

Tanna's Lemming

by Rachel and Sean Qitsualik-Tinsley

illustrated by Tamara Campeau



EDUCATOR'S
RESOURCE



Tanna's Lemming

About the Book

"Stories have hearts, just like people. And the heart of this story is true, even if the things said or done have been switched around a bit."

In this follow-up to the critically acclaimed *Tanna's Owl*, Tanna finds a small, grey lemming, far too cute to turn over to the scientist who has sent the children out to gather lemmings for his research. Instead, Tanna deems Fluffi to be a family member and attempts to raise the lemming in her home. But when the lemming strays from its cozy bed behind the stove and into Tanna's mother's things, Tanna is forced to consider whether she has really done what is best for Fluffi. Is it possible to treat something poorly by trying to treat it well?

About the Authors

Rachel Qitsualik-Tinsley was born at the northernmost edge of Baffin Island, in Canada's Arctic. She grew up learning traditional survival lore from her father. Sean Qitsualik-Tinsley was born at the southernmost edge of Ontario. He grew up learning traditional woodcraft. They were brought together by a love of nature and each other. Together, they write Arctic fantasy.



About the Illustrator

Tamara Campeau's illustration journey began at Dawson College, where she earned her associate degree in illustration and design. Shortly after, she furthered her studies at Sheridan College, where she obtained her bachelor's degree in illustration with honours. Tamara works digitally to bring stories to life through her painterly illustrations. Her work has a strong sense of lighting and vibrant colour palettes, along with dynamic compositions. She loves creating endearing characters with a strong sense of personality and emotion. Her work is inspired by wildlife, children, and the environments they reside in. She uses this inspiration to add a layer of realism to her illustrations. When she's not at her desk, she can be found breaking a sweat at the local gym or exploring nature with her standard poodle, Peanut.

Pre-Reading Discussion Questions

- Identify the title, author, and illustrator.
- What kind of a story do you think this will be? What makes you think that?
- What do you know about lemmings? Are they similar to any other animals that you know of?
- If you could have any animal for a pet, what would you choose?
- What would you name a lemming?
- What details do you notice about Tanna's community by looking at the cover illustration? Does anything about this image look similar to where you live?
- How do you think Tanna is feeling in this book? How can you tell?

During and Post-Reading Discussion Questions

The following questions and discussion points can be used during and after reading *Tanna's Lemming*. 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.

A Greeting From Rachel

- Read the greeting from the author, Rachel. Why do you think she has included this in the book?
- What do you think she means when she says the heart of the story is true?
- What might a child be able to learn from a lemming?



Page 2

- Would you enjoy days where the sun never set? What might you love about them? (E.g., able to play outside longer, able to see more, may feel warmer/happier.)

Page 4

- Why might a researcher be interested in catching lemmings? What do researchers do?
- Lemmings can jump a couple of feet! Stand up and see how high you can jump.

Page 7

- What do you think the Laws of Thunder might be?

Page 8

- Think of some reasons that even the littlest things on earth might be important.

Page 10

- How would you describe Thunder? What do you see when you close your eyes and imagine Thunder?

Page 11

- How do you think Fluffi feels with Tanna? How do you think Tanna feels when she's with Fluffi?

Page 13

- Tanna is doing a lot of kind things to take care of the lemming. What things has she done so far in the story to show kindness to Fluffi?

Page 17

- Why was Fluffi's coat turning brown?

Page 18

- What do you think happened?



Page 21

- How do you think each character in the story is feeling at this point? What might they be thinking?

Page 22

- What are Tanna's parents waiting for her to decide on?

Page 25

- Do you think Tanna and Fluffi will see each other again?

Page 30

- What do you think Tanna means when she says, "Was it possible to mistreat something by trying to treat it well?"

Post-Reading

- Do you think Tanna did the right thing by taking in Fluffi? Why or why not?

Extension Activities

Talking Circles

Sit in a circle on the floor or in chairs and pass around a talking piece so each person has a turn to contribute. Allow students the right to pass if they do not wish to share. Here are some suggestions to guide the discussion:

- What is your favourite season? What do you love about it?
- What is your least favourite season?
- What wild animal do you wish you could have as a pet?
- Give this story a thumbs-up if you liked it, a thumbs-sideways if it was so-so, or a thumbs-down if you did not enjoy it. You can explain your answer or only show your thumb if you prefer.
- How would your family react if you brought a lemming home?

Art/Science: Habitat

Imagine you are keeping a wild animal in your home. What things would you need to know about it so you could keep it safe and healthy? What does it eat? What temperature does it need to live in to survive? Does it need a small or a big space? Draw a picture of the space you would create for your new friend to live. Use labels to show what is in the animal's space (e.g., extra blankets, a bowl for water).

Pros and Cons

Make a chart with two sides. On one side, think of all the pros or positive things that happened because of Tanna keeping Fluffi. On the other side, think of any cons or negative outcomes that could come from her actions.

Writing: Point of View

Rewrite the story from someone else's point of view. You could choose to be:

- Fluffi
- Tanna's mom or dad
- Tanna's friends or sister
- Another lemming in the wild

Keep the plot the same, but change perspectives. Consider how the other characters would think, feel, and speak. Present your writing to a partner, small group, or the whole class.

A Special Object Show and Tell

Tanna's mother was very upset when Fluffi chewed holes through her silk cloths. They were special to her. Think of an object that is special to you. Perhaps it is something that somebody special gave to you, or that you received during a very important time in your life. If you can, bring the object, or a picture of the object, to school as a show and tell. Talk about things such as where you got the object, how it makes you feel, where you keep it at home, and what you love most about it.

