

yuw'i'na'qws' tthu hwthuthiqut¹
Ruler of the forest
nutsim' yuhw 'a'lu 'ushus shtil'a'lus tthu sxayukw'us
(or) Why Raccoon wears a mask

'u kw'un'a-a-a wulh hith ni' tthu tsiitmuhw 'u tthu hwthuthiqut.
A long time ago, Owl was there in the forest.

ha' ni' snet 'i' nilh ni' hwiil'asmut tthu hwthuthiqut.
It was night and he was watching over the forest.

'i' 'i ts'u wulh tsitsulh thu lhqel'ts' 'i' ni' wil' tthu qi'xune'tun 'u tthu
hwthuthiqut tumuhw.
And the moon was high in the sky and it cast a shadow on the forest floor.

suw' niis shts'unets ni' u tthu xpey'ulhp, lhuplhupxnuhw tthuw'nilh.
And he was sitting in a cedar tree, blinking.

hwun' xut'u 'i' wulh lumnuhwus tthu ni' yukwayxthut.
Suddenly, he saw something moving.

sis nem' 'uw' lhakw' yuhwsiweem'qun 'ul' kwus nem' lhakw' tun'ni' 'u
tthu xpey'ulhp.
And he flew quietly, flying from the cedar tree.

hwun' xut'u 'i' ni' wulh kwunnuhwus tthu sxwul'xwal'qw', tsq'ix 'i' tthu
p'uq' shtl'upi'snuts.
Suddenly, he grabbed the striped thing, a black and white tail.

'i' nilh sxuyukw'us.
It was Raccoon.

m'i se'tus tthuw'nilh tsiimuhw
Owl lifted him up.

¹From Margaret Roome's collection of Cowichan stories, rendered into Hul'q'umi'num' and then retranslated into English by Ruby Peter and Donna Gerds, October 2012 & July 2013. [VERSION FROM February 11, 2014]

tl'lim' 'uw' yuhwt'it'iyuq'us tthu sxuyukw'us.
Raccoon was very angry.

“kwe'tham'sh! kwe'tham'sh! 'uwu nuwees yuw'i'na'qws tthu hwthuthiqut.
“Let me go! Let me go! You are not the ruler of the forest.

'i' 'uw' 'i kwthu thuhiws tsakw si'em' 'utl' nuwu.”
There is a bird greater than you!”

tl'lim' nuw' tth'uykw'thut tthu w'unilh tsiitmuhw sus 'uw' kwe'tus tthu
 sxayukw'us.
Owl was so surprised that he dropped Raccoon.

“skw'ey ts'twa' kws stu'es?
“That can't be true, can it?

nu stl'i' kw'unus tul'nuhw 'uw' thu'itus, la'us 'uw' niin' tse' 'uw' s-
 hwuhwi' 'ul' 'u tthu skweyul.”
I want to find out if this is true, even if I have to stay up all day.”

suw' t'a'thut 'itut kwus wulh net 'i' hwi' skw'ey kws tth'up'nuhws, nilh
 kws yaths 'uw' s-hwuhwi' 'ul' 'u kws snet-s.
*He tried to sleep that night, but his eyes wouldn't close, because he always
 stayed awake at night.*

ni' tus 'u tthu qul'et kweyul, 'i' hwi' nilh yuhwqi'xun'aa'lus 'u tthu
 sum'shathut.
The next day, the sun was shining brightly.

ni' hay 'ul' shxulha'qws tthu w'unilh tsiitmuhw.
Owl got a headache from it.

suw' lhakw' nem' 'u tthu hwthuthiqut ni' 'u tthu sta'luw', quw'utsun'
 sta'luw'.
He flew to the trees by the river, the Cowichan River.

'i' ni' tthu smuqw'a' lhxilush luq'shin lhew'q'lhne'num' 'u kw' stseelhtun.
And there was Heron standing on one foot fishing for salmon.

suw' pte'mutus tthuw'nilh tsiimuhw, "nuwe 'u yuw'i'na'qw 'u tthu hwthuthiqut?"

And Owl asked, "Are you the ruler of the forest?"

"shh!" thut smuqw'a' hwteel'qi'num', sus nem' kwun'um 'u tthu shnetulhquns.

"Shh!" said Heron rudely, and he went to catch his breakfast.

suw' huye' tha'ithut lhakw' tthuw'nilh tsiitmuhw.

So Owl flew on.

tl'lim' 'uw' 'ulh kw'ey'.

He was really hungry.

sht'eewun', "ha' tsun lhuyxt kw' stseelhtun, 'i' xwum tsun 'i' yuqwinus."

He thought, "If I eat some salmon, I might get heartburn."

sis nem' 'uw' lhakw' xwte' 'u tl' kwa'mutsun xatsa'.

So he flew over toward Quamichan Lake.

'i' wulh lumnuhwus tthu hay 'ul' 'iiyathut s-hwuw'qun, p'up'ekw ni' 'u tthu qa'.

And he saw graceful Swan, floating on the water.

suw' pte'mutus, "nuwe 'u yuw'i'na'qw 'u tthu hwthuthiqut?"

And he asked, "Are you the ruler of the forest?"

'uwu niis hwtulqun tthu s-huw'qun.

But Swan didn't answer.

'i' ni' 'uw' hwmutqwusum' 'uw' tthu tl'uqtulhnulh ni' 'u tthu xatsa'.

He ducked his long neck under the water.

ni' hwi' 'uw'kw'ulhnulhstum kwus xi'xlhe'mutus, 'i' wulh slhstsiws tthuw'nilh tsiitmuhw.

It made Owl feel he had run out of breath, and he was tired.

tl'im' 'uw' stl'i's kws tul'nuhws sus nem' 'uw' xwte' 'u tl' tl'ulpalus.

But he really wanted to find out, so he went on toward Cowichan Bay.

tus 'i' wulh lumnuhwus tthu hay 'ul' thuthiw's kws lhalhukw',
Soon he saw a big powerful bird flying,

'i' ni' sel'ts' 'i' ni' swi'wil' kwus tl'ulqtul'exun'.
hovering with his wings spread out.

'i' nilh p'e' tth'ixwth'uxw.
And it was Osprey,

'i' wulh lumnuhwus tthu tl'itl'up ni' 'u tthu qa'.
and he had spotted something down below in the water.

nilh tthu sxun'us ni' yuw'en' kwus nem' wulh nuqum,
He dived down feet first,

nuqemutus tthu p'owi' ni' lumnuhwus.
diving for the flounder that he had seen.

s'ulhtuns tse'.
It would be his dinner.

sus 'uw' ximutus tthu p'owi' ni' 'u tthu tl'itl'up.
And he grabbed the flounder that was down deep.

sus nem' 'uw' se'tus nem' huye'st-hwus t'ukw'st-hwus tthu s'ulhtuns tse',
He lifted it up and made off with it, taking his dinner home.

nemust-hwus 'u tthu shts'ustutsus lelum's.
taking it back to his home made of branches.

'i' nihw ts'u yutsukwul'ul'qum' tthu tsiitmuhw,
Owl must have been following along,

shts'unets ni' 'u tthu ts'sey'ulhp.
and sat on a douglas-fir tree.

suw' temutum' 'utl' tsiitmuhw tthu tth'ihwth'uhw,
And Owl shouted over to Osprey,

“nuwe ’u yuw’i’na’qw ’u tthu hwthuthiqu?”
“Are you the ruler of the forest?”

hwun’ xut’u, ni-i-i ’u tthu tsitsulh.
Suddenly, there was something up above.

m’i yulhalhukw’ tthu thi-i-i yuxwule, nem’ yul’ew’ ’utl’ tsiitmuhw.
And the big eagle came flying, passing by Owl.

hay’ ’ul’ tuw’ yo-o-o kwus yuya’yuluqw ’ul’ ni’ ’u tthu skweyul.
He was gracefully soaring across the sky.

suw’ lumnum ’utl’ yuxwule’ tthu shun’tse’ ’utl’ tth’ihwth’uhw,
Eagle had spotted what Osprey had caught,

sus ’uw’ shitums stl’i’s sus nem’ ’uw’ numnusus ’i’ ximutus.
and he wanted it, so he swooped down and grabbed it.

suw’ tul’num ’utl’ tsiimuhw, “e’ut p’e’ tthuw’ thu’it yuw’i’na’qw ’u tthu
 hwthuthiqu.
So Owl realized, “Here is the ruler of the forest.”

hay ’ul’ xisul’alus tthu yuxwule’ kwus wulh lemutum tthuw’nilh tsiimuhw.
Eagle looked at Owl with fierce eyes.

Suw’ thut-s, “i ch ’a’lu tsukwstamut ’un’sh ’i’i ’u tun’a?
And he said, “What are you doing here?”

nem’ tsun tse’ qw’umqw’umuwthamu ’u tthun’ stl’ulq’een’.”
I will pluck out your feathers!”

wulh si’si’ tthuw’nilh tsiitmuhw.
Owl was afraid.

tl’lim ’uw’ skw’ey kws tslems kwus hwqi’xun’a’lus ’u tthu sum’shathut.
He could not see because the sun was shining in his eyes.

’i’ tl’lim’ tl’e’ ’uw’ xulha’qw ’i’ kwus wulh hww’hwuw’luq ’i’ mutl’el
 kwus kw’ekwi’.
His head really hurt and he was almost fainting with hunger.

sus nem' 'uw' t'akw' nem' 'u kwthuw' swe's thqet-s 'i' wulh nilh 'ul' sus
'uw' nuqw.

He flew home to his tree and fell right to sleep.

tus kwus wulh net 'i' hwi' skw'ey kws 'itut-s tthu yuxwule'.

That night Eagle could not sleep.

xatsthut-s, "sht'eewun' tsun kws 'eenthus 'uw' yuw'i'na'qw 'u tun'a
hwthuthiqut."

He was thinking to himself, "I thought I was the ruler of the forest."

'uy' kwunus nem' nets'uw't-hwum 'utl' tsiitmuhw."

It would be good for me to pay a visit to Owl."

suw' huye' lhakw.

And so off he flew.

tus 'i' 'uw' ni' tthu'nilh tsiitmuhw ni' 'u tthu xpey'ulhp,

He got to where Owl was in the cedar tree,

tth'up'tthu'up'nuhw 'i' 'uw' yuhwsuweem'qun 'ul' kwsus qwal.

blinking his eyes and hooting softly.

"i' ch 'a'lu nutsim' 'un'sh 'i tetsul, 'a yuxwule'?"

"What are you doing here, Eagle?"

'een'thu yuw'i'na'qw 'u tthu hwthuthiqut 'ukws snet-s."

I am the ruler of the forest by night."

"hee, 'uw' thu'it 'i' hay tthu 'een'thu tthu yuw'i'na'qw 'u kw sus skweyul.

"Yes, it's true that I am the ruler of the forest by day.

'i' hay tthu nuwu yuw'i'na'qw 'u kwsus snet.

But you are the ruler of the forest by night.

'o-o-o nilh pe' 'i'elh kwthu skwati sxayukw'us 'i mi'mulut'stal'hw."

That crazy Raccoon really fooled us."

hwyunumus tthey' yuse'lu stsuy'tsi'elh thuhiws, tsiitmuhw 'i' yuxwule'.
The two great birds, Owl and Eagle, smiled at each other.

nilh 'uw tun'ni' 'u tthu stsi'elh shqwaluwun, tul'nuhwus 'eelhtun kwsus
 mi'muluts'tum' 'utl' sxayukw'us.
*They were great in their wisdom, realizing they were being tricked by
 Raccoon.*

ni' kwu'elh tun'ni' 'u kwthey' 'i' t-hwyath 'ul' 'uw' shtiiil'a'lus tthuw'nilh
 sxayukw'us.
From that time on Raccoon wore a mask.

nilh 'ul' kwsus hay 'ul' xi'xe' kwsus t'a'thut kws 'iye'qt-s tthu shtuhim's
 tthu 'i' 'u tun'a 'u tthuw' mukw' tumuhw.
He was ashamed about trying to change the nature of things.

ni' nexun 'u kwthey'.
That's the end of that (story).