

THE TRUE PLAY

HOW

ITIMANGNARK

GOT KINGNUK

THE GIRL HE

REALLY WANTED.

BY CARTER WILSON



This play comes from true stories about Netsilik Eskimos; some of the people in the play are still living today. Their lives were recorded by Father Vandavelde, a missionary who has lived for many years with the Netsilik.

It is an easy play to act, and it is meant for fun. The play takes about fifteen minutes to give in class.

Here are some suggestions for getting it ready.

#### PREPARING THE PLAY

1. Decide who will take each part:

##### BOYS

###### 1st STORYTELLER

ITIMANGNARK (ity MANG nark), a fine hunter and the hero of the play

IRKOWAGTOK (irko WOG tok), ITIMANGNARK'S younger brother

HAPLUK (HAP luck), the boys' stepfather, not a fine man

PAPIK (PA pik), the father of KINGNUK, and not much of a hunter

OOLIK (OO lik), PAPIK'S brother, another older man, and also not much of a hunter

##### GIRLS

###### 2nd STORYTELLER

KINGNUK (KING nook), a pretty, shy girl

ARNAK (AR nak), KINGNUK'S mother, wife of PAPIK

MAKUK (ma COOK), ITIMANGNARK'S old mother

TOGAK (TOE gak), a girl in ITIMANGNARK'S camp

2. Have the actors read through the play once. On the second time through, each actor should underline his name with a red crayon every time it appears, so he will be able to read the script easily when he finally appears in the play.
3. Rehearse the play with action once or twice. During the play the two STORYTELLERS describe what the actors are doing when there is no conversation. The actors should listen carefully to the STORYTELLERS to be sure they are doing the right thing at the right time. And the STORYTELLERS should make sure the actors have finished each action before going on.
4. Props:
  - a blindfold
  - some books wrapped in a scarf to use as a catch of fish
  - some coats or jackets to use as caribou skins
5. Setting the stage:

The first scene takes place in an igloo. Decide where the tunnel will be, and remember to crawl when you go through it. Decide where the sleeping platform will be. You can use a low table or chairs for the sleeping platform if you want.

The second scene takes place in a tent. Decide where the entrance will be. You won't need any "furniture" here.

# 1 Scene One

1st STORYTELLER:

The play you are about to see really happened, and so it is called 'The True Play of How ITIMANGNARK Got KINGNUK, the Girl He Really Wanted.'

The first scene takes place in an igloo in the middle of winter. You have to imagine this: it is very dark outside and the wind is whipping around the igloo and blowing snow everywhere. The people are happy to be inside where there is a blubber lamp and it is warm.

There by her lamp, keeping it well tended, is an old lady named MAKUK. She lost her husband a while ago, and she has a new one. You'll hear more about him later.

MAKUK has two sons. The older one, ITIMANGNARK, is sitting on the sleeping platform. ITIMANGNARK is the hero of this play. Sitting next to him is his brother, whose name is IRKOWAGTOK.

Listen to the song MAKUK sings and you will know why she is a contented old lady.

MAKUK:

Life is not as bad as it could be,  
All things considered.

I have my little boys to hunt for me,  
And my boys are not so little anymore.

My boy Itimangnark is quite a hunter,  
Quite a walker.  
In the summer we live in a place  
Where the caribou don't come to us,  
So my Itimangnark puts on his boots  
And goes to the caribou.

And when he comes home,  
My Itimangnark is loaded down with caribou skins,  
And I can see I have my sewing work cut out for me.

1st STORYTELLER:

Now watch and see how good your hero ITIMANGNARK is to his mother. She has taken a new husband, a mean old man named HAPLUK. Here he comes into the igloo now. (HAPLUK comes in.)

HAPLUK:

Eh, woman, give me something to eat!

MAKUK:

Yes, my little husband, as soon as it's ready.

HAPLUK:

I don't mean as soon as it's ready, I mean right now!

1st STORYTELLER:

And with that, the stepfather gives poor MAKUK a kick.

Why do we show you this unpleasant scene? Because it has happened over and over, and ITIMANGNARK is angry. After the old people, HAPLUK and MAKUK, go to sleep on the platform, ITIMANGNARK talks to his brother IRKOWAGTOK.

ITIMANGNARK:

I would like to let that old man know he can't treat my mother that way--hitting her and scolding her for no good reason. Maybe some women deserve a good punch from time to time, but not my mother.

IRKOWAGTOK:

But what can you do?

ITIMANGNARK:

Somehow I've got to find a way to tell the old man who's in charge here.

1st STORYTELLER:

Now imagine there are a lot of people around--the whole camp. Imagine we are in the great igloo and people are playing games. This game is called hide and guess. ITIMANGNARK gives a blindfold to his stepfather, HAPLUK.

ITIMANGNARK:

Here, old man, let me tie this tight, so not even a slippery weasel could see out of it.

1st STORYTELLER:

The brothers have worked this out between them. First IRKOWAGTOK comes up to HAPLUK and slaps him on the shoulder. Then IRKOWAGTOK jumps out of the way. HAPLUK feels around in the air, trying to find the person who hit him.

HAPLUK:

Who was that? It came from over here but--no, nobody here.

1st STORYTELLER:

Now young ITIMANGNARK comes forward and gives HAPLUK a good swat. HAPLUK reaches out and grabs ITIMANGNARK.

HAPLUK:

There! I've caught some bear now!

1st STORYTELLER:

But ITIMANGNARK grabs the old man back and holds him.

ITIMANGNARK:

Did you catch a bear old man, or did the bear catch you?  
Who do you think it is?

HAPLUK:

It's the strongest man I ever met, for sure.

1st STORYTELLER:

And all the people are laughing at old HAPLUK for being so weak.

Finally, HAPLUK struggles free of ITIMANGNARK and tears off the blindfold.

HAPLUK:

There! Was it you Itimangnark? You who made the people laugh at me for being old and weak? My own stepson?

ITIMANGNARK:

So I guess now we know who's the strongest and who gives the orders, don't we? Did you hear me, Hapluk?

HAPLUK:

I hear you, my lovely little stepson.

1st STORYTELLER:

Now we can look at the way things are going between HAPLUK and MAKUK after the game of hide and guess. HAPLUK is in a bad mood as usual. MAKUK is sitting by her lamp. ITIMANGNARK is there, watching carefully.

HAPLUK:

Eh, woman! I'm thirsty. Give me a drink of water!

MAKUK:

Yes, my little husband, as soon as I can.

HAPLUK:

I said now!



ITIMANGNARK:

Well, look at the fierce old man who has to show his strength by being mean to an old woman. Remember who's the strongest around here, Hapluk.

1st STORYTELLER:

And HAPLUK knows what ITIMANGNARK means and he says--

HAPLUK:

Don't hurry yourself, my little wife. I'll have my drink whenever you're ready.

1st STORYTELLER:

So now you know why ITIMANGNARK is our hero. He is a good man. But now a much more serious problem comes up for this family. One day, when winter is almost over, ITIMANGNARK starts talking to his mother.

ITIMANGNARK:

I've made up my mind. I'm ready to go.

MAKUK:

Where are you going, my son?

ITIMANGNARK:

I'm going south to get my wife.

MAKUK:

You mean Kingnuk?

ITIMANGNARK:

Yes.

MAKUK:

Are you sure you want to go so far to get a wife? It will take you months to get to where Kingnuk's living now.

ITIMANGNARK:

Kingnuk is the girl who was promised to me when I was a little boy, and I'm ready to marry her now.

MAKUK:

That's a long way to travel just for a woman. And who knows if Kingnuk is still pretty?

ITIMANGNARK:

I can tell you don't want me to go away.

MAKUK:

I didn't say you shouldn't go. I was just thinking that it would be better if you stayed.

ITIMANGNARK:

Why?

MAKUK:

Who's going to hunt and care for me, Itimangnark?

ITIMANGNARK:

I'll leave Irkowagtok with you.

IRKOWAGTOK:

Oh no you won't. I'm going traveling with you.

1st STORYTELLER:

MAKUK is pretty upset about both of her sons leaving her at the same time. So what does she do? Take a look. MAKUK gets up and goes out of the igloo, and soon returns with a neighbor girl, named TOGAK. This TOGAK is a nice girl, a fact which MAKUK wants her son to know.

MAKUK:

Here, Togak, sit next to me. What lovely sewing on your clothes. You couldn't have done that sewing yourself, not a pretty young girl like yourself.

TOGAK:

Yes, I sewed this myself.

MAKUK:

You hear that, Itimangnark? You see how well Togak sews?

ITIMANGNARK:

I see.

MAKUK:

It's hard to believe a pretty young girl who knows how to sew is without a husband. Why don't you have a husband, Togak?

TOGAK:

One has been promised to me, but he lives a long way away.

MAKUK:

And yet you are a happy, pretty, good-sewing little girl, laughing all the time and helping your mother. What a wife you're going to be for some happy hunter! Do you hear what I say, Itimangnark?

ITIMANGNARK:

I hear you. I think Togak ought to keep to her promises. And I think that very soon I will be traveling south.

MAKUK:

Just to marry that ugly, little, skinny, unhappy Kingnuk?

ITIMANGNARK:

Yes, just for Kingnuk. She was the girl who was promised to me.

1st STORYTELLER:

So, you can see that ITIMANGNARK's mind is made up. In the second scene you will see how things are going for Kingnuk in the south.

# 2

Scene  
Two

2nd STORYTELLER

Now we are moving a long way off. It is fall now, when families live along the rivers.

Here is a tent. Inside are a pretty, shy girl named KINGNUK, and her mother, whose name is ARNAK.

ARNAK:

I've got itchy fingers.

KINGNUK:

Why is that?

ARNAK:

My hands feel like they would like to be sewing something.

KINGNUK:

I know what you mean. My hands feel the same way.

ARNAK:

But your father and your uncle didn't get any caribou this year and we aren't going to have a thing to wear this winter. You know the saying?

KINGNUK:

Yes: Quick hunter's feet in caribou time, quick women's fingers in the fall, or no new clothes in the winter.

ARNAK:

If only we had some strong young hunters!

2nd STORYTELLER:

At just this moment, KINGNUK'S father PAPIK comes into the tent. Behind him is KINGNUK'S uncle, OOLIK.

PAPIK:

Were you talking about me? Did I hear you say  
"strong young hunter?"

ARNAK:

That wouldn't be you, would it?

PAPIK:

No, my little wife, it's true. But, Oolik and I did  
get a nice fat bunch of fish. Here.

ARNAK:

Very nice. But you're going to look funny this winter  
in a coat made of fish skins.

PAPIK:

From what I've heard, fishskin coats aren't very warm.

OOLIK:

Eeee! I can already feel how cold I'm going to be.

PAPIK:

You know what the trouble is, brother.

OOLIK:

Of course I know, brother. You and I are getting old.  
What we need is a young man who can hunt for us. One  
excellent hunter needed.

PAPIK:

But bad luck has given me no sons, just that one use-  
less girl over there!

OOLIK:

Now wait! Let's offer that useless little niece of  
mine to some excellent hunter from around here. Then  
you won't have to feed Kingnuk, and your new son-in-law  
can take care of all of us in our old age.

KINGNUK:

That plan wouldn't work.

PAPIK:

Why not, my darling daughter?

KINGNUK:

Because I am never going to get married.

ARNAK:

She's a shy girl, Papik. She doesn't want to leave me.

PAPIK:

Kingnuk will be the luckiest girl in the world when she gets away from you.

ARNAK:

Your plan won't work, my little husband. You've forgotten that when Kingnuk was born we promised her to a little fellow named Itimangnark.

PAPIK:

Ah yes. But Itimangnark isn't here, and he's still too young to be the hunter we're looking for. And he's probably forgotten little Kingnuk.

OOLIK:

And how can we be expected to remember a promise when we are in danger of freezing to death in the winter?

ARNAK:

A promise is a promise.

PAPIK:

But you can't keep a promise once you've been turned into an icicle.

2nd STORYTELLER:

And so they continue to argue day after day. Things get more and more serious. KINGNUK'S family don't know that ITIMANGNARK and his brother are on their way to them, crossing the tundra, every day getting a little closer, hunting as they come.

One evening PAPIK hears his dogs barking outside --  
OOOW ROWLF -- and so PAPIK himself gets up and looks  
out.

PAPIK:

Two men coming. I don't recognize them. They look  
like little hills, both of them, they're so weighted  
down with something.

2nd STORYTELLER:

And so, a little while later, in comes ITIMANGNARK,  
followed by his younger brother IRKOWAGTOK.

ITIMANGNARK:

Papik, my future father-in-law!

PAPIK:

I don't think I know you, young man.

ITIMANGNARK:

I'm Itimangnark, the man who's going to marry your  
daughter.

PAPIK:

Oh, yes, of course. Please excuse me. It has been  
many years, and you've gotten much bigger, Itimangnark.  
You've grown quite large.

ITIMANGNARK:

Brother, there is Kingnuk, who is going to be my wife.  
What do you think?

IRKOWAGTOK:

I think our trip was worth it.

PAPIK:

Wait, Itimangnark. Things have changed a little bit  
since we saw you last. I'm afraid Kingnuk is no longer  
free.

ITIMANGNARK:

Is she married to somebody else?

PAPIK:

Well, no. But she's no longer available. She's going to marry a big hunter.

ITIMANGNARK:

And I've been traveling six months to get here. And waiting for Kingnuk for years.

OOLIK:

We're sure it must be a great disappointment to you, Itimangnark.

ITIMANGNARK:

Do you mind if we stay overnight?

PAPIK:

Of course not. Stay as long as you want -- two days, even three days if you want.

ITIMANGNARK:

Come on, brother, let's bring our things inside.

2nd STORYTELLER:

And very sadly, ITIMANGNARK and IRKOWAGTOK go outside.

PAPIK:

Eh, brother, I think I smell something I haven't smelled in a long time.

OOLIK:

I smell it too!

ARNAK:

It smells like caribou skins.

2nd STORYTELLER

And then, ITIMANGNARK and IRKOWAGTOK come back inside with their arms full of --



PAPIK:

Where did you get these, Itimangnark?

ITIMANGNARK:

On our way here we stopped and hunted from time to time.

OOLIK:

Brother, I've been thinking--

PAPIK:

So have I. Itimangnark, nothing could make me happier than for you to marry my girl, my own precious Kingnuk.

OOLIK:

And if your younger brother hunts as well as you do, we can find a girl for him, too.

ITIMANGNARK:

But you just said--

PAPIK:

I was joking, Itimangnark. You know I am a man who keeps promises. If Kingnuk was promised to you, she is still yours. I would never go back on a promise. Take her, my boy!

KINGNUK:

But I'm not getting married. I'm going to stay here with you.

ARNAK:

Don't be silly. When a hunter like Itimangnark with so many caribou skins offers to marry you, you accept!

KINGNUK:

I don't want to live so far away from you, Mother.

OOLIK:

Now here we have a serious problem. The girl does not want to marry. And even if she does marry, her husband will take all those lovely skins away and we will be as cold as we were to begin with.

PAPIK:

Yes, a serious problem.

OOLIK:

This is a fine place to live, Itimangnark. Good fishing, plenty of caribou, at least for a fast-footed young hunter like you. Why don't you settle down here?

IRKOWAGTOK:

Our poor old mother is waiting for us at home. She needs us to hunt for her.

KINGNUK:

And I'm still too young to leave my mother.

ARNAK:

And as you can see by the rags we're wearing, we need a hunter here, too.

ITIMANGNARK:

Well, if Kingnuk really wants to stay with her mother, I am willing to stay for a while. My brother is as good a hunter as I am. He can go home and I will hunt here.

2nd STORYTELLER:

And that's how it was decided. IRKOWAGTOK went home to his mother and took care of her. PAPIK and OOLIK got their winter coats. KINGNUK got to stay with her mother. And--oh yes--ITIMANGNARK got the girl he really wanted for his wife.

I won't tell you they all lived happily ever after, since this is a true play and not a fairy tale. But for a while everyone was pretty pleased with the way things turned out.

THE END