Julie of the Wolves Study Guide

Julie of the Wolves by Jean Craighead George

BOOKRAGS

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Overview

On one level, Julie of the Wolves is a book about survival in the wilderness. A young Eskimo girl, named both Julie Edward (her American name) and Miyax Kapugen (her Eskimo name), runs away from a traditional planned marriage that she finds intolerable. She becomes lost on the vast North Slope of the Alaskan Brooks Range, far away from even the most remote settlement. The long arctic winter is coming on and Julie must call on all her wits, her Eskimo skills, and her sensitivity to nature to find the food and shelter she needs to survive. Near her camp, she discovers a wolf den and determines that somehow she must find a way to make the wolves share their resources with her if she is to live.

On another, more metaphysical level, Julie of the Wolves is about being lost in a culture. Julie runs away from the Eskimo village thinking that she will go to live with her pen pal in San Francisco.

Her experience alone on the tundra with the wolves, however, teaches her the value and beauty of the Eskimo ways.

She learns to hate modern civilization, which she views as being out of touch with the natural world. She gives up the idea of San Francisco and almost decides to live her life alone on the tundra.

A certain ambivalence, however, takes hold of her, and she journeys towards human settlement. At last she meets another Eskimo couple and learns from them that her father, Kapugen, whom she had thought dead, is not only alive but a leader in the nearby town of Kangik. Her goal changes: she will go to live with her Eskimo father and practice the old ways that he taught her as a child.

But when she gets there she finds that he has made compromises and adopted some of the modern ways.

Narrative tension arises from two major sources—the practical matter of how Julie will survive on the tundra, and the philosophical matter of how she will resolve the problem of her cultural identity. Julie struggles, like many young members of other ethnic groups, to work out on a very personal level some kind of compromise between the old culture that defines her people and the disparate values and methods of modern society.

About the Author

Jean Craighead George was born on July 2, 1919, in Washington, D.C., into a family whose consuming interest was nature. Both of her parents, Dr.

Frank C. and Carolyn Johnson Craighead, were entomologists, or insect specialists, and a succession of wild birds and animals shared the family home over the years. The family often spent summers on their farm in Pennsylvania or on field trips. Twin brothers, Frank and John, grew up to become ecologists, while George herself became an author, illustrator, and naturalist— although she did not settle into her career immediately.

George studied both natural science and English at Penn State University, the latter under the noted American poet Theodore Roethke. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in 1941, she departed for Louisiana State University to study modern dance. With the United States' entry into World War II, however, George put aside her dancing ambitions and became a reporter. Since then, writing has been the foundation of her career, and environmental subjects her frequent focus. Her journalistic assignments, particularly those she took on as roving reporter for Reader's Digest—a position she held for many years—often provided material for subsequent children's books.

In 1944 she married John L. George, 'an ecologist. Together they wrote six well-researched children's books on natural history and raised three children—Twig, Craig, and Luke. The marriage ended in divorce in 1963.

George has written close to fifty books for children and young adults over the course of her career, several of which received important awards. In her most popular books, she parallels descriptions of a somewhat anthropomorphized natural world with stories of children or teens struggling to grow up and become independent. The lives of the children and the life cycles of natural creatures become intertwined as George emphasizes the interrelationships of all living parts of the earth's environment.

Julie of the Wolves is based on material George gathered during a trip to the Arctic Research Laboratory in Barrow, Alaska. She never accomplished the original goal of her trip—to write an article about wolf language and family behavior—but the novel won the Newbery Medal as the best children's book of 1973. Perhaps George's best-known book for young adults is My Side of the Mountain, which she based to some extent on her own childhood experiences camping in the wilderness. This story of a boy's year in the wilderness was a Newbery Honor Book and the basis of a 1969 film by Paramount Studios, George's personal favorite is Spring Comes to the Ocean (1965),a nonfictional account of the gradual changes made by sea creatures in response to the changing season.

George currently lives in Chappaqua, New York, in a home filled with wildlife— ravens, raccoons, and even an indoor pond with a bubbling fountain and a stock of fish.

Plot Summary

Miyax, a thirteen-year old girl whose mother is dead and whose father disappeared while hunting, has run away. She intends to use the survival skills her father taught her to walk from Point Barrow to Point Hope. There, she plans to get a job on one of the huge ships as a laundress or cook and work her way to San Francisco, where she has a pen pal, Amy, who always ends her letters, "When are you coming to San Francisco?" Unfortunately, the tundra is different from her home country, and Miyax is lost.

Remembering what Miyax's father Kapugen, the great hunter, told her, she uses the body language she has learned from watching a wolf pack to persuade them to take her in and feed her. Miyax calls the great black lead wolf Amaroq, the Eskimo word for wolf. She names his mate Silver, and she calls his work partner Nails. There is also a cringing wolf that she calls Jello. Finally, the wolf pack has a litter of puppies. The smartest and bravest of these puppies she names after her father, Kapugen, or Kapu for short. In time, the wolves take in Miyax, though Jello's apparent opposition costs him even his low status in the pack. Miyax celebrates Amaroq as her foster father and sings songs in his praise. Winter is approaching, though, and Miyax, now that she is not starving, has gotten her bearings. She prepares to move on as the wolves enter the final days of training the grown pups for their nomadic winter life. Miyax hears the wolves calling. Finally ready, she is shocked to discover that the wolves have left.

Miyax's sense of abandonment triggers memories of her past life. Her mother dies when she is four, and her father takes her to a remote seal camp where the old Eskimo ways are practiced. Five years later, her Aunt Martha shows up with a court order and takes her back to be schooled, but Kapugen whispers that if she doesn't like it, at thirteen she can marry his friend Naka's son Daniel and escape. A month later, word comes that Kapugen has gone out to hunt and never returned. Miyax is now called Julie. Aunt Martha is strict, and at thirteen Julie, whose greatest pleasure is now the weekly letter from her pen pal Amy, does leave. Daniel turns out to be dull-witted, but although they marry, Julie's main role is helping her mother-in-law sew. Daniel and Julie live as indifferent brother and sister until the teasing of village men goads him to attempt to have sex with her. Julie is so upset and frightened that she gathers supplies and leaves, intending to take a ship for San Francisco.

Coming back to the present, Miyax is even more upset to find that Jello has destroyed her camp and much of her food. He misses her pack, though, and using what she has learned from the wolves, she backs him into surrender. Nevertheless, he follows her, and several nights later he steals her pack while she is sleeping. For this, Amaroq kills him, just as he would kill a lone wolf that stole food from a puppy. Miyax takes in a nearly frozen young golden plover and names him Tornait, "spirit of the birds." She discovers that she likes the old Eskimo ways, and her distrust of civilization is justified when hunters shooting from a plane kill Amaroq and wound Kapu. Miyax nurses Kapu back to health, and he becomes pack leader. Miyax's decision to stay in the wilderness living the old ways changes when she learns that Kapugen is living in a nearby town. He is overjoyed to see her. Miyax is surprised by his white English wife and modern

possessions. She learns that he is now a pilot who takes hunters out. Taking Tornait, she slips out, but the bird dies shortly thereafter. Miyax sings, in English, a farewell to the old ways and returns to Kapugen.

Part 1, "Amaroq, the Wolf," Section 1

Part 1, "Amaroq, the Wolf," Section 1 Summary

Miyax, a thirteen-year-old girl, is lost on the tundra. She has run away from her husband, Daniel, confident that the skills she learned from her hunter father Kapugen will be enough to keep her going until she comes to the ocean. There, she intends to get a job on *The North Star*, the ship that brings supplies each August to the towns on the Arctic Ocean. On it, she plans to escape to San Francisco, where her pen pal Amy lives. Amy calls her "Julie" and always writes, "When are you coming to San Francisco?"

The signs in nature that enabled Miyax to navigate Nunivak Island, where she was born, do not apply on the tundra. At home, the wind from the north bent the berry bushes, pointing them south. The puffins and sandpipers flew to the sea twice a day. Here on the tundra, the birds are buntings and longspurs, which do not. It is summer, and this far north the sun will not set for another month, so she cannot follow the North Star. She came away with good equipment - a backpack, needles to mend clothes, matches, her sleeping skin, a ground cloth to go under it, two knives and a pot - but she only has enough food for a week or so. Often the tundra is crawling with lemmings, small, plump rodents who multiply quickly. Even in Barrow they were underfoot everywhere when she walked to school, but every four years their population drops. Then, the animals that prey on them disappear, too. The game Miyax had counted on to sustain her is scarce and shy. Now her food is gone, and she is becoming desperate. Her one hope is a small pack of wolves. Based on the memory of the story her father told her of becoming so friendly with a wolf pack that they shared their hunting with him, she is trying to figure out their language.

Miyax has identified the pack leader, a great black wolf she mentally calls Amaroq, the Eskimo word for wolf. There are three other adult wolves, Amaroq's mate, who Miyax thinks of as Silver, and a second male she has named Nails. There is also a meek little male she thinks of as Jello, for the way he wriggles when crouching low in front of the great Amaroq, and a black puppy, the smartest and most fearless, who Miyax has named Kapu, after her father Kapugen. Miyax knows that animals communicate through gestures, and for two days she has been watching the pack to figure out their code. She has noticed that a puppy who has misbehaved, or even a low-status adult like Jello, will crouch, ears back, making himself as small as possible. She has noticed that a reprimand can be a snarl or even a nip on the nose and that a tail-wag indicates approval. Most important, she has seen the adult members of the pack approach Amaroq and one by one spank the ground with their paws before taking his lower jaw in their mouths and gently biting his chin. He, in turn, takes the nose of each in his jaw, nuzzling or licking his particular favorites. Miyax has recognized this as the way the pack pays tribute to its leader. The puppies simply approach, sit, lie down and wag their tails while looking adoringly at Amaroq.

When the pack goes off to hunt, leaving Jello in charge of the puppies, Miyax is able to watch more closely and analyze specific bits of wolf-language, recognizing that ears forward, eyes narrowed and teeth showing means "lie down." She is triumphant when trying this on the puppy she thinks of as Sister causes her to lie down. Still, although she imitates their prancings, snarls, rollings and yippings, and is careful never to stand upright, making the man-outline on the sky, she can't get the puppies to roughhouse with her.

Backing toward the hut Miyax has built from turf, she is surprised by the pack coming around an earth heave, a mere five feet away. She attempts to imitate a puppy, prancing up to Amoraq and lying down, but she appears to offend him. He backs up and avoids her eyes. Although she wants to run, Miyax prances closer, reaches up and pats Amoraq under the chin. Conditioned by centuries of wolf evolution, Amoraq wags and releases a cloud of wolf scent, lightly drenching Miyax and marking her as one of the pack. Miyax thinks her problem is solved and is surprised when the pack returns from the hunt with full bellies but no food for the pups. Since the pups are plump and frisky, they are getting food somewhere, and yet she has seen Silver snap at them when they attempt to nurse. Finally, she sees both Silver and Amoraq regurgitate half-digested meat when the pups nose the corners of their mouths. When Amoraq and Silver have finished feeding the pups and go off to the kill to eat for themselves, Miyax uses what she has seen to call Jello, who has also eaten. Pinching his nose, she says, "I'm boss." This works well enough that Jello drops his tail and head in submission, but only when Kapu nuzzles his mouth does Jello cough up meat. Kapu and Miyax become partners. Miyax cooks herself some caribou stew and finally can consider problems other than starvation. First, though, dizzy and sleepy from food, she sleeps.

Part 1, "Amaroq, the Wolf," Section 1 Analysis

The first section of *Julie and the Wolves*, "Amaroq, the Wolf," opens *in media res.* That is, much has already happened. While Miyax watches the wolf pack, desperate to pick up clues which will lead the pack to accept and feed her, her memories and associations provide the reader with clues, hints and allusions to what has happened to place her in such danger. There are references to her pen pal, her lost father and, although she is only thirteen, her husband. On the one hand, Miyax has been a student at The Bureau of Indian Affairs School in Barrow, Alaska and has learned English. On the other hand, she was born on Nunivak Island and thinks of it as her home. She understands that wild creatures communicate through complex body language and knows how to build a shelter and forage for what may possibly serve as food, and yet she is so far out of her accustomed landscape that she is lost, out of food and unable to navigate. The reader learns that Miyax is running away, but while the word "terrifying" is used to describe her husband Daniel, no details are given. Miyax shakes her head to forget and turns to the linked problems of survival and of understanding the language of the wolf pack.

Partly through memories of what Miyax's father the hunter told her, but primarily through close observation and logic, Miyax works out the problems of communicating with the

wolves using their own signals. She considers the relationships between the different members of the pack. Again, through observation of such details as on which side of the ice-heave hills the lichens grow thickest and the differences between where the lichens grow and where the grasses grow, she begins to understand the tundra itself. The only human, though, with whom Miyax has a memory of shared communication is her father Kapugen.

Part 1, "Amaroq, the Wolf," Section 2

Part 1, "Amaroq, the Wolf," Section 2 Summary

Miyax knows that wolves bring food not just to pups but also to nursing mothers and even to wounded comrades, and as she sees signs that winter is approaching, she tries to think of some way to persuade Amaroq that she, too, is helpless. While she considers, a caribou herd passes by, and Amaroq, Silver and Nails are off in pursuit, leaving Jello to baby-sit the pups. Miyax watches as Amaroq chases and is outrun by one and then another caribou. Just as she is wondering how he ever catches anything, he tests a third. This one is older and slower, and Miyax is amazed by the teamwork with which the wolves separate it from the herd and chase it out of sight.

Turning, Miyax is surprised to see Kapu looking at her with hostile, narrowed eyes. When she realizes she is standing upright, she drops to all fours, and Kapu comes over to play. Already Kapu can get away with ignoring Jello's call to return to the den, she notices. Miyax uses her increasing knowledge of wolf language to roughhouse with the pups, even managing to send them off when they get too rough. As she watches Kapu run into the den and out another exit to pounce on Jello, she feels a clutch of fear, remembering that her father told her that wolves build two kinds of dens for pups. When they are first born, they live in a den with only one entrance, safe and warm at its far end. When the pups are about six weeks old, the pack moves to a summer den with a tunnel open on two ends. They stay there for only a few weeks before they leave to take up the nomadic life of winter wolves.

Miyax is terrified. The wolves will be leaving soon, and there is no way she can follow them, since they can run fifty miles in a single night. As she stands frozen, she remembers her father warning her about fear. Kapugen believed that fear could cripple a person, making it impossible for them to think or act. He believed that fear usually meant that you're doing something wrong, so when you are afraid you should change how you are acting. At once Miyax recognizes her problem. She has been depending on the wolves to support her. From now on she will concentrate on supporting herself.

Kapugen told her that he used to hunt birds as a small boy. Miyax uses her ulo to cut a section of cloth from the hip of her tights and cuts it into small strips, which she ties to grasses and stones to mark her way back home. The great rolling tundra looks the same in all directions, and it would be very easy to lose her way. Taking a thong from her boot, she makes a noose and circles a rock that has droppings indicating that some bird rests there every night. Although all around her other birds return, her rock remains empty. Miyax remembers, though, that Kapugen sometimes sat for five hours at a seal's air hole, waiting for it to surface, so she tries to be patient. Suddenly a snowy owl, an ookpik, snatches a bunting from a nearby clump of grasses. Miyax follows it back to its nest, knowing that owls often pile up extra food for the fledglings in their nests. Unfortunately, the lemmings which are so abundant some years are very scarce, and

the nest contains only one starving owlet and the bunting. Miyax takes both birds home to cook and eat, wasting nothing, but she is disappointed not to have found a provider.

When Miyax goes to say good-night to the wolves, she finds Amaroq and Jello snarling at each other, ruffs raised. Jello gives in almost immediately. Amaroq, to the excitement of the other wolves, then tears Miyax's leather mitten to shreds, rolls in it and trots up the hill to her. Miyax is convinced Amaroq is attacking her and flattens herself to look as meek as possible, but he stops and issues the grunt-whine with which the adults call the puppies. Overjoyed, Miyax realized she is being called to sleep with the pack and does her best to imitate their bedtime rituals. After a time, Miyax wakes. Fog has rolled in, and the wolves, unable to hunt, sleep on. Miyax is hungry, though. She tries suckling, but Silver chases her off just as she does the pups. Seeds, roots and insect larvae from the pond have to do for dinner, and Miyax creeps off to find some.

Overhead, a plane appears, flying low. Knowing that it can only be headed for Fairbanks, Miyax scratches a line in the dirt showing the direction of the plane's flight and pounds some pebbles into the line to make it more permanent. She now knows the direction to Fairbanks. Suddenly, out of the fog, a caribou appears, with Amaroq, Silver and Nails in pursuit. The wolves bring it down nearly at Miyax's door and immediately begin to feast, and the pups are now big enough to imitate and join in. Miyax is delighted, planning how to smoke the meat to make it lighter, confident now that she will have food for her journey. To her surprise Jello, apparently in disgrace, appears after the other wolves have left. As soon as he leaves, Miyax goes to work with her knife to skin the caribou, hard work usually performed by men and boys. She rewards herself with a slice of the liver, a great treat. She builds a fire and begins smoking strips of meat.

Days pass. Amaroq comes to accept Julie standing upright. The cubs practice hunting, and Miyax smokes and stores meat. The days grow shorter. Returning to the caribou one day to slice off more meat, Miyax is shocked to find Jello feeding, since the wolves have not returned to it since the first day. She has come to regard it as their gift to her. What is more, Jello growls at her and refuses to leave. Quickly Miyax returns to her hut and gets her knife. She uses it to cut a "cellar" through the turf and three feet into the permafrost. There she can store the remaining meat until she has time to smoke it, roofing it over with turf. Still, a day comes when, for the first time, the sun dips below the horizon for an hour before rising again. Miyax knows this means that it is August twenty-fourth. Snow is on the way, and by November the sun will disappear for sixty-six days, the long Arctic night. Miyax begins her final preparations, but she is horrified to find Jello digging at the lid of her cellar and refusing to leave. Only when Miyax taps him on the snout with her knife is she able to regain control.

From Miyax's sleepskin, she hears strange wolves calling and her pack's answering cries. Going to look, she sees the pack running. Jello is behind and isolated, a lone wolf. Although she feels that a call of command from Amaroq is meant for her, she stays behind to finish smoking the last morsels of meat and to make a kind of compass. As migrating terns fly overhead, she scratches the line of their flight across the pebble-line pointing to Fairbanks. Then, standing on the X made by the two lines and holding a length of sinew in her hands, she stretches one arm south toward the birds and one

along the Fairbanks line. She breaks off the sinew to that length. Now, if she holds the sinew when birds fly overhead and points one arm in their direction, the other arm will point toward Fairbanks. She reads a battered letter from Amy one more time and falls asleep thinking of San Francisco. In the morning, she packs and crawls to the den, calling "Amoraq, I'm ready to go when you are!" only to find the den deserted. The wolves are gone.

Part 1, "Amaroq, the Wolf," Section 2 Analysis

Miyax increasingly identifies with the wolves. While observing and thinking about their actions has enabled her to imitate them so successfully that she is taken into the pack and fed by them, her connection to them goes deeper. As the "Amaroq, the Wolf" section progresses, she thinks less and less about people, with one exception. Her missing father, Kapugen, is often in her thoughts as she draws on his stories and lessons to survive. She begins to identify Amoraq with Kapugen, at first unconsciously as she mimics the dependant and adoring behavior of a wolf pup. By the end of "Amaroq, the Wolf" though, Miyax is consciously identifying Amoraq as a father figure, singing to him:

"*Amaroq, wolf, my friend You are my adopted father. My feet shall run because of you. My heart shall beat because of you. And I shall love because of you."*

Significantly, Miyax adds, "But not Daniel. I'm a wolf now, and wolves love leaders." (p. 61) Not only does she mention her husband only to reject him, but she also clearly states her identification with the wolves.

Interestingly, the only other time specific lyrics are provided for something Miyax sings is when she sings "Kapugen's song of the Bird Feast." This is her song after catching her first birds. Just as she is performing the actions and enacting the rituals of a young hunter, including skinning the caribou the wolves bring down, so she increasingly combines Amaroq and Kapugen into one father figure, a teacher of strength and wisdom. Since Kapugen has already disappeared, it is doubly poignant when, going to join the wolves on their long trek, she finds that they have already left.

Part 2, "Miyax, the Girl"

Part 2, "Miyax, the Girl" Summary

Miyax remembers having been left behind once before. Although Miyax doesn't remember much about her mother, who died when she was four, Miyax remembers the day she died. On that day, she and her father walk the winter beach hand in hand, and although he tells her that her mother has died, she only feels intensely happy to be going somewhere with Kapugen. Sometimes she sleeps, and he holds her in his parka before going on. Sometimes he climbs cliffs and finds eggs for her to eat. They walk a long time.

Miyax doesn't understand this time until years later when her Aunt Martha tells her that her father went crazy the day her mother died. According to Aunt Martha, he picked up Miyax, walked away from his good job as manager of the reindeer herd and never looked back.

For the next five years, Miyax lived a traditional Eskimo life at the seal camp. She sees the memories as color spots. Her father's little driftwood house, full of harpoons, drums, knives and a kayak, is rosy-gray outside and warm gold-brown inside. She remembers the ocean as green and white, rimmed with fur, because she saw it from inside Kapugen's parka as she rode to sea with him. The celebration of the Bladder Feast, in which the spirits of seals are returned to the sea in their inflated bladders, is rose colored from her memory of Kapugen's hand in hers. A memory of Naka and Kapugen doing a dance in which they imitate wolves is flickering yellow. Another of Kapugen bringing in a huge white whale on the first day the sun rose over the horizon is a silver memory, which includes the bent woman dancing to put the whale's spirit into her I'noGo tied to return it to the sea.

When Miyax is nine, her father is making her a beautiful sealskin parka when there is the sound of an outboard motor. Her father's Aunt Margaret has arrived to take Miyax back. At first Kapugen argues, but Aunt Margaret has a court order and an officer with her. He yields. Before Miyax leaves the next morning, her father whispers to her that if she doesn't like living with Aunt Margaret, when she is thirteen she can marry Naka's son Daniel. Miyax moves to Mekoryuk and becomes Julie.

The first month in Mekoryuk goes well. Julie likes learning to read English words in books and has a cot by the door in Aunt Margaret's little house. After a month, an old man from the seal camp comes to tell Aunt Margaret that Kapugen went out hunting and didn't come back. Bits of his kayak have washed up on shore. Aunt Margaret tells Julie bluntly that Kapugen is not coming back.

Julie settles into life in Mekoryuk, though when girls make fun of her traditional Eskimo ways, she cuts her hair, curls it and throws away her I'noGo tied. Her greatest happiness, though, comes when a white man in a truck stops to ask if she will agree to

be pen pals with his daughter in San Francisco. He hands her the letter his daughter Amy has given him to give to the nicest Eskimo girl he can find. Amy's letters become the greatest pleasure in Julie's life. She memorizes every detail of Amy's life, from her big feet to her curly blond hair. Julie knows the floor plan of Amy's house by heart, including the pink bedroom Amy says will be hers when she comes to visit. The older Julie gets, the stricter Aunt Margaret gets, forbidding her to go to the movies with her friends and saying, "the old ways are best." When the head of Indian Affairs appears with a letter from Naka explaining the arrangements he has made with Kapugen for Julie to marry his son Daniel, Julie is glad to leave. Aunt Margaret whispers to her that she can say no if she wants to, but Julie replies "the old ways are best" and gets on the plane to Barrow.

Fog delays their landing in Barrow, but just as it looks like they'll be forced to return to Fairbanks for the night, the fog lifts briefly. They land. Julie is relieved to see Naka, though she has never met his wife Nuska before. Daniel is hiding behind his parents, and when Julie sees his dull eyes and vacant grin, she knows something is wrong with him. Nuska reassures her that he has a few problems, but he is a good boy and will be just like a brother to her. At this, Julie is relieved and follows her new parents home. To her surprise, the next day a minister comes, and she is married to Daniel, who seems as upset and anxious as she is. Afterwards, as Julie sits outside, a tall girl invites her to the quonset, the building where young people hang out to listen to music, play pinball and drink Cokes. The girl introduces herself as Pearl and tries to cheer Julie up, telling her that she herself was married last year and that these marriages are not very serious. Pearl's guess is that Julie is there much more to help Nuska sew parkas for tourists than she is to be a wife to Daniel. "All you have to do is leave the house or run away and everything's forgotten.... Even in the old days they didn't make kids stick with these marriages if they didn't like each other. They just drifted apart." (pp. 94-95)

Sure enough, Julie has little contact with Daniel. She helps Nuska with the sewing, studies at night and waits for Amy's weekly letter. She discovers that Naka is a violent alcoholic, beating Nuska when he is drunk, but when he is sober he sings the old songs of the seal camp or tells Julie stories of hunting with Kapugen. She is happy enough until one night when Daniel storms in. Some men have been teasing him, saying, "Ha, ha. Dumb Daniel. He has a wife but he can't mate her. Ha." (p. 102) Julie protests, but Daniel kisses her and forces her to the floor. After grinding against her, he curses, kicks violently and cries out, "Tomorrow, tomorrow, I can, I can," and runs out of the house. Frightened, Julie vomits. Then, she remembers Kapugen saying, "When fear seizes, change what you are doing. You are doing something wrong." Dressing warmly and putting her man's knife and *ulo* in a pack with some matches, she goes to Pearl's house. She refuses to tell Pearl where she is going, but she asks her for some supplies. Pearl gives her food and needles as well as a sleeping skin and hide, calling them wedding presents and laughing that no one wants such old fashioned things any more anyway. Julie slips out into the night, telling herself, "Julie is gone. I am Miyax, now." She strides off, heading for San Francisco.

Part 2, "Miyax, the Girl" Analysis

Essentially a flashback triggered by the realization that she has been left behind by the wolves, "Miyax, the Girl," the book's shortest section, links "Amaroq, the Wolf" and "Kapugen, the Hunter" by providing background and details about Miyax's early life. In order to engage the reader, the book's first section, "Amaroq, the wolf" begins deep in the heart of Miyax's dilemma, fascinating the reader both with the practical problems of survival and with the behavior of the wolf pack. In order both to intrigue the reader and to avoid interrupting the narrative flow of the story, only brief flashes of memories or teasing descriptions, such as referring to Miyax's "terrifying" husband Daniel, hint at her background.

Now, however, with Miyax and the reader briefly stunned by her abandonment, the book can fill in the blanks in her story. Using Miyax's sense of abandonment by a father figure to link her current situation to her past, the narrative picks up the thread of Miyax's early life and her relationship with her father Kapugen. Her life in the seal camp is described in brief memories, each linked to a color. Since only the muted colors of the tundra have been described so far, these vivid snapshots evoke the selective but intense quality of childhood memories. This technique also makes it possible for the story to move quickly through five years without sacrificing a sense of reality. Instead of the moment-to-moment narration of Miyax's life in the "Amaroq, the Wolf" section, the reader experiences the contrast of brief, vivid scenes which echo a child's selective memory.

By contrast, the scenes in both Nunivac and Barrow are almost devoid of color or light, taking place mostly indoors. The one exception, the moment when everyone greets the brief return of the sun, stands out the more vividly by contrast, giving the reader some sense of the relief and reverence the natives and even the tourists feel. It is appropriate, then, that both Julie's attack and her escape take place by night and that her period of freedom and increasing self-reliance occurs during the long Arctic summer, when the sun never sets.

The conclusion of "Miyax, the Girl," with Miyax declaring, "Julie is gone. I am Miyax now," suggests by implication that Miyax's girlhood is over. She has taken matters, and her life and identity, into her own hands. At the same time, the final line, "Her stride opened wider and wider, for she was on her way to San Francisco," (page 104) reminds the reader of the original goal of Miyax's journey and the limitations of her knowledge of the world. At the same time, it returns the narrative to Miyax at the abandoned wolf den, facing the next leg of her journey and of her independence.

Part 3, "Kapugen, the Hunter," Section 1

Part 3, "Kapugen, the Hunter," Section 1 Summary

As Miyax leaves the abandoned wolf den, she picks up a bone the pups have gnawed. She realizes that by deepening the tooth marks she could make a comb, something she's been wanting. She also picks up a caribou antler, reasoning that she may need a club. Returning to her hut, she is stunned to discover it smashed in, her groundcloth and sleepsack torn and strewn over the grass. The food she had laid out is gone, and her icebox is empty. At first, she cannot imagine what creature could have done this, but crouched in the reeds she spots an angry Jello. She steps back, but then she corrects herself and steps forward, waving her antler club. Jello wriggles in submission, and then, when she still steps forward, furious, he rolls on his back and exposes his belly. Miyax cannot hit a coward.

Holding Jello at bay and growling, she investigates the camp and discovers her pack buried under the collapsed hut. Jello has not found it. It has some food, and she has seen evidence that the lemmings are coming back. She can make it. Miyax drives Jello off, gathers her scattered skins, takes out a needle and sews the skins together. When she is done, Miyax gathers her belonging, packs them, checks her compass and walks off without looking back.

A new cycle is beginning. The small animals are coming back, and Miyax is able to follow a wolverine's tracks to its lair and take the kill it has stashed. As she walks, she has a sense of being watched, but she sings her song of praise to Amaroq to distract herself. Staying clear of a caribou herd, she makes camp and rejoices that the North Star will soon be visible on clear nights, giving her a guide. As she goes to sleep, she hears the voices of her pack signaling to one another, but she does not hear Jello's voice. She is nervous but tries to sleep. Suddenly, Jello is there, snarling. Before she can move, he picks up her pack and runs. Julie starts to chase him, naked, but realizes she must go back for her clothes. Still, she feels doomed. She has no boots and no tools to make any. Her needles and her ulo are all in the pack, along with her matches. She climbs into her sleep sack, wondering how long it will take her to die.

When Miyax wakes, there is a small puddle of wolf urine next to her. It doesn't have the bitter odor of Jello, and it is small, not the large soaking of a hostile wolf. She knows it is a sign from Amaroq. Reassured, she wraps her drag around one foot and her sleepskin around the other and sets off to seek her pack, hoping that Jello will have eaten the food and abandoned the rest. Around the side of a frost-heave, she comes across her pack and the body of Jello, ripped to shreds. She remembers Kapugen telling her about some wolves who had tolerated a lone wolf until he stole food from one of the cubs. At that, the entire pack had attacked and killed him. Just as she regards Amaroq as her foster-father, he has behaved as if she were one of his pups. Her supplies are intact. She puts on her boots, puts a rock at Jello's head, and heads off, singing. Reaching

Point Hope now seems less important. She knows that with her tools she can survive the year until the next boat comes, if necessary.

As Miyax journeys, she is able to use the cold as a tool to help her. Soaking bundles of grass in a lake and leaving them out to freeze, she creates tent poles. Cutting her drag in two, she turns half into a tent. The other half she cuts and shapes and freezes into a sled and snowshoes. With a thong she snares a snowshoe rabbit, and as she returns with it to camp, Kapu appears, bringing her a leg of caribou. She skins the rabbit and while the caribou cooks, dances like the old "bent woman," changing her song to a new one about a wolf that brings a lost girl a shank of meat. When she is done, she is warm. Again she understands the wisdom of the old ways.

When Miyax wakes, she sees she has camped at the edge of a lake. She hears her pack and starts a fire, intending to cook a stew. Gradually she notices that the pack has split up, which is unusual. Each is barking from a different position, forming a circle with her in it. When she hears them change their tone, she steps onto the lake to investigate, only to discover that the wolves are trying to hold a huge grizzly at bay. The wolves are trying to herd it away from Miyax's camp, leaping and snapping, but the bear is galloping toward Miyax. She runs. Then, realizing that the wind in her face is blowing her scent straight back at the nearsighted bear, she changes direction, reaches the bank and sits down, wondering why the bear is not hibernating. The wolves succeed in running the bear off, and Miyax calls her thanks. As she packs, she realizes that the white people's hunting season must have begun, which means her wolves are in danger. There is a fifty-dollar bounty for any man who brings in the left ear of a wolf. As she travels, Miyax worries about how she can persuade the wolves to run away to safety. She is seeing more and more abandoned oil drums, a sure sign of civilization, and skuas, sea birds, so she knows she is approaching the coast.

A white-out springs up, and Miyax changes her mind about traveling that night. Instead she crawls into her tent and carves on her comb. As she carves, she sees that it should not be a comb, but a carving of Amaroq, and for hours she carves until she has released his form. As Miyax gets ready to sleep, she hears a bird outside, and looking, she finds a golden plover. Kapugen called them "the spirit of the birds," and Miyax knows this one is lost and starving without seeds and insects. She names it Tornait, the bird spirit, feeds it and keeps it warm inside her sleeping skin.

When the whiteout dies down, Miyax is cooking dinner when Amaroq and Kapu appear. They greet her, but when she tries to follow them, Amaroq stops and glares at her. When she stops, he and Kapu run off. Miyax notices that none of the rest of the pack are there, and she understands that Amaroq is training Kapu to be lead wolf. She also understands now what the wolf sign is for "don't follow me."

Miyax sees the plane before she hears it. Zigzagging as it follows the river, the plane is flying low, and Miyax realizes it carries hunters. Afraid she will be mistaken for a bear in her bulky clothes, she heads back to camp, covering herself and her sled with snow and crouching half under the oil drum. When shots ring out elsewhere, she looks and realizes that the hunters are shooting at Amaroq and Kapu. Amaroq is wounded and

growls a warning when Kapu comes to help. Kapu is wounded but escapes. Amaroq is killed.

"For a bounty, for money, the magnificent Amaroq is dead!" Miyax screams, but it is worse. The plane flies off without bothering about the ear. Miyax is able to stop Kapu's wound from bleeding by applying pressure, and later, chanting a soothing song, she sews the wound shut. That night, she says good-bye to Amaroq as the Northern Lights blaze green and red and white, and the pack howls.

Part 3, "Kapugen, the Hunter," Section 1 Analysis

As Miyax's independence grows, so does her emotional bond with the wolves. Instead of the abject adoration of a puppy, she can regard Amaroq with the love of a comrade who recognizes his superiority. She is even strong enough to nurture the clearly symbolic bird Tornait, the "bird spirit" who appears at the same time that Miyax's respect for the old Eskimo ways is growing.

A further symbolic indication of Miyax's growth is the gnawed bone she carves. From seeing it as a wolf artifact she may be able to adapt into a useful object she moves to shaping a powerful object of spiritual art. Miyax experiences the impulse to take the world around her and to shape it. She has already used the cold as a tool to form tent poles, sled and snowshoes. Now, her instinct rises to the level of art and religion. She "releases" her vision of Amaroq from the bone and, later, as the Northern Lights dance on the first of the sixty six days of darkness, receives Amaroq's spirit back into it.

Just as the totem receives Amaroq's spirit, so the plane carrying his pointless death comes to represent and contain all of Miyax's feelings about gussak civilization. She has been moving toward a fantasy of the symbolically womb-like pink room in San Francisco. Now this feminine, maternal image has merged with the bright, mechanical plane in her mind, forever associated with the death of one father figure.

Part 3, "Kapugen, the Hunter," Section 2

Part 3, "Kapugen, the Hunter," Section 2 Summary

The sixty-six-day-long night begins. For days, Miyax nurses Kapu, feeding him and Tornait while the pack hunts. Without a leader, they are able only to catch small game, but still Silver brings a rabbit to the tent. Miyax skins it for Kapu and catches lemmings for herself. She can no longer amuse herself by imagining San Francisco and the pink room. They are now blended in her mind with the nuts and bolts and metal of the plane which killed Amaroq and with everything negative about *gussak*, white people's, civilization. While Kapu heals, she carves the antler into a line of wolves hunting, Kapu in the lead.

Gradually Kapu's strength returns. Miyax moves her camp to the river, knowing the game will be more plentiful there. When Kapu is out an entire night and Miyax, looking out, sees him leading the pack, she resumes her travel, tucking Tornait into her hood. She is trying to decide what she wants to do. When she thinks of San Francisco, she sees blood and the death of Amaroq. The closer she gets to towns, the more oil drums she sees. When she sees fifty oil drums on a spit of the river, she knows what she wants. Getting out her ulo, Miyax cuts the ice into blocks and builds an igloo. She lives here contentedly for many months, hunting, trapping, carving and singing. She makes a tiny coat of ptarmagin feathers for Tornait, who has been shivering.

One night, Miyax hears a man's voice, and looking out, she sees a man on the river running beside his sled and dogs, Eskimo-style. Miyax calls out, and the hunter and his wife and baby spend the night. Miyax pretends not to speak English, so the couple, who at first have introduced themselves as Roland and Alice, give her their Upick names of Atik and Uma, with baby Sorqaq. From them, she learns that she is near Kangik, still many sleeps from Point Barrow. After dinner, Miyax is able to tell Atik about the nearby caribou herd, saving him the dangerous journey to Brooks Range to hunt them. While Atik and Uma sleep, Miyax imagines a life in Kangit, teaching children what she knows, maybe working in the store and living the life of her ancestors. The next morning, when Atik goes out to feed the dogs, Uma tells Miyax about their town, which had fallen into poverty and alcoholism until the great hunter who trained her husband came to town. This hunter brought in musk oxen, which the men helped raise while the women fashioned their fur into thread and garments for which the gussak would pay high prices. The hunter's name is Kapugen.

As Miyax leaves for Kangik, the pack meets her, yipping for her to join them. As she turns to leave, Miyax turns and glares at them as she had seen Amaroq do. For a moment the wolves hesitate in disbelief, and then they speed off into the night. Miyax hurries on, planning what her life with Kapugen will be like. When she gets to Kangit, she pitches her tent. For a while she stays still, watching the town, and then she looks for a house on the edge of town, where Uma said Kapugen lives. There are two possibilities, but when three children run out of one, she decides the other must be his.

When a woman comes out of it, Miyax has to remind herself that he father will have remarried and already have someone to cook and sew for him. As the woman disappears into the mission, Miyax goes down to meet her father.

When Kapugen opens the door, Miyax is unable to speak. Finally she holds out Tornait, saying in Upick, "I have a present for you." Kapugen invites her in, speaking English, but Miyax just smiles and shakes her head until he switches to Upick. The harpoons, stove, hanging kayak and furs look so familiar that Miyax feels she is home, and when Kapu asks who she is, she tells him "Julie Edwards Miyax Kapugen." (p. 167) Kapugen recognizes and welcomes her, telling her that once he had built his new life, he had gone back for her but found her gone. Just at that point, his wife Ellen enters. She is a gussak, with reddish gold hair. She and Kapugen have a rapid conversation in English. Kapugen speaks softly, and Ellen speaks loudly. While they talk, Miyax notices all the gussak inventions she missed before - a radio-phonograph, a coffeepot, an electric stove, cotton curtains and china dishes. When Kapugen sees her staring at a pair of goggles, he tells her that he now has a plane and takes hunters out in it, since the seals are scarce and the whales almost gone. Miyax cannot believe it and buries her thoughts quickly.

Ellen tells Miyax in bad Ukpick that she is a teacher and that tomorrow they will enroll her in school, where she will have to learn English. Miyax tells Kapugen in Upick that she is on the way to San Francisco and is leaving tomorrow. A phone call interrupts them, and Kapugen, saying he will be right back, tells Ellen to fix Miyax some food. When Ellen goes to the kitchen, Miyax puts Tornait in her hood, turns on the radio and under cover of its music, slips out the door. "Kapugen, after all, was dead to her." (p. 169) She loads her tent on her sled and heads back up the river, planning her future life, building sod houses in summer, ice houses in winter, living off the land, meeting a boy like herself and raising children in the old ways. Tornait peeps, and when Miyax touches him with her chin, he is limp. She takes him out, chews some meat from her pack to thaw it and feeds it to him, but he refuses to eat. She pitches her tent, builds a fire and warms him, but Tornait peeps softly and closes his eyes.

Many hours later, Miyax buries Tornait in the snow. She fingers her Amaroq totem but does not take it out of her pocket. In her very best English, she sings:

"*The seals are scarce and the whales are almost gone. The spirits of the animals are passing away. Amaroq, Amaroq, you are my adopted father. My feet dance because of you. My eyes see because of you. My mind thinks because of you. And it thinks, on this thundering night, That the hour of the wolf and the Eskimo is over."*

The last line reads, "Julie pointed her boots toward Kapugen."

Part 3, "Kapugen, the Hunter," Section 2 Analysis

After the death of Amaroq, Miyax for the first time functions as an independent adult, although, as she tells Uma, she is not yet physically a woman. Free of dependence on a

father figure or a maternal-womb fantasy, she lives alone, busy and happy, able to sustain herself and Tornait, the symbol of the independent Eskimo spirit, creating art in the carvings she works on in her spare time. She embraces the traditional ways and pretends to Uma and Atik that she only speaks no English, only Upick. She uses her wit to invent ways to protect Tornait/spirit, making a bird coat for him.

At the word that her father is alive, Miyax slides back into a fantasy of dependence. Although she hands him Tornait/spirit as a gift, she soon recognizes that she has preserved more of that spirit than her father. He speaks English as his first choice, lives in a house filled with gussak artifacts and has married a gussak. Indeed, it seems likely that he was responsible for the death of Amaroq. For a second time, Miyax has to lose a father figure. She is briefly able to persuade herself that a return to the old ways is possible, and she fantasizes a future life with a husband like herself, raising children in the old ways. The death of Tornait is the symbolic death of this dream and of the spirit of the Eskimo. When Miyax has buried the bird, she sings her farewell song in "her very best English," and it is important to note that the final sentence does not read, "Miyax pointed her boots toward Kapugen," but "Julie pointed her boots toward Kapugen."

Characters

Miyax/Julie

Miyax, called Julie when she is in white-influenced settings, is a pretty thirteen-year-old girl who is making an effort to cope with difficult circumstances. Her mother is dead, and her father is missing, assumed dead. She has a grumpy guardian aunt, and her arranged marriage is to a young husband who is feeble-minded and violent. By remembering what her father taught her and supplementing it with observation and logic, she not only survives in the hostile environment of the tundra but also comes to master and love it. In the course of the book, she changes from a fairly docile, dependent girl who looks to others to solve her problems to one who cannot only survive an Arctic winter but nurture others.

Miyax/Julie is the central character of the book, and just as the Arctic sun circles the horizon all through a long Arctic day, so all of the events of the book have her at their center. Although she is called Miyax for much of the book, there is a strict division between where she is Miyax and where she is Julie. English names and language become associated in her mind with the death of the wolf Amaroq and of Eskimo culture. She may shake her head and urge Pearl to speak English to her when she is trying to fit in in Barrow, but when runs away she makes a conscious decision and says, "Julie is gone. I am Miyax now." (p. 104) She does not speak English again until the she sings farewell to the old ways on the last page of the book.

So closely does the reader come to identify with Miyax that it is possible to forget that she is an adolescent with the absolute, black and white values of that age. She goes from despising the old ways to embracing them and utterly rejecting white culture. When she discovers that her adored Kapugen is speaking English and has acquired some of the material possessions of white culture, her faith is shaken. The possibility that, as a pilot, he may have been responsible for Amaroq's death is the final straw. Yet when the bird Tornait, the symbol of the Arctic spirit, dies, she abruptly drops her plans to return to the wild and turns back toward her people and her father.

Kapugen

The reader sees Kapugen the hunter, Miyax's father, only through Miyax and two other characters. Aunt Martha tells Miyax that Kapugen went crazy the day his wife died, that he picked up his daughter, walked all the way to the seal camp and was never good for anything after that. By contrast Uma, the young wife from Kangit, describes him as a man of great dignity and intelligence who rescues their town from poverty and alcoholism by his initiative and personal example.

By far the most vivid picture of Kapugen comes from Julie's memories of him from the time she was five until she turned nine, when her aunt came to take her away to school.

While the reader makes a certain allowance for hero-worship, the author is careful to include specifics, whether of Kapugen holding his daughter's hand as the "bent woman" dances or reverently touching the white whale. Miyax most often remembers him giving specific instruction, whether by telling of being fed by wolves or in dealing with fear. As Miyax gains a respect for the wisdom of the old ways, she comes to regard Kapugen as the source of all wisdom.

Perhaps Miyax's most difficult step in coming of age, then, is in recognizing that Kapugen has made compromises. His first language is now apparently English. His house combines Eskimo equipment with gussak luxuries. Most damning, he has learned to fly a plane and may very well have been the pilot who made it possible for hunters to kill Amaroq. While Kapugen himself behaves lovingly toward Miyax, she feels that she has lost him a second time. Still, when her "spirit bird" dies and she sings her farewell to the old ways of the Eskimo, it is toward Kapugen that she points her boots.

Amaroq

Amaroq is the great black wolf, the leader of the pack and eventually Miyax's foster-father. Amaroq faces down Jello's opposition to bringing Miyax into the den, kills Jello when he steals her pack and organizes the wolves to fend off a grizzly bear she doesn't realize is headed her way. In addition, he teaches her, by example, proper adult wolf behavior while nurturing her as one of the half-weaned pups, one whom he even finally allows to go on two legs without disapproval. Although Miyax fails to interpret the message correctly, Amaroq calls to her when the pack begins their winter travel and trusts her to understand his message when she attempts to follow him on his hunt with Kapu.

By the time winter begins, Miyax has transferred many of her feelings for Kapugen to Amaroq, a father figure who is present and taking care of her. She composes songs in his praise and switches from carving a comb for herself to carving a portrait-totem of Amaroq. Unlike her own father, whose fate has always been unclear, Amaroq dies in front of her, and she is able to mourn him with the other wolves, receiving his spirit into the totem she has carved.

Silver

Silver is Amaroq's mate, the only grown female in the pack. Although she won't allow Miyax to nurse from her, she does bring her a rabbit after Amaroq is killed when Miyax is nursing the injured Kapu.

Nails

Nails is Amaroq's friend and "serious partner," much as Naka is "serious partner" to Kapugen. Nails serves as surrogate father to the pups when Amaroq is absent and forms a vital third of the hunting pack.

Jello

The least important adult male in the pack, Jello does not hunt with the pack but is left behind to baby-sit the puppies. He appears to oppose including Miyax in the pack, and when Amaroq overrules him, Jello seems disgraced, no longer allowed to eat with the pack. He runs behind them, head down, when they travel. Because Miyax stands up to him when he shows aggression toward her, first by tapping him on the snout with her man's knife and later swinging her caribou-antler club, he never openly attacks her. Eventually, though, he stalks her, first stealing much of her food and ripping up her sleep sack and later stealing her pack while she sleeps. For this, he is killed by Amaroq, presumably for the same reasons that a lone wolf is killed by the pack if it steals food from a pup.

Kapu

Kapu is the fat, black leader of the puppies. Because he is fearless and the smartest of the puppies, Miyax names him after her father, Kapugen, and calls him Kapu for short. Watching how he behaves toward Amaroq helps her to understand how to behave in order to be considered a pack member worth feeding. Miyax and Kapu become comrades, "partners," much as Amaroq and Nails are partners.

Sister

Sister is one of Kapu's little sisters. Watching those two puppies play together, tugging on a bone and roughhousing, enables Miyax to see parallels with the games of Eskimo children and to understand wolf language. Sister responds to Miyax's narrowed eyes and bared teeth by lying down, causing Miyax to realize, "I'm talking wolf!" (p. 22)

Zing, Zat and Zit

The remaining puppies of the pack, Zing, Zat and Zit have less distinctive personalities than Kapu and Sister.

Amy

Amy is Miyax's San Francisco pen pal, a girl her age with blond curly hair and big feet. Her letters become Miyax's greatest comfort, and Amy's invitation to visit San Francisco provides Miyax with a goal when she runs away from Barrow.

Mr. Pollock

Amy's father, Mr. Pollock, works for the Reindeer Corporation on Nunivak. He also helps men deal with their alcoholism in Barrow. When his daughter wants an Eskimo pen pal, he asks Miyax if she would be interested, a decision which gives a focus to her life.

Aunt Martha

Aunt Martha is Kapugen's aunt, who comes to retrieve Miyax from the seal camp when she turns nine so that she can go to school. A grumpy and unsympathetic person who disapproves of Miyax's friends and delivers the news of Kapugen's probable death bluntly and without sympathy, Aunt Martha nevertheless preserves many of the old ways and attempts to discourage Miyax from the arranged marriage to Daniel.

Naka

Naka is Kapugen's "serious friend," his work partner. Kapugen feels safe in arranging a marriage between Miyax and Naka's son Daniel as a possible escape for her from Aunt Martha. He is unaware that Naka will become a violent alcoholic, gentle and humorous when sober but physically abusive when drunk, which is increasingly often.

Nusak

Naka's wife, Daniel's mother and Julie's mother-in-law, Nusak is married to a man who beats her and has a son "with some problems." She is the primary support of the family and welcomes Julie's assistance. She assures Julie that she and Daniel will live merely as brother and sister, but she is down at the jail bailing out the drunken Naka when Daniel storms in and attacks Julie.

Daniel

Daniel is Miyax's husband, the simple-minded son of Naka and Nusak. Described merely as "dull," he is more interested in taking apart an old radio than he is in marital relations with his young wife until some village men goad him into attacking her.

Tornait

Tornait is a golden plover Julie finds nearly frozen. Kapugen has told Julie that the golden plover represents "the spirit of the bird," and it comes to represent the Eskimo spirit to Julie, native but endangered and weakened. She nurtures it, even making it a little feather coat from a ptarmigan, but on the night she finds that Kapugen has adopted many gussak ways and may be responsible for Amaroq's death, Tornait dies. At that,

rather than attempt to return to traditional Eskimo life, Julie recognizes that the old spirit is dead, sings a farewell in English and returns to Kapugen.

Objects/Places

The Tundra

The tundra is the treeless, frost-heaved landscape north of the Arctic Circle. Julie initially loses her way in this landmarkless landscape, but she comes to understand its ways and even to thrive in its winter.

The Seal Camp

After his wife's death, Kapugen walks his daughter all the way to the remote settlement of the seal camp. A tourist center during the summer hunting season, in the winter it is a sanctuary for men who follow the old Eskimo ways. Miyax lives here between the ages of four and nine.

Nunivak

Nunivak is the island settlement where Miyax was born and where her father was manager of the reindeer herd. Miyax is brought back to Nunivak by Aunt Martha and goes to school here, shedding the old Eskimo ways, between the ages of nine and thirteen.

Point Barrow

Point Barrow is an extremely northern settlement, home of Miyax's husband and in-laws.

The Ulo

One of the things Miyax brings with her when she runs away is her *ulo*, "the half-moon shaped woman's knife, so versatile it can trim a baby's hair, slice a tough bear, or chip an iceberg." (p. 12) In fact, Miyax uses it to cut turf into bricks to build her hut, skin a caribou, slice her red tights into ribbons to mark a path across the tundra and cut ice blocks for an igloo.

The Sleeping Skin

Miyax is able to sleep comfortably as the Arctic nights grow colder and colder because she has a sleeping skin, a moose hide bag lined with white rabbit fur, and because she knows how to use it. She is careful always to undress completely and to store her clothes in a waterproof bag made of whale bladder, tying it tightly so that her clothes

stay dry while she sleeps, "for damp clothes could mean death in the Arctic." (p. 26) The bag is hooded, and Miyax can close it around herself so that only her nose shows. The rabbit fur traps her warm breath and holds it against her face. A womb-like object, the sleeping skin is a place whose comfort enables Miyax to ignore her hunger and bodily weaknesses. She can concentrate on permitting her conscious and unconscious knowledge of the wolves to combine: "In this cozy micro-world she forgot her hunger and recalled what she already knew about wolves so that she could put it together with what she had observed." (p. 26)

The Wolf Den

Initially, Miyax notices the wolf den only insofar as it is a background and home site for the wolves. Her progress is measured in terms of how close she is allowed to approach, and the sign of her acceptance into the pack is being invited to spend the night outside it. In a pivotal moment, though, Miyax watches Kapu run into the den and out a second entrance to pounce on Jello. With some effort she remembers her father saying that wolf pups are born in a den at the end of a tunnel, a home with only one entrance. Once they are six weeks old, though, the pack moves to a den with multiple entrances, really just a brief summer shelter while the pups learn to hunt. It is not long after this move that winter arrives and the wolves resume their nomadic winter habits.

The recognition that the pups are nearly at the end of their childhood forces Miyax closer to the end of her own. Her fear triggers the memory of her father's teaching on fear, which in turn causes her to look at her own behavior. Recognizing that she has hoped to depend on the wolves and that this is a behavior which is not going to work, Miyax takes steps to provide for her own survival. The wolf den, then, comes to symbolize both the comfortable dependence of childhood and the outgrown structures and protections which must be abandoned.

The Bladder Feast

During the time Miyax lives at the seal camp with Kapugen, she witnesses the celebration of the Bladder Feast. A shaman called "the bent woman" dances, and a masked figure frightens Miyax until she recognizes her father's friend Naka. Later Kapugen blows up seal bladders, and he and the old men carry them out onto the ice and drop them into the sea. The bent woman explains to Miyax that the bladders hold the spirits of the animals and that the men have returned the spirits so that they can enter the bodies of newborn seals.

I'noGo Tied

The I'noGo tied is a charm which represents a little spirit. The bent woman ties one made of a piece of seal fur and blubber onto Miyax's belt. Miyax mistakes a charm bracelet for an I'noGo tied and, embarrassed when her friends laugh at her, throws her own away.

The Comb/Totem

At the deserted wolf camp, Miyax finds a gnawed bone whose puppy-tooth groves, if deepened, could make a comb. She has been wanting a comb and begins to adapt the bone with her ulo after her day's trek is through. Soon, though, she sees the image of Amaroq in it and adapts her carving to "release" his image. After Amaroq is shot, she holds the totem over him and waits until she feels that his spirit has entered it.

The Antler Club/Pack Carving

Having carved the totem of Amaroq, Miyax looks at the horn of her antler-club and can picture the pack in hunt. She carves what she sees, with Kapu in the lead.

Setting

The story is set on the vast, inhospitable, treeless plain of the far north, known as the tundra. Across the tundra sweep hard winds, driving snows, and thick blankets of fog. Beneath its surface is the permafrost, a layer of permanently frozen soil through which water cannot drain and roots cannot grow. Tundra is covered by a shallow soggy carpet of dwarf plants, sedges, mosses, lichens, and grasses.

The tundra environment pervades the story, functioning almost like a character and contributing to the details of the plot. There is no wood with which to make a fire, so Julie gathers dried caribou droppings instead. The landscape is rolling, with no obvious landmarks.

Julie camps in a small depression for protection from the wind. Whenever she leaves, she must take care to mark a path so she can find her way back. The arctic summer is only two or three months long: during this time, the sun never sets; it simply circles the horizon.

Its movement cannot be used to distinguish east from west. Julie must wait until autumn, when migrating birds point the way south, and winter, when the pole star appears in the sky, before she can find her way through the wilderness.

Social Sensitivity

Julie of the Wolves is a book about an ethnic group on the verge of extinction.

Although specifically about the Eskimo, the book raises questions about cultural roots and about conflicts between cultures that are transferrable to discussions of many different ethnic groups.

The novel also encourages environmental awareness, and is infused by an almost religious expression of humanity's dependence on the natural world.

The stresses of Julie's arranged marriage are handled with care. Julie's husband, Daniel, appears to be mentally disabled. He attempts (and fails) to rape Julie to prove his manhood to his friends; George uses this incident to show that Julie's reasons for leaving the Eskimo village are not frivolous ones.

Literary Qualities

Julie of the Wolves is a relatively brief book. It is divided into three parts: a long section detailing Julie's life on the tundra and her association with the wolves; a short flashback concerning her life on Nunivak Island and her unsatisfactory relationship with Daniel; and a long section on her journey back to civilization.

The wolves are heavily anthropomorphized, and Julie's relationship with them is very sentimentalized. The death of Amaroq affects sympathetic young readers rather like the death of Bambi's mother. George's use of anthropomorphism does not trivialize the material; it makes it far more compelling. The impact of the novel's environmental lesson is very strong as a result of the emotional bonds built up between the reader and the animal characters.

The city-country dichotomy that underlies the story line draws to some extent on traditional pastoral motifs.

Pleasure, virtue, and love are discovered in the idealized existence of the country, where characters find relief from the stresses of city life and civilization.

Realism intrudes on the pastoral ideal, however. Julie eventually recognizes that the wilderness is only a temporary place for escape. The pastoral ideal becomes internalized: it is a memory of a lost golden age, a memory that must be carefully guarded in the imagination where it becomes the standard of virtue.

Themes

Language/Communication

The question of language is central to *Julie and the Wolves*. The author chooses to open the book with Julie attempting to interpret, understand and imitate the language of the wolves. While this language is primarily one of gesture, it also includes vocalizations like the growl and the grunt-whine which will be crucial to her acceptance by the pack. It is worth noting that Julie does not question whether the wolves have a language. She already has experience with animal communication, having lured many an Arctic ground squirrel to her hand by imitating with a finger the sideways tail-jerk indicating friendly intentions. She realizes that the wolves have a more complex society and therefore a more complex language. Her ability to recognize patterns is of great help here. "She had seen the wolves mouth Amaroq's chin twice before and so she concluded that it was a ceremony, a sort of 'Hail to the Chief.'" (p. 19) By the third occurrence she is recognizing both a ritual and its significance, and by duplicating the chin-stroke she first gains Amaroq's approval and acceptance into the pack. By the same token, her imitation of wolf dominance postures has at least as much to do with fending off Jello's attack as her caribou-antler club. Recognizing the relative values of bared teeth, narrowed or widened eyes and erect posture is a matter of life and death to Miyax, a tool as valuable as matches or knife.

Human language is also crucial to the story. Miyax's native language is Upick, and the degree to which English is spoken in each setting reflects the degree to which white, or "gussak," culture has encroached on native ways, even to requiring each person to be renamed. Miyax becomes Julie in these situations. In Barrow, she suggests that she and Pearl communicate in English, but by the time she finds Kapugen, she does not even admit that she understands English, though Kapugen's gussak wife declares (in bad Upick) "It's very difficult to live even in this Eskimo town without knowing English." (p. 168) At the crucial moment that she walks away from Barrow Miyax declares, "Julie is gone. I am Miyax now." (p. 104) This claiming of her native identity is reversed on the last page where, having lost both her father figures and the "bird spirit" Tornait, symbol of the old ways, Miyax sings a song of farewell "in her best English." The subtle blow of the last sentence is that she returns to her English name. "Julie pointed her boots toward Kapugen." Not only does she renounce the old ways she was returning to claim mere hours before, but she gives up her name in the process. Miyax is gone. She is Julie now.

Society

How living creatures work together, or fail to, underlies each scene of *Julie and the Wolves.* The organization of the story forces us first to consider the structure of the wolf pack. In order to join the wolves, Julie has to understand how their group functions, what signals maintain order and how status changes and is enforced. She recognizes

that there are different rules for puppies and adults, that the rules change as the puppies grow and that although discipline is strict, it is measured. An adult may grab a misbehaving puppy in its jaws, but in such a way that the teeth do not penetrate. Cubs are cared for and educated, and only those who do not serve the pack are excluded.

The disciplined but loving structure of the wolf pack stands in stark contrast to the splintered society of Nunivak. Aunt Margaret's grumpy devotion to the old ways repels Miyax, while the attitude of the other girls encourages her to discard her I'noGo tied and to cut and curl her hair. Even more extreme is the society in Barrow, where the young hang around the pinball machines listening to rock and roll and drinking Cokes, and the traditional crafts are valued only insofar as they can be sold to tourists. Alcoholism is rampant. On the other hand, a gussak, Mr. Pollock, is involved in helping form a self-help group for alcoholics. Julie's arranged marriage is completely traditional, as is, Pearl assures her, society's acceptance if she chooses to walk away from it. Values are relative, but standards and rules are not clear-cut. At the positive end of the human scale is the traditional society of the seal camp, at least in winter when all the tourists have left and those who remain survive by traditional means. At the other end is Miyax's vision of gussak culture, where animals exist only for sport and can be eliminated on a whim.

Although Miyax initially turns from it, perhaps the most hopeful human society is represented by Kangik. Here, although the town had sunk into poverty and alcoholism, Kapugen's efforts and example have restored Kangik to prosperity and self-respect. Native animals combine with human efforts to provide a living, although one based on gussak money, and children still play traditional games. In a world where the traditional Eskimo life is becoming impossible, Kangik, not San Francisco or even Nunivak, is the choice Julie finally makes.

Survival

Summer or winter, tundra or living room, *Julie of the Wolves* is consistently concerned with survival. On the most obvious level, the story of a thirteen-year-old girl alone in the wilderness without food will be concerned with survival. Indeed, in the first pages Miyax concentrates on survival even to the exclusion of her original goal, walking to Point Hope to catch the *North Star*. Her observation of the wolves is motivated entirely by her hope that they will help her survive, but all her activities independent of the wolves, such as building shelter, searching for food and marking paths, has the same goal, survival.

Yet Julie's life since her separation from her father Kapugen has equally been an exercise in survival. Placed in new surroundings, first Nunivak and then Barrow, she has attempted to blend in, like the Arctic hare and least weasel who change the color of their coats to blend better with brown tundra or white snow in order to survive. Like an animal changing its coat, Miyax changes her name and her language. She copies the styles and opinions of the girls her age, including contempt for the old ways of the Eskimo, ways which were adapted to surviving in the wilderness. Adapting to the new ways, Julie dreams of visiting and living with her pen pal Amy in San Francisco. After her

necessary return to the old ways to help her survive the winter, though, and after witnessing the murder of Amaroq by an airplane-borne hunter, Miyax rejects everything new, planning to return to living an entire traditional life. Imitating the traditional life of the seal camp, which she once scorned, she finds that even such traditions as the shaman's dance have survival value. She is "warm as the center of a lemming's nest." (p. 126) Her brief reunion with Kapugen, though, shows her that the new ways have made it impossible to survive the traditional way. Game has become scarce, and survival will mean adaptation - and loss.

Themes/Characters

The most important characters in the novel are Julie herself and the wolves— four adults and five puppies—who serve as her companions on the tundra. Her father, Kapugen, is present for the most part only in her imagination; through most of the story she believes him to be dead. The other human characters— Daniel, the mentally disabled boy to whom she is married, and her stepmother, Martha—are minor characters whom she leaves behind.

Julie is a thirteen-year-old Eskimo girl. Her mother died when she was very young, and her father, Kapugen, overwhelmed by grief, left the village, taking his little daughter with him into the wilderness. There he taught her the old Eskimo way of life. Kapugen's lessons become the key to Julie's survival on the tundra. She is patient, intelligent, observant, and self-reliant. Although she is frightened by being lost, she pushes away her fear and husbands her resources, both material and spiritual.

Amaroq (the word means "wolf" in the Eskimo language) is a royal black wolf and the leader of the pack that Julie befriends. Fearless of enemies and protective of his family, Amaroq becomes, in Julie's imagination, almost a surrogate father figure. The other adults in the pack are Amaroq's beautiful mate Silver, who is loving and respectful; Nails, a gray wolf; and Jello, the villain of the piece and low dog in the pack.

Jello babysits the pups while the other adults go off to hunt, and is the last to eat when they return home. Eventually he is exiled, but as a loner he becomes dangerous, attacking Julie's camp and then Julie herself for her food.

The five puppies are playful creatures, childlike in their behavior. Kapu (for Kapugen) is their leader and Julie's favorite. He is fearless and intelligent, and becomes the pack's leader when Amaroq is killed by hunters. Kapu is the first wolf with whom Julie establishes a friendly relationship.

Julie of the Wolves is filled with details about both wolf behavior and the natural history of the tundra. Although untrained, Julie observes the world around her like a scientist. Her experience and observations give credibility to the major underlying theme of the book—that human beings are only one small part of a vast ecological system.

Failure to recognize humankind's unity with nature is seen as dangerous and destructive; litter, airplanes, guns, oil rigs, and the gadgetry of modern life— these represent the imposition of the human will on the natural world.

The disparity between civilization and nature seems clear when Julie is lost on the tundra. A far more ambivalent relationship emerges when Julie enters Kangik and finds that Kapugen, who in her imagination represents the pure Eskimo ideal, has compromised and adopted modern ways. She finds that he even hunts wolves in an airplane, raising the possibility that Kapugen himself might have shot Amaroq.

Julie is confused by these compromises, and by her father's assertion that the old ways are dying. She rebels at his suggestion that perfect harmony between humans and the natural world is no longer possible. But by the end of the book Julie recognizes that she too must adapt to survive in a new kind of wilderness—that of an ecologically responsible modern civilization.

Style

Point of View

Julie of the Wolves employs a limited third person point of view. That is, although the reader sees everything from Miyax's point of view, never, for example, from the point of view of the wolves or Kapugen, she herself does not narrate the story. The narrator's voice is removed, observing Miyax's thoughts, emotions and memories as well as her actions, but it does not back up far enough to observe events Miyax cannot see, nor enter into the thoughts and emotions of any other character. By limiting the point of view in this way, the author is able to guarantee a closer identification of the reader with Miyax's situation. Initially drawn in by her desperate situation and by the nearness of the wolves, the reader is teased along by hints of Miyax's past life, by names and brief memories designed to intrigue: Who is this thirteen-year-old divorcee? What did Daniel do? Where is the all-wise Kapugen?

Only once the reader has been thoroughly intrigued by Miyax's current situation, by her solution to problem after problem and by the dynamics of the wolf pack and all its members, does the author allow Julie's memories to go back to the beginning of her life. Jumping first through snapshot-memories of her childhood and then through a smoother narration of her recent past, the reader knows no more of the circumstances which force Julie's life in this direction and that than the girl does. The result is a close identification with Julie's reactions and emotions. When she is worried, the reader worries. When she relaxes, the reader, generally, relaxes. Daniel and Jello's attacks, the departure of the wolves, the death of Amaroq and the rediscovery of Kapugen strike the reader with greater force.

Setting

Julie of the Wolves contrasts the world of the Arctic tundra, both in summer and in winter, with the settlements of Nunivak, Barrow and, to some extent, Kangit. The tundra, bare and uniform as it at first appears to Miyax, eventually reveals itself as harsh but not inhospitable to a person who has come to understand it. The sky is huge. The northern lights dance, and even the cold itself can be an aid to survival.

By contrast, the settlements are cluttered, enclosed and riddled with gussak culture, rock and roll, Coca-Cola and alcohol. They encourage people to ridicule and abandon the old ways until in starvation, Miyax is charmed to see that her reflected face has high cheekbones like a gussak instead of her usual, round-faced Eskimo beauty. Although it is only glimpsed at the end of the book, Kangit is held out as a possible compromise. As described by the young wife Uma, Kangit had abandoned the old ways and fallen into poverty and alcoholism. Thanks to the Kapugen's efforts and standards, it is now a prosperous town, earning money from the gussaks through breeding the native musk oxen and producing luxury items out of their fur.

Nevertheless, the tundra is the setting which dominates the book and captures the reader's imagination. Ironically, because of the cyclical nature of animal life on the tundra, Miyax finds life harder in the summer than in the Arctic winter. Simply finding her way home amid the low-rolling, nearly identical frost-heaves is a challenge. Yet by the end of the summer, she has begun to observe the tundra itself as closely as she has been observing the wolves, to notice that the lichens prefer one side of the frost-heaves and that the grasses grow separate from them. By the time winter arrives and Miyax has lost and recovered her pack, she and the reader have come to recognize that the setting is not hostile to those with the skills to adapt to it. It is perhaps with this knowledge that Julie points her boots back to Kapugen.

Language and Meaning

Language is a key element of *Julie and the Wolves.* From the first pages, Miyax's survival depends on her ability to observe, interpret and mimic wolf language, both body language and spoken language. In some cases she can recognize parallels to human language. The play gestures of the puppies are similar to human play, and Silver's reprimand, taking Miyax's shoulder in her jaw when she attempts to nurse, needs no interpreter. It takes a deliberate effort, though, to identify and learn the grunt-whine which summons, the grovel which apologizes and the glare which turns away.

The book's second and third sections show that in human society the symbolism of language is nearly as important as its role in communication. Whether to speak Upick or English is a decision with serious implications. When Miyax is attempting to fit in with Barrow society, she calls herself Julie and declines to speak Upick with Pearl. At her lowest point, the death of Amaroq, she cannot even remember English words. Her sorrow is too great. When she takes in the nearly frozen golden plover, an obvious symbol for the spirit of the Eskimo, she gives it the Eskimo name for "bird spirit." By the time she is reunited with Kapugen, she is pretending not to understand English at all, though Ellen assures her (in bad Upick) that even in an Eskimo town it would now be hard to survive without English.

The final pages of the book bring all of Miyax's languages into use. When her pack appears as she approaches Kangit, she is able to send them away to safety by employing the glare she learned from Amaroq. Simply by greeting her in English, Kapugen is telling her something about how he is different from her memory of him, and the tenderness of their reunion is conducted in Upick. He and his gussak wife argue in rapid English, and Ellen's insistence that Miyax will have to learn English while herself speaking bad Upick tells us something about her as a person. Finally, Miyax chooses to sing her farewell to the old ways in her best English, and when she walks away, it is as the English-named character Julie, making the book's title take on an implication it did not possess before.

Structure

Julie of the Wolves is composed of three sections of unequal length. "Amaroq, the Wolf" drops the reader straight into the action. Before the narration ever begins, Miyax has lost her father, been married to Daniel and run away. She now faces death if she fails to use what she has learned from her culture and her father. Although there are enough hints of her past life to intrigue the reader, the focus of this first section is on the wolves and on Miyax's interaction with them. While she comes equipped with some lessons in survival and some knowledge of wolf behavior, Miyax is required to observe and reason in order to survive. Just as the puppies are being weaned when she first encounters them, she is forced to abandon her hope of depending on the wolves. Instead, like the puppies, she increases her skills and strengths. Unlike the pups, however, at the final moment she finds herself abandoned by the pack, facing her next challenge alone.

"Miyax, the Girl," the shortest of the three sections, is an extended flashback linking "Amaroq, the Wolf" and "Kapugen, the Hunter" through Miyax's memories of the period between her mother's death and her own running away from Barrow. For the first time the reader is given Miyax's background in a linear form rather than as brief memories and phrases. The author enables us to skip through Miyax's early years by linking brief vivid memories to intense colors. By contrast, the years in Nuviak and Barrow are told in a linear style and are largely colorless, taking place indoors or in the dark. This section serves primarily as an informative link between the two Arctic sections, giving necessary background as quickly as possible.

"Kapugen, the Hunter" is the final section. Interestingly, while the last section of the book is named for Kapugen, he does not appear until the final five pages of the book. Instead, this section contains the coming of winter and Miyax's embrace of the old ways, her increasing competence and comradeship with the pack, the death of Amaroq and Miyax's peaceful months alone, living a traditional Eskimo life. Instead, the title must be taken to be ironic. Although she denies it to herself, when Miyax learns Kapugen pilots a plane for hunters, she realizes that her birth father is responsible for the pointless death of her foster-father. Kapugen's traditional identity as hunter, with his reverence for the spirits of the beasts he kills, has been degraded to the level of the gussaks who kill for sport or money. The section named for the main character is bracketed by sections named for her father figures, and while their sections stand on either side of her, by the end of the book neither Amaroq nor Kapugen serve as any kind of support to Miyax.

Quotes

"Like the beautifully formed polar bears and foxes of the north, she was slightly short-limbed. The frigid environment of the Arctic has sculptured life into compact shapes. Unlike the long-limbed, long-bodied animals of the south that are cooled by dispensing heat on extended surfaces, all live things in the Arctic tend toward compactness, to conserve heat."

"Amaroq, the Wolf," p. 8

"Amaroq got to his feet, and as he slowly arose he seemed to fill the sky and blot out the sun. He was enormous. He could swallow her without even chewing.

"'But he won't,' she reminded herself. 'Wolves do not eat people. That's gussak talk. Kapugen said wolves are gentle brothers.'"

"Amaroq, the Wolf," p. 15

"He must indeed be their leader, for he was clearly the wealthy wolf, that is, wealthy as she had known the meaning of the word on Nunivak Island. There the old Eskimo hunters she had known in her childhood thought the riches of life were intelligence, fearlessness, and love. A man with these gifts was rich and was a great spirit who was admired in the same way that the gussaks admired a man with money and goods."

"Amaroq, the Wolf," p. 19

"'Kapu,' she whispered. 'We Eskimos have joking partners - people to have fun with - and serious partners - people to work and drink with. You and I are both. We are joking-serious partners.' He wagged his tail excitedly and blinked. 'And that's the best of all.'"

"Amaroq, the Wolf," p. 34

"'Oh, ho!' she said aloud. 'More lichens grow on one side of the frost heaves than on the other.' She pondered this, as well as the oblong shape of her pond, which was caused by the flow of the ice as it moved with the wind. But did the wind come down from the north or out of the west on the North Slope of Alaska? She did not know. Next, she noted that the grasses grew in different spots than the mosses, and the more she studied, the more the face of the tundra emerged; a face that could tell her which way was north, if she had listened more carefully to Kapugen."

"Amaroq, the Wolf," p. 36

"The cold chill of fear ran up Miyax's spine - the wolves would soon depart! Then what would she do? She could not follow them; they often ran fifty miles in a night and slept in different spots each day.

"Her hands trembled and she pressed them together to make them stop, for Kapugen had taught her that fear can so cripple a person that he cannot think or act. Already she was too scared to crawl.

"'Change your ways when fear seizes,' he had said, 'for it usually means you are doing something wrong.'

"She knew what it was - she should not depend upon the wolves for survival. She must go on her own."

"Amaroq, the Wolf," p. 42

"Finally she crept to her cellar for the rest of the meat and found Jello digging through the lid of sod.

"'No!' she screamed. He snarled and came toward her. There was nothing to do but assert her authority. She rose to her feet and tapped the top of his nose with her man's knife. With that, he stuck his tail between his legs and slunk swiftly away, while Miyax stood still, surprised by the power she felt. The knife made her a predator, and a dangerous one."

"Amaroq, the Wolf," p. 66

"Walking the tundra with Kapugen was all laughter and fun. He would hail the blue sky and shout out his praise for the grasses and bushes. On these trips they ate salmon berries, then lay in the sun watching the birds. Sometimes Kapugen would whistle sandpiper songs and the birds would dip down to see which of their members had gotten lost in the grass. When they saw him and darted away, Kapugen would laugh."

"Miyax, the Girl," p. 79

"'I know how you feel, Julie. I was married last year,' Pearl began. 'Don't pay any attention to it. No one does. All you have to do is leave the house or run away and everything's forgotten. Most of these arrangements are for convenience. I'm sure you are here to help Nusak make parkas and mittens for the tourists.' Pearl leaned back. 'Even in the old days they didn't make kids stick with these marriages if they didn't like each other. They just drifted apart.'"

"Miyax, the Girl," pp. 94-95

"Rolling to her stomach, she smelled something sweet and recognized the scent of wolf urine. It had been dropped at the edge of her bag and was frozen but fresh. Someone had greeted her during the night. It could not have been Jello for the scent did not have the bitter odor of an angry and desolate wolf. Furthermore, it was sparsely given, not the dousing given to hostile objects. It must have been Amaroq. She sniffed again but her nose was not sensitive enough to read the other messages in the urine that meant 'all is well.' Yet its light and loving scent gave her a sense of security and she smiled at the sun, dressed and put her mind to inventing boots."

"Kapugen, the Hunter," p. 120

"The air exploded and she stared up into the belly of the plane. Bolts, doors, wheels, red, white, silver, and black, the plane flashed before her eyes. In that instant she saw great cities, bridges, radios, school books. She saw the pink room, long highways, TV sets, telephones, and electric lights. Black exhaust enveloped her, and civilization became this monster that snarled across the sky."

"Kapugen, the Hunter," p. 141

"'The Pink room is red with your blood,' she said. 'I cannot go there. But where can I go? Not back to Barrow and Daniel. Not back to Nunivak and Martha...and you cannot take care of me anymore."

"Kapugen, the Hunter," p. 148

"She walked on up the river toward her house. She was an Eskimo, and as an Eskimo she must live. The hour of the lemming was upon the land, cycling slowly toward the hour of Miyax. She would build snowhouses in winter, a sod house in summer. She would carve and sew and trap. And someday there would be a boy like herself. They would raise children, who would live with the rhythm of the beasts and the land."

"Kapugen, the Hunter," p. 169

"Many hours later she buried [Tornait] in the snow. The totem of Amaroq was in her pocket. Her fingers ran over it but she did not take it out. She sang to the spirit of Amaroq in her best English.

"The seals are scarce and the whale are almost gone. The spirits of the animals are passing away. Amaroq, Amaroq, you are my adopted father. My feet dance because of you. My eyes see because of you. My mind thinks because of you. And it thinks, on this thundering night, That the hour of the wolf and the Eskimo is over."

"Julie pointed her boots toward Kapugen."

"Kapugen, the Hunter," p. 170

Topics for Discussion

1. Julie finds herself lost on the Alaskan tundra. What unusual characteristics of the tundra make it difficult to survive there?

2. Julie believes at first that she will die unless the wolf pack adopts her. To what extent does this turn out to be true? To what extent is it false?

3. Julie remembers many things that her father taught her. What are his most important lessons? Why?

4. Julie of the Wolves is about being lost in the wilderness. It is also about being lost because you don't know who you are. How is Julie "lost" before she runs away? How is she lost later? How are these two kinds of being lost related?

5. Jello is thrown out of the pack in the third section of the book. Why? Why does he attack Julie and why does Amaroq attack Jello?

6. When Julie learns that her father is alive, she is happy. Compare what she expects to find when she meets him with what she actually finds. Why does she run away again?

7. Julie adopts a bird that she names Tornait. Why does she do this, and how is Tornait important to the story? Why does Tornait's death convince Julie to return to Kangik?

Ideas for Reports and Papers * 1. Scientists have established that many animals have a language. Prepare a report about the language of wolves, using this book as one of your sources.

How does wolf language compare with the language of the domestic dog?

2. Although Julie likes to think of Amaroq as her "adopted father," she never loses sight of his "wolfness." Compare the wolf pack with a human family.

In what ways are the two groups alike?

In what ways are they different?

3. How does Julie change during the story? What does she learn? How does the journey form Nunivak to Kangik relate to this change?

4. Using Julie of the Wolves as a source, write a survival guide for life on the tundra without modern camping gear.

5. Compare the modern Eskimo's life in a settlement with the way Eskimos used to live in the wilderness. What aspects of the old Eskimo culture do you find reflected in the modern Eskimo's life as it appears in this book?

Essay Topics

What reasons might the author have had for not titling this book *Miyax of the Wolves*?

What significance do names have in this book? Under what circumstances and by which people is Miyax called Julie? What does she mean when she says, "Julie is gone. I am Miyax now"? (p. 104) Which animals does she name with Eskimo names and which with English names? Is there a difference in their natures?

Why does Julie change her mind about going to live with Amy in San Francisco?

How does the author use light and dark to intensify emotion or embody abstract ideas? Consider the rising of the sun in Barrow, the hunter's airplane, the Northern Lights, the Arctic night and the Bladder Festival.

Cold would seem to be the greatest threat to human survival in the Arctic. How does Miyax use the cold as a tool to improve her life and increase her chances of survival?

Why does Julie change her mind about going to live with Amy in San Francisco?

Although wolf urine and caribou droppings play important parts in the book, we are told nothing about how human beings deal with the need to go to the bathroom in the Arctic, neither in the traditional seal camp nor when living on the winter tundra. What reasons might the author have for omitting this information? Why might the author include it?

Did the last page surprise you? Why does Julie change her mind and go back to Kapugen's house? What does the death of Tornait have to do with her decision? What is the significance of singing her final song to Amaroq in "her best English"?

Further Study

George, Jean Craighead. Journey Inward. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1982.

This autobiographical account provides an overview of the circumstances that surrounded the writing of George's books and illustrates her deep regard for nature.

"Newbery Award Acceptance."

Horn Book 49 (August 1973): 337-347.

Describes the research that went into the writing of Julie of the Wolves.

Hopkins, Lee Bennett. "Jean Craighead George." Elementary English 50 (October 1973): 1049-1053. Overview of George's work, with many autobiographical quotations about how she came to write specific books.

Scott, Jon C. "Jean George's Arctic Pastoral: A Reading of Julie of the Wolves."

Children's Literature 3 (1974): 131-139. Examines the novel as part of the pastoral tradition in literature.

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