SILENT ENEMY
The content in this comic book may stir up unpleasant feelings or thoughts, particularly if you or someone you know has experienced cancer. Please consider reading it with a family member or friend.

The events and characters appearing in this work are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, or places, is purely coincidental and unintended.

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ARE WE LOST, DAD?

WE'RE NOT LOST. WE JUST ZIGGED WHEN WE SHOULD HAVE ZAGGED AT THAT LAST FORK IN THE TRAIL, SO WE'RE...

WE'RE TAKING THE SCENIC ROUTE!

BUT WE CAN'T SEE ANYTHING, AND I'M TIRED OF WALKING.

WHAT WAS IT YOUR GRANDPA ALWAYS USED TO TELL YOU WHEN HE'D TAKE YOU UP HERE AND YOU'D START TO COMPLAIN?

HE SAID THERE WAS A DONUT SHOP JUST OVER THE NEXT HILL.

WELL, THERE YOU GO.

WHAT?

THERE'S A DONUT SHOP JUST OVER THE NEXT HILL!
Cough, cough!

Cough!

Come on, dad! You’re making me late!

Oh, I’m making you late?

Or did you just roll out of bed nine minutes before class starts?

Move, dad!

Slam!

Dad?
HONK!!

LET'S GO, WREN! YOUR BROTHER'S WAITING IN THE CAR!

LET'S GO, SWEETIE!

I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH DAD.

I'M SERIOUS, MOM. THERE'S BLOOD ON THE BATHROOM SINK.

AND YOU'RE JUST FIGURING THIS OUT NOW?

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

ETHAN?
WHAT’S UP?

AND WHY HAVEN’T YOU LEFT YET?

WREN SAYS YOU’RE BLEEDING.

IT’S NOTHING. COUGH COUGH. PROBABLY JUST COMING DOWN WITH SOMETHING.

YOU’RE COUGHING UP BLOOD?

LIKE I SAID, IT’S NOTHING.

YOU’RE GOING TO THE DOCTOR IF I HAVE TO PULL YOU THERE MYSELF!

CAN’T DO IT. YOU KNOW MY CREW HAS TO FINISH THAT JOB BY FRIDAY——

WREN, GRAB THE OTHER ARM, WILL YA?

ALL RIGHT. ALL RIGHT! I’LL SWING BY THE CLINIC ON MY WAY TO WORK!
I'm sorry, I didn't plan on getting stuck in this snowstorm today.
I just wanted to get some exercise. I think we're going to have to find a place to rest for the night. Maybe we can start a fire.

What about Mom? If we don't get home, she's gonna kill us!

Assuming we survive the night.

Come on, you guys. Your Grandpa and I have camped in worse conditions than this.

Look, we know the river is to the west. If we can find the river, we can follow it down.

We just have to find a place to wait until this storm blows itself out.

We'll know which way to go when the sun comes up.
AND WHAT IF THE STORM DOESN'T DIE OUT? WHAT IF WE CAN'T SEE THE SUN IN THE MORNING?

THEN WE'LL ALL FREEZE TO DEATH.

ALWAYS LOOKING ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, HEY?

ALL RIGHT, YOU TWO, GO GATHER UP ALL THE SMALL STICKS AND BARK YOU CAN CARRY.

I'LL GO LOOK FOR DEAD-STANDING BIRCH TO BREAK UP.

AND STAY TOGETHER!
Looks like the whole gang's here!

Whatever happens, we're in this together.

That's great. The more support, the better.

Now it's tricky to see, but what we're looking at here is a non-small cell tumour that's developed along the outer edges of the lung.

Wait? Lung cancer?

Specifically, a stage one adenocarcinoma, which means that it hasn't had much time to grow.
I'm sorry, I just... we went through all this a few years ago.

We lost my mother to breast cancer.

I know it's difficult, but if you're able to, try not to make any assumptions based on that experience.

What were dealing with here is quite different.

Is my dad going to die?

Well, all things considered, Wren, the tumour is in about the best place it could be for surgery.

This could be a long road, but I like our chances.

Surgery?! When would that happen?

As soon as possible.
4 out of 10 Canadians develop cancer some time in their lives.

The body has trillions of cells - such as bone cells, skin cells, and brain cells.

Cancer starts small - in a single cell.

If a cell gets damaged, your body fixes or removes it.

Cancer happens when damaged cells aren’t fixed and grow out of control.

Some cancer cells clump together and form lumps or tumours. They invade their neighbours, stopping them from working right.
I DON'T KNOW IF I'M DOING THIS RIGHT, DAD. NOTHING'S HAPPENING.

I CAN'T DO IT.

MAYBE IT'S TOO COLD OR SOMETHING. MAYBE THE WOOD IS TOO WET.

LET ME TRY IT, BUDDY.

WHAT?! YOU HAD A LIGHTER THE WHOLE TIME?

OK, OK! STOP! HELP ME PICK OFF THE WING Before THIS GOES OUT!
Is it too soon to say I told you so?
How long have you been holdin' onto that one?
You stupid, beautiful man.

Ah, Myrtle! Welcome, my friend.
Hello, nephew.
Hello, auntie. Thank you for coming, hi, Thomas.
I'm not sure if we can smudge in here, mom.

Well, how about a prayer then? Will that set off the sprinklers?
Haha, I think that'll be okay.

We give thanks to you, creator, for the many blessings of this life. We pray for the health of our dear boy. We ask you, creator, to watch over him.
ALL RIGHT, ETHAN, WE'RE READY FOR YOU.

THANKS FOR BEING HERE WITH ME, DAD.

OUR BRAVE WARRIOR, CHARGING INTO BATTLE.

ALL OF YOU, I LOVE YOU GUYS.

WE LOVE YOU, DADDY.

HEY, I'M JUST HERE TO GET OUT OF CLASS.
I thought you said you were quitting.

Why don't you both go get us some more wood?

Why don't you go get us some more wood, Logan?

You promised, Dad.

This birch is burning pretty fast.

Every cigarette you smoke takes off eleven minutes of your life.

Go!

Help your sister.
GET TO THE FIRE!
NOT WITHOUT YOU, DAD!

ARE YOU OKAY, DAD? DID HE BITE YOU?!
MOSTLY JUST MY JACKET. I THINK I'M OKAY.

STAY BACK!
HOW ARE YOU, SON?

DAD?

ELLIE AND LOGAN ARE RESTING, WREN'S HERE WITH ME.

HI DADDY.

HELLO, MGIRL.

I'M SORRY YOUR MOTHER ISN'T HERE.

I'M SORRY SHE CAN'T SEE WHAT A KIND AND LOVING FATHER YOU HAVE BECOME.

I KNOW CANCER TOO WELL. IT TOOK MY BABY BROTHER AND MY DARLING WIFE.

JUST BEFORE SHE LEFT THIS WORLD, SHE TOLD ME SHE FEEL THE LUMP YEARS AGO.
She'd made up every excuse she could because she was afraid to hear bad news.

Afraid of missing out on seeing you all grow up.

Afraid of making a fuss.

If it happens, it happens,” she told herself.

Without my children and grandchildren, without the rez...

But it didn't have to happen. If she'd just...

My home, my family... I would've gone right after her. You gave me a reason to go on.

Well, cancer picked a fight with the wrong fellow this time.

Don't worry, Grandpa. I've seen dad stare down worse than this.
ALL RIGHT, KIDDO, UP AND AT ’EM!

I DON’T KNOW, WE LOST HIM, HE JUST KINDA FADED INTO THE DARK.

WHAT DO YOU SAY WE GET OUTTA HERE?

I THINK WE’VE HAD ENOUGH ADVENTURE.

WHERE’S THE COUGAR?!

I’M HUNGRY, DAD.

WELL, LET’S GET GOING THEN.

I SURE COULD GO FOR SOME DONUTS...

COME ON, LET’S GO FIND THAT RIVER.
WE MANAGED TO REMOVE MOST OF THE MASS.

HOW DOES THAT WORK?

THE NEXT STEP IS TO USE CHEMOTHERAPY TREATMENTS TO GO AFTER THE REMAINING CANCER CELLS.

WE'D LIKE TO TRY TO GET THIS TAKEN CARE OF IN FOUR CYCLES.

EACH CYCLE WILL CONSIST OF AN INJECTION OF AN ANTI-CANCER DRUG, A FEW TIMES A WEEK, FOLLOWED BY A PERIOD OF REST.

THERE WILL BE SOME PAIN AND SIDE EFFECTS FOLLOWING THE TREATMENTS.

NAUSEA AND VOMITING AREN'T UNCOMMON, AND YOU'LL MOST LIKELY SUFFER SOME FATIGUE.

WE'LL PRESCRIBE DRUGS TO HELP WITH THAT, BUT A STRONG SUPPORT SYSTEM WILL BE ESSENTIAL.

AND THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE YOU'LL PROBABLY LOSE SOME HAIR.
I've been thinking a lot about that time we were lost in the woods.

And the cougar.

If it weren't for these scars, I'd think it was all a dream now.

Scars are a funny thing. Each one tells a story of pain, a story of survival.

I don't know how much stronger I can be.

And everything I've put you all through, with Logan chipping in, and your mom working double and triple—

They remind us of who we are and how strong we can be.

You have a strength, my son, that I have never seen before. There's something in you...

A fire...

That nothing can put out.

Don't you know that you have carried us all? And now we carry you.

This is not a burden to us. This is a gift.

I know it's hard, dad. But don't worry. I'm pretty sure there's a donut shop just over the next hill.
Hold on.

Dad, my feet are freezing. I gotta keep... Shh! Just a second, kiddo. Listen.

Do you hear that?

I can hear it! I can hear it!
CAREFUL, WREN.

STAY LOW, SLIDE YOUR FEET.

DAD, BEHIND YOU!
WHAT'S WRONG, BABY?
THIS IS WHAT WE'VE BEEN PRAYING FOR!
I DON'T KNOW. IT'S BEEN A LONG SIX MONTHS.
I FEEL A BIT SHAKY, LIKE THIS HAS ALL BEEN A DREAM.
IT MIGHT BE A WHILE BEFORE YOU FEEL NORMAL AGAIN.
BEFORE ANY OF US FEEL NORMAL AGAIN.
WELL, I'VE GOT AN HOUR BEFORE I NEED TO BE AT WORK.
WHAT DO YOU FEEL LIKE DOING, BABE?
HMM, SINCE YOU ASKED...
I COULD SURE GO FOR A DONUT RIGHT NOW.
HA HA HA HA HA HA!!
Lost Innocence - A fictional story (but based on documented real life experiences of survivors) of a brother and sister’s residential school experience in the 1930’s. It’s our longest book at 64 pages and has a truth and reconciliation theme.

It Takes a Village - Our maternal child health book is about Lara, a young mom-to-be that is visited by Danis, a stranger. Danis teaches Lara the importance of eating healthy foods, avoiding alcohol, breastfeeding, keeping dad involved and bonding with your baby.

Kiss Me Deadly - Interlinking stories cover a variety of issues in our sexual health comic book – from respect and communication in relationships to pregnancy and sexually-transmitted infections – as well as exploring sexual health as a career or youth-led project and the concept of two-spirit people.

River Run - The story of a group of youth that learn the traditional use of tobacco while on a canoe trip. One of the youth, who smokes, gets her world opened up along the way.

Just a Story - Wendy doesn’t have any friends her age and feels overwhelmed at school. Her little brother is more social but he’s quick to lose his temper and get into fights. Something is clearly bothering them both. Good thing they’re open to getting help and breaking down the stigma of mental health.

An Invited Threat - is about a family’s realization that the food they eat and make available to their community is not good for them. It’s about making healthy decisions now, rather than waiting until it’s too late.

Healthy Aboriginal Network
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The First Nations Health Authority is the health and wellness partner of First Nations communities in BC, and the first province-wide health authority of its kind in Canada. Guided by the vision of embedding cultural safety and humility into health service delivery, FNHA works to reform the way health care is delivered to First Nations people living in BC through direct service provision, provincial partnership collaboration, and health systems innovation.

RESPECTING TOBACCO

The tobacco plant has had a sacred role in ceremony, ritual, and prayer for many BC First Nations for thousands of years. Let’s keep tobacco sacred.

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