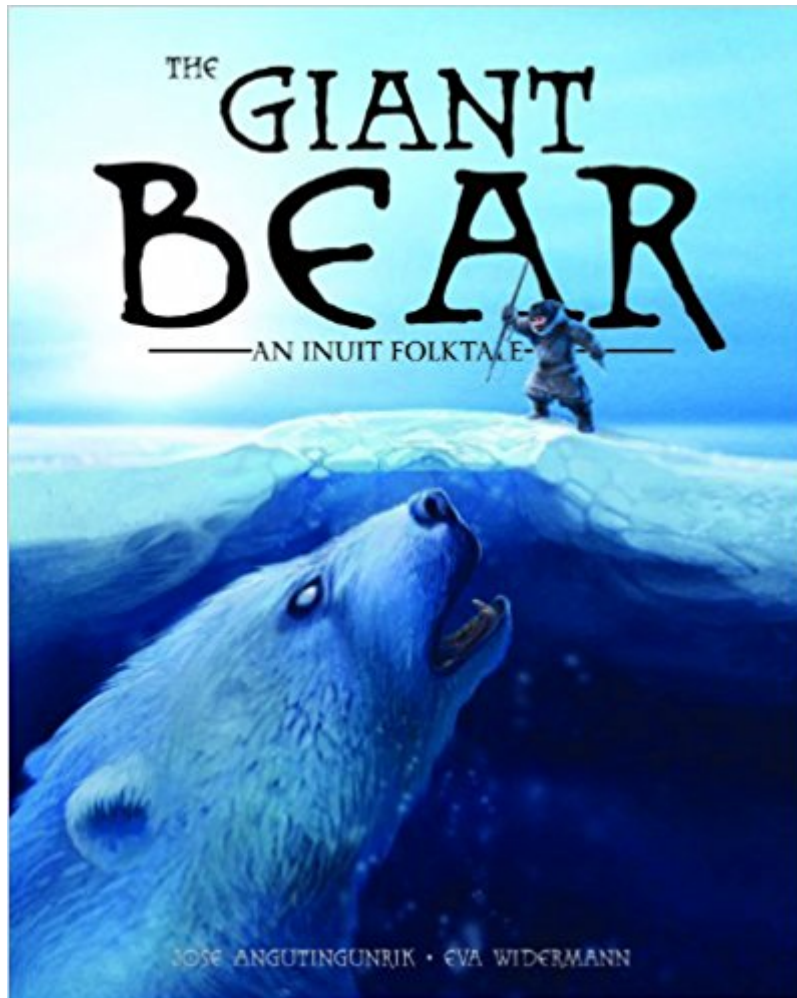




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The Giant Bear: An Inuit Folktale



Synopsis

One of the most terrifying creatures to be found in traditional Inuit stories is the nanurluk, a massive bear the size of an iceberg that lives under the sea ice. Its monstrous size and ice-covered fur make it an almost impenetrable foe. Jose Angutingunrik, a gifted storyteller and respected elder from Kugaaruk, Nunavut, brings to life a story of the great nanurluk that has been told in the Kugaaruk region for generations.

Book Information

Hardcover: 40 pages

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Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

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Age Range: 8 - 11 years

Grade Level: 3 - 6

Customer Reviews

Gr 2-4-A storyteller recounts a traditional tale that his grandfather told about a colossal polar bear, a "nanurluk," a survivor of the days long ago when giants roamed the Arctic hunting the huge creatures. In this simply told story, an Inuit man living near the edge of the sea comes upon a large hole in the ice, an "aglu," where a huge bear sleeps in the deep water. To protect his wife and home from the predatory creature, he quickly devises a plan that involves scooping water from the hole and pouring it over the aglu's icy sides. The freezing water thickens its walls until the great bear can no longer fit through. Seeing the man through the ice, the bear claws at the hole until its huge head pokes out, allowing the man to stab at the creature's eyes and nose with his harpoon, taking away its senses of sight and smell. Later, following the bear's trail, the man finds the huge creature dead on the ground, now a source of many meals for the couple. Widermann's double-page paintings of

the snow-and-ice landscape sandwiched between clouded blue sky and icy blue-black water clearly show the man's minuscule size in relation to that of the immense nanurluk; the soft fur and leather of the couple's clothing; and the warmth of the fire-lit igloo interior. Several scenes show the vividly bloodied bear against the icy landscape. Pencil sketches of the roaring animal's massive head fill the endpapers. A foreword briefly introduces creatures of Inuit lore. Despite the rather gruesome details of the bear's demise, larger collections seeking Inuit folklore may want to consider this authentically recounted tale.-Susan Scheps, formerly at Shaker Heights Public Library, OH

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Jose Angutingunrik is an elder and storyteller from Kugaaruk, Nunavut. Eva Widermann is a freelance illustrator and concept artist whose work has been published in a wide variety of books, magazines, and games. Her work has become renowned for its realistic and evocative edge.

Very interesting perspective on polar bears. It will be used in our public library.

This is a beautifully illustrated book that captures the imagination of my 5 year old grandson with its legends of a distant time and resolute people. The enormous mythical polar bear is exciting but not too scary for the little reader- and it sparked his deep interest to see everything about polar bears on National Geographic films and the Arctic. The story of traditional Inuit hunting, courage, life and death provides much to think about and discuss - even after story time is over.

There are at least five reasons THE GIANT BEAR is outstanding. From the art to the story to the Foreword to the Study Guide, this book is a gem and has a lot going for it! If you're a hunter, or you take your kids hunting, they'll find much to like in this story about an Inuit man who comes up with a clever plan to kill the nanurluk (giant bear) he finds near his camp. If you're a teacher you'll find a lot of ways this book can expand what your students know about Indigenous peoples--in this case--those of the Inuit. My full review is at American Indians in Children's Literature: [...]

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