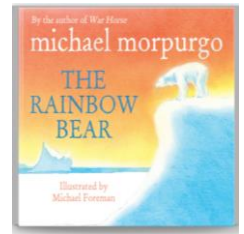


## The Rainbow Bear



I am snow bear. I am white bear. King in my wild, white wilderness.

There are plenty of hopping hares, frisking foxes and wallowing walruses to hunt. However, seals, who are very slippery in the sea, are the best. I stalk them silently. Silently. I am snow bear in a world of white and they cannot see me coming.

All at once I looked around me and saw a Rainbow! A beautiful, bright rainbow in my wild, white wilderness. I knew at once I had to catch rainbow. I leapt from ice floe to ice floe. I stalked him silently. Silently. I would hunt nothing but rainbow.

Hungry and exhausted, I knew I must eat, or I would die. How long I wandered I did not know. Then I saw a man. The man, who showed no fear, had wisdom in his eyes. I stalked him silently. Silently.

"If you let me go," he whispered, "I shall grant you your dearest wish. Rainbow cannot be hunted. You must wish on it and then all you wish will come true."

Early one morning, I woke and rainbow was there. I remembered the wise old man's words. So I sat and waited and hoped. Nearer he came, until I was soaked through in his colours. I closed my eyes and I wished.

"Let me stay like this. Let me be rainbow bear."

Cavorting and frolicking down the mountainside, I smelt seal. I stalked him silently. Silently. But seal had seen me coming and was quickly gone. I smelt fox. I stalked him silently. Silently. But had seen me coming and was gone.

By the time I found the wise old shaman again, I was weak with hunger. He told me that everyone was talking about the rainbow bear.

"But there is much danger in beauty, my friend!" he went on. And he was right.

A great ship came after me. I was too weak to fight the net they threw over me. They took me away. Oh, I had everything I had wished for. I was indeed a rainbow bear, but my kingdom was now a cage.

And so the long days passed. Until early one morning a voice, which was kind and friendly, roused me from my dream.

"I have been watching you, Mr Rainbow Bear," said the boy. "You hate being rainbow bear, don't you? You want to be like other snow bears."

Immediately, he was pointing at the sky.

"Look, Mr Rainbow Bear! Just like you! It's a rainbow!"

And the boy wished, and I wished with him. I wished myself white. I wished myself away, and back home.

I am waking up. Time to hunt. I am snow bear. I am white bear. I wander far and wide, king in my wild, white wilderness.

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