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THE INDIAN READING SERIES:
Stories and Legends of the Northwest

The Good Hunter and Fisherman
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A Jamestown Clallam Legend
As told by Jim Cook
Illustrated by Seahthluk (Gary Hillaire)
Joseph Coburn, Director
Pacific Northwest Indian Program
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
In the old days,
the Indians would teach their young menfolk
the way they should live.
This is the story of one particular young man
named Sonny.
Sonny’s father wanted his son to be a good hunter, a good fisherman, and great in all that he would do.  
He began working with his son.  
He showed him the things that he should do.  
He prayed to his God that Sonny might be great in all that he’d do.
Sonny’s father put him on a strict diet for quite some time.
One day when the father was away, old Motherlove saw her son sitting outside, next to the old home. He looked so hungry.
Old Motherlove brought him into the house, made some soup and gave it to him to eat.
About halfway through the meal, the father returned. When he saw that Sonny was eating, he lost his temper. He grabbed the bowl of soup and threw it in the boy’s face. He said angrily to his wife, “Don’t you know I’m trying to make something out of this boy!”
Sonny went outside.
He thought, “This is about the end of it.
I might as well leave home.”
Sonny walked until he came to a small stream. He laid down, tired and hungry.
While he was asleep, he had a dream. In his dream he saw people walking along the trail. They were carrying octopuses. He thought, “Well, I have nothing to lose. I might just as well follow these people.”
Sonny followed the people into the hills.
He came to a crystal-clear lake.
He looked down into the lake and saw some houses.
With a heavy rock to weigh him down,
   he dove to the bottom of the lake.
The chief of the tribe at the bottom of the lake asked him, “Young man, what are you doing here?”

“My father wanted me to be a great hunter, a great fisherman and great in everything I do,” said Sonny.

“But I think I might have spoiled the whole thing by my behavior. I don’t know whether I’ll ever amount to anything.”
The chief said to him, "Look at the wall. You can see my powers up there. Young man, I am going to give you a lesser power. Then I’m going to send you home.”
He gave one of the lesser powers to Sonny and said, "Now, you be on your way home."
Sonny left.
He woke up from his dream, right back where he had fallen asleep.
In the meantime, several days had gone by.
Sonny’s parents had gone from village to village
asking about their son.
But nobody had seen him.
When Sonny returned,
    they were glad to have him back.
They went out and gave him a royal welcome.
Not long after that, a whale came into the bay. All the great fishermen and hunters got in their canoes and went after the whale.
Sonny got a short pole which he sharpened at one end. He called his little brother and said, "Come on, Brother. We’ll go and get that whale."
They got into a small canoe
and paddled out into the bay.
Sonny stopped the canoe.
“Brother, that whale is going to come up
right here,” he said.
“We’ll wait here for it.”
So they waited while the other fishermen and great hunters tried to get the whale. But soon, sure enough, the whale came right alongside of the boat. Sonny took his stick and speared the whale in a vital spot. He killed it right there, and then he and his brother towed it home.
The story goes that after that,
    Sonny’s people were never in want.
They had all kinds of fish and game to eat,
    because Sonny had gotten his power
from his dream.
EDITH CUSACK

Edith Cusack is a member of the Jamestown Band of the Clallam Indians and is the Business Manager of the Jamestown Clallam Tribal Council. Throughout her professional career she has been active in many Indian-related organizations, particularly in the areas of health and education, which are her greatest concerns. She serves on the Clallam County Mental Health and Retardation Board and for several years has been Chairman of the Johnson O’Malley, Title IV and Urban/Racial/Disadvantaged Programs in the Sequim, Washington, schools. She has served as a Board member and represents the Clallam Tribe in the Small Tribes of Western Washington Organization. In 1976 she was one of eight Indians in the United States to receive a Ford Foundation Fellowship to participate in the American Indian Educational Leadership Development Program operated by the National Indian Training and Research Center. All of these activities keep her on the move, and she travels about 2,000 miles per month in her work with the many agencies and organizations with which she is involved. She also is the mother of five children.
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