



# Hans & Hona

by Cobe Lindsay

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In the Valley of Freezes the breezes blew a colossal blizzard over the tundra, painting the landscape blue and white. The sight of this inspired the birds to travel merrily south, singing birdiful words. Two lovebirds remained, sleeping comfortably in their frost-encrusted nest. From a distance, their dwelling might have appeared to be an oversized igloo, but underneath the mound of snow and ice that buried them lay a spacious cabin, just large enough to fit two giants: he stood at 7'4" tall and she slouched at 8'1½". With the snowdrift covering the windows, Hans and Hona slept in until long after daybreak when their clock cuckooed 4:00 a.m.

Hona struck a match with her teeth, lit a candle, and wrestled her way out of bed. She lit dozens of candles and then lit a fire in oven. Being an Inuit gal, she wore jet-black, braided hair. And being half-frozen, she always wore a walrus-skin hat on top. Hans, a Scandinavian fellow with blond locks protruding under his seal-skin hat, slid open one of the windows that had been enveloped in the snowstorm. He clenched one mitten, and punched a hole through the snow. Sunlight and cold air beamed through the cabin. Hans grabbed a slab of ice from outside, closed the window, and dropped the ice in an iron pot that was already hot on the stove.

While Hans collected his fishing gear, Hona brewed some coffee and filled up a thermos for Hans that was hot enough to burn a hole through the floor. Hans had to wear two sets of mittens in order to hold it. He also wore an outer parka over his overcoat, which he wore over his inner coat of hair, which was as thick as the hide of a grizzly's backside. When Hans opened the front door, designed to swing inward on its hinge to prevent it from being blockaded by snow, the snow caved in, burying the man up to his knees in powder. Hona helped brush him off and sent him on his way with a nudging of noses.

After an hour of hiking, Hans arrived at his favorite fishing spot: a lake that was entirely frozen over. He looked back over his shoulder and followed his

tracks back to the cabin, 100 yards away, where he could see Hona waving from the doorway. He placed the fishing gear neatly by his side and knelt down to scoop away the loose snow so that he could find the ice and punch a hole through it. He dug through the snow so fast that he worked up a sweat so wet that the sweat beads froze to his forehead. So, before he hammered down on the ice with his mittens, he twisted open the thermos cap for a hot drink of coffee. The steamy aroma that wafted from the open lid was so strong that it caused the beard on Hans' chin to stand on end, and caused his face to bear a monstrous grin. He scorched the tip of his tongue on the first taste. Hans kept the lid off to allow the coffee to cool. He readied himself for a mighty thump to the ice.

Meanwhile, a nearby polar bear, that had been up all night due to the overabundance of daylight and aurora borealis, caught the coffee scent. The bear, with its nose in the air, followed the fragrance, walking feverishly. In no time, the bear saw Hans, who was distracted with his arm stuck in the hole he had punched through the ice. The bear tiptoed around the fisherman and singed the tip of its tongue on the open thermos. Hans caught the whiff of burning tongue-hair and instantly was on the bear's back with his arm around its neck. The polar bear staggered to its hind legs, bumping the thermos and spilling coffee, lifting Hans ten feet high in the air.

Starkly contrasting the otherwise white snow, the dark, brown coffee melted curiously deep into the packed snow, and sunk down all the way past the ice into the mouth of an even bigger monster. The two bear-hugging coffee fiends noticed the half-tipped thermos at the same time, and they both lunged for the warm deliciousness. The great magnitude of weight that hit the ice all at once caused the earth to roar. The ground shook. And when the ice split, Hans gripped the bear's back paws with his mittens, and the bear gripped the thermos with its front paws, but the beast below opened its mouth and swallowed the thermos with the bear still attached. Fortunately for Hans, Hona's grip was stronger than Hans'. Hona, who had longed for many years to be married in a polar bear-skin hat, rescued Hans and the hide, and indeed she and Hans were married and yes, indeed she wore a polar bear-skin hat.