



# On the longest night

of the year in the frozen icescape of the Arctic, the mother white bear gave birth to her single boy cub. Although the sun would not rise above the horizon, the little cub brought sunshine to the heart of his mother. In years long past, large healthy mother bears had always given birth to twin cubs, but now, in the mid-twenty-first century, mother bears were smaller, and their little cubs were born alone. Still, the mother love was the same, and she and her little boy cub lay nestled in their winter den, deep in the snowdrift along the ice-packed shoreline.

Mother Bear nursed her healthy son in the huddled warmth of their ice cave for many months so that he could grow strong and big. While she had not eaten since last fall and would not eat again until spring, which is natural for mother bears, she was able to provide nourishing milk for her cub son throughout the cold winter while the frigid winds blew, icy with bitterly cold temperatures. The ice cave was the cub's nursery, where he was fed, protected and loved by his mother.

When spring came to the island chains along Baffin Bay, Mother Bear introduced Cub Bear to the Arctic world. Even though Mother Bear was very hungry, having lost one third of her weight, Cub Bear was well fed, and delighted at his new world. Never during the long winter in the snow den had he imagined so many sights and sounds and smells among the rough and tumble of pushed-up sea ice, snow drifts, and rock outcroppings that followed the shoreline. While Mother Bear began her search for sea swimmers along the air holes and cracks in the ice, Cub Bear bounced and ran and rumbled along, often bumping into his mother just like the clumsy, goofy little boy cub that he was. Whenever he was hungry, Mother Bear was close by for a meal of warm milk.

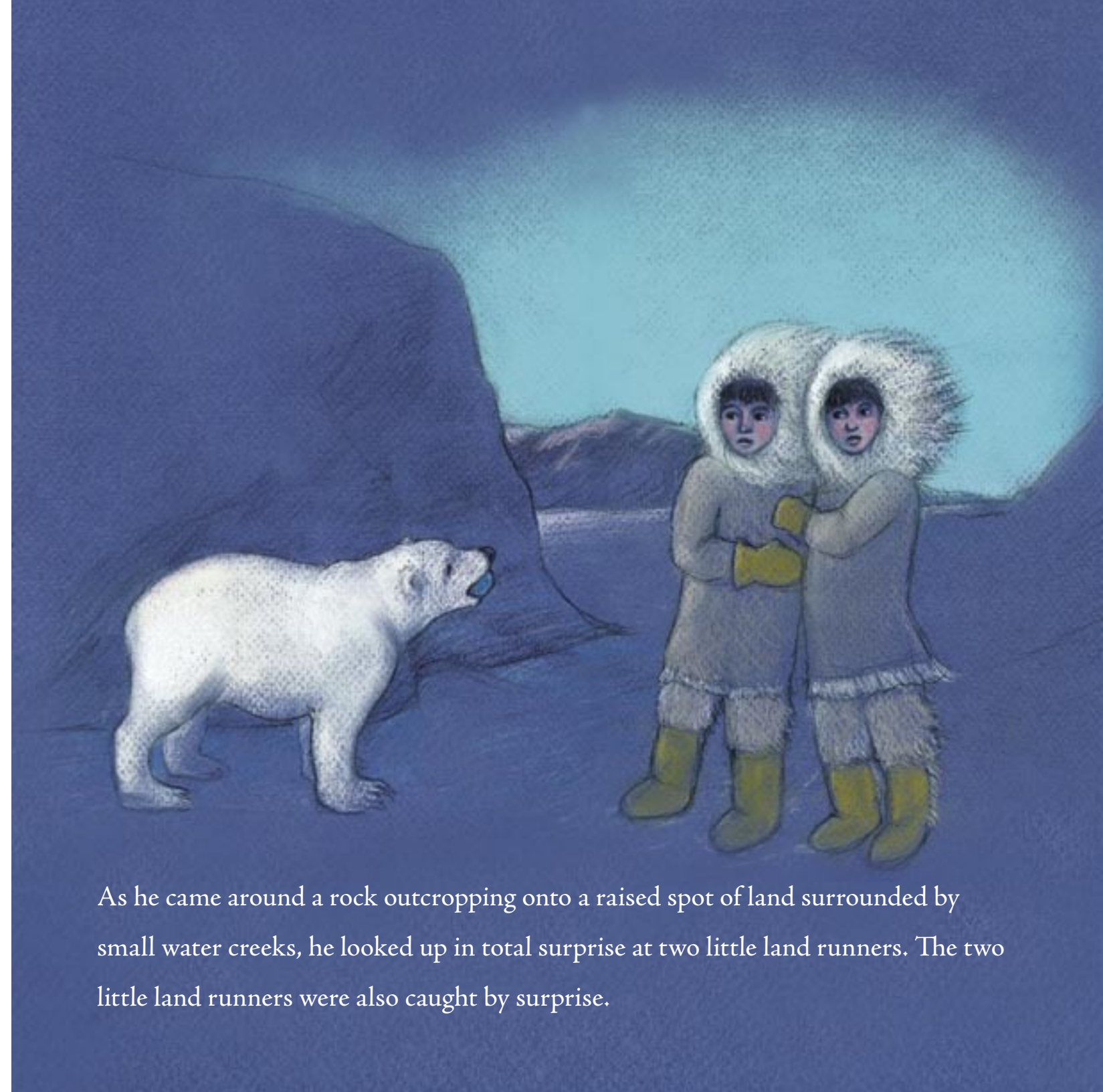


~Cub Bear was looking everywhere in his new and wonderful world, and soon he began to marvel at the sea swimmers, the land runners, and the sky fliers that he encountered each day while Mother Bear was looking for food. Mother Bear was able to catch a sleeping sea swimmer, which seemed very tasty, and this food also helped Mother Bear to end her eight-month hunger fast. Cub Bear was happy to see how eating the sea swimmer had helped to raise his mother's spirits with this first breakfast of the year.

One day in the summer, when his mother had been sleeping for a very long time, Cub Bear decided, just for fun, to take a walk around the area to see if he could find any land runners or sky fliers to play with, or even a sea swimmer to play Wait and Chase. So he walked around the rock outcroppings and muddy coastal marshes, splashing and jumping and having a good time. And then he smelled it. It was the smell of the contraption, and Cub Bear remembered what his mother had so firmly said about how it might harm him.

Cub Bear's senses were on full alert as he sniffed around to see where the contraption might be. He walked around and around sniffing, and found a round egg of one of the sky fliers. Well, that was a good surprise, so he picked it up and carried it while he sniffed for the scent of the contraption. He noticed parallel lines in the earth that left a track from the water's edge to the uplands where the big valley and ice mountain were.

As he put his nose along the trail, he was convinced that indeed this was the same contraption smell he had memorized. Since he could not see the contraption, he was not really worried that his mother would be angry with him, so he trotted along and carried his new egg in his mouth.



As he came around a rock outcropping onto a raised spot of land surrounded by small water creeks, he looked up in total surprise at two little land runners. The two little land runners were also caught by surprise.



Inuits lived in the natural way with the other animals of the Arctic. That is why, every year, the community nurse tested all the children for these poisons. Some children were allowed to eat fish only once a week. The storytellers had told all the children that long ago the ice pack never melted. As time went on, the Earth got warmer from the factories and cars burning off carbon dioxide, causing something that was called 'global warming.' "Now," they said, "there are little areas of partial ice in the winter. Since there is less ice, the seals that make the icy waters their home have moved away. Without the ice and the seals, the great white bear has no food and no habitat, so they are dying off."

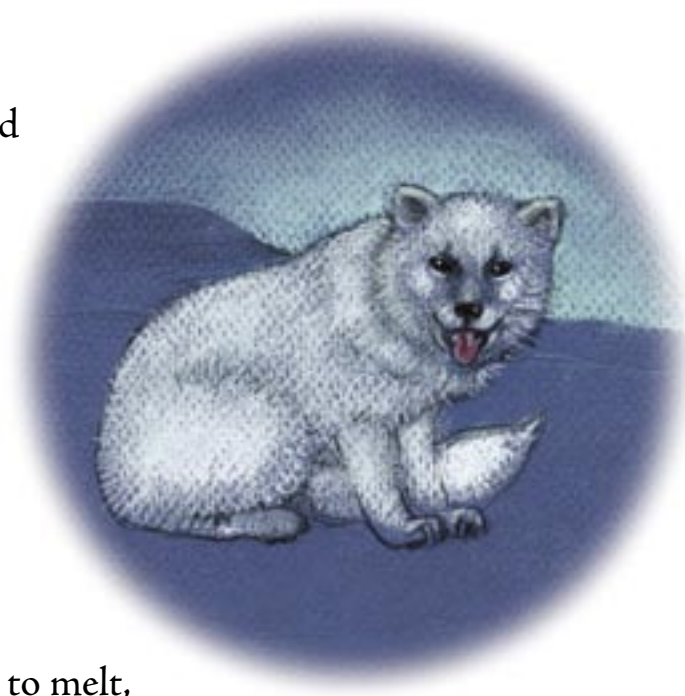
The twins, however, also remembered stories of white bears eating people, even children, and these thoughts sat in the back of their minds. So they were hardly ready to believe their eyes when they ran into the bear cub.

But since all three were looking at each other, it must have been real. Olneg knew it was real when he reached out and picked up the shore-bird egg, which delighted Cub Bear very much. Wanata then reached into her parka pocket and pulled out a ball made of seal fur that she and her brother used to play Catch. When she tossed it to the bear cub, he bounded over the rocks and ice to pick it up and throw it back towards the children.



*In the Arctic, where the polar bears live, mercury, pesticides and chemical toxins are collected, after flowing from industrial countries, factories and power plants in the southern latitudes. Poisons accumulate in fish, which are eaten by seals, which are in turn eaten by polar bears.*

White bears had been a major part of the Inuit ways for millennia, providing food and clothing to the people. It had always been said by the old storytellers that the Inuits' destiny was interwoven with that of the white bears.



“Boy, they all seemed to die off so fast,” Oltva exclaimed. “First, the ice pack began to melt, and then seals no longer came with the ice. And then the white bear population began to drop off, and probably no more than a dozen or so are left,” he continued. “I heard the scientists with the Wildlife Service down at the community center say they estimated that there were ten times more polar bears in the zoos around the world than there are here in the Arctic Circle. It makes my heart sad that my children may never see a white bear in our land.” Then, looking up at his brothers with a wink in his eye, he jested, “Well at least that means there are more fish for us to hunt and sell for money. At least we are still surviving up here, in the farthest north land of the people, *Nunavut* – our land.”

The twins, with unleashed emotion, both exclaimed, “Oh father, oh father, we have seen the white bear, but it was small and young like us!”

“What?” the father turned his head to look back at the children. Their uncles turned their heads around too. “What silliness are you saying? You know it is not of our tribe to tell falsehoods. You know *iliqqusiq* – the Inuit way of tradition!”

“No, no, father, it is true,” both children echoed and sat up straight while they testified solemnly with hands on their hearts. “We played with him for two days when we first came to set up the new camp.”

“What?” barked their father. “You played with a white bear cub and did not tell us? Why, that is terrible.”

With a furrowed brow he looked back again and questioned, “You probably did not tell us so we could not tell you not to go near the cub white bear. Oh children, you could have been killed.”





“No, no father, it was perfectly safe. We never touched it... but we could have,” said Wanata shyly to her scolding father.

“We played Hand Pull and Give and Take. Except he ate the fish,” giggled the young boy, which made his sister giggle too, as she added, “It was great fun, father, really, and you would have had a good time too.”

“I’ll bet I would,” said the father as he gave a knowing look to his brothers who were shaking their heads in disbelieving unison. “I believe you twins, because you have never broken the truth code with me before, and you obey the truth rules of the tribe and *iliqqusiq*. But you must remember that the cub’s mother, who was undoubtedly very near by, could have killed you. Obviously, she was up-wind or she would have sensed you, lucky for both of you. She would play Hand Pull with you, all right, just before she served you as supper to her cub.”

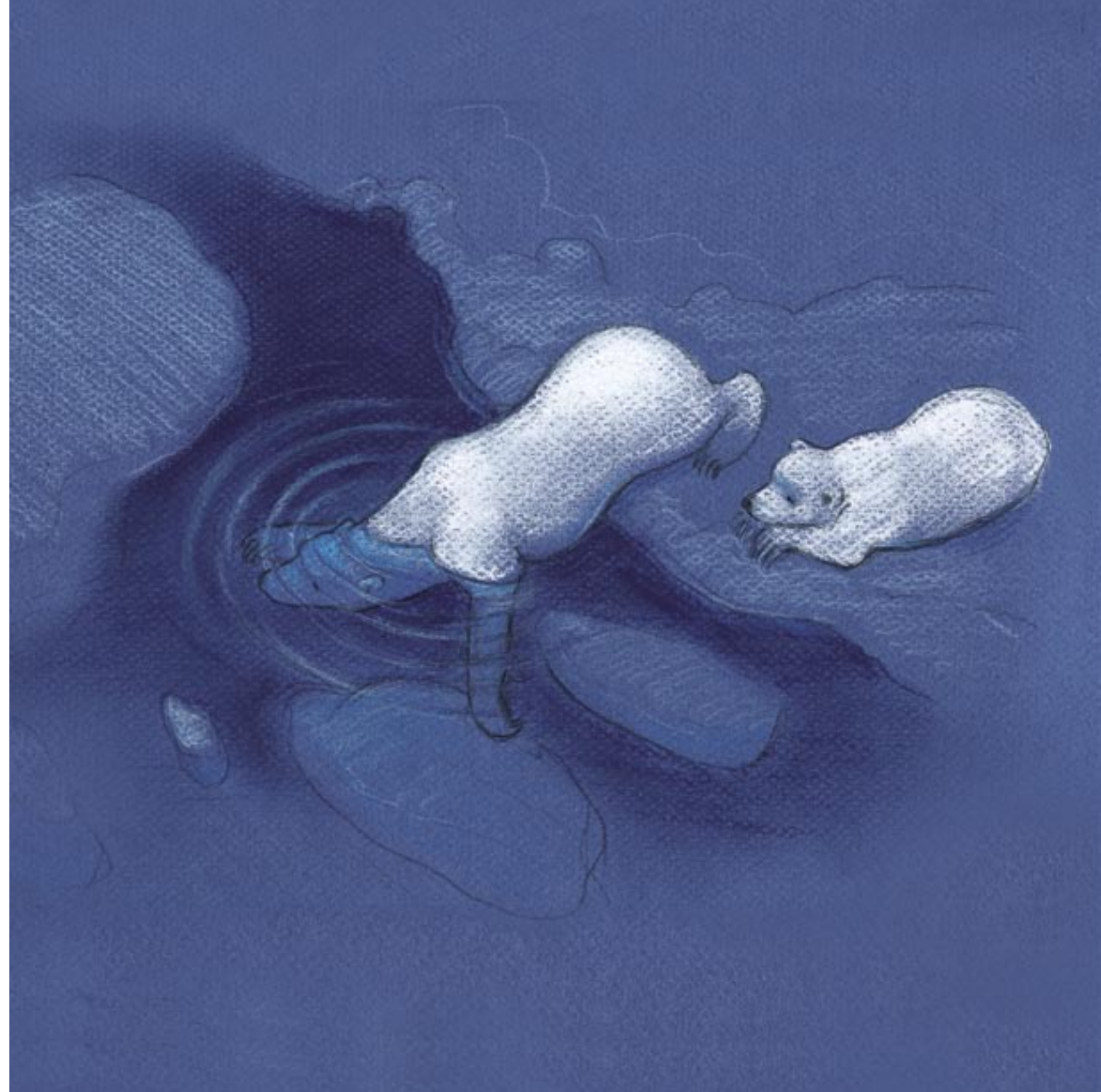
“You had an experience,” he went on, “that can only mean some strong totem is communicating with you two and that could mean either great danger or great fortune for your futures. We will meet with our shaman when we reach the southern community,” he declared, “to learn the meaning behind this strange encounter with the bear cub.”

And with a look of stern wisdom, he said that the matter was closed. For the rest of the journey back south to their winter village, they spoke no more of the children’s fantastic tale.

~ **The land of ice** continued to tilt on the Earth's axis away from the sun. As it did, the sun dropped towards the horizon lower and lower each day, while the Mother Bear and her cub were discovering a rough winter indeed. The small bear family huddled up together in the much deeper snow den for long periods. Nuuk was beginning to miss the long hikes, the sea swimmers and sky fliers all around. He had no one but his mother to play with and she was always sleeping these days.

Finally, after an exceptionally long sleep for Mother Bear, she woke up and they emerged from their snow den for a dinner walk. She had been feeling dizzy again and needed a meal to build her strength and regain her health. With her much lower body weight, she could not last for so many months without a meal. Nuuk was doing pretty well with his diet, because he always got his mother's milk, along with plenty of sea swimmer pieces when they hunted, but it seemed that the sea swimmers weren't helping his mother any more, and he was beginning to worry.

As they continued their walk, his mother went along the edges of the packing ice to look for dinner. When she slipped into the water, she had a strange, dizzy look to her eyes. Nuuk waited for a long time.





He ran all along the edge of the ice, whimpering sadly, and then he lay on his tummy with his nose and his paws over the water where Mother Bear had slipped in. He waited and waited, and then he checked again the places where she might emerge, all along the ice. But she never came up from under the ice floe, and he never saw her again.



Sadly, Cub Bear began his solitary life, using the skills his mother had taught him to find food and make snow caves. Although he was small, he was a bright little bear, and he had learned well how to care for himself through seasons of hunting with his mother.

Though Nuuk did not understand this, Mother Bear had become disoriented and weak from lack of food, and finally she perished under the frigid ice surface.

What Mother Bear and Nuuk could not have known was that she had finally become ill because of her low weight and because poisons from chemicals had collected in her body over a lifetime of eating seals and fish with poisons stored in their fat.

Although these poisons were not good for Nuuk, he did not have enough to cause his young body harm. It would take a few more years before he would begin to feel the effects of the poisons that had made his mother weak and dizzy. For right now, all he knew was that he was all alone. The wildlife scientists that often came to talk with the Nunavut villages would have said that Nuuk was a healthy male yearling, of the species *Ursus maritimus*, weighing approximately two hundred pounds. What they would not have said was that the yearling was a very, very sad and lonely little bear.

~ **As winter came into full blow**, Nuuk became pretty good at the waiting game with the sea swimmers. But still, even the best of bears could expect an average of only one or two seals a week. So he began to migrate back in the direction of the summer spots where they had played the waiting game. And this brought Nuuk close to his very special play spot near the fishing camp. Although he could not find any scent of the land runners and their contraptions, he walked cautiously up to the vacant fishing camp.



Nuuk was surprised at the extent of the land runners' camp and to discover the wood caves they had built to live and eat in. Being a curious and smart bear, he checked to be sure that no land runners were anywhere around; then he found a way into the wood cave and discovered dinner things in large cans that would crush open when he stepped on them. Oh, this was a real treat to a lonely, hungry bear in the middle of winter! And so the young land runners' fishing camp became a favorite place for Nuuk to visit throughout the remainder of the winter. He had nothing but fond memories associated with the place – memories of good food and of his two little land runner friends.



Winter ran its natural course that year, though there were days of strange, warm air stirring the ice floes, until one day the sun came up over the horizon and the long night was broken into gray days, and then finally into sunshiny ones. Often Nuuk would sleep near the camp in one of his snow dens. When the sky fliers returned with the longer days of spring, he was able to add nutritious eggs to his diet.

~ The twins had spent their school year through the fall, winter and spring learning many new things about history, math, and science. They were also learning new skills in traditional crafts, making drums and costumes for their native dances. They were so busy with school, crafts and sports that they did not have much time to worry about Nuuk. As the Inuit school closed for the summer season, the community once again began preparations for their annual treks to numerous ancestral fishing and hunting areas along the coastlines of the many islands that make up the Nunavut lands. When the twins, now in their eleventh year, were fast approaching the clan's summer fishing camp, they absolutely did not dare to say a word in front of any of the Elders as to what they were secretly thinking about... the cub bear Nuuk.

"Gee, it's been almost a year since we were here. What do you think the chances are, Olneg?" his sister asked quietly, without naming names, as they sat in the back of the all-terrain trail wagon.

"Well, what were our chances to have discovered him in the first place, Wanata?" whispered her brother. "Our father says that we hit the white bear *lotto*. Father said it was one billion to one odds that we could ever see a bear in our lifetime, because here in the middle of the twenty-first century, there are 12 billion people and only 12 bears left."

“Ha, ha,” the twins’ uncles had agreed with their father’s clever math trick. But indeed the Elders had all impressed upon the twins just how rare it was to see a white bear outside a zoo. They joked that they knew of a woman from a southern university who had spent three years on the glaciers for her study on Polar Bears, as she called them, and never saw a single one. It made all the papers and the cover of *National Geographic* magazine. So the twins’ enthusiasm was tempered by the overwhelming scientific evidence, and by tales from the Elders telling them that the likelihood that they would ever see the cub again was infinitesimally small.

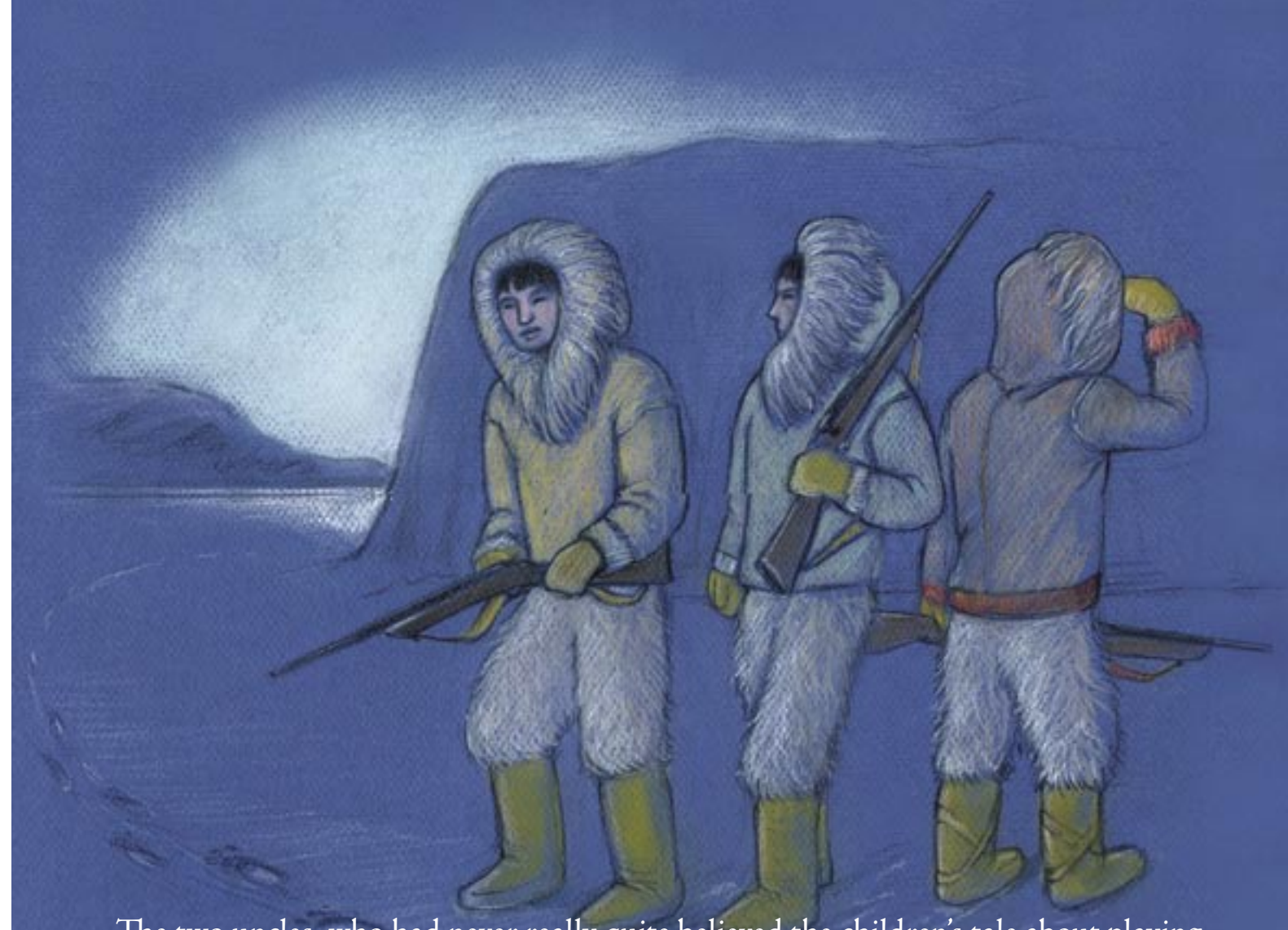
What would be the chances? But the old shaman, Karnak, had read their futures last fall, while holding their totems in his hand by the firelight of a clan festival. He had declared that a spirit cloud was weaving through time to share a great knowledge with the twins. Clan bear spirits were touching their lives, and they should pay close attention to what the land and spirits had to teach them. He explained to them the special story about the inter-linkages of the white bear spirits and the Inuit spirits and how they live together in harmony in the spirit world, and that all things on Earth would be in harmony with the spirit world.





~ And so, one fine day in June, Nuuk felt like going on an extra long hike and dinner walk, and as he approached the fish camp, although still a couple of miles away, he could smell the twins. His first sniff was of the strange odor from the contraption and then the meaty smell of the young land runners. It was a pleasant smell – it kind of reminded him of his mother, he thought. He stood up to full height and moved his ears around as he sniffed again and again. There, after so many long months, the young land runners had returned, he was sure. This was much more than he could have dreamed about during these last three hundred days. And Nuuk was happy again, as he had not been for a long time. He was happy to think of playing again with friends. And they were, indeed, the only friends that he knew. So today was going to be a very special day.

~ At the Inuit fishing camp, the men immediately discovered the pilferage of their food, which once and for all confirmed for all the Elders that the twins had indeed seen their bear friend. In fact, he had come to visit their camp. He must have felt quite at home as he helped himself to a big portion of their provisions. The men shook their heads.



The two uncles, who had never really quite believed the children's tale about playing with the cub bear, finally had to admit that they had underestimated the twins and that the bear was not just an idea of their young imaginations. They could see with their own eyes that a bear had come and played with their camp and taken most of their canned food. Oh yes, he was a playful bear all right. The men also noticed that the bear's footprints were very large.

“Those do not look like a cub’s prints. I wonder if this could be another bear,” announced one of the uncles. “Seems unlikely, with so few bears alive any more. Of course, the cub would be bigger now. But these could be the prints of the mother. We may have a large bear on our hands.”

“Well, it looks like we have some work to do before we can play host to our fishing tourists this year,” observed the father, “including bear control and supply replacement, not to mention repair work.”

So the uncles decided to return south immediately to pick up more supplies, while the father stayed with the twins to prepare the camp. “I’ll set up a trap and get the bear before you guys return. But I’ll save his heart for you, I promise,” exclaimed the father.

“But Father!” cried out the twins, “You can’t kill him for food.”

“Now listen my children,” consoled the father. “The bear is competing with us for food. If he eats all our food, then we starve and we can’t fish and the tourists can’t fish and hunt and then we can’t sell our fish to the market, so we can’t buy things for our home and your mother. And we certainly don’t want to kill him and not eat him, do we?”

“No father, we want you to let him live. We can show him how to not break in and steal our food. Let him live Dad, please, let him live.”

“I don’t know why we should much care; he is probably the last of his clan ever,” lamented their father. “You know that it is not against the law any more to shoot the white bear, since the government scientists said that their species has passed the point of sustainability and will therefore go extinct, except for the few here or there and for those still in the zoos. The lottery for hunting tags was canceled before you were born. They said that the genetic code was recorded and stored now, so that it wasn’t so important to keep any more alive in the wild. The zoos around the world have plenty of white bears. So, we tribes of the people can kill and eat anything that our ancient fathers could eat.”

“That is why we eat whale and birds and all things from the sea. But I will see if we can just keep the food secure, and if he doesn’t come around any more, we will see if I still have to kill him.” He looked at his brothers and they shared a knowing look among them as the father grabbed the hunting rifle and cartridges.





“Those tracks look pretty fresh, younger brother,” said one uncle. “You and the twins need to be especially alert while we are gone.”

“We should be back in a couple of days,” said the other uncle, “we can track and shoot him then.”

~Nuuk waited along a snow ridge for the sun to rise above the horizon, and then he went to investigate the old play place where so many moons had passed since his wonderful first meeting with the two-legged land runners.

He sniffed and he waited. And he sniffed and he waited. He was getting very, very good at the waiting game, even though not many sea swimmers seemed to come up for air any more. The morning coastal air was smelling very interesting, causing a flood of good memories to return to his mind.

Then Nuuk heard the land runners walking to the play place. He could hear them from a long way off, scuffing along in their *kamits*, so when he finally saw them, it was all he could do to stay still and wait. But somehow he knew that his role in the waiting game was just that – to sit still and wait.

Olneg and Wanata were trying very hard to be quiet as they approached. They left their father sleeping that morning, as he had stayed awake until just about dawn working on repairing the food shed and sitting out in front of the sleep shed cleaning his rifle. The twins had finally agreed to go and sleep, but only after their father’s solemn promise that he wouldn’t shoot their bear cub friend if he came during that night, though he sure as heck would shoot the mother. No matter what, he wasn’t going to be the main course for her and her cub.

The twins crept along in the haze of the twilight sun as it bounced along the horizon among ice spires and mountain ridges for the daily circle of light. And as they walked to the edge of the play area, Nuuk, who had been lying absolutely still in the snow bank, jumped up to full height at the delight of seeing them.

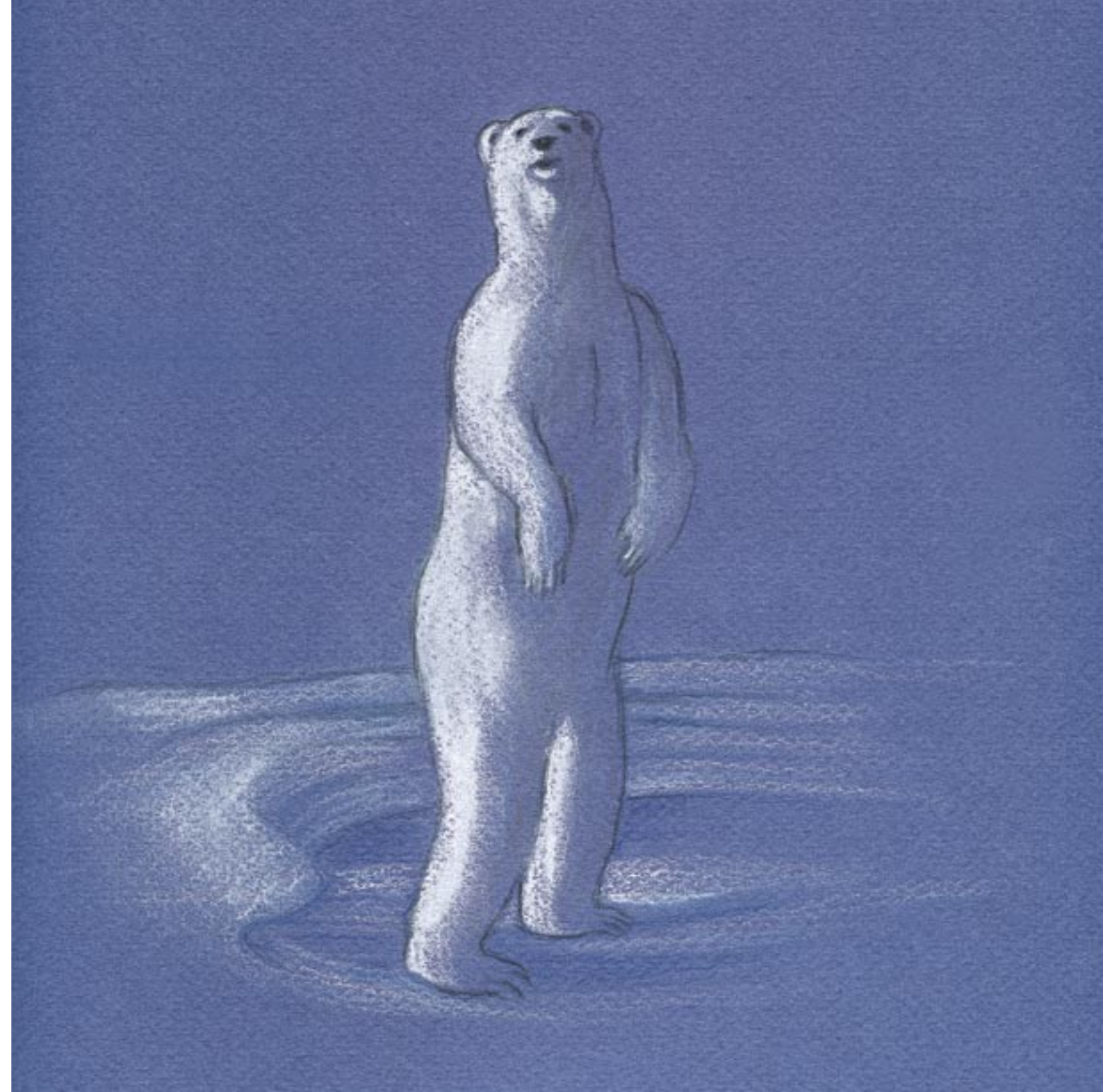
The boy and girl were completely surprised by the very large white bear that had appeared out of nowhere, and began to scream in unison. The cub, who had somehow grown three feet taller and gained more than a hundred and fifty pounds since they last had seen him, just stood there looking at them.

The twins fell back in sheer panic, but the bear jumped up and down in joyful bounds and began to show off his back tumble trick and other bear tumbles that he himself had invented during the long nights in the winter snow den. Nuuk might have won an Olympic medal if there were such things for bears, because he was very good as a tumbling bear. In fact, he was probably the world's best tumbling bear, and as he did his back tumbles, the twins stopped and recovered their voices and quickly whispered to each other.

“Well, yes, it has to be him, doesn't it?” asked Wanata.

“Well, yes, but he's grown soooo big since we last saw him!” replied Olneg.

“Yeah, just like the pup dogs that are near full size at six months and full grown at a year. But gosh, he scared me,” admitted Olneg.





“Wow! Look at his tricks!” said Wanata.

“He really knows how to play. How do you suppose he learned to play like that?”

The twins were in wonderment and awe at the antics of their bear friend Nuuk. It was not easy to call him a bear cub anymore because he was just too big to be a cub – an adolescent, maybe, but certainly not a cub.

“Boy, if father saw him now he would shoot him for sure,” Olneg said.

“Yipes, we have to do something,” worried Wanata. “But what? We have to save the last bear. You heard them! He’s probably going to be the last bear. That’s what the Elders said. Now what are we going to do? I was so happy, but now I’m worried. If we don’t think of something, the Elders will surely kill Nuuk.”

“Well, maybe we can ask them to let us keep him as a pet,” offered Olneg optimistically. “I think we can safely touch him once or twice. Don’t you? I know one way to find out.”



And with that, the twins inched over to Nuuk, who was now standing in the formal position of both Hand Pull and Give and Take. He did not move as the twins both came up and touched him on the shoulder, one at a time, while he turned his head back and forth at the wonderment of their touch, thinking of an appropriate response for this new Touching game. He demonstrated a four-legged back flip and touched his nose gently to each of their small heads, remembering the soft touch of his mother. And then he stepped back just to savor the moment, feeling the loneliness slip away. He was sure this was his best day ever.

“Oh yeah, we can touch him alright,” Olneg stated, “but what are we going to do with him now? Oh my, oh my.”

“Well, let’s run back to camp and wake up father, and then we will make him promise not to shoot the bear if we tell him a secret,” suggested Wanata.

“Yeah, what secret?” asked her brother.

“That we know where the white bear is,” she responded.

“OK, if you think that will work, OK,” agreed Olneg. And so they walked backward to the edge of the play area, which was a new game the bear did not remember, so he did not know when to run and when to hide. Then, when he turned to hide his head in the snow bank, the twins ran as fast as they could back to their fishing camp.

~ “Oh father, please don’t yell at us,” cried the twins in unison.

“What do you mean, leaving camp and chasing a wild bear while I slept?” shouted their father. “Where is it? Where is this bear of yours?”

“No, father, not unless you promise not to shoot him. Please father. Besides, Olneg thinks that if you capture it, maybe it can dance for the tourists like you see at the circus-zoos and you can make a lot of money,” Wanata said bravely with her quick, creative reasoning. “It would be worth more than a boat of fish and you could be rich.”

“Well indeed, you are clever children, aren’t you? You say it jumps around and does tumbles?”

“Yes father, yes, we saw him, and we even touched him.”

“What? You touched him?”

“Yes, and he kissed us on the head.”

“Teeeeeeee!” cried their father. “You are such foolish children. That bear could eat your heads.

Oh, my dear sweet children. No, No, No. Where is this bear of yours? I want to know now,” he insisted. Firmly gripping the upper arms of both twins, he was clearly in no mood to hear anything but the tribal truth, *iliqqusiq*, and to hear it now!

“But father, you promised, please you promised,” they cried out in real tears. “We know we have to tell you the truth, but you can’t hurt our bear friend. Please don’t hurt Nuuk.”

“Well, we’ll see about that. And now he has a name, has he,” noted the father as he grabbed his hunting rifle and stepped outside of the sleeping shed.





He quickly began to trace his children's footprints and ran off at half trot in the direction of the play area. Their father had admonished the twins to stay put in the camp, but their anguish over Nuuk's fate caused them to stealthily follow their father as far back as they must, being doubly sure not to be seen by him. They realized then that they could never have kept Nuuk's location a secret from their father, because he read the ground like city people read maps. He could tell you who went by and what they were doing just by looking at the loose dirt or paw prints in the snow. The twins, however, knew the short cut to the play area just back behind the ice spires. And off they ran, not knowing what they could do to save Nuuk, but unwilling to stay behind.



~ Back at the play area, the cub bear suddenly sensed another land runner – not the twins, but a stronger presence than he had ever sensed back at the camp. And there was a new odor that began to affect him in a strange subconscious way, with a reaction in his stomach and legs.

He suddenly felt a tremendous and uncontrollable urge to run fast, away from the strong strange scents coming his way. It seemed only natural that he should run as fast as he could, just as his mother had done last year when they had run from the same land runners' camp. All these rapid thoughts were triggered when his nose picked up the smell of the Inuit hunter's adrenaline, which had in turn triggered Nuuk's natural fight or flight response. The bear quickly escaped over the ice bank and bounded off to the shoreline before the crouching land runner hunter had laid eyes on him.

“Those are awfully big paw marks for a cub bear,” thought the father, realizing that this animal had escaped. “You are definitely an adolescent bear – and a menace to my fish camp and a danger to my young twins. I will get you or my brothers will get you when they return before long,” he whispered, as he walked back toward the camp, passing the twins, who were hidden behind a rock outcropping.

The twins, of course, had seen their friend jump over the small rock and ice outcropping that surrounded their special play area. Wanata whispered out to Nuuk, “*Nagligivagit*” – “I love you” – and their hearts both cheered and cried as they watched Nuuk safely run from the danger of their father's hunting rifle. The twins ran down the short cut and reached the camp in time to greet their father.

“What happened, Father?” asked Olneg with a sly, knowing look at his sister.

“Well, it looks like your bear friend got lucky and left before I could catch him,” explained their father. “My brothers can hunt for him when they return.”

“But Father,” suggested the boy twin, “why don’t you leave food out for the bear and perhaps we can charge the tourists more money for seeing the last little white bear?”

The father looked at his children and thought about what had been said.

“You know, you might have a good idea my children, after all. If we can keep him from breaking into our camp supplies, and if we put out warning strings around the camp, maybe we can take advantage of this strange not-so-little bear. Maybe we can figure out how to live in harmony, as our ancestors did, with our young Arctic neighbor. Let me make counsel with my brothers when they return,” he concluded.



~ When Nuuk finally stopped running,

he was over ten miles down the coastline. As he stopped to see where he was, he was attracted to the busy commotion coming from a group of two dozen ringed seals that had migrated along the almost ice-free shores for the mating and feeding seasons. The bear liked sea swimmers of all types, but these were his very favorite ones. And so he continued to travel east along the coast, following and playing the waiting game with the various groups of sea swimmers, which kept him traveling for many weeks.





Many months later, Nuuk turned around to travel westward, and eventually arrived once more at the land runners' fish camp. It was vacant again, but this time he couldn't figure out how to get into the wood cave and look for dinner. He walked all around, but it was no use. The land runners had added too much bark to the wood cave, and try as he might, he couldn't get in. He could hardly even sniff the twins' scent anymore.

Even with the happy memories, his own bear sense told him it would be a good time to move to the other spots to play the waiting game with sea swimmers. He was surprised when, before he left, he noticed a group of sticks tied together and standing like an ice tower, with a seal skin bag hanging from it. His nose quickly inspected the bag and found the leftover parts of sea swimmers hung by the land runners, frozen but ready to eat. As he enjoyed the gift meal, out fell a sealskin ball with a string attached. Nuuk knew that this gift was from his young land runner friends. He was happy again with the food and the memories of his play friends.

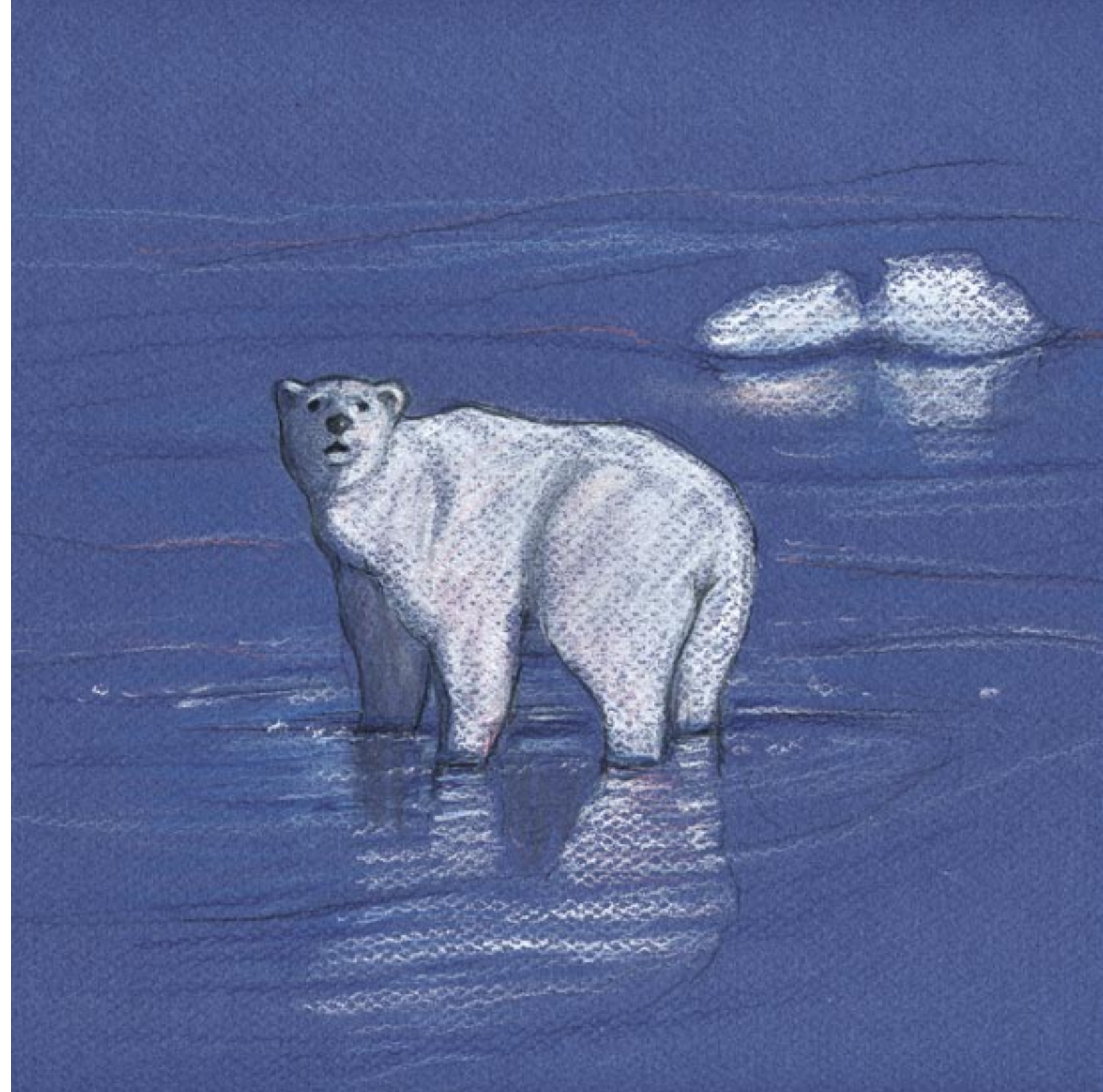
Later, Nuuk noticed as he walked along the shore that the sun was riding lower along the horizon each day. The winds were getting colder, and his instincts began to focus more and more on the waiting game.

As the sun finally disappeared below the horizon, constant night settled over the *Nunavut* icescape and lands once again. The ocean was no longer cold enough, however, to maintain the ice packs that had seemed so permanent to bears and the two-legged land runners until just fifty years ago. Nuuk looked out at the few remnants of the ice floe and saw that the ice had continued to shrink all the way to the horizon. He was losing his habitat more and more every day.

Nuuk wondered if his land runner friends would ever come back again. He wondered and he wondered.

Somewhere to the south two young Inuits were lying next to each other in their beds, wondering what would happen to their special bear friend Nuuk.

## What will happen to the last little polar bear?





# Inuit Word Game

Here is a list of Inuit words and the English translations. After you have read the story, see if you can find Inuit words from this list that can be used in the story to replace English words.

<b>Inuit</b>	<b>English</b>
adja!	how nice!
aglerolarpok	gnashes teeth
aiklerpok	fetches something
aimerpok	visits expecting to receive food
aitangayok	has his mouth open
aitaurpok	yawns, is sleepy
aiwok	goes home
akkorpok	catches when flying (ball, etc)
akpalikitaurtut	they race
akpattok	steps, walks, runs
akreatorpok	ate his fill
akropiyok	lies down (as a dog)
alianaigosuktok	is happy, cheerful
aluktorpok	licks
amarok	wolf
anana!	beautiful!
angusuktok	is good hunter
anguyok	catches game
annakpok	is not caught, is still free, escapes
annuarsorpok	obeys, listens well
annudlakpok	is very sad
arktayut	thieves
atertak	bear cub
audlatsiariktok	moves with facility, skilful
aulaiiyok	pays attention, remembers
awadlerpok	goes far away
angayokrak	superior, parents
awisuitok	inseparable

<b>Inuit</b>	<b>English</b>
erealarpok	yells, cries out
erkraidguyok	is inventive
erkrarpok	remembers
erkrarsautit	souvenir
erkrivok	curls up
erkromayok	is awake
erksiwok	is afraid
idjuarsiwok	imitates
idluartok	is good
idlulutaowok	is the cause of trouble
ikpinartok	causes one to feel something
iktsuarpok	often goes out to see if someone is coming
iktumiyok	makes noise
illa	partner, friend, related
illimasukpok	is on the watch, suspects
illitariyok	learns easily, intelligent
imgiarpok	precedes, goes ahead
immoriktok	is curled up (as a dog)
inerkonartok	is fair, pretty
ingertarpok	walks to and fro
ingiarpok	precedes, goes ahead
inuksiwok	meets, finds human being
ipkolukpok	whines, complains
irkraumalerutiksak	souvenir
issibjukpok	speaks in low voice
issukangitok	has no end: eternal
issumayok	thinks
ivayok	broods
iyerartorpok	goes and hides
iyerpok	hides self

<b>Inuit</b>	<b>English</b>
iyorpok	laughs, mocks
kamik	sealskin boots
kapiasukpok	is afraid
kadzait	wolves wandering and hungry
kagliwok	comes closer
karpok	is hungry
kattersorpok	is gathering things
kiggertarpok	makes little leaps, hops, etc.
kingudlerk	the last
kingupiusarpok	falls backwards, steps backwards
kipingoyok	feels lonesome
kissermiorpok	is solitary, alone
konwarpok	smiles
kranogitok	has no trouble, (all is well)
kreyok	cries and yells
krenerpok	looks for, seeks
kriksimigarpok	scowls at some one
kriptaerpok	is well awake, in good humour
kritigitiksak	toy
kritikpok	plays
kuviasukpok	is glad, happy
mangatpok	flees away (game etc.)
mianersiyok	watches, guards
mikilak	the smallest
naglingnartok	is lovable
nakkersarpok	goes faster and faster
nakkertok	goes fast, quick, far
nalektok nalaktok	listens, obeys
nanertak	bear cub
nangiarpok	is afraid
nanuk	polar bear
nappatak	fox
natserk	seal
nayagarpok	is half asleep
nerreyok	eats
nerriungnerk	hope
nerromiktok	is smooth, soft to touch

<b>Inuit</b>	<b>English</b>
nertuark	is strong, powerful
nikadlorpok	is sad
ningarpok	gets angry
ningatsuitok	patient
niplerpok	makes noise
nippaitok	makes no noise, is silent
niviorpok	is anxious
nukilik	is strong
okalruserk	word of authority
okrarpok	speaks
okrilayok	is swift
olrowok	falls down
omariksartok	is full of energy
omilarpok	complains
padlakpok	stumbles
papatsiyok	keeps well guarded
perkoyiyok	commands, orders
pigiarpok	is a beginner
pikaluyak	iceberg
pikannerpok	does it once more, continues
pikattarput	children imitating elder person
pikattauiyok	takes part in game, etc
pikjukpok	finds eggs.
piktauyoriyauyok	has a good reputation
pimayarpok	gives
pingoarpok	plays, imitates, jokes
pissimaitok	has not been touched
pissuinnarpok	takes a walk
piwallialerpok	is more and more active
pokrittok	is intelligent
puibjarpok	shows head above water
puigojuitok	never forgets
puigorpok	forgets
pullarpok	visits
sadluwalliyok	is thinner and thinner
sadluyok	is thin, skinny
sadvarpok	answers

## Inuit

sagverpok	loses sight of
sanguyok	changes
sannesiktok	gets away from
sapputiyok	protects
sarremaitok	is sad
sarremasakpok	is tired
sarrimayok	is happy
satkomerpok	appears
satornartok	thankful
satortok	gives back to owner, etc.
sausimayok	is covered with snow, etc.
senneksorpok	makes preparations
silatusarpok	is prudent, thinks ahead
sinaliarpok	goes to the edge of ice
sinnaktomawok	dreams
sinnik	sleep
sinnikpok	sleeps
sinniktarpok	sleeps (camps away from home)
siterpok	repulses, recoils
sitorarpok	slides
sokoersiwok	recognizes well, understands well
soruserk	child
sumikpok	tries to cry
sunakasuitok	deserted
sunasorpok	eats remains
taggiarpok	goes inland with whole family
takrayok	is tired
taku	look!
takuyok	sees, looks and sees
talliktok	is hidden
tamuasukpok	bites, eats, chews
tamuawok	takes a bite
tapsitarpok	touches, feels
tatabjiyok	is suddenly frightened
tiglikomerpok	steals food to eat
tipiariktok	smells good
tiretokrat	youngsters

## English

## Inuit

togvawutit	good bye (to those staying home)
torklurarpok	calls loudly
torngark	devil, spirit, etc
tuawiorpok	acts quickly
tubjarsiwok	follows tracks
tukerpok	kicks backwards
tunerk	gift
tupakpok	is awake
tupkoyakiktok	almost choked with emotion
tupsiyok	finds footprints
tussangisartok	is disobedient
ublarorpok	starts early in the morning
udlayok	runs
uglarpok	visits
uibjangoyok	becomes dizzy
uimakpok	is excited
uimayarpok	is nervous
uiritsaktok	is very playful
uitayok	with eyes wide open
uivarpok	goes around
ungayok	loves affectionately
uniwok	eats any thing
upaluarpok	is taken by surprise
upingorpok	surprises
utarak	child
utatkriyok	waits
utterpok	returns home
uvingiarpok	whistles
watsinak	do not move

## English

# Polar Fun Facts

This book describes the adventures of a polar bear cub and two Inuit children in the Arctic lands at the top of the North American continent near Baffin Island, in the Northwest Territories.

Polar Regions are associated with the environment above the Arctic Circle where the sun shines 24 hours a day for six months of the year and remains dark 24 hours a day for the other six months of the year. This imaginary line begins at 66° 33' 39" north latitude and there is another imaginary line at the South Pole called the Antarctic Circle at 66° 33' 39" south latitude.

Temperatures are extremely cold in the Arctic causing ice to form over the vast ocean that covers the North Pole. The plants and animals and humans that live in these regions have adapted to their environment over thousands of years of evolution. To learn more about the Arctic and Polar Regions, and to find many wonderful educational resources, you can go to our web site at [www.LastLittlePolarBear.org](http://www.LastLittlePolarBear.org). This web site is maintained by a non-profit educational organization.

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