

Evie's Christmas Concert



This book is part of the Tulliniliara Reading Series, developed by the Department of Family Services in Nunavut. The Tulliniliara Reading Series is a unique, Nunavut-developed literacy initiative that infuses awareness of skills, interests, and careers into a culturally appropriate reading program.

The Tulliniliara Reading Series was developed to support the reading level guidelines outlined in Uqalimaariuqsaniq, the Department of Education's reading program. Uqalimaariuqsaniq is a sequential and progressive Inuktitut reading program that supports students in their development as readers.

The Tulliniliara Reading Series informs readers about jobs available in their community. It also provides opportunities for readers to consider their own interests and skills when thinking about future work. Awareness of career possibilities at a young age will better prepare children to understand the opportunities that are open to them and the importance of staying in school.

These books represent the Department of Family Services' investment in the early development of our future workforce.

Book details

Level:	14
Text type:	Fiction
Subjects/themes:	Learning strategies, performing, trying new things
Key features:	28 pages of text, dialogue, story told over a long period of time

Evie's Christmas Concert



Written by
Dana Hopkins

Illustrated by
Emma Pedersen

Contents

Chapter 1: Evie's Favourite Season	3
Chapter 2: Let's Pick a Story	7
Chapter 3: The Country of Wolves	12
Chapter 4: The Wolf Chorus	16
Chapter 5: Practice, Practice, Practice.....	21
Chapter 6: The Christmas Concert	25

Chapter I: Evie's Favourite Season



Winter was Evie's favourite season. She loved the first few snowmobile rides of the year. She loved the feeling of her boots crunching through hard-packed snow. She loved blizzard days, when she could stay inside and listen to her *ataatatsiaq* tell stories while the wind howled outside.

What Evie loved most of all was Christmastime. This was going to be her first Christmas in her new community. She wondered if Christmas here would be the same as Christmas at home.

Evie was walking to her friend Noah's house to pick him up for school. They always walked together, unless it was very, very cold. Then Noah's *anaana* would drive them.

When she got to Noah's house, his dad was standing outside on a ladder.



“Ullakut, Evie!” Noah's dad called.

“Ullakut! Are you putting up Christmas lights?” Evie asked.

“I am!” He plugged them in to show Evie the string of brightly coloured lights winding all the way around the roof. They lit up the dark, cold morning.

Just then, Noah came outside.

“Uah! They look awesome, *Ataata!*” Noah said. Then he grinned at Evie. “My *ataata* won the Christmas lights contest in town last year. He’s trying to win again this year!”

“We did that in my community, too!” Evie said. “Almost every house in our community would put up lights. It looked so cool.”

They waved to Noah’s *ataata* and started walking to school.

“So what else do you do here at Christmastime?” Evie asked.

“All sorts of things!” Noah replied. “My *anaanatsiaq* serves *igunaq*. We have Christmas games at the hall over the break. And the best part is the school Christmas concert.”

Evie raised her eyebrows. She said, “We had a Christmas concert at my old school, too. Last year my class did a square dance onstage. It was so much fun!”

As they continued walking, Evie wondered what kind of dancing her class might do at the Christmas concert this year.

Chapter 2: Let's Pick a Story



When they got to school, Evie noticed that her teacher, Julie, had put up Christmas decorations. There was a small tree in the corner of the room, and she had hung up paper snowflakes in the window. It made Evie feel even more excited about the Christmas concert.

“Good morning, class,” Julie said after everyone had settled into their seats. “Today we are going to talk about something very important. Can you guess what it is?”

Almost everyone raised their hands. Someone shouted, “The Christmas concert!”

Julie said, “Noah, your hand is raised. What do you think?”

“The Christmas concert,” Noah said, and everyone laughed.

“That’s right!” Julie said.

Evie was so excited. She couldn’t wait to show her classmates what a good dancer she was.

“Let’s decide which story our class will act out this year. Who has ideas?” Julie asked.

Evie frowned. Acting out a story? That wasn’t how they put on a Christmas concert at her old school.

A bunch of hands went into the air again. Her classmates began suggesting stories.

“What about Nanurluk?”

“Or Kiviuq!”

“We could ask my ataata if we could act out his first seal hunt,” a girl named Peesee said. “He tells that story all the time!”

Julie said, “We have so many good ideas here! I want you all to take out your journals and write one idea down. What story do you think our class should act out at the Christmas concert?”



Evie took out her journal and an extra piece of paper. She used the paper to cover up the part of the page she

wasn't writing on. It was a strategy Julie had showed her. Evie had a learning disability. Her memory worked a little bit differently from the other kids. That meant that sometimes she used special strategies to help herself learn. When she covered up most of a journal page or a worksheet, she could focus just on the part where she was writing.

Evie stared at her journal. She knew lots of stories. Her ataatsiaq was the greatest storyteller in the whole world! But Evie didn't like acting. In fact, she had never acted before in her life! She had never been in a school play or anything like that.

Even though Evie loved to tell stories, she didn't really like speaking in front of an audience. She had trouble with memorizing, so she was always worried she would forget her lines and embarrass herself. That's why she loved dancing. When you danced, you didn't have to memorize lines!

Another strategy Julie and Evie worked on was drawing instead of writing. Evie was a good artist. She found that drawing a picture to go with her work helped her to focus on what she wanted to say. She took out her pencil crayons and drew a picture of herself dancing.

Chapter 3: The Country of Wolves



The next day, Julie gathered everyone on the rug. She said, “I read all the ideas in your journals. You came up with so many creative story suggestions!”

Evie looked down at the rug. She hadn’t really put down an idea; she’d only drawn a picture of herself twirling around like a ballerina. She wondered if she would be in trouble. But Julie kept talking.

“Our class will tell the story of the hunters who journey to the country of wolves,” Julie said. Noah punched his fist in the air. Evie guessed this was his story idea. Noah loved scary stories.

Julie continued, “There are lots of characters in this story. It’s a good one for the whole class to act out.”

Evie felt really anxious. She was worried that she might end up with a character with a lot of lines to memorize.

Julie handed out scripts to everyone. Evie noticed that her script looked a little bit different from Noah’s. Evie’s had thick lines between each part. This was another strategy to help her with her learning disability. She could look just at what was happening inside one set of lines and concentrate better. Julie did this with her regular classwork as well. At first, her classmates had asked why her worksheets weren’t the same as theirs. Soon they realized that she was doing the same work, just using different methods, and no one asked about it anymore.

“Noah,” Evie whispered, “how many people come to the Christmas concert?”

“The whole community!” Noah whispered back excitedly. “It’s a big deal!”

That wasn’t what Evie wanted to hear. There was no way she could get up onstage and perform a play in front of the whole community!



Julie said, “Let’s read through this script together. Who wants to read the role of the older hunter?”

Soon, all the roles were assigned. Evie hadn’t put her hand up. She didn’t like reading out loud in front of people. The students who hadn’t volunteered for a part were supposed to read the wolf chorus, when all the wolves in the story spoke at the same time. That meant they all read the words together. Maybe no one would notice if Evie didn’t read at all.

Chapter 4: The Wolf Chorus



When Evie got home for lunch that day, she slumped down at the kitchen table. Her anaana was making her a sandwich, and her ataatatsiaq was listening to the radio in the living room.

“How was school this morning, *panik*?” Anaana asked.

“It was okay,” Evie said. “We picked a story for the Christmas concert.”

“You don’t sound very excited about it,” Anaana said.

“Well, I don’t really want to do it.”

“Hai? Why not?” Ataatsiaq asked, turning down the radio. “Your anaana showed me videos from your concert last year. It looked like you had a lot of fun!”

Evie scrunched her nose. “Yes, but last year I got to dance. This year we’re doing a play. I have to remember my lines and say them in front of everyone. At my old school, only the big kids had to talk onstage!”

Ataatsiaq thought about that for a minute and then came to sit next to Evie at the table. He said, “It seems to me that you must be a big kid now, too.”

“If being a big kid means being in a play, then I don’t want to be a big kid!” Evie exclaimed.

Ataatsiaq chuckled. “If you could do anything at the Christmas concert, what would you do?” he asked.

“I would dance,” Evie said. “I like dancing with my friends. I can remember dance moves way easier than I can remember words I have to say out loud.”

“Why don’t you ask Julie after lunch if you can do a dance, too?” Anaana said.

“That’s a good idea,” Ataatsiaq said. “Maybe you could even teach the other kids a dance that you know.”

Anaana said, “This way, you can be very brave and say your lines onstage. Then you can show everyone what a wonderful dancer you are!”

“That would be so cool,” Evie said, imagining herself dancing with all of her new friends at school.

When Evie got back to school after lunch, she ran into her classroom to find Julie.

“Julie, I have an idea for the Christmas concert!” she said.

“What’s that?” Julie asked.

“Well, I thought maybe I could do a dance after we do our play,” Evie suggested, and did a twirl for Julie. “I’m a really good dancer.” She grinned.



Julie thought for a moment. “I’m sure you’re a wonderful dancer, Evie,” she began. “But I’m afraid it wouldn’t be fair to the other kids if you did a dance all on your own.”

Evie frowned, but she realized Julie was right. Then she thought about how her ataatsiaq had once described seeing a pack of wolves running across the tundra when he was hunting. “They ran like the wind,” her ataatsiaq had said. “Very graceful animals.”

“What if the wolf chorus did a dance all together?” Evie asked.

“Now that is an excellent idea,” Julie said.

Evie beamed. She didn’t feel so nervous about the Christmas concert anymore.

Chapter 5: Practice, Practice, Practice



Evie's whole school practised for the Christmas concert for weeks. When Evie walked down the hall of her school, she could hear the older kids practising on guitars and harmonicas. She heard the little kids singing songs. And she heard other classes rehearsing plays, too.

Evie was excited to see everyone perform, but every time her class practised, she felt nervous about her own performance. When Evie tried to read her lines, the words in the script got all mixed up in her memory. No matter

how hard she tried, she kept getting distracted by all the other words on the page.

But every time she felt discouraged, she thought about the wolf chorus dance. Julie had even let Evie show the other kids in the wolf chorus what steps to do. The dance made her feel strong and confident, like a wolf! She tried to remember that feeling when she had to read her lines.

Her classmate Peesee was in the wolf chorus too. “Evie, I’m glad you asked if we could dance,” she said one day after they practised their routine. “I love to dance!”

“Me too!” Evie said.

“Did you know that there are dance classes at the high school once a week?” Peesee asked.

“Really?” Evie had always wanted to take a dance class.

“Yeah! My big sister is the instructor. Want to come with me sometime?”

Evie grinned at Peesee. “Atii!” Dancing was even helping Evie make new friends.

Peesee started sitting next to Evie when they practised their lines. She said, “Why don’t we read together? Here, this helps me remember one section at a time.” Peesee took a piece of green paper and covered up most of the script. It was just what Evie did with her worksheets!

“Thanks, Peesee,” Evie said. They slowly started reading the script out loud together. Evie felt better about following the script this way. And it was nice to have friends who understood that she learned a little bit differently.

They practised and practised and practised. The whole class practised at school. Noah and Peesee and Evie practised together at Evie’s house. Noah had one of the lead roles. He practised his lines, and Peesee and Evie practised the wolf chorus lines. Anaana read all the other roles for them.



Whenever Evie needed a break from reading lines, they would practise the wolf chorus dance together. And when they all needed a break from practising, they would put on music and dance however they wanted.

Sometimes Anaana and Ataatsiaq would even join in!

Chapter 6: The Christmas Concert



The night of the Christmas concert came fast. Evie thought it was so much fun to be at school after hours with all of her friends. She peeked out into the gym. It was packed full of people!

She ran to find Noah and Peesee. “You weren’t kidding! The whole community is here. Come look!”

Noah and Peesee followed Evie to the stage and peeked out at the audience. They watched as their principal

welcomed the audience and then as the first group of kids hustled onstage for their performance.

Peesee and Noah stayed to watch the performances, but Evie decided to go and practise her lines one more time. She wanted to feel as confident about her lines as she felt about her dance.

Soon it was time for her class to go onstage. They were dressed in their costumes. Noah's character was a hunter. He wore *iggaak* and *kamiik*, and he carried a spear. Evie, Peesee, and the rest of the wolf chorus wore furs so everyone would know they were wolves.

Evie closed her eyes and pictured the script. She pictured one sentence at a time, just like they had practised. "Long ago, two hunters came to the country of wolves," she said out loud with the rest of the wolf chorus.

It was okay! She had remembered her first line! Peesee grinned at her, and then they both pretended to snarl at

Noah the hunter. The rest of the play went along smoothly. Evie remembered every single line.

At the end of the play, the wolf chorus began to dance. Evie stomped and whirled. She raised her arms. She jumped and crouched. The rest of the class joined in.



When they were done, the audience clapped and cheered so loudly! Evie could see Anaana and Ataatsiaq cheering. They waved at her and shouted her name. Julie clapped from the side of the stage, too. Everyone took a bow.

As they ran offstage, Julie was waiting to give everyone a high five.

“That was so fun!” Peesee said, out of breath.

“Best Christmas concert ever!” Noah agreed.

Evie thought so too. She already couldn’t wait for next year!

Published in Canada by **Inhabit Education**
www.inhabiteducation.com

Design and layout copyright © 2020 by Government of Nunavut
Text copyright © 2020 by Government of Nunavut
Illustrations copyright © 2020 by Government of Nunavut

All rights reserved. The use of any part of this publication reproduced, transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, or stored in a retrievable system, without written consent of the publisher, is an infringement of copyright law.

Printed and bound in Canada

ISBN: 978-0-2287-0847-6



INHABIT
EDUCATION




INHABIT
EDUCATION