

## Ivik, the Ice Age Boy

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Category	Yarn
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Time to allocate (mins)	15
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### 1st part:

Ivik, the Ice Age boy woke and listened to his tummy rumbling. He felt cold as he dressed and went outside the rock shelter. The sea had finally frozen. The morning light showed big patches that hadn't the brightness of water. He knew that the current would gradually push the patches together and it would look as if the sea was all frozen solid. Further away he could see some big openings where little waves came splashing over the edges of ice but these would grow smaller and smaller. Heavy clouds were coming from the south west. Old Grandfather stood next to Ivik.

"That means the Nigerk wind: said the old man. "It brings big game for the hunter but bad weather and snow too. Pity men haven't the strength to keep snow clouds away".

True enough, before nightfall, snow fell; drift ice floated in preventing them from mammoth hunting, now food was very scarce. Ivik and the old man sat together.

Grandfather, old and quite feeble was a storehouse of information and experience which he tried to pass on to Ivik – it was his duty since Ivik's father had been killed by a sabre tooth tiger. Ivik, young, without his full strength and lacked the experience to be the provider of the family – the old man, too old now; the position in the camp was very bad. These two sat and talked, the old man trying to pass on his knowledge, about hunting bison, antelope and walrus – fishing through holes in the ice; what cloud formations meant, what to expect if the wind blew from the south or the north, and how to find your way by the stars.

### 2nd part:

It was finally agreed that Ivik would go for help to another settlement close by. The camp was so short of meat and blubber for lamp oil and "we can't expect visiting hunters yet" said the old man, "those on the mainland will be going to bring in the summer catch. They will come when the the weather is warmer but we won't be here to meet them". Ama, Ivik's mother nodded. She knew the journey would be dangerous but it was the only way. The little ones could not last much longer, neither could the old man; Ivik MUST get help. Ama told Ivik to get some sleep while she mended his clothes and packed some food for the journey. Ama found some scraps of fur and put new bottoms on his boots, bear fur that she had kept for a long time. She patched his trousers and Grandfather dug in the meat platform and found an some dried meat. He cut it up with his burin which had a strong bone chisel. He put it into a food pouch for Ivik to hang round his neck. Ama wanted Ivik to take the big spear with him but he said it was too heavy. If he took it they would have no weapon and that he could not do. He chose instead his father's old harpoon, with the short shaft and strong walrus tusk head. Putting on his snow shoes, he said goodbye and started on his journey. He walked and walked but he had to be very careful, as all the ice was not safe. He dropped the harpoon on the ice in front of him. If the handle didn't punch through the ice, it was safe to walk. Black ice was dangerous to walk on, so he walked around it. After walking for some time he felt tired and hungry. Without thinking he started to eat the food in the bag and soon it was all gone.

**3rd part:**

Ivik walked on and on, keeping the wind at his back. To make it easier for himself, he thought of what he would tell the friends at the settlement. His father's death would be first, for if his father was alive, this journey would not be necessary. How wonderful it had been when his father had been alive – how fat and well they had been. He remembered too the plentiful food when his father had brought back the meat after a successful hunt. He thought about what his father had taught him, how they had stood together and watched the game animals. His father had known about useless creatures like ptarmigans and hares, and about other places and their people. How Ivik had loved the stories told by his father. Ivik thought too of the times they had worked together, cutting up the seals, gathering berries and cutting down trees. Sadly Ivik kept on walking.

**4th part:**

The food he had eaten made his tummy think that there was more coming. He felt hungry again and so he cut up the pouch and chewed the bits till they were soft. It made good chewing but it made him thirsty. He decided to change course slightly towards the ice crags that lay near the mainland. By watching the snowdrifts he kept his course, as it was cloudy and too dark to actually see the mountains on the mainland. He quickened his pace and was less alert, the thought of water uppermost in his mind. Too late he realized that there was something moving towards him – a strange unreal something he couldn't make out – perhaps it was a fox, but it grew bigger and bigger... In a flash he realized he was facing the biggest game animal in the Arctic – the most dangerous, the giant bear! He forgot how for years he wanted to meet a bear; he felt very small and alone. As the bear came closer he remembered that he was a hunter with his father's harpoon in his hand that could kill swiftly and surely – all hardship could be over with one blow. The bear came closer, sniffing the air, and moving menacingly forward. In that instance, Ivik attacked the bear, the head of the spear missing the vital spot between the ribs, as the bear turned slightly. The spear buried itself in the bear's soft belly – it roared and Ivik yelled like a true hunter. The angry bear swung round frantically as Ivik held onto the spear, but as it swung back again Ivik flew over the bear's head and landed on the ice. The bear struck the spear shaft, broke it in half and started to eat the end. Ivik didn't wait to see what else he would do; he leaped up and ran in the direction of the ice crag. He looked back over his shoulder and saw the bear starting after him. Ivik ran as he had never run before, over the ice, up the crag and collapsed on the ledge, exhausted. Ivik no longer knows what is happening. He hears no growls from the bear, the cold ceases and the ice he lies on is gone.

Everything seems further and further from him, then he is with his father and his father is proudly telling his friends that his son is a good hunter, he killed his first bear, and then suddenly he is showing his father his first fish, caught in the small ice hole, then he is floating with the fish, floating, floating...

**5th part:**

Time passes but Ivik does not stir. He is awake and feels as if everything he dreamt has happened. He no longer feels cold or hungry. He eventually rolls over and looks down the crag at the bear but he is too tired to go down to it. He sees a fox sliding over the ice to sit nearby in the hopes of sharing the kill... He lies back again and presently he hears a sound from far, far away. It is the sound of hunters, shouting as they come closer.

Slowly Ivik sits up, his body protesting, its cold and very sore, his right hand is frozen as he lost his mitten in the fight with the bear. From his high place he can see the black specks on the ice moving towards him. Then he sees what the hunters are chasing, it is a bear, coming right towards him for it knows that its only chance is the crags. The hunters are closing fast, and just before it gets to the crags the hunters have it surrounded. The bear strikes a blow at the hunters, sending one flying over the ice. The hunters wait for the right moment and then one of them strikes quickly with a great roar, the bear sinks onto the snow. From his place on the ledge Ivik shouted "I got a bear too, I got one too."

The men stopped – who could be shouting from so high up – could it be the spirits were angry with them. Then the voice said "Here I am, I need help" and looking up they saw the boy. They looked in astonishment, how did he get there... Then they noticed that there was a bear on the ice, not quite dead but severely wounded. They took their spears and finished off the bear and told the boy to come down.

As Ivik reached the bottom of the crag he stood quietly, knowing that the men should speak to him first. He recognised them, they were friends of his father, and as they came closer, they recognised him too. He blurted out his story, this bear story, and they listened attentively, amazed that one so young had such courage to fight a bear singlehanded. "Your father will be proud of you" said the tallest of the men. "There are fewer of us at our camp than you would expect". Ivik replied and the men knew that his father was dead. A closer look at the boy told the rest of the story – he was exhausted, near collapse, he needed warmth, food and lots of sleep. "We will take you home and cut up the bears and take you home". Ivik nodded, and was lifted onto a hunter's back, covered with a rug and after the men had put markers at the bears to help them find them the next day, they headed for the settlement. Before they had gone very far, Ivik was asleep.

### **Conclusion:**

The men returned for the bears the next day, bringing Ivik with them for they knew how important it was for him to help to skin the first bear he had ever killed. When all the work was done, the meat and skins were loaded onto packs and Ivik said goodbye to those who were returning to the settlement and set off with the friends who would take him safely back home.

At the camp, Ivik's mother was getting more and more worried about the little ones and old Grandfather. They did not want to get up now and were very weak. Suddenly she saw a speck, moving in the distance and as it got nearer, she saw it was people. This could mean only one thing. Ivik had got to the settlement safely and soon there would be enough food and warmth for all. When she at last heard Ivik's story, she knew that his father would have been very proud of him, just as proud as she was of her son.