



by Margaret Lawrence

# WHEN PUMPKINS FLY

illustrated by  
Amiel Sandland  
and Margaret Lawrence

EDUCATOR'S  
RESOURCE



# WHEN PUMPKINS FLY

## ABOUT THE BOOK

The air is cold, the nights are long, and Halloween is just around the corner. This is the time of year when pumpkins fly! In the remote, fly-in community of Sanikiluaq, Nunavut, the last cargo flight of October brings some strange orange guests for the children. Seeing a pumpkin for the first time, the local kids eagerly carve and light their first jack-o-lantern. But when everyone adjourns to the community hall for the Halloween dance, the pumpkin is left alone outside. The land around Sanikiluaq is home to many spirits who love to cause mischief, especially this time of year. But what would land spirits do with a pumpkin?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Margaret Lawrence is an educator and artist. She was born in Japan and moved to the Canadian Arctic in 1980, first to Frobisher Bay (now Iqaluit) and then to Sanikiluaq in 1988, where she began teaching. She has spent more than half her life in the Canadian Arctic, seeing much change in the community over that time period. She has been fortunate to learn from four generations of Qikiqtarmiut, the people of the community she calls home.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Amiel Sandland is an illustrator living in the Toronto area. He studied illustration at Seneca College, eventually specializing in comic arts and character design. He's also dabbled in layout, comics, and props making. Rarely found without a pen in hand, he enjoys drawing animals, monsters, and plants.

## PRE-READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before reading the book out loud to the class, show them the cover and ask: What do you think the title means? How could a pumpkin fly? What are some other pictures on the cover that might give clues to what the story is about? What about the back cover? What clues are there?

## DURING AND POST-READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The following questions and discussion points can be used during and after reading *When Pumpkins Fly*. Provide students with the chance to voice their own opinions, share their experiences, ask questions, or point out anything else they may notice about the book.

- Who loves Halloween? Do you think Halloween is fun or scary? What is your favourite part of Halloween? What's your favourite candy? What's the best costume you've ever had?
- In the community where you live, do the Halloween pumpkins have to arrive on a plane? Where does your family or classroom get their pumpkins? Do you carve jack-o-lanterns? Do you roast the pumpkin seeds and eat them? As it says in the story, do you like your pumpkin to be “funny, spooky, silly, or scary”?
- Can you think of other places in the world that might have to receive their pumpkins, groceries, and mail by airplane? By boat?
- Think about the outside scenes from the book. How is that Halloween weather similar to or different from where you live? Does the wind blow hard when you go trick-or-treating? Do you have to wear gloves, boots, a hat, and coat?
- What are some of the ways that your Halloween activities are like the ones in this book? What are some of the ways that your celebration is different?
- Can you think of other holidays and celebrations that might be celebrated in different ways around the world? Can you think of another holiday where pumpkins are important?
- Is this the first time you have heard about the tunnaat? If not, what do you know about them? If yes, what did you learn about them from the story? The narrator of the story says that they are “ancient and wise beings.” Do you think that he is afraid of them? Would you be afraid of them?
- Talk about some of the ways that the story's illustrators use the pictures to portray the tunnaat. What could they have done differently with the art if they had wanted to make the tunnaat seem like funny characters?
- This book was illustrated by two people. When two or more people create something together, it's called a collaboration. How do you think these artists collaborated on this book? Did one of them draw a picture and then the other one added things to the same picture? Or did each of them draw different pages in the book? Maybe one of them drew the people, and one of them drew the scenery. Is there anything about the illustrations that shows two different people worked on it?



# EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

## LANGUAGE ARTS

### THE DAY AFTER HALLOWEEN

At the end of the book, the story says, “But what will the tunnaat do with an old, old pumpkin?” Write a story about what you imagine happened after the tunnaat took the pumpkin away.

### STORY-IN-THE-ROUND

*Note: You might need to divide the class into two groups, depending on class size. This activity works well with 8 to 10 students.*

Have the class draw pictures of their favourite Halloween “props,” cut them out, and put them inside a paper bag. Have students sit in a circle. Pick a student to start by pulling a prop out of the bag and beginning a story with it. (For example, if the prop was a pumpkin, they could say, “Once there was a pumpkin who was purple instead of orange.”) The next person then chooses a prop and adds on to the story. Continue until everyone in the circle has contributed. (If the story doesn’t seem “finished,” just keep going around the circle until it is.) If the students like the story, they can write it down and illustrate it.

## ART

### PUMPKIN JOURNALS

Give everyone in the class a large piece of orange construction paper, scissors, and a stack of plain white paper. Have students fold the construction paper in half, draw a circle on it, and cut around the circle to make the front and back covers of the journal. Trace around the covers onto the white paper and cut those pages into a circle. Staple on the left side, and the pumpkin journals are ready for stories and art!



## PUMPKIN FRIEZE

Tape large pieces of paper along a wall (or walls) of the classroom or hallway. Each student can decorate a section of the paper; ask them to draw a Halloween picture or a scene from this book. When Halloween is over, you can roll it up and save it for display at next year's celebration!

## COMICS COLLABORATION

One of the book's illustrators, Amiel Sandland, likes to draw comics. Have the class choose partners (or assign them) and have the teams collaborate on a short comic strip. It can be about anything, but it has to have pumpkins in it.

