

**Jens Haven School
Nain
presents**

“Tundra”

Cast:

Eugene Frieda..... Shane
Abby Webb..... Angela
Melissa Webb..... Rebecca
The Shadows:
Sarah Hearn..... Torngat (Spirit of the land)
Samantha Lyall..... Immapisuak (The Sea)
Monica Montejano..... Atsanik (The Northern lights)
Danielle Baikie..... Nanuk (The Polar Bear)

Teacher Advisors:

**Kathleen Gilhooley
Robin Hunt**

“Tundra” is an original production written by a group of students at Jens Haven memorial School about the struggle of Inuit youth to recall their heritage through traditional legends. While out for a snowmobile ride, three friends get stuck on the land when their machine breaks down. In an attempt to remain calm while waiting for help, they begin to tell each other stories that were taught to them by their elders. Little do they know that “The Shadows” Torngat (spirit if the land), Atsanik (Northern lights), Immapisuak (The sea) and Nanuk (The polar bear) are watching over them. The playful shadows reminisce over the fading culture, but still with a few tricks up their sleeves, they help the youngsters along their way. Shane, Rebecca and Melissa think they are alone in the wilderness, but with so many legendary spirits around, is anyone ever really alone and helpless?

Begins with stage black and lights rising slowly. Audience can hear Shane, Angela, and Rebecca arguing over a skidoo on Upper Stage Left. All three are dressed for a ski-doo ride.

Shane: What the hell are you doing? You don't know anything about skidoos....you're a girl for God's sake!

Angela: Shut up. I told you to take extra gas!

(Lights come up SL on 3 friends).

Shane: The gas isn't even the problem!

Rebecca: Ughhh! I *knew* something like this would happen.

Angela: *(to Shane)* Check the spark plugs.

Shane: I just put new ones in before we left.

Angela: Check them anyway.

Rebecca : *(whining)* I'm cold! We've been here forever.

Shane: Quit whining!

Rebecca: I would if you could fix that piece of crap. You call yourself a Labrador boy and you can't even get a ski-doo running.

(Shane kicks snowmobile and stomps off to Lower Stage Right and sits on the snow. Angela and Rebecca look at each other for a moment then Angela makes her way over to Shane, sitting down beside him. Rebecca simply sits on the skidoo, huffy. Lights come up down SR as Shane walks over)

Angela: Calm down, Shane. It isn't anyone's fault. That ski-doo's old, you know that.

Shane: Heh. Remember the last time we broke down? We should'a learned our lesson on that piece of junk.

Angela: Yea, we were over to Kauk and had to walk all the way back. It was dark when we finally got into town. And the whole way back *you* were telling me horrible stories and freaking me out.

Shane: *(laughs)* Yea, you really got jumpy when I told you the legend of the northern lights.

Rebecca: I'm cold over here! It's like minus 26. Are you guys just going to sit there and do nothing?

Shane: You can try to start that machine if you want, but all I'm starting is a fire. Come over with us if you're cold. *(Gets up and begins to gather wood.)*

(Rebecca pauses a moment before going over. As Shane busies himself with a fire the girls talk Lights off at SL)

Rebecca: So, what did he tell you about the northern lights?

Angela: Well, first he started whistling and I asked him why the hell he was doing that, because I was annoyed. He said he was calling the 'lights down. It was practically pitch black and so much colder than it is now, but how beautiful the ice was under that sky.

Shane: *(interrupts)* You can only say that after. You were complaining constantly out there.

Angela: *(kicks out/hits him play-angry)* *(to Shane)* You weren't any help. *(To Rebecca)* He went on to tell me that whistling would make the lights come closer. The lights are spirits playing with a human head, and sometimes they need a new ball. So, if we were still all alone at midnight, out of town, they would come down and chop our heads off. *(With a sidelong glance to Shane)* At least that's what he said.

(While they are talking, Torngat and Atsanik come out to Centre Stage and look on. Their light is low-ish and tinted (Blues and Purples). Atsanik is indignant. They are tossing a 'head' between each other)

Atsanik: Well that's not all true.

Torngat: Hush. It is not often we get to be with the people since they began to build homes from trees. Besides, you *do* play with skulls.

(Atsanik simply sticks her tongue out to Torngat and remains silent)

Rebecca: And you believed him?

Angela: Well out there on your own with no comforts can, I dunno, change what's real. I know it couldn't really happen but in the moment I guess I could've believed anything. Besides it's fun to freak out a little.

Shane: Just wait until dark, Rebecca, and we'll see how brave you are. (*Devilish smirk*)

***Stage cue: match is lit – fire gets plugged in from off-stage right) ***

Atsanik : (*To Torngat*) It's not like I couldn't chop off heads, I just don't.

Angela: (*rolls her eyes*) Whatever. You're not so brave yourself. I know a few stories to freak you out.

Shane: Just try.

Rebecca: Wait a second, are we going to be here long enough for dark?

Shane: They won't get concerned 'til after dark. (*By now he's finished with starting the fire and is once again seated in the semicircle.*) And seeing as that pile of crap over there won't start we're stuck until we're found. It'll be dark soon anyways.

Angela: It'll be fine. Let's just talk, pass the time.

Shane: ; I know a story. My Anansiak told me a long time ago. It's about the Kullapuliuk (*miss pronounces the name*).

Torngat: I know that story, but you call her the Kalupilluik, not whatever he said.

Rebecca: What's a Kalopalook?

Angela: Kalupilluik, dummies.

(Rebecca pushes Angela).

Angela: Hey! (*Rubs her arm.*)

*(Shadows Torngat and Atsanik laugh silently; there is a sudden breeze due to their chuckle... **sound cue: wind sound**).*

Angela: Ahhh, I just got a chill. How would you expect it to be pronounced right when you even screwed it up the first time? Just tell the story.

Shane: Geez...alright. So there's this little girl a long time ago who wanted to go ice fishing but everyone was too busy to take her. She was about to go down on the ice by herself, just on the harbour but her mother and father stopped her.

(Atsanik mimics the child skipping about, and Torngat imitates the parents stopping her. Imappisuak enters stealthily behind Torngat and Atsanik.) (Lights on shadows are hazy – depicting a winter afternoon).

Shane: They say that if a child goes out on the ice alone a sea monster, Kalupilluik, will come up through the cracks and will take the child back under the ice. The girl doesn't believe this and goes down to the ice anyway. Once she gets there she feels mischievous and taunts the monster 'Kalupilluik, Kalupilluik have stinky feet' and that sort of thing. Suddenly, the monster comes up behind the girl and grabs her, and pulls her under.

(Imappisuak grabs Atsanik and they struggle)

Shane: I don't remember how she got away, but somehow she did. That Kalupilluik was nasty the way my Anansiak described her. I had nightmares about it and I don't think I went to the shore alone in winter 'til I was ten or eleven.

Shadows: Laughing

Angela: I think that was the point.

Shadows: Laughing

Rebecca: *(snobbish)* What a fine story. Do either of you hear laughing?

(The shadows who are laughing now suddenly stop).

Shane: It's probably the Kalupilluik enjoying our ignorance.

Rebecca: Yeah, whatever. Its dark you know.

Angela: Nah, the sun is only just gone. Sure it's colder, but we're good yet.

(Light is dim – the sun has just set)

Torngat: *(to Imappisuak and Atsanik)* They should build an igloo.

Shane: Hey, let's build an igloo.

Rebecca: *(disbelievingly)* Do you even know how?

Shane: Can't be too hard. C'mon Ang. Lets get building. *(Stands up)*

Angela: Who died and made you boss? *(Reluctantly stands too).*

(The pair makes an igloo shape out of painted juice boxes).

Imappisuak: You know we should help them.

All: *(after a pause)* Nah.

(They all hover around the friends sometimes pushing a box, sometimes tripping someone up, sometimes just hovering and watching)

Rebecca: *(remains seated by the fire) (Sarcasm)* Any more wonderful stories to share?

Angela: Rebecca, how do you not know any of these stories? You grew up here too.

Imappisuak: *(lights on Down Centre as Immapisuak speaks to audience)* So many of our people have forgotten our stories. They do not even bother to tell their children about us any more. Soon there will be no one left to pass them on. Then what will happen. *(The shadows shrug and hang their heads). (As Immapisuak walks back lights fall back on all shadows – Back Centre).*

Rebecca: *(shrugging her shoulders)* I don't know. No one ever told me. Forget about me, I wanna hear another story.

Angela: Well there's that Sedna story.

Imappisuak: *(excited)* Oh excellent. I wonder if they know the correct tale.

Rebecca: You already know I'm clueless so go on, who's Sedna?

Angela: *(while building)* Sedna is the old sea goddess of the Inuit. In the legend she starts as an ordinary human girl who was very beautiful. Probably, because she was so beautiful, she was conceited and very picky over the men who wished to marry her. Until one day when a stranger showed up on her island promising to marry her and fill her life with more riches than she could imagine.

(The shadows are acting out the story. Imappisuak is acting as Sedna. Torngat is the stranger for the moment. Atsanik is watching.) (Lights are bright over shadows).

Torngat: *(to Imappisuak as Sedna)* "Come with me and I promise you great riches. Your pots will always with meat, your lamp filled with oil, you bed covered in soft skins and your clothes lined with warm feathers".

(The three shadows continue acting out the story as the others talk.)

Angela: Sedna could not resist his song and agreed to marry him.

Shane: Well that doesn't sound so bad.

Angela: Hold on, there's more. On their voyage to his home Sedna's husband transformed into a fulmar (*a bird type creature*). He left her alone on a rocky ledge, bringing her fish guts as her only source of food. In her loneliness Sedna cried out for her father.

Imappisuak: Father if you knew my suffering you would rescue me from this terrible place.

Angela: Her father answered her cries and in the spring came to rescue her. He was so angry that he killed the fulmar. He pulled his daughter into his kayak and they paddled quickly away. They soon found themselves swarmed by other fulmars. Selfishly the father threw Sedna overboard to save himself

Rebecca: How sad. That's a terrible thing for a father to do.

Angela: Let me finish. (*Pause*) Sedna did not make it easy for her father. She clung on to the side of kayak but the old man fought back. He grabbed a knife and stabbed at her hands, cutting off each finger at the first joint. Her fingers bobbing in the sea turned into the first seals. Sedna grabbed the kayak again but her father cut off her fingers at the second joint, these pieces became the walrus's. Sedna tried again to clutch the kayak but her father cut off the rest of her hands which became the first whales when they hit the water.

Shane: Gross man, sickening. So what happened, did she die?

(*Blue light filter to show Sedna being in the ocean*).

Angela: No, Sedna was stronger than that. She sank to the bottom of the sea but didn't drown. She became a spirit who guards her sea creatures. Unfortunately for Sedna, she could no longer comb her beautiful hair without any hands. At times Sedna's hair bothers her so much that she won't release animals for people to eat until a shaman visits and gently combs out her hair. There, finished!

Shane: That is one nice igloo if I do say myself. Lets go in. (*Shane crawls in*).

Rebecca: That's an igloo? I am not going in there.

Angela: It's warmer...

Rebecca: Not if it all falls on your head.

Shane: *(comes out again)* what are you two yakking about? Just come on in. It's fine.

(Shadows shake heads knowingly.)

Torngat: They don't make them as they used to.

(Atsanik kicks the igloo. Everyone watches as the igloo falls. Shane has his back to it and turns when he hears it fall.)

Shane: Oh that sucks.

Rebecca: Told you.

Angela: ughhhh... let's just huddle around the fire, its dark now, no point in trying again.

Imappisuak: I pity them, you know. I'm nearly certain their grandparents could have built an igloo at their age, twice as big that stood up without crumbling.

Atsanik: Their grandparent's might have asked the spirits for some help.

Torngat: They might not believe in the traditions anymore, but at least they know some of the myths. They are not completely disconnected with their culture.

Shane: Hey, shshsh...

Angela: What?

Shane: I thought I heard something.

Rebecca: You're terrible. You're just trying to freak us out.

Shane: And wa?

Rebecca: *(Rolls her eyes then speaks to Angela.)* Do you know any more stories? Cultural stuff? I'm kind of getting into this on-the-land thing.

Shane: I dunno, you don't seem like someone who could last back then... life was hard.

*(The friends stare into the fire while the Shadows talk and act out what they are saying).
(Lights turn back to blues and purples "northern lights" over the shadows as the talk).*

Atsanik: Oh, the olden days... what a beautiful time that was. The Inuit respected us, passed on information on surviving the land to their children, struggled day to day to live. *(Tragic & zealous sadness.)* Beautiful.

Torngat: Women would sew and cook and care for the young while worrying about their husbands out on the land whom they scarcely knew if they would return to them.

(Imitations of a sobbing/stressed woman)

Imappisuak: I loved how they hunted my seals, using a screen to get closer until their harpoon could easily be thrown into the flesh of a seal resting on the ice near his air hole. Many times I would watch in glee, never knowing who would win, the seal or the hunter?

(Imitations of a hunter and seal)

Torngat: The sled teams! Men and dogs trusting in one another, almost like a single creature gliding across the landscape.

Atsanik: They had such wonderful songs then. I loved the stories, truly I would dance above them on a clear night for as long as they spoke or sang.

Torngat: Do you remember how the people used the Inukshuk?

(The shadows build an Inukshuk in the direction that the three teenagers will be going home)

Atsanik: For guiding the way to special places, and to trick Caribou. They would create a series of them to guide the caribou to a funneled end. Hunters would hide behind these piles of stone while the women would snap hides to scare and herd the caribou. They usually took only as much as they needed for they were not wasteful.

Imappisuak: Unlike these foolish people. They may only be partially Inuit but their heritage is on this land. It is like looking at a child grasp at water for me to see their language and ways slip through their fingers. Such a rich heritage . . . such foolish young.

(One or all drop snow on the heads of the friends. Lights go black on shadows)

Rebecca: It's snowing! Oh no!

Shane: It's only a flurry. *(Stands up)* I gotta go take a leak. *(Walks off stage left).*

Angela: How about another story, Rebecca? I hate it when it's too quiet.

Rebecca: *(shivers a little)* Go ahead.

Angela: Alright, you know that stone on top of the hill back home in Nain? The one that looks like a polar bear from a distance but if you go looking for it you'll never find it. Anyway, my grandmother was the first to tell me the story of how it got there.

(Spirits are acting story out – lights come up on shadows (daylight))

Angela: When Nain was still small, mostly only tents and very few houses, the men would often all go hunting together leaving the women, children, and the old. One winter day they all left taking the dogs with them, you know, for dog teams. The town was left practically defenseless, so when a polar bear, hungry from the sparse food, began lumbering towards them there was cause for panic. There were no weapons left as the men took all of them on the hunt. An old man, who hadn't quite forgotten the shaman arts despite the missionaries, knew exactly what to do. He pulled out his old skin drum from his tent and began to beat it in a hypnotic rhythm and he began singing. His song was some sort of prayer to the spirits to protect them. Anyway, after some serious drumming the bear froze in place and turned to stone. So the people were safe.

Shane: *(Comes running on screaming)* Ahhhhhhhhhh! A BEAR!!!!!!

(Rebecca and Angela stand promptly and look in the direction that Shane entered from.)

Angela: Where? I don't see any bear.

Shane: *(out of breath and cowering behind the girls)* a....polar....bear...When I was.... pissing.... I saw one.

Angela: Whatever, you're dreaming, or hallucinating or something.

Shane: Seriously.

(Nanuk enters, laughing.)

Atsanik: Nanuk! That was not needed.

Nanuk: But it is fun. You know I wouldn't hurt them. They're just so fool able.

Shane: *(Walks over to the skidoo)* Let's get this thing fixed. I don't want to be stuck here all night.

Rebecca: It's dark right now, lets just wait until the midnight sun so we won't strain our eyes.

(This flabbergasts the others for a moment)

Angela: That means that it's daylight for 24 hours, not that the sun rises at midnight. And we're too far south for that anyway.

Nanuk: You know if they had a sled team this would not have been a problem. But no, they must ride that horrible technology.

Shane: You know if we had a sled team we wouldn't be in this mess.

Rebecca: Oh how I wish I could be back home on my computer... My boyfriend must be wondering why I'm not on MSN.

Shane: ; Poor ol' relationship. Geez, if I could I'd put you there too, just so I wouldn't have to put up with your whining.

(Rebecca tosses her hair in a way to portray a 'superior' attitude).

Angela: Anyway... *(pause)* Shane, I honestly don't think you'll be able to fix it. Just wait a little bit more. I told my parents that we would be over in this area riding, so we'll be found sooner or later.... someone will see our fire.

(Torngat excuses herself; she must attend to some other matters, and exits stage followed by Imappisuak.)

Shane: You know there's plenty of reasons I don't wanna be here too late. Ever hear of the Smoker?

Rebecca: Which smoker?

Shane: *(seizing an opportunity to frighten, walks back over to the fire, Atsanik gets a brilliant idea for mischief and trips him. The two girls laugh. Shane gets up and dusts off, muttering something about a snow covered root.)* No, THE Smoker. He was a musher a long time ago. The story goes that one stormy day he took his dogs out in a whiteout. He was wise and experienced, so it had to have been important for him to do something so foolish, that no other would attempt. But his errand was never to be completed, for when he said good bye to his family it was the last time anyone saw him.

Rebecca: That's not scary... it's barely a full story.

(Spotlight on Atsanik as she speaks to audience)

Atsanik: I remember the storm, the spirits were angry... it wasn't long after the tragedies up on the north coast with the Spanish flu and such.

(Lights black on Atsanik)

Shane: I'm not done. Now, getting lost is easy, especially in a storm. My uncle told me a story about being a young man and getting lost out on the ice trying to get home. He had a ski-doo then, you know, one of them crappy old-fashioned kinds. He was following along the shoreline the best he could with the visibility, but his ski-doo broke down on him in the middle of the ice. He didn't want to freeze so he got off and started walking. It was hard going; he said it almost felt as if he was just going in circles. He was hungry, cold, and thirsty, and he had lost all orientation of where his skidoo was or where he had came from. He just felt like giving up. But up ahead of him he could barely see the figure of a man walking in what might have been snow shoes. My uncle tried to catch the person 'cause he thought for sure that buddy was lost too. But no matter how fast my uncle walked he couldn't catch him, so he just kept following. That buddy led my uncle right into town, but then he disappeared. No one besides my uncle made it back to town that day.

Rebecca: So?

Angela: So it had to be the Smoker.

(Northern lights come up on friends downstage right. Nanuk enters, stepping on sticks)

Shane: You hear that?

Rebecca: What?

Angela: Ah he only gonna fart.

Shane: No Listen.

(A polar Bear walks by the three children, stepping on more sticks)

Shane: Told you I saw one.

(They start running in the opposite direction. Northern lights come up full stage)

Rebecca: I'm scared.

Angela: Don't be scared. Just keep Running!

Rebecca: What's that?

Shane: Is that another polar bear?

Angela: No it's a cabin.

Rebecca: Can we go in?

Shane: Of course we can. It is a matter of life or death, besides I don't want to keep walking knowing there is a polar bear out there!

Atsanik: That was a good idea!

Nanuk: I just had to do it. They would have frozen to death if I didn't scare them in that direction.

Rebecca: Thank God for that polar bear. It's starting to get real stormy.

Angela: We should get a fire started and put candles up in the windows so they know where we are to.

Shane: Ahhh, this is my uncle Ern's cabin. It's my first time here though.

Angela: Me too *(giggles)*

Rebecca: I guess we'll spend the night.

Imappisuak: They will be okay now. Their parents are on their way to the cabin too.

(As the three enter the cabin Shane pauses outside)

Shane: *(looking towards the sky)* Nakkumek

(Northern lights dimming as music playing and shadows drum -- fade to black).

