



I am 99



Twisted Orca

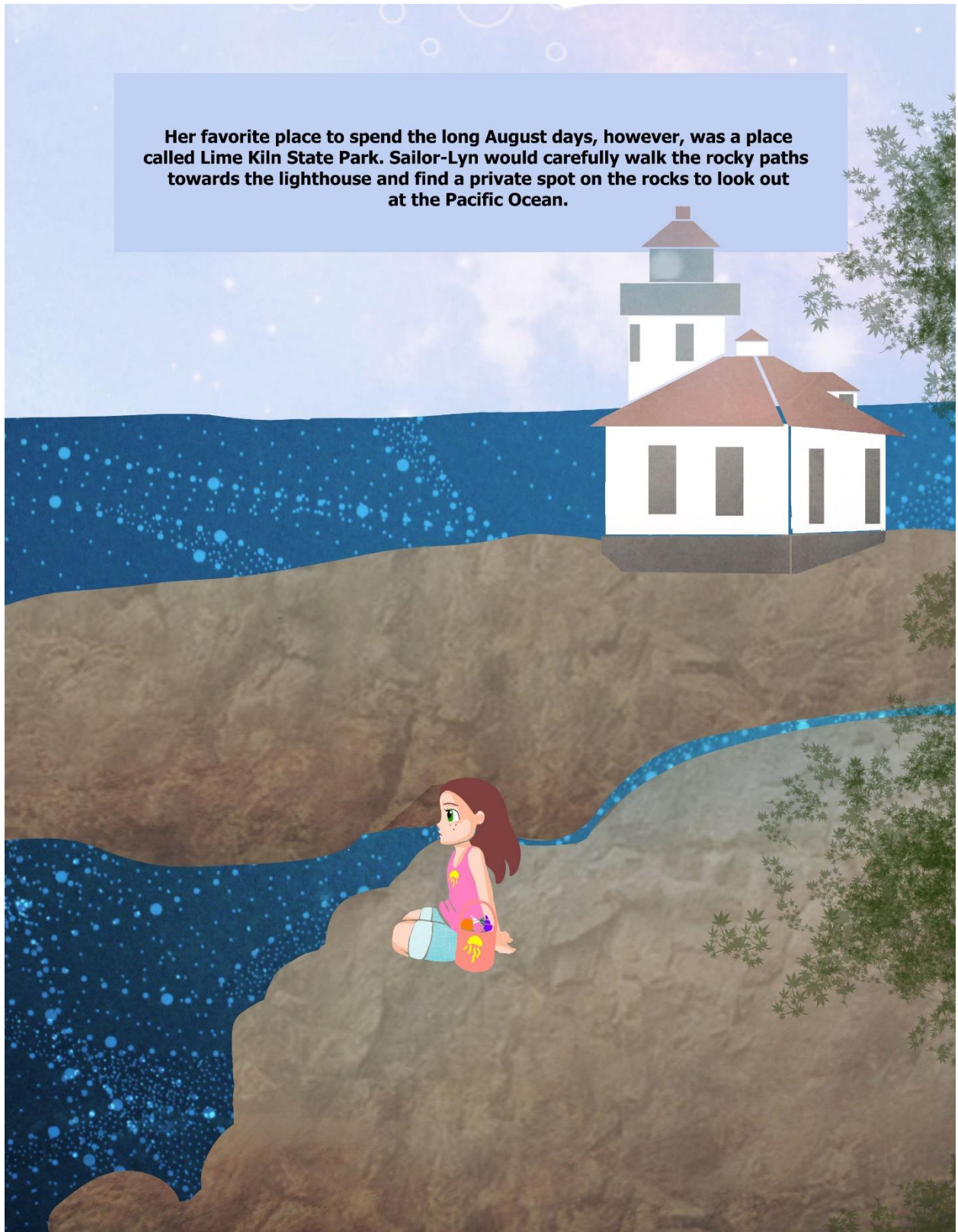
A Southern Resident Orca Story

By Keri Newman

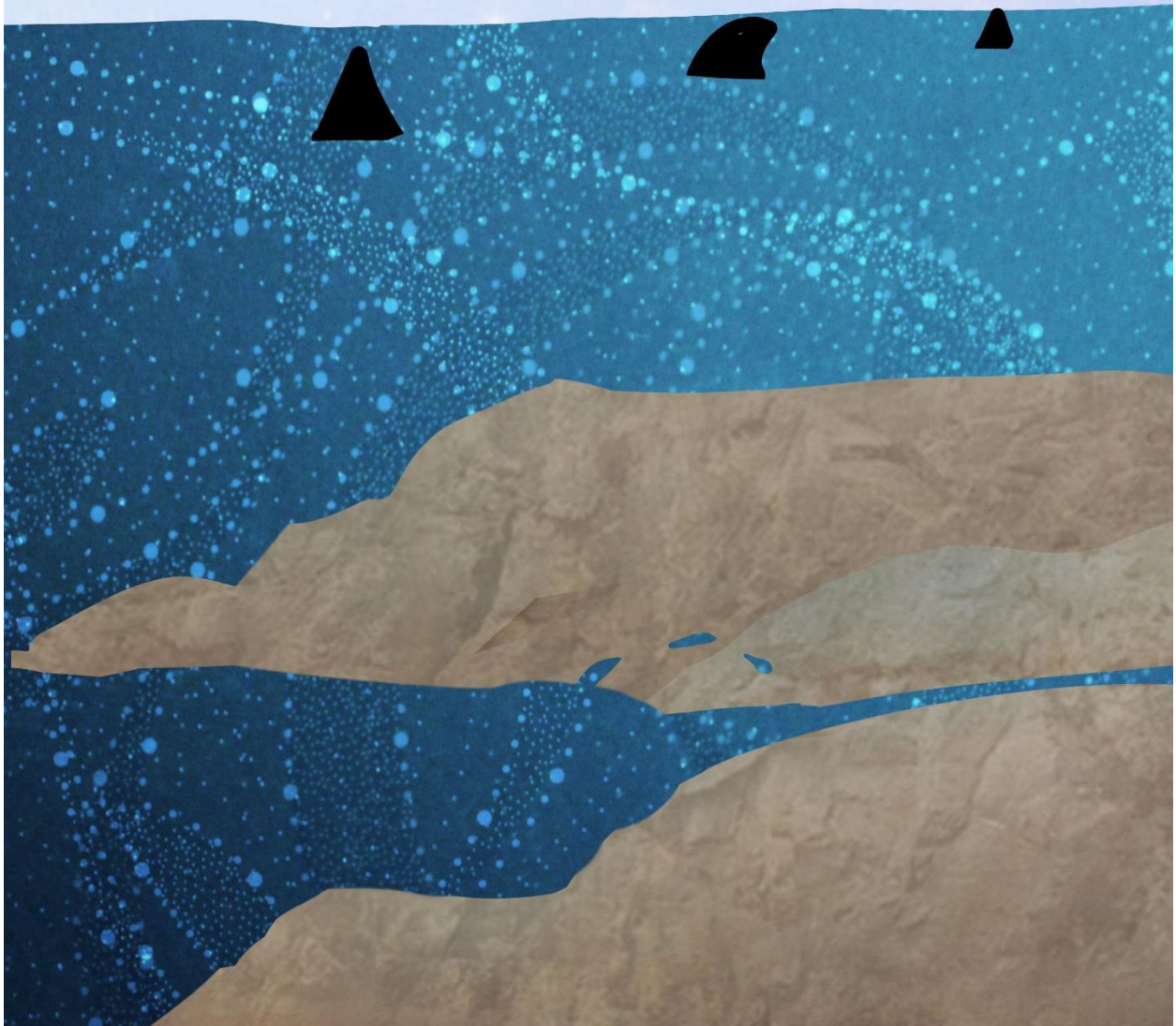
Sailor-Lyn didn't know many people when her family moved to the small town of Friday Harbor. She passed the time by running errands with her mother and watching the boats and sea planes come in and out of the marina.



Her favorite place to spend the long August days, however, was a place called Lime Kiln State Park. Sailor-Lyn would carefully walk the rocky paths towards the lighthouse and find a private spot on the rocks to look out at the Pacific Ocean.



Some days she would sit there for hours and see nothing but waves and the occasional seal. On special days, she would see the fins of killer whales, far off in the distance.



On **VERY** special days, she would see the whales much closer!
Sailor-Lyn was mesmerized by these beautiful animals.
She wanted to learn everything she could about them.



On August 12, Sailor-Lyn woke up extra early. It was her birthday. She had asked for a whale journal so she could keep track of everything she saw. She couldn't wait to open her presents and head to the lighthouse.



Her excitement faded quickly when she opened the front door and her new journal got soaking wet. It was pouring out. "This is the worst birthday ever" said Sailor-Lyn sadly. "All I wanted to do was see whales. Now my journal will be empty."



But Sailor-Lyn's mother had an idea. "We are going to a little place that I think you may like" she said with a sly smile. "Bring that journal with you".



Sailor-Lyn was curious as she followed her mom into town to the Whale Research Laboratory- a place where she would meet someone who would change her life forever.



Sailor-Lyn met Captain Ben, a marine biologist who had been studying whales for over forty years. He showed Sailor-Lyn the many journals they had of killer whales. She couldn't believe her eyes. "Would you like to join our crew on the water tomorrow?" Ben asked an excited Sailor-Lyn.



The next morning, the crew and Sailor-Lyn boarded a small boat and headed out to sea. "The Killer whales that you've been seeing around here are called Southern Resident Orcas", Ben explained. "They live in three families called pods. There is J Pod, K Pod, and L Pod".



J Pod

"Wow there are so many of them!" Sailor-Lyn said.



"I wish that were true," said Ben. "You see, they are almost extinct. If we don't do something to help them quickly there won't be any left". Sailor-Lyn couldn't imagine a world without these beautiful animals she had come to love so much.



K Pod

Ben sighed. "They don't have enough food to eat. You see...these Southern Resident Orcas don't eat seals or sea lions like other killer whales do. They eat Chinook Salmon. There's not a lot of salmon left out here."

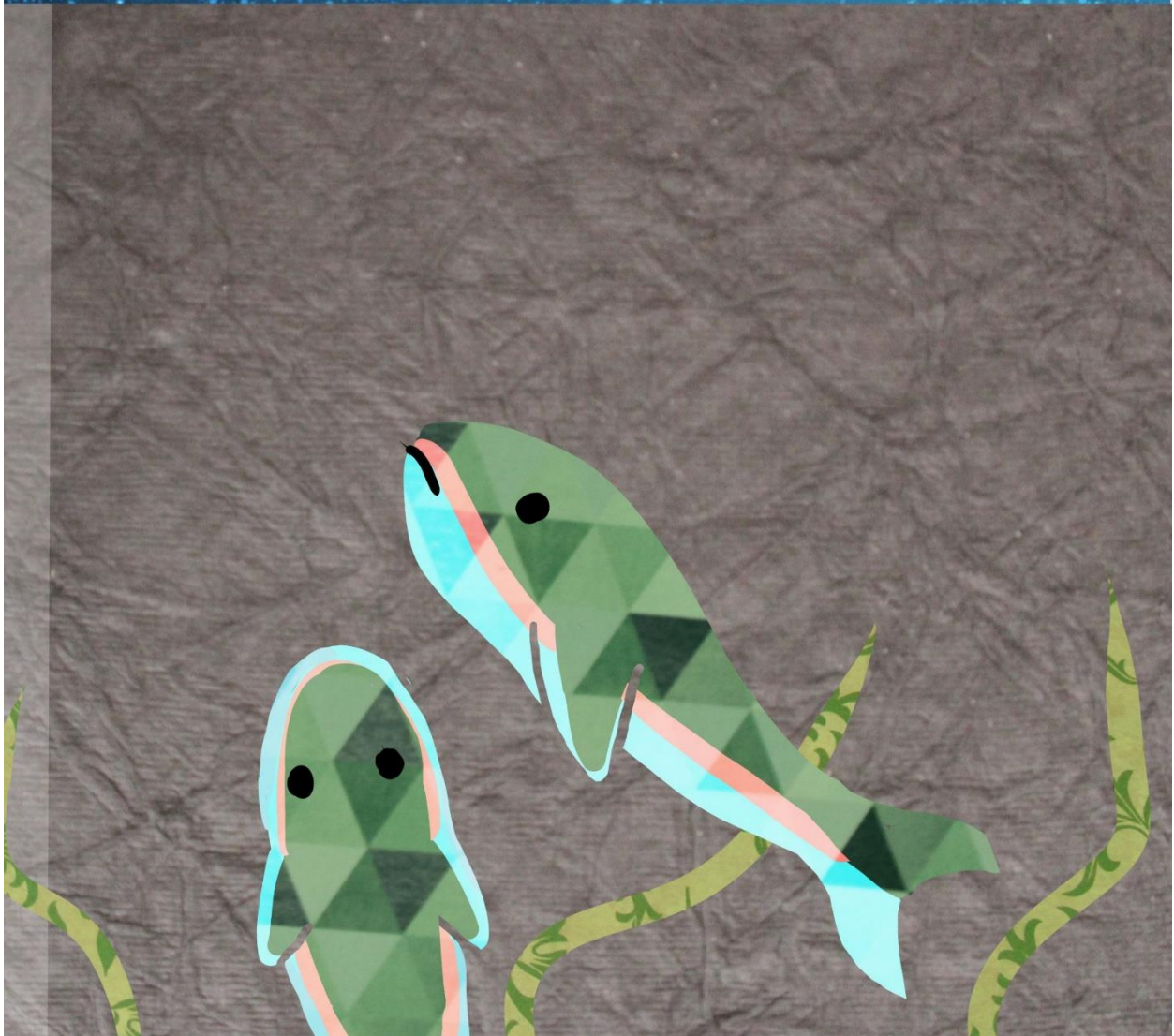


L Pod

Ben could see that Sailor-Lyn was sad. "I have been studying this group for a long time. At one time there were 99 orcas. Today there are only 72. We can help them" he continued, "but it will take a lot of hard work."



"There are walls called dams that are stopping the salmon from swimming to the whales. These need to come down. We also need to give them space, and keep their waters clean and healthy. But most of all.... people need to care."



"I care" whispered Sailor-Lyn. "I will make sure there are 99 of you again.
I promise."



Sailor-Lyn was determined to keep that promise. She went straight home and made a petition to help save the Southern Resident Orcas.



Sailor-Lyn told everyone she knew about the Southern Resident Orcas needing salmon and asked everyone to sign her petition. She met many new people and made many new friends. She worked...day after day... year after year.



Until one day...it was time for her to leave the island she loved and go study whales across the country. She promised her friends she would return.



Four years went by, and Sailor-Lyn did come back to Friday Harbor. She came back on the very best day ever! For when she looked out at the ocean she saw a little black and white head pop out of the water.



Who are you?

I'm 99!

**Sailor-Lyn jumped for joy! Because of her and all of the friends that she made, there were finally 99 Southern Resident Orcas again!
This called for a celebration!**



The town all gathered for a big parade. 99 was a celebrity!

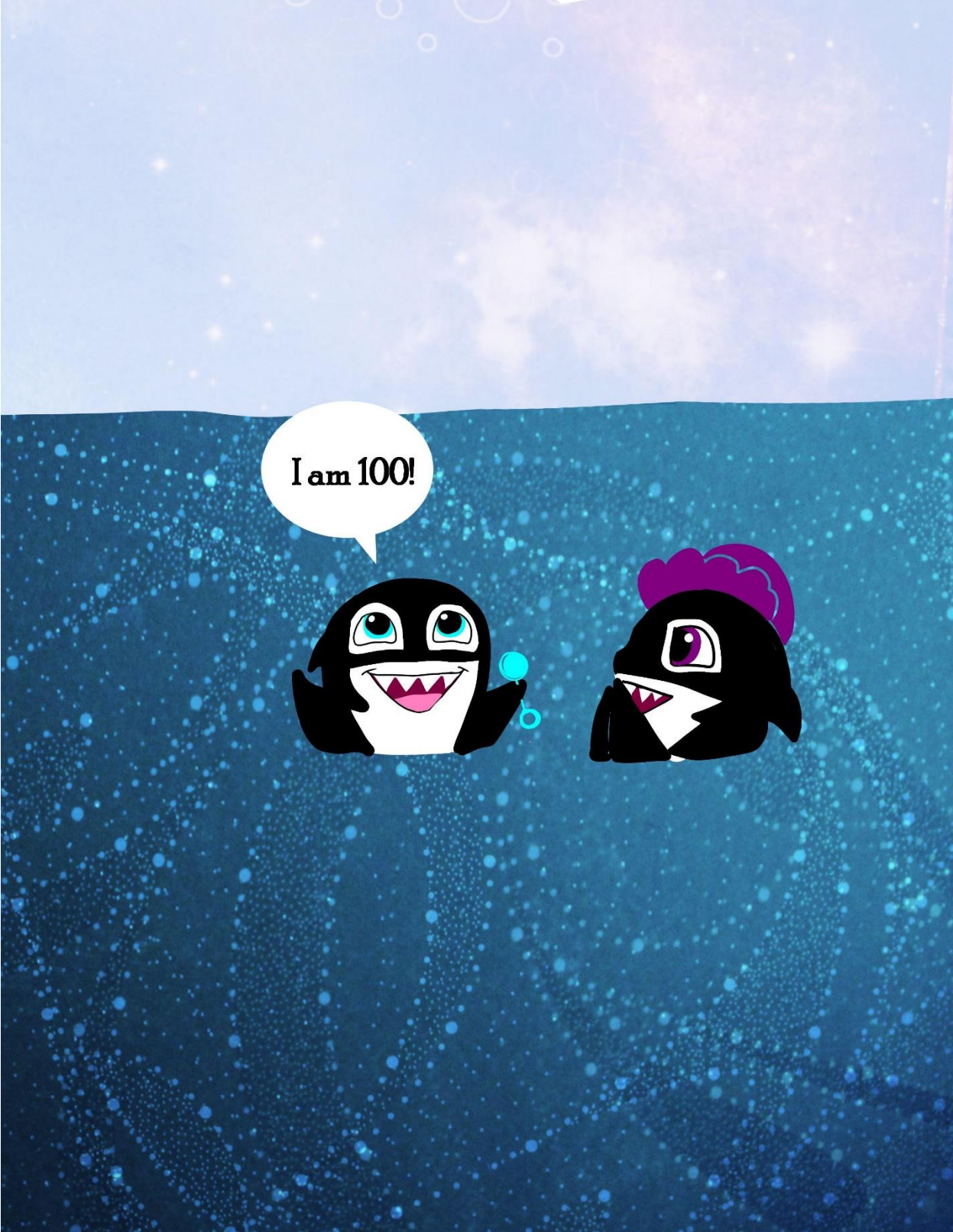


When the celebration wound down, Sailor-Lyn went out to her favorite rock at Lime Kiln State Park and took out her old whale journal. What a perfect journal entry this would be. What could possibly be better?

99 Southern Residents!



I Can't Believe it!
This is the best day
EVER



I am 100!

