



*For Bello and Elsje,
animal lovers at heart*

– Ellen

*For Hania, because you always
know how to solve a problem*

– Malgosia

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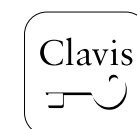
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NEW YORK



Sitting on the bed,
a little boy and
his teddy bear
talk to each other
in hushed tones.



The boy nods.



"I'll tell you
where I went . . ."





"One evening, not too long ago, I saw an envelope on the bed addressed to Little Teddy Bear. I was very surprised and thought you had written me a letter. But it was something completely unexpected. Inside the envelope was an invitation . . ."



"I read it, and while you were sound asleep, I quietly slipped out of bed."



What Little Teddy Bear didn't know was that he wasn't the only one who had received a secret invitation.



Other bears had received one too. They were making their way from all over the world to the secret meeting spot in the forest.



Some traveled for many days.





Owl flapped excitedly when he saw Grizzly Bear approaching, and not far behind him were Spectacled Bear and Koala Bear. *Just a few more bears and we can start,* thought Owl.

Deep in the snow-covered forest, a wood fire burned. Polar Bear and Black Bear gazed into the flames, nervously chatting. They had no idea why they were there.



On the other side of the world, another bear had been on the road for many days. He hurried to be on time for the meeting. He also wondered what this secret gathering was about.



Owl was thrilled when he saw the black-and-white bear slowly approaching. The wise old bird was very happy Panda Bear was joining them. Like Koala Bear, Panda Bear had undertaken an extremely long journey.




Now they all sat around the fire: Polar Bear,
Black Bear, Grizzly Bear, Kermode Bear,
Spectacled Bear, Koala Bear, and Panda Bear.
They warmed themselves and chatted amicably.

Who are we waiting for? they wondered,
looking at that one empty spot by the fire . . .

When the last bear arrived,
everyone looked very surprised.
This was indeed an unusual bear!
Little Teddy Bear walked to
the empty spot by the fire,
with his invitation
still under his arm,
hoping he was
in the right place . . .



*"I must tell you," Little Teddy Bear
confesses to the boy, "that I felt quite
scared and small when I saw so many
big bears around the fire. I'll try my
best to explain what happened next."*



"The wise owl could hardly contain his excitement to see us all together."

"He thanked each of us for coming from so far to participate in this secret meeting. He knew all bears were facing serious problems at home."

Owl explained that he had invited them to the secret meeting to talk about their experiences. He said that unfortunately Honey Bear couldn't make it but that he hoped with everyone present, they could find a way to bring the bears' difficulties to the attention of human beings.

Polar Bear jumped up. He couldn't wait to tell his story. "The temperature is rising," he said. "The ice is melting slowly, and now there's less sea ice in the Arctic. It makes it very difficult for me to hunt for food. Some months, we barely have enough to get through the day."

"He told us that he was lucky there was just enough ice this winter, so he could make it to the meeting on time," Little Teddy Bear explains to the boy.



Then the big brown bear stood up.
"I'm sorry to hear that, Polar Bear.
We grizzly bears used to live
in a huge forest."



"But many trees
in our forest have
been cut down.
New houses and
roads have taken
up a large part
of our land."



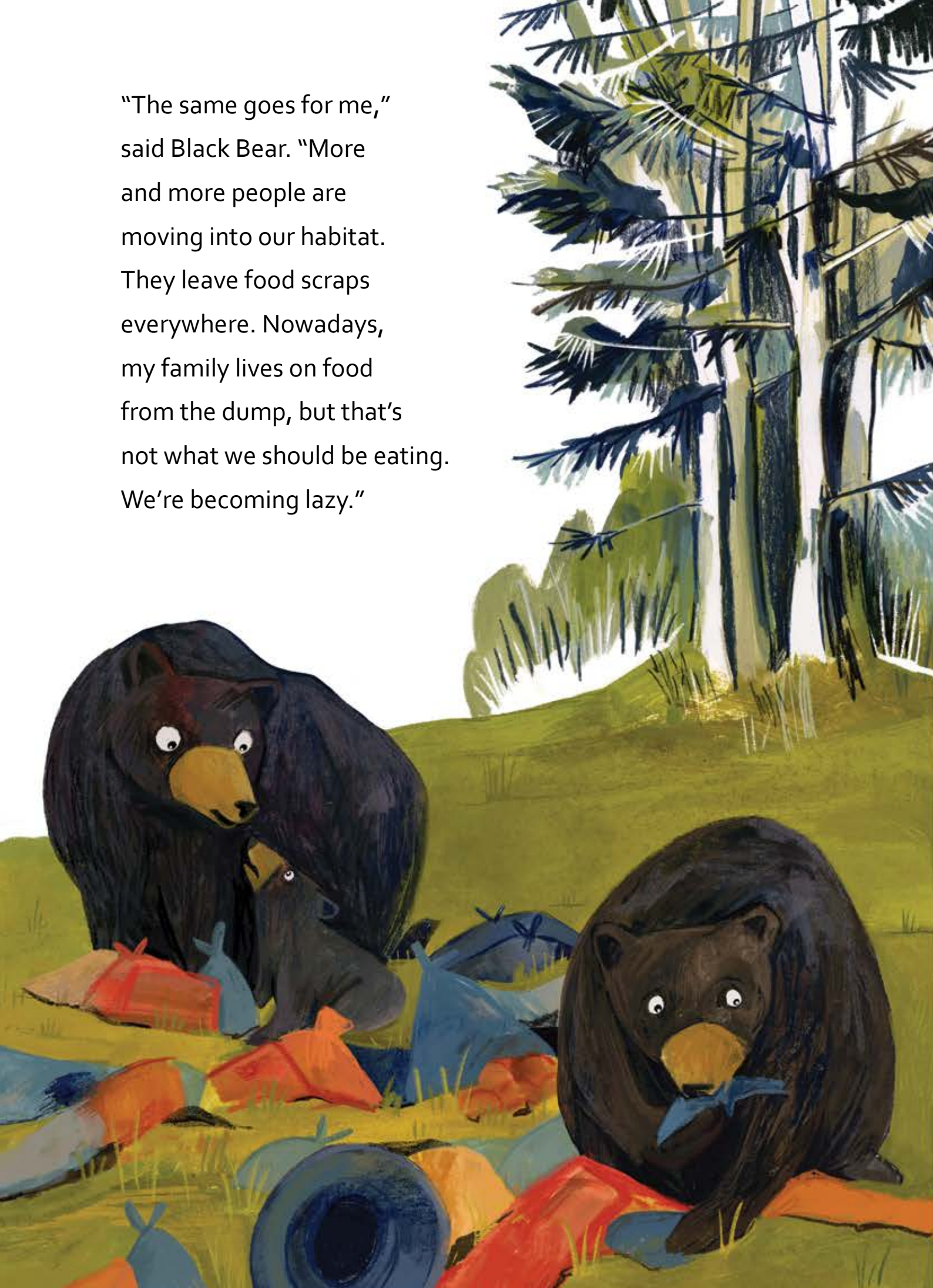
"Our life is very
difficult now,"
he said, sniffing.



Spectacled Bear nodded.
He was experiencing the
same problems at home.



"The same goes for me," said Black Bear. "More and more people are moving into our habitat. They leave food scraps everywhere. Nowadays, my family lives on food from the dump, but that's not what we should be eating. We're becoming lazy."



"Yes," said Kermode Bear. "We have to be very careful not to eat plastic bags by mistake. Some of my family members have gotten sick."

With big eyes, Little Teddy Bear looks at the boy. "I wondered how Owl would react to so much sad news," he says. "I wasn't surprised when I saw him shake his head in disbelief."



"We eat only eucalyptus leaves,"
said Koala. "We love them. But lately,
the summers have been so hot that
the forests catch fire and our trees
are dying, leaving us all hungry
and sad . . ."

"And you, Koala?" hooted the owl.
"You're not actually part of the
bear family, but people still call
you a bear. We're very curious
about your story as well."



"We face a similar problem," sighed Panda Bear. "There's not enough bamboo forest for us to live in anymore. We now depend on an area that's so much smaller. Like koalas, who mainly eat eucalyptus leaves, we have one major food source: bamboo."



"As I walked around the fire, I saw all the bears nodding and heard them sigh as they listened to each other's troubling stories," says Little Teddy Bear.





"And then Owl looked at me."

"And you, Teddy Bear," he hooted. "What's your story?"

"When he asked me to speak," Little Teddy Bear tells the little boy, "I felt very uncomfortable. My voice trembled a bit as I told them that I live with humans, who are very kind to me. I told them that we teddy bears sleep with them in a warm bed and get cuddled before we go to sleep."

"Hmm, well," said Owl, "it seems like you lead a nice life."

The other bears looked at each other and couldn't believe their ears. If Little Teddy Bear had such a good life, why was he invited to this meeting? they wondered.

"I was relieved when Owl made the bears stop complaining that I was invited," Little Teddy Bear tells the boy.

“Listen!” exclaimed Owl. “I have a good reason I invited Little Teddy Bear. As you all know, humans and bears don’t talk to each other. If we want to change something, a bear like Little Teddy Bear can share all of this important information with children. I’m sure that as they grow older, they’ll remember your stories and take care of you and all the other animals who are in danger.”

The bears nodded happily. They thought it was a fantastic idea. They thanked Little Teddy Bear and Owl. This gathering had sparked hope, and all the bears went back home much happier than when they had arrived.



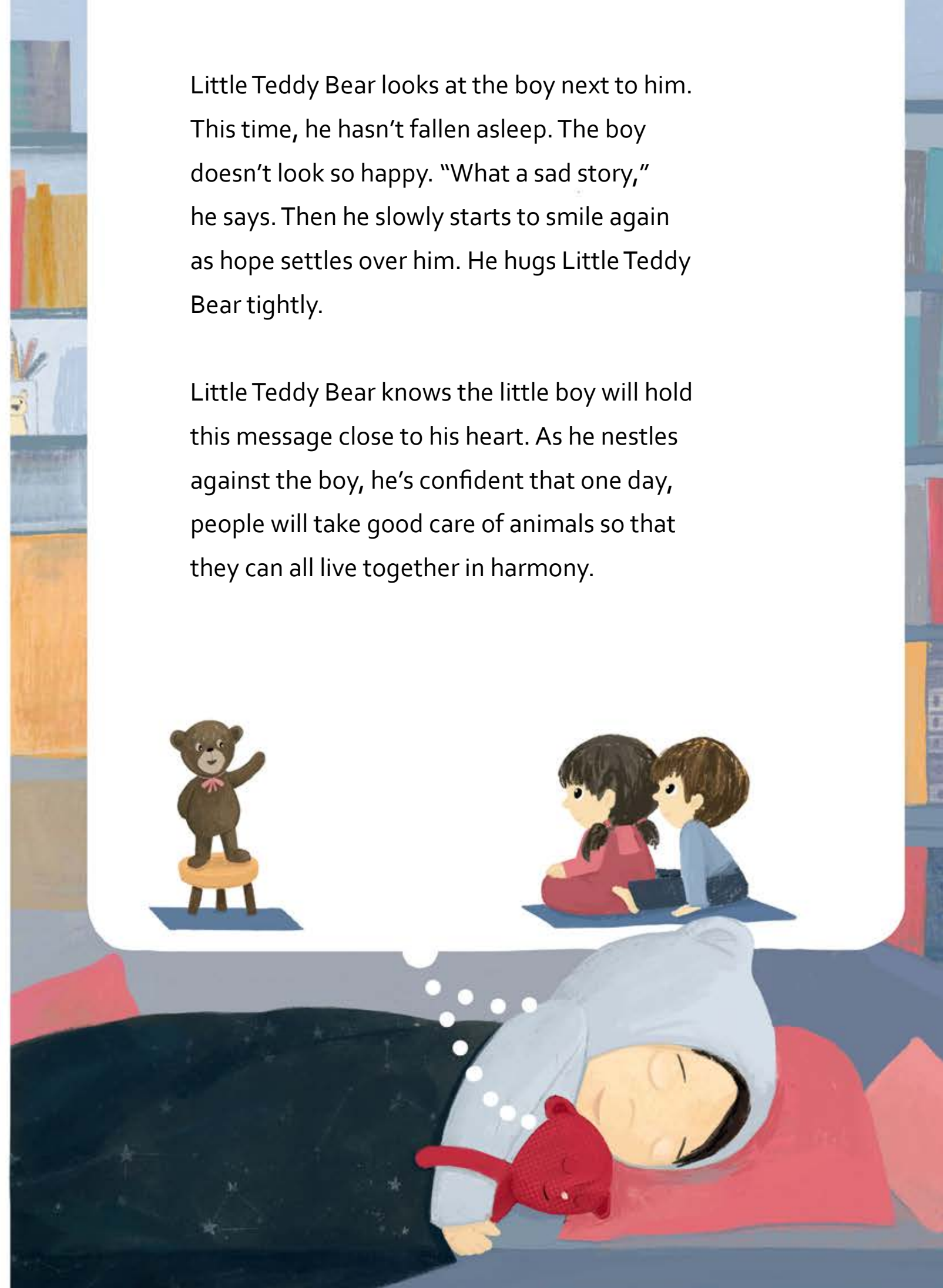


"I'm still a bit overwhelmed by what happened," Little Teddy Bear says to the boy. "But I feel incredibly honored to share this important message with all my fellow teddy bears."

As all teddy bears around the world tell this story to their human little friends, we hope they'll make changes to ensure a better future for everyone."

Little Teddy Bear looks at the boy next to him. This time, he hasn't fallen asleep. The boy doesn't look so happy. "What a sad story," he says. Then he slowly starts to smile again as hope settles over him. He hugs Little Teddy Bear tightly.

Little Teddy Bear knows the little boy will hold this message close to his heart. As he nestles against the boy, he's confident that one day, people will take good care of animals so that they can all live together in harmony.



Polar bears live in the polar regions. They love an environment with lots of snow and ice . . . and as few people as possible. It's humans who threaten their existence with their actions.

Vulnerable

POLAR BEAR

📏 COLOR - HEIGHT - WEIGHT



8-10 feet tall
300-1,300 pounds

⚠️ THREATS

- Climate change
- Pollution
- Shipping
- Tourism
- Disease

💡 INTERESTING FACTS

- Their wide paws make it easier to walk on snow and ice.
- Bears close their nostrils when swimming.

🛌 HIBERNATION

- Polar bears don't hibernate for long periods.
- Females take shelter in dens to protect their cubs.
- The heart rate and body temperature of a polar bear mustn't drop too much, or the bear will freeze.

📍 HABITAT

- Polar regions of North America, Canada, and Russia.
- Canada is home to 6 out of 10 polar bears.

🕒 HOW OLD DO THEY GET?

20-30 years

👥 HOW MANY ARE THERE?

22,000-31,000

🍴 WHAT'S ON THE MENU?



SUN BEAR

Vulnerable

Sun bears are shy and live deep in the tropical rain forests of Central Asia.

📏 COLOR - HEIGHT - WEIGHT



2.3 feet shoulder height
4-6 feet from head to tail
77-176 pounds

⚠️ THREATS

- Deforestation
- Expansion of agricultural land
- Logging
- Hunting
- Poaching

🛌 HIBERNATION

Sun bears have no need to hibernate because the rain forest can provide them with sufficient water and food throughout the year.

📍 HABITAT

Sun bears live in warm, humid, and dense forests in Central Asia: China, Vietnam, Myanmar, Borneo, Brunei, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Thailand, and Indonesia.

🕒 HOW OLD DO THEY GET?

up to 30 years

🍴 WHAT'S ON THE MENU?



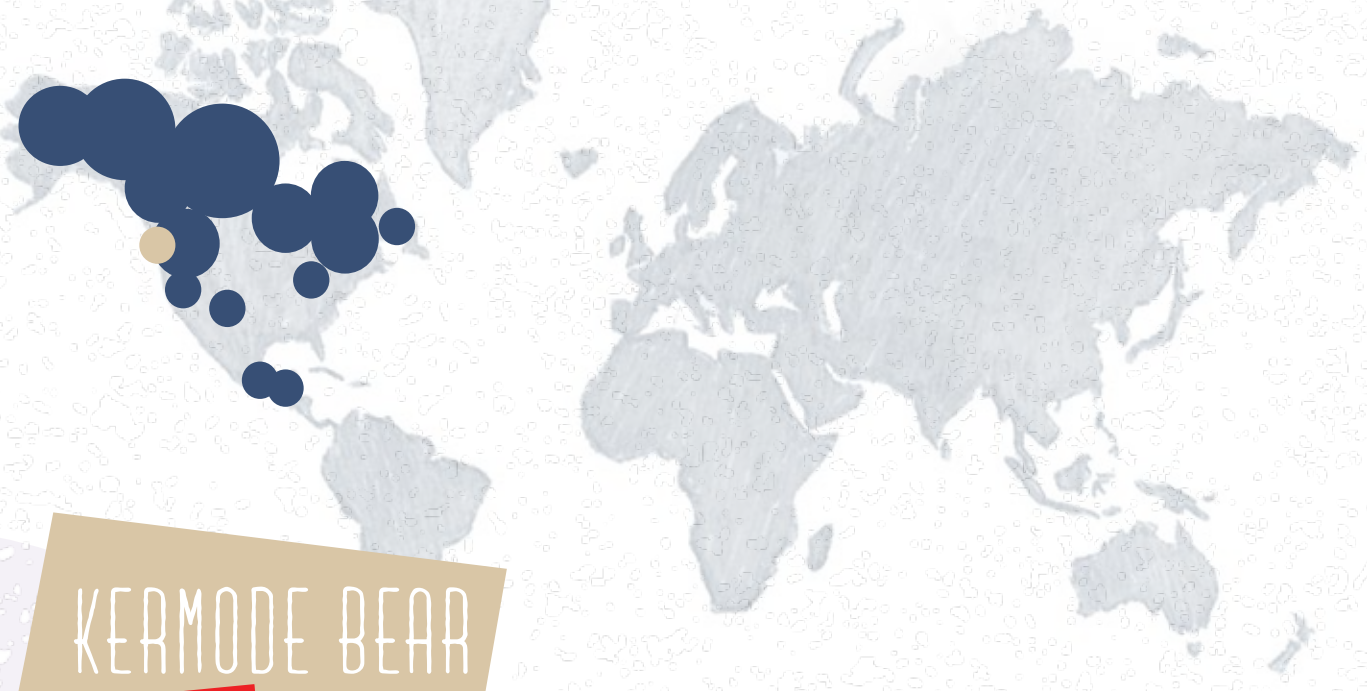
👥 HOW MANY ARE THERE?

In the wild, there are fewer than 1,000

💡 INTERESTING FACTS

- With their extremely long tongue, sun bears can easily extract honey from beehives and catch insects.
- Sun bears even eat live bees!





KERMODE BEAR

Endangered

The Kermode bear is a relative of the black bear. It has white fur and is also called a spirit bear.

COLOR - HEIGHT - WEIGHT **HIBERNATION**



up to 5.5 feet tall
up to 496 pounds

HIBERNATION

5-7 months

During the winter months, they sleep in holes in large, old trees.

INTERESTING FACT

They can run up to 35 miles per hour.

HOW OLD DO THEY GET?

up to **25 years**

HOW MANY ARE THERE?

In the wild, there are approximately **100-500**

WHAT'S ON THE MENU?



THREATS

- Decrease in salmon in rivers
- Stronger grizzly bears that take over their habitat
- Hunting
- Deforestation
- Fewer old trees for hibernation

HABITAT

Rain forests along the coast of West Canada.



The black bear is a common species. They mainly inhabit dense forests.

BLACK BEAR

COLOR - HEIGHT - WEIGHT **HIBERNATION**



3-5 feet shoulder height
180-400 pounds

HIBERNATION

3-8 months

In winter, there's little food available. Black bears hibernate and don't eat when they're asleep. The duration depends on the regional weather.

HOW OLD DO THEY GET?

10-30 years

HOW MANY ARE THERE?

600,000

in North America. There are no estimated numbers available for the rest of the world.

WHAT'S ON THE MENU?



THREATS

- Unhealthy food in landfills
- Destruction of habitat
- Deforestation
- Hunting
- International trade
- Mining
- Logging
- Expansion of human habitats

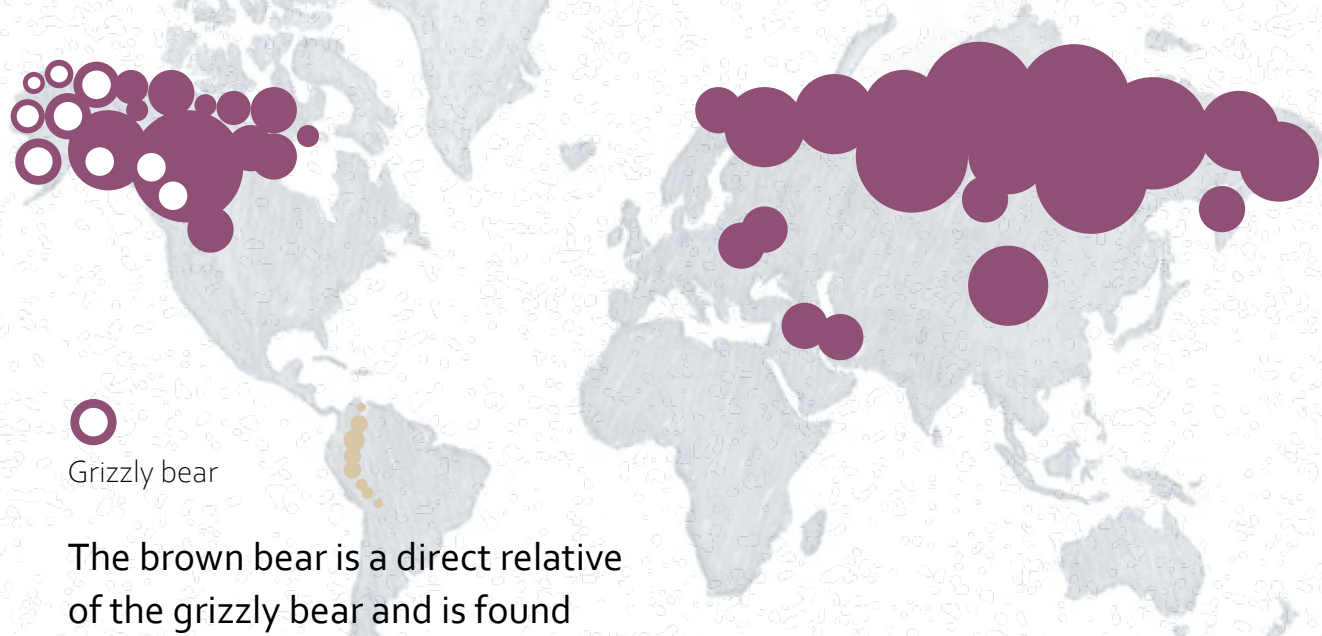
HABITAT

- North America, Canada, and central Mexico.
- The Asian black bear, also called the moon bear, lives in Asia.

INTERESTING FACTS

- Black bears are very good at climbing trees.
- They have a highly developed sense of smell and can detect food from miles away.
- They're the smallest bear species in North America.





○ Grizzly bear

The brown bear is a direct relative of the grizzly bear and is found in Alaska and West Canada.

BROWN BEAR

INTERESTING FACTS

Brown bears can run fast, are good climbers, and have an excellent sense of smell.

HOW MANY ARE THERE?

In the wild, about **110,000**

WHAT'S ON THE MENU?



HIBERNATION

During winter, they sleep an average of

4-7 months

HABITAT

Brown bears live in the northern Rocky Mountains of the U.S. and in Alaska, West Canada, and parts of Europe and Russia.

HOW OLD DO THEY GET?

up to **25 years**

COLOR - HEIGHT - WEIGHT



3.35 feet shoulder height
6.5 feet from head to tail
1,500 pounds

THREATS

- Loss of habitat
- Logging
- Mining
- Road construction
- Farmers who hunt and set traps to protect herds
- Poaching for the bears' perceived medicinal properties

SPECTACLED BEAR

Vulnerable

The spectacled bear gets its name from the distinctive rings around its eyes.

COLOR - HEIGHT - WEIGHT



5-6 feet tall
180-340 pounds

THREATS

- Deforestation
- Agriculture
- Mining
- Logging
- Hunting
- Poaching for the bears' perceived medicinal properties
- Expansion of urban areas

HIBERNATION

No hibernation is needed due to the tropical climate, which provides sufficient food and water in all seasons.

HABITAT

Spectacled bears live in the Andes Mountains on the north and west sides of South America.

HOW OLD DO THEY GET?

20-25 years

INTERESTING FACTS

- Spectacled bears are excellent climbers.
- They're the only bear species found south of the Equator.

HOW MANY ARE THERE?

In the wild, about **2,500-10,000**

WHAT'S ON THE MENU?



The panda bear, or giant panda, lives in dense bamboo forests in China. Pandas are known for their round and funny black-and-white bodies.

PANDA BEAR

Vulnerable

COLOR - HEIGHT - WEIGHT



2 to 4 feet tall
220-330 pounds

THREATS

- Ever-shrinking habitat
- Hunters
- Traps
- Logging
- Reduced habitat
- Isolation, which threatens reproduction

HABITAT

Pandas can be found only in China.

HIBERNATION

Pandas don't hibernate because they have to eat 26 to 84 pounds of bamboo per day.

HOW OLD DO THEY GET?

up to
30 years

INTERESTING FACTS

- They have six fingers on each paw.
- Pandas are very playful and love to climb.

WHAT'S ON THE MENU?



HOW MANY ARE THERE?

300 live in captivity. Approximately

1,850

pandas still live in the wild. In China, wildlife specialists are trying to increase the number with a special breeding program.



KOALA

Vulnerable

We call koalas "bears," but that's not entirely correct. They're related to marsupials, such as kangaroos.

COLOR - HEIGHT - WEIGHT



2-2.75 feet from head to tail
9-33 pounds

THREATS

- Decrease in number of eucalyptus trees
- Dogs
- Disease
- Climate change, which causes forest fires
- Decrease in habitat
- Breakup of groups

HABITAT

Koalas are found only in the wild in eastern Australia.

HIBERNATION

Koalas don't hibernate. They do sleep a lot:

20 hours a day

In winter, koalas sleep vertically between two branches.

WHAT'S ON THE MENU?



HOW OLD DO THEY GET?

up to
20 years

HOW MANY ARE THERE?

The number of koalas in Australia is estimated at between

40,000-100,000

INTERESTING FACT

"Koala" in the language of the indigenous peoples of Australia means "no drinking." They get all their water through the juicy eucalyptus leaves.



Create a small vegetable garden, and grow your own veggies.

Take a shower instead of a bath. If you shower for 5 minutes, you use 26 gallons of water. A full bath uses 66 gallons!

A toilet is not a garbage can. Don't flush just anything!

Turn off the lights when you leave a room.

Turn off electrical appliances when you're no longer using them.

Ways You Can Help

Compost food scraps, and recycle paper, cans, bottles, books, and even toys.

Reuse paper. You can draw or write on both sides.

If clothes don't fit anymore, give them to someone else, and don't throw them out!

Conserve water. Turn off the faucet while brushing your teeth. You waste an average of 5 gallons if you leave the water running.

Replace plastic bags with reusable cloth bags. It takes years for plastic to break down.

Never play with matches outside (and not inside either, of course).

Respect the animals and insects around you. Enjoy watching them, but leave them alone.

Take your lunch to school in washable containers and not in disposable plastic bags.

Clean up after you play outside, and throw any garbage in the trash.

If you no longer use a toy, give it to someone else.

Take your bike or use public transport whenever you can.

