

Takannaaluk

About the Book

Takannaaluk means “the one down there”—a term used in the High Arctic to refer to the mother of sea mammals, the most important being in Inuit mythology. This unique picture book tells how she came to be both feared and respected. As a young woman, Takannaaluk is tricked into marrying a seabird posing as a man and then betrayed by her family. Her story is brought to vivid life by respected Elder Herve Paniaq and renowned artist Germaine Arnattauijuq.

About the Author

Herve Paniaq was an Elder who was born around the Iglulik (Igloodik), Nunavut, area. His adopted children are Melanie, Itani, Cindy, Moses, Agnes, and Catherine. He enjoyed recording traditional stories and legends, and telling stories. When his sisters were young, Herve would grab a comic book and tell stories about what he thought the pictures were saying. His siblings who were able to read in English would come around to listen to him, and he would tell them to go away as they knew how to read in English. They enjoyed his versions better as they were more interesting. He is the author of *Animals Illustrated: Walrus* and *Takannaaluk*.

About the Illustrator

Germaine Arnattauijuq is an Inuit artist and illustrator, best known for her prints and etchings depicting Inuit myths and traditional ways of life. In 1999, she designed the special edition two-dollar coin commemorating the founding of the territory of Nunavut. She is the co-author, with Gyu Oh, of *My Name Is Arnaktauyok: The Life and Art of Germaine Arnaktauyok*. She lives in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories.

Note to Educators

This educator’s resource is written for Kindergarten to Grade 3 classrooms. The suggested discussion questions and activities can be adapted for each class according to the experiences of students.

Teachers can use this book to teach about topics such as:

- Inuit legends
- Storytelling
- Ocean animals
- Arctic animals
- The meaning of names



Pre-Reading Discussion Questions

- What images do you see in the cover illustration?
- Based on those images, what do you think the story will be about?
- Notice that the person in the image is blowing bubbles, as if she is underwater. Why do you think a person would be underwater?
- Of all the animals on the cover of the book, which one do you think is the most interesting? Why? What do you already know about each of these animals?
- Look at the inside cover (before the story starts). Who do you think this character is? What do you notice about them? (For example, red eyes, wearing snow goggles, wearing a parka.)

During and Post-Reading Discussion Questions

The following questions and discussion points can be used during and after reading *Takannaaluk*. 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.

- Page 2: She is an only child. Are you an only child? Do you have any siblings?
- Page 4: Do you think Uinigumasuittuq knew that this man was a bearded seal? How do you think she would feel if she did know?
- Page 6: What other animals transformed into people do you see here other than the caribou that is mentioned?
- Page 8: What is a *qajaq*? What clues can you use to figure out the meaning? (For example, the context in the sentences, the picture on the other page.)
- Page 8: Do you think she will come?
- Page 10: Why do you think the author points out that the man stays sitting? What might happen next?
- Page 12: When ice is thin, as mentioned on this page, it can be very dangerous! Other than avoiding thin ice, what other ice safety tips and rules do you know? What other water safety tips?
- Page 12: Can you imagine how Uinigumasuittuq is feeling at this point? What do you think she is thinking as she realizes he is a seabird?
- Page 14: Do you think she will make it back to her mother and father? Let's take a vote and then check our prediction at the end of the story.
- Page 18: Uinigumasuittuq makes the best of her situation when she knows she can't go home. She learns a very valuable skill when she practises skinning seals. Does anyone in your family hunt? What steps must they take to properly clean the animals that they bring home? Who helps?
- Page 20: Why do you think Uinigumasuittuq wanted to wait until her husband came home after the way he had tricked her?
- Page 24: What do you think will happen next? Will Uinigumasuittuq be okay?

- Page 30: Were your predictions right about why the woman was blowing bubbles in the cover illustration?
- What did you think of this story? How did it make you feel?
- What can we learn from this book?
- Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why or why not?
- What was your favourite part of this story?
- What more would you like to learn about this legend?

Extension Activities

The following activities could be used to help strengthen students' understanding of the story. Adapt these suggestions to the ability level of your students as necessary.

Poster/Collage

Cut up and use magazines, newspapers, and any other old media to create a poster or collage about this story and what you learned. Be creative and use words and images to show your understanding.

Vocabulary

Look through the story again. Choose five words that are new to you, tricky to spell, or interesting. Use each of these words in a sentence of your own. Trade sentences with a partner and edit their writing.



Writing Prompt

Pretend you are Uinigumasuittuq at three different points in the story. Write three journal entries from her point of view. Through her words, explain what is happening, how she feels, what she thinks might happen to her next, and any other thoughts she may have at that time.

Talking Circle

Sit in a circle on the floor or in chairs. Pass around a talking piece and allow each student to have a turn contributing. Here are some possible discussion ideas:

- Uinigumasuittuq was tricked! Talk about a time that you were tricked by someone.
- Give this book a rating on a scale from one to ten.
- In one word, tell how this book made you feel.

Interview

Choose one character from the book that you would like to interview. Create a list of questions you would like to ask them. Swap questions with a peer and pretend you are the character that is being interviewed. Answer the questions as if you are speaking from their voice. You could do this in writing or as a speaking and listening activity.

