

Iluvaktuq and Paluqtaleq

Two Yup'ik Warrior Stories

Iluvaktuq and Paluqtaleq: Two Yup'ik Warrior Stories is a traditional Yup'ik story, told by Annie Blue and Mary E. Bavilla. It accompanies the curriculum module *Designing Patterns: Exploring Shapes and Area*, which is part of the series *Math in a Cultural Context: Lessons Learned from Yup'ik Eskimo Elders*.

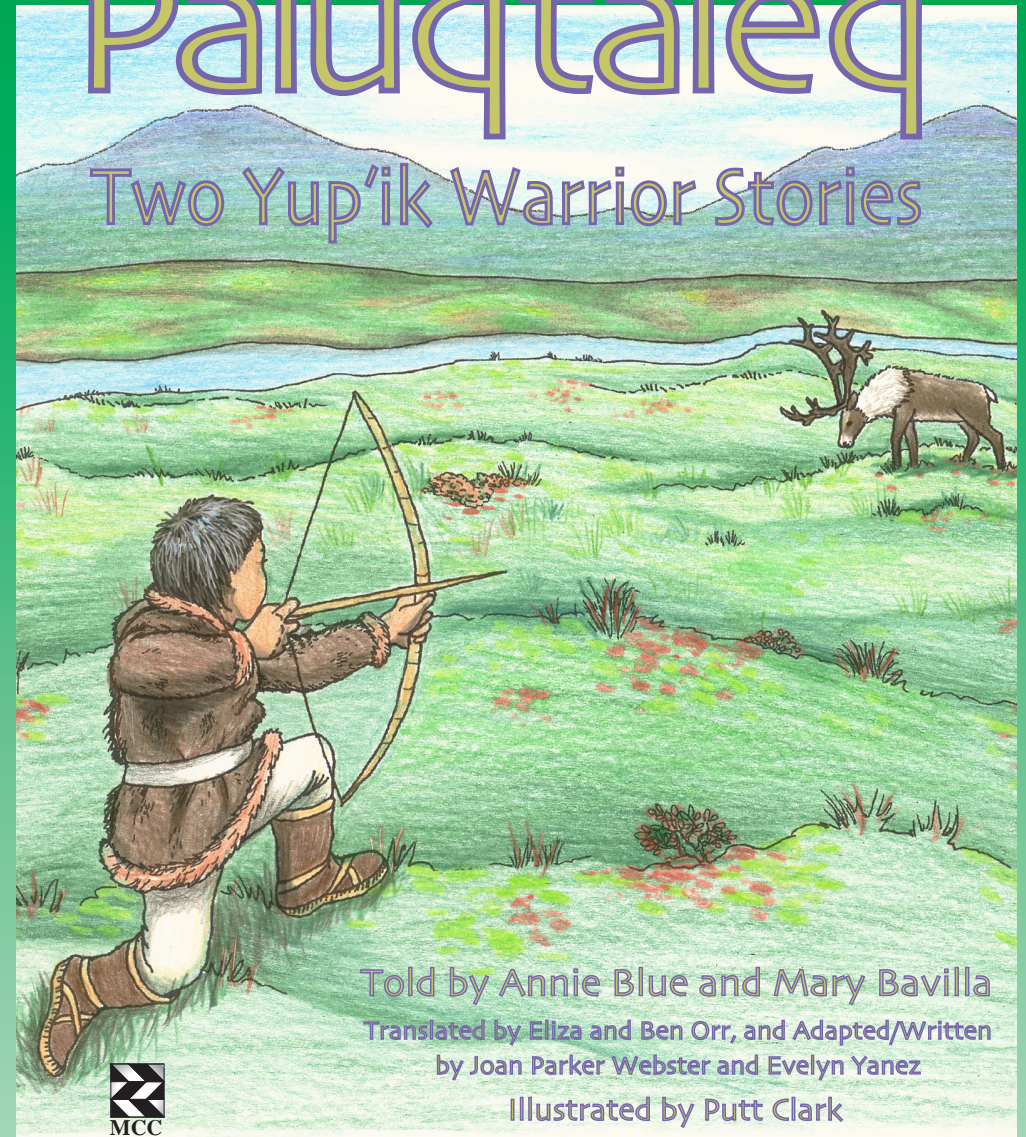
These stories are about two Yup'ik warriors who were part of a group of warriors living during the Great War, during the Russian occupation of Alaska. Stories are an important part of the *Math in a Cultural Context* series, as a way for students to relate to Alaska and some of its unique characteristics. These two stories help connect to the math of the module through parka pattern designs.



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Part of the series: *Math in a Cultural Context: Lessons Learned from MCC Yup'ik Eskimo Elders*



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Iluvaktuq and Paluqtalek: Two Yup'ik Warrior Stories

Original Stories told to
Evelyn Yanez
by
Annie Blue and Mary E. Bavilla

Children's Version Adapted by
Evelyn Yanez, Dora Andrew-Ihrke, and Joan Parker Webster

Illustrated by Putt Clark

This storybook accompanies *Designing Patterns: Exploring Shapes and Area*, a third-through-fifth-grade curriculum module that is part of the series *Math in a Cultural Context: Lessons Learned from Yup'ik Eskimo Elders*, Jerry Lipka, Principal Investigator and Series Editor.

Iluvaktuq and Paluqtalek: A Story of Two Warriors, told to Evelyn Yanez by Annie Blue and Mary E. Bavilla, accompanies *Designing Patterns: Exploring Shapes and Area*, a third through fifth-grade curriculum module © 2006 University of Alaska Fairbanks, which is part of the series *Math in a Cultural Context: Lessons Learned from Yup'ik Eskimo Elders*, Principal Investigator and Series Editor Jerry Lipka.

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About the Storytellers

Cungaayar, Annie Blue

Annie Blue was born on February 21, 1916, in a place called Qissayaaq on the Togiak River in Alaska. Her mother, Aninautaaq, and father, Quriciq Yugg'aaq, had nine children. Annie Blue moved to Togiak around 1945, where she still lives. She married Cingarkaaq and had seven children; four survived birth. Of these four children, one is still living today.

When asked how she became a storyteller, Annie Blue said that she remembers listening to Saveskar, the storyteller in her village, as she told stories. Annie remembers that while Saveskar was telling her stories, others who were also listening with her would start to leave as time went by. Pretty soon, Annie found herself the only one left listening to Saveskar's stories. It was important to Annie to stay and listen to the stories because she respected Saveskar and was afraid to offend her by leaving while she was telling stories. Today, Annie Blue is a respected storyteller, carrying on the oral tradition of Yup'ik storytelling. When asked what her favorite stories were, she said Iluvaktuq and Kukugyarpak.

Ernerculria, Mary E. Bavilla

Mary E. Bavilla was born on May 1, 1927, in Goodnews Bay, Alaska. She moved to Togiak in 1946 after her oldest son (one of fourteen children, eleven of whom are still living) was born. When asked how she became a storyteller, Mary said that her parents told her stories as a young girl. Her father, Angulluaq, was a storyteller, and he would tell stories every night. Today Mary is a respected storyteller, following in the tradition of her father. Her favorite story is Tulukaruk.



About the Contributors

Dora Andrew-Ihrke is a retired Yup'ik teacher and bilingual coordinator from Dillingham City Schools. She was recognized as the teacher of the year three times and nationally recognized as the recipient of the Milken Family Foundation National Education Award in 1990. She also was given the Alaska Federation of Natives Eileen McLean Educator Award in 2003. She contributes her considerable knowledge of Yup'ik culture and its connections to Western knowledge as a consultant to the Math in a Cultural Context project. She contributed some of the supplementary cultural information in the boxes in this storybook.

Putt Clark was born in Petersburg, Alaska, in 1967, later moving with her family to Fairbanks, where she grew up. She attended the University of Alaska Fairbanks, later transferring and graduating from World College West in Petaluma, CA, with a BA in arts and society.

Joan Parker Webster is an associate professor in the School of Education at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. She develops the literacy component and conducts qualitative research and analysis for Math in a Cultural Context.

Evelyn Yanez, a former Yup'ik teacher and state-recognized bilingual educator, has been involved in education for the past thirty years. She has extensive experience working with Yup'ik elders and collecting, recording, transcribing, and translating traditional Yup'ik stories.



Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the elders who have told stories to us so that the next generation may learn them and that the stories may live on. We also want to thank Eliza and Ben Orr for collecting stories from elders and helping with the transcribing, translating, and editing of these and other stories.

We would like to thank all the behind-the-scenes people who have contributed their talents to the production of this book. Thanks to Flor Banks for her persistence and attention to detail. Also thanks to Carrie Aldridge for her editing, and special thanks to Sue Mitchell for the layout and editing.

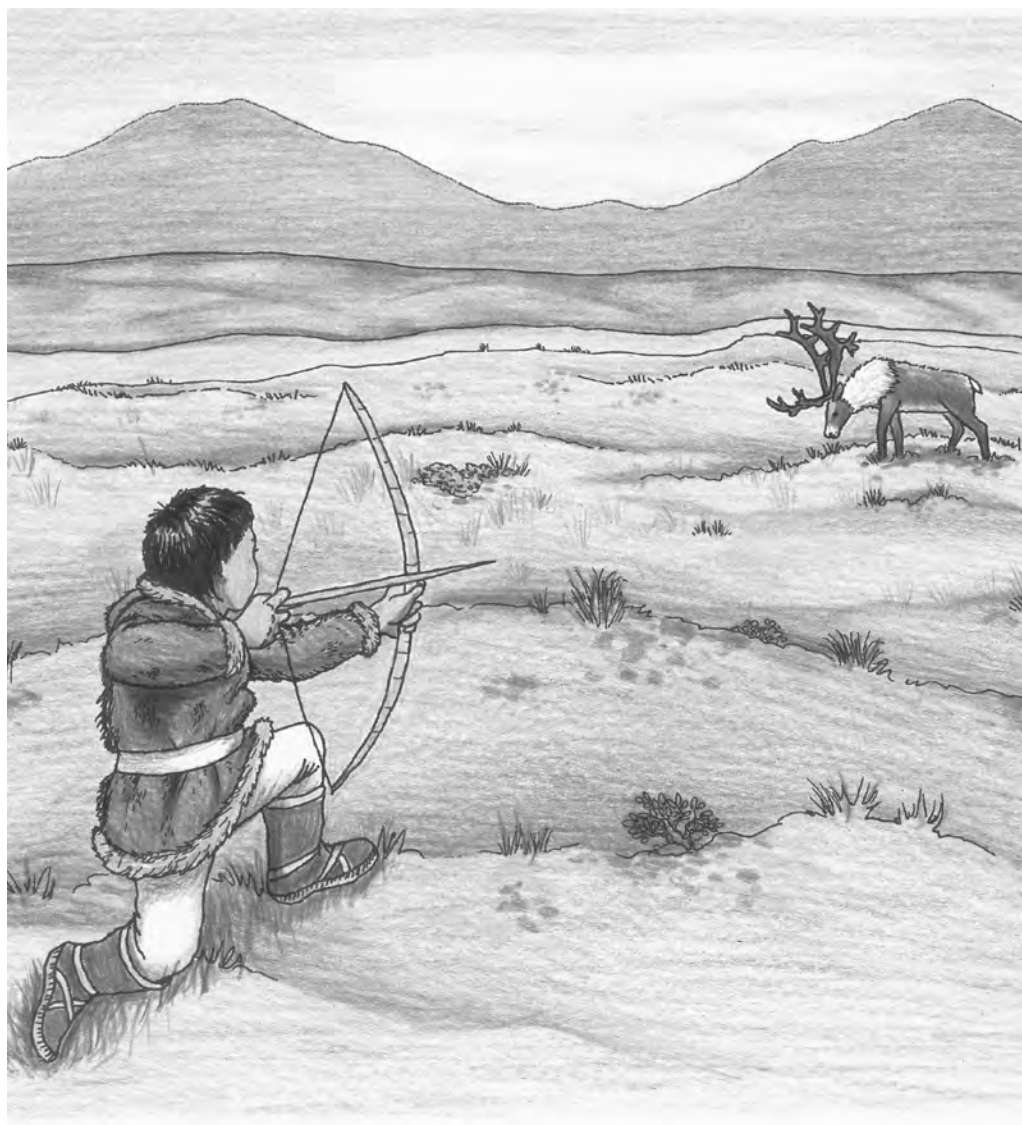
We would also like to express our thanks to Grace Gamechuck for contributing her recipe for *akutaq*.

Note to Readers

This is one version of the stories of Iluvaktuq and Paluqtalek. It is taken from the tellings of two Togiak storytellers, Annie Blue and Mary E. Bavilla. There are also other versions. Annie Blue and Mary Bavilla are well-respected storytellers and that is why we chose to include their version.

There are many culturally based vocabulary words located in the story. They are explained in text boxes that appear on the page (with the story narrative). There is a glossary at the end of the story to help further explain meanings of these words. There are also illustrations that contain the visual representation of the words. For example, the word cache is explained in a text box on page 26, which also contains an illustration.







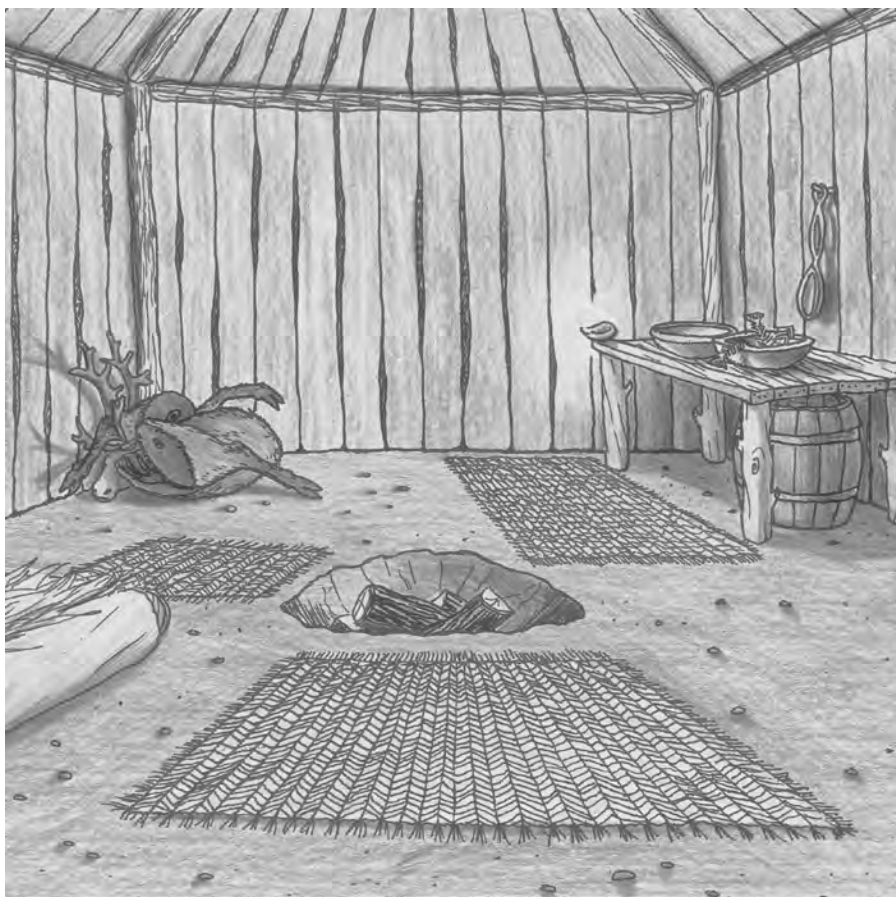
Iluvaktuq

I am going to tell a story about a great war that happened a long time ago in the Kuskokwim River area. During this time, there lived a warrior. The people called him their lethal weapon because he could incite his men to attack whenever they set out on a war party. This warrior's name was Iluvaktuq. Not only was Iluvaktuq a great warrior, he was also a successful hunter. He could go out into the wilderness and get not one, but many caribou or arctic char in one hunt.

They say that Iluvaktuq was a big man. He also had a great appetite. So, Iluvaktuq decided to take a second, younger wife. With two wives to prepare the caribou and char, Iluvaktuq doubled his fish cache and his smokehouse.

The War of the Eye

Iluvaktuq lived during a war called the War of the Eye. The War of the Eye occurred in the first two decades of the 19th century, before the first Russians reached the Nushagak and Kuskoswim regions. The war began when two boys were throwing darts at a target in the community house (*qasgiq*). One of the boys made a wild throw and hit his companion's eye. It is said that if the father of the injured boy had been satisfied with an eye for an eye, the conflict would have been settled then and there. But the father of the injured boy took out both of the other boy's eyes with a dart. The feud spread to their kinsman, then to other villages, and eventually to the entire Yup'ik region (Orr et al., 1997).



One day, Iluvaktuq came home with one gigantic bull caribou. When he arrived, he stashed it in the house. The caribou was so big, it filled the entire back corner. Then, Iluvaktuq and his two wives retired for the night, since it was late.

Early the next morning, the second, younger wife woke up and realized that the corner of the house was empty. She asked the first wife, “Where is the meat that was in the corner?”



The first wife replied,
“Our husband ate it all. He
eats one whole caribou in one
sitting when he is going to
have a successful hunt.”

“*Alingnaqvaa*, oh my
goodness,” said the younger
wife, who was concerned
because Iluvaktuq ate the
whole caribou. “Now what are
we going to eat all winter?”
The younger wife became so
forlorn that she hung her head
down in despair.

Preserving Food for the Winter

In a subsistence society, people hunt, fish and gather berries and other edible plants to eat. They also prepare and store food for winter consumption. Smoking meat in the smokehouse and drying fish are ways to preserve the food for storing. It was extremely important for a man to be a good hunter so that his family would have food for the long winter months.





“Don’t worry,” said the first wife. “This is what he always does before a successful hunt.” And she reassured the younger wife that Iluvaktuq would not only replace what he had eaten, he would also kill many more caribou.



Iluvaktuq began to bring home caribou one after another. Food accumulated in the cache. But the second wife still dreaded the prospect that Iluvaktuq would keep on eating all the caribou until they were entirely consumed, leaving nothing to eat during the winter. This upset Iluvaktuq, because he was such a good provider.

Iluvaktuq's first wife always cooked freshly boiled arctic char using two cooking pots. She used one pot to cook the upper part of the fish and the other pot to cook the tail end part of the fish. The fire, which was built on the dirt floor of the house, was used as the source for heat as well as for cooking.

There was one window in the top part of the house that was also used as a smoke hole. In those days, they used windbreaks in the hole to stop the smoke from going inside the house. The members of the household had to move the windbreak constantly. If the windbreak was not set properly against the wind, the house would get smoky.

Summer and Winter Houses

During the summer months, people living in the northern regions of western Alaska lived in skin tents or lodges, while those living in the more southern regions lived in more permanent wood structures that were located at or near the winter village.

A typical winter house built in the Yukon-Kuskokwim region was a rectangular, semisubterranean log structure. It was about eight or nine feet high and was covered with earth. The fire was built under the window or smoke hole in the roof.

The window was a quick way to talk to the inhabitants of the house. People would run onto the domed roof of the semisubterranean house and call down the window or smoke hole to the people inside the house. (Fitzhugh & Kaplan, 1982; Lee & Reinhardt, 2003.)





In those days, the women had oval shaped wooden bowls to use in cooking. These bowls were used to make *akutaq* (Eskimo ice cream). There was also a berry masher that was made of walrus tusk. Iluvaktuq's first wife also used the walrus tusk for grinding the big game fat used to make all different kinds of *akutaq*.

Iluvaktuq's first wife also used her wooden bowls to cool what she had cooked. After cooking the char, she would carefully place the upper part of the fish in one wooden bowl and use another one for the tail parts. As soon as the fish in the two bowls cooled off, she covered the bowls.

Wooden Bowls

Every woman had a set of wooden bowls and trays to use when serving food to her family and guests. These were made by men and were often decorated with mythological and supernatural creatures. The decorations often recalled stories and helped women identify their bowls. One of the chores for the women living during the time of this story was to prepare food for her husband, family, and guests, using these bowls (Fitzhugh & Kaplan, 1982).



Recipe for Akutaq

Akutaq, which is also called Eskimo ice cream, is a mixture of fat and various kinds of berries. Many recipes include salmonberries or cloudberry (*naunrat*), and crowberries (*tan'gerpiit*). Each family has a slightly different recipe and way of making their *akutaq*. Here is one recipe.

Blueberry Akutaq

by Grace Gamechuk from Manokotak

- 1 gallon of blueberries
- 1 ½ cups of shortening
- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 to 1½ cups of sugar
- ½ to 1 cup of applesauce

Fluff the shortening with the oil. Next add sugar in increments until it is used up. Then add the applesauce in small amounts. Finally add the berries. Enjoy your first Eskimo ice cream!

Eating from Two Bowls

The tail part of the fish does not have any bones, so it can be eaten quickly. When Iluvaktuq came home from a hunt, he was hungry. Eating the tail part first allowed Iluvaktuq to eat very fast to satisfy his hunger. Then, he could eat the upper part slowly, carefully removing the bones.

It is also a Yup'ik belief that if you eat the tails of fish, you will be quick like a fish, because the fish uses his tail to navigate and swim quickly.





When Iluvaktuq came home from hunting, he ate from both of the bowls. First he ate the tail parts of the fish, slurping very noisily. Then he drank the fish broth. Next he ate the upper part of the fish very slowly, like a genuine human being, carefully putting the bones on one side of the bowl while he ate. Iluvaktuq ate everything that was in the big, wooden bowls.





Soon the enemy warriors heard about the great hunter and warrior Iluvaktuq and his big appetite, and they wanted to get rid of him. They started secretly following him around when he went caribou hunting.

One day, while the warriors were quietly observing Iluvaktuq, they saw him kill a big bull caribou. Iluvaktuq cut the fat part of the caribou and set it aside to gel. Then he started cutting up the meat. As soon as he was finished, the warriors closed in on Iluvaktuq and surrounded him in a circle.

Caribou ***Rangifer tarandus***

Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) live in the arctic and mountain tundra and northern forests of North America, Russia, and Scandinavia. Caribou travel in herds. In Alaska there are 32 herds. A herd is distinguished by its calving area or place where their young are born, which is separate from the calving areas of other herds. In winter, however, different herds may mix together in the same ranging area.

The herds of caribou in Alaska have different names, such as the Porcupine herd, the Fortymile herd, and the Mulchatna herd (Alaska Department of Fish and Game, www.adfg.state.ak.us).





When they had completely encircled Iluvaktuq, one of the enemy warriors said, “Are we going to kill him now?” Another answered, “Well, I heard that this one has a big stomach. So, let’s force him to eat first. Then after he eats we will let him go. But, he won’t be able to run away because he will be so full. Then, we will be sure to get him.” What the enemy warriors didn’t know was that earlier Iluvaktuq had wrapped something tightly around his waist so that his stomach still had a lot of room in it.

A Clever Plan

By wrapping his stomach, Iluvaktuq could artificially restrict his ability to intake food. This would allow him to easily vomit it up as he walked. By emptying his stomach, he could then run quickly to escape from the enemy warriors.

Then one of the warriors said, “You will end up with nothing if he outsmarts us. There are some very intelligent people living among us, and this man is the most intelligent of all!” But, another warrior replied, “You are wrong, he will not outsmart us with such a full stomach.”

So, the warriors watched Iluvaktuq eat. He finished one part of the back fat, and began eating the other half. When he stopped eating, the warriors began to stuff his mouth with fat.





Now, Iluvatuq looked very full. The warriors said, “Now we can let him go.” They made way for Iluvatuq and formed two lines that stretched far into the distance where there was a mountain that had a steep slope. The warriors planned to kill Iluvatuq when he reached the foot of mountain.

Iluvaktuq began walking between the two lines of warriors that stretched toward the mountain. He kept looking back at the men who were following him, and as he did, he would vomit a little on the shoulders of his short squirrel skin parka. As walked, he carefully held on to his walking stick, because he did not want to lose it.

Importance of the Walking Stick

In the story, Iluvaktuq “carefully held on to his walking stick, because he did not want to lose it.” It was very important to always carry a walking stick, because it could save one’s life. The walking stick was a survival tool that could be useful in the following situations:

- If one fell through thin ice into the water, the person could place the walking stick horizontally across the hole and pull himself up and out of the water.
- It could be used to check for quicksand while walking on the tundra or by a river or pond.
- It could be used to check for soft mud while walking on the beach when the tide is out.
- It could be used to check water depth.
- It could help one walking on glare ice.
- It could help in walking faster and walking uphill through rocky terrain.

Can you think of other uses for the walking stick? How could you use a walking stick today where you live?





Finally, Iluvaktuq reached the last two men at the end of the lines of enemy warriors. Now, Iluvaktuq could outsmart the enemy. He knew that all the enemy warriors were behind him so he started running. He ran as if he was not full of caribou fat. He ran as a young caribou.



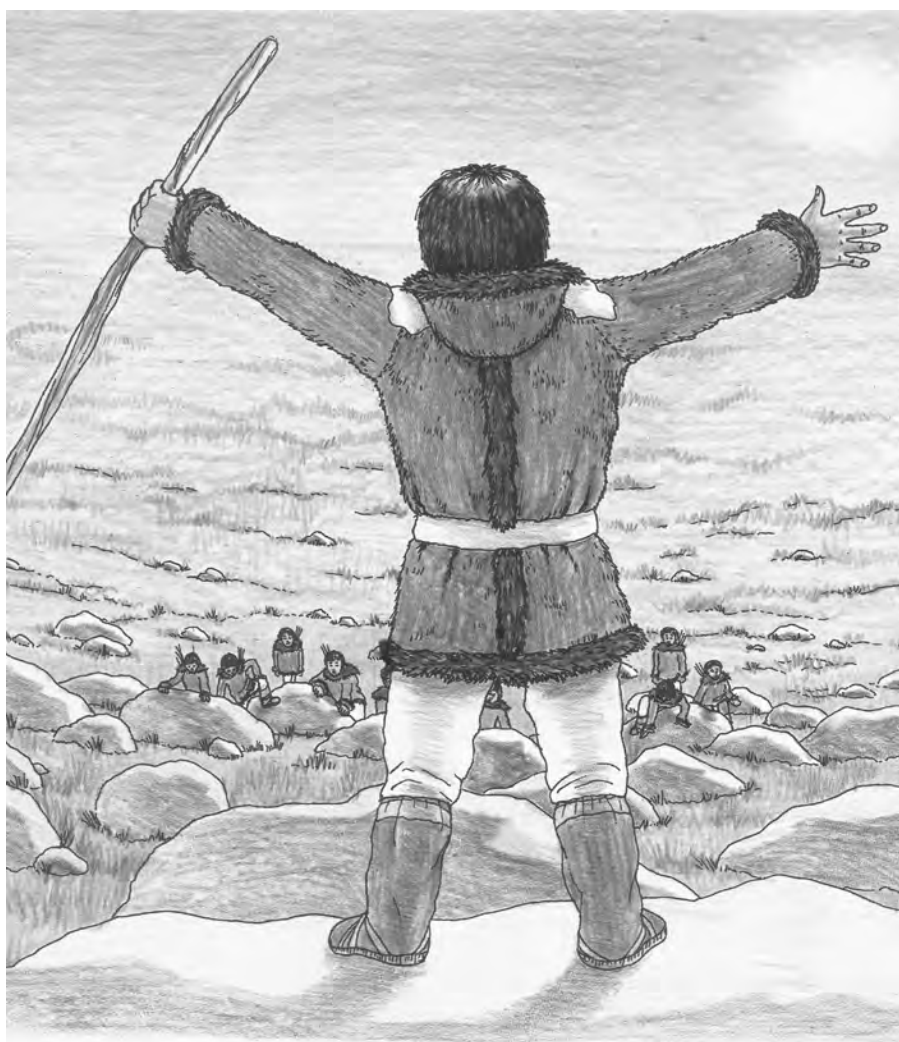


Ilovaktuq ran up the mountain. The warriors ran after him, but they could not catch up to him. They shot arrows at him, but the arrows could not hit him because he was too fast for them. One of the enemy warriors who had warned the others said, “I told you what was going to happen, but you would not listen.”



As soon as he reached the top of the mountain, Iluvaktuq stood up very tall. Looking down on the men below, he shouted,

“Aa-gga-gaa, Ak’a pikna naqii-ii. Ayarurturluku. Ayarurturluku” (a chant signifying his triumphant escape from his enemies).



Today we have two pieces on the shoulders of our parkas called *miryaruak*. The *miryaruak* are white fur trim sewn onto the shoulders of the parka. They represent what Iluvaktuq vomited while he was running away from the enemy warriors. And to this day, there are no children named Iluvaktuq. He was too great a warrior and no one can live up to his name. It would be boasting. This ends my story.

Naming Custom

Naming in Yup'ik culture is an important custom that is very significant. When children are born, they are named after a deceased person, a namesake. The storyteller has never encountered anyone named after Iluvaktuq.





Paluqtalek

After his encounter with the enemy warriors, Iluvaktuq went home to his community house (*qasgiq*). Here he started whittling a harpoon. Iluvaktuq knew a fellow warrior named Paluqtalek, who was an invalid and a very small person. Paluqtalek's name came from the two beaver pelts (*paluqtak*), that were sewn back to back to make his parka. Since he could not walk, he would travel around in his kayak (*qayaq*) on the ice and in the water.



The Significance of Two Beaver Pelts

The story describes Paluqtalek as a small person. Paluqtalek's name comes from the Yup'ik for two beaver pelts, *paluqtak*, which were sewn back-to-back to make his parka. The number of the beaver pelts used to make Paluqtalek's parka is significant and an indicator of his small size. Generally, it takes between five and six beaver pelts to make a parka for an average-size adult male. Paluqtalek's parka was made from only two pelts, which is about a third the size of an average male's parka.



One day, while one of the men was on top of the *qasgi* (also called *qasgiq*), he noticed the enemy running after Paluqtalek. The man shouted down to Iluvaktuq through the window in the top of the house.

“The enemies are after Paluqtalek. He is pushing his way back, but they are gaining on him!” the man said, urging Iluvaktuq to hurry.



But Iluvaktuq did not hurry. He said, “Let them run after him, and if anything happens to him, he will be changed into a new person.” After saying that, Iluvaktuq got ready to leave the *qasgiq*. As he went out, he could see that the enemy was already fleeing. But, he went after them and killed them as he caught them. Soon Iluvaktuq, the lethal weapon, had killed them all.

The *Qasgiq*

My grandmother said the *qasgiq*, the community house or meeting place, was the most important building in the village. It was built in a circular shape with a domed roof. The floor of the *qasgiq* was called *nuna*, which means the earth, and the ceiling was called *qilak*, which means the sky. In center of the domed ceiling there was an opening or smoke hole, which had three purposes. One purpose was for cooking, and the smoke hole would allow the smoke to rise out of the *qasgiq*. Another purpose was to let light in, like a window. It was sometimes covered with seal gut, especially in the winter. The third purpose was for use in festivals. During these times, the smoke hole was an integral part of the festival’s rituals. As the shaman was performing the rituals, his spirit would exit through the smoke hole in order to communicate with the spirits of animals or directly with living animals. Depending on the purpose, the shaman’s spirit might go under the *imaq*, which means water, to talk to the seal, or go on the *nuna* (earth) to talk to the caribou. Sometimes the shaman’s spirit would travel to the moon to get a look at all the inhabitants, both human and animal to see why some phenomenon, such as a famine, had occurred.

In the story, two words are used that mean the community house: *qasgiq* and *qasgi*. In Togiak, these two words mean the same thing and can be used interchangeably.





Another time, Iluvaktuq and Paluqtalek traveled by *qayaq* to a place by Manakotak called Iiyuussiiq. On their way there, they stopped in one of the villages in Quluqaq called Eqtaat and rested, waiting for nightfall. Once it was dark, Iluvaktuq went to one of the houses and peeked through the woven grass door.

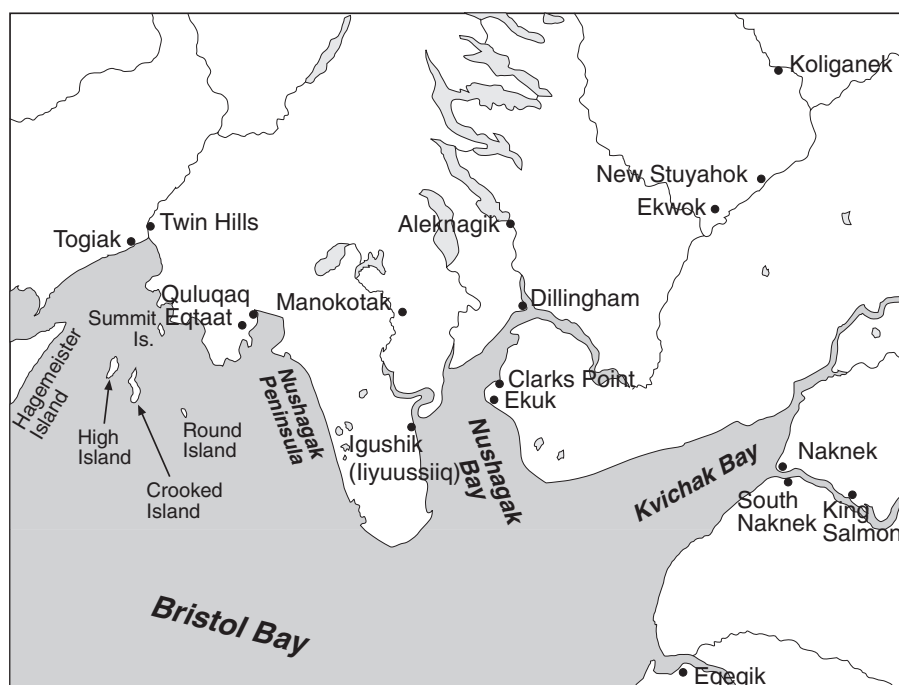
Iluvaktuq looked in and saw a woman sewing. Her husband was lying in another bed. There was a small child crying on the dirt floor. Iluvaktuq noticed a beautiful beaded necklace made with Russian trade beads, hanging on the *naparyaq* (a tripod to hang cooking pots over the

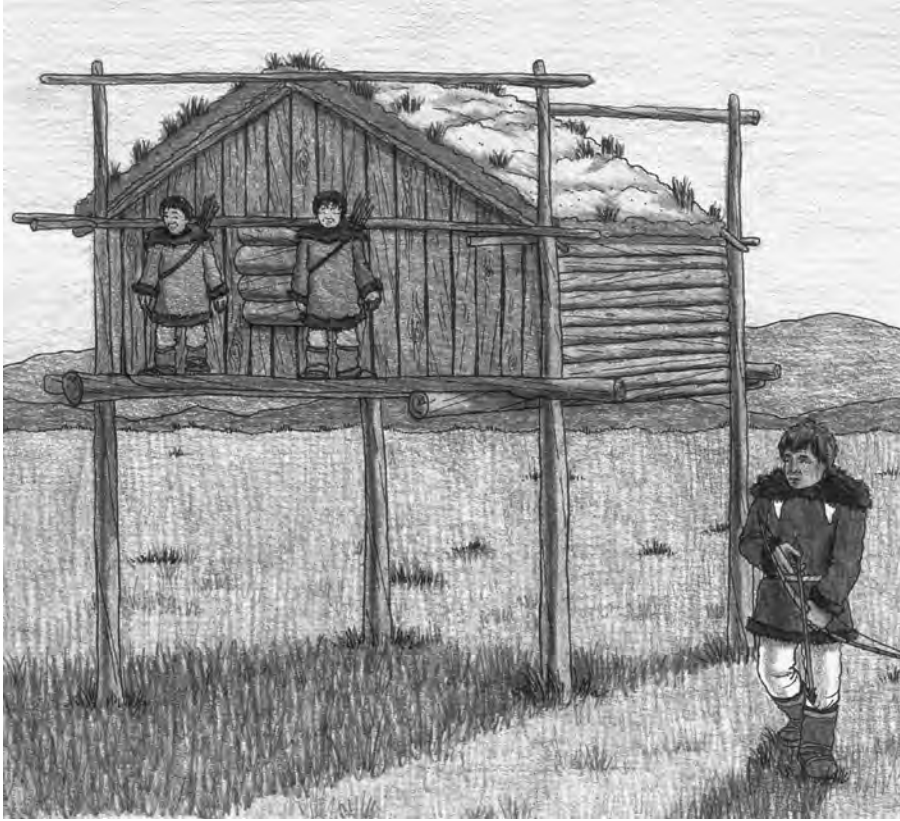


fire), in the middle of the *qasgiq*. Every time the child started crying, his mother would say to him,

“Stop fussing. If you don’t stop crying, Iluvaktuq will get you.” She was trying to scare the child so he would be afraid to cry.

But, Iluvaktuq did not like the mother using his name to scare her child. So, Iluvaktuq and Paluqtalek left the village. They traveled by *qayaq* to a place called Iiyuussiiq.





The Cache

The cache was an elevated storehouse, high off the ground, where meat and other perishable items were placed. The cache was typically erected on top of four log posts, which were about 10 to 12 feet high, forming a quadrangle. The walls of the cache were made from rough-hewn logs and the top was covered with sticks as was the floor. Sometimes a grass thatch was placed on top of the flooring. Moss was also used as a caulk between the logs (Fitzhugh & Kaplan, 1982).



Iluvaktuq and Paluqtalek were great warriors. During this time, the people in the area would build elevated fish caches using logs. The enemy warriors would hide on the sides of the elevated fish caches thinking the sun would hide them from Iluvaktuq. But, Iluvaktuq would see them hiding and shoot at them with bows and arrows as they were trying to hide from him and the caches would be covered with the bodies of the enemy.



Paluqtalek was known for his ability to hide. Nobody could find him when he hid. Paluqtalek was so good at hiding that the enemy would often give up looking for him. When Paluqtalek was a small child, one of his chores was to keep the floor of the *qasgiq* clean. Back in this time, the houses had dirt floors that were covered with grass. The floors needed to be swept off to keep them clean. When Paluqtalek swept up the grass, he would bundle it before he removed it from the house and threw it away.

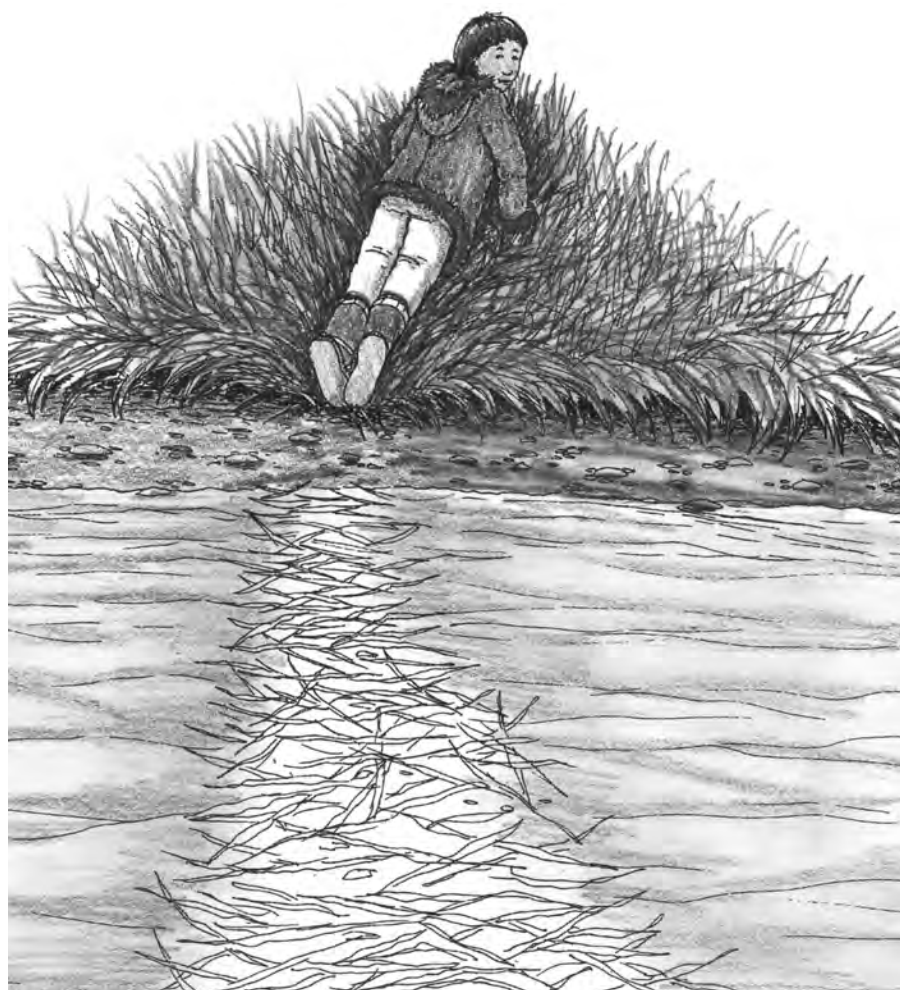


One fall day, the enemy warriors were running after Paluqtalek. Around this time, the currents of the river were very strong. Paluqtalek came to a spot that had a very fast current. So, he quickly took off his beaver parka and let it float down stream. He found a spot on the side of the river and hid. He heard the enemy close by and they were shooting arrows at his floating parka. He waited until they left.

The sun was starting to go down and he finally came out of his hiding place. He noticed that the current was not as strong as it was earlier. So, he quickly went to the other side of the river. The enemy saw him as soon as he got to the other side.

“Look,” they said. “He is crossing over there.”





Just when Paluqtalek looked back along the path he had crossed, he saw that it wasn't a river at all! It was the grass his mother used to make him throw away that had come back to rescue him. It had formed a thin layer, like ice, over the current of the river, which had stopped, so that Paluqtalek could cross over. Once Paluqtalek was across, the grass scattered, preventing the enemy from following.

How the Grass Came to the Rescue

The significance of the grass playing an important role in saving Paluqtalek from his enemies relates back his chore of sweeping the floor of his house. In the Yup'ik culture it is important to do your chores because one's diligence will result in a good payback. Because Paluqtalek was diligent in his chore of sweeping the floor for his mother, the grass came back and saved him in his time of need.

In Yup'ik culture, everything a person does has a purpose.



Glossary

akutaq—a food that contains animal tallow or fat, salmonberries, cloudberryes, or blueberries and sugar. This light and fluffy mixture is sometimes called Eskimo ice cream.

alingnaqvaa—Yup'ik for an expression of concern, like “Oh my goodness.”

arctic char—a type of fish found in lakes in Alaska. They can weigh between 2 and 10 pounds, depending on the area and lake in which the fish lives. Some scientists say that the dolly varden trout is a closely related cousin to the arctic char.

cache—an elevated storehouse where food items were kept. The cache was usually a rectangular wooden structure built on top of four log posts.

caribou—animals that live in large herds in the arctic, tundra, and northern forest regions of North America, Russia, and Scandinavia. Caribou eat vegetation such as tree leaves and small sedges as well as lichens, moss, and berry shrubs.

imaq—water or sea

miryaruak—white fur sewn onto the shoulder area of parkas from the Togiak region. In Iluvaktuq's time the fur was either white dog fur or caribou. Today white calf-skin is used. It also symbolizes the vomit caused by Iluvaktuq's running when he escaped from his enemies.

naparyaq—a tripod to hang cooking pots over the fire

naunrat—salmonberries or cloudberryes

nuna—the earth

paluqtak—beaver pelt

qasgiq—served as a men's house and a community/ceremonial meeting place

qayaq—Yup'ik for kayak, a traditional boat, originally made from skin stretched over a wooden frame. Can be made for one or two people. Yup'ik people used double-bladed paddles to propel the boat.

qilak—sky

smokehouse—a small structure, built from logs or wooden planks in which a fire is built to slowly smoke meat and fish for the winter

tan'gerpiit—crowberryes

windbreaks—pieces of wood that were placed in the window or smoke hole on top of the domed roof of the subterranean houses. These windbreaks would block the wind so that the smoke from the fire in the house below would not be blown back down through the window or smoke hole. It was important to change the placement of the windbreaks, when the wind shifted direction, to keep the house from getting smoky.



About the Stories

When Evelyn Yanez was a young girl, during a time before there was electricity in her village, Annie Blue would come to her house and tell stories in Yup'ik. Remembering these times, Evelyn says, "I was never bored when I was listening to stories." Even when she and her family went to pick berries or fish at Togiak Lake, Evelyn remembers they would stop along the way and stories would be told.

When Evelyn became a teacher, she asked Annie Blue to come to her classroom to tell stories. When Evelyn became the school district's bilingual coordinator, she began to tape the stories, so they would be saved as oral histories. Annie Blue wanted to start sharing her stories in the classroom because she knew if the children did not have the opportunity to hear them, they would be lost to future generations. This children's book represents another way of sharing these stories so they will not be lost—so they will remain with us forever as they are passed down to future generations.

The children's book you are reading is the result of a careful process that occurred in several phases. The first phase of the children's storybook project involved collecting traditional Yup'ik stories told in Yup'ik by elder storytellers. While many stories were previously recorded, translated, and compiled into an unpublished archival collection, one of the project goals was to collect additional tellings of the stories that were already in the archived collection as well as stories that may have not been included. Also, these stories are part of a larger project, Math in a Cultural Context (MCC). Of particular interest was the collection of stories that would directly relate to the cultural theme and math content of the developing math modules. While we already had a transcribed Yup'ik version of many of these stories in the archived collection, we collected additional tellings of them, because every oral performance of a given story differs somewhat from other performances of the same story, and we wanted to capture the various nuances of detail that might occur.

The members of the literacy team (Evelyn Yanez, Dora Andrew-Ihrke, and Joan Parker Webster) then began to compare the transcriptions and the two new English translations of the Togiak story performances with a previously transcribed and translated versions of Iluvaktuq and Paluqtalek. The "constant" elements formed the framework for the composite story and details were added from the various performances. This involved a recursive comparative process that moved back and forth between Yup'ik transcriptions (performed by Evelyn Yanez and Dora Andrew-Ihrke in consultation with the elder storytellers) and English translations. For example, in one narrative performance, the storyteller (Annie Blue) started with this formulaic beginning:



There was a young and very successful hunter who would catch all kinds of things.

In another performance, a different storyteller (Mary E. Bavilla) specifically names the hunter Iluvaktuq in her opening. She also includes a reference to the War of the Eye, an historical event that occurred in the first two decades of the 19th century involving the inhabitants of the Kuskokwim River area. Here is the opening as Mary E. Bavilla told it:

I am going to tell you a story about wars that happened a long time ago.

I am going to tell a story that I heard about the Great War that happened a long time ago.

At that time of the war they had living amongst them a warrior, a lethal weapon. He was named Iluvaktuq.

In the final composite, the specific name of Iluvaktuq is given to the great warrior and hunter, and the introduction also includes the historical setting of the “War of the Eye.”

The next phase of the process involved working with the English composite versions to produce a children’s text that contained language and vocabulary appropriate to a range of reading levels that were compatible with the target reading audience of the module (grades 3–5). After this children’s English text was constructed, the literacy team first reviewed it for content accuracy and faithfulness to the oral storytelling style. The team then reviewed it for its comprehensibility and accessibility to younger readers. After these readings, the text was read (translated into Yup’ik) to Annie Blue and Mary E. Bavilla for approval. In this phase, we also checked the preliminary sketches of the story illustrations for accuracy and compatibility with text of the preliminary sketches for the story’s illustrations by consulting with the elders. This debriefing and revision stage also involved the formatting of the text such that page breaks and illustrations would occur in a narrative flow and would coincide with the story’s natural narrative pacing and action segments. Thus, throughout the process, there were member checks and revisions contributed by the literacy team members and the storytellers, Annie Blue and Mary E. Bavilla.

Another goal of the literacy team was to provide cultural and historical information to students, both Alaska Native and non-Native, who may have limited or no prior knowledge or experience in these areas. We decided to include text boxes set within



the narrative story text that would present content information that provided historical as well as cultural background information for the story.

In the Yup'ik culture, stories are integral to daily life. Stories relate historical events and cultural knowledge. Stories teach values and ways of properly conducting oneself. Yup'ik traditional narratives are often divided into the two categories of *qulirat* and *qanemcit* (plural terms), and explanations of the differences between the two categories vary (Orr et al., 1997). The descriptions of these categories in the Togiak region are *qanemiciq* (singular), a personal/historical narrative about a person, and *quliraq* (singular), which is similar to the Western literary genre classification of myth or legend that has been handed down over generations. Annie Blue, Yup'ik elder and storyteller of Togiak says that some stories start out as *qanemiciq* and then become *quliraq* over time. According to Annie Blue, Iluvaktuq is such a story. It began as a *qanemciq* told about this great warrior during his lifetime, and as it was handed down over generations, the story became a *quliraq*, telling of Iluvaktuq's super-ordinary and heroic accomplishments.

We hope you will enjoy the story in its written form with the amplified content explanations. The collaborators on this project believe the use of traditional Yup'ik stories, told in Yup'ik and translated into English can provide a way to bridge the culture of the community with the culture of school. We also believe the historically untapped wisdom and knowledge embedded in these traditional stories open new pathways to greater levels of engagement with the activities in the MCC curriculum. We believe that these stories can contribute to students' meaning making abilities through a direct experience with a literary genre that has historically rested outside of the Western literary tradition taught in school.

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