

TWO CANES ON THE TUNDRA

by Mary Tellefson



“A masterfully written story... Readers are subjected to diversity, empathy, and challenged...to broaden their understanding of this unique culture and the challenges connected to blindness.”

- Cheryl Williams, Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist, TVI, Learning Media Specialist

“As a teacher of students with a visual impairment in Alaska, I am thrilled to finally have a book to share with Alaskan youth who experience vision loss that features their own culture.”

- Sarah Moreau, COMS, TVI, CLVT Alaska Vision Specialist

“The rich insights into the worlds of the Alaskan culture and the blind community help students connect to and create empathy with others...This is an incredible book.”

- Kim A., Ft. Atkinson, WI, Veteran 5th grade teacher

In an Alaskan Yupik village, a blind 12-year-old, Apu, relies on his older cousin to guide him around the village. When a special teacher flies in to teach him how to use a cane, Apu is teased by the other kids and gets angry.

Hearing about Apu's struggles at school, Grandfather sets up a ceremony in which Apu's extended family tell stories of ancestors bravely navigating the Alaskan wilderness using tools for survival. Apu's resistance to using a cane fades as he recognizes Grandfather's support cane and his own mobility cane as tools for independence, similar to the role of ancestral tools for survival in a harsh wilderness.



Mary Tellefson has been a teacher for visually impaired and blind students for over 40 years. A well-respected professional in her field, she has given workshops all over the US and has published in multiple peer-review journals. This is her first children's book, and her second, *Blooming Besties*, will also be published by Orange Hat Publishing this year. A professional text entitled *Culturally Responsive Orientation and Mobility Career, College and Community Readiness Standards* is also in publication with Austin Macauley Publishers.

Destine Poulsen is a first-time book illustrator. She is well known in her native Yupik culture for winning the Festival of Native Arts logo contest in 2020. Destine graduated from the University of Alaska Fairbanks with a Bachelors in Fine Arts/ Native Arts with a concentration in painting. She has lived in Washington, Hawaii, Alaska and Maine. Follow her art on Instagram @theravensfeet or @ravensfeet_toons to see her comic and sketch account.



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