

MENTOR TEXT – BOOKLET 10

The sun was just starting to get hot as my little canoe glided across the smooth water of the lagoon. I was fishing for my family, trying to catch some snapper for our dinner. The water was so clear I could see little silver fish darting below. It was peaceful and quiet, just the gentle splash of my paddle and the chirping of birds in the trees along the shore.

Suddenly, the peaceful surroundings was shattered by loud cries. They sounded scared and frantic. I stopped paddling and listened carefully. The cries were definitely coming from the direction of my village. Then, I saw it: thick, grey smoke rising above the trees. My heart started to thump really fast. Black smoke usually meant trouble. I knew I had to get back to my village as quickly as possible. I paddled with all my might, my arms aching, but I didn't stop. When I finally reached the shore near our village, I saw what had happened.

A fire had broken out in one of the houses near the edge of the village! People were running around, shouting and trying to pour water on the flames with buckets from the river. Yet, the fire continued to spread quickly, devouring the dry roofs of neighbouring houses. I jumped out of my canoe and ran towards the chaos. My mom saw me, and her face was worried, but she told me to stay back. I couldn't just stand there so I looked around to see how I could help. I saw some of the younger children scared and huddled together, away from their parents who were fighting the fire.

I remembered what my grandfather had taught me about staying calm in an emergency. I went over to the children and tried to comfort them, telling them it would be okay. Then, I had an idea. Our canoes were down by the lagoon, away from the fire. I told some of the older children to follow me. Together, we ran towards the canoes with the younger children. We helped the younger children get into the canoes, one by one, and took them to safety across the water.

It took a few trips, but we managed to get all the children away from the smoke and the flames. By the time the fire was finally put using water from the river, some houses were damaged, but thankfully, no one was seriously hurt. My family was so relieved to see me safe, and they were proud that I helped the younger children get to safety. Even though it was a scary day, I was glad I was there to use my canoe to help my village in a time of need.