

The Whirlpool

By Emily Larkin & Illustrated by Helene Magisson

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Life is full of brightness for one polar bear cub. But then shadows fall...and his world changes. The little cub must learn to hope again.

The Whirlpool is a beautiful story about feeling sad and happy, lonely and loved, small and big. This gentle, emotive tale will help children navigate their way through the ups and downs of life.



Teacher notes have been based on those supplied by the publisher. A full version is available on our website.

Themes:

- Perspective
- Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health

Discussion Questions & Activities:

For Young Readers:

- What makes you feel happy?
- What can you do to feel better if you're feeling sad?
- What does the polar bear cub enjoy doing? (Drawing, performing on stage, travelling, etc.)
- What colours are used in the picture book? Do you think they mean something?
- Do the colours change throughout the story? Why?
- What do you think the stars represent for the polar bear?
- Draw a picture of a polar bear. What kind of house does he live in? What does he enjoy doing? Write a sentence to go with your picture.

For Older Readers:

- How does the colour scheme change throughout The Whirlpool? What role does colour play in the story?
- Why is The Whirlpool told in second-person? What effect does this have?
- What does the polar bear draw on for comfort?
- What is used to foreshadow the polar bear's sadness?
- What do the stars represent?
- How is your sense of time affected by emotions? What does someone mean if they say they're having a "long day"?
- How can individuals manage their emotions? What can someone do to feel better if they are feeling sad, lonely, anxious, or depressed?
- What happens to the cat in the photographs throughout the course of the narrative? Give a possible reason for the cat's transformations.
- Find a song that includes instances of second person, and discuss why this point of view is used. Try writing a paragraph in second person about feeling happy, sad, confused, or lonely.
- Discuss the symbolism of an object or colour in the picture book. Write down an example of where else this symbol/colour is used in literature, movies, lyrics, etc.
- Discuss the meaning of 'personification' and why a polar bear may have been chosen as the protagonist of The Whirlpool.