



# KALI: A Polar Bear's Tale

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## Chapter One:

The first thing Julie did was make the meatballs. With gloved hands, she carefully rolled the raw beef into round blobs, between her palms. Next, she prepped the capelin, a small, silvery fish, taking handfuls from a container that had been carefully measured the day before. Frost and shiny scales stuck to her gloved fingers as she parceled out just the right amount. She added carrots and lettuce and a few handfuls of a dry, crumbly chow. Finally, there was cubed, buttery-smooth, white lard.

It was time to feed the polar bear. Julie made her way through the gates to the shallow pool area of the polar bear habitat. There, she found Kali. All 1,100 pounds of him. The great white bear was splashing in the saltwater, playing with a few of his favorite toys and pouncing at the visitors.

As a zookeeper, Julie did this several times a day. Her job was to take care of Kali, making sure he had everything he needed, including a healthy diet. She prepared meals for him, fed him, gave him toys and treats and new objects to interact with, trained him to open his mouth or show her his paws, among other behaviors, and even cleaned up after him. It was her job, but most days it felt more like her calling.

She watched Kali in his pool. She always marveled at his size and strength. Even though she saw him every day, she never truly got used to those dinner-plate-sized paws pressed up against the glass.

She began to unlock the enrichment chute; a long, narrow tube that leads directly to Kali's pool, allowing her to safely offer him food.

"Are you going to feed him?" a little voice said. A zookeeper with a bucket never gets far without attracting the attention of visitors.

"Yes," Julie answered. "I'm just about to give him some food through the chute. Do you want to see?"

"Sure!" the little girl said.

Soon, a crowd gathered. Everyone wanted to meet the woman who took care of Kali.

"Before I feed him," Julie said, "does anyone have any questions about Kali?"

"How did you get that bear?" a young boy asked.

"How did he even get in there? He's so big!" Julie laughed. "That's a long story."

The boy looked at her expectantly as a few more kids gathered around. Julie smiled and began to share Kali's tale.

## Ask Zoo Keeper Julie

### What do polar bears eat?

Polar bears are the largest carnivores on Earth, but they are considered omnivores in that they will also feed on vegetation, bird eggs or even human dump sites when available.

### What is a group of polar bears called?

A group of polar bears can be called a pack or a sleuth.

## Newspaper Connections

Record the facts in this and the following chapters. You will write a newspaper-style story at the end of this series, with the 5 Ws and 1 H; who, what, where, when, why and how.

