KHAII TS'A
AN ATHAPASKAN FALL

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KHAII  TS’A

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Artists  All the children in Arctic Village School in 1975

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My thanks to the Alaska Language Center at the University of Alaska for providing the funds that made this book possible. I also wish to express my appreciation to Dick Mueller for all his time and patience, and Tupou Pulu and Mary Pope for all of their help. A special thanks to Maggie Gilbert for her inspiration, love, and joy of story telling.
INTRODUCTION

This is a story about the way the Nets'i' Gwich'in lived around the year 1858. This was just after the white men came to Ft. Yukon. The Indians didn't have guns, and they made all their tools themselves. Their food came from the animals and plants living and growing around them.

The characters and story line are fictitious. The names are real Athapaskan Indian names, those of actual people who lived in this area. The entire story is based on fact.
CHARACTERS

Tr'ootsyaa  
(tr-ô-tsê-a)  
Father

Dit'ik  
(dîtr-îk)  
24 years old

Tł'eevihti'  
(tł-ä-vëh-të)  
17 years old

Geh 1k  
(gë ìk)  
19 years old

Deets'e'  
(dâts-ë)  

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Deedzii  
(dâ-dzë)  
15 years old

Tôg'iintin  
(tô-ën-tîn)  
14 years old

Vi'it  
(vî-ît)  
12 years old

Gwaatr'al  
(gwâ-tr-âl)  
6 years old

Vindeegoozhrajj  
(vîn-dâ-gô-zhrî)  
13 years old, a friend

Tthał Dhahkhwajj  
(tthał thâh-wî)
KHAI I TS'A

Di'ilii t'oonchya'a. T'og'iiintin ts'å' dizhehk'aa najj haa Van-choh-vee, Old John Lake chan oozhjj, geeghaih nigiiindjj. K'eejit kha'ii gwanljj gwizhik t'ee vadzaih-tthał ts'eegojhoondjj, giyedaa tr'iheendal eenjit.

Tr'ookit t'ee zheh gogwihiksåjji.
Tr'ooytsa, T'og'iiintin viti', digii tsya dòg najj t'åhnyågå, "Tå'eevihiti', Deets'e', T'og'iiintin, ts'å' Vi'it Gwaatr'ål, ts'iiivii ky'aac'e nizj kariheentya, ts'iiivii vaa kwanh tr'ahaytsya eenjit. Ajjt'ee nyå' vishreecch'ook'aii choh kharahahtthaa, gwakat deiheelyyaa eenjit. Juk t'ee kwanh tr'ahaytsya, nan ohotan geh'an."
The month is August. Tqq'iiintin and his family have just moved to a place near Van-choh-vee, also known as Old John Lake. They wanted to finish building a caribou fence that they had started the year before.

The first thing they did was build a house.

Tr'ootsyaa, Tqq'iiintin's father, told his four sons, "Tl'eevihti', Deets'e', Tqq'iiintin, and Vi'it Gwaattr'al, we must look for some good, straight spruce trees for the frame of the house. Then start cutting big squares of moss to put on top. Now we can build the ground house because the ground is frozen."
Tóó'iintin va'han, Ditr'ik, vinjyaa'ya njjhnan, zheh gwizhit drin gwiheelyaa eenjit. "Dža, jii aadzii vinjyaa'ya eenjit vat'aghch'ya'a," Ditr'ik yahnyąą.

"Gwjjzjįį," Tr'ootsyaa yahnyąą. "Zhit ts'įįj nihih'aa, drin-t'-an hée gwizhit nideeshréehee'aa eenjit."

Zheh gwiltsąąjįį. Ajjįįįjįį zheh gwizhit ah nankat nigjjlii.

"Vadzaih k'iinaa nah'oo ji', ch'adhaa-chyah k'eejit ah kat nineeriheelyaa," Tóó'iintin ajj dijuu ji'khįįjįį Vindeegoozhraajįį t'ahnyąą. "Ajj ji' juk khaii tr'iheedluu kwąą t'oonchy'aa."
T99'iintin's mother, Ditr'ik, wanted a window to make the house bright. "Here, use this caribou skin for the window," Ditr'ik said. "Good," said Tr'ootsyaa. "I will put it on this side so the sun will shine inside in the afternoon."

The house was built. Then spruce boughs were laid on the ground in the house.

"When the caribou come we will lay new caribou skins on the spruce boughs," T99'iintin explained to Vindeegoozhrajj, his little sister. "That way we won't be cold this winter."
Zheh k'eejit gwiltsąjj. Ajjtł'ęę juu najj datthak gwats'a' neelzhii ts'ą' gogwągh'in.

"Łyaa tsee kwan k'it tiinchy'aa, hee?" Tọq'iintin dlok haa nyąą. Zhat khaa datthak zheh nihdinegeejil. Ch'ik'eh-daak'a' neegeek'ın.

"Nehkaa ji' tr'ookit vadzaih-tthal tr'ahahtsyaa," Tọq'iintin viti' nyąą. Ajjtł'ęę idzée ahtsii ts'ą' neiilii kwaa, vadzaih-tthal zhit iilok kwaii yaa haahkhwaa eenjit.

Tọq'iintin łyaa gwjjzzjj yak'aahtii. Ch'angwal ts'ą' tth'an haa t'ąhchyy'aa. Tth'an dits'ik, jiinin ts'ą' chan dach'ok. Ajjtł'ęę tth'an ch'ok aii k'aii ninjyaa ky'aa'ee tsjj tł'il haa diyahchaa.
The new house was finished. Then everyone stood and looked at it.

"It really looks just like a beaver house, huh?" smiled T99'iintin.

That night they went inside the house. The fat lamp was lit.

"Tomorrow we will start to work on the caribou fence," said T99'iintin's father. Then he got busy making spear points to kill the caribou that would be caught in the fence.

T99'iintin was watching closely. His father used caribou leg bones. They were narrow, sharp, and pointed. He then tied the bones to long, straight willows with babiche.
Geh Ik, Tł'eevihti' va'at, Deedzii, Tq̓q̓iintin veejii, Ditr'ik najj haa vadzaih-dhah kwaiitryah k'eeegaahkaii, tthał zhit giizhihee'yuu eenjit. Kwaiitryah ch'ajat niljj zhit gaa'yuu ji', vadzaih yahahtsan ts'a' duuyeh gwizhit gah'oo. Geetee kwaiitryaa k'eejit gii'jj kwaad ts'a'

chik-luu dagwakwaiitryaa kat t'igilik.

Vi'it Gwaatr'al ts'a' Vindeegoozhrajj najj chan nankat dachan tsal zheht'ineegahaatł'ak haa tseegee'in.

Khwaaic-dak'ą' naatthaa ts'ą' juu najj datthak niłchuu.
Geh Ik, T'eevihti'\'s wife, Deedzii, Top'iintin's oldest sister, and Ditr'ik were sewing new caribou skin boots to wear inside the fence. If old boots were worn inside the fence, the caribou would smell people and not go in. When they had no new boots, ashes were put on the boots to take away the smell.

Vi'it Gwaatr'al and Vindeegoozhrajj were playing zheht'ineegahaat'ak, a game with sticks, on the ground.

When the fat lamp went out everyone went to bed.
Tłįįntin tr'ookid vigwit'it drin gwiteegwaanchy'ąį t'ee traanoonjii niljį, gwiheek'ą eenjit.
Gweełk'in, ąjjt'ęę vahan tthaa ahvir. Juu nąjj datthak ch'jj'al, ąjjt'ęę t'ee vadzaiẖ-tthar gihiłtsįįj.
Drin lęjj gwiidhat, ąjjt'ęę shragwaazhik. Tr'ootsyaa tthar tr'ahtsii gwats'ąį k'eeegwaadhat.
Zhehk'aa tik yighaih gwich'įį nąjj chan yits'inyaa.
Tq'q'iintin's first job every day was to get wood to build the fire. After his mother built the fire she boiled ground squirrel. When everyone had eaten they went to work on the caribou fence.

After many days passed the fence was completed. Tr'ootsyaa was in charge of building the fence. There were three other families staying near who helped him.
Dinjii lat nəjj chan dachan khagit'jj. Tr'iinjaa lat nəjj chan dachan ts'iivi ghaii ts'ə' k'ail tľ'ak kwaii haa tigiyahchaa. Ts'iivi ghaii duuyeh khan ahjat ts'ə' deenii trii ts'ə' vakat diyaagəjj.

Ants'ə' dinjii lat nəjj chan tľ'oo-hanshyah khaihat nqilii, ch'aghat ts'ə' dachan nan zhit gatthat kat deegiheelyaa eenjit.

Vindeegoozhrajj, Tq'iiintin haa tr'agwah'in. "Jaghaii tľ'oo-hanshyah jii dachan kat deerilii?" nich'it-tsal ch'oaahkat.

"Vadzaih nəjj dinjii t'igjji hchy'aa googoheenjyaa ts'ə' giyeelin needigiheendidaa gwik'eeegwigiheendaa eenjit. Ajjtł'ee vyah zhit giieelok," Tq'iiintin yahnyə.'

"Łyaa gogoonzhjj," nyə' ts'ə' tth'aii tľ'oo-hanshyah lejj neehoondal eenjit tr'anəqik.
Most of the men cut the poles for the fence. Some of the women tied the poles together with spruce roots and narrow willows. The spruce roots would not rot and wouldn't dry up quickly.

The rest of the people gathered tussocks to put on the tree stumps and on poles they put into the ground.

Vindeegoozhrajj was working with T99'iintin. "Why do we put tussocks on these sticks?" the little girl asked.

"So the caribou will think they are people and try to go around them. Then they get caught in the snares," T99'iintin answered.

"That's smart," she said and ran to get more tussocks.
Dinjii lejj kwáa nájj chan, juu tthař kat tr'agwah'in kwaa nájj, vanh dai' hee hikigaazhik ts'á' vadzaih kaiigiihi'ik.

Drin nihk'iidog niijun gwahaadhat datthak gwjji't'aii tr'agogwah'ya'. Gohch'it dee tthař khainjih giit'sájj.

"Nehkaa jih vyah diriheet'ya'a," Tr'ootsyaa yahnyáa. "Juk khaii vyah dóó daatin ants'á' dóó shi'ijj."

Vyah kwaii tthař ts'á' náhgíig nígiiyili, gogwiheetrii kwáa ts'á' khan vadzaih giheeghaa eenjít.
There were a few men who weren't working on the fence, who would go out very early each day to look for caribou.

For eight long days they all worked hard. Finally the fence was almost ready.

"Tomorrow we will set the snares up," Tr'ootsyaa said. "This winter I have forty-four snares."

The snares would be set close to the sides of the fence so killing the caribou would be easier and quicker.
Ṯḻi̓ḻ ṉi̓ẖḵ'i̓i̓ḏo̓q̱ ṯ'a̓a̓ḻc̱ẖ̱y̱̱'a̓', v̱y̱a̓h ̱c̱'i̓ẖ-̱ł̱a̓ḵ ẖa̓ḻṯs̱y̱a̓a̓ e̓e̓ṉj̱i̓ṯ.  
Ṯ'o̓o̓ṯs̱y̱a̓a̓ v̱i̓ẕẖe̓ẖḵ'a̓a̓ ṉa̓j̱j̱ ̱g̱o̓o̓ṯi̓' ̱ḻy̱a̓a̓ ḏi̓ṉj̱i̓i̓ ̱c̱ẖḻ'e̓e̓ ̱ṉi̓ḻj̱ ̱g̱a̓a̓g̱i̓i̓ṉḏa̓i̓i̓. ̱ḻy̱a̓a̓ ̱g̱w̱j̱j̱ẕj̱ ̱g̱o̓o̓ḵ'a̓a̓ẖṯi̓i̓i̓. 
G̱w̱i̓ẕẖi̓ḵ ̱ḏi̓ṉj̱i̓i̓ ̱ṉa̓j̱j̱ ̱g̱y̱ā̓ẖ ̱ḏi̓g̱i̓ṯł̱'u̓u̓. ̱Ṯo̓o̓ṯi̓i̓i̓i̓ṉṯi̓, ̱V̱i̓i̓i̓ṯ ̱G̱w̱a̓a̓ṯṟ'a̓ḻ, ̱g̱o̓o̓j̱y̱a̓a̓ ̱Ṯ̱ṯẖa̱̓ḻ ̱Ḏẖa̓ẖḵẖw̱a̓j̱j̱ ̱ṉa̓j̱j̱ ̱ẖa̓a̓ ̱ṉa̓g̱a̓a̓aẕẖṟi̓i̓i̓.
To make one snare eight babiche were used.
Tr'ootsyaa's family knew that their father was a rich man. He took very good care of them.
While the men were setting the snares, T99'iintin, Vi'it Gwaatr'al, and their friend, Tthał Dhahkhwaii, went hunting.
Tajh tah gahaajil ts'ą' k'ıqq gwinjik gwats'ą' geedaa akhai' khan hee... "Ahhh. Yeezhee ts'iivii t'eh ts'it dhidii!" Tthał Dhahkhwąjj daadzit ts'ą' t'inyąą.

"Shhh. Vats'ą' tr'ahoojyaa. Gał neehihchik t'oonchy'aa," Tıqq'iintin yahnyąą.

Khai' ts'ą' ts'it eeghaih nich'idzigjj'ąjj. Tıqq'iintin yikii-th'än iłkhaa. Ajjtt'ęę yidreeghaa niłtaa ts'ą' yeełkhwąjj.

"It'ee nats'ąą tee! Shahan ływaa ts'it ch'oo eenjit shoo heelyaa t'iinchy'ąą!" Tıqq'iintin yahnyąą. Ts'it ch'oo giiee'ee ts'ą' dagogwach'aa kat k'eeegiihaahkaa.

Ajjtt'ęę k'iitthan k'ıqq gwinjik gwats'ą' tr'ineegeejil. Daagqq tik khan hee k'aii tee gwits'an niinjil. Tıqq'iintin gihiłkhaa. Gaa Vi'it Gwaatr'al ływaa khan khaghal. Dik'i' k'iłtai' kat njjzhaa ts'ą' yuunahdhak. Ch'ihlak ildaii.
They were walking over a hill and down to a creek when suddenly Ttha Dhahkhwajj whispered, "Ahhh. There is a porcupine under that spruce tree!"

"Shhh. Let's go. I have a stick," said T99'iintin. Very quietly they crawled close to the porcupine. T99'iintin hit it over the head. Then the artery to it's head was broken and it was killed.

"Oh boy! My mother will be happy to get these porcupine quills!" exclaimed T99'iintin. The porcupine quills would be dyed and sewn on their clothes.

Then they continued walking down to the creek. Three ptarmigan suddenly flew out of the willows. They scared T99'iintin. But Vi'it Gwaatr'al was quick. He put an arrow in his bow and he let it fly. He shot one down.
"Tthał Dhahkhwąjj, dzaa. Nan jii daaq̓q̓ ts'än an'jj. Diikhwan ajj ts'it tr'ii'jj t'oonlyy'aas," Vi'it Gwaatr'al yahnyą, gwizhik daaq̓q̓ yantł'ąhchjj.

"Mahsj'," Tthał Dhahkhwąjj yahnyą. "Daaq̓q̓ łyaa veet'ihthan. Vinjya-dhah shijuu veenjit vizhihshol ts'a' ch'iiighoo hakłsyaa eenjit."

Juu najj datthak shoo niljj. łyaa goodiveegwijnnzi' ts'a' gwjjzjj nigilzhrii.

Drin gwjjdhat ajjł'e khán hee dinjii vadzaih eenjit khach'oaayą' najj tąjh choh ts'an k'iiđąą neegaagal.

"Vadzaih łyjj ah'ál! Vadzaih łyjj ah'ál!" gwjjt'àiìi ginyąą.
"Here, Tthał Dhahkhwajj. You can have this ptarmigan. We have the porcupine," said Vi'it Gwaatr'al, while giving him the ptarmigan.

"Thank you," said Tthał Dhahkhwajj. "I really like ptarmigan. I will blow up the crop inside to make a ballon for my sister."

Everyone was happy. They had had good luck and a good hunt.

The next day the men who were looking for caribou came running down from a tall hill.

"Lots of caribou are coming! Lots of caribou are coming!" they said strongly.
Jii drin t'ee juu datthak geenjit nagogol'in t'oonchy'aa. Dinjii tr'iinjaa nājj dagats'an shruh neegoonjik, dagakwaiitryaa k'eejit zheegee'yuu ts'ą' tthał ts'ą' tr'agal gāhjil.

Tąq'iintin voondee neekwąjj nājj digiyehkhan haa gahaajil. Deets'e' tr'ookit veenjit gwanljj. Tąq'iintin govaav hoihshi' jjdhan gaa vaghai' nitsyą'. Tr'iinin tsal nājj eenjit gogwaanjat t'oonchy'aa.

Vadzaih Ĩejj ah'al dąj', tr'iinin ts'ą' ch'anjaa nājj haa khik kwank'it geelk'jj. Tąq'iintin vitsyįh ts'ą' vitsii nājj haa nigjįnnįjik ts'ą' Drit vizhehk'aa nājj t'ee gootsyįh ts'ą' gootsaii nājj oo'ęę gahaajil ts'ą' giisadilk'jj. Drit vigii nājj chan oo'ęę gahaahil.

Tąq'iintin ts'ą' tsyaa-tsäl vaghai' adhaa nājj duuyeh ch'aagihijyaa ts'ą' t'ee tseege'e'in. Tr'ookit t'ee ch'aghat avee vadzaih ji' gwich'in lat goonjik.

"Vi'it Gwaatr'al, nan vadzaih jiłįj. Tąq'iintin ts'ą' shįj nājj haa naazhrii tr'iheelyaa," Tthał Dahahkhwąjj yahnyąą.
This was the day they had all waited for. The men and women got their caribou bone spears, put on their boots, and ran to the fence.

Tqq'iintin's two older brothers went with his parents. It was the first time for Deets'e'. Tqq'iintin wanted to go too but he was not old enough. The fence was too scary for small children.

The children and old people always stayed in camp when the caribou came. Tqq'iintin's grandmother and grandfather were dead so the grandmother and grandfather in Drit's family came over and stayed. Drit's children came, too.

Tqq'iintin and the boys his age couldn't go and so they played. First they got a piece of gray dried wood that looked like caribou horns.

"Vi'it Gwaat'ral, you be the caribou. Tqq'iintin and I will be the hunters," Tthał Dhahkhwajj said.
This was a game that the boys loved to play. The girls liked to play too but they were busy working with skin and watching the little children.

Everyone else was at the fence.

"Quick! Get close to the fence! Ditr'ik, stand by that spruce tree real close. There are too many caribou and they will be coming fast," commanded Tr'ootsyaa.

There were so many caribou that everyone had to get very close to the fence. If they hadn't the caribou might have run them down.
Tr'ookit vadzaih vyah zhit dhalaj', łyaa juu najj datthak shoo i'tsajj.

Ditr'ik łyaa digii tsysaa najj eenjit tr'igwidii. Goov'ah'in kwaa.
Gaa gooti' łyaa gwjjzjj geegovee'tin gaandaii.

Njjuuk gwahaadhat kwāq ts'a' t'ee vyah lat vizhit vadzaih dhalaj'.
Goolat najj goojj' vyah zhit nideelchaa ts'a' goolat najj chan gooki' dhalaj'. Gaa gwjjtsal njjuuk gwahaadhat ājjt'ee t'ohju' hee vadzaih lat najj t'oohtjj neehir'oo.

"Łyaa vadzaih ch'ihłok dinanli' k'it ts'a' juutin ch'ihłak gwanli' daatin ą̂łchy'ą̂ł niljį!
Gwa'ah'in...diivyah zhit tik daatin ants'ą̂vanchoh-nak'ą̂h-zhak-dhitin tr'aaląj' t'ee!" Tr'ootsyaa shoh haa azhral. "Tr'agoroh'ą̂."
The first caribou caught in a snare made everyone happy. Ditr'ik was worried about her sons. She couldn't see them. But she knew that their father had taught them well.

Soon most of the snares had caribou in them. Some had their antlers tangled and some had caught their heads. But the rest of the caribou didn't leave for a while yet.

"There must have been at least one hundred and fifty caribou! "Look...we caught thirty-nine in our snares!" shouted Tr'ootsyaa joyfully. "Let's get to work."
Deets'ę' ts'ą' T'eeviht' haa it'ee digiyihkhan eeghaii giilk'įį.
Deets'ę' ch'ihłok gaa vadzaih-tthał eenihee kwąą ts'ą' diti' eeghaii nahgwan dhidii, viti' jidii haandaii datthak agwahaa'ee eenjit.

"Łyaa gwįįjįį gwik'eerahąąhtyaa gwizhrįįh, ch'eekąįį nan kat t'iriheelyaa kwąą eenjit. Vadzaih tth'an shỳh haa gwįįjįį hoohkhwaaw gwizhrįįh, gwįįl'oo ch'eekąįį vats'ān t'ihee'yąąa kwąą eenjit. Ch'eekaii lejj oozhok t'irinlik ji', vadzaih duuyeh oo'ēe neegwaah'in t'inchy'aa." Jii datthak Deets'ę' viti' gwįįjįį yąagwildak. Gwikįį đąį datthak gwįįtth'ak gaa juk ływąa gwįįjįį giik'yąanjiik.

Dinjii lat najj vadzaih gaghan gwiizhik goolat najj chan k'āi khaih'lān nagahjyąąa. Jii kwaii tthál eh'at hee gwįįjįį nan kat nigiyiili, giikat vadzaih nahan'ąą eenjit. Vadzaih ch'ihłak gaa tthał zhit nagah'ąą kwąą.
Deets'e' and Tł'eevihti' were by their parents now. Since Deets'e' had never been to a caribou fence before, he stayed close to his father so that he could learn all that his father knew.

"We must be very careful not to get blood on the ground. You must kill the caribou with the spear so that very little blood comes out. If we get too much blood around, the caribou will not come back." All this Deets'e''s father explained to him. Deets'e' had heard it all before but now the words really meant something.

The men killed the caribou and carefully carried them outside the fence. All the caribou were laid on willows to be cut up by the women. Not even one caribou was cut inside the fence.
Tr'ootsyaa digii tsyaa neekwajj oozhrjj. "Dinjii neekwajj ghjii ts'a' tthał zhit ts'a' geelin kwaii haa datthak shriitr'ineegooh'a'ii. Nijin nan kat ch'eekei nho'inn da'j', khoht'i'ii ts'a' tthał eh'ok njjyit hee nqghjj. Nya' nizjj oo'qee noo'airi ts'a' nijin nan khoht'uu gjjzjj k'itinooh'a'ii. Khan t'akho'in. Khaa gwats'a' nahgoq gwilii."

Juu najj datthak gwnj't'airi gwitr'it t'agogwah'in gjiiizhik chan khan t'igii'in. Vadzaih datthak shrigjniilik. Zhehk'ag najj gooteegogwaahch'aa ts'a' niljj oo'an digizheh gwits'ee gihi'tsit ts'a' dagadraa kat deegiyili'i.

Tr'ootsyaa vizhehk'ag najj k'airi datthak giłk'in ts'a' nijuk datthak gogwaah'ya'. Gwjzzjj neegogwì'ı'sajj ji' eenjit ts'a' chan vyah datthak tineegogwàgh'ya', gjjzzjj dineegiyaat'jj ji' eenjit.

Izhik gwandaa khaa gwaniijj, gaa too oozhrjii adrii ts'a' gjjzzjj goovaa gweech'in. Zhat drin tyaa juu najj datthak goovaa shrigwjijnch'ag'.
Tr'ootsyaa called his two sons. "I want you to get two more people and clean inside the fence and all around it. When you see any blood on the ground, cut out the moss and take it far from the fence. Bring back good moss and put it back neatly where you cut out the ground. Hurry now. It's getting close to night time."

Everyone was working hard and fast. They saved all of the caribou. Each family took meat back to their house to put it in their cache.

Tr'ootsyaa's family burned all the willows and made sure that the ground was clean. They also checked all the snares to make sure they were set. By then the night was late, but the moon was bright so they could see easily. The day had been a very happy day for everyone.
Vadzaih-ki' heechy'ąą eenjit kꆷ' ehdee neegaht'ài. Niljj chan gahvir. Ch'itsik chan gal haa giitach'ąh'ee, giihahchy'ąą eenjit ts'ą' ch'its'ik chan gahvir.

Ch'igiheee'ąą gwats'ą' chan hagineedi', "Shih goonjik eenjit datthak mahsj'," ginyąą.

Juu najj datthak tィaa gwjjzjj neech'jn'al! Ch'anjaa najj gogwaandak gwiizhik tr'iinin najj kꆷ' eelin tseegii'in.
The women hung caribou heads over a fire to cook, boiled meat and intestines, and hung ribs on a stick to cook.

Before they ate they prayed. "For all the food we have taken, thank you," they said.

What a feast everyone had! The old people told stories and the children played around the fire.
Nihkaa vanh daj' hee juu najj datthak hikyaazhii. Dinjii lat najj chan vadzaih kineegohoojil. Goolat najj chan kwank'it giilk'jj, niljj tr'eeegihah'tii eenjit.

"T99'iintin, nan ts'a' Vi'it Gwaatr'al najj haa Deets'e' vaa dachan qhjii. Niljj eenjit ch'agajhawk'it vaa gwarahahtsyaa eenjit," viti' yjaa nyaga. "Shach'adhah tr'ihchoo alsii vehdaa tr'ihihndal, niljj ootthan drah ts'a' neehiyaka eenjit."

"Nijn ji' hinhav?" T99'iintin ch'oaahkat.

"Nijn niljj dhaqajji' ji,'" viti' yahnyaga.

"Khan nna hihshyaa lee t'oonthy'aa?" T99'iintin yuaahkat.

"Gwich'in roh. Drah shaa shrinnehjnlyaa."

Ajj lyaa T99'iintin shoo deetsajj. Ch'adhah tr'ihchoo zhit neehidik lyaa geet'jjandhan. Gaa ch'adhah tr'ihchoo lyaa gwjitt'oo vit'eeegwaahchy'aa kwaj, han k'iidj' ts'a' geete van kat eenjit gwizhrjch chan.
The next day everyone got up early. Some men went out to look for more caribou. The others stayed in camp to cut the meat.

"Tqq'iintin, you and Vi'it Gwaatr'al go with Deets'e' to get poles. We have to make drying racks for the meat," said their father. "I'm going to finish making a skin boat to take some meat down to our cache."

"When will you go?" Tqq'iintin asked.

"When the meat is dried," answered his father.

"Can I go with you?" asked Tqq'iintin.

"Maybe so. You can help me fix the cache."

That made Tqq'iintin happy. He liked to go in a skin boat, but his people didn't use boats much, only to go down river and sometimes on a lake.
Gwiizhik khaa hee ch'adhah tr'ihchoo dachan kat tr'agwah'in. Vigii tsyaa cheegohoo'oo ąjjtł'ęę, ch'adhah tr'ihchoo eelin ch'adhah k'aahkaii. Vadzaih choh dhah nihk'iitik t'ąąchyy'aa, ch'adhah tr'ihchoo ch'ihłak hahtsyaa eenjit.

"Vindeegoozhrajj, tth'àiitiseenjyaa k'ih-khąjjaado ooinjii gaa nahan vagwadal kwaii shrihtoinlyaa shrò'," Tr'ootsyaa yahnyąą.

"Ti'yaa, khan ch'its'ihihiyaa lee t'oönchyy'aa? Ch'adhah tthah t'aałchyy'aa gaachandaii t'oönchyy'aa," Vindeegoozhrajj yahnyąą.

"Nakwąą, jii ch'adhah kwaii ḥyaa dach'at t'inchyy'aa," Tr'ootsyaa yahnyąą.

"Nijn gwats'an tth'ávti ihdi' oodhįjįnjik, ch'adhah tthah eenjit?" Vindeegoozhrajj yahnyąą.

"Van choh kat. Deets'e' shreenyąą dąj'i yeełkhwąjj t'inchyy'aa."
Tr'ootsyaa had been working on the skin boat frame in the evenings. After his sons left he sewed skins on the frame. He used six bull caribou skins to make the one skin boat.

"Vindeegoozhrajj, go find more sinew but don't mess up your mother's things," said Tr'ootsyaa.

"Dad, can I help? I know how to use the awl," Vindeegoozhrajj asked.

"No, these skins are too tough," Tr'ootsyaa answered.

"Where did you get the loon bill for the awl?" Vindeegoozhrajj questioned.

"On the big lake. Deets'e' killed it last spring."
"Tth'an gaa nizjj, gaa ts'a-lvit ihdi' ąjj gwąndaa dach'at. Ako' t'ee khan oo'an hjnhaii ts'ą' k'ıh-hąjjndoo oiijii."
Vindeegoozhrajj tr'aangik, yuuheendal eenjit.
Njyuyk gwahaadhat kwaa ts'ą' tsyaa-tsal najj dachan haa oo'ęę neegejil. Ch'agąjh-k'it ko' eeghain gogwiłtsąjj, niljj łat vagwąhąndaii eenjit.
"A bone is good too, but the loon bill is stronger. Now go and get the sinew."

Vindeegoozhrajj ran to get it. Soon the boys returned with the poles. They built the drying rack by the fire so the meat would taste smokey.
Geh Ik niljj tr'aht'ii ts'a' tyyaa vigwitr'it gwanljj. Tł'eevihti ts'a' Deets'e' nąjj niljj ch'agąjh-k'it gwakat deegili.

Deedzii ts'a' dahan nąjj haa chan tyyaa googwitr'it gwanljj, kiitl'eeegwat gahtsii, tth'an giyaahheetthat ts'a' ch'aghwaaghwai' giyaahntsyaan eenjit.

"Deedzii, k'ail nanchoo ąhkii agwąh'aii. Shįj ajj ts'iiivii-ghaii ts'a' kii kwaii haa oohjhnal," vahan yahnyąą.

Tr'ookit Van-choh-vee gwats'an k'eeqiical dąj' Dit'rik dits'iiivii-ghaii datthak chyy zhit yjnlīi. Jii t'ee datłok yah'jj, nįjįn gįyjįndhan dąj' tły'ah giihaa'yaa eenjit. Ts'iiivii-ghaii t'ee kii, dachan kat gįgiįhahchaa, tły'ah eenjit giit'ąąhchya'aa.

Deedzii k'ail oonjik ajjtł'ęę yatł'an gwįjįtsal khagwąht'uun ts'a' kii eendįn neeyaandąą.

"It'ee ni'ę, nan dąhchaa. Nan ajj shandaa gwįjt'aii dahąhhdįyaą t'inchy'aa."

Kiitl'eeegwat giitsąjj ajjtł'ęę, nįhįnanjįi neegee'ali ts'a' tth'an jįdįj ddhak heelyaa gwats'a' giyaatthat.
Geh Ik was busy cutting the meat. Tł'eevihti' and Deets'e' hung the meat on the rack.

Deedzii and her mother were busy making a sledge hammer to pound bones with to make bone grease.

"Deedzii, find a willow as big around as your thumb. I'll get the spruce roots and rock," her mother said.

When they had first come to Van-choh-vee, Dit'rik had taken all her spruce roots and put them in water. This kept them soft so they could use them for rope any time. The roots would be used to tie the rock to the stick.

After Deedzii got the willow, she cut it a little in the middle and then bent it over the rock.

"Now Mother, you tie it. You can tie it tighter than I can."

When the rock hammer was made they took turns pounding the bones into small pieces.
Angela Peter
Vindeegoozhråjįj had just given her father the sinew and walked over to her mother. She saw a pile of bones not being used.

"Mother, why don't you use these too?" she asked.

"Because they are no good. Those bones have no grease," answered her mother. "Only the bone around the joints is used, not the bone in the middle."

Ditr'lik broke the bones with the rock hammer. Then she boiled them.
Ditr'ik shih-tyah-choo t'aahchy'aa, yizhit tth'an ahvir. Tr'ootsyaa vadzaih-kyaa gâjh yit'jj haa'çjj. Gwichyaa-zheh ch'adhah niht'jjrihilii gwats'an yuunjik. Ditr'ik Ŷyaa yeech'i'in.

Ch'aghwaa-khwai' it'ee nizjj ǧjj gwandaa t'ee Tr'ootsyaa ch'adhah tr'ihchoo shrinlik ts'ą' tsyaa-tsal nąjj chan niljj datthak deegaadlii. Ch'aghwaa-khwai' ch'ihdheeghwat zit giyyjnja, gwit'ee gwats'ą'. Niljj gâjh haa gihee'ąą.

Datthak ts'ą' goozhit gwit'ls'ik. Juu nąjj datthak dachan k'ik di'jj tth'an-chu' giyaahenjyaa eenjit, Ditr'ik zhrii nakwąą. Tr'ootsyaa divii-ji' ts'an ch'iįį' k'ik yeel'tsąjj. Ŷyaa yihiľ'ee. Dinjii lejj nąjj Ŷyaa divii-ji' k'ik di'jj kwąą.
Ditr'ik used a big, food pan to boil the bones in. Tr'ootsyaa had traded dried caribou tongue for it. He got it from the fur traders in Ft. Yukon. Ditr'ik was very proud of that pan.

By the time the bone grease was ready, Tr'ootsyaa had finished his canoe and the boys had hung the meat up to dry. Ditr'ik put the bone grease in the small stomach of a caribou and saved it for later. The bone grease would be eaten with dried meat.

They were all hungry. Everyone had a wooden dish to drink the bone juice with, except Ditr'ik. Tr'ootsyaa had made her a dish from a sheep horn. It was a very special present. Not many people had a sheep horn dish.
"Jii 'lyaa gehdaa kwąa nizji!"
Tqo'iintin yahntąą, gwiizhik dadachan k'ik oonjik ts'ą' tth'an-chy' eech'iintthaii. Njjyuk gwahaadhat kwaa ts'ą' juu nąjj datthak ch'anagoho'al.
Drin hee gwjjtsal gwjjndhąą ts'ą' chiiąjj hee vikeech'agąhchey'ąą. Gwitł'ęł gwjjnk'oo' nagwaanąjj ji' zheh gwizhit vikeech'agahąhchey'ąą. Zheh gwizhit 'lyaa 'at gwiheelyaa.
Datthak ch'igen'al tł'ee zheh gwizhit nihdeeginjil.
Tł'eevihti' ch'ik'eh-daak'ą' neełk'in. Tr'ootsyaa juhtoo shriitr'ichii, ch'adhah tr'ihchoo yaa ineech'ahahtthak eenjit. Tqo'iintin chan ch'ihłak daatsii.
"This is the best!" exclaimed T99'iintin as he took a dishful of bone juice. Before long everyone was full.

The days were still a little bit warm so all the cooking was done outside the house. Later when the days got cold they would be cooking inside. The house would be very smokey then.

After they had eaten they went inside the house.

Tł'eevihti' lit the fat lamp. Tr'ootsyaa was fixing a pole that he would use to guide his skin boat. T99'iintin was fixing one, too.
"Vadzaih tsal shats'an kat haktsyaa," T99'iintin adlaa ts'a' t'inyag.
"Tyaa nagwadatsi' nizjj jnlj," T99'iintin vahan tyaa yeech'i'in
ts'a' t'iyahnyaag. "Yeendaa ji' tyaa niti' vik'it t'ihinchy'aa t'oonychya'aa."

Njyuk gwahaadhat kwag ts'a' t'ee nijj dhagajj ts'a' t'ee T99'iintin
ts'a' diti' nagg haa han-di' gihee'al geetr'igogwah'in. It'ee gaha'oo
gwizhik dinjii k'iiidaa goots'a' tr'aangik. VADZAIH LEJJ AH'AL!
"I think I will make a little caribou on mine," smiled T99'iintin.
"You're quite an artist," said T99'iintin's mother proudly. "Later on you will be like your father."

Soon the meat was dry. T99'iintin and his father were getting ready to go down river. Just before they left a man came running towards them. LOTS OF CARIBOU WERE COMING!
"Tr'iheedaą ąjj nagoorahaa'yaa. Vadzaih ąjj gwandaa chil'ee.
Goovehdan duuyeh tr'agwandaii t'oonchy'aa," viti' khai' ts'ą' t'iyahnyaa.
"Niljj datthak k'it tinejjlii. Gwadqohk'ą', ąt gwiheelyaa eenjit. Drit
vizhehk'ąą nąjj oo'ęę giheedaa ts'ą' chan drin neegahaahky'aa."
Tąg'iintin viyehghan ts'ą' voondee nąjj haa gahaajil.
Jii vadzaih ah'al nąjj ąyaa gwjjt'oo gjlejj kwąą, duulee ch'ihtak
gwanli' daatin agąąhchyy'ąą. Vadzaih tik daatin ąąą gaaląąj'.
Vadzaih tsal shriit'ąąhchyy'aa-chan vyah zhit gaaląąj'. Tł'eevihti'
goovinghan ts'ąą' vyah ts'an tr'igivinlii. Oo'at k'aii ts'ąą' goohaadlii
ts'ąą' khai' ts'ąą' nagoovii'ąą.
Vadhah ąyaa datłok. Tr'iinin tsal eenjit ąyaa nizjj. Va'at njjyit
kwąą ts'ąą' tr'iinin heeyaa ts'ąą' jii ch'adhah kwaii gwach'aa eenjit
vit'eegwahaahchy'aa.
"The trip will have to wait. The caribou are too important. Without them we cannot live," T99'iintin's father told him quietly. "Put all the meat back. Keep the fire going so there is lots of smoke. Drit's family will be coming over again to stay for the day."

Then off went T99'iintin's parents and brothers.

This herd of caribou wasn't as large, maybe fifty animals. Thirty caribou were caught.

Several young caribou were caught in the snares. T'h'eevihti' killed them and took them down from the snares. He carried them over to the willows where he skinned them very carefully.
Chan hee ṭyaa ṭʊq nagwaanąjj. Ajjįl'ée k'ineeegidai. Di'ilii, vadzaih zhrjj, dinjik zhrjj gwideezhak ṭyaa gwįįt'oo tthar t'eegehaahchyyaąą. Nin t'eegehaahchyyaa zhrjj giheeghaua.
The fur was very soft. Just right for a baby. Tł'eeviht'ı's wife was soon to have a baby and these skins would be used for clothing. Again they didn't get back until very late.

Tłq'ıintin's family and the other families would need the fence alot during the months of August, September, and October. They would kill only the animals they needed.
Tł'eevihti' izhik khaa ch'adhah neekwąjj da'at eenjit oo'eq naahtsuu. "Dinjii ahtsii, jii ch'adhah kwaii lýaa nizjj. Mahsj'," Geh Ik yahn̓yą. "Ch'ikii-khąjj oo'eq nejjlii ji' lýaa gwiheezyaa. Ch'adhah vizhihihtyaa eenjit vit'eelahcy'aa t'inchy'aa. "Ch'ihłok gaa k'eiiich'ii anaaldee kwąa t'oonchy'aa!" yahn̓yą gwizhik adlaa. Izhik nihkaa Təq'iintin ts'ą' diti' nąjj haa niljj haa, drah ts'ą' gahaa'oo. Han lýaa chųų nitsya' ts'ą' khaa' ch'adhah tr'ihchoo gahľaa têeheechnäh kwąa eenjit.
T'reevihti brought two of the skins to his wife that night.

"Oh, these are good skins. Thank you," said Geh Ik. "I hope you brought the brains back. I will need them to soak the skins in."

"I never forget even one thing!" he laughed.

The next day Tqq'iintin and his father left with the meat for their cache.

The river was low and they had to be very careful not to tear the skin boat.
Tr'ootsyaa vadraa tth'aii nizjj. Dachan neekwajj gookat ninegiintin ts'á' niljj chan gwizhiit gjjnlii. Neekwajj gogwaahchy'ág izhik nineegohoo'oo niljj haa, han teediheechyaa gwikjh. Tóó'iintin khik ch'aaneehidik. Ŷyaa han geet'jndhan.

Izhik khaii ts'á' Ŷyaa gwiiizjj gogwjjndaii. Shih gwanljj ts'á' juu najj datthak shoo niljj.
Tr'ootsyaa's cache was in good shape. He added two logs and then piled in the meat. They made two more trips with meat that fall before the river froze up. T99'iintin went everytime. He loved the river.

Life that fall was good. There was lots to eat and everyone was happy.