

"Tuck and Kayuk's Adventure"
By Robert W. Friedrich
Published by Last Mountain Publishers
Review by Shelley A. Leedah

In my career as a writer, I've often met people who say they have an idea for a novel or a children's story and are going to write a book one day. I expect that "one day" never arrives for most of these would-be authors, nor do they realize how difficult and time-consuming it is to acquire a publisher. Sometimes, however, the story *does* get written, and the writer sidesteps the long process of publishing with a publishing company by taking the matter into his or her own hands.

The self-published children's story "Tuck and Kayuk's Adventure," by Regina writer Robert W. Friedrich, and illustrated by Walter Mink, of Le Pas, Manitoba, is a fine example of what can result when one has the determination to see their story in print.

As the title suggests, this is an adventure story, which Friedrich dedicates to "all young boys everywhere." The main character, Tuck, lives in the (undefined) north with his family and his canine companion, Kayuk. The boy dreams of being "the best hunter in his village" and being celebrated as such by his community. One day he goes out on his sleigh with Kayuk, and at the sea's edge they watch the whales. Soon "A terrible thundering sound" is heard, and boy and dog find themselves drifting away on an iceberg.

This story of faith (in the Great Creator), bravery, animal loyalty, and family is charmingly illustrated in black and white, in what appears to be a combination of pencil sketching and ink, with much crosshatching. The landscape is simply and effectively rendered, and the uncluttered pages, with their abundance of white, echo the snow and ice-filled terrain. Friedrich's employed a bold font and has not superimposed it over the images, making the text – at times poetic, ie: "He could feel goose bumps popping on his skin like little tents" -- easy to read. The story is printed on thick, quality paper and coil-bound, which means it should stand up well to the rigours of little hands.

It might also be said that this is a story about community, because Tuck wishes to "harpoon a whale for his whole village," and "other villagers" join the search party with Tuck's father.

If readers of this review have an idea for a story they want to see in print and possess the desire to self-publish, they would be well-advised to view as many locally self-published books as possible, including this one. The story of "Tuck and Kayuk's Adventure" contains good lessons for children, and for adults who wish to embark on the adventure of self-publishing, it demonstrates one way in which this can be done. As Friedrich advises in his dedication: "Dream big dreams."

THIS BOOK IS AVAILABLE AT YOUR LOCAL BOOKSTORE OR FROM THE
SASKATCHEWAN PUBLISHERS GROUP WWW.SKBOOKS.COM

