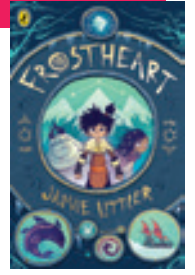


# EXTRACT

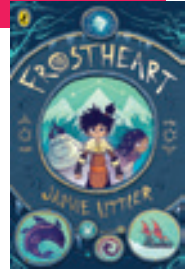


“Snow erupted into the air like water from a geyser. The children staggered back as freezing slush rained down on them. Out of the snow-chasm rose three large shapes. ‘Lurkers,’ Ash gasped, his voice strained with fear. The creatures were wet, sleek and serpentine, longer than two men, with six frost-white eyes that blinked slightly out of order, and gaping jaws filled with ice-sharp fangs and drool-slick tongues. Despite their graceless scrambling gait, they moved with terrible speed – so quick, in fact, it was hard to make sense of their spiny crests, scrabbling claws and whip-long tails – they just looked like a writhing mass of horror to Ash.

‘They’ve cut him off!’ Shyne screamed. And she was right. The Lurkers had blocked Ryse’s path back to the village and were already racing hungrily towards him. Ryse was frozen to the spot in fear.

‘We need to tell the grown-ups!’ Ash yelled, but he needn’t have bothered. A lookout on the watchtower above had already seen the commotion.

‘LURKERS!’ he bellowed. ‘HUNTERS, TO THE BATTLEMENTS!’



Meanwhile the Lurkers were nearly upon Ryse, who simply stood there, whimpering in terror.

‘Ryse, RUN!’ Ash yelled at the top of his voice. This seemed to snap Ryse out of his trance. He dropped the ball and began to sprint, trying his hardest to skirt round the approaching Lurkers. Suddenly a hungry, violent noise grew, echoing across the plain, terrifying in its fury. It was the Song of the Lurkers. Harsh ragged howls and screeches pierced Ash’s ears, and his belly gave a sickening lurch as he felt the hateful emotions of the Leviathans. This was a war Song.

‘HUMAN. CATCH. KILL.’”

(Extract from **Frostheart**, by Jamie Littler, published by Puffin)



Illustrations: Jamie Littler