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Black-and-white Bear Cub

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One day at the North Pole a bear cub was born.
It squealed like all the other bears.
The mother was overjoyed.
The wise old bears from the clan were pleased.
However, the others saw it right away!

Part of the bear cub's cheek was missing fur.
Polar bears have white fur. However, under the fur, their skin is black.
This bear cub had a black spot on its white cheek.

At school, the little bears learned about bear life.
They learned that there is a Long Day, when one explores.
They learned that there is a Long Dusk, when one must search for food.
They learned that there is a Long Night, when one falls asleep.
And they learned that there is a Long Dawn, when one wakes up from sleep.

They learned what ice was thin enough to break through to reach the fish,
but also thick enough not to crack under them.
How much they needed to eat to survive the Long Night.
How close they dared to get to human beings while searching for food.

They learned which fish were tasty and which were not.
That there were very tasty fish that are too fast to catch.
That they must not swim too far or drift on an ice floe.

The polar bear cubs were talking about the great secrets of bear life.
They wondered why they were not allowed to swim as far as they wanted.
One bear cub told the others what his parents had told him:
“We polar bears eat fish from the ocean.
But there are also creatures in the ocean that we cannot eat.”

“Those creatures eat us!”
“They look like fish, but they’re bigger than the biggest iceberg!”
“They’re as black as night. But they have two huge white eyes!”

“All you can see is darkness, white eyes, and hundreds of white teeth coming at you. Those creatures are called Killer Whales!”

The bear cub rarely participated in these conversations.

The others teased him.

“This is a story only for Polar Bears.

You’re not white. You are a black-and-white bear!”

“Black-and-white, black-and-white...” they mocked him.

The black-and-white bear cub told his parents that he was having fun playing with his friends.

But in fact, he spent most of his time alone.

They didn’t want him in their company

...and neither did he!

He was exploring the icy world alone.

He was figuring out how thick the ice was.

He studied how far he could get to human villages without the dogs barking.

One day, he went far away from his village, all the way to the edge of the sea. He came across a strange sight...

On the icy sea shore in front of him, he saw a huge fish.

As if a bear had pulled it out... but this fish was too big for any bear.

It was much bigger than the bear cub!

He looked closer, and realized: the fish was black.

Completely black, except for its big white eyes.

In its half-open mouth, he saw a hundred teeth...

A hundred small teeth. The mouth was small too.

Bigger than his, but not big enough to eat him.

He saw that the creature was not completely black. It had a white belly, and a small white spot behind its dorsal fin...

The killer whale then let out a scream that made the cub’s blood run cold. He quickly ran away!

After a few moments, the cub returned.

He realized that the scream was not a war cry but a sad one.

The black-and-white cub came closer to the Killer.

He saw that the huge white eyes were not eyes at all. They were just white spots on the black skin.

The small eye under the white spot looked at him as if asking him for something.