

Coast  
Salish  
Tales



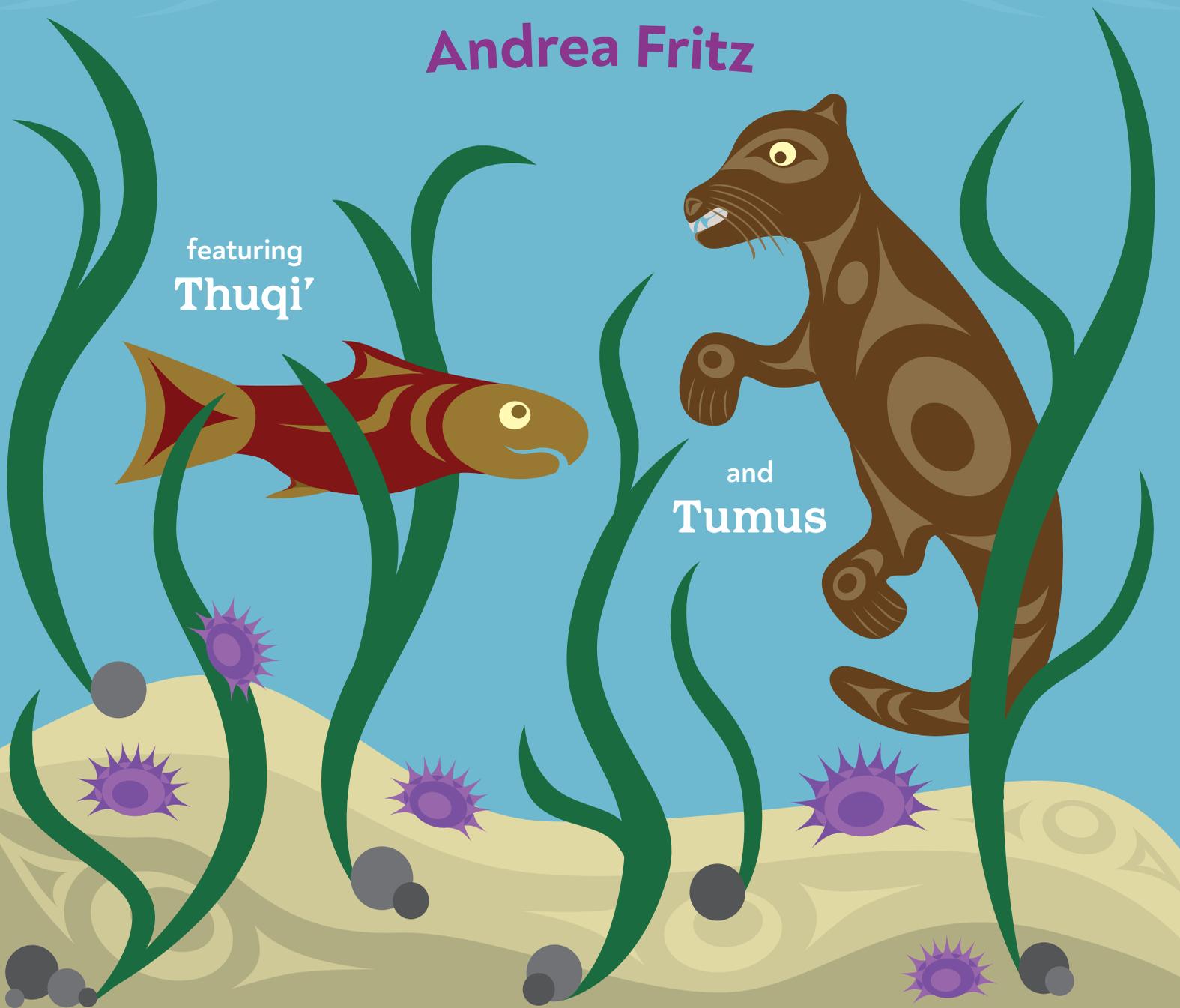
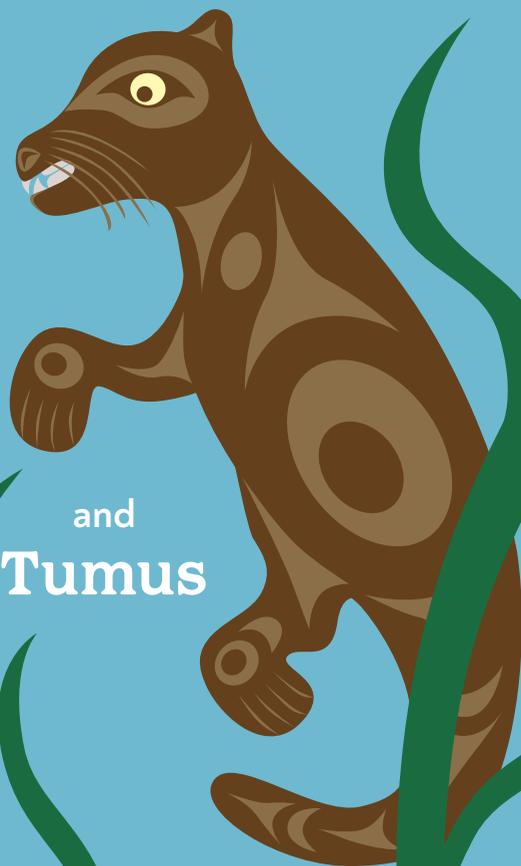
# Otter Doesn't Know

Andrea Fritz

featuring  
**Thuqi'**



and  
**Tumus**





# You don't need to have all the answers to be a helper.

**Thuqi' the sockeye salmon** knows it's time to spawn, but she is lost in the Salish Sea and doesn't know the way to Sta'lo', the river. When she asks Tumus the sea otter for help, he doesn't exactly know either, and he dismisses her questions. But when Tumus becomes lost in some weeds, Thuqi' shows him that it's okay not to know something—you can still find a way to help a friend in need.

In this original story set in Coast Salish Traditional Territory, author and artist Andrea Fritz uses Indigenous storytelling techniques and art to share the culture and language of the Hul'q'umi'num'-speaking Peoples.

**Andrea Fritz** is a Coast Salish artist and storyteller from the Lyackson First Nation of the Hul'q'umi'num'-speaking Peoples on the West Coast of Canada. She studied West Coast Native art with Victor Newman, a Kwakwaka'wakw master artist. Andrea strives to express her People's history and all our futures using her art and stories. She focuses on animals and places of the West Coast and our intricate relationships with them. Andrea works in the mediums of acrylic on canvas and wood, serigraph, vector art and multimedia. She has had numerous gallery shows of her work and participates in community-based art pieces. Andrea lives in Victoria, British Columbia.

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PICTURE BOOK • AGES 6–8  
Publication: September 12, 2023

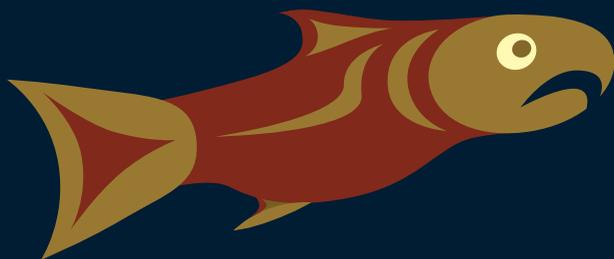
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# Otter Doesn't Know

**Author/Illustrator: Andrea Fritz**

**September 12, 2023**

In this picture book featuring Coast Salish art and storytelling techniques, a salmon and an otter learn to help each other even though they don't have all the answers.

## FORMAT

8.75 x 10.75"

32 pages

## Hardcover

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## KEY SELLING POINTS

- Thuq' the salmon's bravery and kindness help her find her way in this story about being comfortable not having all the answers.
- The text includes names and words in Hul'q'umi'num', an Indigenous language spoken on and around Vancouver Island, British Columbia. A glossary, pronunciation guide and introduction to Hul'q'umi'num' are included in the back matter.
- The illustrations follow the Coast Salish art tradition of combining four basic shapes in both positive and negative space.
- Author/illustrator Andrea Fritz has shown her work in numerous galleries and public art projects. She shares Coast Salish stories, both traditional ones learned orally and new ones created from modern experience, with school children throughout British Columbia.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR



PHOTO CREDIT: JORDAN GLOWICKI

**ANDREA FRITZ** is a Coast Salish artist and storyteller from the Lyackson First Nation of the Hul'q'umi'num'-speaking Peoples on the West Coast of Canada. She studied West Coast Native art with Victor Newman, a Kwakwaka'wakw master artist. Andrea strives to express her People's history and all our futures using her art and stories. She focuses on animals and places of the West Coast and our intricate relationships with them. Andrea works in the mediums of acrylic on canvas and wood, serigraph, vector art and multimedia. Andrea lives in Victoria, British Columbia.

## PROMOTIONAL PLANS INCLUDE

- Print and online advertising campaigns
- Promotion at national and regional school, library and trade conferences
- Extensive ARC distribution, including NetGalley
- Blog and social media promotion
- Outreach in Orca newsletters

## BISACS

JUV030090 JUVENILE FICTION / People & Places / Canada / Indigenous

JUV039140 JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / Self-Esteem & Self-Reliance

JUV002100 JUVENILE FICTION / Animals / Fish

## RIGHTS

Worldwide

## AGES

6–8



The Coast Salish Tales series shares the art, culture and language of the Hul'q'umi'num'-speaking Peoples. Using Traditional Oral Storytelling techniques, artist and storyteller Andrea Fritz connects young readers to the animals, land and waters of the Coast Salish Traditional Territory.

## PUBLICITY

For more information or a review copy, please contact Kennedy Cullen at [kennedy@orcabook.com](mailto:kennedy@orcabook.com)

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## Hul'q'umi'num' words in this book:

**Hul'q'umi'num'**  
*hull k uh-mee num*

the language of author  
Andrea Fritz's People

**smun'eem**  
*smun eem*

the children of our  
community

**huy'ewulh**  
*hi e-wuth*

goodbye

**sta'lo'**  
*stah low*

river

**huy ceep q'a'**  
*hi-sep ka*

thank you (to many)

**thuqi'**  
*thu-kee*

sockeye salmon

**huy ch q'a'**  
*hi-ch-ka*

thank you (to one)

**Tth'hwumqsun**  
*th hwumk-sun*

the shining point  
at the south end of  
Le'eyqsun Island, also  
known as Porlier Pass

**Le'eyqsun**  
*le eyk-sun*

an island in the Salish Sea,  
also known as Valdes Island,  
and the home of the Lyackson  
First Nation

**tumus**  
*tuh-mus*

sea otter

**Leeyqsun**  
*le-eyk-sun*

the place of many  
Douglas fir trees

**xihwu**  
*hee-hwuh*

purple sea urchin

**'** means you stop making noise for a fraction of a second—that's called a glottal stop. One at the end makes the word stop abruptly.

**th** is soft.

**q** is like *k* but farther back on the tongue.

**x** is like *h* but said farther back on the tongue.

**lh** is like *th* but at the back of the tongue, and it makes a bit of a hissing sound.

### Learning any language takes time and patience.

Please remember that proper pronunciation is not important for enjoying and learning from this story!

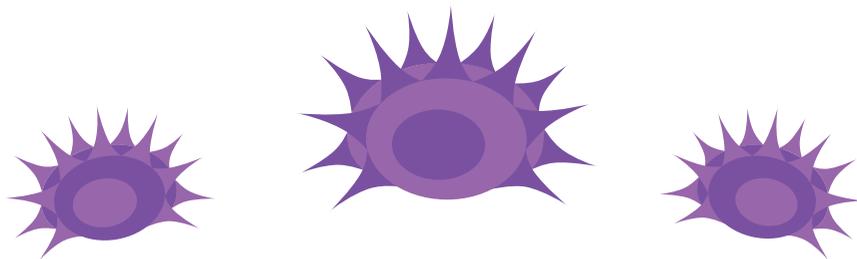
You can learn more about Hul'q'umi'num' at the end of this book.





# Otter Doesn't Know

Andrea Fritz



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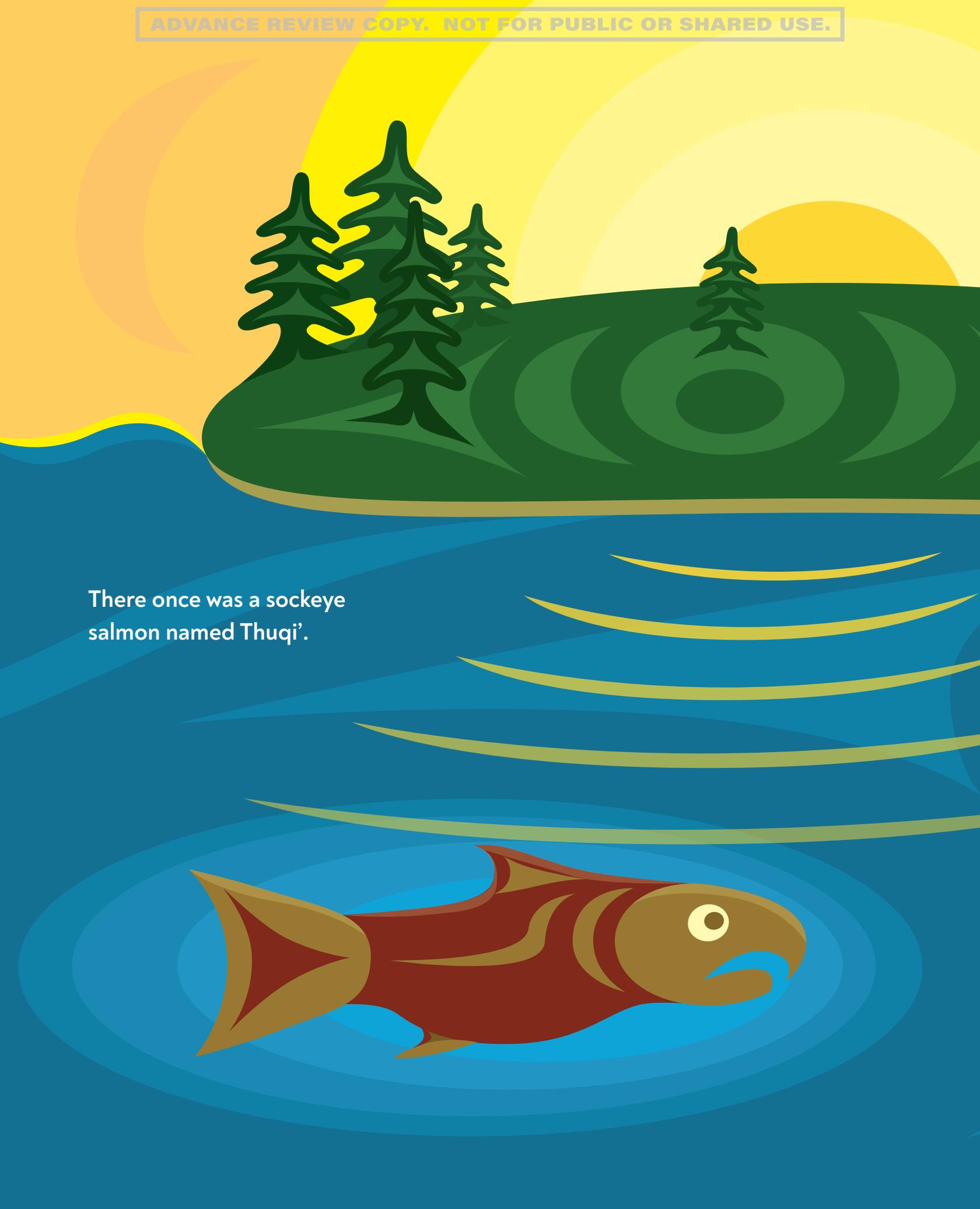


***My family has a long history*** in our Traditional Territory of the Salish Sea on the West Coast of British Columbia. Like many Indigenous people in North America, my family's history includes surviving the residential school system, the Sixties Scoop, the foster care system and child and family services. My family has a longer and more important history of self-sufficiency, balance with nature and showing love for those around us.

I have learned through studying Coast Salish culture and sitting with Elders and storytellers from our communities that storytelling is a basic building block of a healthy community. It was used to teach smun'eem the proper way to behave and what is important in life. Storytelling was one of the many parts of Coast Salish culture damaged by colonialism. In reading and sharing these stories with the smun'eem in your life, you are making an important step toward reconciliation by valuing Indigenous ways of knowing and teaching.

*Andrea Fritz*

I would like to acknowledge the First Peoples whose land my family and I call home. Huy ceep q'a' Lekwungen Siyeyu. Thank you to the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations for having us on your unceded territory. I hope that we honor you and make you happy.



There once was a sockeye  
salmon named Thuqí'.



She had grown into a big, healthy fish. She was big enough to know that it was time to take the long trip up Sta'lo', the river, to spawn, but Thuqi' had no one to swim with. She had been separated from her family and had forgotten the way to Sta'lo'.

As Thuqi' searched for Sta'lo', she came across Leeyqsun, the place of many Douglas fir trees. The long shadows cast by the trees scared her. She quickly swam away from them, down to Tth'hwumqsun, the Shining Point, where the gleaming water was bright and welcoming. From there she looked out into the deep, dark waters of the strait.





Thuqi' then remembered that Sta'lo' was somewhere beyond these waters. She felt too scared to swim through the dark water all alone. She had no idea what might be hidden in the murky deep.

Just then someone swam past Thuqi'. He had a xihwu balanced on his belly.

"Tumus!" Thuqi' called as she swam up to the furry creature. "I remember meeting you when I was very young. Do you know how to get to Sta'lo'? Will you take me there?"

"Num, num, num—can't you see that I am having my breakfast!?" Tumus grunted at her. He finished eating and swam off to go clean his fur.





Thuqi' still did not want to wander out into the darkness by herself, so she swam in the shallows close to shore. She swam there for a long time.





She swam for *so long* that she made it all the way around Le'eyqsun Island and ended up back at Tth'hwumqsun with the dark waters in front of her.

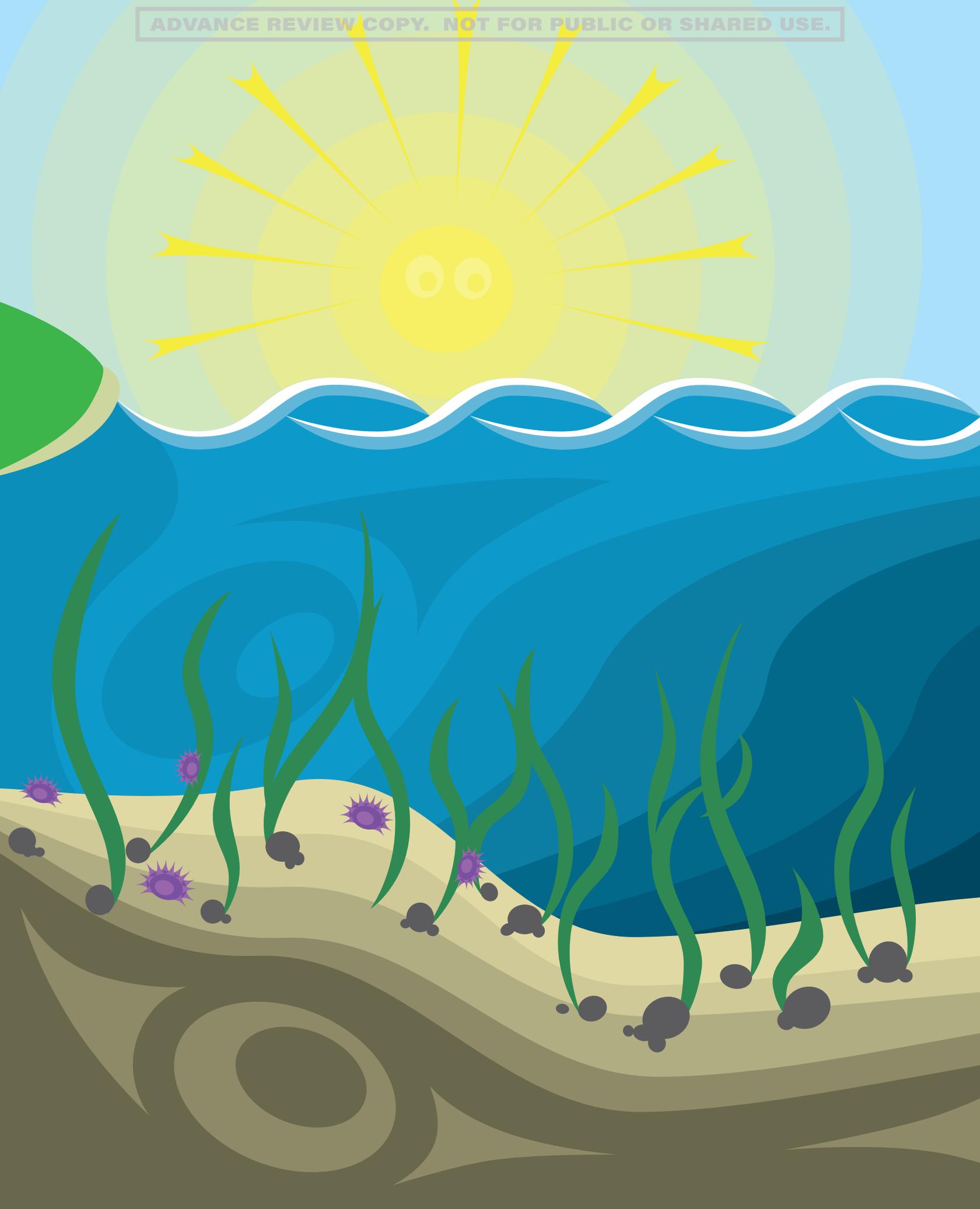
Someone else had returned as well. Tumus!

Thuqi' knew her family must be worried about her, so she asked Tumus again if he would help her find Sta'lo'.



“Why would you want to go there?”  
Tumus grumbled. “Can’t you see that  
all the xihwu you could ever want to  
eat are right here?” He swam off to  
play in the weeds. Tumus didn’t seem  
to know that salmon don’t eat xihwu.

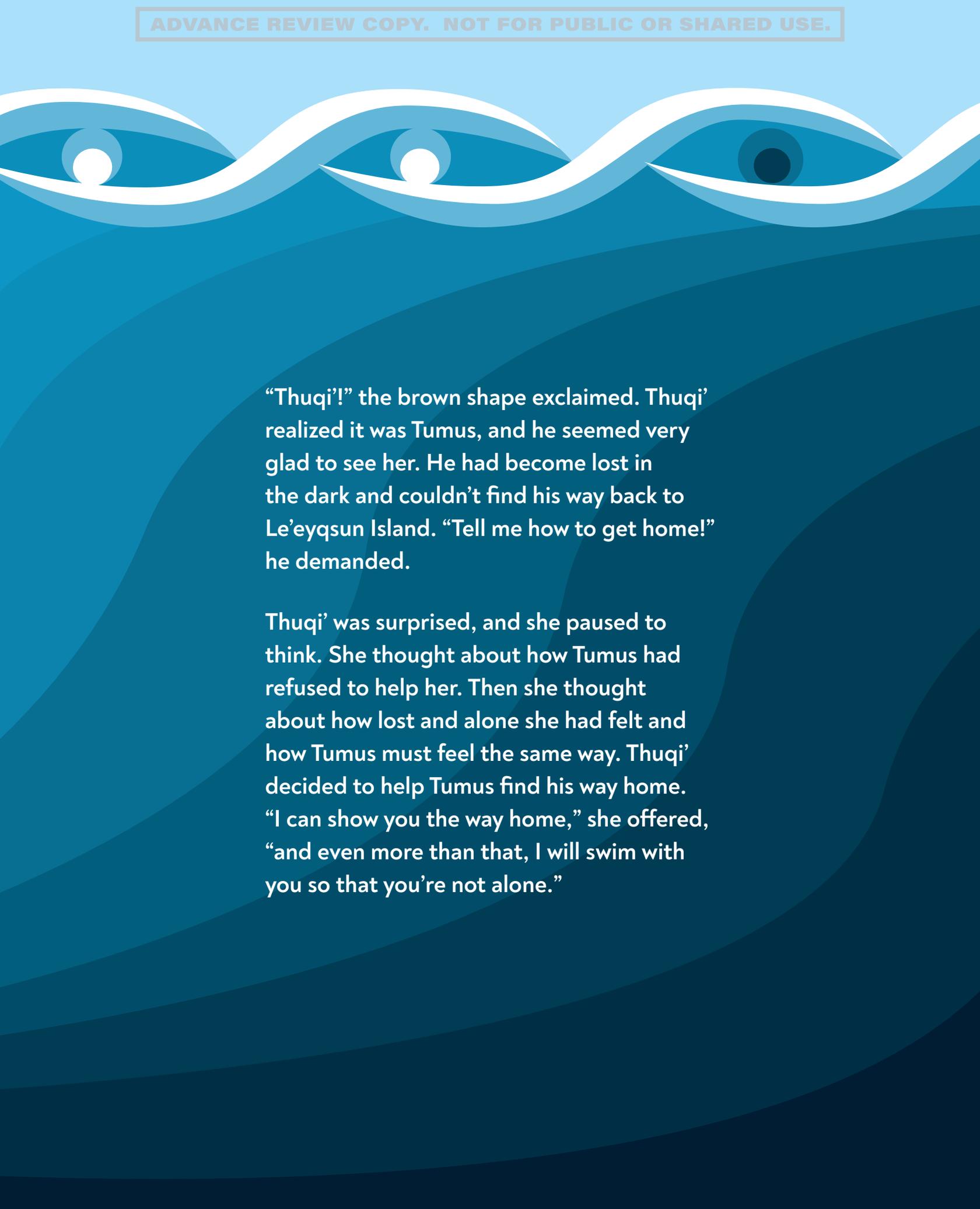




Thuqi' swam alone at Tth'hwumqsun and thought of all the salmon before her who had made the long trip up Sta'lo'. She thought of her family waiting for her and decided that she could be brave and face her fear.

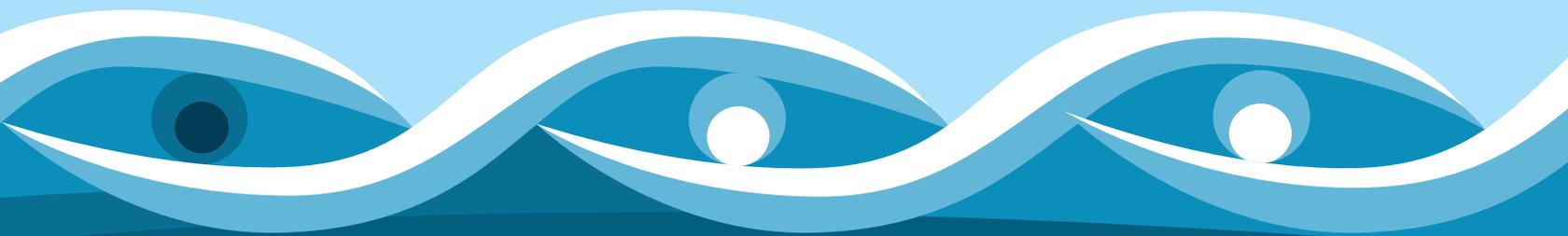
Thuqi' swam away from Le'eyqsun Island, slowly at first. She was surprised to find the dark waters calming, and she began to swim faster. As Thuqi' moved through some thick weeds in the deep, a shadow came up alongside her, and she jumped with fright.





“Thuqi!” the brown shape exclaimed. Thuqi’ realized it was Tumus, and he seemed very glad to see her. He had become lost in the dark and couldn’t find his way back to Le’eyqsun Island. “Tell me how to get home!” he demanded.

Thuqi’ was surprised, and she paused to think. She thought about how Tumus had refused to help her. Then she thought about how lost and alone she had felt and how Tumus must feel the same way. Thuqi’ decided to help Tumus find his way home. “I can show you the way home,” she offered, “and even more than that, I will swim with you so that you’re not alone.”





“This way,” Thuqi’ said as she turned around and swam back the way she had come. Thuqi’ was happy to be helping, even if it meant she would be farther from Sta’lo’.

As Tumus swam toward home with his new friend, he realized that she needed help too. He thought about how unkind and impatient he had been. Tumus stopped swimming.





“Thuqi’,” he said shyly, “I don’t know exactly how to get to Sta’lo’, but I remember your family saying that you must swim away from the setting sun. Huy ch q’a’ for being such a good friend. I hope you find your way.”

Tumus lifted his hands in thanks to his new friend. He could now see his island, so he swam off home by himself.



With the sunset at her tail, Thuqi' swam alone into the deep, calming waters of the strait. She was confident that no matter what happened, her kindness and her bravery would help her find her way.



“Huy’ewulh!” she called out into the darkness.

“Huy’ewulh,” came her new friend’s reply.

*Huy’ewulh* means “goodbye,” and that is the end of our story.  
Do you think Thuqi’ found her way to Sta’lo’?

# Learning Hul'q'umi'num'

The Hul'q'umi'num' language is spoken by many First Nations on the West Coast of British Columbia. It is also understandable by speakers of closely related languages in the region. Because of this, Hul'q'umi'num' was once considered the Big House language of Vancouver Island, used by professional speakers so that most people in attendance at ceremonies could understand what was said.

The language is guttural, precise and fun once you get the hang of a few sounds not used in English. My auntie Sally Norris used to tell me that “unless you grow up speaking the language, you will never be able to say some of the words properly, but that should never stop you from trying.” She went on to explain how part of the mouth gets shaped by the sounds you speak as a child. Sally would laugh and say, “Oh, it’s hopeless, but keep trying!” Her tough-love teaching method was given with such directness and kinship that we all loved coming to her lessons every week. Sally and our other language teacher, Veronica Kauwell,

challenged us to be the best speakers we could become. What we didn’t realize was that we were having cultural lessons at the same time as we learned the language.

Hul'q'umi'num' is an oral language and was not written down until after the colonization of the lands now called Canada. It is meant to be spoken, shared and experienced as part of a broader cultural journey—a journey that brings you closer to those who came before you, those who discovered what there was on our land and how to talk about it. We never want to lose our language, because knowing our language is a big part of knowing where our people came from. The journey of learning Hul'q'umi'num' has also become one of finding our smun'eem (the young people of our community) wherever they may be—on the streets, in our homes or lost in the bureaucratic system. We must find them and ensure that they have the chance to learn the language and be a part of the living culture of the Hul'q'umi'num'-speaking Coast Salish Peoples.

In reading this book and doing your best to learn the new-to-you sounds of the Hul'q'umi'num' language, you are starting your own journey toward understanding how knowing something's name connects you deeply with that thing. Thuqi' swims the oceans and rivers to help feed us, and she also shows us ways that we can be better in our own lives. We can face our fears, be kind to those around us and remember that having family

and friends to support us makes life easier. Knowing the names of Thuqi' and Tumus will help you meaningfully talk about them and the lessons they teach us with those in your life.

Remember what Auntie Sally says: You won't get everything right, but that's okay. What's important is connecting to the story and passing on what you learn to those around you. Huy ceep q'a'—thank you to each and every one of you.

## Online Resources

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**ta'ulthun sqwal Hul'q'umi'num' Language Academy:** [sqwal.hwulmuhwqun.ca](http://sqwal.hwulmuhwqun.ca)

**Hul'q'umi'num' FirstVoices:**

[firstvoices.com/explore/FV/sections/Data/Coast Salish/Halkomelem/HUL'Q'UMI'NUM'](http://firstvoices.com/explore/FV/sections/Data/Coast%20Salish/Halkomelem/HUL'Q'UMI'NUM')

**Hul'qumi'num Language and Culture in Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools:**

[sd68.bc.ca/programs/aboriginal-education/hulquminum-language-and-culture](http://sd68.bc.ca/programs/aboriginal-education/hulquminum-language-and-culture)

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Huy ch q'a' to my partner RA for always believing in me and supporting my efforts.  
And to my children for starting me on this journey of sharing  
my knowledge with young inquisitive minds.

—A.F.

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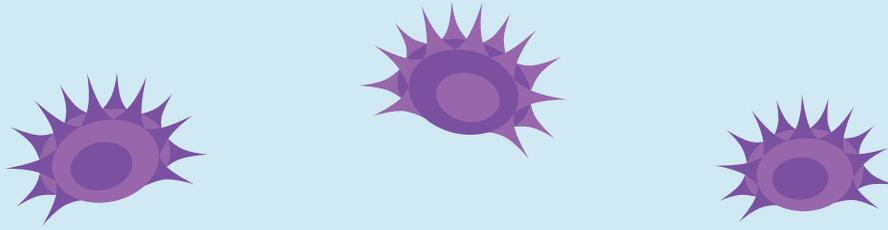
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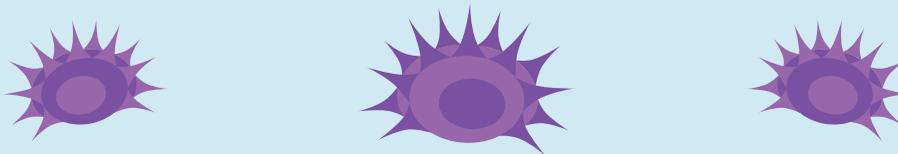
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Teaching stories have been told by the people of the Salish Sea for thousands of years. Elders told these stories to the young people of the village as they worked wool, carved canoes, harvested food and performed many other daily tasks. In this spirit of sharing, teaching and entertaining, Andrea has adapted and created the Coast Salish Tales stories for children in today's classrooms and homes. Each book in the series introduces an aspect of Coast Salish culture, including Hul'q'umi'num' language, traditional art style, plank houses and weaving.



## Coast Salish Tales series

*Otter Doesn't Know*

*Crow Helps a Friend*

*Raven Gets Tricked*

*Woolly Dog Warms His Family*