



**Minnesota Storytime
Reading Guide**

Title: *The Fiddler of the Northern Lights*

Author: Natalie Kinsey-Warnock

Illustrator: Leslie W. Bowman

**Publisher and
Copyright Date:** Dutton, 1996

**Connection to
Minnesota:** Minnesota illustrator

Summary: This story takes place in the north woods of Quebec. Henry loves to hear tales told by his grandfather. Grandpa leads Henry on a night ice-skating trip on the river in search of the fiddler whose music makes the northern lights dance.

Suggested ages: 4-6, 7-10, all ages

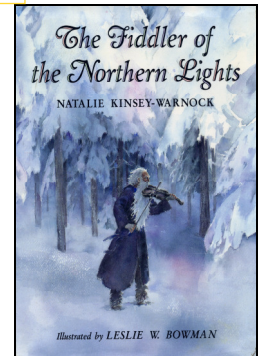
Tips for Reading:

- Before reading the book, practice your pronunciation of the French words: l'hibou blanc (li-bo blanc) and loup-garou (lu ga-ru).
- Show the illustrations before reading each two-page spread and again after reading it. Point out areas that accentuate the story.
- While reading the first page, pause after the word "north" and accentuate the words "howl" and "wondrous."
- When the stranger comes to the door, pause and ask, "Who is this stranger?"
- Reread the story and look for details (clothing, barrel stove, skates, candles) that hint that the setting is in the past.

Questions before reading:

- Do you have a relative that likes to tell stories?
- Do you know an older person that you enjoy being with? Who?
- Have you ever seen the northern lights? (If possible, show a photo.)
- There's another name for the northern lights. Do you know it? (The Aurora Borealis. The Aurora Borealis happens in the earth's northern hemisphere.)

To Introduce this story say: We're going to read a story about a boy named Henry who loves to hear his grandfather's stories about the north woods. One night Henry and his grandfather skate up the frozen river to try to find the fiddler from one of the stories. Something strange and magical occurs. Let's find out what happens.



**Questions
After Reading:**

- How do the various family members feel about Grandpa's stories?
- Did you think Grandpa's stories were real or make believe?
- What can happen when you believe something that no one else does?
- How did the illustrations help you understand the story? (Look at specific pages.)
- Why does Henry carry carrots out in the woods at night?
- Do you have any ideas about what causes the northern lights?

RELATED ACTIVITIES

Art:

- Using pink, green, blue, purple, and white chalk or Craypas, draw the northern lights on black construction paper. Rub them gently with a paper towel to blend the colors. Cut out shapes or images of items in the north woods. Glue these onto the black construction paper.

Music:

- Listen to a recording of fiddle or violin music. If possible, find a musician to show the children a violin and bow, play music, and discuss the instrument.

Science:

- Learn more about the northern lights from other books, videos, and the internet. You can use a search engine like Google to find many web sites, including <http://www.geo.mtu.edu/weather/aurora/>
- Discuss the seasons. Why is there more darkness in Minnesota in winter?

**Suggestions for
English Language
Learners:**

- Do the northern lights appear in your family's home country? What are they called?
- Fiddle, or violin, music was important to this story. Name and describe the musical instruments from your family's home country.

Related Books:

- ***Nightlight*** by Jeannine Anderson, illustrated by Nikki Johnson, art direction by Joy Dey (Windward, 2004)
- ***Northern Lights*** by D. M. Souza (Carolrhoda, 1994)
- ***Goose Moon*** by Carolyn Arden, illustrated by Jim Postier (Boyd's Mills, 2004)
- ***The Night Rainbow*** by Barbara Juster Esbensen, illustrated by Helen K. Davie (Orchard, 2000)
- ***Aurora: a Tale of the Northern Lights*** by Mindy Dwyer (Alaska Northwest, 1997)
- ***The Blizzard's Robe*** by Robert Sabuda (Atheneum, 1999)
- ***Skysisters*** by Jan Bourdeau Waboose, illustrated by Brian Deines (Kids Can, 2000)
- ***Northern Lights: the Soccer Trails*** by Michael Kusugak, illustrated by Vladyana Krykorka (Annick, 1993)

