

When Seagull Stole the Sun (and Raven Returned it to the World)

An edited transcription of an [oral telling](#) or [video version](#) by George Squtxulenuhw Seymour

Today I want to tell a **swi'ém'** - a story. A story about the **Qwuní** (seagull) and **Spa:l** (the raven).

A long time ago. All the birds and animals got along. They were **nucama:t** - they worked together and played together. Then all of a sudden, one day, there was total darkness. The daylight didn't happen. The daylight didn't come.

Spa:l had his schedule, he thought he would go down to the beach, but all of a sudden, the light was gone, there was no light. He couldn't see anything.

So he made his way around to see if anybody else was around, but it was too dark. So he went over to his friend Qwuní's house and he knocked on the seagull's door. Qwuní just said, "Go away!" So he knocked again and the seagull still said, "Go away."

So, Spa:l didn't know what to think. He left and couldn't see anything. He tried to go back down to the beach and he was thinking about getting some sea urchins, **xíxwe**. But in the dark he couldn't picture where it was.

So he went back, to ask Qwuní for help. He went knocking on the door again... and this time Qwuní actually opened the door. And Spa:l asked the seagull, "Can you come and help me? I don't know why there's no light, but there's no light."

But Qwuní said, "No. I won't come and help you.". So Spa:l, left. If Qwuní didn't want to help, he would go without his friend.

He went down the beach to look for food by himself. When he reached the water he felt around with his wing, treading through the dark water very carefully. He felt something sharp and spiky... he had found some **xíxwe**, purple sea urchin!

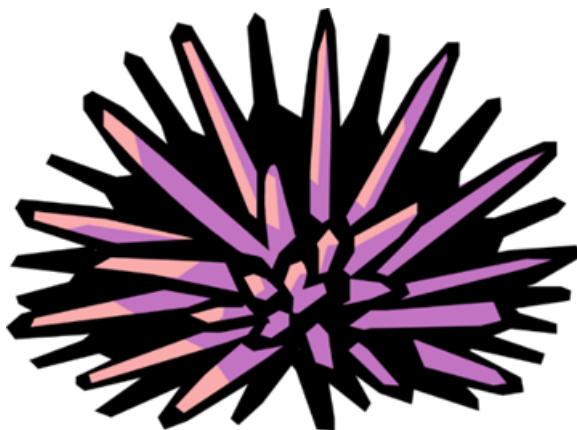
He picked it up, flew up into the dark sky and dropped it on the rocks below, smashing the spiny shells open to expose the meat. It was so dark that he couldn't see the meat, but he used his keen smell to find the exposed, tasty meat through the darkness and ate them.

"Tlim'nanau'uy!" They were very good!

But Spa:l always has room for more, so he went back to the water, feeling around for some more **xíxwe**.

When his belly was full, he thought he would share the **xíxwe** with his friend, Qwuní, so he went back up to the seagull's house, and told him that he found some **xíxwe**. "You come with me. I'll show you where they are. I know where they are now, even in the dark, I know where they are."

But Qwuní was not interested, "Just go away! I don't want any right now, I'll come out when I come out."



Spa:l, insisted , “Well, I think you should come with me anyway.”

But Qwuni said, “No!” and slammed the door. But, just before he shut the door, the raven actually saw a flickering light in a box by the fireplace, like there was a fire in the box or something.

Spa:l made a plan.

So, Spa:l left again. He went back down and he collected all the broken **xixwe** shells, the ones he opened. He brought them up to the seagull’s house and started spreading the shells on the porch and on the stairwell. Then he went down to the beach and got some live, whole **xixwe**, And he did the same thing without breaking them. He brought them up and spread them out on the porch and stairwell.

This time he knocked on the door again and stepped away carefully, still holding two **xixwe**.

And he called his friend. “Qwuni! Come out, I have some **xixwe** for you. I have some big, huge **xixwe**. **Tlimuw’ thi**, really big ones.”

Qwuni peeked out of the window and he saw his friend Spa:l standing at the edge of his porch. He stuck his head out and he told him, “Go away! I’m not hungry right now. Go away!”

So, Spa:l went out and got some more **xixwe** and added them to the others. This time he knocked on the door real hard, but this time he went to hide behind a tree. And he waited, and he waited, and he waited.

Qwuni must have become hungry, he could probably smell the delicious **xixwe**, because he finally came out and he stepped onto his porch. But sure enough, he stepped right onto the poky **xixwe** spines and screamed.

And then he was hopping around and around. He went back in, hopped inside the house, and went and sat on his armchair.

Qwuni was screaming, “I’m in pain! I’m in pain! Somebody needs to come and help me!”

Spa:l, the raven, stood there for quite a while behind the tree, just listening to the seagull crying and screaming for help. But he finally decided to go see what was going on.

So, careful not to step on the shells. he knocked on the door and the seagull cried from inside, “Come in, come in. I need your help. I need your help right now! I’m in pain. I’m in terrible pain. So, I need your help!”

Spa:l walked in and he noticed the light flickering in the big cedar box again. He realized for sure it was the sun in the box.

“**Nu siyetyu**, my friend, **Qwuni**, What’s wrong?”

“Oh Spa:l, I don’t know, I stepped on something out there and it’s lodged in my foot, so I need your help to get it out.”

“Well,” said Spa:l, “It’s probably from the **xixwe** I left for you. I’d like to help, but I don’t know where your tools are, or a knife or whatever.

Qwuni whimpered in pain, “There’s a sharp knife on the table. You could feel around, and then you could get it.”

So, Spa:l felt around on the table and found the knife, “Which foot is it?”

Qwuni, lifted his left foot up, “It’s in here, it’s in here, this foot here!”

So, Spa:l grabbed his webbed foot and he starts gouging, gouging into the foot with the sharp knife. Qwuni screamed even louder.

"You're not helping me, you're hurting me!"

Spa:l paused for a moment, "Well, I'm sorry if I'm hurting you, but I can't see a thing. I try to feel where it is, but it... it's there but I need light. If you had some light... I wouldn't mind using some of your light."

So, Qwuní reached over towards the glowing box and cracked it open just a little bit, and a little bit of light came out and once again, the raven started gouging at the seagull's foot.

But it was still no good. Seagull cried again, "What are you doing? You're just hurting me! What are you doing? You're supposed to be helping me!"

And even though he could see a bit better, Spa:l said to Qwuní "Well, I'm sorry I'm hurting you, but I can't see very well. And I need more light."

But his friend, the seagull shouted, "No! Just keep on working!"

So, the Spa:l started gouging even harder... and Qwuní was just screaming. "Ok, Ok, I'll open the box a bit more."

He opened the box just a little bit more and more light came out.

And, once again, Spa:l, the raven, started gouging the seagull's foot. And the seagull was screaming in pain again.

And Spa:l just tells him, "Well, I'm sorry, it's not enough light. I can't see a thing. I need more light."

So, the seagull says, "No! you can't have any more light. That's my light, I'm not sharing with you or with anybody. It's mine! Mine, mine MINE!"

Spa:l sighed, "Well, I could gouge a little more in your foot, but I would hurt you more..."

Finally, Qwuní opened the box a little bit more, and it was getting brighter and brighter in the room.

Once again, the raven started gouging away.

And seagull complained in pain again, "You're just hurting me, you just hurting me!"

But Spa:l didn't give up, he had a plan, "Well, give me control of your light and then I could see your whole foot, not just part of your foot."

Qwuní really wanted the spine out, So he pushed the box over to Spa:l, and Spa:l opened the box wide. The sunlight filled the room and escaped out of the chimney.

And then, when the sun was back in the sky, because they were friends, Spa:l, actually helped Qwuní get the urchin spines out of his foot.

It took a long time for Qwuní to forgive Spa:l. And still, to this day, the seagull is how he is. He'll just take anything.

And the raven is a little bit smarter, I guess. He was able to free the sun from the big cedar box.

And that's the end of this story.

Ni' Hay.



bit.ly/seagull-stole-sun