

The Snow Bear





The bear shivered in the wind and stamped his feet trying to get warm. Big wet flakes of snow fell around him and on him too, and he looked at the sky and wondered when the snow would stop and just how cold winter could get. The wind blew the cold air into his dark brown fur and made him shiver again. He wasn't a big bear, but he wasn't a cub anymore either. In fact, this was his first winter on his own without his mother.

"Mama said I was a snow bear, so I'll just have to get used to it," he said to himself, and he padded down a path, trying to warm up. When the wind gusted again, he stepped behind the biggest tree to shield his body from the chill.

"Hey!" came the sound of a voice at his feet. He looked to see a lump of snow at the base of the tree. It spoke again. "Please watch where you stand!"

Then he saw two long ears on the lump of snow, and a nose and two eyes. "Who are you?" the snow bear asked.

"I am a hare. You almost flattened me."

"I am so sorry."



The hare twitched his ears, shaking off some snow. “Well I guess it’s okay. I didn’t get flattened I suppose. And who would you be?”

“I am a snow bear.”

The hare thought on this for a second and he wrinkled his nose as he thought. “A snow bear? I don’t think I have ever heard of a snow bear. Bears are supposed to be asleep all winter. Are you sure you’re a snow bear?”

The snow bear folded his arms confidently. “My mama called me her little snow bear all the time. And she would know. My mama is a very smart bear.”

The hare shrugged his shoulders. “Okay then. So you are a snow bear. I guess that makes me a snow bunny.”

The snow bear didn’t like this. “But you can’t just suddenly be snow bunny. My name is special. Someone has to give you a special name.”

“No they don’t,” the hare said with a shake of the head. “I can give me the name if I want to. And besides, I have a good reason to be called a snow bunny. I stay awake all winter and live and play in the snow. And my fur has changed from brown to white, so I look just like the snow. That’s why you almost flattened me.”

“Your fur changes from brown to white?” the snow bear asked in surprise.

“Well sure it does. When the cold weather starts my fur has to change to white so that I can blend in and nobody can see me to catch me.”

It was true, even as the hare spoke, the snow bear had trouble seeing exactly where his fur stopped and the snow began. He looked down at his own dark fur and how it was so different from the colour of the snow. He felt like the only piece of pepperoni on a big pizza. “I’m not sure that my fur is going to change colour,” he whispered sadly.

“Are you sure you’re a snow bear?” The hare asked to make sure.

“Yes, that’s what mama called me.”

“She didn’t call you a Florida bear?”

The snow bear was puzzled at that. “A Florida bear? What’s Florida?”

The hare relaxed against the tree as he educated the snow bear about things. “Oh, you know, it’s a place where it doesn’t snow, so your fur doesn’t need to turn white. And it’s warm, so you don’t shiver like that. You look better suited to Florida if you ask me. And lots of others go there in the winter, like birds and humans.”

“Wow, can I go there?” the snow bear said hopefully.

“Actually, I don’t think so,” the hare replied, having given it some extra thought. “it’s a long way to go and the birds and humans have to fly there.”

The snow bear’s jaw dropped open in surprise. “The humans fly?”

“That’s what I’m told.”

“Wow,” the snow bear said slowly and quietly. “there is so much about life I still don’t know.”



“Better stick with me then,” the hare gave him a friendly pat on the leg.

Hare led him along the path and into a ravine.

“With all this snow on the ground, I can’t find any food to eat,” the snow bear said with a frown.

Hare hopped beside him. “There’s always food if you know where to find it.”

The snow bear put his arms out in frustration. “But I don’t know where to find it.”

“That’s a problem,” the hare agreed. “But didn’t you get enough to eat over the summer?”

“I thought so. But I’m a snow bear and I have to stay out all winter and I don’t think it will last me,” he said rubbing his belly where all that delicious food from the summer was stored.

The hare hopped a little ahead. “I think I know what you need,” he said. “Follow me.”



Up the side of the hill of the ravine hare went, between a few trees and around a boulder to where a hollow appeared. Hare went to the entrance and waited for the snow bear to catch up.

“What’s this?” the snow bear wanted to know.

“This is a little cave I sometimes hide in if someone is looking for me.”

The snow bear sniffed the air. “Is there food in there?”

“You don’t eat dirt and branches and leaves do you?”

“No way,” the snow bear said, looking very insulted.

“Then there’s no food in there.” The hare replied with no notice of his expression.

“So what is in there?”

“A warm, dry place to sleep.”

The snow bear looked alarmed. “Sleep? If I fall asleep I might sleep all winter. Mama said I was her little snow bear, so if I sleep all winter that just won’t do.”

Just then a clump of cold wet snow fell from a branch above and landed right on top of the snow bear’s nose. He sneezed.

The hare nodded at the cave. “It’s warm and dry,” he reminded him.

“Is anyone else in there?”

“Not anytime I’ve gone in,” the hare assured him.



The snow bear nodded. “Okay,” he said.

After moving some of the brush aside, the two crawled into the little cave. It was true, no one else was there. And it was just big enough for the snow bear to snuggle against the back wall while the hare sat next to the entrance.

“So do you think you could sleep here?” The hare asked.

The ground was quite warm in the cave, and the snow bear was oh so comfortable right away, but he cautioned his friend. “Just a nap hare, that’s all I want. Don’t let me sleep all winter. I am a snow bear after all. I need to find out what mama meant by that.”

“Okay. I promise to wake you up after a nap,” the hare said as he fussed with a stick or two, trying to find a comfortable place to sit while the snow bear had a sleep. As he scratched the ground and scootched over some leaves, he heard the snow bear’s breathing turn heavier. He looked to see the snow bear’s eyelids fall gently closed, and then he heard the rumble start. It was a little rumble, but it started to grow. It was a little shake of his breathing at first, then a gurgling from his throat, then a combination of bubbling, rasping, and growling. It started to build up louder, with some snorting mixed in, until the loud rumble was like a snowmobile getting warmed up. In no more than a few seconds, the snow bear was making great snoring sounds! The hare couldn’t help but laugh. “You sure do snore bear!” he said.

In an instant, the snow bear opened one eye. Then he lifted his head as he opened the other. “What did you say hare?” he asked in excitement.

The hare wasn’t sure what all the fuss was. “All I said was that you sure do snore bear. You were snoring.”

The snow bear laughed out loud. “Snore bear! Snore bear! Mama called me her little snore bear!”

“Not snow bear?”

“Well I thought so until you said snore bear. That’s it. I’m her little snore bear.”

The hare was giggling and holding his tummy. “It’s a good name. You sure do snore!”

“You know what this means don’t you?” The snow bear said more quietly. “It means I don’t have to go out in the snow anymore. It means I can go to sleep for the winter now.”

“Then I think you should. See you in the spring,” the hare said.

“How will I find you in the spring hare? Your fur will be brown again and I won’t recognize you.”

“Don’t worry snore bear. I will know where you are. I will hear you snoring all winter.”

That was true. The snore bear closed his eyes again and went to sleep.



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