

THE LILY ROOT INTRODUCTION

By Tracy Hanson

As I began my search to find more information on stories about Indigenous Peoples, I came across the [Government of Canada](#)'s website and found a number of stories to change the script. This particular story brought me back to my days when my two sisters and I would play [Cat's Cradle](#) together. But I didn't know each shape you made had a name; "soldier's bed", "candles", "manger". How to play? Here is an [example](#) with pictures to follow. This is a very nice [video](#) with a good explanation. Don't have a partner? Here she shows you how you can play Cat's Cradle [solo](#), or alone. Learn how to make a friendship bracelet whose origins come from ancient Native American crafts.

The second thing I decided to explore as I worked on the story was the use of plants by Indigenous Peoples for medicine. The current epidemic is making us more aware or and knowledgeable about partnering with our surroundings to create a happier and better sustainable way of life. What can we learn from them? Here are some sites you may want to explore and perhaps you will find others you can share as well.

[The art of healing](#): five medicinal plants used by Aboriginal Australians.

[Indigenous Peoples' Medicine in Canada](#).

[Plants Used Medically](#) by Indigenous Peoples.

[Medicine in your backyard](#): How Indigenous peoples have used medicinal plants.

Listen to and read the original Ojibway story of "[The Lily Root](#)" and see how it was rewritten into a script. Do you feel the script is a good representation of the original story? Why or why not?



THE LILY ROOT
An Ojibway Story
Script by Tracy Hanson

EMILY	HATTIE	NARRATOR 1	NARRATOR 2	MOTHER
OLD JOHN	SHOMIS	GRANDSON	NARRATOR 3	

NARRATOR 1: Emily Muskrat was ten years old. She lived with her family on a reserve in Manitoba, north of Lake Winnipeg. Emily had a younger sister named Hattie whom she often looked after.

EMILY: "My father works for a First Nations organization as a community health worker. He visits First Nations communities to help develop local health programs."

HATTIE: "Our mother is a teacher's aide at the school."

NARRATOR 2: Emily took care of Hattie on Saturday afternoons when her parents went to town to shop for food.



MOTHER: "Watch after Hattie now, Emily. Don't let her wander away."

EMILY: "I'm going to teach Hattie how to play cat's cradle!"

NARRATOR 3: And off her parents went to market.

NARRATOR 2: Emily pulled out a long piece of string tied together to make a circle.

NARRATOR 3: Hattie watched as Emily weaved the tiny string between her two hands.

HATTIE: "Show me how to do that."

EMILY: "Spread your hands and fingers."

NARRATOR 2: Emily wrapped the string around Hattie's thumbs.

EMILY: "Move your fingers like this."

NARRATOR 3: She showed Hattie how to wind the string between her fingers and hands.

HATTIE: "This is not very easy!"

EMILY: "Keep trying and you'll get it. Look, there's Peter."

NARRATOR 1: Peter Crane rode his old bicycle past the girls.



EMILY: "See those old and worn-out jeans he wears?"

HATTIE: "That's what he wears when he plays and rides his bicycle."

NARRATOR 3: Neither girl spoke to Peter as he went by.

NARRATOR 2: As the two sisters were playing, Old John walked along the path by their home.

HATTIE: "Look Old John. I made my first cat's cradle!"

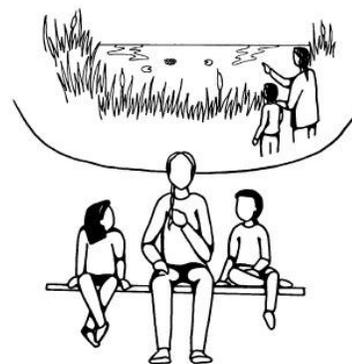
EMILY: "See! I told you you could do it!"

NARRATOR 1: Old John smiled and waved the girls over to him. Then he spoke softly to them.

OLD JOHN: "I'm going to tell you a story. It is about the lily root."

NARRATOR 3: He motioned to the two girls to sit beside him on the small bench.

OLD JOHN: "One day, Shomis and his grandson were walking in the bush. They came upon a small river with a big pond."



SHOMIS: "Look, my grandson. Water lilies in the pond. You must get me a lily root."

EMILY: "Why does he want the lily root?"

Old John: "Lily roots were important to the Salish people. After Shomis dries the root, he will grind it into powder. It becomes medicine he'll use to keep healthy."

HATTIE: “How did he get them out of the water?”

OLD JOHN: His grandson removed his boots and socks. Then, he rolled up his pant legs and stepped in

Grandson: “Grandfather, the mud is oozing between my toes.”

OLD JOHN: “Shomis stood on shore and pointed to the lily plant he wanted.”

SHOMIS: “**Stop, there!**”

OLD JOHN: “When the boy reached the lily plant, his pants and legs were wet and muddy.”

Grandson: “Grandfather, this muck is very smelly and dirty.”

****EMILY & HATTIE:** “Ewww, Yuck!!”

OLD JOHN: “He reached into the water quickly to pull out the root.”

SHOMIS: “Be careful. You must not break the root when you pull it up. The medicine will be spoiled if it is taken from a broken root.”

GRANDSON: “Grandfather, I got hold of the root and pulled hard but nothing happened.”

SHOMIS: “Use both hands. Be careful, now.”

OLD JOHN: “When he yanked the second time, the boy's shirt became wet with the muddy water.”

GRANDSON: “Grandfather, nothing is happening.”

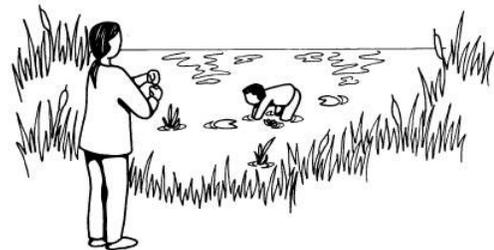
SHOMIS: “Reach deeper with both hands.”

OLD JOHN: “Very slowly, the boy bent over the beautiful white lily flower. He reached with both hands for a better grip around the root.”

SHOMIS: “You must reach deeper down with both hands.”

GRANDSON: “ But, Grandfather!”

SHOMIS: “Go deeper!”



OLD JOHN: “He realized he would have to get all wet with the muddy water. It still smelled. He held his breath. Quickly, his face went under water. (pause) He bent right over the plant with both hands deep around the stubborn root and pulled and pulled and...”

GRANDSON: “Look Grandfather! I got the Lily Root!”

SHOMIS: “Very good, my Grandson. Bring it here to me.”

OLD JOHN: “He walked back to shore to Shomis. He was wet from head to toe. His skin was itchy. Mud covered his feet, his pants, and his shirt.”

EMILY: “Did he get the lily?”

HATTIE: “What did it look like, Old John?”

OLD JOHN: “At one end of the plant was the beautiful white flower. At the other end was the muddy root.”

SHOMIS: “Now I must clean the mud from the lily root and cut off the flower.”

HATTIE: “What did Shomis do with the flower?”

EMILY: “Maybe he gave it to his grandson.”

SHOMIS: (laughing) “ My, you are a sight!”

Grandson: “I smell like muddy pond!”

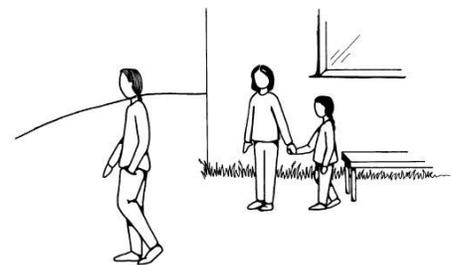
OLD JOHN: “They both laughed. Then Shomis held the lily root very gently.”

SHOMIS: “This will make me feel strong and healthy. The root is more important than the flower. Many people are interested only in the pretty flower. Remember, my Grandson, the lily root.”

NARRATOR 2: Hattie and Emily sat quietly next to Old John.

NARRATOR 1: Now the story was over and Old John stood up.

OLD JOHN: “You be good now. “



****EMILY & HATTIE:** “Thank you Old John. Good night.”

NARRATOR 2: And Emily and Hattie walked to their house with their string. They, too, would remember the lily root.