

# Uqsruagnaq



Debby Dahl Edwardson • *Illustrated by Annie Patterson*  
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 **TALEWINDS**  
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*For my sons Amiqqaq and Ahmaogak; and for my daughters  
Ayaʔhuq, Qiʔaavsuk, Aaluk, Manuluuraq, and Ahgeak.  
May you always remember whale happiness—D. E.*

*To Gramma Vivi—A. P.*

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## The Iñupiaq Language

Iñupiaq hasn't always been a written language. Through the long winter nights of the Arctic, young people learned by listening to the stories of the elders, told in Iñupiaq. These stories taught history and culture and were passed from generation to generation through the memory of the people. In the 1800s when commercial whalers crowded the North, the Iñupiat were forced to learn and speak English. At schools, Iñupiat children were punished for speaking Iñupiaq. During this time the Iñupiaq language and culture were threatened, but the Iñupiat fought to preserve their cultures by recording their stories and putting their language into writing. Today schools and cultural centers teach Iñupiaq history, language, and culture.

To read *Whale Snow* in Iñupiaq and for more information on the Iñupiaq language, check out our Web site at [www.charlesbridge.com](http://www.charlesbridge.com).

## Words to Know

aaka (AH-ka): grandmother

aapa (AH-pa): grandfather

aarigaa (AH-dee-gah): Wow! Wonderful!

agvaktuni quviasuun (aga-VAHK-too-nee  
coo-VEE-ah-soon): whale happiness

agviq (AGA-vik): bowhead whale

amii? (AH-mee): right?

Amiqqaq (AH-mik-kahk): the boy's name

apuyyaq (AH-pooh-yahk): snow house

apun (AH-poon): snow

ii (ee): yes

il̥itqusia agvigum (ill-LIT-coo-see ah  
AGA-vee-oom): spirit-of-the-whale

Iñupiaq (in-YU-pea-ahk): Adjective form of  
“Iñupiat,” and the name of the language.  
It can be used as a noun to refer to a  
single person.

Iñupiat (in-YU-pea-at): The name used by  
Eskimos living in the northernmost portion  
of Alaska. Literally this means “real people”  
of the Arctic.

tupiq (TOO-pick): a white, canvas tent

uunaalik (oon-AH-lik): cooked whale meat and  
blubber

uqsruagnaq (ook-rue-AGA-nuck): whale snow

Qanniksuq qanniich aniqpaktut, quiñirut qiviunisitun  
qaugaich. Uimaiñjuraaqhuni qanniksuq  
aqlakatatun ittuatun kattagaalarut qilañmiñ.

Amiqqaq itchuaqtuqtuq isumavluni imma tağumiqsiuqsimali,  
tupiğmiqsiuqsimali Paapamiñi ağıviqsiuqtini.



Amiqqam aakaᅇa makitaruq igniᅇvigmi  
uqsrukuaqsiuqhuni. Uunnalaat uqsrukuaqtat igalauraq  
arruksivluᅇu tivraᅇiksipkaᅇaat iglu. Amiqqam qinani  
apuqtisimaagaa igalauramun. Igalauraq aarigaa nigliᅇaqhuni.  
Siᅇami qannich aktigiruat tiᅇmiᅇgruktun kiavittut anuᅇimi.



“Hii, Aakaan,” Amiqqam pigaa. “Quiññiich qanniich!”  
“Hmmm,” kiugaa aakaanata tasiullaǵmigich uqsrukuaqsiaksrautini.  
“Uqsruagnaq.”  
“Uqsruagnaq?”  
Aakaanata niaqumiñik añigaa.  
“Ii, uqsruagnaq. Uqsruagnaǵuuruq aǵviq qaiññami iñugnun.”  
“Kisunun iñugnun?” Amiqqam apiqsruǵaa aakani. “Kisunun  
iñugnun aǵviq qaitpa Aakaan?”  
“A,” uqallaktuq aakaan kavlaqsivlutik irrak, “ilitchuginiaqtutin.  
Ilitchugiyasirutin.”



Aaqaguilimman Amiqqam tusaagaich Paapami skidoo-ni. Qilamiuraq Paapaᅇa isiqtuq iglumignun aputaiyallaᅇmiuᅇ atigini.

“Aqpaagutigiga Amiqqatkut takuyaᅇat,” Paapaᅇa uqallaktuq.

Aakaᅇa iglaᅇaruq, aᅇiqhuni niaqumiᅇnik. “Aarigaa!” uqallaktuq.

“Takuyyiaqsivisa?” aᅇiqsriruq Amiqqaq.

“Ii,” uqallaktuq Paapaᅇa. “Takuyyignaqtugut kiliglugit iᅇuich aᅇvaᅇatilaaptinnik. Aglaan, saavitqiqqaqtuksrauruᅇa ikayuᅇiaᅇlugich aᅇviuqtit. Umialik una iqiasuktuksrauᅇitchuq.” Anmun qᅇiᅇlᅇugu Amiqqam nuyaᅇich tigulagaich.





Amiqqaq makitammaagiksiruq.

“Paapaᅇ, malikkumiᅇaqpik? Ikayuᅇiaᅇumiᅇaqpik? Iqiasuᅇitchuᅇa!”

Paapaᅇata qiᅇiᅇaa aakaᅇa. Aakaᅇata qiᅇiᅇaa Amiqqaq aasii iglaᅇavluni.

“Aqullᅇmi Amiqqatkuayaat aitchuusiaqagmata agviᅇmik imma anikavich. Tainnamik atchiᅇaraptiᅇiᅇ Amiqqamik,” Aakaᅇa uqallaktuq.

Paapaᅇa iglaqtuq.

“Qilamik Amiqqaaq,” uqallaktuq. “Uquqsagᅇiᅇ. Tautuᅇiaᅇlakpuk Amiqqatkut agviutiᅇat.”



Siła anuq̄liqhuni, tunummigaa Amiqqaq.

“Anuq̄liq̄luk imma Paapaᅇ,” Amiqqaq uqallaktuq.

“Ii, tavra aᅇvigum anuᅇiᅇa,” uqallaktuq Paapaᅇ.

“Aᅇvipayauraq siłaqaqtuq. Amiqqatkut aᅇviutiᅇat qaiᅇᅇaruq anuq̄liqsuami. Aᅇvigum tavra anuᅇiᅇa.”

“Aasii sumiitpa Amiqqatkut aᅇviutiᅇat?”

“Aa,” uqallaktuq Paapaᅇ. “Tautugniagiᅇ.”



Paapanata skidoo-ni kiapqatittut tagiumun sikumun,  
anuqfiqumun. Qaanigugich ivunigruat sunaaqtaat,  
sunauraaqtaat, anilhaat skidoo-niñ, aktilaalgich iglutun.



Sivisuᅇitchuq, tautukkaak Amiqqatkut aᅇviutiᅇat.  
Qakimaruq sikum qaᅇᅇani ilaa una maᅇalaaq  
iᅇᅇisugruk. Kivaliᅇaurᅇᅇani Paapaᅇata tupqa ivsularuq,  
iᅇluᅇᅇuatun aktigiruatuᅇ ittuq. Iᅇuich iᅇugiaktuat  
ullaᅇagaat Amiqqatkut aᅇviutiᅇat iᅇlaᅇaalukᅇutiᅇ,  
iqimmivᅇutiᅇ, qiammiut uvva quyavaiᅇᅇutiᅇ.



Amiqqam aakaᅇa aniruq ivsularuamiᅇ tupigmiᅇ saagaqhuni  
uunaqtuagnik qallutignik imalignik kuukpiamik.

Amiqqam Paapaᅇata kivikkaa aᅇviniᅇluum qaᅇᅇanun.  
Iᅇupayaaq avaallaktuᅇ.  
“Aarigaa ! Aᅇviᅇai !”





Amiqqam aakanata tiguvlugu aqqaqtikaa.

“Aakaan, qamaᅇᅇa quviasuktuna. Iᅇuga iglaᅇaalukpaktuatun ittuq. Iglanaᅇiᅇa aᅇiᅇhaaqtuq iglumiᅇ. Iglanaᅇhaaqtuq nunaaqqimiᅇ.”

“Ii,” uqallaktuq aakaᅇa. “Quviasuun aᅇvaktuni tasamma iᅇitchuᅇigiᅇ.”

“Aᅇvaktuni quviasuun?”

“Ii, Amiqqaaq. Aᅇvaktuni quviasuun. Aᅇvigum iᅇitqusia qaiᅇmaun iᅇugnun, quviasuutiqpagmik qaᅇᅇirrisuuruq. Tavra aᅇvaktuni quviasuun.”

Amiqqam qunmun qiᅇiᅇaa aᅇviniᅇluk. “Tautullagiga iᅇitqusia aᅇvigum, Aakaan!”

Amiqqam aakaᅇa iglaᅇaruq.

“Naumi, Amiqqaaq, iᅇitqusigiᅇitkaa. Atigiᅇhiᅇaᅇa una iᅇitqusiᅇata aᅇvigum.”

“Aasii sumiitpa iᅇitqusia aᅇvigum, maamaᅇ?”

“Aa,” uqallaktuq maamaᅇa, iqᅇᅇugu,” iᅇitchuᅇiniaqtutin, Iᅇitchuᅇiaqsiuraqtutin.”



Aᅇaᅇich utiqtaqtut isiurriᅇlutinᅇ annisuurriᅇlutinᅇ niᅇinik.  
Amiqqam maamaᅇalu Aakaᅇalu uunaalliuqtuk, igavlugich  
niᅇitchiallu maktaillu ukkusigruani qalaullagmata. Siviᅇuᅇitchuᅇ  
Amiqqatkut igluᅇat avyuqsiruuᅇ, tivraᅇiksiruuᅇ, misaivsiᅇkaᅇlugu.



Iñupayaaq nunaaqqimi niggiyyaqtuq Amiqqatkunnun.  
Iñuich isauqiqsut uvlupaiqługu. Atchaañich siigñaliqsuirut  
qallutisalagnun. Uunaaliliqsuirut puggutauranun.  
Aitchuqtugaich iñuich uqsrukuaqtanik siigñaniglu  
puggutauraniglu siłipkaqtuanik uunaalignik.



Amiqqaq aquptaqtuq aapami saniġaanun. Aapaŋata avguutigaa  
Amiqqaq uunaalignik niġitquvlugu. Unaalgich aqiaġua uunnaaksipkaġaa.  
Uunnaum iŋugaurani kakki!lauragmatun ilipkaġaich, iglaŋapkaliq!ugu.  
Iŋupayaaq iglaŋaruq, iglaqtuq. Amiqqatkut igluŋat immiŋaruq  
quviasuunmik.

“Aapaŋ,” Amiqqam isuvruutigaa, “Sumiitilaana aġvigum ilitqusina  
ilisimagiga.” Amiqqam aapaŋata qalliuraġaa.

“Uqallautiŋa Amiqqaq, sumiitpa aġvigum ilitqusina?”

“Aapaŋ, ilitqusina aġvigum quiŋŋiŋi qannigŋi sul i anuq!iq!ugmi ittuq,”  
Amiqqaq uqallaktuq. “Ilitqusina aġvigum maani igluptinni ittuq,  
iglaŋapkaq!ugich iglaqti!ugil!u iŋuich. Avanmun.”

“Ii, Amiqqaq,” aapaŋa uqallaktuq, niaqumiŋik aŋŋaqhuni. “Ii.”





“Aglaan sumuguuva aquvatigun, Aapaan?”

“Aquvatigun?”

“Iñuich aiyaaganigmata.”

“Aa,” uqallaktuq aapaña siqungipakhuni, “iļitqusija agvigum tagiumun utiguuruq, samma iļaanni iļitchuginiaqtutin. Utiguuruq tagiumun.”

“Aasii agvaktuni quviasuun piginiagikput suli amii Aapaan?”

“Ii, Amiqqaaq. Agvaktuni quviasuun piginiagikput suli. Quviasuunmik tavra unitchisuuruq agviq aullaġman.”



## The Bowhead and the Iñupiat: A Partnership

When springtime comes to the Arctic coast of Alaska and the ocean ice splits open, bowhead whales swim northward. Iñupiat whalers set their white tents on the edge of the ice waiting, as they have done for centuries, for the return of the whales.

The Iñupiat have long shared a special bond with the bowheads. Legend tells of an Iñupiaq shaman who visited the whales and learned a message of sharing and cooperation. The Iñupiat believe that whales choose to give themselves to worthy whaling crews that have emulated the spirit-of-the-whale by avoiding conflict and practicing generosity. This spirituality, passed down through generations, is the same tradition followed in *Whale Snow*.

But the bond between the Iñupiat and the whale is more than spiritual. Less than 100 years ago, the whale provided the Iñupiat with homes, heat, food, and light. Living on the treeless tundra, the Iñupiat used the huge whalebones, along with driftwood, as the framework for their sod homes. Whale oil provided heat and light, while meat and blubber provided a major source of food. Even bowhead baleen found use in the creation of baskets, nets, cups, and sled runners.

This relationship was threatened in 1977 when the International Whaling Commission (IWC) called for a ban on Iñupiat whaling. Formed by the commercial whaling

nations of the world, IWC did not understand the special relationship the Iñupiat have always shared with the whale. Bowheads have given the Iñupiat physical and spiritual sustenance.

In response to the IWC ban, Iñupiat whaling captains formed the Alaskan Eskimo Whaling Commission (AEWC), which today regulates Iñupiat whaling by agreement with the federal government. Through AEWC, the Iñupiat have sponsored scientific studies of bowheads. Using underwater microphones, called hydrophones, scientists can follow whale movements and listen to individual whale voices.

Today the Iñupiat live in modern homes, but hold fast to the special culture surrounding the whale. Preparation for whaling is a year-round process and as in the old days, when magical amulets and songs were used to call the whales, spirituality is still an important part of the hunt.

