

amō ōsapotawan

AMŌ'S Sapotawan

BOOK TWO



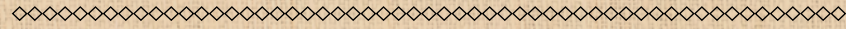
By William Dumas
Illustrated by Rhian Brynjolson





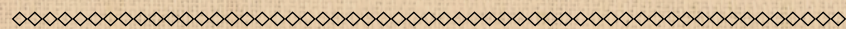


ithinisakahikan



The Six Seasons of the Asiniskaw Īthiniwak series tells the stories of the asiniskaw Īthiniwak (Rocky Cree) and their life on the land of what is now north-central Manitoba. These stories are set during the mid-1600s before direct contact with Europeans in this area. They seek to teach young people about the old ways. *Amō's Sapotawan* is set in nīpin.

Nīpin, or summer, translates to “gifts from the water” (nipi = water; in = to give) because this is the season of the raspberry rains followed by the blueberry rains. The moons for this season are paskahawī pīsīm (egg hatching moon) and paskowī pīsīm (moulting moon). Paskowī pīsīm happens in midsummer when all the birds lose their flying feathers. At this time, the birds are not hunted. They are raising their young. The asiniskaw Īthiniwak fish, gather berries and medicine, and make pottery and baskets during this time.



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BOOK TWO IN THE SIX SEASONS SERIES



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HIGHWATER
PRESS

Introduction

Sapotawana: Rites of Passage.

Generation after generation, the asiniskaw īthiniwak, the Rocky Cree, lived according to the cycle of the six seasons and thirteen moons. Each season posed unique challenges that tested the asiniskaw īthiniwak and required them to develop survival skills—physical, emotional, spiritual and mental.

One of the most important asiniskaw īthiniwak tools for survival is sapotawana: the rites of passage that acknowledge each person as they attain certain skill levels at particular stages of life. Sapotawana encourage people to discover their gifts, learn about their responsibilities, and find their life's purpose.

At each sapotawan, you are going through a metamorphosis, like many of our relatives the animals do. Think of a caterpillar turning into a butterfly, or a bird moulting so that its new wing feathers can grow in.

The first sapotawan occurs when a person enters this world. These rites of passage continue as you unfold through the different transitions of your life:

awasis, child; oskatis, young adult; kīhti aya, adult; and kisi amiya, an elder, the time of life when your work is done.

Sapotawana are there to guide each of us on our miskanaw, our path in life. Each sapotawan is acknowledged and celebrated by our minisiwin, our immediate family, as well as by our ototimīhītowin, our grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, and our wāhkotowin, our adopted relatives.

Although the understanding of these rites of passage has changed over time, the underlying concept is still the same: celebrating a person's accomplishments as they go through life. Today we might think of advancing to the next grade level as a sapotawan, or graduating from school, getting married, or starting your first job.

Sapotawana recognize that you are always learning throughout different times of your life, and that you have new things to offer the world as you gain these skills.