

KW'Í:TSEL

VOLUME 1



ARTIST: OVI SPINU

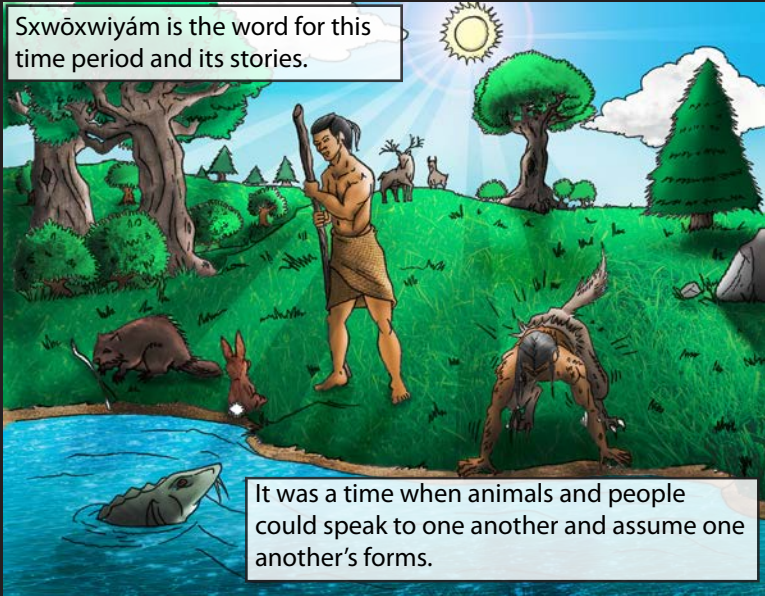
INK, COLOR AND LAYOUT: RONNIE DEAN HARRIS

STORY: THERESA POINT, JOY HALL AND X-SYTE

WWW.SXTA.BC.CA

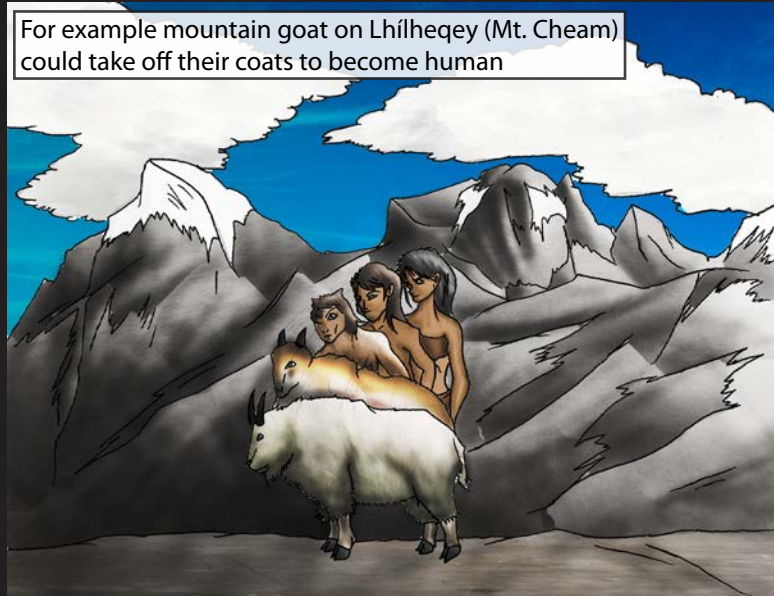
Kw'í:tseł's story begins with the creation of S'olh Temexw, our world...

Sxwōxwiyám is the word for this time period and its stories.

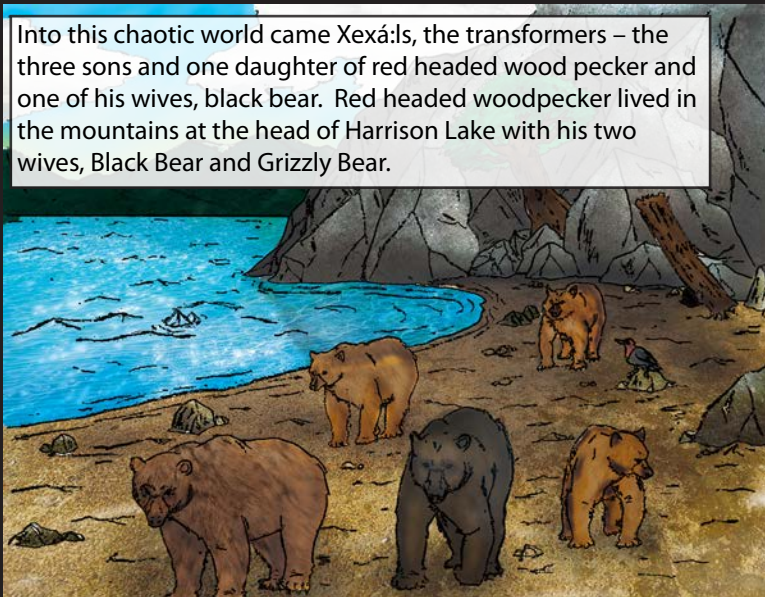


It was a time when animals and people could speak to one another and assume one another's forms.

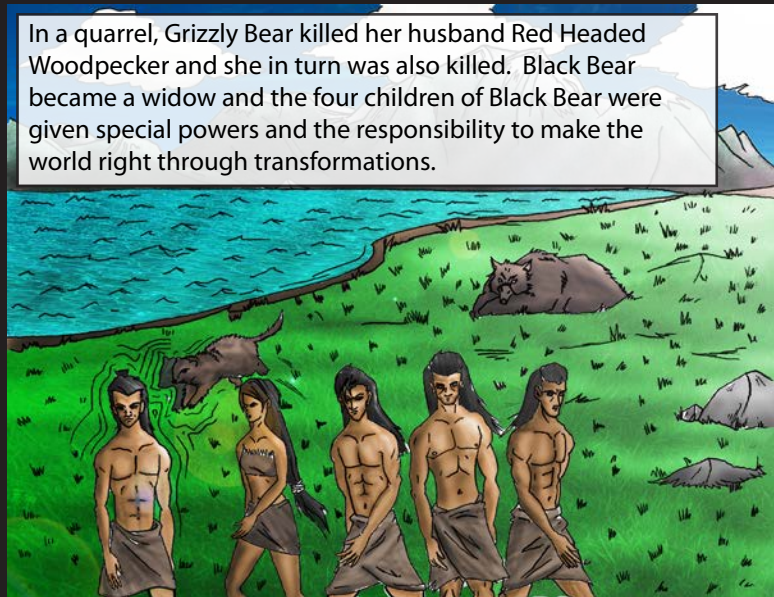
For example mountain goat on Lhílheqey (Mt. Cheam) could take off their coats to become human



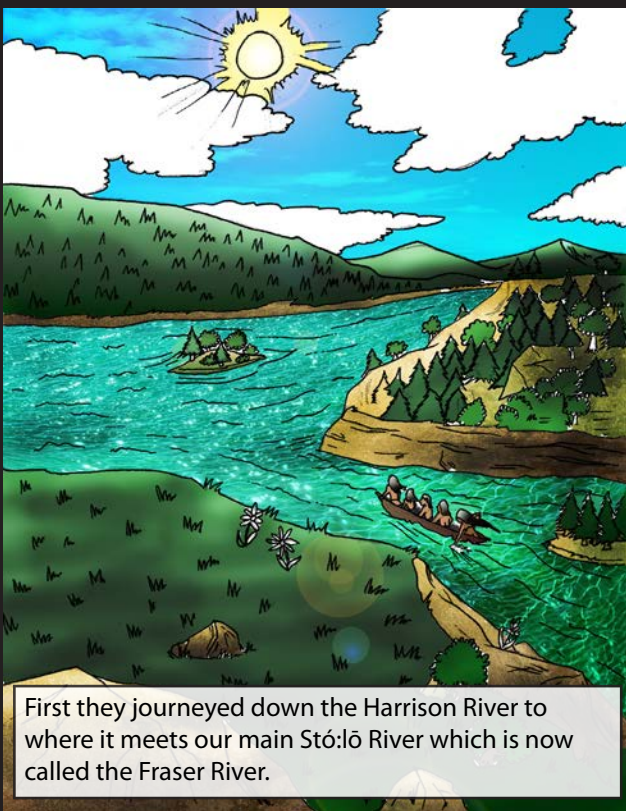
Into this chaotic world came Xexá:ls, the transformers – the three sons and one daughter of red headed wood pecker and one of his wives, black bear. Red headed woodpecker lived in the mountains at the head of Harrison Lake with his two wives, Black Bear and Grizzly Bear.



In a quarrel, Grizzly Bear killed her husband Red Headed Woodpecker and she in turn was also killed. Black Bear became a widow and the four children of Black Bear were given special powers and the responsibility to make the world right through transformations.



From there Xexá:ls journeyed up-river to the sunrise and then ascending continued westward to the sky to the sunset, upon reaching the sunset they returned back up-river to the sunrise and were never seen again.



First they journeyed down the Harrison River to where it meets our main Stó:lō River which is now called the Fraser River.

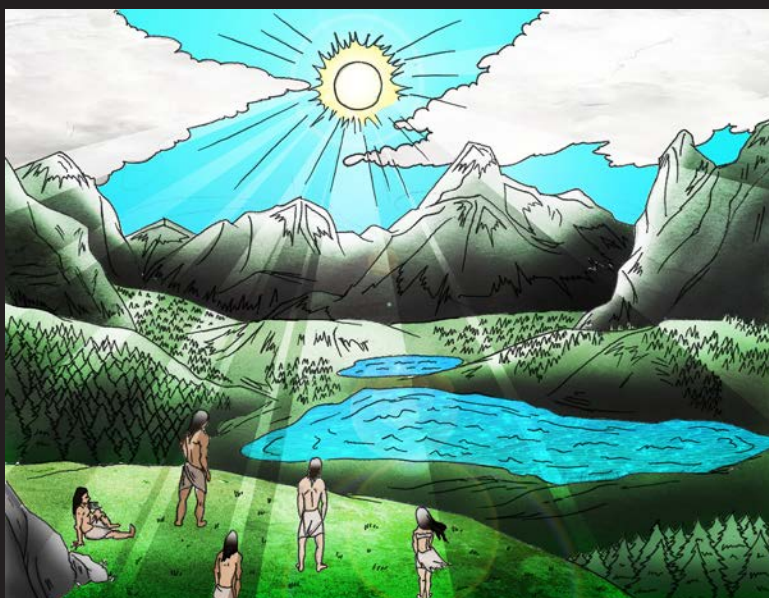


During their travels Xexá:ls performed many transformations, they turned our ancestors who acted wrongly to stone.



They rewarded the generosity of some ancestors by transforming them into valuable local resources; which included xepá:y (the cedar tree), skwōwech (the sturgeon) and sqelá:w (the beaver). Many of these resources contain the shxweli (spirit, life force) of our ancestors.

They fixed those people and animals that they chose not to transform into permanent forms, along with other land features such as rivers and mountains. These transformations fixed the world and established the present landscape.



The old people remind the youth of today that these Sxwōxwiyám stories are true and that these events really happened.

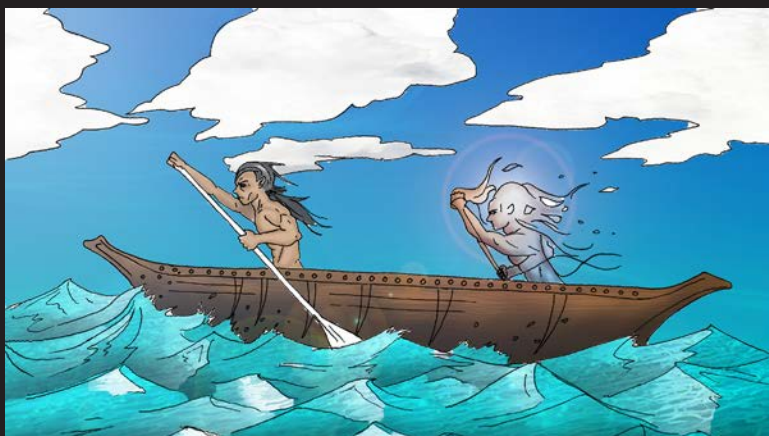
The rocks and other objects transformed by Xexá:ls along with other associated Sxwōxwiyám bear witness to the unique and long standing relationship between the Stó:lō and the land (and resources) of Stó:lō Territory. Today we build treaty negotiations from this strong foundation.



Kw'í:tse! is a prime example of this as he was born of one of the black bear transformers and his Stó:lō mother Sp'á:q'em. *



* Kw'í:tse!, Sp'á:q'em and further characters are a work of fiction created by X-SYTE and Treaty Outreach authors, it does not follow along with the Sxwōxwiyám presented in this issue. Any likeness or resemblance to anyone living or deceased is purely coincidental and not the intention of said authors.



S'ólh téméxw is as much a mythological universe as a biological world. The Stó:lō walk simultaneously through both spiritual and physical realms of this landscape, connected to the creator through the land itself as transformed by Xexá:ls.



Stay tuned for the adventures of Kw'í:tse! ...to be continued...

The original stories this comic was inspired by can be found in *A Sto: Lo-Coast Salish Historical Atlas* - pg. 6 - plate 1