

THE POLAR BEAR'S DINNER

by Chris Rose

So, I'm a polar bear, right? Got that? A polar bear. Not one of those brown bears that live in forests and on mountains. One of those big white ones, you know, surely. Where do I live? On an iceberg of course, not that far from the North Pole. We never go too near the North Pole though, it's much too cold up there. We prefer to live in places like Greenland. You must have seen one of us on one of those tv documentaries. Or perhaps in a zoo somewhere. People think we're cute and friendly. Unfortunately, I have to say that's not entirely true. We don't often attack people, probably because there aren't many people up here to attack. I guess if you just leave us alone, we're perfectly happy.

So, I'm sitting on my iceberg, perfectly happy, it's my favourite iceberg this one, a great place for sitting around, hanging out, chatting to a few friends every now and then, catching fish and whatever else I can find. I'm sitting on my iceberg when I notice something strange. My favourite iceberg is getting smaller. Well, either my iceberg is getting smaller, or perhaps I'm getting bigger. Now then, if I'm getting bigger it means I'm getting fat. But I can't be getting fat, because I've also noticed that recently I haven't been eating very much at all. I sit on my favourite iceberg, hanging out, chatting to friends, you know, the usual, but I do notice that there are far fewer fish around now than there were a few years ago.

Let me tell you a few things about polar bears. We only live at the North Pole, not the South one. And no, I've never met a penguin. You know why? Because penguins only live in the South Pole, and not the north one. It's a long way from one pole to the other, so we rarely meet. There was a cousin of mine though, who ended up in a zoo, and they put him in the enclosure next to the penguins. He said the penguins were ok, but they were pretty noisy.

Let me tell you something else about polar bears: we get cold. Yes, that's a surprise, isn't it? I bet you thought we'd have layers of fur and fat to keep us warm from the arctic cold. Well, we do, but it's never quite enough. We still get cold. I do anyway, and so do most of the other polar bears I talk to (and, believe me, I talk to a lot of polar bears.)

So, where was I? Sorry, yes, I was telling you that I was sitting on my iceberg, noticing that the iceberg was getting smaller and the fish were getting fewer, when this walrus arrives. Now, I'm a pretty easy-going polar bear (as long as you don't try and put me in a zoo!), but there is one thing I hate. Walruses. Perhaps you've never met a walrus. If you haven't, don't. They're awful. Loud and smelly and stupid. Always bothering us. I mean, I know we eat them sometimes (we polar bears are happy to eat anything), but that's no reason for them to be so offensive. There's nothing that's going to ruin my day as much as a walrus, and here comes Mr. Walrus. I tried to catch him, but it was no good, he was too quick for me. He just splashed around in the water making that terrible noise they make and shouting at me.

"Hey stupid!" he shouted. "Yes you! Big stupid polar bear! What's the matter? Can't you catch me? Of course you can't! You know why? Because you're iceberg's disappearing! Ha! Ha! Ha!" Like I said, I hate walruses. "I know that, ugly" I shouted to him. "If you can tell me *why* it's happening then perhaps I won't have you for my dinner!"

"You're as stupid as all polar bears!" replied this extremely cheeky walrus. "Global warming! Never heard of it, have you? Bye now!" And then the walrus dived back under the water and splashed away. I did have to admit that I had never heard of global warming, so when a few of the other bears were around, I asked them if they'd heard anything about it.

"Oh yeah" they said. "It means the sea is getting warmer, so the ice is melting."

"What's causing it?" I asked.

"Humans, of course" they replied. Honestly, as if zoos weren't bad enough. Now they're trying to melt our ice as well.

"It's always humans" said one of my friends. "That's why there aren't as many fish now as well. The humans are eating them all."

This really was bad news. No iceberg; no fish. No dinner for me. Other than the occasional walrus if I manage to catch one.

“The problem is” continued my friend, “there’s very little we can do about it. I mean, how can we stop the humans?”

“Look” I said, “If there are no fish, then that’s bad news for the walruses too, isn’t it? They eat fish too.”

“I guess so” said my friend. “So that means...”

“Exactly...”

“No!”

“Yes...we’ll have to team up with the walruses if we want to do anything...”

“No way! Impossible! Absolutely out of the question!” shouted all the others. You see, I’m not the only polar bear who doesn’t like walruses.

So, the next day, I’m sitting there on my favourite iceberg again, and along comes the same cheeky walrus.

“Caught anything yet? Ha! Ha! Ha!”

“Listen ugly” I replied to him. “You’re right about global warming, but what you haven’t realised – probably because you’re stupid as well as ugly – is that the humans who are causing global warming are also eating all our fish.” The walrus didn’t say anything, so I carried on. “The only way we can stop them is if we work together...polar bears and walruses and everyone else who lives here...”

“Work with you!!! No way!!!!” shouted the walrus, and off he went.

So, I’m sitting here on my iceberg, and my iceberg’s getting smaller everyday, and I’m getting hungrier everyday. Some other polar bears, I hear, the ones who live closer to places where there are more humans are going to the humans’ rubbish bins and eating everything they can find there. That’s one solution, I guess, but I’d rather have some nice fresh fish – or big juicy piece of walrus – than humans’ rubbish. I’d really like there to be a happy end to this story I’m telling you, but at the moment there isn’t. What am I going to have for my dinner?

THE END

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