

# THE RAVEN & THE SEA ANEMONE TULUKARUK TEQ-LLU

Yup'ik story told by  
**Annie Blue**

Translated by  
Eva Evelyn Yanez

Illustrated by  
Jumiah Johnston

Series Editor  
Jerry Lipka



This story is part of the series *Math in a Cultural Context: Lessons Learned from Yup'ik Eskimo Elders* ©



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ANEMONE  
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*The Raven and the Sea Anemone: Tulukaruk Teq-Illu* by Annie Blue, © 2016 University of Alaska Fairbanks, is part of the series *Math in a Cultural Context: Lessons Learned from Yup'ik Eskimo Elders*.  
Jerry Lipka: principal investigator and series editor.



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This project was sponsored, in part, by the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Bristol Bay Curriculum Project and the School of Education.

Text design by Keely Colby

# Acknowledgments

**A**nnie Blue first told this story to Evelyn Yanez in the mid-1950s when Evelyn was a small girl. Evelyn grew up listening to Annie Blue tell her stories. These stories had been passed down to Annie Blue from the village storyteller, Saveskar, who was also her aunt. No one person “owns” these stories, but instead they belong to Yup’ik culture as a whole. When she was older and teaching in the classroom, Evelyn would invite Annie Blue to tell her stories to the children. Evelyn later transcribed many of Annie Blue’s stories, including this one, when she was a bilingual coordinator.

A long time ago, Annie Blue told those of us who work with Math in a Cultural Context (MCC) that “the only reason I want these stories recorded is because I want the children to learn from these stories that I am going to tell you.” Without Annie Blue, this work would not be possible. She always agreed to help when asked. She was willing to drop everything and travel to Fairbanks or Anchorage when we asked for her assistance. Annie Blue told us that the respect that we showed her made her happy to share her knowledge with us. She was pleased and touched to know that her stories would continue into the future. Annie Blue realized that by sharing with us what she knew, books would be created (through the MCC project) and passed on to the next generation. She knew that the stories would be put to good use, even after she was gone.

Annie Blue had lots of children; however, many of them died. She said, “The reason I work with you is because you have taken the place of my deceased children in my heart. This is why I want to teach you my stories, so you can pass them onto the present and future generations.” She always told Evelyn Yanez, “These are my stories. I am passing my stories on to you, the way I learned them from the storytellers of the past.” The other people, who know stories, tell their stories the way they understood it from their own perspectives. We were all fortunate to work with Annie Blue and to benefit from her unselfish sharing.

Jerry Lipka (the principal investigator and editor of the MCC series) is instrumental in bringing us together to gather the elders' knowledge and put it to use in the classroom. His effort to combine math and traditional stories demonstrates the math inherent in Yup'ik activities, language, and crafts. The embedded mathematics is made explicit and is taught to teachers so that they can pass this knowledge on to their students. In this way, we return the gift given to us by the elders to their communities and schools. Without Jerry Lipka, this important work would not be possible.

We would like to thank all the behind-the-scenes people who have contributed their talents to the production of this book. We acknowledge bilingual aides, certified Alaska Native teachers, non-Native teachers, mathematicians, and educators for their support and efforts. Thank you to Jumiah Johnston for the beautiful illustrations, and to Keely Colby for the layout and editing. Thanks to Amelia Topkok for working to keep things going behind the scenes and for helping Evelyn establish the cultural significance of the story by comparing her own culture, Iñupiat, with Yup'ik culture. Thank you to Walkie Charlies for editing the Yup'ik, and to Sassa Peterson for helping with the transcription and translation of this story and other stories. A special thank you to all the elders who have told stories to us so that the next generation may learn them and so that the stories may live on.

# About the Contributors

## *Cungauyar, Annie Blue*

Annie Blue was born on February 21, 1916, in a place called Qissayaaq on the Togiak River in Alaska. Her mother, Aninautaaq, and father, Quriciq Yugg'aaq, had nine children. Annie Blue moved to Togiak around 1945, where she would spend the rest of her life. She married Cingarkaaq and had seven children; four survived birth. Of these four children, one is still living today. She received a Hail Award for a book of her stories, *Cungauyaraam Qulirai, Annie Blue's Stories*. In 2009, she was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree by the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

When asked how she became a storyteller, Annie Blue said she remembered listening to Saveskar, the storyteller in her village, who was also her aunt. Annie remembered that while Saveskar was telling her stories, other listeners would start to leave as time went by. Pretty soon, Annie found herself the only one left listening to Saveskar's stories. It was important to Annie to stay and listen to the stories because she respected Saveskar. Annie was afraid to offend Saveskar by leaving while she was still telling stories. Annie Blue was a respected storyteller, carrying on the oral tradition of Yup'ik storytelling. She passed away in 2013 at the age of 97.

*Dora Andrew-Ihrke* is a retired Yup'ik teacher and bilingual coordinator from Dillingham City Schools. She was recognized as the teacher of the year three times and nationally recognized as the recipient of the Milken Family Foundation National Education Award in 1990. She also was given the Alaska Federation of Natives Eileen McLean Educator Award in 2003. She contributes her considerable knowledge of Yup'ik culture and its connections to Western knowledge as a faculty member in the MCC program. She contributed some of the supplementary cultural information in this storybook.

*Jumiah Johnston* is an illustrator and computer graphic artist from San Francisco, California. He now lives in Fairbanks, Alaska, with his wife and two dogs. He enjoys working with Alaska Native elders and retelling their cultural stories through art and media, so the knowledge of the elders may be passed on to future generations. Jumiah describes working on the Raven story by saying, “On top of gaining an understanding of what ravens mean in Yup’ik culture, I sketched so many of them that I can now draw a raven left-handed in the dark.”

*Eva Evelyn Yanez* is a former Yup’ik teacher and state-recognized bilingual educator and has been involved in education for the past thirty years. She has extensive experience working with Yup’ik elders and collecting, recording, transcribing, and translating traditional Yup’ik stories. She contributes her knowledge of Yup’ik stories as a faculty member in the Math in a Cultural Context program. She has been involved in the development and production of stories in the MCC series for more than a decade.

## Notes

This is one version of the story of *The Raven and the Sea Anemone*, as told by Annie Blue from Bristol Bay. It is taken from the tellings of Annie Blue. There are other versions of this story, but when Annie Blue told it to Evelyn, she was passing down what she herself had heard. In the story the Raven is the center, and the story is told from his perspective. You will find many culturally based locative words and phrases in the story, such as describing the Sea Anemone as “the one down there.” These words help describe the position of objects in relation to the Raven. Throughout the story there are explanatory notes, indicated by boxes. These notes help readers understand the cultural significance of parts of the story. One of the boxes, toward the end of the story, should be of particular note to readers. When Evelyn was young and heard Annie Blue tell *The Raven and the Sea Anemone*, it always ended with the Raven flying away. Annie Blue told Evelyn that she was leaving some of the story out because it “wasn’t for [her] to hear.” She told Evelyn that it was okay to change a story and leave out the parts that young children should not hear or learn, so following this tradition, we provide two endings: one where the Raven flies away without the fatal encounter with the Sea Anemone, and one where the story is told as-is. Please choose the ending most appropriate for your audience.

# Introduction

by Evelyn Yanez

I never realized all that we could be teaching and learning from our stories. I knew what I learned from a story, but I never put it down in writing before. In this story, you can talk about each area. I have drawn my Togiak area, but you should draw your own area. Wherever you live, draw your own bay. If you do not have a bay where you live, then you can adopt Togiak Bay for your introduction.

To the right you can see Tongue Point (1), and if you go up, you will get to Togiak (2). There is Togiak. And there is Togiak River (3), and the mouth of the river. Over there is Twin Hills, and right across from Togiak is the Cannery (4). You go down the coast until you reach Anchor Point (5), and there is another bay hidden there. Down there is Hagemeister Island (6), and over there is High Island, Summit Island, Crooked Island, and our little Egg Island (7). There is that little Rock Island that some people call Hawaiian Island (8). There are no sea anemones near Togiak because of the mud. The only place you will find them is if you go across, to the other side of Anchor Point (9). That might be where the story took place, the story of *Tulukaruk Teqllu, The Raven and the Sea Anemone*.

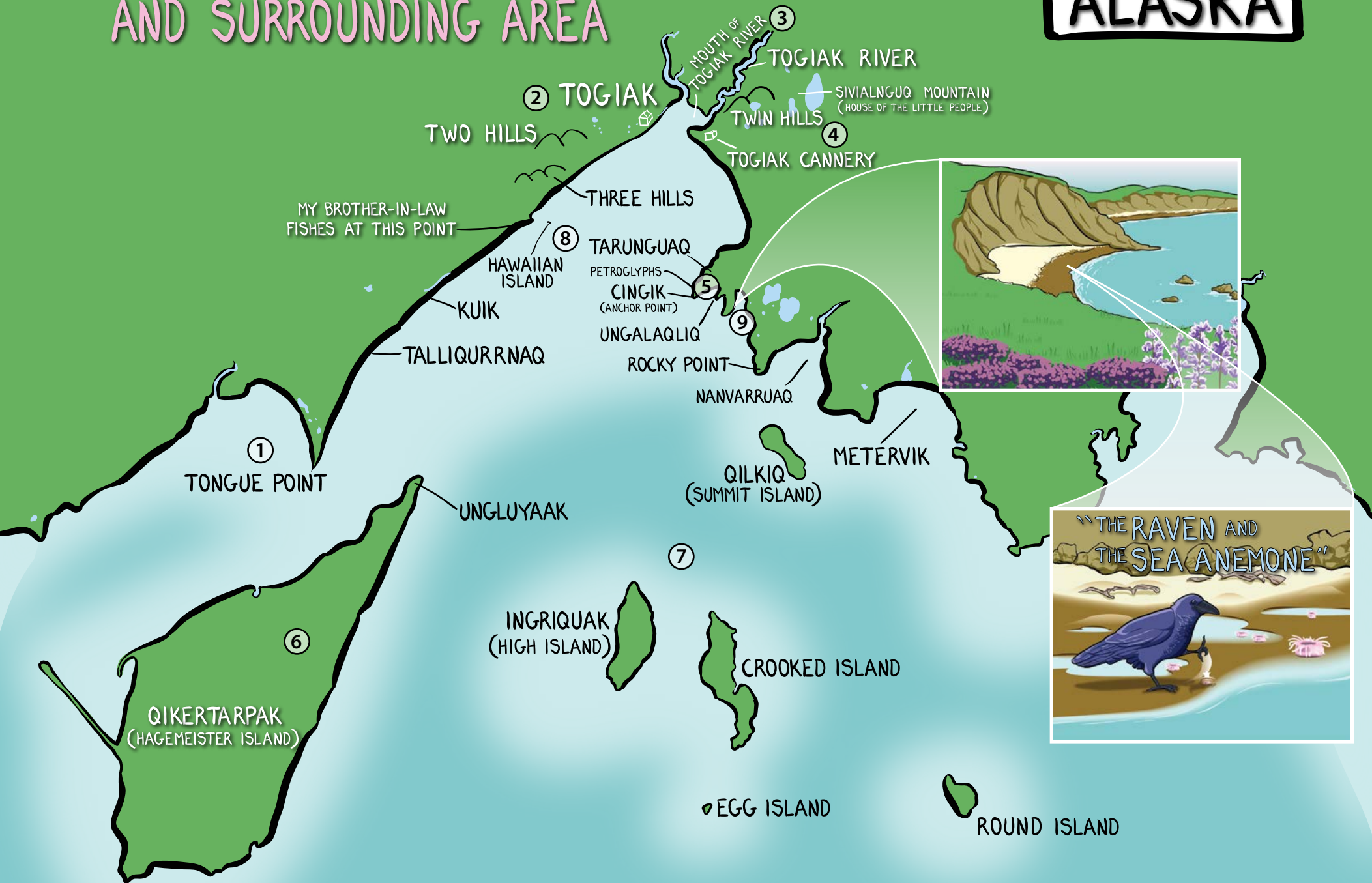
In *The Raven and the Sea Anemone*, I become the Raven and through his eyes I can see the cliffs above me, the beach, the mud, the rocks, the tide pools, and the sea anemones all around me. Even before the story is illustrated I can already picture it in my mind; it is like a movie. I can also see where the waterline is because the tide is way out. I know how deep the water will be when the tide comes in. In this story, you (the listener) start using the Raven's eyes to see what is around him, like the sea anemones, the rocks, the cliffs, etc.

In this story, the Raven becomes the center. Even though Annie Blue does not explicitly state the center, her words and actions establish a picture in which you become the Raven and the focal point of the story. She uses the Raven to teach us how to place ourselves in a location, or how to center ourselves. Not only does this occur as a perspective within the story, it becomes a way of measuring and making things for our daily lives. In this educational program, we use the ideas of center and halving as powerful elements to generate mathematical thinking. This story contains these powerful ideas. Our job is to make these ideas known and visible so that they are usable. That is why Yup'ik stories are very rich, because a storyteller puts everything in this context. When reading or listening to this story, see if you can find some of the lessons waiting to be discovered, explored, and shared. While reading, please keep in mind that it is not possible to do an exact translation from Yup'ik to English. A single word in Yup'ik can be the equivalent of an entire English sentence.



# EVELYN'S MAP OF BRISTOL BAY AND SURROUNDING AREA

ALASKA



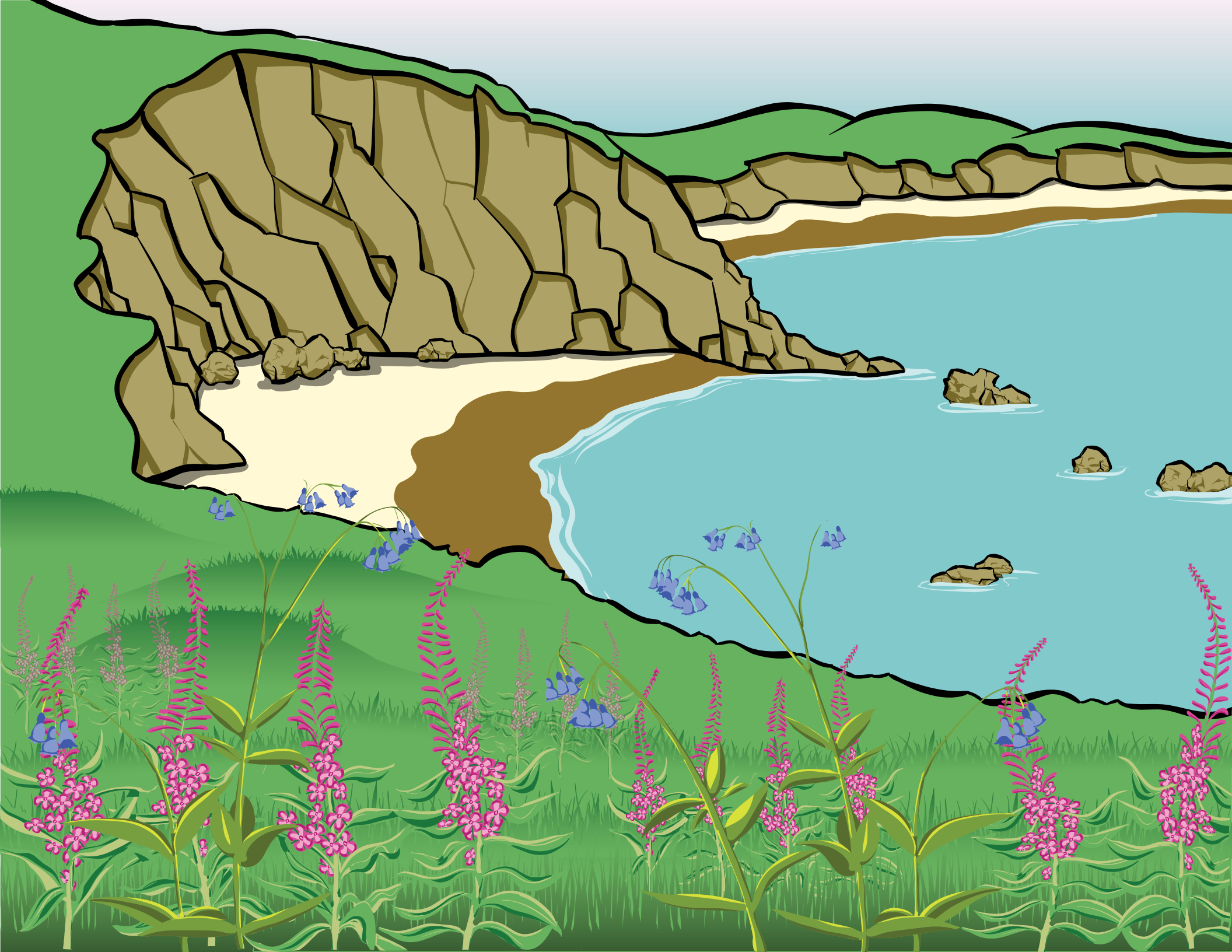
I am going to start a story that I first heard when I was a young girl.

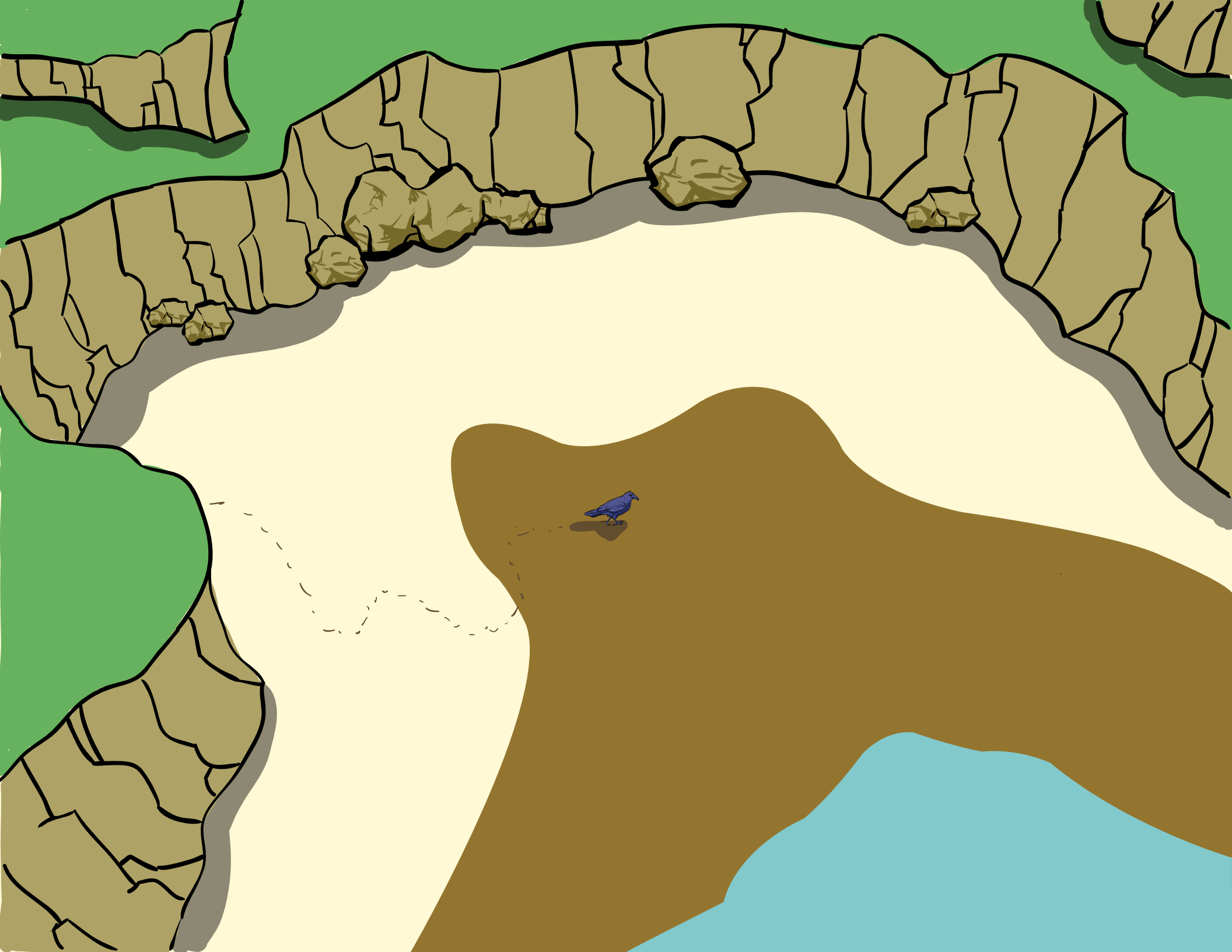
Nasaurlullraulua ak'a ciukacagarmek niitemmek  
quliirmek ayagniqatartua.

In one of those times, other storytellers might have told this story in another way, but this is how I heard the story.

Cam iliini quliirmek niiteqarraallemni waten niitellruaqa  
allauluku-llu tayima ilaita qanemciq'laryaaqellikiit.







This is a story about what our people call a raven. This story starts with the Raven eating food here and there on the beach along the edge of the bay. After he had eaten and because the tide was going out, he went down from one place to another on the mud.

Waten ayuqluni imna Tulukarugmek pilallrat senami unani imarpiin seniini neraniaralliniuq. Tua-i-ll' neriniarraarluni, enuumiin entengarcana-wa tua-i nutaan atrarluni senirtelliniluni.

As he was going from place to place, he came upon the plants that grow on the ocean floor: sea anemones. When he came upon the sea anemones he would kick them, and he walked from sea anemone to sea anemone, kicking them every time.

Senirnginanermini imkut unkut imarpiim naunrai  
Ternek pilallrit. Tamakut tekitaqamiki kitngigaqluki  
ayagturalliniuq.

Each time he kicked them, they would close up and disappear into the mud.

Tua-i kitengkarqateng-gguq quuqerrluteng  
tangrruunriqertaqluteng.











As he continued walking around in the mud, he came upon a *huge* Sea Anemone. The Raven kicked it with his foot, and the Sea Anemone almost grabbed it, but the Raven was able to jerk it back.

Tua-i ayagturalliniluni tamaaggun. Ayainanermini tua-i caqerluni Terpallermek tekitelliniria. Tekicami tua-i tauna teq kitngillinikii it'gaminek.

Since ravens do not learn their lessons right away, he kicked the Sea Anemone again. This time the one down there grabbed his kicking foot and enclosed it.

Tua-i-ll' kitngigyaaqekiini itgani quumkaryarpiaraki cayugartelliniluki. Tua-i-ll'-am anuciilameng-llu makut Tulukaruut cali-am naspaaluku. Cali-am kitngilliniluku. Kitngiani-llu tua-i itgain ingluit cayugartelliniluki quuqerrulluki tua-i.

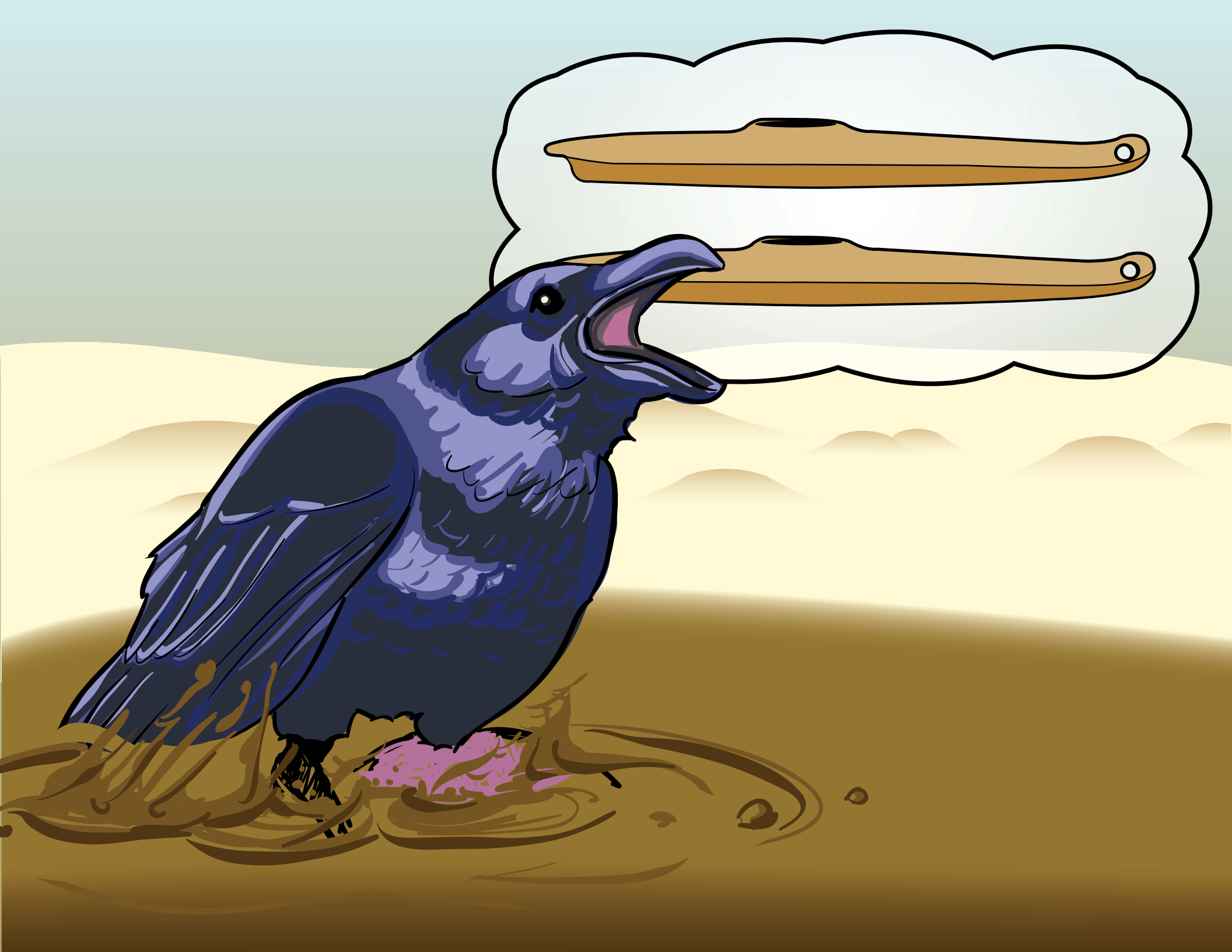
The Raven tried to get loose from the Sea Anemone by yanking his foot and going around in circles. In time, because of what he was doing, his whole body became matted with mud and he became black.

Angaqaaryaaqelliniuq uivvaaryaaqelliniuq. Kiituani-gguq marayamek qainga tamarmi tunguringuq. Yaquklugguq makuk culirqenglutek.

The one down there was holding on to him very tightly. As time passed, the pull got stronger and stronger, and the Raven's leg started to get weaker and weaker. With the Sea Anemone's grip becoming tighter on his leg, the Raven became sorrowful and wanted to cry.

Camum-llu-gguq taum tegumiaqestiin camaken nuqngiinangani iruni man'a arenqialan qamngiinaqataan. Atam iluteqngellinilria. Arenqialami-gg' tua-i tamatum mer'em uka-i agiircan. Ulellra cukaringqataan, iluteqem tekitellinikii.





As the tide was starting to speed up, emotional pain came upon him. At his saddest moment, a song came into his mind. He started singing his song while he was crying.

Tua-i-ll' iluteqnginanermini tua-i tauten yuarutmek  
imangelliniuq. Tua-llu-gguq tua-i qiagurluni aturaa Tii-eq  
Tii-eq pegesnga pegesnga.

*Sea Anemone release me, let me go, Rrai  
Sea Anemone release me, let me go, Rraa  
If you release me I will give you one of my  
uncle's two kayaks  
Release me, Release me*

*Tii-eq Tii-eq Pegesnga, Pegesnga, Rrai  
Tii-eq Tii-eq Pegesnga, Pegesnga, Rraa  
Angama, Angacarama Qayaan Aipaanek  
Nunuliramken  
Teq Pegesnga, Teq Pegesnga*

The voice answered from beneath, "I do not want those."  
The Raven burst out crying through his song.

Tua-llu-gguq atam camaken kiukii, "Tamakut  
qessakvallaarlukii." Qalrillalliniuq.

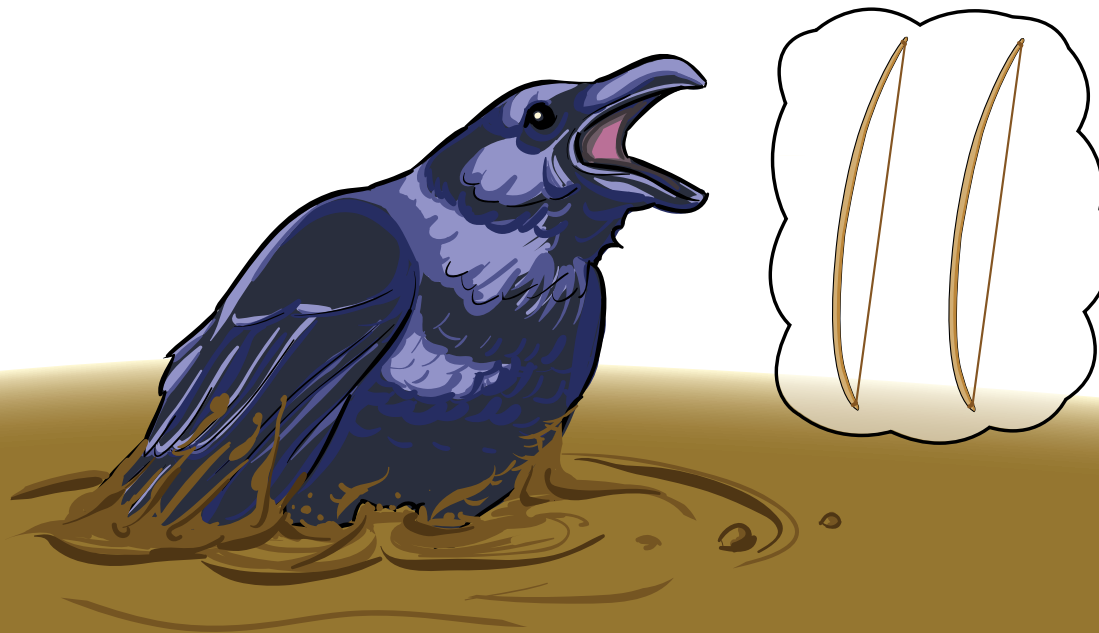
The Raven is crying by singing. In the past, because there was so much illness and death, people had to heal themselves and would do so through mournful song.

*Sea Anemone release me, let me go, Rrai  
Sea Anemone release me, let me go, Rrai  
If you release me I will give you one of my  
uncle's two bows  
Release me, Release me*

*Tii-eq Tii-eq Pegesnga, Pegesnga, Rrai  
Tii-eq Tii-eq Pegesnga, Pegesnga, Rrai  
Angama, Angacarama Urluvran  
Aipaanek Nunuliramken  
Teq Pegesnga, Teq Pegesnga*

The one from down below replied again just as the mud was almost to the lower part of the Raven's abdomen, "I do not want those."

*Tua-llu-gguq-am cali kiugaa camaken, akurani man'a  
tekitniarangenrakun, "Tamakut qessakvallaarlukii."*



Upon hearing his refusal, the Raven started crying through his song.

Tua-llu-gguq taum tua-i pia, ataam-am cali qessakelliniaki  
qalrillagurlulliniuq.

*Sea Anemone release me, let me go, Rrai  
Sea Anemone release me, let me go, Rrai  
If you release me I will give you one of my  
uncle's two quivers  
Release me, Release me*

*Tii-eq Tii-eq Pegesnga, Pegesnga, Rrai  
Tii-eq Tii-eq Pegesnga, Pegesnga, Rrai  
Angama, Angacarama Caniurtaan  
Aipaaneq Nunuliramken  
Teq Pegesnga, Teq Pegesnga*

The one down below him answered, "I do not want those." The Raven replied, "Yes, then what do you want?"

Camna qanertuq, "Tamakut qessakelaranka." "Iiyi cameгна piyugcit?"







*Sea Anemone release me, let me go, Rrai  
Sea Anemone release me, let me go, Rraa  
If you release me I will give you all of my  
uncle's riches  
Release me, Release me*

*Tii-eq Tii-eq Pegesnga, Pegesnga, Rrai  
Tii-eq Tii-eq Pegesnga, Pegesnga, Rraa  
Angama, Angacarama Tukuutainek  
Nunuliramken  
Teq Pegesnga, Teq Pegesnga*

“I do not want those,” the Sea Anemone replied.

“Tamakut qessakvallaarluki.”

The Raven's waist was now going under the mud [because he was sinking], while the tide was now on the borderline [the division between the rising tide and the mud]. The Raven was feeling very distressed now because death was near. He started contemplating on what to do, and then a thought came to his mind.

*Aren uatek ukuk marayamun pulangiinartuk uum.  
Man'a-w' cali meq maani tua-i engelkaarangaartellria  
tua-i arenqialami tua-i waniwa tuquarkaurcami,  
umyuangcarluni atam umyuangartellria.*

The Raven, being a trickster, knows that the items he offers cannot be used by the Sea Anemone, because they will not fit. They would fit the Raven because he is built like a human, with arms and legs. He does things like humans do.

*Sea Anemone release me, let me go, Rrai  
Sea Anemone release me, let me go, Rrai  
If you release me I will give you one of my  
uncle's two wives, the plumper one!  
Release me, Release me*

*Tii-eq Tii-eq Pegesnga, Pegesnga, Rrai  
Tii-eq Tii-eq Pegesnga, Pegesnga, Rrai  
Angama, Angacarama Nulirran  
Aipaaneq nunuliramken uqinranek  
Teq Pegesnga, Teq Pegesnga*

And then the one beneath replied by saying, “Are you truly saying that?” The Raven responded, “Yes, I am truthful. If you release me, I will truly reward you with one of my uncle’s wives. The one who is plumper will be your wife.”

Tua-llu-gguq camna, “Tua-i-qaa ilmuuguten?” “Yaa tua-i ilmuugua. Ilmuulua wani-wa Angama, Angapiama nakmiin Nulirran aipaaneq uqurilriamek nunuliramken nulirkarpenek pegesnga.”



“Yes,” the one beneath him replied by saying, “I am going to release you if you are truthful. What will you do?” The Raven answered, “Stay where you are and wait a while.” “Yes, I will wait,” replied the one down there.

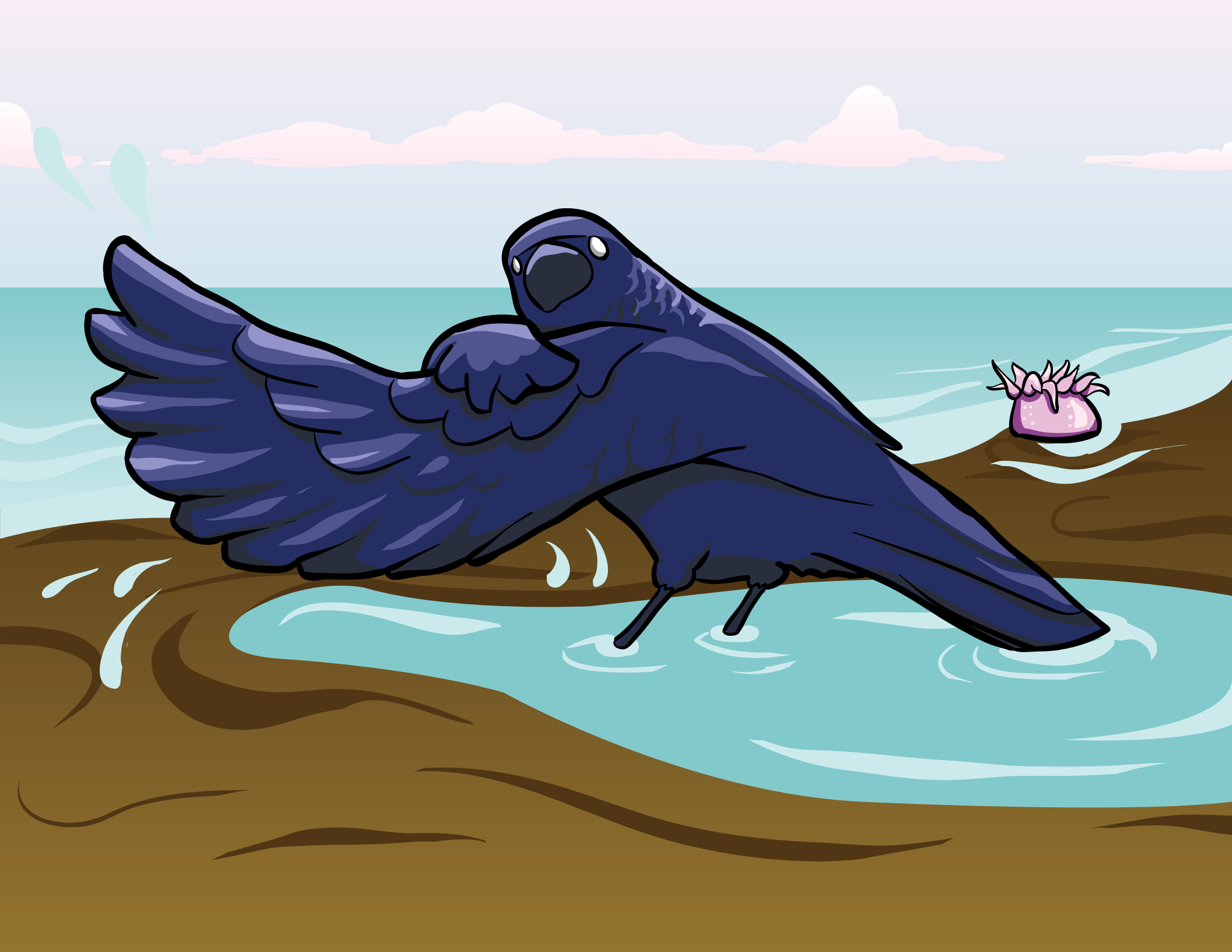
“Yaa” Ayumian tauna atam camna qanertuq, “Tua-i waniwa pegteqataramken, tua-i ilumuuluten qanquvet. Qaillun piqatarcit? Tua-llu-gguq taum pia, taum-wa tua-i Tulukarugtaan pia, “Tua-i uitaqangerpet utaalgirciquten.” “Aa-ang utaalgirciqua.”

Then the Sea Anemone finally started to loosen his grip. *Slowly, slowly*, the Raven pulled out his leg. His poor body was so muddy.

Tua-llu-gguq piqerluni atam, Ter’ una imna qacngaliyartulria camna. Amuurluku, tua-i amuurluku. Qairlua-wa tua-i marayikacaarluni tua-i Tulukaruum taum.



A plump woman is not lazy. She is thought of as someone that cooks and is a good provider. A skinny woman is perceived as lazy; she is the opposite of a plump woman.



When he finally climbed out from below he said, “Wait for me. I’ll be back. It will take time because it is far, but I will be back and I will tell you what to do when I return.”

Tua-llu tua-i atam tagngami tuaken pia, nugngami,  
“Kitaki tua-i utaqaurqia imkuciqamken. Waniwa  
piyaarngaitellilrianga-llu tayima aqvakumku yaaqsiggalria-  
llu. Utaqaurniararpenga tua-i. Tekiskuma taugaam  
ayqucirturciqamken. Tekiskumken.”

“Yes,” the Sea Anemone responded. As the Raven slowly walked away from that area, he went up towards the land to wash his body in a puddle. The Raven flew away.

“Aa-ang” Ayumian tua-i an’uraami mecaqcagmun piavet  
qaini erurraarluku. Tengluni ayagluni.

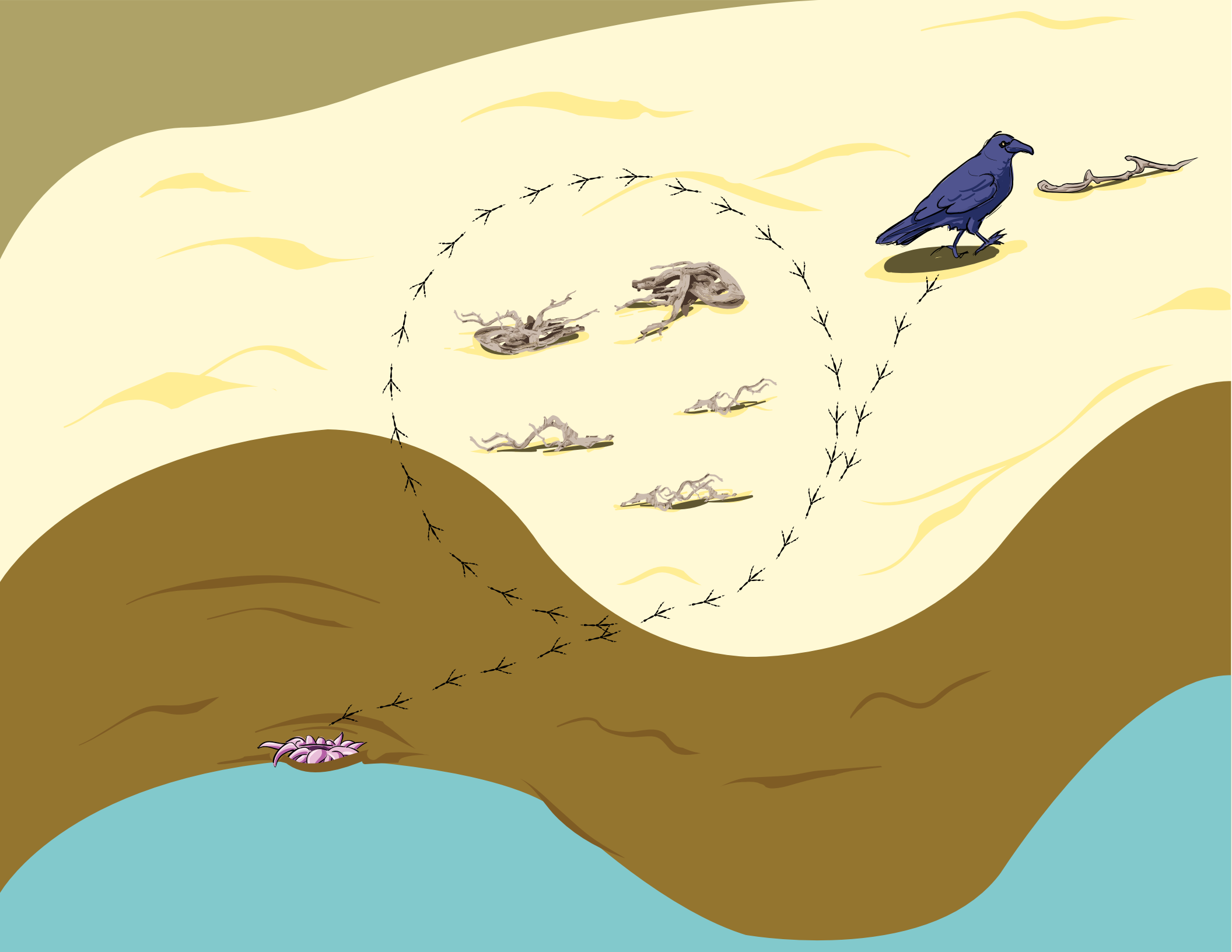
For younger children, the story ends here. For older children and adults, continue reading on the next page. Traditional Yup’ik stories may have differences depending on the storyteller, and the storyteller’s audience. The following is another ending told by Annie Blue to Evelyn Yanez, first when Evelyn was around age twelve.

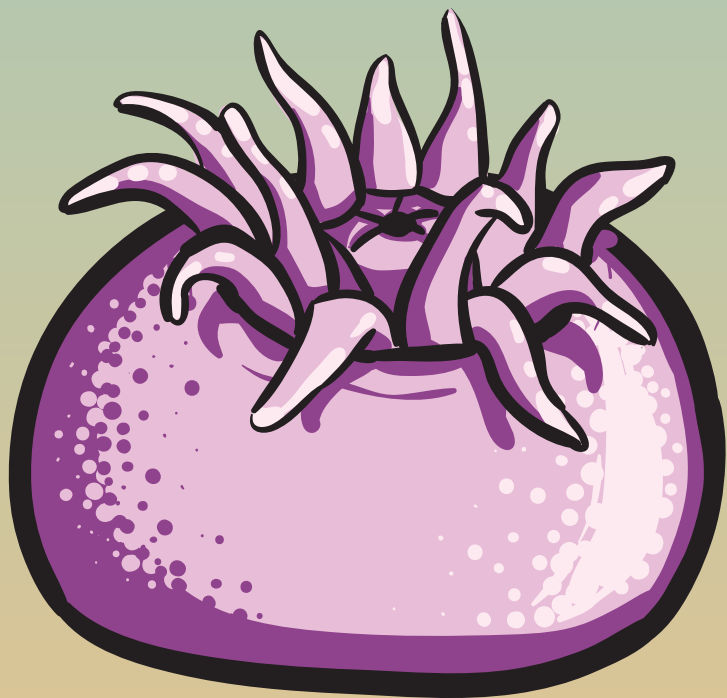
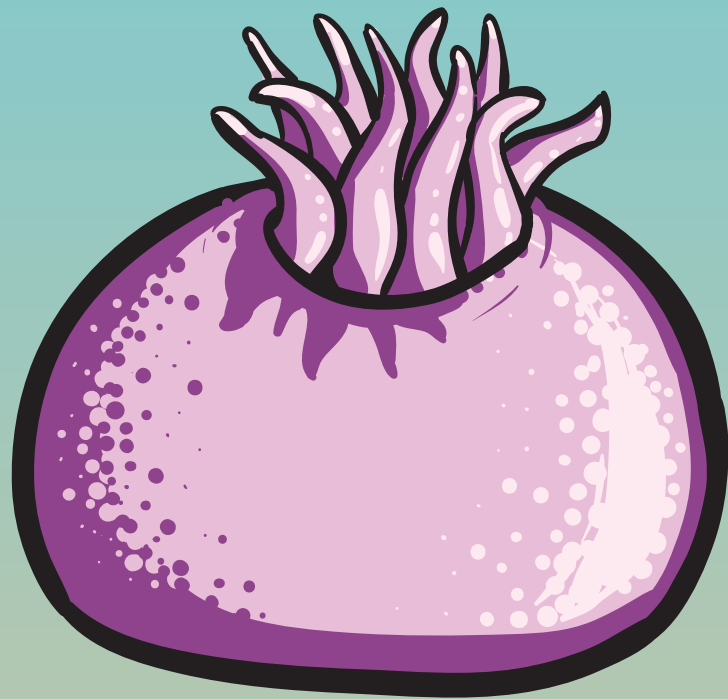
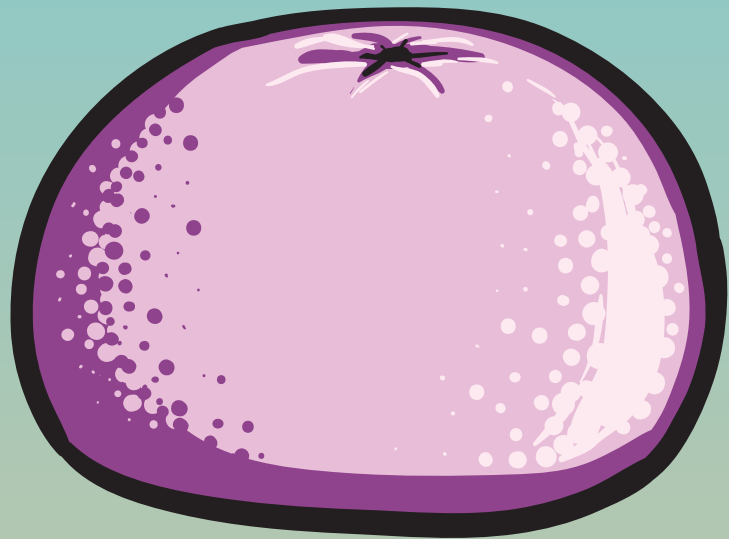
He went from place to place looking for wood with lots of spear-like branches. He finally found a piece of wood with lots of sharp branches. Even the tip of it was very sharp.

Tagluni pavani cenirtaartuq nunami pavani. Tua-i-ll' tagngami cenirtaarlun tua-i muriit makut piyaaqnaurai akqerrunateng. Tua-ll' atam tua-i caqerluni matumek muralkugmek nataqutellria. Tua-i akqulikacagarluni. Ipellrianek tua-i akqurri arenqianeteng. Nuuga-llu cingikeggluni arenqianani.

The piece of wood was not going to easily break, so the Raven walked through the mud to take it to the thing down there. The tide was at the edge of the Sea Anemone. "I have your future wife with me. Well then, put yourself in view. Where are you?" the Raven cried. "Eng!" the Sea Anemone responded, "How should I do this? I think I'll just turn myself inside out." The Raven told him, "Put your whole self inside out. *All the way out.*"

Tua-i piciqngalan asemcugnailngalan-llu ayauteilliniluku tua-i atrauteilliniluku taumun marasqitarturluni. Waniwa tua-i maa-i mer'em engelkaarangluku. Tua-llu-gguq pia, "Tua-i wani-wa nulirkan unakaqa. Kitaki tua-i maninguaryakaryaliriaten naugga?" "Eng! Qaillun atak pilua piqerlii? Ullellua taugaam pikuma." "Ullelluten pikina. Tamarmirtengnaqluten ulleskina."







Then the Sea Anemone started to put his whole body inside out. *“More! More!”* the Raven cried. *“Eng!”* the Sea Anemone said as he tried to turn himself inside out.

Ayumian tauna imna ulleskili. Tua-i ulteqapiarluni. *“Cali, cali! Eng!”*

The one down there was getting more and more angry. The Sea Anemone opened until he couldn't open anymore, and then the Raven said to him, *“Did you put all of yourself inside out?”* The Sea Anemone answered by saying yes, and to give him his wife.

Qenqullagaluni-gguq camaken. Tua-i pikanirvirusngarian pia, *“Wa-qaa pikanirviituten-qaa tua-i allamek?”* Aagguq pikanirviirulluni-gguq wani-w tamarmi piuq. Kitaki-gguq tua-i tauna Nulirkaa ciukan pikiliu.

With that, the Raven stabbed him with the sharpened object. As the Raven stabbed the Sea Anemone, he closed up and said “Ouch!” The Raven stabbed him over and over again, tearing him into pieces. “I do not know about my uncle because I grew from the bottom of the ocean,” the Raven mocked him. The Raven tore him up to many tiny pieces, until the Sea Anemone was unable to speak.

Ayumian tua-i taumek imumek cingiumalriamek kaplerluku. Kapleqiini quumkartuq camna, “Aakeka” Kepuraagguq, allgurluku “Angamnek nalluunga teqermek naullruama.” Tua-i allgurluku, caunrirluku tua-i qanelkitanrian taugaam tua-i taqluku.

The Raven is typically known as a creator, trickster, and powerful symbol in Native American and Yup'ik culture. The Raven should be respected and not toyed with; this story reflects that.



The late Annie Blue, a revered elder and wonderful storyteller from Togiak, Alaska, continues to contribute to the Math in a Cultural Context (MCC) series and to the next generation through the stories she told. Annie's deep cultural knowledge, dedication and caring attitude were recognized by the University of Alaska Fairbanks in 2009 when she was awarded an honorary doctorate.

The stories about the mischievous Raven have become favorites of Eva Evelyn Yanez, who listened and learned from Annie's storytelling beginning in her childhood. Evelyn has retold *The Raven and the Sea Anemone* to teachers, aides, and students at nine schools that comprise the Southwest Regional School District. The story has also been told at MCC's workshops for teachers, at summer math institutes, and internationally. It is always well received.

Each Yup'ik story in the MCC series has embedded Yup'ik values about how to live. This story is no different. The MCC series typically integrates Yup'ik stories to further establish the context and also make connections to the mathematics in complementary materials. This story can be used independently of the MCC mathematics series, or it can be used with *Measuring Proportionally: Stories, Culture, Math, and Pedagogy*; *The Importance of Stories in the Math in Cultural Context Program*. Connections to mathematics can also be made by emphasizing parts of the story that establish perspective, location, and space.



This story is part of the series  
*Math in a Cultural Context: Lessons  
Learned from Yup'ik Eskimo Elders* ©

