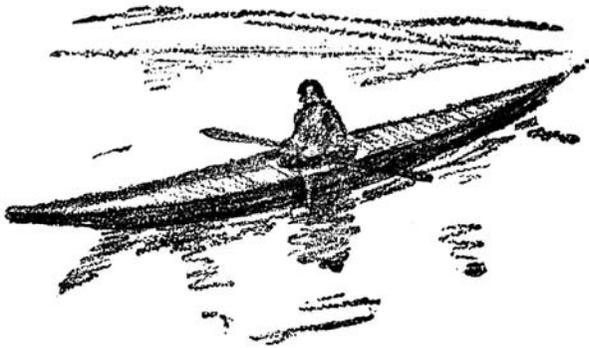


THE ESKIMO TWINS



THE ESKIMO TWINS

BY

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YESTERDAY'S CLASSICS

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THE ESKIMO TWINS

THIS is the true story of Menie and Monnie and their two little dogs, Nip and Tup.

Menie and Monnie are twins, and they live far away in the North, near the very edge.

They are five years old.

Menie is the boy, and Monnie is the girl. But you cannot tell which is Menie and which is Monnie,—not even if you look ever so hard at their pictures!

That is because they dress alike.

When they are a little way off even their own mother can't always tell. And if she can't, who can?

Sometimes the twins almost get mixed up about it themselves. And then it is very hard to know which is Nip and which is Tup, because the little dogs are twins too.

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Nobody was surprised that the little dogs were twins, because dogs often are.

But everybody in the whole village where Menie and Monnie live was simply astonished to see twin babies!

They had never known of any before in their whole lives.

Old Akla, the Angakok, or Medicine Man of the village, shook his head when he heard about them. He said, "Such a thing never happened here before. Seals and human beings never have twins! There's magic in this."



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The name of the twins' father was Kesshoo. If you say it fast it sounds just like a sneeze.

Their mother's name was Koolee. Kesshoo and Koolee, and Menie and Monnie, and Nip and Tup, all live together in the cold Arctic winter in a little stone hut, called an "igloo."

In the summer they live in a tent, which they call a "tupik." The winters are very long and cold, and what do you think! They have one night there that is four whole months long!

For four long months, while we are having Thanksgiving, and Christmas, and even Lincoln's Birthday, the twins never once see the sun!

But at last one day in early spring the sun comes up again out of the sea, looks at the world for a little while, and then goes out of sight again. Each day he stays for a longer time until after a while he doesn't go out of sight at all!

Then there are four long months of daylight when there is never any bedtime.

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Menie and Monnie just go to sleep whenever they feel sleepy.

Although many Eskimos think twins bring bad luck, Kesshoo and Koolee were very glad to have two babies.

They would have liked it better still if Monnie had been a boy, too, because boys grow up to hunt and fish and help get food for the family.

But Kesshoo was the best hunter and the best kyak man in the whole village. So he said to Koolee, "I suppose there must be girls in the world. It is no worse for us than for others."

So because Kesshoo was a brave fisherman and strong hunter, and because Koolee was clever in making clothing and shoes out of the skins of the animals which he brought home, the twins had the very best time that little Eskimo children can have.

And that is quite a good time, as you will see if you read all about it in this book.





THE TWINS GO COASTING

I

ONE spring morning, very early, while the moon still shone and every one else in the village was asleep, Menie and Monnie crept out of the dark entrance of their little stone house by the sea.

The entrance to their little stone house was long and low like a tunnel. The Twins were short and fat. But even if they were short they could not stand up straight in the tunnel.

So they crawled out on all fours. Nip and Tup came with them. Nip and Tup were on all fours, too, but they had run that way all their lives, so they could go much faster than the twins. They got out first.

Then they ran round in circles in the snow and barked at the moon. When Menie and Monnie came out of the hole, Tup

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jumped up to lick Monnie's face. He bumped her so hard that she fell right into the snowbank by the entrance.

Monnie didn't mind a bit. She just put her two fat arms around Tup, and they rolled over together in the snow.

Monnie had on her fur suit, with fur hood and mittens, and it was hard to tell which was Monnie and which was Tup as they tumbled in the snow together.

Pretty soon Monnie picked herself up and shook off the snow. Then Tup shook himself, too. Menie was rolling over and over down the slope in front of the little stone house. His head was between his knees and his hands held his ankles, so he rolled just like a ball.

Nip was running round and round him and barking with all his might. They made strange shadows on the snow in the moonlight.

Monnie called to Menie. Menie straightened himself out at the bottom of the slope, picked himself up and ran back to her.

“What shall we play?” said Monnie.

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“Let’s get Koko, and go to the Big Rock and slide downhill,” said Menie.

“All right,” said Monnie. “You run and get your sled.”

Menie had a little sled which his father had made for him out of driftwood. No other boy in the village had one. Menie’s father had searched the beach for many miles to find driftwood to make this sled.

The Eskimos have no wood but driftwood, and it is so precious that it is hardly ever used for anything but big dog sledges or spears, or other things which the men must have.

Most of the boys had sleds cut from blocks of ice. Menie’s sled was behind the igloo. He ran to get it, and then the twins and the pups—all four—started for Koko’s house.

Koko’s house was clear at the other end of the village. But that was not far away, for there were only five igloos in the whole town.

First there was the igloo where the twins lived. Next was the home of Akla, the Angakok, and his two wives. Then there were two igloos where several families lived together. Last of all was the one where Koko

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and his father and mother and baby brother lived.

Koko was six. He was the twins' best friend.

II

The air was very still. There was not a sound anywhere except the barking of the pups, the voices of Menie and Monnie, and the creaking sound of the snow under their feet as they ran.

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The round moon was sailing through the deep blue sky and shining so bright it seemed almost as light as day.

There was one window in each igloo right over the tunnel entrance, and these windows shone with a dull yellow light.

In front of the village lay the sea. It was covered with ice far out from shore. Beyond the ice was the dark water out of which the sun would rise by and by.

There was nothing else to be seen in all the twins' world. There were no trees, no bushes even; nothing but the white earth, the shadows of the rocks and the snow-covered igloos, the bright windows, and the moon shining over all.

III

Menie and Monnie soon reached Koko's igloo. Menie and Nip got there first. Monnie came puffing along with Tup just a moment after.

Then the twins dropped on their hands and knees in front of Koko's hut, and stuck

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their heads into the tunnel. Nip and Tup stuck their heads in, too.

They all four listened. There was not a sound to be heard except loud snores! The snores came rattling through the tunnel with such a frightful noise that the twins were almost scared.

“They sleep out loud, don’t they?” whispered Monnie. “Let’s wake them up,” Menie whispered back.

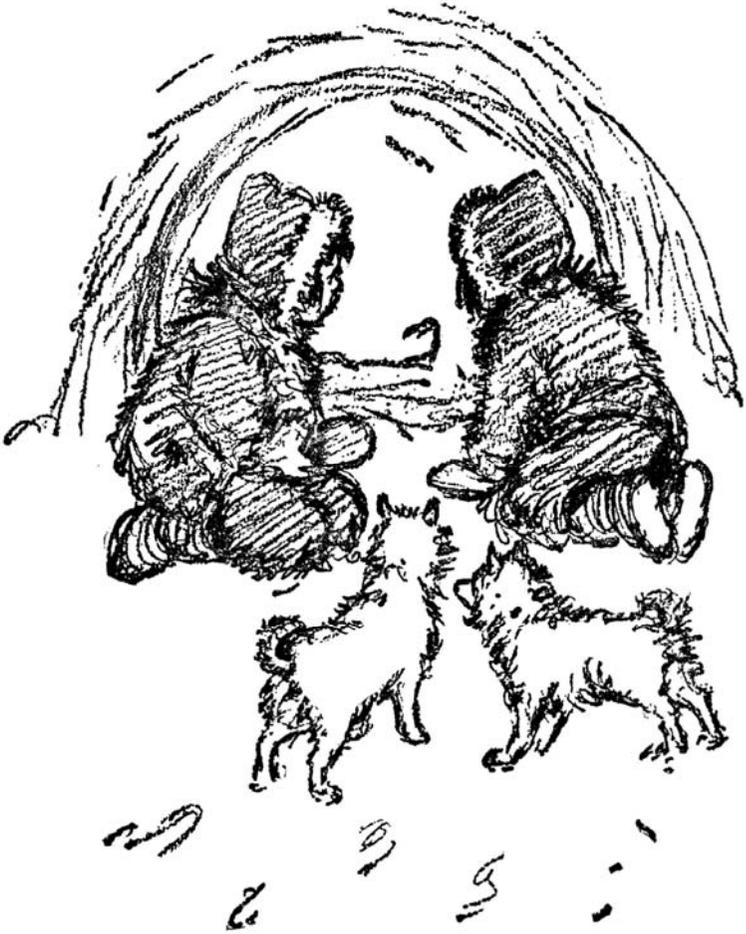
Then the twins began to bark. “Ki-yi, ki-yi, ki-yi, ki-yi,” just like little dogs!

Nip and Tup began to yelp, too. The snores and the yelps met in the middle of the tunnel and the two together made such a dreadful sound that Koko woke up at once. When he heard four barks he knew right away that it must be the twins and the little dogs.

So he stuck his head into the other end of the tunnel and called, “Keep still. You’ll wake the baby! I’ll be there in a minute.”

Very soon Koko popped out of the black hole. He was dressed in a fur suit and mittens just like the twins.

THE TWINS GO COASTING



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IV

The three children went along together toward the Big Rock. Monnie rode on the sled, and Menie and Koko pulled it. The Big Rock was very straight up and down on one side, and long and slanting on the other. The twins were going to coast down the slanting side.

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They climbed to the top, and Menie had the first ride. He coasted down on his stomach with his little reindeer-skin kamiks (shoes) waving in the air.

Next Koko had a turn. What do you think he did? He stood straight up on the sled with the leather cord in his hand, and slid down that way! But then, you see, he was six.

When Monnie's turn came she wanted to go down that way, too. But Menie said, "No. You'd fall off and bump your nose! You have hardly any nose as it is, and you'd better save it!"

"I have as much nose as you have, anyway," said Monnie.

"Mine is bigger! I'm a boy!" said Menie.

Koko measured their noses with his finger.

"They are just exactly alike," he said.

Monnie turned hers up at Menie and said, "What did I tell you?"

Menie never said another word about noses. He just changed the subject. He said, "Let's all slide down at once."

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Koko and Menie sat down on the sled. Monnie sat on Menie. Then they gave a few hitches to the sled and off they went.

Whiz! How they flew!

The pups came running after them. In some places where it was very slippery the pups coasted, too! But they did not mean to. They did not like it. The sled was almost at the end of the slide when it struck a piece of ice. It flew around sideways and spilled all the children in the snow.



Just then Nip and Tup came sliding along behind them. They couldn't stop, so

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there they all were in a heap together, with the dogs on top!

Menie rolled over and sat up in the snow. He was holding on to the end of his nose. "Iyi, iyi!" he howled, "I bumped my nose on a piece of ice!"

Monnie sat up in the snow, too. She pointed her fur mitten at Menie's nose and laughed. "Don't you know you haven't much nose?" she said. "You ought to be more careful of it!"

Koko kicked his feet in the air and laughed at Menie, and the little dogs barked. Menie thought he'd better laugh, too. He had just let go of his nose to begin when all of a sudden the little dogs stopped barking and stood very still!

Their hair stood up on their necks and they began to growl!

"Hark, the dogs see something," said Menie.

Monnie and Koko stopped laughing and listened. They could not hear anything. They could not see anything. Still Nip and Tup growled. The twins and Koko were children of brave hunters, so, although they were

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scared, they crept very quietly to the side of the Big Rock and peeped over.



Just that minute there was a dreadful growl! “Woof!” It was very loud, and very near, and down on the beach a shadow was moving! It was the shadow of a great white BEAR!

He was looking for fish and was cross because everything was frozen, and he could not find any on the beach.

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The moment they saw him, the twins and Koko turned and ran for home as fast as ever their short legs could go! They did not even stop to get the precious sled. They just ran and ran.

Nip and Tup ran, too, with their ears back and their little tails stuck straight out behind them!



If they had looked back, they would have seen the bear stand up on his hind legs and look after them, then get down on all fours and start toward the Big Rock on a run.

But neither the children nor the little dogs looked back! They just ran with all their might until they reached the twins' igloo. Then they all dived into the tunnel like frightened rabbits.

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V

When they came up in the one little room of the igloo at the other end of the tunnel Kesshoo and Koolee were just crawling out of the warm fur covers of their bed. Menie and Monnie and Koko and the little dogs all began to talk at once.

The moment the twins' father and mother heard the word *bear* they jumped off the sleeping-bench and began to put on their clothes.

They both wore fur trousers and long kamiks, with coats of fur, so they looked almost as much alike in their clothes as the twins did in theirs.

The mother always wore her hair in a topknot on top of her head, tied with a leather thong. But now she wanted to make the bear think she was a man, too, so she pulled it down and let it hang about her face, just as her husband did.

In two minutes they were ready. Then the father reached for his lance, the mother

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took her knife, and they all crawled out of the tunnel.

The father went first, then the mother, then the three children and the pups. At the opening of the tunnel the father stopped, and looked all around to see if the bear were near.



The dogs in the village knew by this time that some strange animal was about, and the moment Kesshoo came out into the moonlight and started for the Big Rock, all the dogs ran, too, howling like a pack of wolves.

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Kesshoo shouted back to his wife, "There really is a bear! I see him by the Big Rock; call the others."

So she sent Monnie into the igloo of the Angakok, and Menie and Koko into the next huts. She herself screamed, "A bear! A bear!" into the tunnel of Koko's hut.

The people in the houses had heard the dogs bark and were already awake. Soon they came pouring out of their tunnels armed with knives and lances. The women had all let down their hair, just as the twins' mother did. Each one carried her knife.

They all ran toward the Big Rock, too. Far ahead they could see the bear, and the dogs bounding along, and Kesshoo running with his lance in his hand.

Then they saw the dogs spring upon the bear. The bear stood up on his hind legs and tried to catch the dogs and crush them in his arms. But the dogs were too nimble. The bear could not catch them.

When Kesshoo came near, the bear gave a great roar, and started for him. The brave Kesshoo stood still with his lance in his hand, until the bear got quite near. Then he

THE TWINS GO COASTING

ran at the bear and plunged the lance into his side. The lance pierced the bear's heart. He groaned, fell to the ground, rolled over, and was still.

Then how everybody ran! Koko's mother had her baby in her hood, where Eskimo mothers always carry their babies. She could not run so fast as the others. The Angakok was fat, so he could not keep up, but he waddled along as fast as he could.

"Hurry, hurry," he called to his wives. "Bespeak one of his hind legs for me."

Menie and Monnie and Koko had such short legs they could not go very fast either, so they ran along with the Angakok, and Koko's mother, and Nip and Tup.

When they reached the bear they found all the other people crowded around it. Each one stuck his fingers in the bear's blood and then sucked his fingers. This was because they wanted all bears to know how they longed to kill them. As each one tasted the blood he called out the part of the bear he would like to have.

The wives of the Angakok cried, "Give a hind leg to the Angakok."

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“The kidneys for Koko,” cried Koko’s mother when she stuck in her finger. “That will make him a great bear-hunter when he is big.”

“And I will have the skin for the twins’ bed,” said their mother.

Kesshoo promised each one the part he asked for. An Eskimo never keeps the game he kills for himself alone. Every one in the village has a share.

The bear was very large. He was so large that though all the women pulled together they could not drag the body back to the village. The men laughed at them, but they did not help them.

So Koolee ran back for their sledge and harnesses for the dogs. Koko and Menie helped her catch the dogs and hitch them to the sledge.

It took some time to catch them for the dogs did not want to work. They all ran away, and Tooky, the leader of the team, pretended to be sick! Tooky was the mother of Nip and Tup, and she was a very clever dog. While Koolee and Koko and Menie were getting the sledge and dog-team ready, the rest of the

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women set to work with their queer crooked knives to take off the bear's skin. The moon set, and the sky was red with the colors of the dawn before this was done.

At last the meat was cut in pieces and Kesshoo and Koko's father held the dogs while the women heaped it on the sledge. The dogs wanted the meat. They jumped and howled and tried to get away.

When everything was ready, Koolee cracked the whip at the dogs. Tooky ran ahead to her place as leader, the other dogs began to pull, and the whole procession started back to the village, leaving a great red stain on the clean white snow where the bear had been killed.



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Last of all came the twins and Koko. They had loaded the bear's skin on Menie's sled.

"It's a woman's work to pull the meat home. We men just do the hunting and fishing," Menie said to Koko. They had heard the men say that.

"Yes, we *found* the bear," Koko answered. "Monnie can pull the skin home."

And though Monnie had found the bear just as much as they had, she didn't say a word. She just pulled away on the sled, and they all reached the igloo together just as the round red sun came up out of the sea, and threw long blue shadows far across the fields of snow.





KOOLEE DIVIDES THE MEAT

I

THE first thing that was done after they got the sledge back to the village was to feed the dogs. The dogs were very hungry; they had smelled the fresh meat for a long time without so much as a bite of it, and they had had nothing to eat for two whole days. They jumped about and howled again and got their harnesses dreadfully tangled.

Kesshoo unharnessed them and gave them some bones, and while they were crunching them and quarreling among themselves, Koolee crawled into the igloo and brought out a bowl. The bowl was made of a hollowed-out stone, and it had water in it.

“This is for a charm,” said Koolee. “If you each take a sip of water from this bowl

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my son will always have good luck in spying bears!”

She passed the bowl around, and each person took a sip of the water. When Menie's turn came he took a big, big mouthful, because he wanted to be very brave, indeed, and find a bear every week. But he was in too much of a hurry. The water went down his “Sunday-throat” and choked him! He coughed and strangled and his face grew red. Koolee thumped him on the back.

“That's a poor beginning for a great bear-hunter,” she said.

Everybody laughed at Menie. Menie hated to be laughed at. He went away and found Nip and Tup. They wouldn't laugh at him, he knew. He thought he liked dogs better than people anyway.

Nip and Tup were trying to get their noses into the circle with the other dogs, but the big dogs snapped at them and drove them away, so Menie got some scraps and fed them.

Meanwhile Koolee stood by the sledge and divided the meat among her neighbors. First she gave one of the hind legs to the wives of the Angakok, because he always had

KOOLEE DIVIDES THE MEAT



to have the best of everything. She gave the kidneys to Koko's mother. To each one she gave just the part she had asked for. When each woman had been given her share, Kesshoo took what was left and put it on the storehouse.

The storehouse wasn't really a house at all. It was just a great stone platform standing up on legs, like a giant's table. The meat was placed on the top of it, so the dogs could not reach it, no matter how high they jumped.

II

When the rest of the meat was taken care of, Koolee took the bear's head and carried it into the igloo.

All the people followed her. Then Koolee did a queer thing. She placed the head on a bench, with the nose pointing toward the Big Rock, because the bear had come from that direction. Then she stopped up the nostrils with moss and grease. She greased the bear's mouth, too.

"Bears like grease," she said. "And if I stop up his nose like that bears will never be able to smell anything. Then the hunters can get near and kill them before they know it." You see Koolee was a great believer in signs and in magic. All the other people were too.

She called to the twins, "Come here, Menie and Monnie."

The twins had come in with the others, but they were so short they were out of sight in the crowd. They crawled under the elbows of the grown people and stood beside Koolee.

KOOLEE DIVIDES THE MEAT

“Look, children,” she said to them, “your grandfather, who is dead, sent you this bear. He wants you to send him something. In five days the bear’s spirit will go to the land where your grandfather’s spirit lives. What would you like to have the bear’s spirit take to your grandfather for a gift?”

“I’ll send him the little fish that father carved for me out of bone,” said Menie. He squirmed through the crowd and got it from a corner of his bed and brought it to his mother. She put it on the bear’s head.

Monnie gave her a leather string with a lucky stone tied to it. Koolee put that on the bear’s head too.

Then she said, “There! In five days’ time the bear’s spirit will give the shadows of these things to your grandfather. Then we can eat the head, but not until we are sure the bear’s spirit has reached the home of the Dead.”

“That is well,” the Angakok said to the twins, when Koolee had finished. “Your grandfather will be pleased with your presents, I know. Your grandfather was a just man. I knew him well. He always paid great respect to *Me*. Whenever he brought a bear home he

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gave me not only a hind leg, but the liver as well! I should not be surprised if he sent the bear this way, knowing how fond I am of bear's liver."

The Angakok placed his hand on his stomach and rolled up his eyes. "But times are not what they once were," he went on. "People care now only for their own stomachs! They would rather have the liver themselves than give it to the Angakok! They will be sorry when it is too late."



KOOLEE DIVIDES THE MEAT

He shook his head and heaved a great sigh. Koolee looked at Kesshoo. She was very anxious. Kesshoo went out at once to the storehouse. He climbed to the top and got the liver.

By this time all the people had crawled out of the igloo again, and were ready to carry home their meat. Kesshoo ran to the Angakok and gave him the bear's liver. The Angakok handed it to one of his wives to carry. The other one already had the bear's leg. He said to Kesshoo, "You are a just man, like your father. I know the secrets of the sun, moon, and stars. You know your duty! You shall have your reward." He looked very solemn and waddled away toward his igloo with the two wives behind him carrying the meat. All the rest of the people followed after him and went into their own igloos.

