Character Analysis

Name: _____

Date: _____

Fill in the table about some of the characters: their relationship to the others and their role in the story; choose the descriptions that fit; and give evidence from the story for each one.

Choose from: brave · clever · crafty · wise · accusatory · fair · loving (a description may fit more than one character).

Name	Relationship to other characters	Role in the story	Character description(s)	Evidence from the story
KEESH				
IKEEGA				
UGH-GLUK				
KLOSH-KWAN				
BIM & BAWN				

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Matching exercise

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. Match each phrase from the story with an image. Draw a line to join them.

1 *The father of Keesh had been a brave man, but he had met his death in a time of famine, when he sought to save the lives of his people by taking the life of a great polar bear.*

2 *Across his shoulders he bore a burden of fresh-killed meat. And there was importance in his step and arrogance in his speech.*

3 *Then did the bear grow angry, and rise up on his hind legs, and growl. But Keesh walked right up to the bear.*

4 *But as he ran he dropped a little round ball on the ice. And the bear stopped and smelled of it, then swallowed it up.*

5 *The bear wandered, now this way and now that, doubling back and forth and crossing his trail in circles, so that at the end he was near where Keesh had first come upon him. By this time he was quite sick, the bear, and could crawl no further.*

6 *"I have but devised a mean whereby I may kill the ice-bear with ease, that is all. It be headcraft, not witchcraft."*

7 *Because he exercised headcraft and not witchcraft, he rose from the meanest igloo to be head man of his village.*

A 

B 

C 

D 

E 

F 

G 

Glossary

Name: _____

Date: _____

Gale: (n) a very strong wind

Venture: (v) to set off on a risky or daring journey

Famine: (n) extreme scarcity of food

Deed: (n) an intentional action

Ere: (prep) before (in time)

Mean: (adj) small and of poor quality

Ofttimes: (adv) often

Aghast: (adj) filled with horror

Thou: (pron) you

Hast: (v) old-fashioned second person singular of have

Dost: (v) old-fashioned second person singular of do

Wherefore: (adv) as a result of which

Indignation: (n) anger at unfair treatment

Presumption: (n) behaviour perceived as disrespectful and inappropriate

Unprecedented: (adj) never done before

Assail: (v) to come upon someone suddenly and strongly

Abate: (v) to become less intense

Thrice: (adv) three times

Entrails: (n) internal organs

Tax: (v) to confront someone with an accusation of wrong-doing

Thy: (det) your

Discomfited: (adj) uneasy or embarrassed

Corroborate: (v) to confirm or provide evidence to support

Behold: (v) to see or observe

BEFORE YOU READ

How should food be shared fairly in a community? What can go wrong if the people in charge are unfair?

Can being clever be more powerful than being strong? Give an example.

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Quiz

Name: _____

Date: _____

Please choose the best option for each of the following questions.

1. Where did Keesh live?

(a) The depths of Antarctica
(b) The rim of the polar sea
(c) Lapland
(d) Hull

2. How did Keesh's father die?

(a) He was eaten by a pack of wolves
(b) He died bravely in battle
(c) His bones were crushed by a polar bear
(d) He drowned beneath the ice

3. What is the name of the chief of Keesh's village?

(a) Klosh-Kwan
(b) Aklaq-Anik
(c) Osha-Opik
(d) Pakak-Nuvua

4. What complaint does Keesh have about the meat given to him and his family? Select all that apply.

[a] It is old
[b] It is tough
[c] They are never given any
[d] It has an unusual quantity of bones
[e] They are vegetarian
[f] It is the meat of the polar bear

5. What promise does Keesh make before leaving the council room?

(a) That he will kill all that laugh at him
(b) That he will be the chief of the village one day
(c) That he will never touch meat again
(d) That the meat he hunts will always be divided fairly

6. What does Keesh bring with him along the shore-line the next day? Select all that apply.

[a] His bow
[b] Lots of arrows
[c] A great sword
[d] Half of the village's supply of meat
[e] His father's hunting spear

7. What does Ikeega put on her face in token of her grief?

(a) Black paint
(b) The soot of seal-oil
(c) The blood of the polar bear
(d) A dark veil

8. How many days passed while Keesh was away from the village?

(a) 10
(b) 7
(c) 1
(d) 3

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Quiz

Name: _____

Date: _____

9. Keesh sends the men to collect the meat of what animals?

(a) Three bears
(b) Five penguins
(c) One bear
(d) A pack of wolves

10. How many times more dangerous is it to kill a mother bear and cubs as opposed to an ordinary polar bear?

(a) 9 times more dangerous
(b) It is less dangerous
(c) 3 times more dangerous
(d) 100 times more dangerous

11. Why is it so important to cut up the carcass of a kill in the north?

(a) Otherwise the whole carcass freezes solid
(b) So that scavengers won't steal the whole kill
(c) Because it is an important spiritual tradition

12. Why does Keesh say to Klosh-Kwan that he only hunts bears?

(a) Because his father was killed by a bear
(b) Because bears are the most dangerous prey
(c) Because there is more meat on a bear
(d) Because he finds it so easy

13. What does Keesh ask the men and women of the village to build for him?

(a) A giant ice palace
(b) A bigger igloo
(c) The biggest hunting sled in the north

14. Other than the big igloo, what other prosperity does Keesh's mother come to enjoy?

(a) She was respected as the first woman in the village
(b) She was given more meat than everyone else
(c) She received all the gold her heart desired
(d) She never had to do another day's work

15. What accusation does Ugh-Gluk eventually make to Keesh's face?

(a) That he deals with evil spirits
(b) That he is not dividing the meat fairly
(c) That he is plotting to overthrow the chief
(d) That he is trying to steal Ugh-Gluk's wife

16. What does the council decide one night after long deliberation?

(a) To take away Keesh's igloo
(b) To ban the hunting of polar bears
(c) To spy on Keesh hunting
(d) To banish Ugh-Gluk

17. What does Keesh drop on the ice as he runs away from the bear?

(a) An oddly shaped pebble
(b) A little round ball
(c) His hunting spear
(d) His arrows

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Quiz

Name: _____

Date: _____

18. What do the little round balls do to the bear?

(a) They cause him to fall into a deep slumber

(b) They cause him to squeal and cry in pain

(c) They have no effect

(d) They make him even angrier

19. Where does Keesh finally kill the bear?

(a) On the shore-line

(b) Near to where he first came across him

(c) 10 leagues from the village

20. What are the little round balls that Keesh uses to help kill the bears?

(a) Rocks enchanted with magical properties

(b) Poisoned pellets of meat

(c) Ordinary snowballs

(d) Strips of whalebone frozen in blubber

If you read it in the iClassics app

Answer these extra questions about what you discover as you read:

1. What colour are Keesh's eyes?

2. What happens when you tap Keesh's unfinished new igloo?

3. What happens when you tap the he-bear Keesh comes across?

4. What happens when you run your finger over Keesh's face on the last page?

Think like a detective

Name: _____

Date: _____

Answer in full sentences. Support your ideas with evidence from the text.

1. Keesh is a boy, yet he challenges the elders about how meat is shared. What does his protest show about fairness and courage?

2. Keesh says it is “headcraft, not witchcraft”. What is the difference, and why does it matter for the village’s idea of power?

3. Ugh-Gluk accuses Keesh of dealing with evil spirits. Why might the village be ready to believe this, and what does the ending say about how knowledge changes a community?

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Writing

Name: _____

Date: _____

For each scenario, explain what you think each of the characters would do and why, based on the descriptions and evidence from your character table.

a. Mysterious, weary wanderers arrive at the village asking for food and shelter. They look completely different from the villagers and some fear they may be dangerous.

b. The ice around the village begins to melt, threatening to leave it cut off from the rest of the world and its food supply.

c. A young woman asks the council to let her train as a hunter, because she is as brave and strong as any man.

Extension: choose one scenario and write it as a short story with a beginning, a middle and an end, imitating London's style.

