

The Talent Show



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:	Organizing an event, teamwork, performing for an audience
Key features:	33 pages of text, dialogue, chapters, many characters

The Talent Show



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Chapter I



Nanmak loved jamming with her older brother, Pokok. He was an amazing guitarist. She would keep the song going while he played solos. Sometimes he would solo for minutes at a time. She loved to watch him.

Today their friend Aitaok was jamming with them on his keyboard. Nanmak was getting lost in the music as they played. It sounded so good! She imagined them playing on a stage under bright lights in front of all their friends and family. Nanmak daydreamed about this a lot, even though she knew she could never play onstage in real life. She was way too nervous.

Whoosh! The front door swung open, letting in a rush of cold air and waking Nanmak from her daydream.

“Oh! Hey guys!” said Nanmak and Pokok’s mother. Nanmak quickly put down her guitar. She was too nervous to even play in front of her family in their house.



“No song for Anaana, then?”
laughed their mother. “Maybe I can sing
for you instead,” she joked, pretending
to hold a microphone to her mouth.

“Save it for the talent show,” Aitaok
said, laughing.

Their mother frowned. “Didn’t you
hear?” she asked. “They cancelled the
talent show this year.”

“What?!”

It was Pokok. Everyone could tell he was upset.

“Yeah,” answered their mom. Her voice sounded less happy than before. “I just heard on the radio that it was cancelled.”

“What happened?” asked Pokok. “It was supposed to be next week!”

Every year there was a talent show during Nattiq Frolics, an event held in Kugluktuk to celebrate the arrival of spring. For as long as she could remember, Nanmak had gone to the complex with her family to watch. Usually there were snowmobile races during the day. Then people would go home for a quick dinner before heading to the complex for the show in the evening.

“I guess no one volunteered to plan it,” explained their mom.

“That stinks,” Pokok said quietly.

Nanmak felt sorry for Pokok. Pokok had been talking about the talent show for weeks. He played at it every year, and everyone loved to watch him. Especially Nanmak!

“Hey, maybe we should go and see if we can volunteer to help with the talent show,” suggested Aitaok.

“But the show was supposed to be next Thursday,” Pokok said. “There’s no way we could plan it in time.”

“Who knows! Maybe it’s not too late,” Aitaok said.

“Can I come?” Nanmak asked.

“Of course! Are you coming, Pokok?” Aitaok asked as he pulled his parka over his head.

“Yeah,” said Pokok glumly. “But just for the walk.”

He doesn’t sound very hopeful, thought Nanmak.

Chapter 2



As they walked up the hill to the complex, Aitaok talked to Nanmak about music. Aitaok asked Nanmak what bands she liked and suggested new bands and songs for her to listen to. Pokok stayed quiet.

Stepping inside the complex, they could hear the sound of pucks crashing into the boards at the rink. They walked over to the offices and saw Aglok, the recreation coordinator, working at a computer.

“Hey guys, what’s up?” said Aglok.

“Hey,” said Aitaok. “We actually came to talk to you.”

“How come there’s no talent show?” interrupted Pokok. Aglok stopped smiling and looked at Pokok.

“I guess you heard the announcement,” Aglok began. “We had to cancel it because there were no volunteers. I can’t do much overtime with the new baby, and nobody came to the meeting when we called for volunteers.”

“But there’s always a talent show!” responded Pokok.

“Well, putting on the show is a lot of work,” said Aglok. “But unfortunately no one stepped up to do it.”

“How much work could it be?” Pokok asked, rolling his eyes. Nanmak wanted to leave now. *This isn’t Aglok’s fault, thought Nanmak, and Pokok is taking out his anger on him.* “You just get people to play music,” Pokok continued.

“Well, why don’t you do it, then?” said Aglok. He was starting to smile again.

“Fine,” said Pokok quickly. “I will!”

“And you have two volunteers right here,” said Aglok, waving his hand toward Nanmak and Aitaok.

“Yes, I do!” said Pokok, still trying to sound tough. Nanmak squirmed. She was nervous about being responsible for the whole talent show. *What if we can’t make it happen?* she thought.

“Well, this is exciting! The first talent show ever produced by Kugluktuk youth!” announced Aglok.



Pokok and Aitaok grinned at each other.

“You’d better get to work! It’s already Wednesday. The show is just over a week away,” Aglok said. “You can always come see me again if you need any help!” He waved to the three kids as they left the complex.

“We can do this, right?” Pokok asked, sounding a little nervous now, too.

Chapter 3



“I’m going to call the band,” Pokok said to Nanmak as they walked up to their house. When they got in the front door, their mom was making dinner. Nanmak was looking forward to a meal of muskox ribs their uncle had brought them after his last hunt.

“So, how did it go?” their mom asked.

Pokok didn’t answer. He went right over to the phone without taking off his parka. Nanmak could tell he was nervous. He knew the people in the

band. Sometimes he even played with them during concerts. But he had never asked them to play!

“Aglok asked Pokok if *he* would organize the talent show,” Nanmak explained.

“Oh, really? And what did Pokok say?”

Before Nanmak could answer, Pokok started talking to someone on the phone.

“Hey, it’s Pokok. Is this Charlie?... Hi, Charlie. Are you interested in playing at the talent show next week?... Oh, that’s too bad... Okay... Bye.”

Pokok hung up the phone and then picked it right back up again. Nanmak sat down at the dinner table, pretending to watch her mother cook, but really listening to Pokok make another call.

“Hi Hokanak, it’s Pokok. Were you planning to play at the talent show?... Oh, really? Okay... Bye.”

Nanmak could not see Pokok's face, but she could tell by his voice that it was not going well. Pokok dialled another number.

"Hi, Thomas? It's Pokok. Do you want to play at the talent show next Thursday?... Oh, okay. Have a good trip."

Pokok hung up the phone and let out a heavy sigh.

"What's wrong, Pokok?" asked their mother.

"No one can play at the talent show." Pokok looked so disappointed.

"They all said no?"

"Well, Charlie's fiddle is busted, and he doesn't know if he can fix it in time. Hokanak says she only sings when Charlie is playing. And Thomas is going out of town."

"Oh, that's tough, irniq. Come and eat some dinner. It will make you feel better."

Nanmak and Pokok both had a heavy feeling as they ate. Their mom kept trying to talk to them about other things, but they just didn't feel like it. Then she had a suggestion.



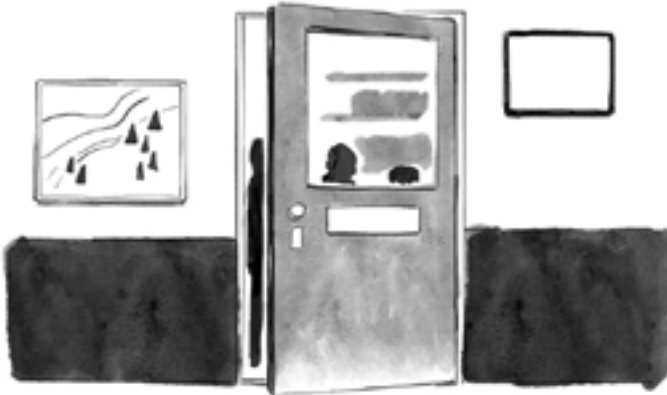
“Why don't you try asking Jorgen for help tomorrow at school? He's always organizing events in town!”

Jorgen was the school community counsellor at the high school. He was so friendly. You could find him at every hockey tournament, bingo night, and square dance in town.

“That’s a good idea, Mom,” said Pokok.

Nanmak looked at Pokok. He seemed a bit less discouraged now. She couldn’t wait for the next day at school.

Chapter 4



After school the next day, Nanmak found Pokok and Aitaok standing outside of Jorgen's office. Pokok poked his head inside the door.

"Hey Jorgen, can we come in for a second?" he asked.

"Whoa! Are you news reporters here to interview me? I didn't know I was such a big deal," joked Jorgen. Nanmak liked the way that Jorgen's joking made everything feel more relaxed. It made it easier to come to him when you had a problem.

Before they even got in the door, Pokok started to explain how they had agreed to organize the talent show but that none of the band members were available to play.

“That’s too bad,” said Jorgen, “but just because the band can’t play doesn’t mean there can’t be a talent show. The whole point of a talent show is for people who don’t normally get the chance to perform to go up in front of the community to show their talent!”

“We hadn’t thought of it like that,” said Aitaok.

“If you spread the word around the school and in town, you might discover some great talent that we never knew we had in our community!” Jorgen was getting really excited now.

“That’s a good idea. We could go on the announcements at school and even on the radio,” said Aitaok.

“I didn’t think planning the talent show was going to be so much work,” sighed Pokok.

“Sometimes when we want something, we have to make it happen ourselves. It might be a lot of work, but think of how good it will feel to be able to play at the talent show! Besides, you have a great team to help,” Jorgen replied, nodding at Nanmak and Aitaok. Nanmak smiled encouragingly at her brother.

“I could make some posters,” said Nanmak. “And we can post online about it too!” She was surprised at how just talking together was helping them come up with new ideas.

“Oh, and there’s another thing to think about.” Jorgen looked at Nanmak. “Don’t forget that young Nanmak here has really gotten into guitar this year.” He looked at Pokok and Aitaok. “You might want to ask her if she’ll play at the show.”

Pokok and Aitaok looked at Nanmak. They didn't have to say anything because their hopeful faces said it all. They were asking her to join the talent show!



“I guess,” said Nanmak. She felt nervous just thinking about performing, but she didn't want to mess up the happy feeling that talking to Jorgen had given them.

“Awesome!” said Jorgen, giving each of them a fist bump. “You've got this!”

After leaving Jorgen's office, they went to see the principal. Pokok asked her if they could make an announcement at the beginning of each school day.

"Of course!" she answered. She also agreed to let them put up posters around the school.

As they walked home from school together, Nanmak's emotions were mixed. She was happy for Pokok and Aitaok, who now seemed hopeful about the talent show. But she was feeling more and more nervous about performing. *How can I get out of this?* she wondered.

Chapter 5



The next day at school, everyone was talking about the talent show. All of Nanmak's classmates looked up at the speaker in their classroom when Aitaok read the announcement.

Between classes, Nanmak saw groups of kids crowding around her posters in the hall. But the more she heard people talking about the talent show, the more anxious she felt about performing at it.

At the end of the day, Nanmak found Aitaok and Pokok in the hall.

“Check it out,” Aitaok said, holding up a sheet of paper with a bunch of names written on it. “A lot of people have already signed up to perform!”

Just then, someone came up to them. It was Alex, one of their quieter classmates.

“I want to perform at the show,” Alex said, “but I don’t have a guitar.”

Pokok and Aitaok looked at each other. They hadn’t thought of that! Not everyone had their own instruments like they did. Nanmak could see the panic on Pokok and Aitaok’s faces.

“You can borrow mine!” said Nanmak.

“Really? Thanks, Nanmak!” said Alex.

“I guess we might need to borrow some other instruments,” Aitaok said.

“Let’s go talk to Leonard,” Pokok said.

Leonard was in charge of the community music program. He had a huge collection of instruments that were

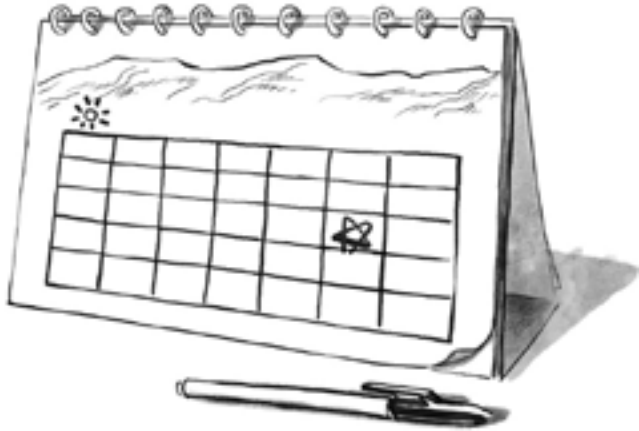
stored at the elementary school. He gave music lessons, and he let people in the community use the classroom to practise and jam.

When Nanmak, Pokok, and Aitaok arrived at the elementary school, they found Leonard tuning guitars. They told him everything: how the talent show had almost been cancelled so they decided to plan it themselves, but now they needed to make sure there were instruments for the performers.



“You can borrow whatever you need,” Leonard said. “The whole community will be so glad the talent show is happening after all!”

Chapter 6



It was the day of the talent show. Everything seemed to be in place. They had been advertising the show on the announcements at school, on the radio, and online for a week. They had filled three sign-up sheets with the names of people who said they were going to perform.

Nanmak had been trying to focus on planning the show instead of performing at it. But now that it was the day of the show, she was feeling more anxious than ever.

They were at the elementary school, packing the instruments and equipment they needed into Leonard's truck to drive over to the complex. With each piece of equipment Nanmak carried out to the truck, her arms got more tired. She didn't want to complain, but the whole experience was making her tired, hot, and stressed.

"I think we'll need to make a few trips," Pokok said, panting as he loaded one more guitar case into the truck. "But we'll have to hurry up! The show is in a few hours. Let's go, Nanmak!"

Nanmak was struggling to walk up to the truck with a heavy amplifier in her arms. But just then she stumbled, and the amp slipped out of her grasp and fell on the ground.

Pokok winced. "Oh no!" he said. "That's the best amp!"

Aitaok rushed to check if the amp was damaged. Nanmak flushed. She was humiliated. She hadn't even gotten onstage and she'd already ruined

the whole show. “I quit,” Nanmak said quietly. “I don’t want to do this anymore.” She didn’t want Pokok and Aitaok to see the tears in her eyes, so she quickly turned and ran off toward home.



“But the show is tonight!” Aitaok called after her.

“We need you!” Pokok yelled. But Nanmak didn’t turn back.

Chapter 7



Nanmak went straight to her room. She knew she had let Pokok and Aitaak down, but she felt like they would have been even more disappointed if she had frozen onstage and ruined their performance.

Nanmak picked up her guitar. Sometimes playing made her forget about whatever was bothering her. But then she remembered she had promised to lend Alex the guitar for the concert!

Nanmak hopped up and ran out the door all the way to the complex with her guitar in her hands.

When she got to the complex, Nanmak was amazed by how many people were there. All of the chairs were full, and people were standing along the walls. There was even a bake sale in one corner of the room. Nanmak recognized Aitaok's older sister standing behind a table full of delicious baked goods. *Wow, everyone really pitched in to help out,* Nanmak thought. She felt another wave of guilt.

Onstage, Aitaok was setting up the instruments and Pokok was testing the microphones. Aglok was standing at the soundboard turning the dials to make sure the volume was at the right level. They looked busy, but it also seemed like they were having fun.

Nanmak looked around the room to try to find Alex. She saw performers wearing traditional *amautit* and *kamngit*. Some were wearing tracksuits or glittery tops. A few girls were sitting next to the stage braiding each other's hair and fixing their makeup. Nanmak was amazed at how many performers there were going to be! But she still couldn't seem to find Alex.

“Good evening, everyone!” a voice rang out over the speakers suddenly. It was Jorgen. “I'll be your host for today. Let's start the show with our first performer, Alex!”

Oh no! Nanmak thought, looking at her guitar. *I'm too late!*

But then Alex walked onstage holding a guitar.

She must have borrowed that from Leonard. I guess they didn't need me after all, thought Nanmak, as she looked down at her own guitar sadly.

When Alex started playing her song, Nanmak recognized it right away. It was a song that she played all the time with Aitaok and Pokok. The audience started to clap to the beat and even sing along. But then...

THWANG!

The music stopped. One of the guitar strings had snapped. Alex stood still, shocked. Everyone in the audience was quiet. At the side of the stage, Pokok and Aitaok were rummaging through their gear looking for new strings.

Then Nanmak remembered the guitar she was holding. She started walking toward the stage. She could feel everyone looking at her, but she kept going. She needed to help Alex and Pokok and Aitaok.

“Here you go,” Nanmak said, handing the guitar to Alex.

“Do you want to play?” Alex asked. “I’ll sing.”



Before Nanmak could even think about Alex’s question, the audience started clapping and cheering.

Nanmak took a deep breath. *I can do this*, she thought.

Without thinking, Nanmak put the guitar strap over her head and started to play. Then she heard another guitar and a keyboard start playing. Pokok and Aitaok had joined them onstage! Nanmak grinned at them, and then looked out over the audience as they played the song together.

Maybe we can organize the talent show again next year! Nanmak thought.

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