

Big John and Little Henry is a fictionalized account of two friends who want to please each other by each building a kayak for the other. Stories form an essential part of the Math in a Cultural Context series (MCC) as a way for students to relate to Alaska and some of its unique characteristics. This story includes the way Yup'ik Eskimo elders measure. The genius of their measuring is that it often takes into account the person, the object being made, and its use. Thus, their way of measuring embeds proportional thinking. The story includes a few body measures used in kayak making. Through the characters and the comical turn of events students learn about body measures and proportional thinking. Increasingly, MCC will produce stories that embed both mathematical concepts and unique cultural, geographical, or historical information about southwest Alaska. Students enjoy learning in this way.

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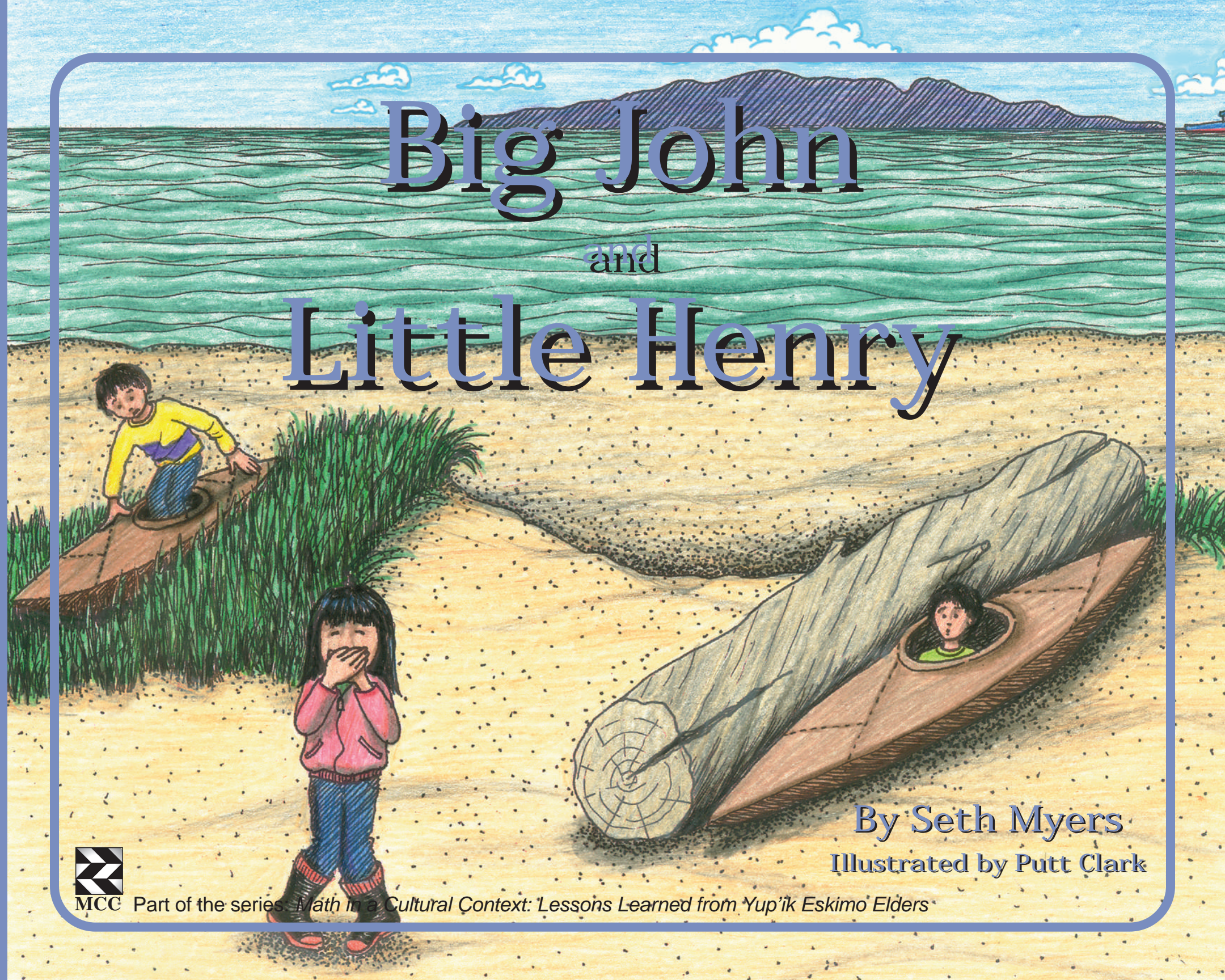
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Part of the series *Math in a Cultural Context: Lessons Learned from Yup'ik Eskimo Elders*



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Big John and Little Henry



By Seth Myers
Illustrated by Putt Clark

John-arpiinkuk Henry-cuar-llu **Big John and Little Henry**

By Seth Myers

*A companion to the curriculum module **Picking Berries: Connections Between Data Collection, Graphing, and Measuring**, part of the series **Math in a Cultural Context: Lessons Learned from Yup'ik Eskimo Elders***

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University of Alaska Fairbanks, 2019

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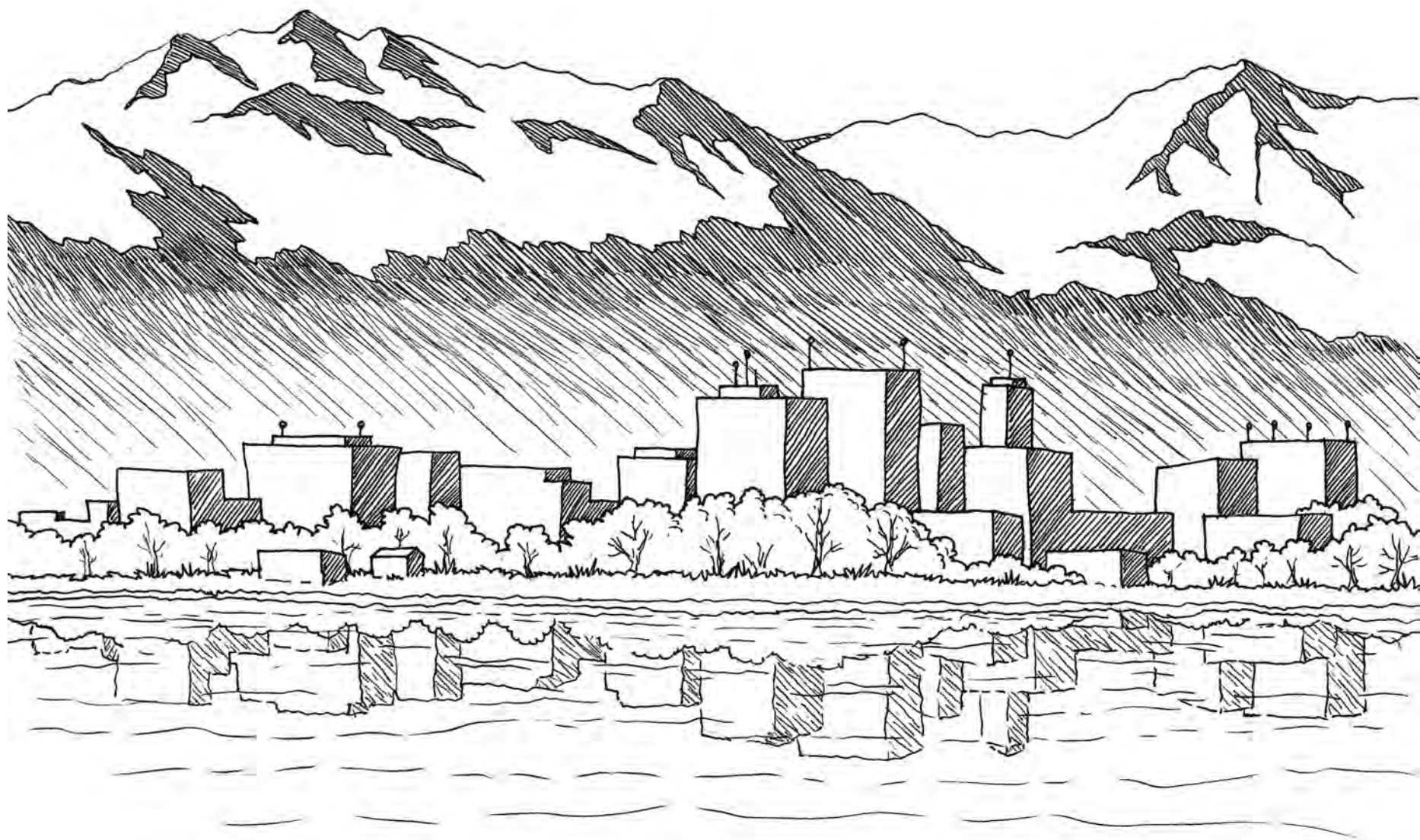
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About the John and Henry Storybook

Big John and Little Henry is a fictionalized account of two friends who want to please each other by each building a kayak for the other. Stories form an essential part of the Math in a Cultural Context (MCC) series as a way for students to relate to Alaska and some of its unique characteristics. This story includes the way Yup'ik Eskimo elders measure. The genius of their measuring is that it often takes into account the person, the object being made, and its use. Thus, their way of measuring embeds proportional thinking. The story includes a few body measures used in kayak making. Through the characters and the comical turn of events, students learn about body measures and proportional thinking. MCC produces stories that embed both unique cultural, geographical, or historical information pertaining to southwest Alaska and mathematical concepts. Students enjoy learning in this way.



*Akaurteksailnguq tayima taukuk-gguq
aipaqngailngalngermek aiparnirraaqelriik Anchorage
Alaska-rmiungulutek. Henry-q mikelqurrauluni fifth
grade-ani John-aq-llu angenqurrauluni.*

*Tan' gurraat ilaicetun John-arpak Henry-
cuar-llu qanengssagnek anglanarqellrianek
niicugniyunqegglutek, Henry-cuaraam-llu nayagaa
Polly Ann-aq cangallruvkenani.*

Not very long ago two unlikely friends lived in Anchorage, Alaska. Henry was the littlest boy in the fifth grade and John was the biggest.

Like many boys, Big John and Little Henry loved adventure stories, and so did Henry's little sister, Polly Ann.



*John-arpiim amllaqunek Henry-cuar tunuminun
amaqluku nunarpagmi piyuanaurtuk Henry-
cuaraam-llu qanengssauqurluku quyurnicetaarluku.
Nayagaat amllaret piyaraicetun Polly Ann-am
maligcuarturaraq Lukek taukuk tan' gurraak, iliini
niicesqumanrilngermek qalartellermegnek niitqaqluki.
John-arpiinkuk Polly Ann-aq-llu anglakluki
Henry-cuaraam qanengssai yuut cayarait cali-llu
yuungnaqsarait. Qanengssai niicugniyunqeggluki
anglakluki keglunret taiyugpalriit taivkanrilkurrluki
kapkaanarugaat paqtaaraqaki agnarni yuinaak malruk
qulnek cipluku cagingalriit, wall' u anssiilriit, taugaam
arcaqerluku niicunqeggluki ellallugmi qayalrianek
ilgayami.*

*Henry-cuar qanengssagnaurtuq qayalrianek
anurvagmi qairvagkun. Qanengssiini, tan' gurraak
taukuk kiimek alingilqurraugaqlutek qairvangraan
ilatek iinrukaitnek cali-llu aturyukngaitnek
aqvataqamek. Piniami John-arpiim tallirpallraagni
aturlukek anguaraqluni qairteggun, Henry-
acuaraam-llu agyat aturluki ayagluni. Henry-
cuar anglanarqellriamun tekitaqami erinacuarii
nepairupaallaaraqluni John-arpiim-llu iirpiik
iirpavallaaraqlutek. Piciryaramitun Polly Ann-aq
niicugniuraraqluni.*

Big John would often carry Little Henry on his big strong back around the city while Little Henry told him stories to make him smile. As many little sisters will do, Polly Ann always followed the boys, hearing more than they sometimes wanted her to. Big John and Polly Ann liked the stories Little Henry told about Native cultures and subsistence activities. Some stories were filled with the excitement of fighting off wolves while working a fifty-mile trap line, or the thrill of a seal hunt. But mostly they liked to hear about the adventures of kayaking in the stormy waters of Bristol Bay.

Little Henry would tell stories about kayaking through high winds and big waves. In these stories, the boys were the only ones brave enough to go out into these waters to fetch the medicine and supplies that their families needed. Big John would power through the waves with his big arms, while Little Henry would navigate by the stars. Every time Little Henry got to an exciting moment, his little voice would get even quieter and Big John's big eyes would get even bigger. As always, Polly Ann was listening, too.



“Henry-q,” Polly Ann-aq pinaurtuq, “Ciin-wa arnataita qanengssagpeni?” Tan’ gurraak-llu engaallaglutek.

Ukut pingayun elitnaullerteng qanengssalteng-llu assiksaaqaat taugaam assikenqurraqaat allrakum iluani iqvaryaneq atsanek. Kiagem iquklitlerkaan tungiini, elitnaurniararluki, John-arpiim ilai Henry-cuaraam-llu ilai ayalartut qavartaryarluteng, cenanun iqvarnaluteng atsanek. Henry-cuar cukangnaqluni atsat akuliitgun ayagartaqluni assinqurrarnek yuarluni. John-arpak-llu cukaunani, tucaa qevkenaki atsat, angenqurrarmek qaltamek tegumiarluni imaigga assinqurraat Henry-cuaraam nalkutallri. Polly Ann-am-llu kingunrirturlukek, teguteqeryuuluni atsanek nalluani John-arpiim qaltaanek.

“Henry,” Polly Ann would say, “Why aren’t there any girls in your stories?” The boys would just groan.

Now, as much as these three loved going to school and telling exciting stories, their very favorite time of the year was when they went berry picking. Late in the summer, just before school would start back, Big John’s family and Little Henry’s family would camp on the coast to pick berries. Little Henry would run quickly through the berry patches, finding the very best berries. Big John would plod along slowly, careful not to step on the berries, but carrying the biggest bucket filled with the best berries that Little Henry could find. Polly Ann would follow the two of them, ready to sneak a handful of berries out of Big John’s bucket.



Tua-i-llu allrakut iliitni Henry-cuaraam ilai ayagtut angayuqaagken kingunragnun Manuquutamun kalukaliyarluteng. John-arpak-llu malikluku Henry-cuaraam aiparnirraqngamii. Erenret iliitni taqneret cenirtaallratni tuaten qanengssagluteng pillratni, John-arpak, Henry-cuar, Polly Ann-aq-llu an'ut paqtaaryarturluteng.

Tan' gurraak aquinginanragi aquicirlutek atertanek muragnek, Polly Ann-aq tangertuq angulluamek qayilriamek. Utqerrluni tan' gurraak qanrutak. Peg' arrlukek tegumiatek muriik aqvaqurlutek agqertuk niillranun. Waten pilriamek tangerqayuituk nunarpagmi.

Tangvaurallermegni, John-arpiinkuk Henry-cuar-llu, cumikaak angulluaq cuqcissuucirluni Yupiit cuqcissuutaitgun qayalillinilria. Irr' ivallaarlutek tangvauralliniak angulluam cuqequrallraniki qayarkami enri muriit unategni talligni-llu aturlukek. Tuamta-llu cali tangvaglukuk qayami amirkaanek kepurillrani cali aturluki Yupiit cuqcissuutait. Atatakuan tamarmek piuk ilumun apiatam kinguani tangvallrak tangssunarqellrullranek.

Then one year, Little Henry's family traveled to his parents' home village of Manokotak for a potlatch, or *kalukaq*. They brought along Henry's best friend, Big John, too. One day, while the adults were busy visiting and telling stories, Big John, Little Henry, and Polly Ann went out to explore.

While the two boys played with sticks of driftwood, Polly Ann noticed an elder making a kayak. She ran back and told the boys. They dropped their sticks and ran to where she pointed. This was the kind of thing they never got to see in the city.

As they watched, Big John and Little Henry noticed the elder was using traditional Yup'ik body measures to build his kayak. They grew more fascinated as they watched the elder using his hands and arms to measure wood for the frame. Then they saw him use more body measures to cut the skin that would become the kayak's covering. Later, they agreed that this had been an interesting afternoon.

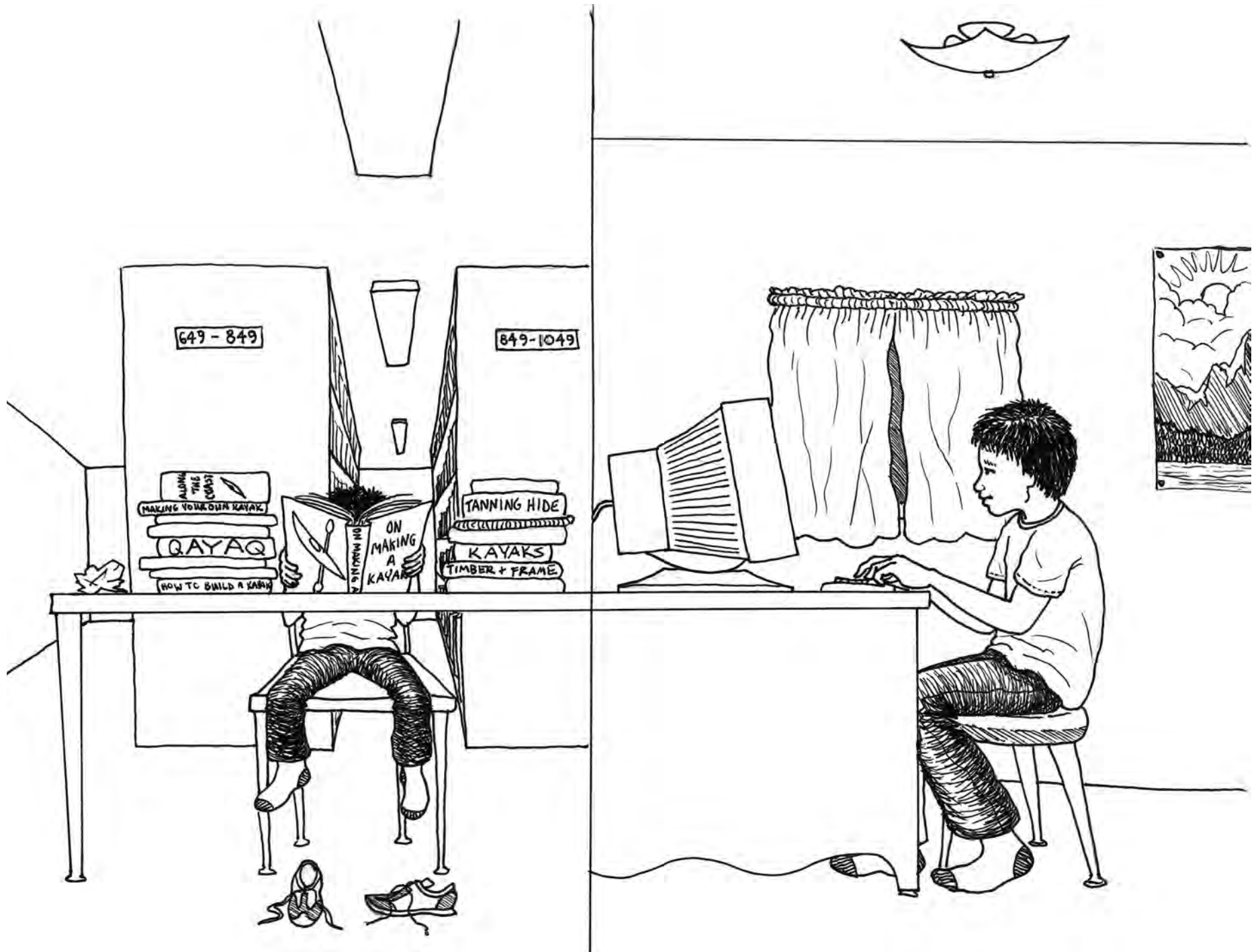


*Iralut qavcin kinguatni, elitnaurinanermeggni,
quyaqertuk elitnaungellermeggi Yupiit qayaitnek.
Elilluteng-llu Yupiit elisngalriit yaaqvanun
ayatullratnek aarnarqelriatgun merteggung, cali-
llu iliini qayaliaqameng teplernek muragnek
caliaqelallinillratnek caskuileng'ermeng machine-
alegnek.*

*Utertellermini elitnaurvigmek, nutaan-llu
qaniksuaryaqlirluni, John-arpak umyuartuq.
Henry-cuar cikirnaluku camek umyuaratequq quyaluku
aiparnirraqellni pitekluku. Henry-cuaraam cali
cikirnaluku aiparnirrarpani umyuaratequq. Nallumegni
ataucikun umyuaratequk tamarmek, "Qayamek!"
Taugaam camek qanerpegnatek. Alangaaruteknaluku
cikiutekatek piamek nepaituk.*

A few months later, back in school, they were excited when their class began studying Yup'ik Eskimo kayaks. They learned how the expert Yupiit made voyages of many miles through dangerous waters, and how they sometimes built their crafts from driftwood without using machined tools.

Walking home from school, in the first light snowfall of the year, Big John had an idea. He wanted to give Little Henry a gift to show him how much he enjoyed their friendship. Little Henry also wanted to give his big, best friend a present. Even though they didn't know it, they both had the same thought at exactly the same time! "A kayak!" But neither one of them said a single word out loud. They wanted their presents to be a great surprise.



Polly Ann-aq, aqvaquryarpiarturluni maligtak tan' gurraak paqnayugluni ciin alqunaq nepailuciagnek, "Waq' ciin-wa qanlartenricetek?", aptak. John-arpiinkuk Henry-cuar-llu tangerqautuk iitek-llu qulmuraarllukek camek qanqerpegnatek.

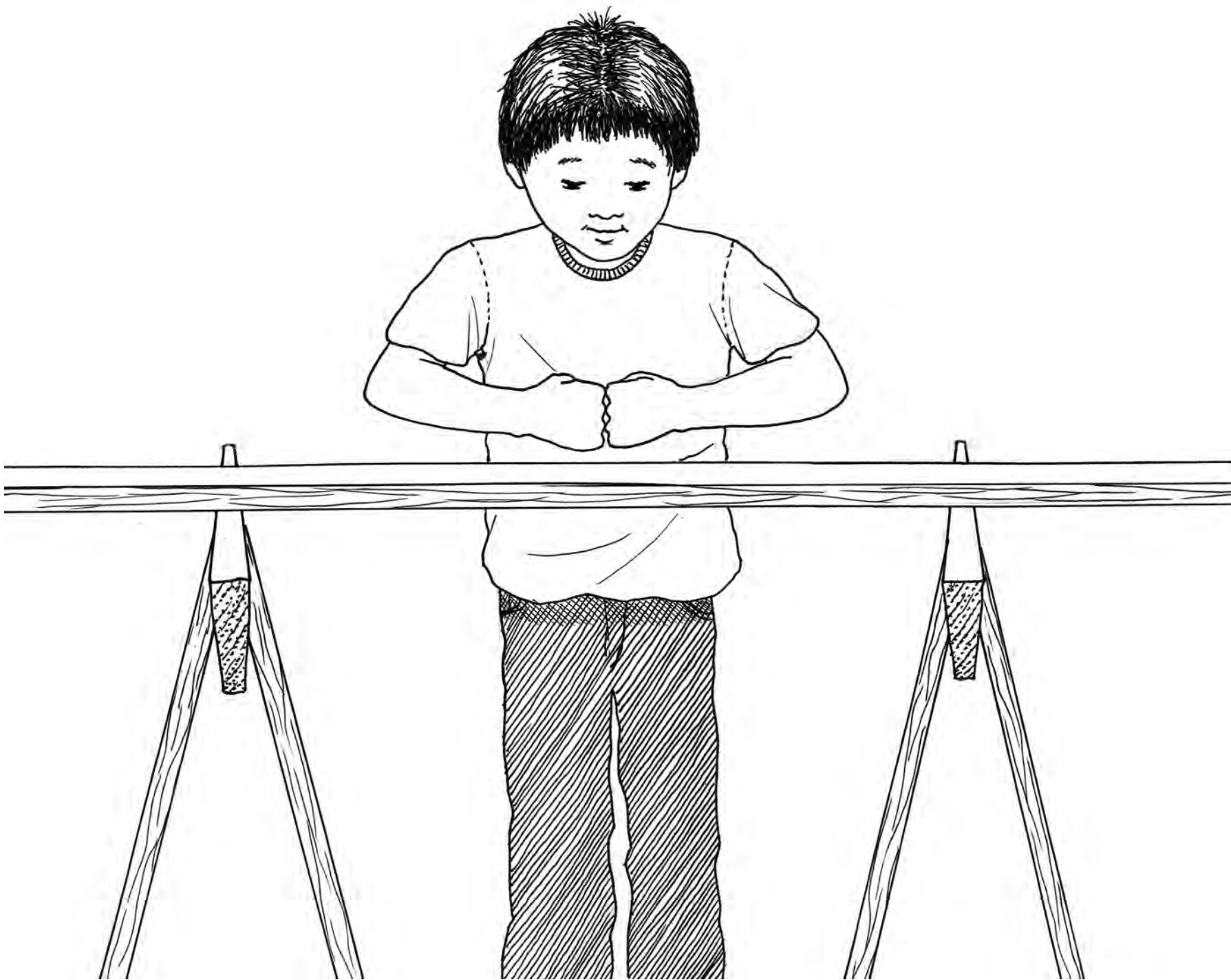
Unuaquani Henry-cuar library-mun, maktaat uitaviatnun, ag'uq paqluki kalikat tamalkuita qaillun qayalinernek alerquutet navrarnaluki. John-arpiim-llu enemeggni computer-ateng aturluku yuarluni.

Uksurpak tan' gurraak naaqiuk maktaamegnek, pillerkiurlutek-llu. Nallunriraak qayalilleq caperrnarqellerkaa. Uksurpak muragnek kepurarkaulutek maniggluki-llu, pitalqeggiluki perrluki-llu, cali ituulluki nemerluki-llu. Tamalkuita-llu cuqtenqegcaarararkauluki. Cayaqlirlutek ayagniryugngariak qayatek.

Polly Ann, almost running to keep up with the older boys, was startled by their sudden lack of words. "Hey, why aren't you guys talking?" she asked. Big John and Little Henry just looked at each other and rolled their eyes without saying a word.

The next day, little Henry went to the library and checked out all the books he could find on making a kayak. Big John used his family's computer to research the same topic.

All winter long the boys read their books and made their plans. They learned that building a kayak would be a hard job. They would need to spend all winter splitting and planing the wood, shaping and bending, joining and binding. And everything would have to be carefully measured. Finally, they felt ready to start building their kayaks.



*John-arpiim naaqellermiitun Yup'igtat aturluki
cuqtaarai temni aturluku muragat Henry-cuaraam
qayarkaan enerikai. Imna angulluaq kiak tangvallni
umyuaqluku. John-arpiim unategni tenglukatalriatun
patgutak caugarullukek-llu, ikusegni-llu ellatmun
anllukek. Elitellrua uum cuqcissuutem caucia
Ikuyegarnerek Malruk, taktaciak talligken unategminek
yaavet ikusegminun malruk, qayam-gguq iqtunqurriin
iqtutacirkaa.*

Big John measured the wood he would use for the frame of Little Henry's kayak using the Yup'ik body measures he had been reading about. Remembering the elder he had watched last summer, Big John put his big fists together and stuck out his elbows. He had learned that this measurement was called *ikuyegarnerek malruk*, meaning "two elbow lengths," which is how wide the kayak should be at its widest point.



*Allakarmi-llu Henry-cuar mingegluni piliami
John-arpiim qayaan amirkaanek. Henry-cuaraam
cuqtaa ket' garvigkaa. Tallicuarani nengtaa cuqluku-
llu yuaracuarami nuuganek yaavet unminun. Elitellrua
caucia Tallineq, iqtutacirkaqluku ket' garviim.
Polly Ann-am ikayussaagyaagaa taugaam Henry-
cuaraam ikayurcetenritaa. Camek qanqataryaaqaqan
mikcessiiyaagniluku ikayuutellerkaanek qanrut' laraa.*

*Tamarmek tan' gurraak uksurpak, up' nerkarpak,
kiagpak-llu caliaqaak qayaliatek taqengnaqlukek.
Erenret iliitni John-arpiim eniini apiatartuk
akerrlugpagluni ilutmun. John-arpiim aanii qanertuq,
"Unuaqu, ella assiqan, qavartaryarciqukut atsanek
iqvaryarluta avavet cenamun, elitnaungvailgata!"
Niicukngamegnek niituk. Tua-i-gga tamarmek
qayaliatek taqutellruamegneki umyuarateqlutek-llu tuani
cikiutekatek tunkunegnegu assillerkaanek.*

Meanwhile, Little Henry worked on sewing the covering to fit over the kayak he was making for Big John. Little Henry measured the opening for the cockpit. He stretched out his little arm and measured from the little tips of his little fingers to his armpit. He had learned that this is a *tallineq*, which is how wide the cockpit opening should be. Polly Ann wanted to help him, but Little Henry wouldn't let her. Every time she would try to say something, he would tell her she was just too little to help.

Both boys worked all winter, spring, and summer to finish their kayaks. One day bright sunlight poured through Big John's apartment while the boys were eating lunch. Big John's mother said, "Tomorrow, if the weather is good, we are going to go camping and berry picking on the coast, before the school starts!" This was great news. Since they were both finished with their kayaks, they thought that this would be the perfect time to give their gifts.



*Qavartarvigkameggnun tekitut, anuqsaagaam
tenglluku imarpiim tepii cenamek pavavet kavirpagnun
arumalrianun atsanun, cuyait-wa cungagpak.*

*John-arpiim qayaliani Henry-cuarmun iillruluku
atertam muragpiim amatiinun. Henry-cuaraam-
llu John-arpiim qayaa iillruluku ingricuaraam
amatiinun. Polly Ann-aq qanrutaa, kinguqvancuilnguq,
yuaresqelluku John-arpak qanrulluku-llu taisqelluku
tuavet cikiutekani tunenaluku.*

*“Atam Henry-q,” piuq Polly Ann-aq, “atam
nallunritan-qa qayalian qailluraq ayucia?”*

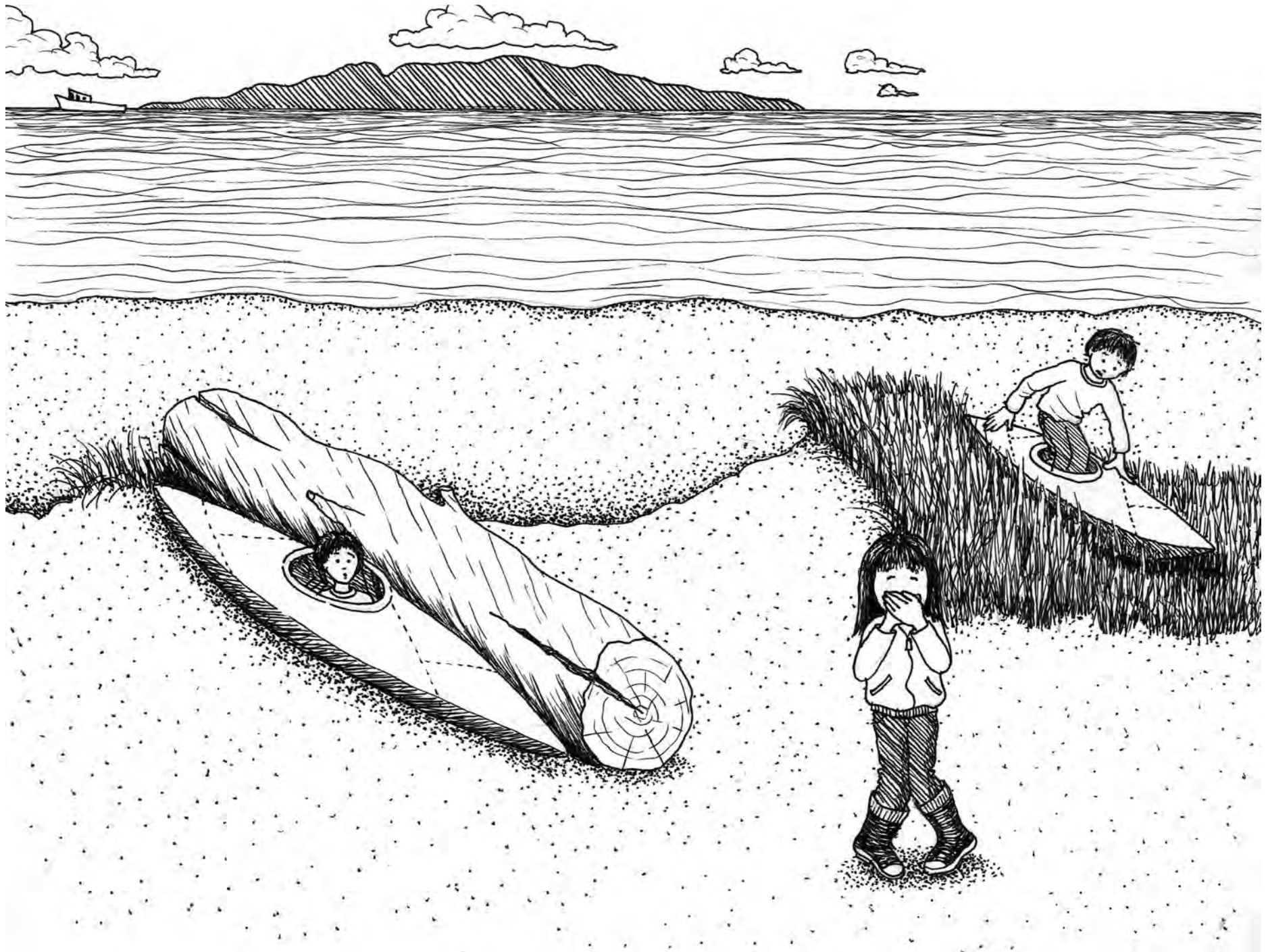
*“Mikcessiiaagtuten, qaillun nallunricarcui?”
Henry-cuaraam kiugaa, “Kitak aqvaqerru John-aq.”*

When they got to their campsite, a soft wind carried the scent of the ocean across the beach to the berry patches brightly colored with the ripe berries and the deep green of the leaves.

Big John had hidden Little Henry’s kayak behind a big piece of driftwood. Little Henry hid Big John’s kayak behind a little hill. He told Polly Ann, who was never far behind, to go find Big John and tell him to meet up at this spot. He wanted to give his big friend his surprise gift.

“But Henry,” said Polly Ann, “you know there’s something wrong with your kayak, don’t you?”

“You’re so little, what would you know about it?” Little Henry replied. “Just go and get John, would you please?”



*Polly Ann-aq taillermuni John-arpak malikluku
taiguq, tamarmek nallunainatek iimegnegun camek
paqnayuglutek, quuyungqaurlutek.*

*John-arpak piuq, “Cikiutekangqertua elpenun,
Henry.”*

*“Wiinga-llu cali elpenun, John,” Henry-cuar
kiuguq.*

*“Tunenritapuk-llam ataucikun-qaa?”
tamarmek qanertuk. Unguciinatek naliagnun
quyanruvkallermegnun cikiqengllermegnun
aiparnirramegnun wall’u cikiutmek akurtullermegnun.*

When Polly Ann returned with Big John, both boys had excitement in their eyes and big, happy grins on their faces.

Big John said, “I have a present for you, Henry.”

“Well, I happen to have one for you too, John,” Little Henry said.

“Why don’t we exchange them at the same time?” they said happily. They didn’t know if they were more excited to give their gift to their friend or to receive one.

Henry-cuar aqvaqurluni ayagartuq ingricuaraam tungiinun qayaliame John-arpagmun iirvianun, John-arpak-llu ayagarlluni atertam muragpiim amatiinun qayaliame Henry-cuarmun iirvianun.

Tangrramiu aiparnirrami piliallra elliinun, John-arpak qayagpagtuq, “Qayangqerrsguturalartua! Assirpaa! Quyana, Henry!”

Henry-cuar ukverciigatuq John-arpiim antellraku qayaliani, “Wiinga cali pingqerrsgulartua! Quyana, John!”

Tamarmek qayak cikiutetek tegugeraak iluanun-llu ek’ arrlutek. Tua-i-gg’ naspaanalukek eksaaqlutek. Henry-cuar eklermini John-arpiim piliaranun tamaqeryarpiartuq ugaani angqitem. John-arpagluq-llu eksaaqelriim it’ gaa ekenricarpiarluni qayakuinrayagarmun Henry-cuaraam piliaranun elliinun.

Little Henry ran to the small hill where he had Big John’s kayak hidden. Big John loped over to the huge piece of driftwood where he had hidden Little Henry’s.

When he saw the gift his friend had made for him, Big John shouted, “I’ve always wanted a kayak! This is great! Thank you, Henry!”

Little Henry couldn’t believe his eyes when Big John brought out the kayak he had made. “I’ve always wanted one, too! Thanks, John!”

They both grabbed their kayaks and jumped in them. Or at least, they tried to jump in. When Little Henry got into the kayak that Big John had made for him, he almost got lost. It was so huge! But poor Big John could barely get one foot into the teeny tiny kayak that Little Henry had made for him.

*Quuyuaranriqertuk. Umyugaak cakneq
nall'artenrituk. Ukuk cikiutekegtaarkartek ak' anun-llu
cakviur teklutek caliaqellrulukek atuungaitellinilutek.*

*"Eqnarivakar," Henry-cuar yuurmiurluni
piuq, "Calirpallrulliniukuk cakaunrilngurmun."
Kanangllugaarruni-llu.*

*"Qanrucaaqellruamken qaillun qayalian
ayunqilluku," Polly Ann-am pia Henry-cuar.
Naklegyugluni anngaminek. Naklegyugluni cali-llu
aiparnirrarpiinek qanrutaa, "John, elpetun-llu tang
cali anngamtun alartellrullinilriaten."*

*John-arpak-llu cali aliyullagtuq. "Qaillun al-
alartellrucenuk?" aptuq.*

*"Tangenritatek-qaa? aptuq Polly Ann-aq niirlukek
qayak. "John-arpaak, temevkun cuqyutet atulten
qayalillerpeni kiingan elpenun engelqaqsugngaut.
Taumek cuqyutet atulten angssiiyaalriit Henry-
cuarmun."*

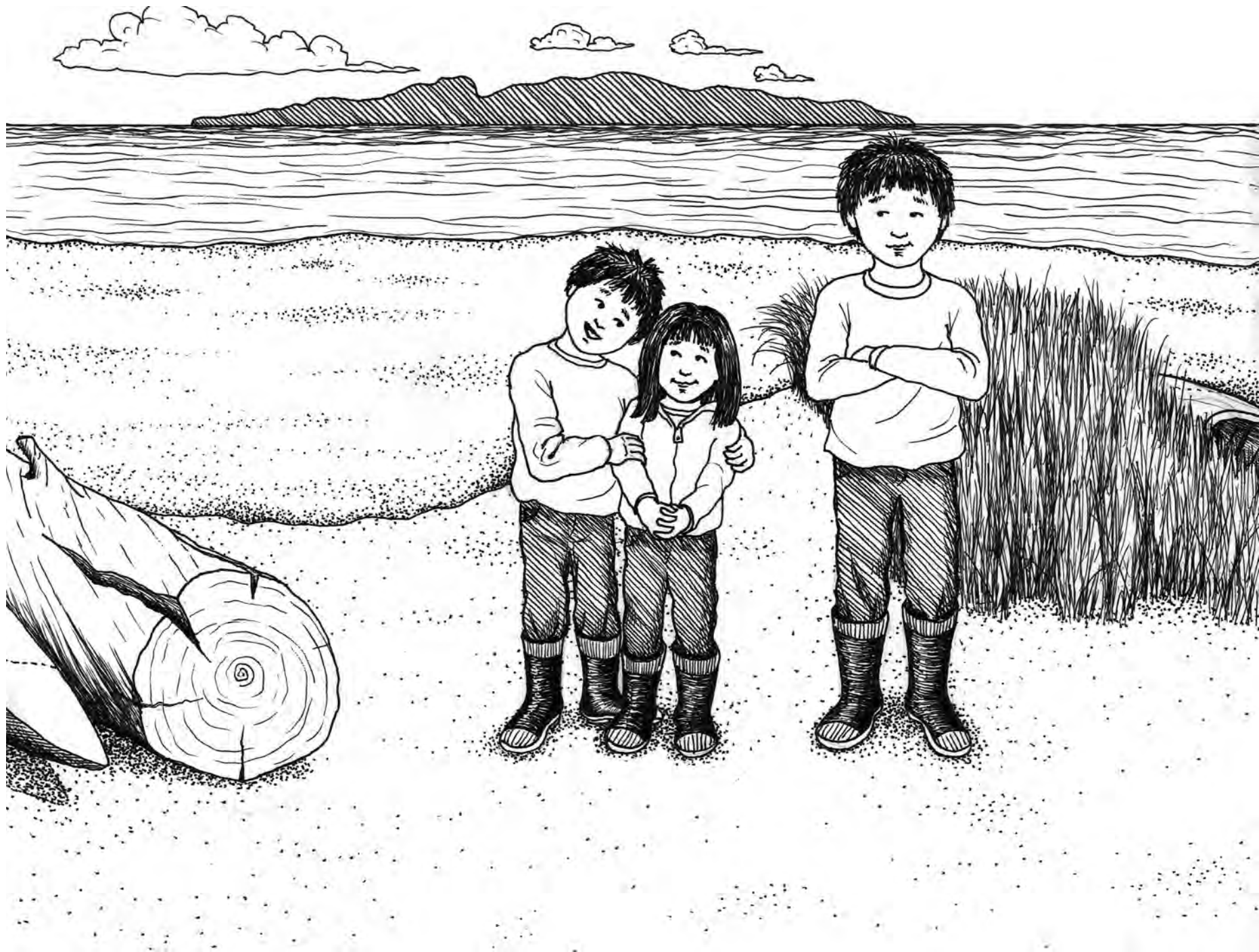
The smiles left their faces. They were both very, very disappointed. These wonderful gifts they had worked so hard to make would be of no use to them at all.

"Oh no," sniffled Little Henry. "We did all of that work for nothing." He hung his head down.

"I told you there was something wrong with your kayak," Polly Ann said softly to Little Henry. She felt bad for her big brother. She felt bad for his big best friend, too, as she told him, "John, it looks like you made the very same mistake while making your kayak as my brother did."

Big John was sad, too. "What d-did we d-do wrong?" he asked.

"Don't you see?" asked Polly Ann pointing to the two kayaks. "Big John, the body measurements you used can only make a kayak that will fit you and the size of your body. So, of course the kayak that you measured is way too big for Little Henry."



Henry-cuar aliayugluni piuq, “Wii-llu cuqtellrenka miksiiyaagluteng John-amun wii cuqyutemnek atullruama piliaqellemku. Unategka talligka-llu mikellrurpagtuk John-arpagmi.”

Tuani-llu Polly Ann-am maniak arenqiallugutiignek kitugutkaa. “Atam, waten mi? Ukuk qayak taugaam nelqaqciqatek navruskuvtek cali.”

Henry-cuaraankuk John-arpak-llu tangvauteqertuk. Engelallaglutek tamarmek qes’artaak Polly-Ann-aq. Henry-cuar piuq, “Ikayuutellerkarpenek miksiiyaanritliniuten!”

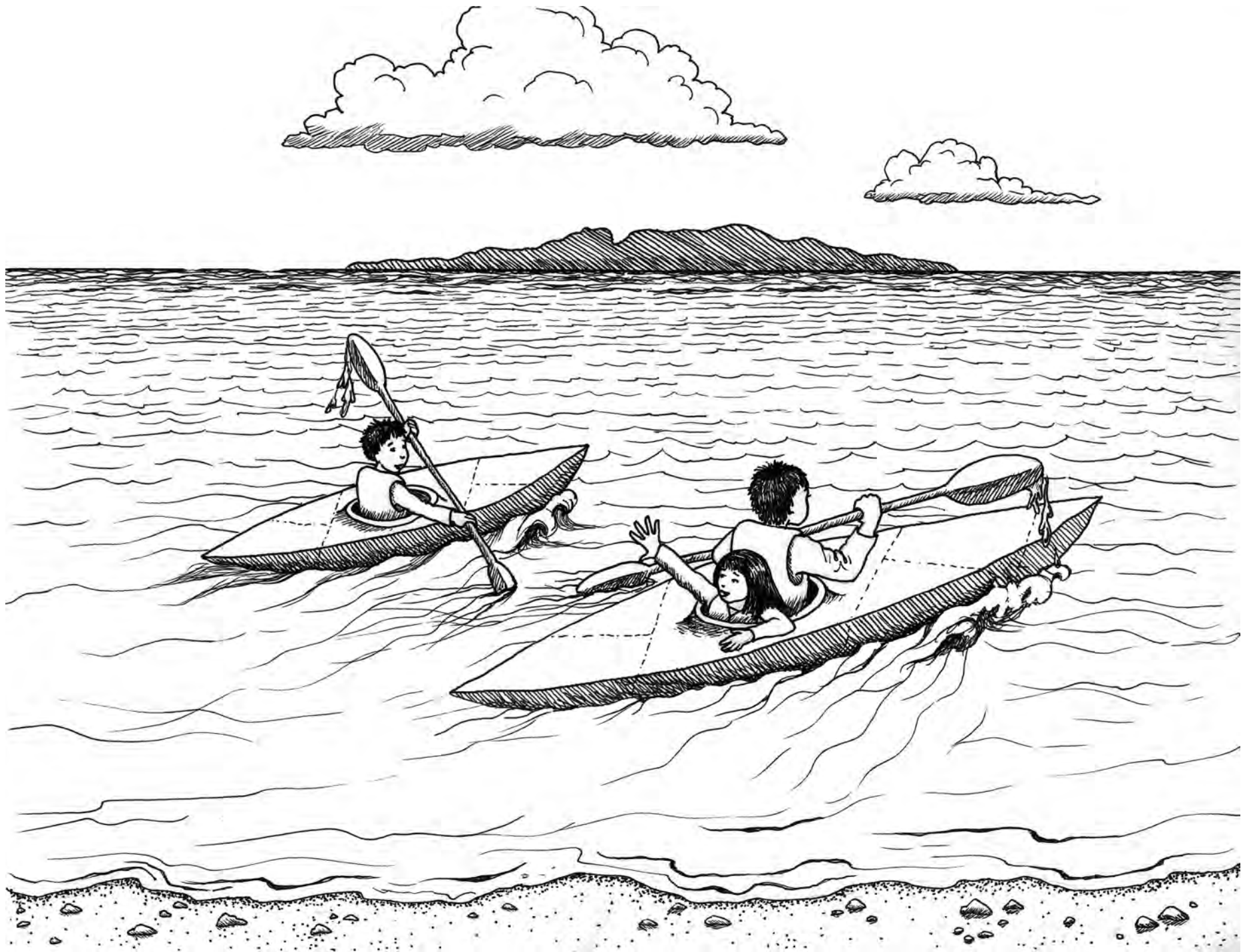
Tua-i-llu taukuk tan’ gaurluuk cali navrutak qayaliatek. Ek’arrlutek-llu, tuani cenami. Engelqaqciqngamegnekek-llu nutaan engelqaqlukek.

Little Henry sadly said, “And the kayak I measured is much too small for Big John, because I used my own body measurements to make it. My hands and arms are a lot smaller than Big John’s.”

That’s when Polly Ann pointed out the solution to their problem. “But you know what? These kayaks WOULD be the perfect fit if you just exchanged them again.”

Little Henry and Big John stared at each other. Laughing out loud, they both gave Polly Ann a hug. Little Henry said, “I guess you really aren’t too little to help!”

So the boys exchanged kayaks again. Right there on the beach they jumped into them. And, of course, those kayaks were now a perfect fit



John-arpinkuk Henry-cuar-llu qayatek atrautak mermun. Ella puqlanirluni akercirluni imarpik-llu quunirluni. Pugtassuutetek allukek cenamek-llu cingqerlutek imarpigmun.

Polly Ann-am tangssugak cenamek unani imarpigmi qayallragani. Unatminek elqiiqerluni akercirngan unavet tangvagak, piqerluni aipaak qayaq uivug cenam tungiinun. Canimellian piuq John-arpauilliniria. “Maligcugtuten?” aptaa.

“Ilumun piyugtua!” qayagpagtuq. Polly Ann-aq quyam ugaani pugtassuutni atengnatugluku ataa. Tua-i-llu ek’ urainarluni John-arpim qayaanun. John-arpak-llu alrapaqlutek tunuarrlutek, Polly Ann-am caugarrluku quyam kingua John-arpak-ll anguarluni Henry-cuaraam tungiinun utaqliriamun.

Tua-i-ll’ tamarmeng John-arpak, Henry-cuar, Polly Ann-aq-llu ernerpak anguarluteng, engelaraluteng qanemciluteng-llu yaavet atakutarnarillranun.

Big John and Little Henry took their kayaks down to the water. It was a warm and sunny day and the ocean was calm. They put on their life jackets and pushed gently off from the shore.

Polly Ann watched from the beach as the boys began to glide out into the ocean. Putting her hand over her eyes to shade the bright sun, she noticed one of the kayaks turn around and head back to shore. When he paddled closer, she realized it was Big John. “You want to ride?” he asked her.

“I sure do!” she shouted. Polly Ann was so excited she could barely get her life jacket on. Finally she climbed into Big John’s kayak. Her back to Big John, Polly Ann faced the back of the kayak as Big John smoothly paddled forward to where Little Henry waited for them.

The three of them, Big John, Little Henry, and Polly Ann, paddled around all day, laughing and telling stories until dinnertime.

