

The Blue Polar Bear



Written by Samantha Tidy Illustrated by Ian Forss

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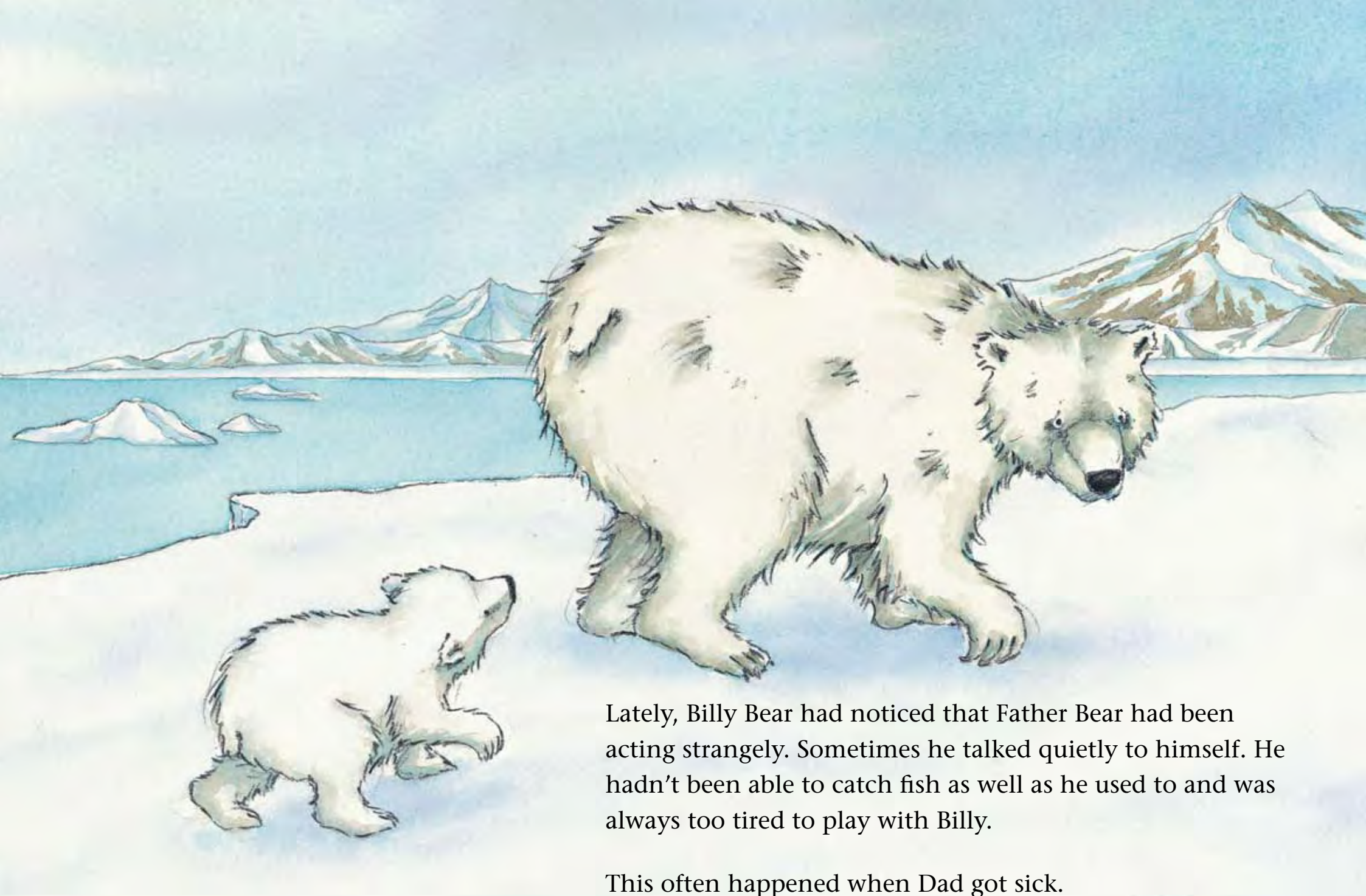
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Billy Bear was out in the sun, soaking up the lovely rays of sunshine that sometimes danced upon the icebergs.

His white fur was growing brilliant and strong lately, and he was very proud of his white fur coat.

Today, he was out fishing with Father Bear. Billy loved to go fishing with his dad.





Lately, Billy Bear had noticed that Father Bear had been acting strangely. Sometimes he talked quietly to himself. He hadn't been able to catch fish as well as he used to and was always too tired to play with Billy.

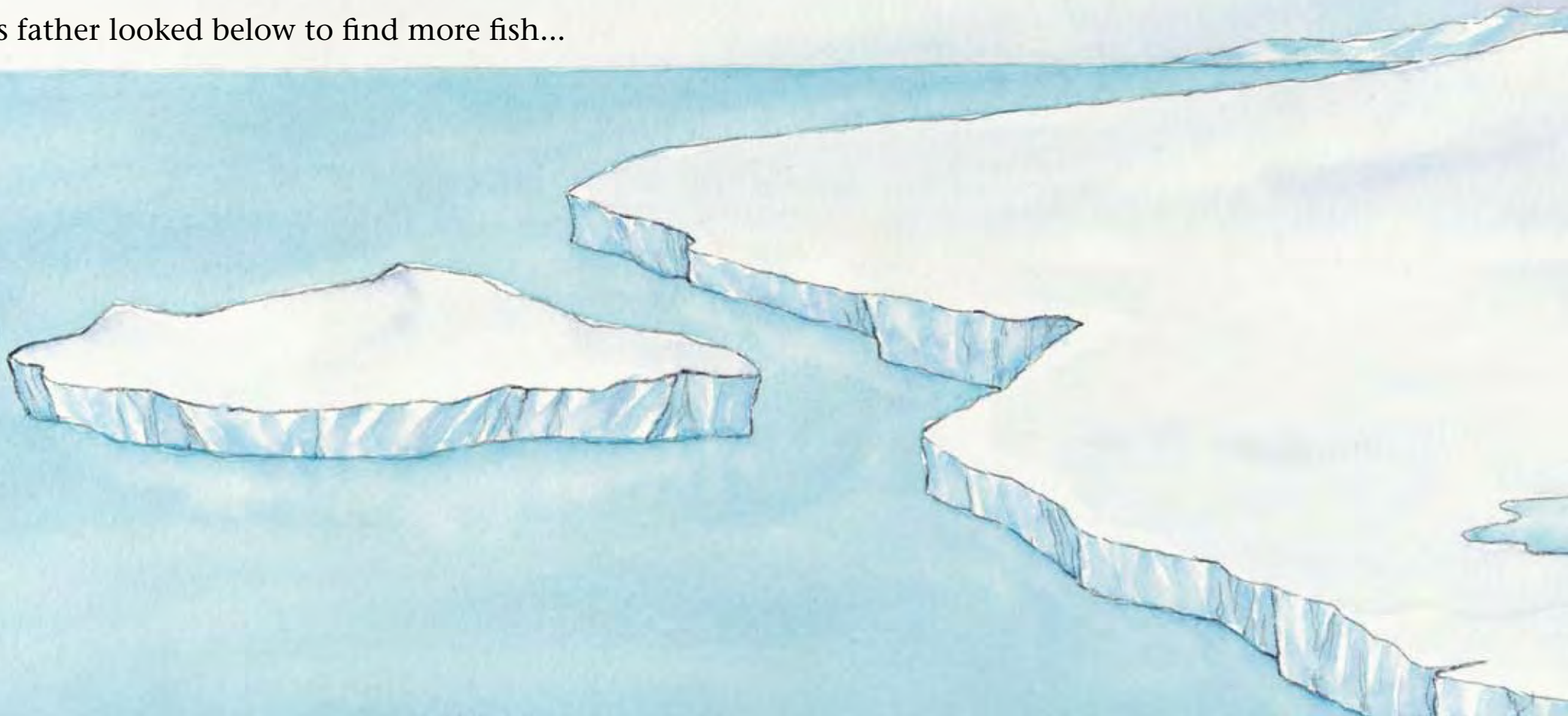
This often happened when Dad got sick.

Billy watched as Father Bear pounded the ice with his big strong paw, and opened up an icehole so that they could watch the fish swim below.

As the fish swam beneath the ice, Billy's dad reached in and splashed around. He finally managed to grab a fish for his son.

Billy wasn't big and strong enough yet to fish for himself. He still needed someone to find the fish for him. He bit into the Silvertail Fish and it tasted yummy.

His father looked below to find more fish...





Billy watched as, suddenly, his father's eyes grew big and hungry.

Billy knew what this meant – his dad had seen a Bluespike, a type of eel.

Even though it looked delicious and yummy, it really made you very sick.

Father Bear loved to eat Bluespike Eel, as it tasted so good to him, but not many other polar bears liked Bluespike.

Perhaps they had been sick before too. Billy wasn't sure.

“No, Dad, don't! Don't eat the Bluespike!” Billy yelled to his dad.

But it was too late. Father Bear's paw had grabbed the eel, and he had swiftly chewed it up.



Now Father Bear knew that eating the Bluespike Eel would make him feel very sad...

But Father Bear really, really liked the Bluespike. And it didn't matter what anyone said or how many times Billy begged his dad not to eat it, Father Bear just had to eat that eel.

Father Bear's coat had started to change colour.

Now Billy was worried. He had seen what happened to Father Bear when he ate the Bluespike before, and he wondered if it was going to happen again.

Father Bear looked at his son. "I'm sorry, Billy," he said. "I don't know what came over me. I just can't help myself with those Bluespikes."

Father Bear shook his head and his eyes filled with tears.



Something very strange was happening.

All over, Father Bear's white fur was turning blue, more blue than the sky and even more blue than the skin of the Bluespike.

The blue colour covered him all over. Father Bear lay down on the cold ice.

He felt very sad and could not move.

Billy took a step backwards and then another.

He was very scared indeed.





As Billy stepped back, he heard a loud crash behind him. It was his Aunty Bear. She scooped Billy up in her paws and lifted Billy on to her back.

Billy looked back at the ice.

“Dad?” he called.

“It’s okay, Billy. The other bears are coming to help your dad,” Aunty Bear said.

“You can come and stay with me while your dad is getting help”.





His Aunty Bear swam with him on her back to another iceberg.

Lifting him out of the water and walking with him high up on her back some more, she stopped and placed Billy down on the ice.

Around him were other polar bears that he knew from other visits.

They too were finding dinner, and Aunty Bear took Billy to the edge of the icehole and found another fish for Billy to eat.

He sat quietly and nibbled at the Silvertail, which tasted good, but he didn't feel happy enough to eat.

“What will happen to my dad? What about the blue on his fur?”



Aunty Bear, who knew a lot about the ways of polar bears, sat up and walked Billy to the edge of the ice. In the distance, they could see Father Bear.

Some other polar bears were with him, and they had scrubbing brushes and were washing Father Bear's fur. Together they were cleaning away the blue.

Billy Bear listened carefully, as he could hear their voices, and all the while that they were cleaning his fur, they were gently reminding him about how he shouldn't eat the Bluespike Eel.





“I knew Dad was getting sick again. I told him not to eat the Bluespike, you know,” Billy said to his Aunty Bear.

“I know, Billy. Sometimes he forgets, and even though he knows that it makes him sick, he can’t help it.”

“Can I go and help him? Can I scrub the blue out of his fur?”

“No, Billy, it’s not your job. The other bears are helping your dad.”

“Can I see him?” Billy asked.

“We can go and visit him when he is feeling a bit better,” Aunty Bear said.



That night, Billy stayed with Aunty Bear.

Billy ate yummy Silvertail Fish in the morning, it made his fur grow strong and white.

He liked the other bears, as they were very friendly to him, and even though he couldn't catch his own fish, they all fished for him.

The other young polar bears and Billy played chasey on the ice. He had so much fun that a couple of times, he found that he didn't worry so much about his dad on the iceberg.

Aunty Bear took Billy to visit his dad sometimes and Billy could see that Father Bear was getting better.





A few weeks later, when Billy was really missing his father, he sat around the icehole fishing with the other bears.

He thought he might like to visit his dad again, like Aunty Bear had said.

Suddenly, he could hear a loud roar. He turned around and there, a short distance away, was his father, his fur all white and clean.

He let out a big strong roar, louder and stronger than Billy had ever heard before.

“Dad!” Billy called. He leapt to his feet and bounded over to his dad, who ran over to meet him.

“Billy! Did you have fun staying with your Aunty Bear?”
Father Bear asked.

Billy thought for a moment. He certainly did have fun. Yes, he did like staying with his Aunty Bear, but he liked being with his Father Bear, too.

He looked up at his father, with his clean white fur and nodded.





“Yes, dad, I had fun!” Billy smiled. He said goodbye to his cousin bears, and goodbye to Aunty Bear, who told him that he could come and visit whenever he needed help.

He took his place walking strong behind his father.

Together they swam back to the iceberg to make a new icehole for today’s fishing.

