

THE COTTONWOOD SINGS

ALFREDA BEARTRACK-ALGEO

7th GENERATION

The COTTONWOOD SINGS

Written and illustrated by
Alfreda Beartrack-Algeo

7th Generation • 978-0-9669317-1-6 • \$14.95 US • \$18.95 CAN

ISBN 978-0-9669317-1-6

5 1 4 9 5

9 780966 931716



 FSC
www.fsc.org

MIX
Paper from
responsible sources
FSC® C000000

Your purchase supports our commitment to using paper stock from responsibly managed forests.



The background of the cover is a solid teal color. In the upper half, there are two stylized dragonflies with yellow and black patterns on their wings and bodies. In the lower half, there are several stylized leaves with yellow outlines and black veins. The title is centered in the middle of the cover.

The COTTONWOOD SINGS

Advanced Reading Copy



Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data available upon request.
Text and Illustrations © 2023 by Alfreda Beartrack-Algeo

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced by any means whatsoever,
except for brief quotations in reviews, without written permission from the publisher.

Printed in China



7th Generation
Book Publishing Company
PO Box 99, Summertown, TN 38483
888-260-8458
bookpubco.com
nativevoicesbooks.com


ISBN: 978-0-9669317-1-6

28 27 26 25 24 23 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9



We chose to print this title on paper certified by
The Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®), a global,
not-for-profit organization dedicated to the promotion
of responsible forest management worldwide.

Advanced Reading Copy



The COTTONWOOD SINGS


Written and illustrated by
Alfreda Beartrack~Algeo

7th Generation
Summertown, Tennessee

Advanced Reading Copy


In the beginning
was First Woman.





Her name was Hunku.
Hunku was immortal
and never aged.


All the animals and plants loved to hear her
sing to them. But Hunku was very lonely.

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a yellow dress with a fringed hem, sits on a grassy bank. She is looking down at her hands, which are clasped together. The background shows a blue sky with a single white cloud, distant hills, and a body of water with a fish visible. The woman's reflection is visible in the water.


Hunku would go to the riverbank
every day and cry herself to sleep.

A certain beaver lived in the river that Hunku visited daily.
Beaver was in love with Hunku.



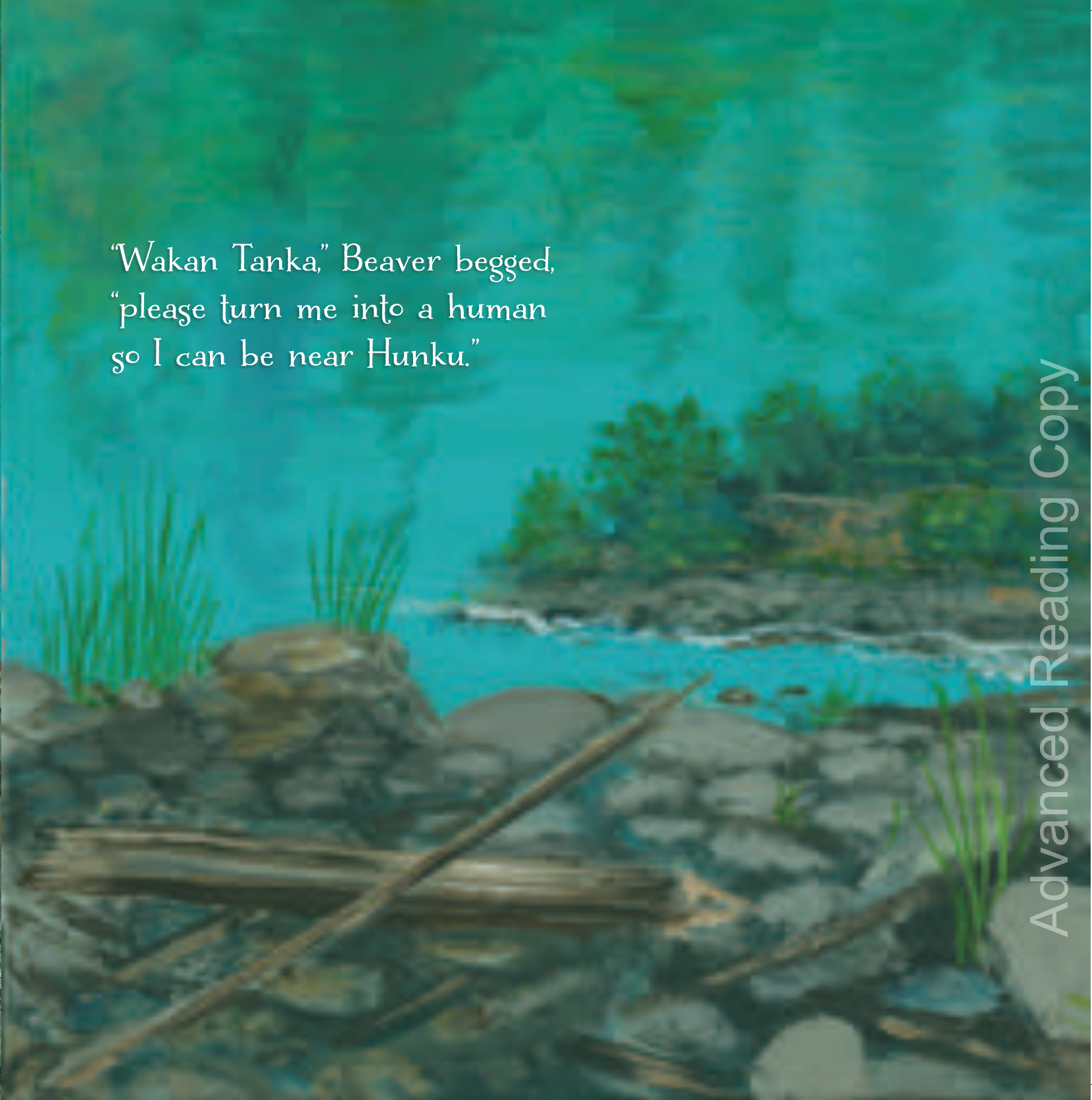


He marveled at the
way the sunlight
reflected off her
long black hair.



And he was awed how her eyes shone
like chokecherries on an August day.

Beaver pleaded with the Great Spirit
whose name was Wakan Tanka.

A painting of a rocky riverbank. In the foreground, there are dark, jagged rocks and a pile of dry, brown sticks. A single, long, thin stick lies diagonally across the rocks. In the middle ground, a small waterfall flows over rocks into a pool of water. The background shows a dense forest of green trees and a beaver dam made of sticks and branches. The overall color palette is dominated by greens, browns, and greys.

“Wakan Tanka,” Beaver begged,
“please turn me into a human
so I can be near Hunku.”

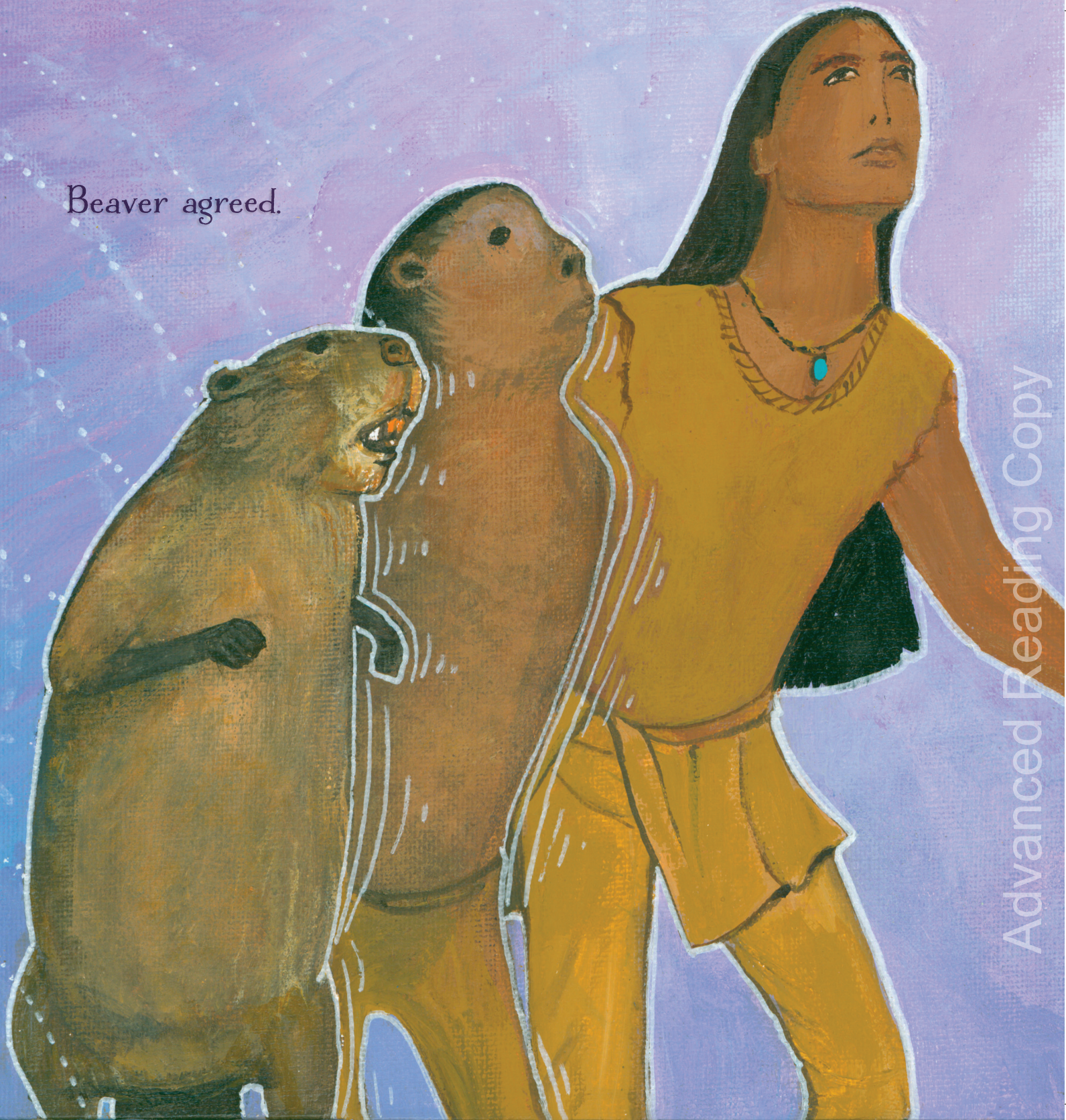
Wakan Tanka said, "Beaver,
I will grant you your wish
to become a human.


You will be First Man
and will be called Takahe.

But one day you must
return to the river and
go back to being
a beaver again."

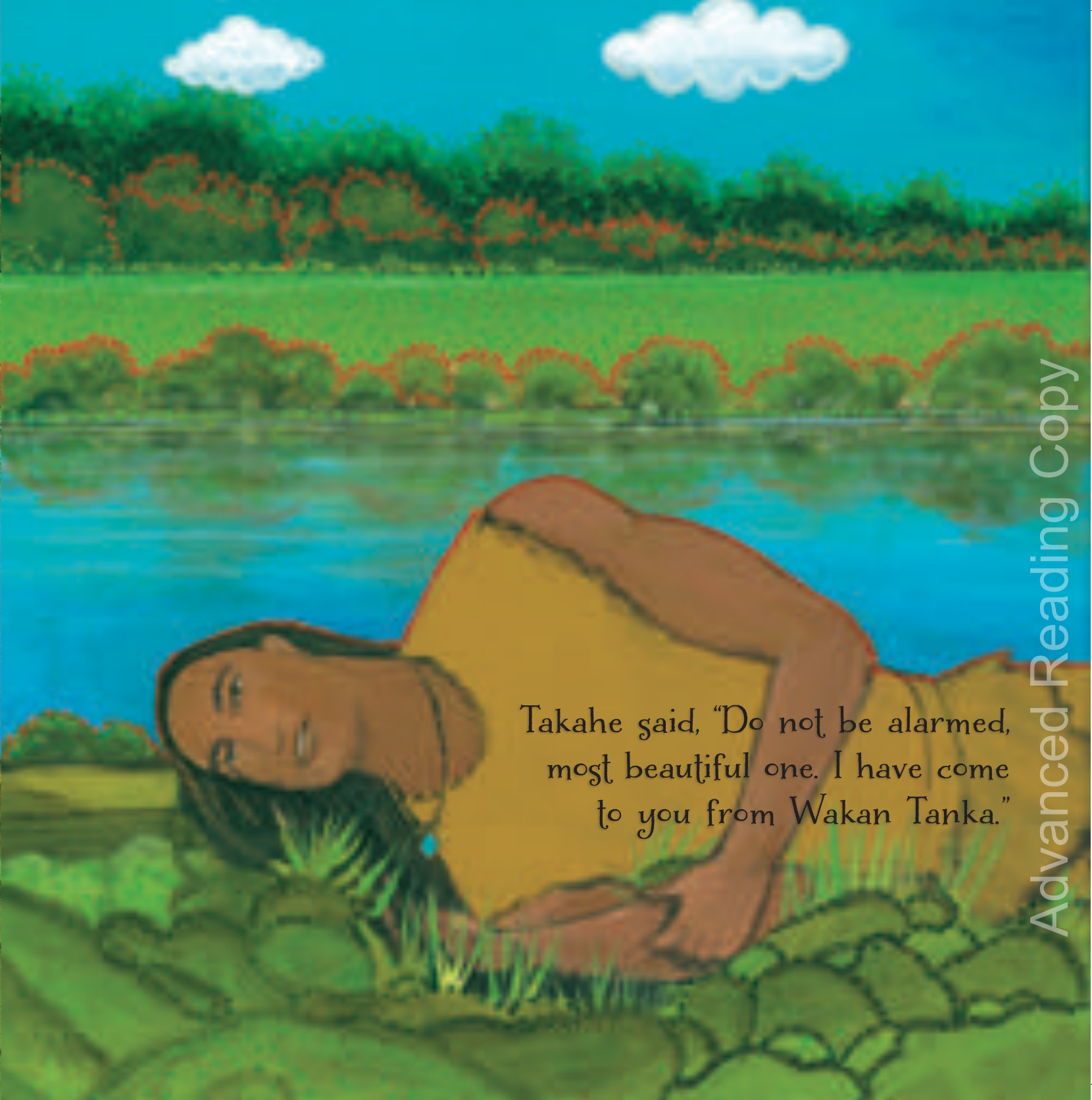


Beaver agreed.



A digital illustration of a woman with long, dark hair, wearing a yellow sleeveless top and a necklace with a blue pendant. She is shown in profile, looking out over a calm lake. The background features a line of trees with green foliage and some trees with reddish-orange leaves, under a clear blue sky. The overall style is soft and painterly.

Upon awakening,
Hunku was surprised
to find Takahe sleeping
by her side.



Takahe said, "Do not be alarmed,
most beautiful one. I have come
to you from Wakan Tanka."

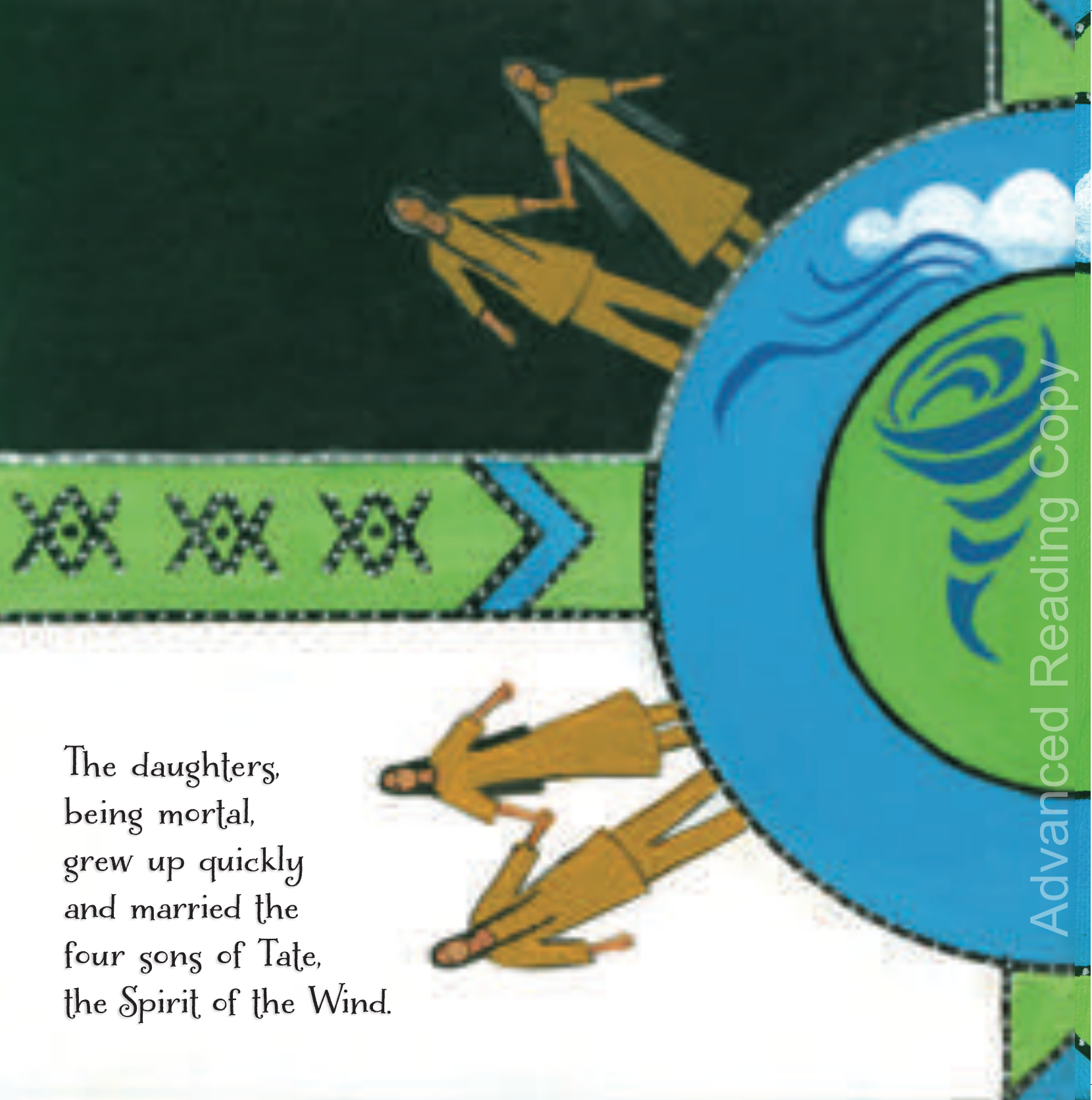
Hunku was pleased. She was no longer lonely
with Takahe by her side.

They enjoyed
their life
together.

Hunku gave
birth to
four beautiful
daughters.

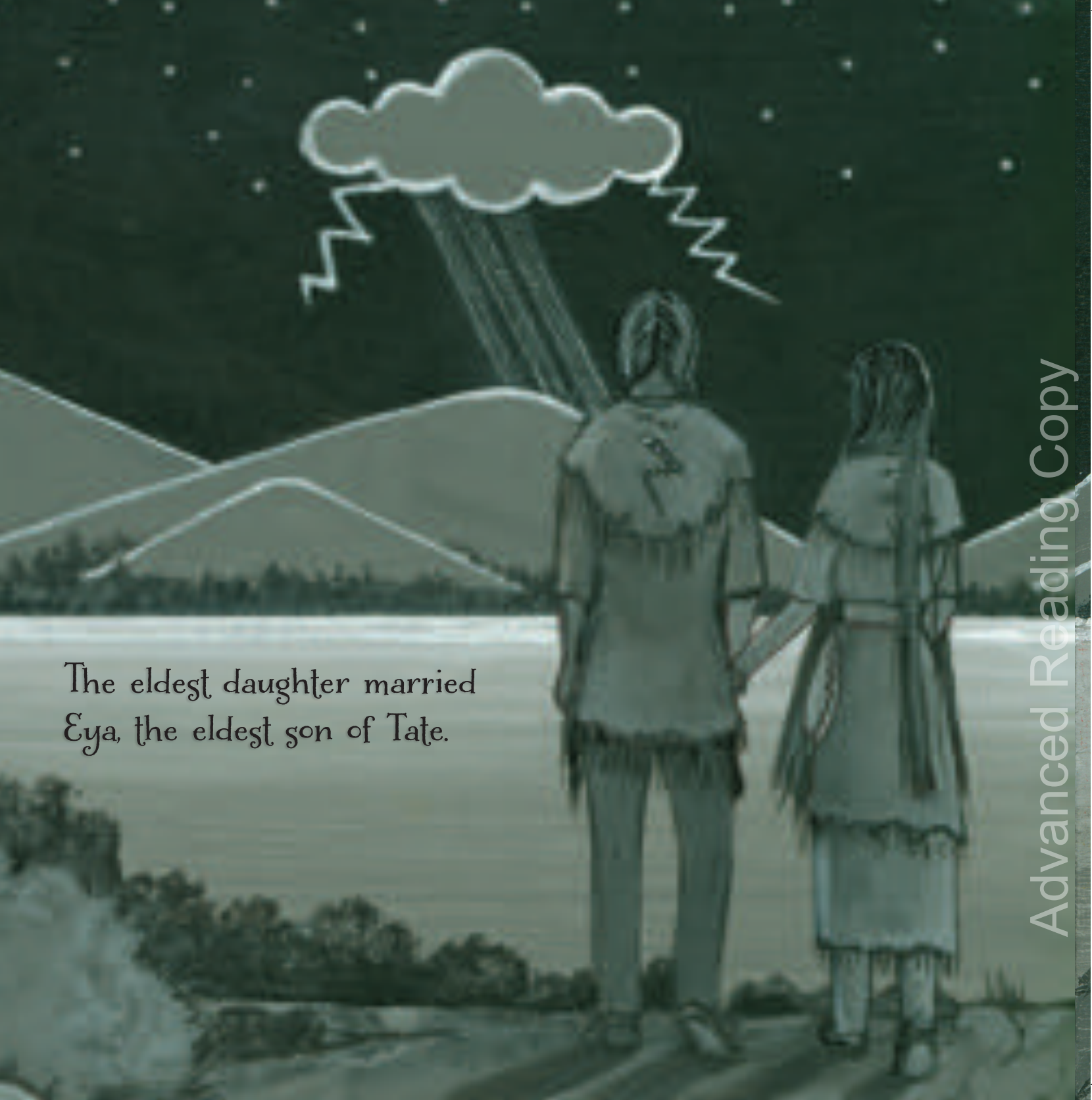


The daughters,
being mortal,
grew up quickly
and married the
four sons of Tate,
the Spirit of the Wind.





Each couple
journeyed to one
of the four directions
to form a sacred
medicine wheel.




The eldest daughter married
Eya, the eldest son of Tate.



They moved to the west.

The second eldest daughter
married Yata, the second
eldest son of Tate.





They moved
to the north.

Advanced Reading Copy

The third eldest daughter married
Yanpa, the third eldest son of Tate.



They moved to the east.



The youngest daughter married
Okaga, the youngest son of Tate.





They moved to the south.






Unlike their children, Hunku
and Takahe were immortal.

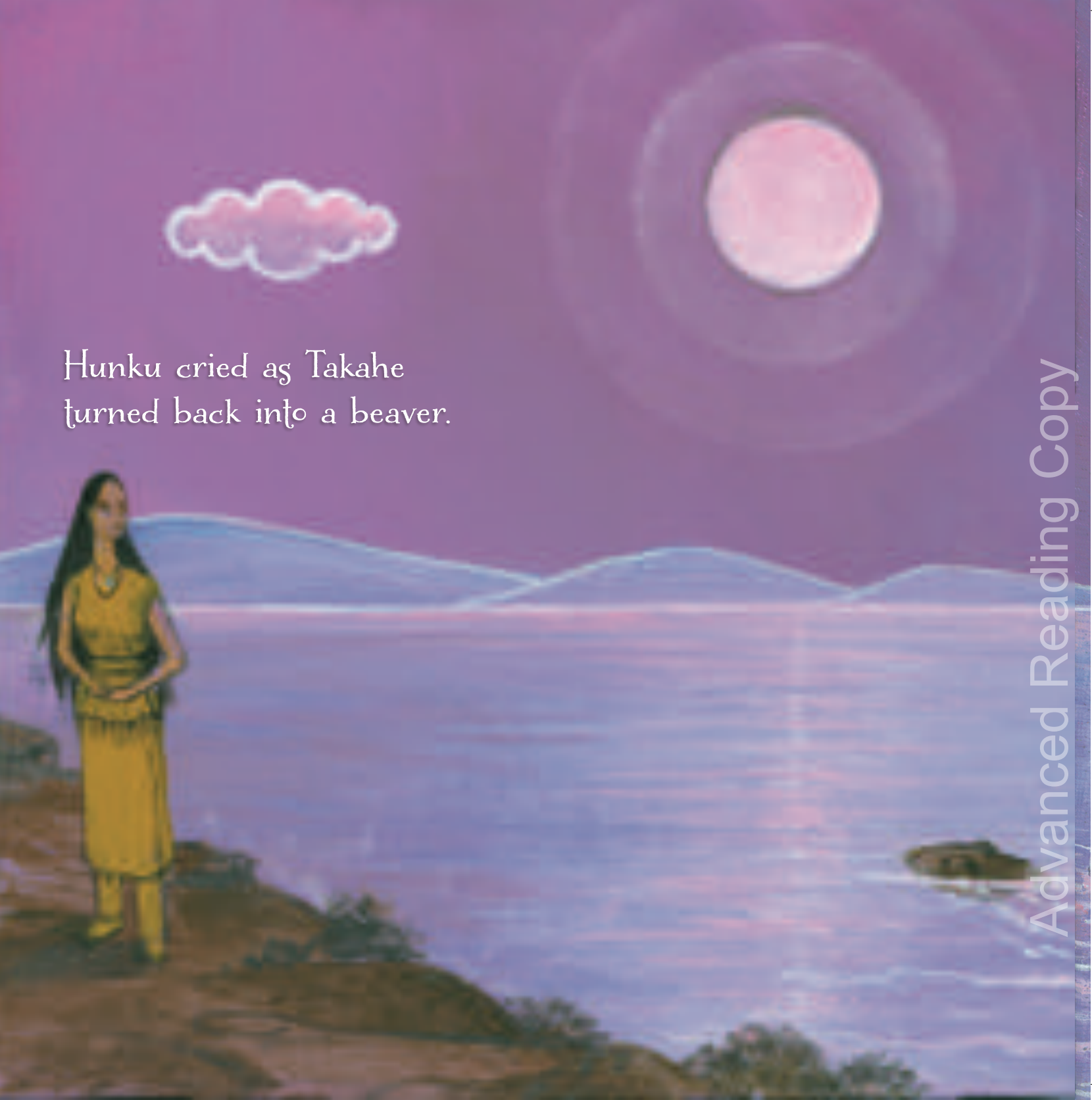
And so they outlived many
generations of their offspring.

Then, the day that Takahe was dreading finally arrived.

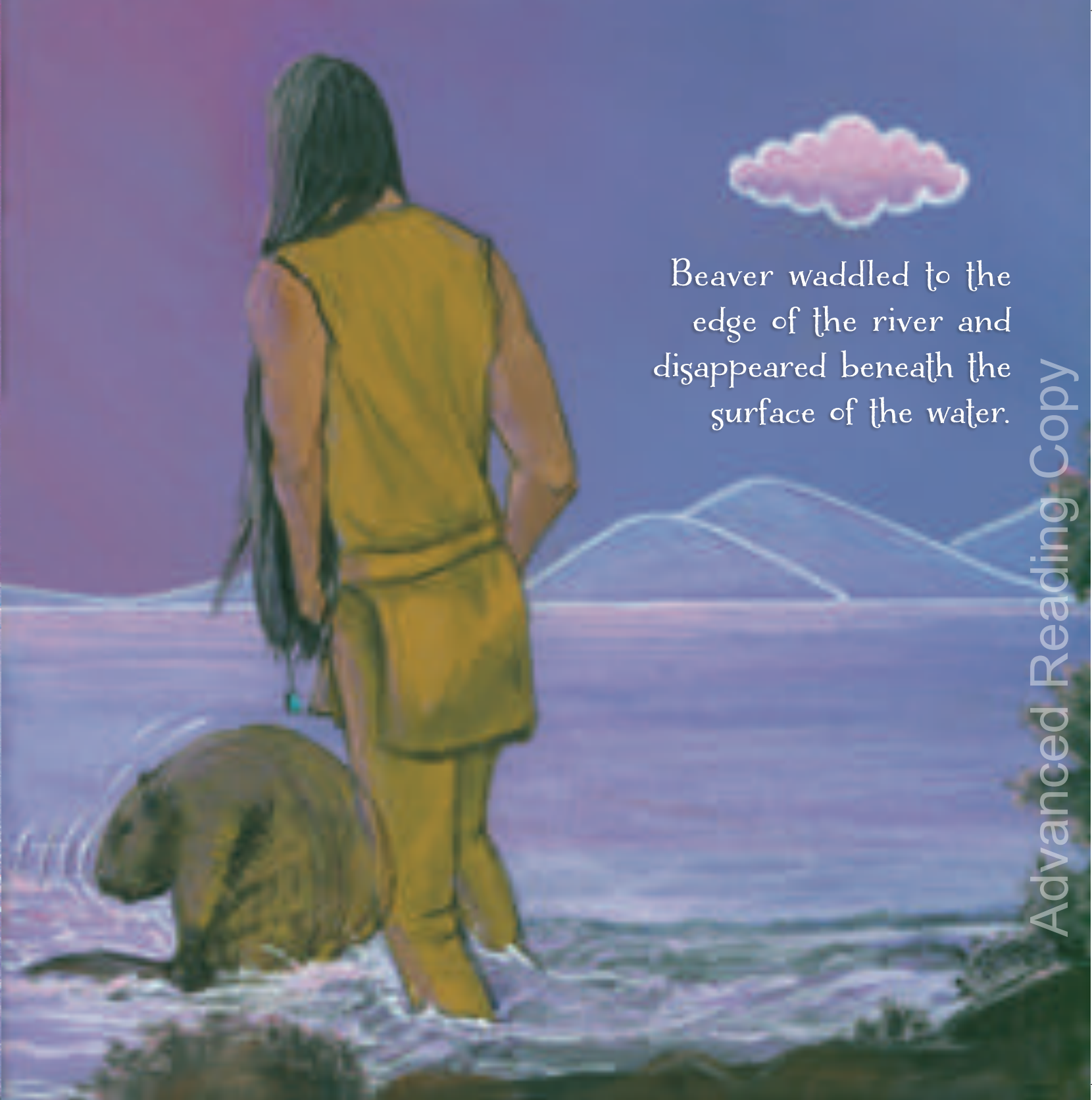




Wakan Tanka said, "Takahe, it is time
for you to return to the water
from whence you came."

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a yellow dress and a necklace, stands on a rocky shore looking out over a large body of water. In the background, there are blue mountains. The sky is a deep purple, featuring a large, bright sun with a glowing halo and a small, fluffy white cloud. The water reflects the colors of the sky and the sun.

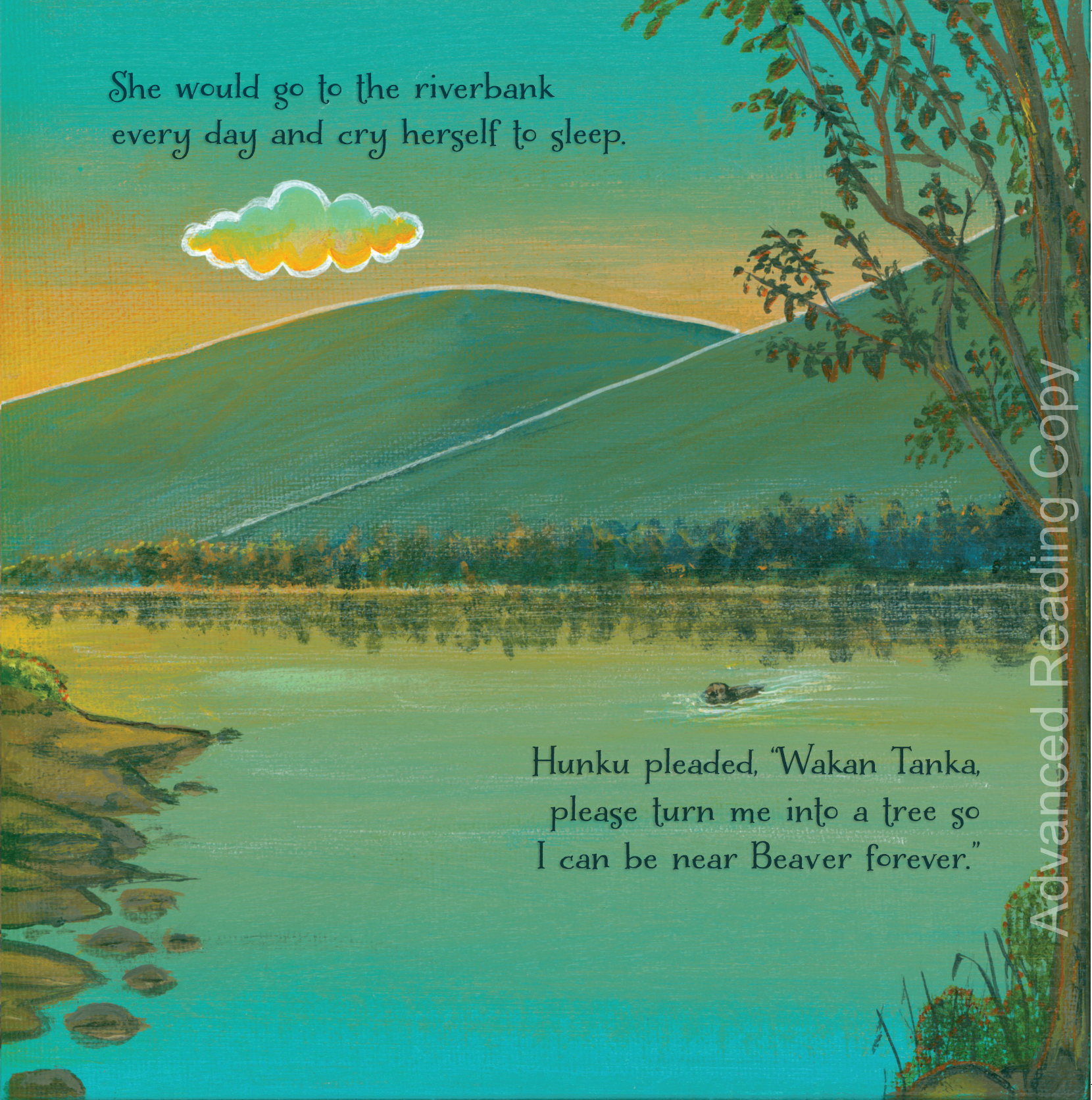
Hunku cried as Takahe
turned back into a beaver.



Beaver waddled to the
edge of the river and
disappeared beneath the
surface of the water.

Hunku was once again very lonely.



A painting of a river scene. In the foreground, a beaver is swimming in the water, leaving a small wake. The river is calm, reflecting the sky and the distant hills. On the left bank, there are some rocks and a small patch of greenery. On the right bank, a tree with green and brown leaves is partially visible. In the background, there are rolling hills under a sky with a single, fluffy white cloud. The overall color palette is soft and naturalistic.


She would go to the riverbank
every day and cry herself to sleep.

Hunku pleaded, "Wakan Tanka,
please turn me into a tree so
I can be near Beaver forever."

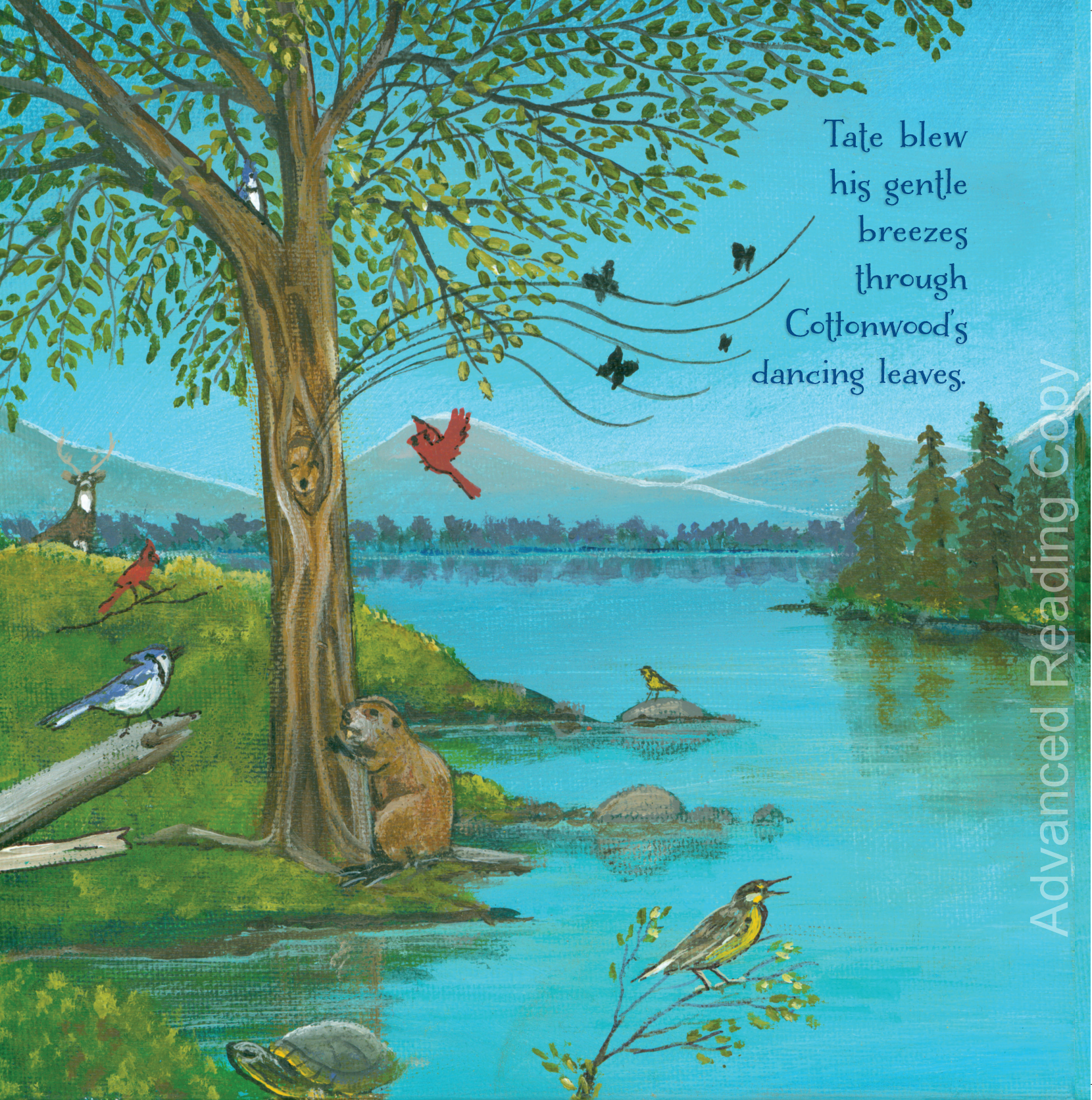


When Hunku awakened,

she had changed into
a cottonwood tree.

The background of the page is a light blue sky at the top and a green field at the bottom. Three dragonflies are depicted in flight against the sky. The field is covered with various green leaves of different shapes and sizes.

Her arms were strong limbs
that lifted high toward the heavens.
Her feet were strong roots that bore deep into the earth.



Tate blew
his gentle
breezes
through
Cottonwood's
dancing leaves.

Cottonwood would sing to all the animals, including a love song to a certain beaver that lived in the nearby river.

To this day, you will find cottonwood trees living near bodies of water and beavers living near cottonwood trees.





ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

Alfreda Beartrack-Algeo is an enrolled member of the Lower Brule Lakota Nation, Kul Wicaga Oyate, Lower Brule, South Dakota. Alfreda is a writer, artist, and educator. She and her spouse reside in Palisade, Colorado, where she manages her studio and gallery, Mato Nunpa LLC.