

# The Boy and the Snowy Owl



Çınar BİBER

# **The Boy and the Snowy Owl**

Çınar BİBER



Leo lived in a small town at the edge of the far north, where winter came early and stayed a long, long time. Snow piled up against the windows, and the wind hummed songs through the streets. Leo was eight years old, with short curly black hair and freckles across his nose. He loved cold mornings and hot cocoa and asking big questions.



One grey morning, his teacher gave the class a special task. "Choose an Arctic animal," she said, "and learn how it survives the cold." Leo pulled on his bright blue jumper and his mustard yellow scarf. He knew at once which animal he wanted. "The snowy owl," he whispered, and his round face lit up with a gap-toothed smile.



That afternoon, Leo hurried to the library with his red boots crunching in the snow. He found a big book full of pictures of the Arctic: white ice, blue shadows, and wide skies. Then he turned a page and stopped. A snowy owl stared back at him with huge round yellow eyes. "Hello," Leo said softly. "You must be very brave."



The book told Leo something amazing. The Arctic is one of the coldest places on Earth, with icy winds and long dark months. Yet the snowy owl lives there all year round. "How do you stay warm?" Leo wondered aloud. He read on, turning pages as fast as he could, and started making notes in his little notebook.



The first secret was feathers. Snowy owls have thick, soft feathers all over their bodies, even on their legs and toes. The feathers trap warm air like a cosy blanket. "So you wear a jumper made of feathers!" Leo laughed. He drew a fluffy owl in his notebook and wrote in big letters: **THICK FEATHERS KEEP OUT THE COLD.**



The second secret was eyes. Those big yellow eyes can spot a tiny mouse far away across the snow. Snowy owls can see in dim winter light, when the sun barely peeks over the ice. Leo drew two round eyes and a small black beak. "Sharp eyes," he wrote. "You never miss a thing."



The third secret was wings. Snowy owls have broad, strong wings that carry them silently over the frozen ground. They can glide for miles without a sound, hunting and travelling across the icy world. Leo spread his arms wide in the library and swooped like an owl. A librarian smiled and put a finger to her lips.



The last secret was colour. Snowy owls are white as fresh snow, with only faint dark speckles. On a snowy hill or an icy rock, they almost disappear. "You hide in plain sight!" Leo said. He thought of his own bright blue jumper and grinned. White feathers were the perfect winter coat for a snowy world.



At home, Leo spread everything on the kitchen table: his notes, his drawings, and a long roll of poster paper. His little sister helped him cut out paper feathers. He glued on a big yellow eye and a small black beak. "Our owl needs strong wings," he said, and drew two wide ones.



All week, Leo worked on his classroom display. He painted a blue Arctic sky, white ice, and a snowy rock for the owl to perch on. Around it, he wrote: THICK FEATHERS, SHARP EYES, STRONG WINGS, WHITE AS SNOW. His father helped him hang the poster, and Leo clapped his hands. "It's almost ready!"



The night before sharing day, Leo woke up worried. What if his classmates thought his display was silly? He pulled his yellow scarf up to his chin and looked at his poster. Then he remembered the owl, calm and watchful on its snowy rock. "You're not afraid of the cold," Leo whispered. "So I won't be afraid either."



In the morning, Leo carried his rolled-up poster to school through the crunching snow. His red boots left little tracks behind him. He held the poster tight, like a treasure. The classroom smelled of chalk and warm radiators, and his classmates were already busy at their desks. Leo took a deep breath and unrolled his work.



One by one, the children gathered around Leo's display. "Look at those big eyes!" said a girl in the front. Leo pointed to the words he had written. "Snowy owls have thick feathers to trap warm air," he explained, "and sharp eyes to hunt in dim light." His voice grew stronger with every sentence. "And white feathers help them hide in the snow!"



His teacher smiled. "So how do all these things help the owl?" she asked. Leo thought for a moment. "They work together," he said. "Feathers keep it warm, eyes help it find food, wings carry it far, and white feathers keep it safe. That's how it survives in a cold, icy world." The class clapped, and Leo's freckled cheeks turned pink.



That afternoon, the whole class made a winter wall of Arctic animals. Leo stood beside his snowy owl, proud and happy. "You taught me something," he whispered to the owl in the picture. "Being clever and prepared helps you through the coldest days." He pulled his scarf snug and smiled his gap-toothed smile, excited to tell everyone at home.



That night, snow fell softly outside Leo's window, just like the snow in his poster. He fell asleep thinking of the snowy owl, calm and watchful on its icy rock. Thick feathers. Sharp eyes. Strong wings. White as snow. The clever owl would fly through the long winter, and Leo would remember its secrets for always.