

# THE LITTLE FOLK

By Levi Illuitok  
Illustrated by  
Steve James



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**T**here once were *inugarulliit*, little folk, who loved to go seal hunting at breathing holes in the winter. One *inugarulliit* couple had adopted an Inuk boy. He was much bigger than his parents, and they loved him dearly.





The Inuk boy always wanted to go out seal hunting, but his parents loved him so much they didn't want him to go out or get lost. But he really wanted to go out, and kept asking, so his father finally let him join the hunting party.

While they were all out hunting, it began to get dark. The inugarulliit hunters started running down the ice, but the Inuk boy didn't know why. He had only seen the tracks of a lemming. The boy ran after the hunters and soon caught up with one of them. He asked, "Why are you all running?" The hunter said they had spotted polar bear tracks.





The boy looked around, but could only see the lemming tracks. Up ahead, he saw the lemming. The boy kept running at full speed towards the lemming, and when he reached it, he stepped on it. It was a small lemming, but he picked it up and started walking back towards the hunters. When he was close to them, he dropped the lemming.

His father was the first to see the boy. His father asked, "Did you see a polar bear?"

The boy said, "I didn't see anything but a little lemming."

His father replied, "It is a polar bear."

The boy looked at it, but it was very small and not a bear.





Since the boy thought that he had only caught a lemming, he left it where it was and headed back to his home. By the time he reached his *iglu*, it was dark outside. Soon he heard the dogs and hunters arriving. The boy's mother said, "Maybe someone caught a polar bear."

The hunters arrived. They had dragged the lemming with them and buried it in a meat cache. When the father got into the iglu, he said, "Our son caught a polar bear. It was very difficult to drag." The son had thought he had just caught a lemming, but the little folk had turned it into a polar bear!





Some time later, the father wanted meat. He asked his son to go outside to the meat cache and to bring back some bear meat.

The boy immediately went out as he was told to do. He started shovelling in the snow to find the meat, but only saw the leg of an eider duck and the hind leg and foreleg of a lemming. He couldn't find any bear meat.



He went back inside his iglu. His family had taught him never to lie, so he told them, "I was looking for bear meat, but I couldn't find any."



His father told an *inugarulliq* child to go get bear meat. The child shovelled meat out of the cache, then brought it inside the iglu. He brought in lots of meat. He had enlarged the hind leg of the lemming and made it the size of a polar bear's hind leg.





The inugarulliit were able to shrink and enlarge what they caught. They didn't have much meat, so they were able to make the lemming into a polar bear.

The boy's parents were so proud of their son for his first catch of polar bear.

# Glossary of Inuktitut Words

Inuktitut is the word for Inuit languages spoken in Canada, including Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun. The pronunciation guides in this book are intended to support non-Inuktitut speakers in their reading of Inuktitut words. These pronunciations are not exact representations of how the words are pronounced by Inuktitut speakers.

For more resources on how to pronounce Inuktitut words, visit [inhabitmedia.com/inuitnipingit](http://inhabitmedia.com/inuitnipingit).

## WORD

## PRONUNCIATION

## DEFINITION

iglu

EEG-loo

snow house

inugarulliit

ee-N00-gah-roo-leet

little people (plural)

inugarulliq

ee-N00-gah-roo-leek

little person (singular)



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