

THE WOLF PUP

BY ETUA SNOWBALL



ILLUSTRATED BY
EMMA CROSSLAND

THE
WOLF PUP

Living a life between two worlds has shown me strength.
Nature and its wildlife provide unforgettable moments
if you take a moment to breathe and explore your
surroundings. My experiences and life-altering friendships,
like the one I had with the wolf pup, will forever be
cherished. I am grateful to have lived such a life.

—Etua Snowball

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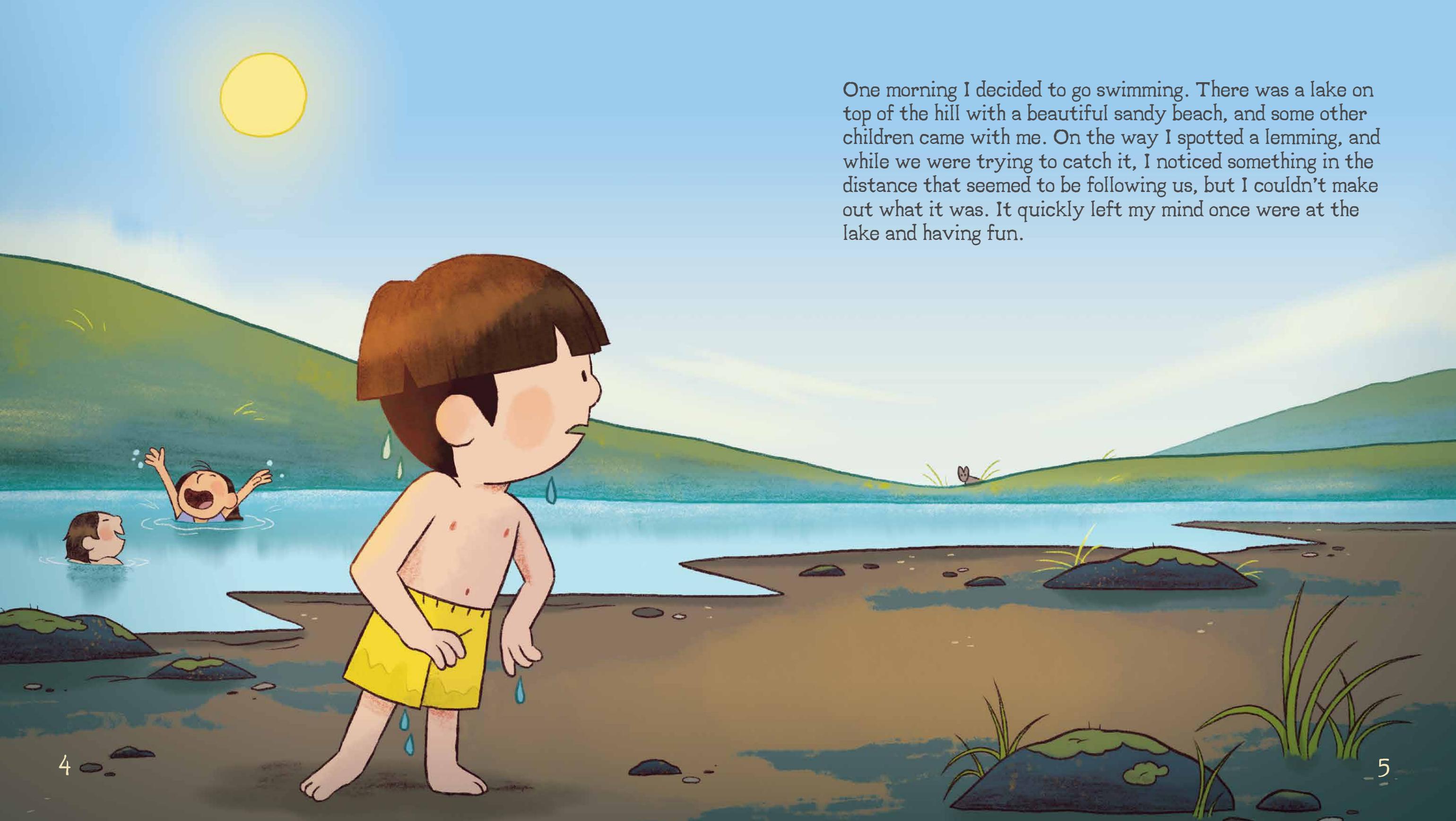


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When I was a young boy I spent my summers in Qurlutuq, at my family's fishing camp. I would walk the land, always searching for small animals. I would catch young birds that had not quite learned

how to fly. And I would catch butterflies with the most beautiful wing patterns for *Aippaq*, my grandmother. She would place them inside her Bible so she could see their beauty when she flipped the pages.





One morning I decided to go swimming. There was a lake on top of the hill with a beautiful sandy beach, and some other children came with me. On the way I spotted a lemming, and while we were trying to catch it, I noticed something in the distance that seemed to be following us, but I couldn't make out what it was. It quickly left my mind once we were at the lake and having fun.

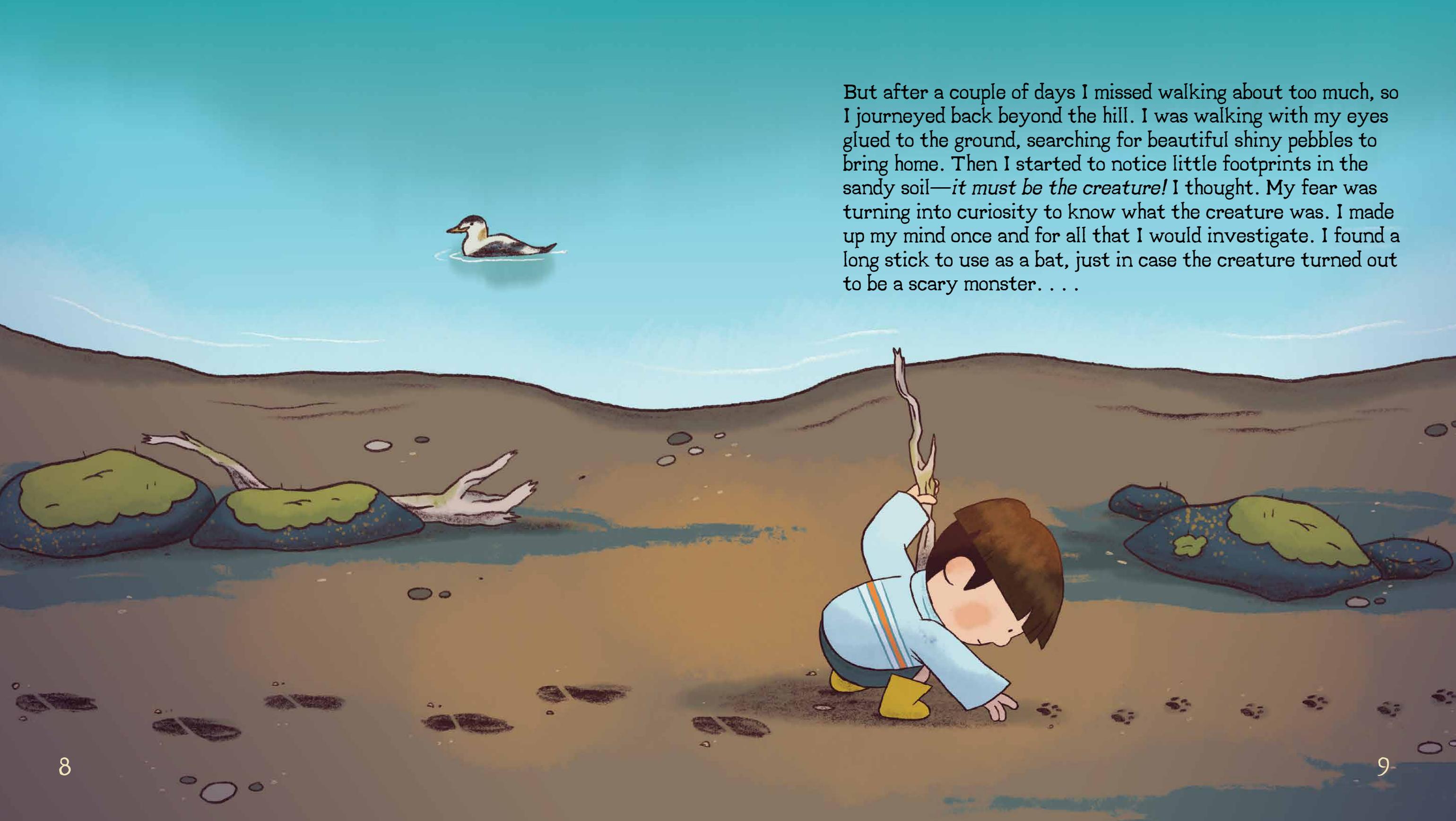
The next day I took a stroll to catch butterflies. The sun was shining brightly, but it was windy, so I looked for a sheltered place to find Aippaq a butterfly that had beautiful varieties of colour. I was so focused on my butterfly mission that when

I finally looked up, I was beyond the hill and didn't know where I was. I noticed movements in the tall grass in the distance, and started to feel uneasy. I spotted a small head with big ears, and the creature seemed to be watching me and making its way closer. . . .

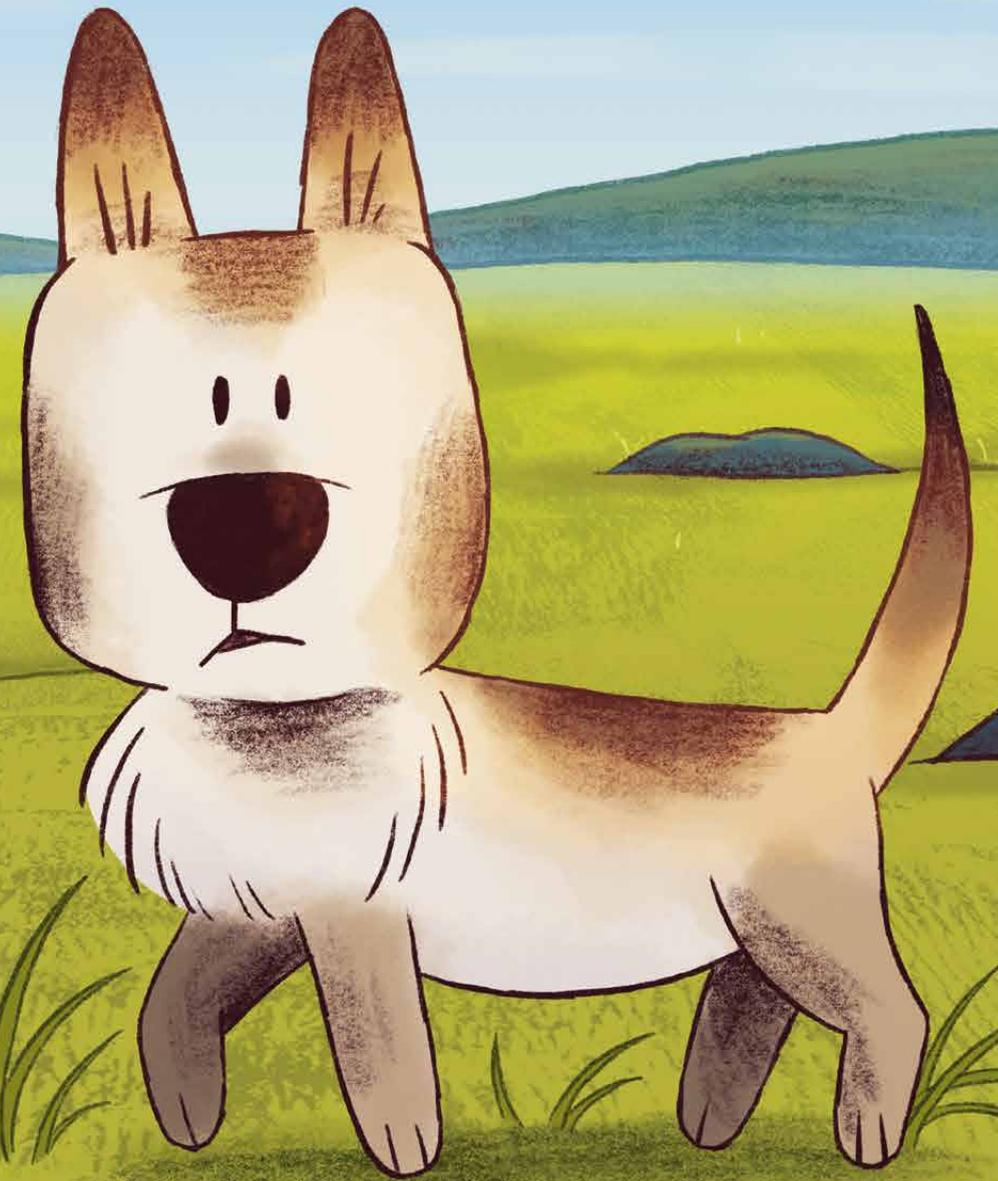
This frightened me, so I scurried back to the camp. I became nervous about the creature, and scared to go on strolls on the land.



But after a couple of days I missed walking about too much, so I journeyed back beyond the hill. I was walking with my eyes glued to the ground, searching for beautiful shiny pebbles to bring home. Then I started to notice little footprints in the sandy soil—*it must be the creature!* I thought. My fear was turning into curiosity to know what the creature was. I made up my mind once and for all that I would investigate. I found a long stick to use as a bat, just in case the creature turned out to be a scary monster. . . .



I was scanning the land when I spotted something looking right back at me. It looked like a beautiful puppy with different shades of brown fur and great big ears—it was a baby Arctic wolf! We stood still, studying each other. I had never seen a wolf pup before, so I started to slowly get closer, and he started getting closer to me, too. Then we suddenly heard a howl in the distance, which startled us both, and the pup galloped toward the sound. I didn't want to be found by the adult wolf that was making the call, so I made my way back to the camp quickly, excited to have learned what the mystery creature was. I decided that I would not tell anyone about the wolf pup. He looked healthy and wasn't bothering anyone, so I didn't want him or the rest of his pack to be hunted.



I woke up the next morning with hopes of seeing the baby wolf again. I went back beyond the hill, and there he was, watching me coming toward him. I stopped and we stared at each other again, not moving or making a noise. I decided to walk toward the lake to see if he would follow me, and

sure enough, he did! He kept his distance, but didn't take his eyes off me as we walked. But before long there was another howl, and the pup turned and ran, obeying his mother or father.





Every day I would journey back beyond the hill to see the baby Arctic wolf. We had become friends and would go on strolls together, and each time he would walk closer and closer to me. When I chased butterflies, he would stare at me with wonder and confusion. But it also made him curious, and he got so close to me that I could see him clearly in all his beauty. Slowly, I knelt with a hand on one knee, then stayed perfectly still so he would come closer. He sniffed closer and closer until his cold, little black nose touched my hand. I had touched a baby wolf! Now that he had my scent, he continued to study me, walking around me in circles. I tried to reach out to touch him, but he would jump away.

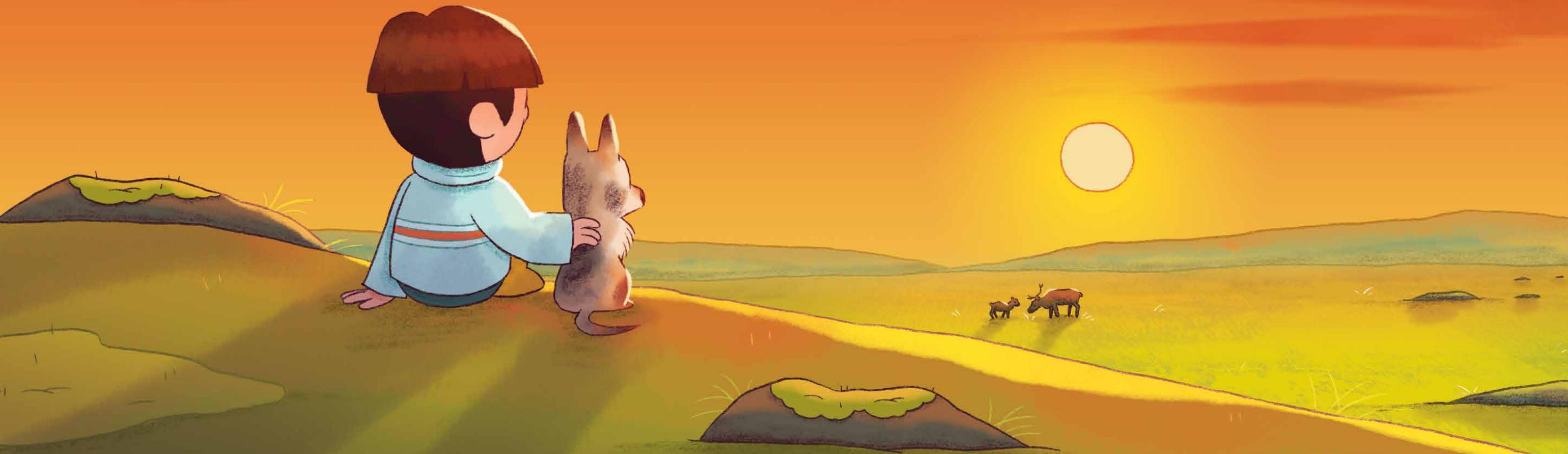


The pup would sometimes hunt lemmings, so I started to hunt them, too. Whenever I caught one I would give it to the wolf to eat. We would also chase ptarmigan together, though we could never catch one. Hunting together confirmed that our friendship was true.

I realized that I wasn't catching butterflies anymore, and thought that my grandmother must be wondering why, so I remembered to catch a colourful, beautiful butterfly on my way back to the camp for Aipaq.

One day in the late summer, the wolf and I sat and watched a caribou mother and calf from afar. The pup sat right next to me while he was fixated on the caribou. I thought this was my chance, and I slowly reached out to touch him. He didn't seem to mind, so I kept petting him, knowing that he trusted me.

That day I returned to the camp to see all the Inuit packing up and storing gear. I knew what this meant—it was the end of the summer, and we would soon be leaving camp.





The next day I rushed to go see the young wolf one last time before I left. But it wasn't the usual time I would meet him, and he wasn't at our usual spot beyond the hill. I sat on the hill to wait, hoping the pup would appear. I held back tears, worried I wouldn't be able to say goodbye to my friend. I scanned the land for the pup until the sun began to set. I howled into the night, hoping he would hear me, but I didn't hear a response. As it grew darker, the only thing I could do was go home. I couldn't sleep that night, thinking about my wolf pup friend.

In the morning we lugged gear to the airstrip and brought belongings to the shore to go on the boat. Before I knew it, we were on our way before I had a chance to go back beyond the hill. I thought about the pup as we left. I knew he had a family and was well taken care of, as I was.

I wondered if he was thinking of me, too.





Glossary of Inuktitut Words

The pronunciation guides in this book are intended to support non-Inuktitut speakers in their reading of Inuktitut words. These pronunciations are not exact representations of how the words are pronounced by Inuktitut speakers. For more resources on how to pronounce Inuktitut words, visit inhabitmedia.com/inuitnipingit.

Aippaq	AH-eeep-pahk	significant other or partner (Etua was named after his grandmother's late husband; in Inuit custom, this means he would refer to her as "Aippaq")
Inuit	ee-noo-EET	a group of Indigenous peoples from the Arctic regions of Alaska, Canada, and Greenland
Qurlutuq	koor-LOO-took	place name

Etua Snowball is an Inuk author who writes of his traditional and unexpected experiences within a modernizing world. He is an accomplished actor, sculptor, and artist, and an award-winning musician who writes with poetic lyrics. Etua grew up living in Kuujuaq, Nunavik with his family. Between the first ice break and the first snowfall, Etua spent his time in outfitting camps, where he met tourists from all over the world on a weekly basis while they experienced fishing and hunting on Inuit lands. Befriending and raising wild animals kept his life eventful and closer to nature as he grew into adulthood. In an effort to keep his culture alive in modern times, Etua is also the director of education services for Nunavik, with a McGill University honours degree, Prime Minister's Award for teaching excellence, and a Citizenship Award under his belt.

Emma Crossland is an illustrator and animator who grew up in libraries loving children's books. They attended Sheridan College, graduating with a bachelor's degree in animation. They are an amateur paranormal investigator and enjoy all things spooky.



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