

Guardians of the Ocean

Extract from a story by Iseabail Duncan Age 13

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Crack!

Intuktu whirled round, eyes wide in horror as she saw the hairline split in the ice, separating her from the huskies and her sled. A cry escaped her lips. She lunged forward, throwing herself at the sled as the ice quivered and quaked underfoot. She would have made it but her feet caught in the fishing-line and, as she fell, the ice broke away. She was adrift on the ocean.

Waking to Intuktu's frantic screams, the dogs leapt to their feet and ran back and forth along the shore of ice, barking loud enough to wake the dead. She shouted at them, trying to make them understand that she needed help, but they stayed there, getting tangled in the fishing lines and yelping indignantly. Intuktu looked on in dismay. In an hour or so, she would be nothing more than a speck on the horizon, and no one would be able to save her. Yet again failing to engage the huskies, she screamed an insult and threw the fishing-line at the useless dogs. They bounded off after it, leaving her alone on the ice floe.

Intuktu fell to her knees in despair. The huskies had abandoned her, she had no contact with the settlement. There was only one way that she could save herself - one strictly forbidden by the Narwhal elders - that was to swim across the seawater to the mainland. This was highly dangerous. She wasn't worried about running out of oxygen, as she had been trained in holding her breath; nor the treacherous life-quenching cold. It was the fact that she risked angering the sea spirits. But Intuktu knew she had no other choice. Taking a deep breath, she closed her eyes and leapt into the water.

.... continued in POTB Issue 13