



# KALI: A Polar Bear's Tale

AUTHOR: CAROLYN MUELLER | ILLUSTRATOR: JEREMY PATTON & JAYNE BALLEW

## Chapter Four:

What name could they give the cub before he set out into the world to meet his future?

The school children in Point Lay had heard about the cub and were able to see him when he was brought to the village. A teacher even provided a large dog crate for the cub's transport. It was the school children who suggested the bear cub be named after their village: Kali.

"Kali," pronounced "Cully," means mound and is the Inupiaq name for their village.

It was decided. The polar bear cub had a name. The next day, Kali was flown to the town of Barrow from Point Lay. The 18-pound cub arrived in the teacher's dog crate with a little dish of water.

Kali had not had anything to eat since he'd been rescued from the den. With Kali's mother gone, the veterinarian would have to find something to replace her fatty polar bear milk, so he could continue to grow big and strong.

The veterinarian offered Kali a mix of seal blubber and muktuk, a traditional Inupiaq meal of whale skin and whale blubber. The bear sniffed the doctor's offerings, but would not eat it. She'd have to try something else.

The veterinarian began blending a concoction of distilled water, an electrolyte solution, dog-milk substitute, and half and half. She scooped Kali up and offered

him the mixture in a bottle. The little bear licked the offering a few times and then began to drink.

The doctor was overjoyed! The most important part of raising any baby is getting it to eat. This is particularly important for a polar bear. The Alaskan Arctic can reach temperatures well below zero degrees Fahrenheit on an average winter day, making the land inhospitable to most mammal species. But polar bears thrive here. They're made for it. Polar bears are equipped to handle the cold, arctic weather in several ways. One adaptation is the 4.5-inch layer of fat that surrounds their bodies. The blubber keeps them warm, and helps them float while swimming and provides fat reserves to live off when food is scarce.

Kali would start building his blubber layer drinking the milk mixture. Wild, adult bears maintain their fat levels by eating seals.

The veterinarian of the North Slope Borough found it hard to picture Kali as a large, fearsome predator. The ball of white fuzz drinking from a bottle didn't exactly look like a master of the Arctic world. Now that she had found a winning formula, Kali could grow strong enough for his next journey.

## Ask Zoo Keeper Julie

### How do polar bears find food?

Polar bears have a very acute sense of smell and can smell a seal from more than half a mile away and 3 feet under snow.

### Are all polar bears white?

Even though polar bears look white, a polar bear's fur is made of clear, hollow tubes filled with air. They have black skin under their coat, which helps them soak up the Sun's rays and keep warm.

## Newspaper Connections

Look through your local newspaper for stories about your school. Use the internet to read stories about schools in the Point Lay area. Do the students participate in the same kind of activities as yours?

