

THE LITTLE FOLK

By Levi Illuitok
Illustrated by
Steve James



EDUCATOR'S
RESOURCE



The Little Folk

About the Book

This traditional story, retold by Kugaaruk Elder Levi Illuitok, tells the tale of an Inuk boy who is adopted by little folk—a magical race of small Arctic people called *inugarulliit*. The boy's adopted parents finally allow him to go hunting, and he tracks and catches a lemming. But with the help of the little folk's extraordinary abilities, the boy may have caught more than he thought. . . .

About the Author

Levi Illuitok was born in Qilijauqtaq, Kugaaruk, a community in Nunavut. While growing up, him and his family travelled by land and didn't stay in one place for long. Levi enjoys going out on the land and hunting, and he also teaches his traditional knowledge to students. He is the author of *Ahiahia the Orphan* and *The Amajurjuk*.

About the Illustrator

Steve James is originally from a small village in North Yorkshire, but he now lives on the outskirts of the vibrant city of Leeds with his partner and their daughter. There are lots of artsy folk in Steve's family, so it was only natural that he should have a love for drawing from a young age, taking his early influence from *The Beano* and *The Dandy* comics to Warner Brothers and Disney cartoons. When Steven isn't illustrating, he likes to see live music, watch films, play video games, take walks in the countryside, and play guitar.



Pre-Reading Discussion Questions

- Identify the title, author, and illustrator of the book.
- What kind of a story do you think this will be? (E.g., fiction, non-fiction, funny, serious, happy, sad.) What makes you think that?
- Look at the characters in the illustration on the front cover. What do you notice?
- Have you heard any other legends or stories about little folk?
- Research common Inuit legends about little folk and see what you can learn about them prior to reading this story.
- The cover illustration by Steve James shows many aspects of Inuit culture. Name some of the things you notice.

During and Post-Reading Discussion Questions

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

- Go to the glossary at the end of the book. Practice saying the proper pronunciation for *inugarulliit*.
- What are breathing holes? Why are breathing holes a good place for hunters to wait for seals?

Page 5

- Why do you think the father finally agreed to let his son go hunting?
- What is something you would like to try but your parents say “no” or “not yet?”
- Hunting is a very important job. What dangers can you think of that are involved in hunting?

Page 6

- What is a lemming? How big is it? How big is a polar bear?

Page 9

- Why do you think the boy could not see the polar bear tracks that the hunter spoke of?
- What do you think the hunters’ reaction will be to the boy bringing back the lemming? Will they be excited? Proud? Shocked?



Page 10

- Do you think either of them is completely correct?
- What's happening at this point in the story?
- Tell about a time that you disagreed with someone. What happened?

Page 13

- Do you think the hunters caught a polar bear?
 - Have a class vote by raising hands or making a chart on the board.
Yes | No | Caught something other than a bear

Page 14

- What is a meat cache?
- How do you think the hunters might be feeling?
- How do you think the boy might be feeling?
- How do you think the boy's mother might be feeling?



Page 17

- Notice the aurora borealis in the background of these pages. Have you ever seen the northern lights? What are they?
- Do you have a favourite type of meat that you like to eat?

Page 20

- Being taught not to lie is an important life lesson. What other important skills or values has your family taught you?
- Where do you think the bear meat is? Is there actually any bear meat outside in the cache?
- Do you think the father knew his son would be confused and unable to bring bear meat?

Page 25

- What was the lesson in this story?
- Why do you think the author chose to write this story?
- What did you learn from reading this book?
- Did this book remind you of any other stories that you've read or heard?



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:

- If you were the son, would you have tried to tell your father and the other hunters that what you caught was truly only a lemming? Why or why not?
- Would you like to be a hunter? Why or why not?
- Give this story a rating from 1-5.
- If this story continued, what might happen next?
- The boy's parents felt very proud of him. What is something that makes you feel proud about yourself?



Writing Prompts

- Write about something that makes you feel proud.
- Write about a time that you were very confused. What was the outcome?
- Create a brainstorm of jobs you think would be interesting or fun.

Arctic Animals

On the board or using chart paper, make a list of any Arctic animals that you know. Add to this list by researching online or in the library. Choose one of the animals and make a list of questions you would like to find the answers to about this animal. The following are a few questions to get you started:

- What food does your animal eat?
- How big can your animal grow to be?
- What can your animal be used for if hunted?
- What is the lifespan of your animal?

Present your findings to your class. Continue with this animal study by adding labelled diagrams, drawings, clay sculptures, or any other way of representing information.

What Am I?

In this story, the little folk said that the lemming was actually a polar bear. Play a game with your peers. Pretend you are the little folk. Describe something in the classroom as if you are very small and seeing it as something differently. Have your classmates take turns guessing what it is that you're describing.

Understanding Emotions

The boy and his parents felt many emotions in this story. Let's talk about some of these emotions.

- Write down or say aloud as many emotions as you can think of (e.g., happy, sad, angry, scared, proud, confused, surprised).
- Talk about situations in which you have some of these emotions.
- Go through the story again to find examples of different emotions (e.g., on page 5, the boy may have been disappointed at first that he didn't get to go hunting, but then he may have felt excited that he was allowed to go. On page 10, the boy may be confused because he only saw a small lemming and not a polar bear).
- Make masks to represent the emotions that have been listed. Think of creative ways to use these masks throughout the day.
 - Hold them up when you are experiencing a certain emotion.
 - Use them while you listen to a story and hold up the face representing the emotion the character may be experiencing.
 - Write your own story that includes each of these emotions.
- Make a "Feelings Alphabet" for your classroom. Try to think of a word that starts with each letter of the alphabet to describe how a person can feel. You could do this as a whole class, in small groups, or on your own.
 - Start students off with a few examples (A - angry; F - frustrated; J - jealous) or help guide them with the more uncommon letters (X - eXtra happy)
 - Continue to add words to your Feelings Alphabet throughout the day, week, or even school year.

Changing Sizes

The little folk had the power to shrink or enlarge things. Imagine you are in your house, at school, or at the grocery store and that you could make anything bigger or smaller.

What would you make bigger? What would you make smaller? Draw a picture of some of the items you would change and explain why you chose these things.

Share your ideas with the class.

