The background is a collage of torn blue and white paper. A black outline of a fish is drawn across the center. The text is overlaid on the collage.

# Where in the world is Cucumber the Orca?

Blackmans Bay Primary School / Anne Wien Elementary School

ICE E-MYSTERY

# Where in the world is Cucumber the Orca?

A story written and illustrated by pupils at Blackmans Bay  
Primary School, Tasmania, Australia and Anne Wien Elementary  
School, Alaska, USA



### **Blackmans Bay Primary School, Tasmania, Australia**

Blackmans Bay Primary School is situated on a hillside overlooking Blackmans Bay and the river Derwent, just south of Hobart. The school is made up of 14 classes ranging from kindergarten to grade 6. At present the school has an enrolment of 356 students.

#### **Blackmans Bay Primary School Grade 5/6**

Teacher Belinda Hall

Students:

Lily Anderson  
 Rebecca Ashworth  
 Jordan Cairns  
 Tyson Devries  
 Ross Driessen  
 Ryan Elford  
 Stuart Facy  
 Katie Fitzpatrick  
 Lachlan Haag  
 Alexander Jacobson

Kyle Johnson  
 Tara Johnson  
 Allison Jones  
 Rebekah Lambert  
 Dillan Marks  
 Erryn Newell  
 Anthony Penaud  
 Natalie Powel  
 Kaitlyn Smith  
 Tanzi Van hulst

Emma Weatherhead  
 Jessica Weston  
 Corey White  
 Jacob Williams  
 Tess Woehler  
 Tamzin Young



### **Anne Wien Elementary School, Alaska, USA**

Anne Wien Elementary is an “urban” school in Fairbanks, AK, located within half a mile of Noyes Slough and Creamer’s Field Wildlife Refuge. We have about 400 students this year ranging from ages 4-12. We have an ethnically diverse school, including a Native Alaskan population.

#### **Anne Wien Elementary School Class 6**

Teacher: Jeanine Griek

Students:

Kaycie Flint  
 Hannah Henry  
 Candace Hubble  
 Trent Johns  
 Eric John  
 Sergio Lara  
 Angelo Lillie  
 Emily McClelland  
 Jacob McConnell  
 Rafael Ocasio

Charli Oktollik  
 Karine Rhaesa  
 Blayke Rifley  
 Te’Andre Smith  
 Brooke Warner Murphy  
 Emmanuel Pachero



One day, as Cucumber was swimming, he saw a leopard seal following him. Cucumber continued to swim but at a slow and steady pace. When the leopard seal caught up to him, he introduced himself as Rex and he called Cucumber his lunch.

Cucumber was getting uncomfortable, so he decided to ignore Rex and swim along. Rex kept following him, calling him names. Cucumber got so mad that he decided to yell at Rex,

'Shut your mouth, you cruel seal!'

'Fine! Gosh! I'll leave you alone and go away,' Rex snorted and dived deeply.

## Chapter 1: The Orcas

The big sweeping landscape of white ice was suspended in the middle of the freezing sea. The wind swept wildly over the cool iceberg like a huge albatross swooping through the air. Pieces of ice made crashing noises as they calved into the Southern Ocean.

Emperor penguins were gliding through the water like bullets chasing fish and krill. Bang! Out of nowhere three Orcas, the kings of the ocean, surge through the waters towards their prey. The Emperor penguins flee. Suddenly a fluke smacked through the water and a whale jumped into the air, making a big splash.

These Orcas were a pod of whales that were busy everyday. Their names are Cucumber, Mussels and Aqua. Cucumber is the smallest and most inquisitive. Mussels is the strongest of them all and Aqua, the smartest.





Cucumber, curious as ever, continued to investigate around to see if there were any boats to research and collect data.

Later that day Rex came back with a lot of other leopard seals. 'Hey Cucumber do you remember me, sponge head?' Rex said in a scary voice. Cucumber replied, 'Yes, I do. You are that cruel seal that calls sea creatures names.'

'First of all, I'm not mean,' Rex said aggressively. 'And second of all, I brought some friends to eat lunch, if you know what I mean.' Cucumber was really scared because he had no one to help him, but luckily Mussels & Aqua came out of no where to back him up!

Mussels and Aqua shouted; 'Stay away from my brother you cruel seals!'

Rex replied, 'Fine I'll leave you alone forever, gosh!'

When Rex and the other seals finally left, Aqua said 'It's okay Cucumber those seals are never coming back.' Then Mussels, Aqua, and Cucumber swam away.

The next day, Cucumber was swimming back to his pod after a long day of research. When he was close, Mussels and Aqua swam over to him.

'So...how was your research?' they asked sarcastically.

'Um... good I guess,' Cucumber answered a little confused.

'Just like always. What a loser!' said Aqua

'Hey! I don't care what you say. When you make fun of me there is no use in talking to you!'

'Whatever! The only thing you care about is lame old science. You need to understand that you will never be accepted by anyone! So ha!' yelled Mussels.

'Lets leave this dork alone! C'mon Mussels,' said Aqua.

They left to feed on the krill stand across the tide... without Cucumber. He felt very upset. The next day he decided to leave, and wrote a letter.

Dear Pod,

I am sorry but I must leave because you guys said that I am a crazy science nerd. Rex called me a wimp and a loser and a stupid whale. You also said that any pod would never accept me. That is why I am leaving.

You said I will never be able to be a real scientist but that is exactly what I am going to do. Don't worry about me. I will be fine, though you probably do not care because you never listened to me anyway. You made fun of me so I'm leaving and never coming back. I will live on krill and cod for the rest of my years.

Don't even try to stop me,  
Cucumber  
P.S. I hope you are all happy!

## Chapter 2: The Krill

After reading the letter, they both felt devastated. 'How could we have done this to our baby brother?' cried Aqua uncontrollably.

'I regret everything I said to Cucumber.'

'Yeah me too, I totally hate myself right now,' said Mussels ashamed.

'Maybe we should start looking for clues to find where he has gone,' Aqua suggested.

'We really need to find him, even if it means going to the edge of the earth,' Mussels cried.

'There is no edge to a sphere,' Aqua replied gently.

Mussels and Aqua were swimming between two huge icebergs shaped like a blue canyon. The strong current pressed against their skin as they made their way past the blocks of ice in search of Cucumber. Suddenly a few Adelie penguins swam past like a jet leaving streams of bubbles as they swam towards the end of the icy hallway.

'Hey Aqua, I'm hungry. I need some food,' Mussels complained. A minute orange flash swam in front of Mussels. It slowed to a stop and faced the two orcas. 'Come get me guys, come and get the sweet juicy krill,' the little krill taunted.

'He's mine,' shouted Mussels as he leapt ferociously at him, the krill flashed away from the Orca's horrible teeth. 'Can't touch this,' sang the krill. Mussels turned his head and the speed from his chase made him swim right into a huge wall of ice. The krill dived off into the sea below singing their merry song.

'I'm gonna have a really big bruise in the morning,' Mussels sighed. 'I think we should get you some help,' Aqua chuckled. 'But I hope you haven't forgotten about why we are here. We are searching for Cucumber.'

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The Polar World boat dropped a sonar device into the water to record the orca's singing. Cucumber was swimming in the water and talking to himself, 'According to my calculations' ... 'I wonder...' His voice trailed off. He didn't notice that he was being recorded. He'd seen the shadow of the Polar World boat, but thought it was the belly of another whale. He kept talking to himself 'I don't like Aqua and Mussels and I don't think I am ever going to see them again. They teased me too much, and I'm furious with them.'

When the sonar recording of Cucumber was lifted up from the ocean, the people in the boat played it but all they could hear, through the whole recording, was the sound of a whale making loud noises.

As he swam away, Cucumber yelled louder and louder. He was so angry and upset that he could be heard from miles and miles away. The people on the boat heard this loud noise and turned the boat around, following the sound of his voice.

### Chapter 3: The Penguin

Mussels quickly recovered from the incident with the naughty Krill. He and Aqua were still looking for Cucumber when they heard the faintest calling in the distance of the blue ocean.

They looked around to see if it was Cucumber, but it wasn't. It was an Adelie penguin with a plastic six pack holder around his neck.

'Help!' gasped the penguin. Aqua and Mussels quickly swam over.

'Here, Mussels, you chew off the six pack holder but don't swallow the plastic, or him. I will wriggle him out to make it easier to get off,' Aqua explained to Mussels.

Aqua and Mussels started to pull and the blue six pack holder snapped off the penguin. 'Thank you so much for helping me,' the Adelie Penguin said thankfully.

'It's okay. Have you seen our brother Cucumber?

He went missing,' Mussels said, looking at the penguin hungrily.

'Yes I saw him head off in the direction of the ice caves,' the penguin answered nervously.

### ? Cucumber's question:

***I wonder how penguins can survive the cold, harsh conditions of the Antarctic?***

*Penguins have short stiff feathers that are protected by a waterproof coating. The packed together feathers overlap to seal out wind and water. The feathers cannot easily be ruffled by wind and water, as they are so short. Like an orca, they have blubber to insulate them from the cold and Adelie Penguins have feet that are adapted for walking on the ice. When breeding, penguins huddle together and some penguins, such as the Emperor Penguin, rest their eggs on their feet to stop the egg from touching the ice. Penguins also have short wings and heavy bones to help them swim and to help them dive low.*

They both raced off in search for their lost brother. They looked everywhere and even followed a red icebreaker that was cutting a path of water through the pancake ice. Eventually they reached the ice caves, a place where Cucumber liked to visit.

## Chapter 4: The Leopard Seal

The ice cave was dark, black, cold and very, very icy. The heart of the cave was filled with beautiful blues, turquoise walls and shimmering sapphire crystals. Inscribed on the icy walls were pictures of maps, vessels and many question marks. The two whales looked around at the many walls and saw a marking that looked like this: ?UCUMBER.

Aqua and Mussels were astonished at what they saw. They didn't know that Cucumber was so interested in the world. Mussels turned to see the old whalebones that he'd used as a weight machine over in the dark corner of the deep blue cave. Even Mussels knew what this meant. They realised that Cucumber was always asking questions because he wanted to be truly part of the family. Smart like Aqua and strong like Mussels. Now they were even more determined to find their little brother.

They dived deep into the cave searching for clues and to their astonishment they found a struggling seal. The leopard seal was tangled in a vibrant blue net and struggling to get free.

'Have you seen our brother?' both whales whistled in unison.

'I can't concentrate, gasp... this sea monster has tangled me and is slowly choking me. I need help!' The tired leopard seal moaned.



'Why on earth should we help you?' Mussels shouted angrily. 'You're part of the reason our baby brother has gone missing!' added Aqua madly.

'Just help me!' the leopard seal cried. Mussels and Aqua didn't want World War Three to break out, so they agreed to help the seal.

'We will bite through the net, only if you help us find our brother,' Mussels growled.

'I'll tell you where he went but be quick, I'm running out of breath,' the seal choked.

Mussels with his strong teeth snapped the net open easily, freeing



the entangled seal. The seal swam up to the surface and belly flopped onto the nearest ice floe, relieved his ordeal was over.

## Chapter 5: Captured

After leaving his letter, Cucumber set off determinedly. As he traveled along the Ross Ice Shelf, he wondered what it might be like in the Arctic. He looked at his map, becoming less confident when he remembered the other orcas' teasing and the bullying from Rex. He was thinking of all the mean things the other orcas said to him and he knew that he was never going to go back to that part of the ocean.

He thought about all the research that he did on vessels and that he could go and continue his investigations. He could just imagine what it feels like to touch one and see if he could guess what the vessel was used for or what it was made of. He wandered along the ice shelf to see if there were any new vessels around, perhaps a tourist boat or a new researching vessel.

He was swimming for hours when he came upon an old crab. The crab scuffled his way over to Cucumber.

'Hello Sunny boy. I'm the old crab around these parts.'

'I can see that,' Cucumber said. 'Do you by chance know where there are any vessels?'

'Well let's see here.' The old crab took out a map from under a rock and took a look at it. 'Well there was Mr. Fantastic's boat fixer upper.'

'Thank you sir. Do you think I could have that map so I can get there?'

'Oh yes of course,' said the crab and he gave Cucumber the map titled, Polar World.

'Bye Mr. Crab and thanks!'

'You are certainly welcome. Goodbye!'

Cucumber looked at the graphs of ships that had been in the area and then glanced at his maps and surged ahead. In the distance he saw a dark shape. A vessel, he thought. He looked again at the graphs. There was not a vessel like this on them. This one said Polar World on the bottom and was this biggest ship he had ever seen. The ship pulled up next to Cucumber, put down a net, and bam! He was captured.

When Cucumber woke up he was in a giant pool somewhere in the ship. Standing over him, he saw humans with the words Polar World written on their blue uniforms. Cucumber cried out, but to no avail. The humans threw salmon at him, which Cucumber ate miserably. They tasted so different from his usual meals. The humans were making noises, and marking something on a map. Cucumber cried sadly. His maps and graphs were gone! They were probably floating somewhere in the Southern Ocean.

## Chapter 6: The Albatross

High above the Antarctic waters, a wandering albatross glided over the icy landscape. Below, a small red fishing boat was



bobbing around the icebergs. The Albatross hovered lower, looking for Antarctic Cod to eat.

'SPLASH!' Aqua smashed through the icy waters with Mussels close behind her. 'Cucumber where are you?' Mussels cried out.

At that same moment the albatross dived into the ocean and then thought to himself, 'My, my, my fish.'

A few minutes later Aqua and Mussels surged towards the fishing boat. Bubbles exploded through the surface of the water. Aqua dived down just in time to see the Albatross being dragged down on a long fishing line. 'Oh no Mussels, get down here quick. An albatross is drowning!' Aqua exclaimed loudly.

Mussels snapped through the nylon line, while Aqua pushed the albatross to the surface. Once the albatross reached an iceberg, he took the hook out of his beak and stretched out his wings. His feathers flew everywhere; he looked beautiful with the Southern Aurora flashing behind him.

The two whales surfaced next to the bedraggled bird. 'Wow! If Mussels and I weren't here at that time you could have died a slow and miserable 'death,' Aqua said in her smart way. 'You're very lucky because many seabirds die because of longline fishing,' she added intelligently.

'My, my how can I repay you?' the relieved albatross asked.

'You can help us find our baby brother!' Aqua hoped. The albatross looked thoughtful and then said, 'Oh, by the way I saw a, um, a piece of paper down there. It had strange markings on it. Maybe this could be a clue,' the Albatross smiled.

'Cool, it must be one of Cucumbers maps; you know he was always drawing coastlines. It might be one of his maps!' squeaked Mussels.

'Ok, can you observe from an aerial view?' Aqua asked the albatross hopefully.

'Sure thing, so look for a calf that looks like you and with a question mark splodge. Got it!'

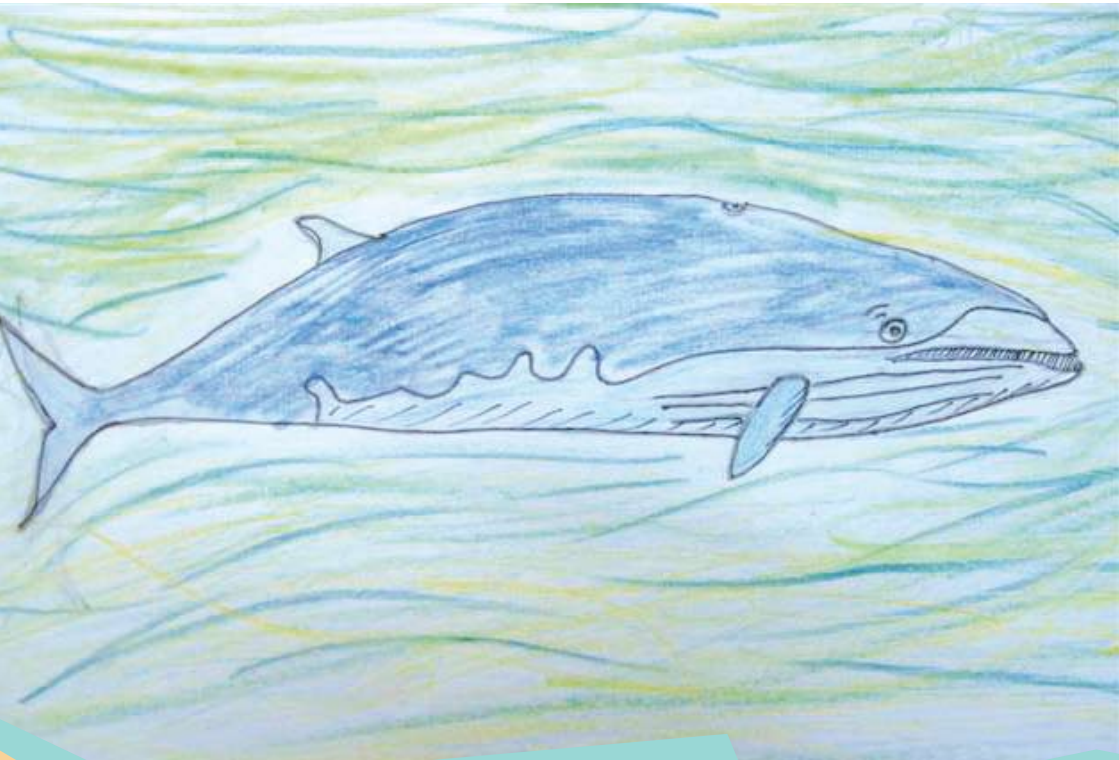
'And observe the ships and boats please,' Mussels added.

The two whales dived again to retrieve the missing map pieces and clutching the pieces in their fins the three friends set off on their new adventure, trying to find CUCUMBER!!! Surging and swooping they all set off to find their next clue.

## Chapter 7: The Blue Whale

The albatross soared above the two whales scouting around for anything that resembled a large orca whale. Far below he saw a looming shape. Was this what his two friends were searching for? He flew down to inform the two whales. Before they could see anything Mussels and Aqua heard a big choking sound. The water swirled and tossed the two whales around, something huge was moving the water.

Mussels and Aqua got closer and closer to the large, shadowy shape. It was the largest whale they had ever seen, a Blue Whale, the giant of the ocean. It was the colour of the big blue ocean



and the grey of a stormy night sky. It was tossing and turning, struggling like a fish on a giant hook. Something was wrong and Aqua could see a plastic bag stuck in his throat. The big bag looked like a white, shiny jellyfish. It was lodged tightly in the whale's throat.

Choking, the Blue Whale slowly asked, 'Could you please remove this smooth, shiny thing out of my throat. I thought it was a jellyfish, but it tastes like seaweed?'

'I think it's a garbage bag, maybe it was blown off a boat,' Aqua replied.

They both tugged till the plastic bag was freed and the whale gave a deep sigh. Aqua stared at the plastic bag, and saw the initials PW. She thought of the map they retrieved from the ice-cave. The symbol on the plastic bag was the same as the writing on the map. In small writing the whales could only just read the words, Polar World, 'the marine circus.'

'Is this from a vessel that was Cucumber's last discovery?' says Mussels hopefully. Aqua was shocked, 'Perhaps this is the key to Cucumber's weird disappearance?'

'He's been kidnapped,' sobbed Mussels.

'Don't you mean orcanapped' cried Aqua.

'How did this happen to you? We think this might be a clue to help us find our missing brother,' exclaimed both Mussels and Aqua.

The Blue Whale replied, 'Two days ago, in this area, I heard noise that disturbed my hearing. It came from a large vessel. I

## ? Cucumber's question:

### I wonder how blue whales eat without teeth?

*Baleen whales do not have teeth, like orca whales, but have baleen plates instead. The blue whale is a baleen whale and they drain water and tiny animals like plankton, krill and small crustaceans through their baleen. Baleen is used for filtering food from the water so these whales do not need teeth. The whale then wipes the food off with their great big tongues. The plates can grow up to 3.6 metres and is made of keratin.*

think it may have been a sonar device. The boat looked new and different. If you travel north you should meet up with them in a day or so,' said the whale.

A few seconds later, Mussels and Aqua said bye to the huge whale and left. The whale dived into the deep, blue sea, it was camouflaged and all that was visible was a dark shadowy shape descending into the ocean depth.

## Chapter 8: Long Journey

Mussels and Aqua took the maps and graphs and started to swim northeast, in search of their brother. Time went by until they found themselves in the ocean off New Zealand. They saw a whale. Mussels and Aqua were excited to see someone who they could ask about Cucumber.

'Have you seen a boat that says PW on it?' They asked eagerly.

'What's in it for me?' the whale responded slyly.

'We'll let you come with us on our adventure.'

'No thanks,' he declined. 'How about some fish?'

'How much fish are we talking about?' they asked.

'20 fish.'

'Deal, we're in,' they chimed.

'So we're looking for our brother, Cucumber. We think he may have been orcanapped by a vessel called Polar World.'

'Uh oh, no way! He's doomed.'



'What?' they asked.

'I'll tell you what I know. They capture animals from the poles and they make them do tricks to earn lots of money. When they get too old they turn them into fish sticks. Now that I think about it I think I did see their boat headed towards Gapuwiyak.'

The two orcas swam until they reached the ocean off the northern part of mainland Australia. Some whales, swimming past them stopped to hear their story. They had seen a boat pass by, heading north. Mussels and Aqua thanked them and excitedly swam on.

They came across more orcas, and asked if they had seen the boat pass by. They gave them directions and after checking their map, swam off towards the equator and beyond.

They swam for a long time until they reached Commander Island, off Russia. They found another pod of orcas. Although they looked slightly different to them, Mussels and Aqua thought they looked cool! They spent time with them and learnt a great deal, but knew they must return to their search. The orcas pointed them in the direction of Alaska. They swam for days till they reached the cold Alaskan waters. Each time they asked if anyone had seen the boat, the answer was always the same, 'yes'. They knew they must continue the search for Cucumber, but where in the world was he?

## Chapter 9: The Crabs

Mussels and Aqua were swimming in the sea and saw a big metal cage going up to a boat. They went towards it and saw some crabs in the cage, so they swam over to talk to them.

The crabs frantically cried, 'We're trapped and we're going to be eaten!' Aqua bit the chain and it fell fast to the bottom of the sea. The crabs were blue and purple, and at first, the sight of them scared Aqua and Mussels. Although usually grumpy, they were being nice because the orcas had let them out. Aqua's tooth fell out when she bit the chain, so she wasn't going to make that mistake again.

'We must head further north,' Mussels said. 'The crabs saw lots of boats up there that were crabbing and fishing for salmon, whatever was big enough to catch.' The adventure had been fun.

They had traveled a long way following the Polar World ship, but still hadn't found Cucumber. He had been gone for a long time and they missed him. Their adventure was not over.

## Chapter 10: The Arctic Tern

Mussels and Aqua still swam the waters in hope of finding Cucumber. In the icy blue and cold of the Arctic there was an Arctic tern named Herald who migrated back and forth from the north to the south. Before Cucumber had disappeared, Herald and Cucumber had been very good friends. They had met just after a big storm. Usually these two animals couldn't communicate, but they became friends instantly.

Herald didn't know that Cucumber had been separated from his pod. It had been fifteen months since the Polar World had taken Cucumber away from his home in the Southern Ocean.

One day as Herald went about his normal daily routines of finding foods like fish, berries, and other tasty things; he heard a noise and spotted something. He flew closer. It was a boat. He decided to fly around and investigate what was going on.

Fashhooo, whoosh. He flew in circles around the boat. While he was still circling, he heard a sound, a voice that he would know anywhere. Herald went flying down to the boat and saw his friend Cucumber lying in a tank. Anxiously, he flew quietly closer to see what was going on. When he landed on the deck of the boat he noticed a wound on Cucumber's back. Herald didn't know what to do at all, but he knew he must help his friend. He flew all the way back to shore as fast as he could. Cucumber wondered

where Herald was going, so he waited and waited, looking up to the sky. Finally he saw a whole flock of birds coming his way, rushing to get him out of that terrible tank.

They had to look out for the Polar World employees at all times. Herald's dad, Jake, was the lookout for any of the Polar World employees. When one would come by, Jake would have to stomp on the deck 5 times to get everyone's attention. When a group of employees came Cucumber's way, a flock of birds rushed and attacked them. The sailors ran inside and closed the doors. But the birds were helpless outside. Unfortunately they were just too small and weak to save Cucumber.

## Chapter 11: Pollution and Whaling

Mussels and Aqua continued on their journey find Cucumber, but the boat seemed to always be too fast for them. It had been leaking oil and they had followed a thin slick. They followed this into the northern part of the Bering Sea. They knew it must be just ahead of them, as they saw a trail of oil, and they hoped it would mean the boat would soon stop running. They could smell something like burning plastic and the water had the taste of rotten krill. They were determined to get Cucumber back, but this ocean was so polluted. Oil got in Mussel's eyes. 'OUCH! It stings really bad!' Mussels said.

After an hour or two, they saw a boat from a distance. Then when they got closer to it, they saw POLAR WORLD written on the side of it. They knew it was the boat Cucumber was in. They yelled 'CUCUMBER!' so loudly; you could hear it from miles away. Cucumber heard them. They didn't want to risk going over

there and getting caught, but they went anyway. They tried to be as quiet as they could, but the Polar World people heard them.

The vessel started chasing Aqua and Mussels, but the orcas dived deeply and were too fast for the boat to chase. When they surfaced, they noticed something interesting going on in the distance.

Aqua and Mussels saw 3 small strange boats from a distance. When they got closer, they saw seven or eight people in each one and they had four handheld harpoons and five buoys. They started heading over there, and they tried to be as quiet as they could so they wouldn't be heard.

Mussels and Aqua didn't know what the people in the boats were doing until they saw something big in the water. They went closer and saw that it was a bowhead whale and realized that the people were whaling. The whale was so big! They tried to warn it that it was in danger of the people and their harpoons. Then, all of a sudden, it was over. It looked like the whale just gave itself to the people. Aqua and Mussels didn't know why the bowhead whale did this, and wondered why it didn't try to protect itself since it was so big compared to the people.

Then they heard the people talking. It sounded like they were happy that they got the whale and they were cheering. They heard the people thanking the whale for giving itself to them. They said, 'our people will survive because you gave your life to us, and we will not waste anything you gave us. Thank you.' Aqua and Mussels thought to themselves, now I understand why the bowhead whale wasn't afraid of the people in the boats. They realized that they weren't really bad people after all.

Mussels and Aqua swam on towards the Polar World boat and tried to think of a better idea of how to rescue Cucumber.

## Chapter 12: The Polar Bear

The polar bear blended in with the snow. After swimming for fifteen miles she crawled onto an ice floe, but fell through. She was only a seven month old cub and started to drift away from her mother. Aqua and Mussels saw the mother was exhausted and could see the little cub drifting further away. 'Oh no!' said Aqua. 'We need to help her.' The polar bear was going to drown so they helped by swimming under her. They rolled her onto her back, and as the sea ice was melting, they looked for the safety of a stronger ice floe.

The ice was flying everywhere. It was so windy that the water was rocking back and forth like in a hurricane. It was so hard to

### ? **Cucumber's question:**

#### **How do polar bears survive in the freezing arctic?**

*Polar bears have many adaptations to survive in the arctic. The polar bear's skin has blubber, which helps prevent heat loss to the body while in -30°F weather. The polar bear's eyes are binocular, which allows them to see straight forward to help with hunting. They are also opaque which reduces a glare from the sun like we use in sunglasses and allows them to see clearer in the bright white around them. The polar bear needs every trait to survive. They are covered in fur except for the tip of their nose. They use their fur to camouflage in the white snow. As you can see, polar bears have many adaptations to survive in the Arctic.*



swim in these currents. The ice was so thin that if a seal got on it the ice would shatter. The sky was dark gray, which meant it was at least November. The deep dark water had many shades like light blue, blue green, and one color was as blue as an Alaskan blueberry in late August.

As soon as the orcas finished helping the polar bear cub, they saw lights dancing in the sky: blue, green, orange, and purple. This area had all kinds of birds and animals unlike the ones in Antarctica. The ice was crystal clear and there were more clouds than last time they looked. They swam further until they were almost blinded by the bright lights of a boat. When they came from under the water to breathe they saw the mother polar bear

was on the land winking at them.

Then Aqua and Mussels pushed the cub on its ice floe, back to her mother to try to save her. She weighed 565 pounds, so it took the two whales a long time to push the little cub back to its mother. Suddenly hunters came and started shooting. They had to escape... but how? They had to think, fast.

'Go to a safe spot,' said Mussels.

'Ok, and thank you,' said the polar bear.

'GO! HURRY! We'll distract them,' said Aqua. The polar bears took off swimming, in the opposite direction.

Mussels and Aqua tried spraying the hunters but it wasn't working. They had to get away so they went under the ice where they could not be seen. They swam deep and surfaced again to meet up with the pure white polar bears.

'Are you all right?' asked Mussels.

'Yes, we are fine,' replied the polar bear.

'This is Mussels and I'm Aqua, what's your name?'

'I'm, um, um, I don't know my real name. My parents were killed by hunters when I was a cub,' said the mother.

'That's awful!' said Aqua.

'Yes, I lived on my own for a very long time,' said the mom polar bear fighting back tears.

'Ladies, can we get back on task? Have you seen a ship?' asked Mussels.





'Yes, one that said Polar World on it,' said the polar bear.

'In which direction did it go?' asked Aqua excitedly.

'That way,' said the polar bear pointing north.

'Thank you! Bye,' said Aqua and Mussels and they took off swimming.

## Chapter 13: The Narwhal

Cucumber woke up to a commotion. The humans were yelling. Suddenly a large splash occurred. A huge animal with a horn on

its head landed next to Cucumber, 'my name is Cucumber. What is yours?' Cucumber asked curiously.

'I'm Bubbles,' the creature replied. 'I'm a Narwhal.'

'Cool!' Cucumber said, convinced that this strange creature with a horn on its head could help him.

'Do you know what these humans are going to do to us?' he asked.

'I've heard about these strange humans,' said Bubbles. 'They come from a place called Polar World which is like an amusement park for humans. They train animals to do tricks.'

'I don't want to do that!' Cucumber said, shocked.

'Then why not escape? I bet I could do something with my horn,' offered Bubbles.

'That would be great!' Cucumber's hopes were restored.

### ? **Cucumber's question:**

#### **What is the horn on the Narwhal for?**

*Almost everyone knows that Narwhals have a large ivory horn on their heads, but what are those horns for? Scientists have many theories; some believe they are for bashing through ice and for fighting for territory. They also use them to hunt. Other scientists believe a Narwhal's horn is a sensory organ. Those scientists think that the horn helps them navigate, and acts somewhat like a cat's whiskers. Today the most followed idea is that the horn is a sensory organ.*



He wondered, however, what the horn was for.

Bubbles immediately started to drill a hole in the side of the ship with his horn. As the hole gradually got bigger, the boat began to sink. The humans were yelling and screaming at each other as they climbed into the large yellow life rafts. The marine animals were leisurely floating around, while the humans were speaking in their radios trying to get help. The land animals' cages were floating around in the water, soon to be swiftly carried away by the current.

Cucumber swam up to Bubbles 'We escaped!' he said, hardly able to believe it. Suddenly, Bubbles screamed. A Great White shark had come up to them. The shark laughed, 'It's okay, I won't eat you, you two saved my life! But, I may not be so grateful later. I

love small orca.'

After that, the shark swam off. 'Seems nice,' mumbled Bubbles. 'We better swim away.'

'No,' Cucumber said. 'I have to get back my maps and graphs.'

'Crazy orca,' Bubbles said. 'Can't you see ...?'

Suddenly, they both saw a frightened Arctic hare, struggling to stay above water. 'Come on, we have to save this hare!'

Cucumber knew that this was more important than any maps or graphs, so he swam to Bubbles' side. 'Come on. Why not swim to the shore? It's only a couple 100 yards away,' Bubbles said soothingly.

'I'm too tired,' the hare whined.

'We are going to have to push him to the shore.' Bubbles whispered, not wanting to alarm the hare.

They pushed the hare as far as they could, and then he swam the rest of the way. 'Thanks!' he yelled from the shore.

'Take this map of the arctic as a gift,' as he said this he threw the map at the whales. 'Thank you again.'

'You are welcome!' Cucumber yelled back.

Then the two friends swam away.

'What about your maps and graphs?' Bubbles asked.

'They are not as important as finding my family!'

Then the two set out to do just that. It didn't take long for

Cucumber to start to get curious about the Arctic.

## Chapter 14: Reuniting One year later...

It had been a long and horrible year for Cucumber, Aqua and Mussels.

Aqua and Mussels had tried to find the Polar World, but each time they came close, the ship sailed away faster than they could swim. They knew they had to return to Antarctica and worst of all they had to leave their search for Cucumber. If he was on board that dreadful ship, perhaps it may sail back to Antarctica and they could try again to rescue him. It was nearly New Year and they were worried that they would be unable to celebrate the New Year together. They always did. If they didn't find him, they would have to start another year without him.

Cucumber was depressed. He'd lost his maps and graphs, had to leave his new friend Bubbles, couldn't find his family, and he had no one to celebrate the New Year with. He had never felt so alone than right now. Not even when the orcas teased him or when Rex made fun of him. He was alone with no family, home or friends.

Aqua and Mussels thought about how he'd be alone with no one to help him, alone by himself.

Cucumber started swimming towards two other orcas.

They were very good looking, and could be friends, but he just felt too lonely and swam off in another direction.

Meanwhile, in the distance, Aqua and Mussels saw an orca. They thought maybe they could be nice and introduce themselves.

'Well, hi there,' Aqua said happily.

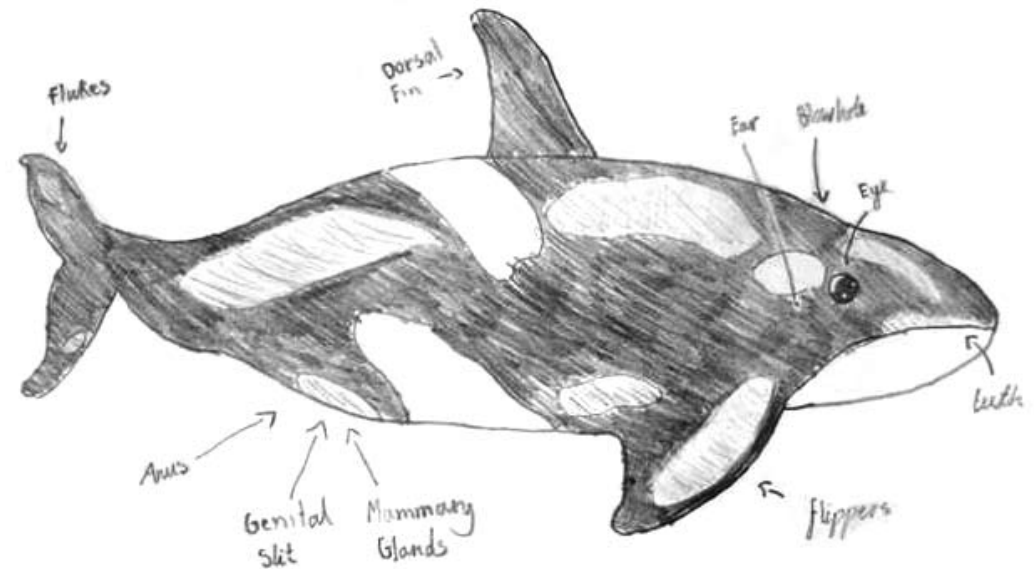
Mussels joined in quickly, so as not to be rude.

'Uh ... hi,' Cucumber stuttered. Darn. No getting past these guys.

'I'm Aqua and this is Mussels,' Aqua said cheerfully.

'Um. I'm Cucumber,' Cucumber said vaguely.

Cucumber started to swim off, and then he began to think. Aqua and Mussels. Aqua and Mussels. Where have I heard those names before?



He quickly turned and stared at them. They must have thought his name sounded familiar too, because they were staring at him.

'It's you!' they all shouted at the same time.

When they got home, Cucumber told them of all he had seen. He spoke about his cruel capture and the kindness that so many animals had shown to him. He also told them of what he had learnt and how he would, from now on, only research from safe distances. Mussels and Aqua told him of their long journey to try to find him, searching in the water's of the world and meeting many new and kind creatures, whilst trying to battle with dangers and difficulties.

'You are not a loser, but the bravest orca ever,' said Aqua proudly.

'And you will always be understood and accepted by us,' laughed Mussels.

Their long adventures were over and they were just happy to find each other again. They had a blast as the New Year kicked in, and celebrated the start of many years where they would all be together again, as a family.

If you ever see three inseparable orcas, we'll bet that it's Cucumber, Aqua, and Mussels.

## THE END

## Ice E-Mystery

This book is one of a series of e-books resulting from a collaborative writing project between Australian and Alaskan school classes based around polar science. The ICE E-MYSTERY: Global student Polar e-books project ran through 2008/9 and involved over 400 students in 24 classes from these two countries.

The Ice e-Mystery Project explored polar science through an innovative approach to science, art and literacy education. Students from throughout Australia and North America worked together (paired classes across the hemispheres) to write and illustrate on-line e-books in a predominately mystery genre focused around the themes of polar science. Students were guided by Teacher Associates trained in Antarctic science, classroom teachers trained in the project methodology and polar sciences and resources from national research organisations such as the Australian Antarctic Division, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery and Antarctic related Cooperative Research Centres. Classroom activities were augmented by visits to museums, science organisations and contact with researchers in Antarctica.

A key outcome of the project was the development of an international learning community of school students, teachers, postgraduate students and scientists.

The project workspace can be viewed at [www.iem.tmag.tas.gov.au](http://www.iem.tmag.tas.gov.au) where students drafted their collaborations and posted comments to each other on developmental ideas. The full range of e-books in the series is also viewable at this site.

The project was coordinated by the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

Key partners were the Australian Government, National Science Foundation (USA), University of Alaska (Fairbanks), the University of Tasmania and the Education Departments of Tasmanian, Queensland and Alaska.

## Acknowledgements

Andy Baird	Project Coordinator
Sandy Zicus	Deputy Coordinator
Elena B. Sparrow	Alaskan Convener
Martha Kopplin	Deputy Alaska Convener
Alan Miller	Project liaison Alaska
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Jacqui Foster	Post Graduate Teacher Associate
Alex Fraser	Post Graduate Teacher Associate
Coral Tulloch	Editor
Jess Atkinson	Graphic Designer
Brian Martin	Web Designer

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This material has been developed as a part of the Australian School Innovation in Science, Technology and Mathematics Project funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training as a part of the Boosting Innovation in Science, Technology and Mathematics Teaching (BISTMT) Programme.

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