



Danger in the Arctic

by Ruth Boellstorff

1 The packs were loaded at last, and the dog team was ready. Steve inspected everything to make certain that they would have no problems. It was a good outfit, he admitted grudgingly to himself, strong and sleek.

2 "Are you ready, Makpuk?" his father asked as he fastened the team of huskies into position.

3 "Ready," the boy answered. Why couldn't his father call him Steve, he wondered, instead of always using his Inuit, or Eskimo, name? Everyone else called him Steve.

4 His father shouted a command, and soon the huskies were leaping ahead, yelping with excitement. His father ran along behind, and then, as the huskies settled into a steady pace

behind One-Ear, the old lead dog, Steve's father stepped onto the runners to ride. Their village was not far away, and they expected to arrive safely home by nightfall.

5 "Let me drive soon, father," Steve pleaded. "I know I can handle the dogs."

6 His father hesitated, but then brought the team of huskies to a halt. "Very well," he said, "the dogs know the way, and I'm tired and will be happy to ride."

7 This is great, thought Steve happily as they moved along. Maybe dog teams weren't so bad after all. Many times he had urged his father to buy a snowmobile, one of those small vehicles with motors, as many people in the village had done, but his father always replied, "No, Makpuk, it is not good to abandon all of the old ways."

8 "But father," Steve protested, "we are different now. Planes come to our villages, and we have stoves, electricity, and radios in our houses."

9 "Yes, son," his father responded, "many changes have come to our people, and most are very good. But our land does not change. Its cold, its darkness, and its dangers are the same as before. That is why it makes me sad to see the old ways forgotten, the old skills lost."

10 And so it was a team of huskies, not a snowmobile, that Steve was driving back to the village. Absorbed in his thoughts, he did not notice the darkening horizon until his father motioned to him that a storm was approaching.

11 Even as he watched, a biting snowflake stung his cheek—then another! His father leaped to the ground and gestured, "You climb on and let me have the team now."

12 Very soon, with a shriek, the storm was upon them. The wind was stinging and bitter, and the snow fell in heavy, choking curtains. "Whoa!" Steve's father shouted. He went rapidly to each husky, passing his mittens over the dog's eyes to remove the frozen snow, then lifting each paw to check for ice balls.

13 The dogs went on again more slowly. Suddenly, as the wind ceased to a new form, One-

Ear stopped abruptly and curled himself into a tight ball in the snow. Within moments, the other huskies had also wound themselves up tightly with their furry tails covering their noses and eyes.

14 "Father," cried Steve, "what shall we do?"

15 "We must build a shelter and take cover ourselves—quickly!" his father replied, pulling out his old snow knife.

16 Surrounded by the howling storm, Steve's father carved blocklike slabs out of the frozen snow. These he set on edge in a circle and then lifted a second ring of blocks on top of the first.

17 "Bring the sleeping bags and the stove from the pack," his father shouted, "and the tea!"

18 As Steve struggled with the heavy load, his father was finishing the top of the shelter. They scrambled in at once, pulling the final block in place behind them, and soon had snow melting on the stove for hot tea. The warmth from the flame and the moisture from their breathing caused a thin layer of ice to form on the inside of the snow walls.

19 "The ice seals the snow, so we must make an opening for fresh air," his father said as he cut carefully through the roof above their heads. "We cannot allow this hole to become covered with snow or we will die!"

20 Finally, exhausted, they both crawled into their sleeping bags and lay listening to the wind.

21 "Father?"

22 "Yes, Makpuk, my son?"

23 "Why is it, father, that you always speak of the old ways of our people, yet you want me to attend school and study the ways of the outside world?"

24 "You must take your place in the larger world, my son, but the old world is still with us. We must learn to live in both."

25 The noises of the storm were becoming quieter. "Let us sleep now, Makpuk. Tomorrow we will go home."

26 I think father is right, Steve thought to himself sleepily. Old wisdom, old skills had saved their lives. His people needed to understand new ways, but they must never forget

and One-Ear, the old lead dog, Steve's father stepped onto the runners to ride. Their father was not far away, and they expected to arrive safely home by nightfall.

"Let me drive soon, father," Steve pleaded. "How can I handle the dogs?"

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Life is great, thought Steve happily as they drove along. Maybe dog teams weren't so different after all. Many times he had urged his father to buy a snowmobile, one of those small machines with motors, as many people in the village had done, but his father always refused. "No, Makpuk, it is not good to abandon the old ways."

"But father," Steve protested, "we are different now. Planes come to our villages, and we have stoves, electricity, and radios in our homes."

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Soon, with a shriek, the storm was upon them. The wind was stinging and bitter, and the snow fell in heavy, choking curtains. "Help!" Steve's father shouted. He went to each husky, passing his mittens over the dog's eyes to remove the frozen snow, then lifting each paw to check for ice.

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How Well Did You Read?

Write the letter of the best answer for each question.

- 1 Why did the father call Steve by his Eskimo name?
 - a He believed in keeping some of the old ways.
 - b He had forgotten the boy's other name.
 - c He thought the boy preferred it.
- 2 Why did Steve want a snowmobile?
 - a Snowmobiles were safer.
 - b He didn't like huskies.
 - c It was the modern way to travel.
- 3 How would you describe the father?
 - a Old-fashioned; opposed to everything new
 - b Wanting the best from two worlds
 - c Greedy; never satisfied
- 4 Why did One-Ear curl himself into a ball?
 - a To get some sleep
 - b To protect himself from the storm
 - c To melt the ice on his eyes and feet
- 5 How did the father save them?
 - a He built a shelter of snow.
 - b He had Steve build a snow house.
 - c He left Steve and went for help.
- 6 How had Steve changed by the end of the story?
 - a He was more understanding of his father.
 - b He was less willing to change.
 - c He was fonder of Eskimo names.
- 7 By building a shelter out of snow, the father proved that
 - a he was cleverer than his son
 - b the old ways were still useful
 - c a house is not a home
- 8 When Steve grows up, he will probably teach his children how to
 - a drive a snowmobile
 - b build a snow shelter
 - c Both a and b

Learn about Words

Vocabulary

A You can often tell the meaning of a word by reading the words around it.

Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. Then find the word that fits the given meaning. Write the word.

- 1 give up entirely (7)
- 2 very much interested (10)
- 3 becoming darker (10)
- 4 "Stop!" (12)
- 5 violence; fierceness (13)
- 6 slight wetness (18)
- 7 be present at; go to (23)

B A word may have more than one meaning. Its meaning depends on the way it is used. The word *string* is an example.

We tied the box with *string*.
Our team had a *string* of victories.

Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. See how the word in **heavy type** below is used in the paragraph. Decide whether it has meaning a or b. Write a or b.

- 8 **runners** (4)
 - a people that run; racers
 - b narrow pieces on which a sled slides
- 9 **biting** (11)
 - a sharp; cutting
 - b sneering
- 10 **seals** (19)
 - a settles; determines
 - b closes tightly

Word Study

C Large cats have **big** paws.

Words that have the same or almost the same meaning are called synonyms. *Large* is a synonym of *big*. From the group of words below, choose a synonym for each word in **heavy type** in the sentences that follow. Write the synonym.

pretty shy offer save
pretend noted burst fly

- 11 A deer is a **timid** animal.
- 12 Lynda is a **beautiful** girl.
- 13 The furnace in the basement **exploded**.
- 14 Let's **make believe** we live in another country.
- 15 Mary ran to **rescue** the child from the lake.
- 16 We watched the bird **soar** into the air.
- 17 Samson was **famous** for his strength.
- 18 We would like to **volunteer** our services to the new library.

D Pups are **little** dogs, not **big** ones.

Words with opposite meanings are called antonyms. *Little* is an antonym of *big*. From the group of words below, choose an antonym for each word in **heavy type** in the sentences. Write the antonym.

build cheerful correct allow
scatters enjoyed tame shorten

- 19 Polly **collects** seashells on the beach.
- 20 I **disliked** the film we saw yesterday afternoon.
- 21 You have three **wrong** answers on your test.
- 22 The city is going to **destroy** that beautiful building.
- 23 Be careful, the lion is **fierce**.
- 24 Sam was **sad** when school ended.
- 25 Please don't **lengthen** the dress.
- 26 I will **forbid** you to go to the party.

E Read each sentence and the words that follow. Write the word that completes each sentence best.

- 27 Jayne is an active girl; she's not _____.
(lazy, lively)
- 28 Daniel acts like an adult; he's not _____.
(childish, mature)
- 29 This is an unusual coin; it's not _____.
(common, rare)
- 30 The sea is calm today; it's not _____.
(stormy, still)
- 31 I am comfortable with you; I'm not _____.
(contented, uneasy)
- 32 My brother is a fair person; he's not _____.
(just, unjust)
- 33 This car is new; it's not _____.
(good, used)

Use Your Imagination

Ask an adult how people entertained themselves before there was television. Make a list of the good things people did then. Do you think people had more fun then or now?