

# the Just Right Gift

A Story of Love



Katherena Vermette  
Irene Kuziwo

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# the Just Right Gift

A Story of Love

the Seven  
Teachings Stories

Katherena Vermette

Illustrated by Irene Kuziwo

  
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Migizi loves his Gookom.



He wants to get her a gift,  
but it has to be just right.











He wants to find something  
as sweet as her kisses  
and as warm as her smiles.





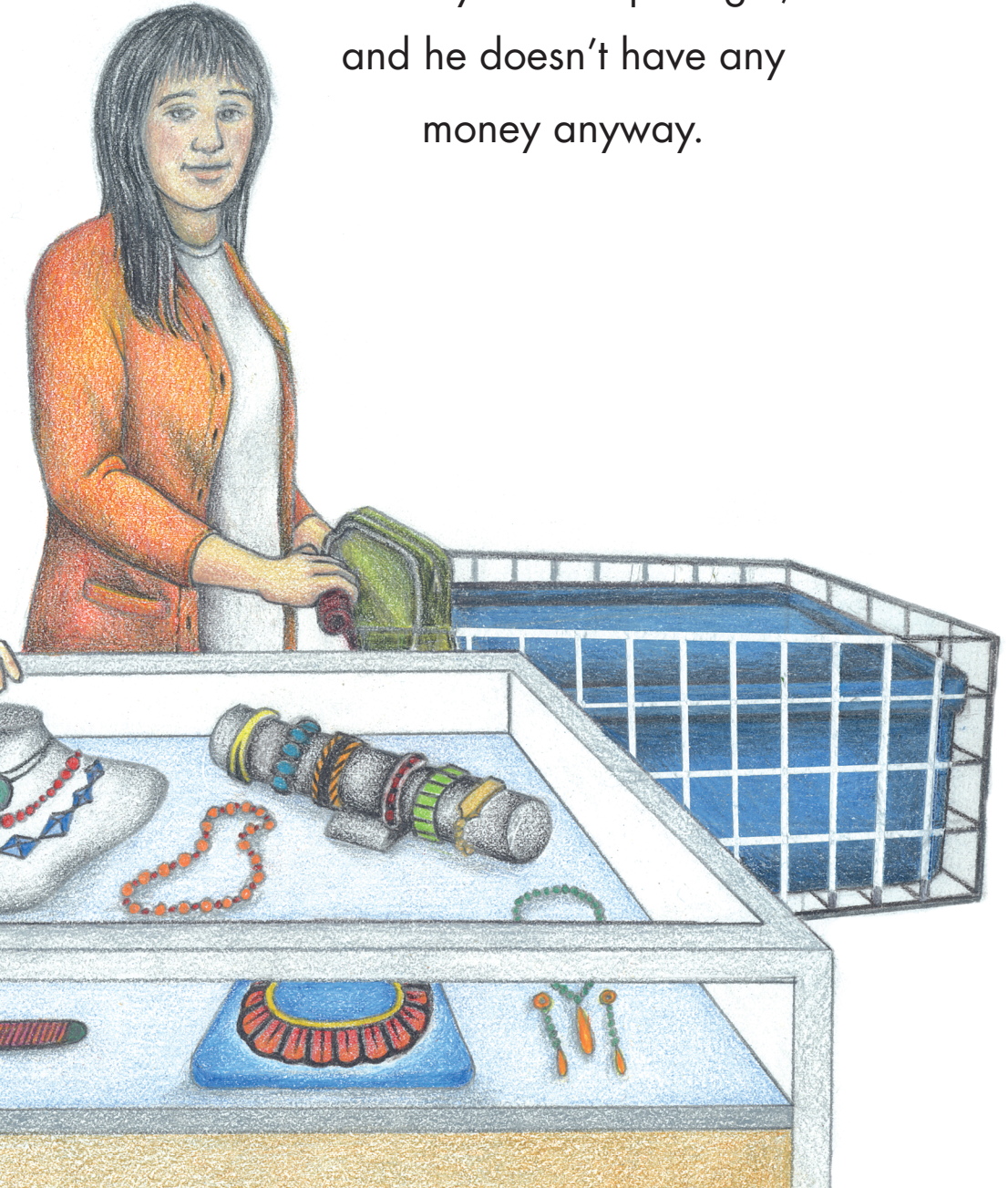
Migizi goes to the store with his Mom.

He finds gold earrings that  
sparkle in the light,





but they are not just right,  
and he doesn't have any  
money anyway.









He goes to the park  
with his class.

He finds some big,  
beautiful roses,  
but they are not just right,  
and Mr. Bee says you are not  
supposed to pick those anyway.



### **Pronunciation of Anishnaabemowin words**

Short Vowels: *i* as in *pit*, *o* as in *book*, *a* as in *cup*, *e* as in *bed*

Long Vowels: *ii* as in *peek*, *oo* is between *soup* and *soap*,  
*aa* as in “open up and say *ahhhh*”

*g*, *b*, *j*, *d*, *h* are softer than their English equivalents; *g* sounds very much like *k* and sometimes *k*, *p*, *t* are aspirated, as if an *h* was in front of them.

*m*, *n*, *y*, *h*, *w* are very similar in sound to their English equivalents.

Apostrophes are used to separate vowels (with distinct sound for each).

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My sincere thanks to those who helped review the content of these books: Ruth Norton, Ko'ona Cochrane, and Mary Courchene. Special thanks for all the language guidance from the incomparable Patricia Ningewance and her book *Talking Gookom's Language* (pronunciation guide, above, used with permission from that publication).

I would also like to acknowledge Little Red Spirit Aboriginal Head Start program and all my fabulous former workmates, parents, and students. Inspired by my young friends and the work I was privileged to do, these books are dedicated to my former students, as well as all my beautiful nieces and nephews.

— K.V.

I would like to thank Katherena for entrusting me with her stories. This has truly been an adventure and an experience in getting to know all the kids and helping them come to life. I would also like to thank Annalee and Cathie from HighWater Press for giving me this opportunity. I dedicate these stories to little JayJay.

— I.K.



Migizi loves his Gookom.  
Can he find the perfect gift  
to show her how much?



The Seven Teachings of the Anishinaabe—love, wisdom, humility, courage, respect, honesty, and truth—are revealed in these seven stories for children. Set in an urban landscape with

Indigenous children as the central characters, these stories about home and family will look familiar to all young readers.

**Katherena Vermette** is a Métis writer from Treaty 1 Territory, the heart of the Métis Nation, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Her first book, *North End Love Songs* (The Muses Company) won the Governor General's Literary Award for Poetry. Her National Film Board documentary, *this river*, won the 2017 Canadian Screen Award for Best Short, and her novel, *The Break* (House of Anansi), won the 2017 Amazon.ca First Novel Award. She holds a Master of Fine Arts from the University of British Columbia, and lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

**Irene Kuziw** has worked in galleries, museums, and schools. Her artwork has been featured in many shows. Irene now devotes her time to doing what she loves—drawing and exploring the abstraction of reality, whether it be the human face or the animal spirit. A graduate of the University of Manitoba School of Art, she lives in the Interlake region of Manitoba.