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Opening extract from

The Ice Bear

Written by

Jackie Morris

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Frances Lincoln Children's Books

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For Sophie, Jon, Rhoderic, Thomas and Katie.
For all of you, with love from me.

JANETTA OTTER-BARRY BOOKS

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The ICE BEAR

Jackie Morris

FRANCES LINCOLN
CHILDREN'S BOOKS

The boy looked around. The sun was low in the sky.
He walked towards the sun, towards where he thought home was,
still clutching the smooth beads of amber. He walked over ice ridges
and down into valleys. The cold clung to him, it gnawed at him
and fear began to suck at his bones.

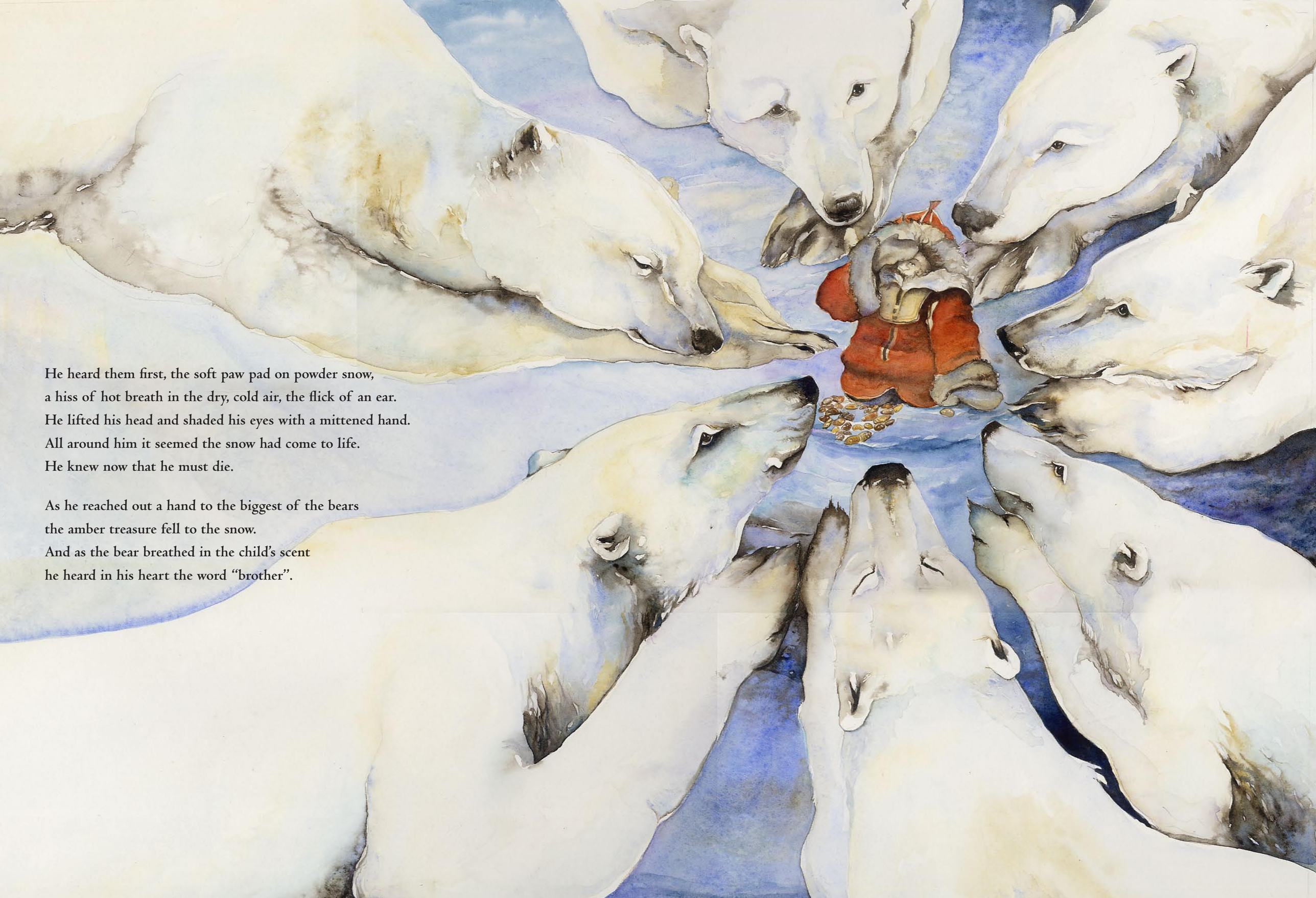
He walked, but nothing now seemed familiar to him.
The sun set, then rose and set again. It took moments.
Winter had come. Stars began to fill the sky.

He sank into thin powder snow, climbed out and walked on,
until his small strength was gone.

He fell to his knees, head bowed against the bright whiteness
of the snow, and a weary sleep began to overwhelm his heart.

It was then that they came for him.





He heard them first, the soft paw pad on powder snow,
a hiss of hot breath in the dry, cold air, the flick of an ear.
He lifted his head and shaded his eyes with a mittened hand.
All around him it seemed the snow had come to life.
He knew now that he must die.

As he reached out a hand to the biggest of the bears
the amber treasure fell to the snow.
And as the bear breathed in the child's scent
he heard in his heart the word "brother".

She held him close, the lost one. He buried his face in her golden white fur, breathed in deep the rich smell of his mother, and the memory of the ice cave, so long ago, flooded back into his mind.

All the while the hunter drew closer. Maddened by grief he followed the trail of the running bears, a river of paw prints on the frozen sea.
Ice tears burnt on his face, blurring his vision.
He came to the gathering and ran into the ring of bears,
raising his bone-tipped spear to strike a killing blow.

