

Willow Flower walked on unsteady feet as she approached the museum. Because her hunched back made it difficult for her to see where she was going, she took each step carefully, moving her cane forward only a foot at a time. All of her ninety-eight years on this earth were written in the wrinkles that crisscrossed her face.



Willow Flower went on to explain that her great-grandmother spent months making the beads.

“She drilled tiny holes in each stone and rolled them on a rough rock until they were the shape and size she wanted. When she had a variety of colors, she began to practice beading designs.



In the old days, the women learned to bead by touch and taste alone. She beaded this bag without looking at a pattern or the beads. This was something a woman had to do before she could become an official beader. My great-grandmother was one of the last beaders to hold such an honor. This is the bag she used for her test.

