



Little Polar Bear and the Brave Little Hare

Hans de Beer

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In this latest installment of Lars, the little polar bear's adventures, Lars rescues a small hare named Hugo from a deep hole. On their way home, the two get caught in a snowstorm and are lost until a red "car" (more like a minivan on tank treads) leads them to the polar station. After snacking, Lars, still itching for fun, accidentally falls down a shaft into the station itself. It's now up to Hugo to save him which, despite his scaredy-hare nature, he does without hesitation. "I just did what I had to," he declares as the two of them race away.

Readers will delight in the rollicking tale of discovery and budding friendship full of one adventure after the next. Lar's bouncing joy is infectious while Hugo's cautious trepidation acts as a steadying counter foil. While tension exists as Lars (now a scardy-bear) hides from the ranger, readers are reassured by way of the lighthearted illustrations that everything will work out just fine. The ranger, with his thin, scratchy beard, pointy nose and skewed sunglasses, looks harmless and no match for this unassuming, intrepid duo. Lars and Hugo, both softly rounded and cute enough to cuddle, look and act like a team with a long and happy future.

MARTHA TOPOL (January / February 1999)

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