

Traditional
Tales

How the Bear Lost His Tail

Susan Price Sara Ogilvie

OXFORD



Traditional Tales

About the story

Traditional tales have been told for many years. This story is known in many cultures, including Norse and North American. It belongs to the tradition that explains why some things in the world are as they are. Enjoy sharing and retelling this timeless story with your child again and again.

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Tips for reading together

Talk together

- Look at the cover of the book together and read the title. Ask: *Did you know that bears don't have long tails like the one on the cover? How do you think he might have lost his tail?*
- Talk about something your child might have lost that was precious to them. Ask: *How did you feel? Did you ever find it again?*
- Read pages 2 to 5 together. Ask your child if they can think of any words to describe foxes. Ask: *How do you think a fox could be to blame for the bear's stumpy tail?*

About the words in this story

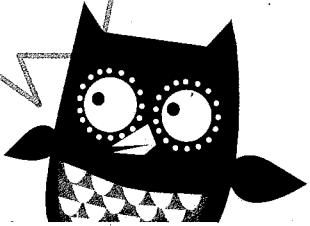
- Your child should be able to read most of the words in this book. Some of them may be more challenging or unusual, such as:

grumpy either caught
icicle laughing believe

- Encourage your child to sound out and blend these words. If necessary, read them to your child and explain their meaning.

During reading

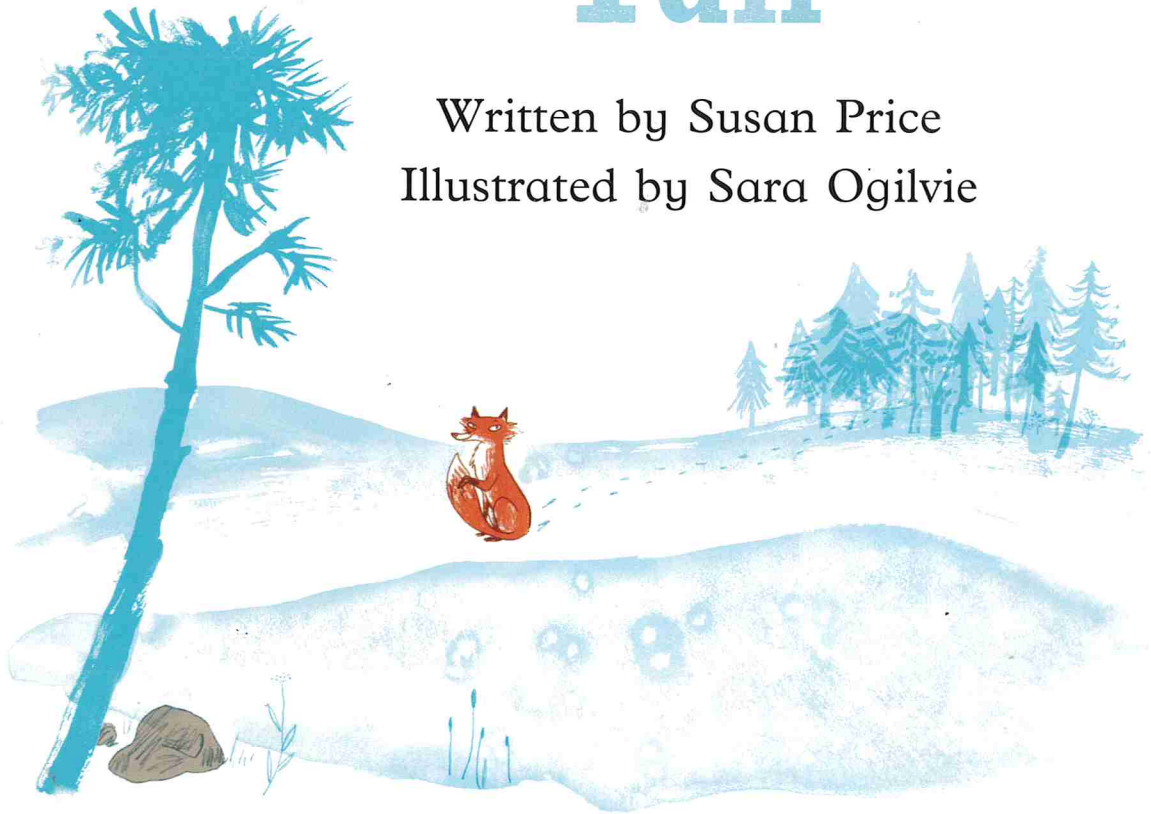
- Encourage your child to read the story to you. They may be able to read more than a few pages at a time, to build up their reading stamina.
- Talk about the story language. Look out for phrases which tell you this is a tale that has been told many times, e.g. *Once, long ago ...*
- Encourage your child to use lots of expression as they read. Draw attention to punctuation that adds expression to the story as it is read aloud, such as exclamation marks, commas, speech marks and question marks.
- Look out for descriptive language that tells us how things are said or done, e.g. *waved, asked.*
- Re-read sentences to focus on their meaning where necessary.



Use lots of praise to encourage your child to keep reading!

How the Bear Lost His Tail

Written by Susan Price
Illustrated by Sara Ogilvie



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We all know
how bears are,
don't we?



Bears are big, hairy and grumpy,
with short, stumpy tails.

Bears weren't always like that though.
Once, long ago, bears were different.



They were still big and hairy, but they were sweet and kind, and had long, fluffy tails. Bears were proud of their tails in those days.



How did the bear get a stumpy tail?
Why are they so grumpy now?
Fox is to blame.



Let me tell
you what
Fox did.

Fox was trotting about one cold day, looking for something to eat.

He saw a fisherman by a frozen lake, dangling a line through a hole in the ice.



The fisherman had caught a lot of fish. They were lying in the snow, tied together with string. Fox was hungry.

Fox was sly and quick. He sneaked up, grabbed the string of fish, and ran as fast as he could!



In the forest, he met Bear. Bear was hungry too. He waved his long, fluffy tail and said, "Oh, Fox! Where did you get all those fish from?"



Fox saw that Bear's tail was even longer and fluffier than his.

Fox did not like that one bit. He did not want to share his fish either.



So Fox said, "I caught them!"

"How?" asked Bear.

"All you have to do is break a hole in the ice on the lake," said Fox. "Then sit down and put your tail in the water."

“It will be cold!” said Bear.
“Yes, but you will catch
a lot of fish! Sit still, and the
fish will come and nibble
your tail,” said Fox.

“It might hurt, but don’t pull your tail
out, or you will lose the fish! Your tail is so
long, you will catch even more than I did!”



"Oh, thank you, Fox!" said Bear.
"Remember, don't pull your tail
out too soon!" Fox said...



...and he ran on,
with his stolen fish.

Bear went down to the frozen lake. He did
everything Fox had said. He broke a hole in the ice,
and put his long, fluffy tail in the icy water.



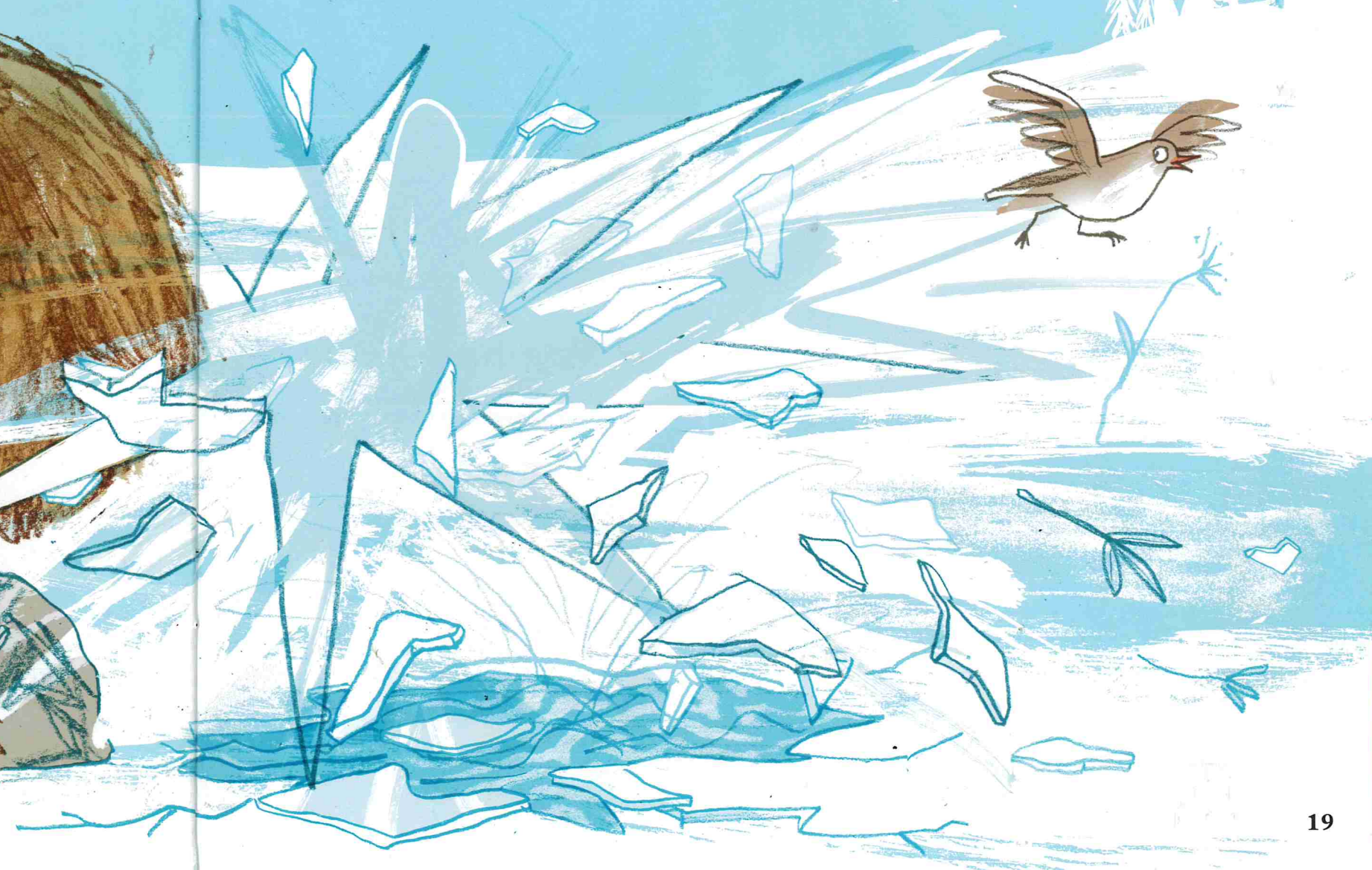
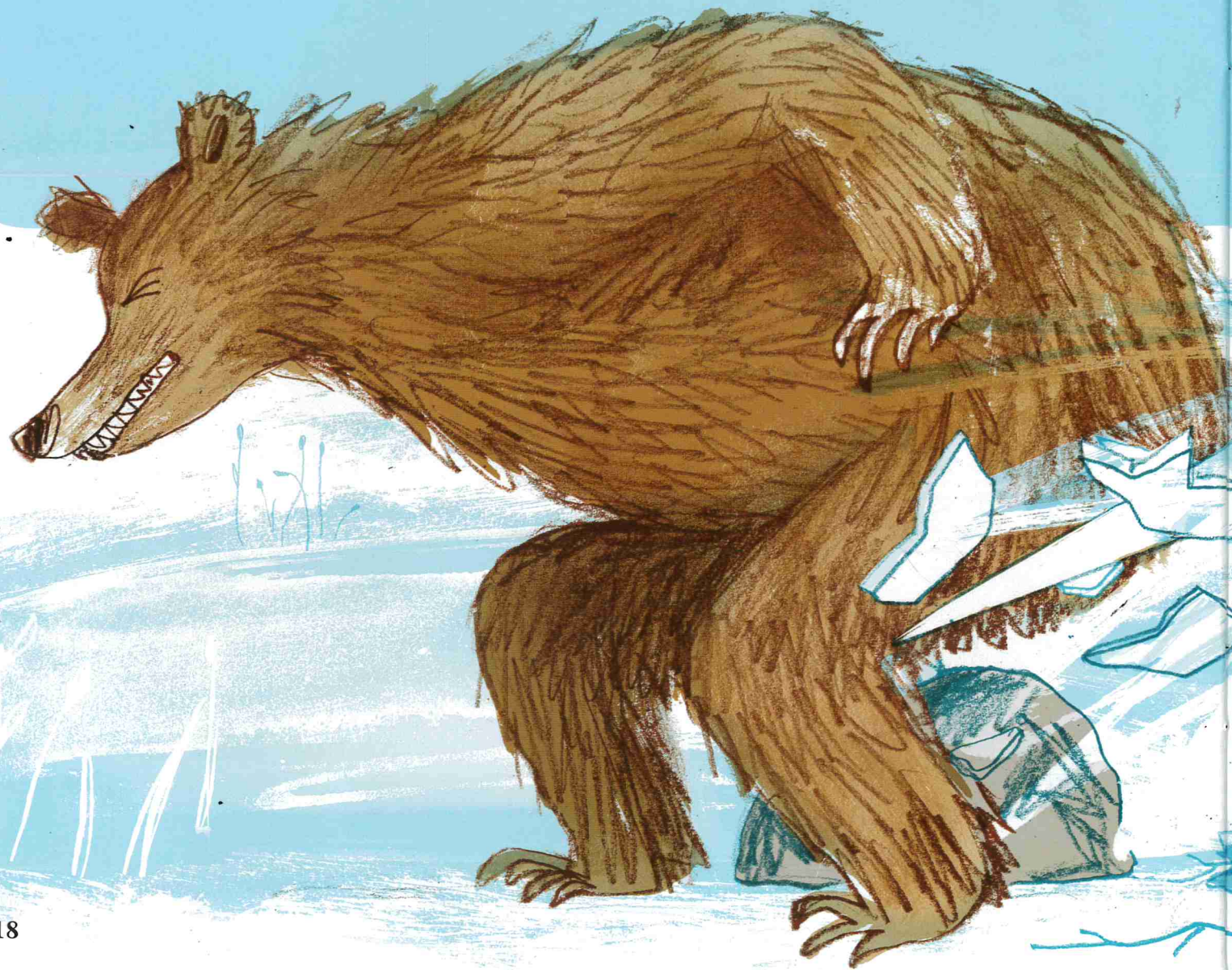
It tingled. The water was cold! The tingling got worse as the fish began to bite. But Bear kept his tail in the water, just as Fox had said to do.



The water in the lake was so cold, the hole behind Bear began to freeze over again. But Bear did not see.

Bear had to grit his teeth. The more it tingled,
the more fish he thought he was catching.

But soon it was too much for Bear.
“I don’t care if I lose my fish. This hurts too much!”
he thought.
He tried to pull his tail out of the water.



But his tail had frozen! It snapped off like an icicle, leaving nothing but a stump. He did not even have any fish.



Fox had made a fool of him.



From that day to this, all bears have had short, stumpy tails.

They are grumpy because they think everyone is laughing at them.



And Fox? Fox is still as quick and sly
and clever as ever.



Bear, on the other hand, has learned that
he shouldn't believe everything he is told.



Retell the story

Once upon a time...



Q Tips for retelling the story

Talk about the story

- Ask your child to tell you why Fox decided to trick Bear. Ask: *What kind of character is Fox?*
- Look together at pages 16 to 20. Ask your child to suggest words that describe how Bear was feeling in the pictures on these pages, such as *freezing, hopeful, determined* or *annoyed*.
- Read the first sentence on page 6. Ask your child which word tells us how Fox was moving. Help them to identify *trotting*. Ask: *Can you think of any other words that could tell us how he moved? E.g. ran, crept, padded.*
- Ask: *Do you think this is really how bears came to have short stumpy tails?*

Retell the story using the story map

- Now you have read the story and talked about it, use the story map on page 24 to retell the story together. Each picture shows an important part of the story.
- Encourage your child to retell the story in their own words. You could do this together or take it in turns to tell different parts of it.
- As they retell the story, encourage your child to include descriptions of how both Fox and Bear were feeling as well as relating the events of the story.

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