all the time. Remember? When we'd stay late at her place.

Adrian: Oh yeah...

Kim: "This game is for 2 players. Each one rolls the dice, moving through the world of the game. First to get home wins."

Adrian: I'll go first.

Kim: No wait-

Adrian rolls the dice.

Kim: It says here the game only works in Cree.

Adrian: Whaat?

Kim: Yeah. Tapwe.

Adrian: Why didn't you say so?

Kim: You grabbed the dice out of my hand.

Adrian: Thanks a lot. So now what?

Kim: Really Adrian? Come on. It's just a game. I'm going to brush my teeth.

The sound of the drum and voices again from the game. They approach to take a closer look. Suddenly, it is as if the audience has been inserted into the game.

Adrian: Whoa!

Kim: Wow. How did that happen?

Adrian: I don't know.

Kim: Hi everyone.

Adrian: Hey. It's everyone from before. Remember when we were playing Hot and Cold?

Kim: Yeah. Nice to see you all again.

Adrian: Hey. Do you guys wanna play with us too? *Audience responds.*

Kim: What? No. It says it's only for two players, remember?

Adrian: Oh yeah. Darn. But hey, it says for two players. But not which two players.

Kim: Are you thinking we can take turns?

Adrian: Yeah, I mean. As long as its two players, right? Two at a time. Share it.

Kim: Let's try then. It'll make the game faster too. You guys wanna?

Audience responds.

Adrian: Look. It says here you must play until the game is finished, using the Cree language.

Kim: Pass me that sheet. These look like the rules or something.

Adrian: Does it say anything about what I rolled?

Kim: Yes. Here. There are symbols on the dice that match the- Of course!

Adrian: What?

Kim: They're syllabics. Like a syllabics chart.

Adrian: So what does it say?

Projection.

Kim: The first part is this syllabic. On the chart it is 'ne'.

Adrian: 'Ne'?

Kim: This one is 'wo'.

Adrian: What does 'n e w o' spell everyone? Altogether.

Audience answers.

Kim: Cooooooooool.

Adrian: Newo means four. Thank you. So, I have to move four spots.

Adrian: This game feels like its gonna take long. I don't wanna play.

Kim: We have to. Now you have to count to four in Cree.

Adrian: I don't remember. I told you I'm no good at Cree.

Kim: Okay. Everyone. He needs our help. The Cree word for walk is...does anyone know? Hands up.

Audience interaction.

Kim: Very good. Thank you. The Cree word for walk is pimohte. Let's show Adrian how to count to four. Ready? *With audience.* Peyak, niso, nisto, newo.

Adrian walks 4 spots. Drums, music and voices. They read the prompt from the game.

Adrian: "Echoes of thunder shake the land. Make way the sacred herd is grand."

Kim: What was that?

Louder and closer.

Kim: A herd of buffalo??

Adrian: Whaat?

Kim: We have them on the reserve! Watch out!

A herd of buffalo run around the stage.

Kim: We need to say it in Cree.

Adrian: Huh?

Kim: Say it in Cree. All of us.

Adrian: What?

Kim: Run!

Adrian: Okay.

Adrian leaves and hides. Kim follows.

Kim: What are you doing?

Adrian: You said run cuz!

Kim: No I meant SAY RUN IN CREE I mean. We have to tell the buffalo to run in Cree!

Adrian: Oh. I can't I don't know how.

Kim: Ask for help.

Adrian: Ugh. Okay. Awasisak, to say run buffalo we all need to say "_____". Altoher ekwa maka...

Audience responds.

Kim: It worked! They're running!

The herd leaves. All is quiet.

Adrian: Are they gone?

Kim: I think so. Let's keep playing, before they come back.

Adrian: Good idea. Your turn.

Kim: Okay. Don't be scared. Here goes...

She rolls the dice.

Adrian: What does it say?

Kim: According to the chart, the syllabics say 'ni' 'ya' 'na' and 'n'.

Adrian: *To audience.* Altogether what is this word in Cree?

Kim will help audience.

Kim: Very good. Niyanan. It means five. Here I go. Ready to count everyone? *Altogether.* Peyak, niso, nisto, newo, niyānan.

Kim moves five spaces and reads the game prompt.

Kim: "Once the fiddle starts, you dance. Don't stop when it speeds and you lose your chance."

Adrian: What does that mean? Lose your chance to what?

Red River Jig on the fiddle.

Kim: Oh no.

Adrian: What?

Kim: It's Just Dance...FOR JIGGING!

She begins the dance.

Adrian: You know how to jig, don't you?

Kim: Yeah, but that was five years ago. Back on the rez.

Adrian: Just try. We have to finish the game. Hurry. It's playing faster.

The music speeds so Kim must jig. The fiddle plays faster until Kim can dance no longer.

Kim: It's too fast.

Adrian: Holy, just real fast, holy.

Kim: I can't!

She stops and the music fades. A new game prompt appears.

Adrian: "The fiddle stopped, you lost your chance. Go back three spots and in Cree sing."

Kim: WHAT? Now pow wow.

Adrian: Yup. How do you say the word sing in Cree? Does anyone know how?

Audience interaction.

Adrian: Really? Nikamo? You guys know more than me.

Kim: Great job everyone.

Music.

Adrian: Hey, I recognize this song.

Kim: Yeah, it's kā-kanātahk in Cree. Oh Canada. We learned this song in school on the reserve. Do you remember?

Adrian: I was too small.

Kim: Let's sing.

Adrian: Nuh uh. Not me. I don't know how.

Kim: Adrian, you have to stop saying I can't and at least say I'll try.

Pause.

Kim: Come on I need your help. Please?

Adrian: Ok then. I'll try.

Kim: Thank you. Ekwa maka. Nikamok. Come on everyone, let's do it.

kā-kanātahk
kitaskinaw kahkiyaw
sakihitowin
kicawasimisak
kimamihcihawak
mamihcimowak
kihci-kiwetinohk
ota ohci, niti isko
kasitoskatinan
nohtawinan
kanawiyihta
kā-kanātahk nitaskinan
oma
kā-kanātahk
nitaskinan
tapwe

Kim: Alright. Good job everyone. Miywasin! That was a lot of work but looks like we did it. Your turn.

Adrian grabs the dice.

Adrian: Someone else should try.

Kim: Ok. Um, who wants to try?

Audience response. The actors will choose an audience member to play. Someone they feel will be cooperative.

Kim: Okay you. Yes you in the (hat, pink shirt, glasses and blue sweater). Thank you. Hi, what's your name?

Student says name.

Kim: Okay everyone, a round of applause for _____. Can you roll the dice please? *Rolls dice.* Good job. Let's see what it says.

The group will decipher 6 as the number. They will work with the audience to pronounce 6 in Cree.

Adrian: Wow. Everyone's so good at Cree.

Kim: Great work everyone. Thank you. Okay _____, can you walk 6 spaces? Everyone, let's help _____, here we go. Ready? Peyak, niso, nisto, newo, nikotwasik! Yes, you all did it! Thank you _____, you can sit down now.

Adrian: Awesome possum! Way to go bro. Five up top, pop!

Adrian leans in and reads the prompt.

Kim: Wow. Only 3 more spaces and you can finish the game Adrian.

Adrian: That's how I roll, yo.

Kim: Adrian.

Adrian: Right, sorry. Your turn.

Kim: Okay. I'm also gonna share my turn with someone. Who can I choose? Hmm.

Audience response.

Kim: Okay you. Yes you in the (hat, pink shirt, glasses and blue sweater). Thank you. Hi, what's your name?

Student says name.

Kim: Okay everyone, a round of applause for _____. Can you roll the dice please? *Rolls dice.* Good job. Let's see what it says.

Adrian: "In order to get to the next space, you see, you must first get past Mr. NoMoreCree."

A mean teacher named Mr. NoMoreCree enters.

Mr. NoMoreCree:
HAHAHAHAHAHAAAA!

Kim: Oh no. It's Mr. NoMoreCree.

Adrian: Who's Mr. NoMoreCree?

Kim: He thinks he's a teacher, but he's not!

Mr. NoMoreCree:
I heard Adrian here doesn't know how to count in Cree.

Adrian: No I don't.

Mr. NoMoreCree:
Hahaha. And it's your turn?

Adrian: Yes.

Kim: No. We need help! Hey everyone can you help us?

Mr. NoMoreCree:
Hahahaha! He can't count in Cree. Now you'll never finish the game. Now no one is going home! Muahahahahahahahaaaaaa!

Kim: You, in the (hat, pink shirt, glasses and blue sweater). Adrian needs your help. Let's help him count to ten.

He points to a chart that has the days of the week and starts.

Mr. NoMoreCree:
Here we go...

He goes through the days. Kim & Adrian will help the student complete the days of the week, while working with the audience.

Mr. NoMoreCree:
What? No! Hey. Wait. You're not supposed to get that right. I didn't hear that. I'm plugging my ears. Lalalalalalala.

Adrian: EVERYBODY ALTOGETHER. AGAIN. LET'S COUNT TO TEN!

Audience and actors count.

Adrian/

Kim: Peyak, niso, nisto, newo, niyanan, nikotwasik, tepakohp!

Mr. NoMoreCree:

NOOOOOOOO! YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO GET ANY ANSWERS RIGHT ADRIAN.
YOU'RE NO GOOD AT CREE!

Adrian: But I can learn. And my friends helped me. I can learn.
We can all learn. Right everyone?

Kim: Whoa. Way to go Adrian. Miywasin!

Adrian: I'm not shy anymore. I can learn. I'm smart and I will
learn! And I finished the game! So there!

Music, drum, fiddle, chorus of voices.

Mr. NoMoreCree:

NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

*Mr. NoMoreCree disappears. So does the eagle. Everything becomes
still and quiet.*

Adrian: Hey I did it.

Kim: We're done. We finished. I can't believe it. We did it!

Adrian: We did it! We did it!

They hug.

Adrian: We all did it. Great job everyone.

Adrian: Yeah. Thank you for helping. Kitatamhinawaw.

Music, drum, voices. The game closes and everything is quiet.

Kim: Whoa.

Adrian: Cool.

Kim: How did you know how to say thank you in Cree?

Adrian: Kohkom. I remember her saying it whenever we had dinners
back home with all the family.

Kim: On the reserve?

Adrian: On the reserve.

Kim: Cool. I knew you were smart. You were just too shy to speak Cree.

Adrian: I guess. What do we do with this game?

Kim: I don't know. But I know I'm gonna keep learning Cree on my own. And at school.

Adrian: With me too.

Kim: Aha, tapwe. Kista mina. Just leave the game here I guess.

Adrian: Okay. We better get to bed.

Kim: Yeah, good night Adrian.

Adrian: Yeah, good night.

They settle in and get ready to sleep.

Kim: Hey Adrian?

Adrian: Yeah Kim?

Kim: You did really good. I think one day you'll be really good at Cree.

Adrian: Thanks.

Kim: You remember how kohkom always used to say good night?

Adrian: No. wait, hold on.

He stops to think for a few seconds.

Adrian: miyo-tipiskanisik. Right?

Kim: Wah hua. Tapwe. miyo-tipiskanisik Adrian.

Adrian: miyo-tipiskanisik.

They fall asleep. As they snore, the music and drum of the game play...quietly, as if to remind us that it is not over...

END PLAY.