

Finding orca by Minna Bulloch

Chapter 1:

Hello, my name is Dorothea, I am 17 years old and this is my book. My father, who knows a lot about books because he is a bookstore owner, told me that I need to present myself before I start telling my story. Here are a few facts about me. Number 1 is that I spend a lot of time thinking about orca whales because I find them fascinating. Number 2 is that I live on an island called San Juan. I have lived here for 890 weeks and 6 days. The San Juan Islands are an archipelago in the Pacific Northwest of the United States between the U.S. state of Washington and Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada. The San Juan Islands are part of Washington state and form the core of San Juan County. In the archipelago, four islands are accessible to vehicular and foot traffic via the Washington State Ferries system. I have only been out of the islands three times. The first time was when I was born, the second was when I had to visit my grandmother because she was going to die. And the last time was when I couldn't sleep so I tried to go all the way to Seattle to see the Ferris wheel and the ocean and the museum because I love the ocean and I love the museum and I couldn't sleep. Now I don't like leaving because it makes my head hurt when I think about how I got lost last time. Number 4 is that I have 2 older siblings, the first is my sister Marjorie who is 19 years old. Marjorie is mean to me so I don't like her most days. My other sibling is August, who is my brother. August is also 19 because Marjorie and August are twins which means they shared the same uterus during the same pregnancy. August is kinder and lazy so he spends more time with me when I'm home. I also have a pet orca. My mother explained to me that the orca wasn't a pet but a pet is something you look after and care for because you love it, and I love the orca and I make sure it doesn't get hurt. So for me, the orca is my pet. Number 5 is that I have a type of autism called Asperger's syndrome. This means that I lack interpersonal relationship skills and instincts. I have a hard time expressing my feelings. I often verbalize internal thoughts that most would keep private. My speech lacks pitch. I appear to lack empathy. I have a difficult time interacting with my peers. At least that's what everyone tells me.

Chapter 2:

This is the chapter I originally wanted to start my book with but when I asked my dad how to start a detective story he said that I should have an introduction before I present the hook. This is the part where I present the hook. This is the detective story about how the orca Inez disappeared. It was 12:07 in the afternoon on Tuesday, August 7th when I realized that Inez had disappeared. I go to the orca museum every day because I love orcas and they have devices that keep track of the orcas around the islands so that they can protect them from the evil people who try to capture them and exploit them and I also go because my mother works there. My favorite orcas are James, Betty, and Augustine. They are my favorite because I created a story in my mind that they have a dramatic love triangle like in the books my sister reads. Inez is the orca that gossips and tells all the other orcas about the love triangle drama. On Tuesday, August 7th, at 12:07 I looked at the board with all the information about the orcas and realized that Inez was gone.

Chapter 3:

I love orcas because people call them killer whales and I think that's a cool name.

They are everywhere. Orcas are in every ocean of the world, this fact makes me feel safe. I like that they would be with me wherever I go. They are very smart. They have the second-biggest brains among all ocean mammals and scientists have found that they are amazingly well-wired for sensing and analyzing their watery, three-dimensional environment. They are dolphins and dolphins are very smart. They are at the top of the food chain which means that they have no predators and are very powerful. I also like them because they seem to understand people, and are eager to cooperate and create bonds. The only cases where orcas harmed humans were in sea parks where the orcas are confined to a tiny pool and trained to entertain people. Even most experts say that these few cases of orcas hurting humans shouldn't be classified as attacks but rather a case of mistreatment getting out of hand. I think my passion and fascination for these animals come from a feeling of longing. I feel that I long to be more like them. I feel that I look up to them, and because they have always been a part of my life I find it very important to discover what happened to the orca Inez.

Chapter 4:

So far, we know this:

- I discovered that the orca wasn't on the board at the museum at 12:07 pm on Tuesday, August 7th. When I arrived at the museum I went to the board where we keep all the names and info on the orcas and I found one missing.
- The last time that I saw Inez on the board was on August 6th at 18:03 when I was leaving the museum with mom.
- the disappearance had to have happened between 18:03 on August 6th and 12:07 pm on August 7th

Chapter 5:

I like making lists. Making lists makes me feel calm and helps me organize my thoughts. I have a list for everything.

- wake up at 7:45
- get dressed at 7:50
- go downstairs at 7:55
- eat breakfast at 7:57
- finish eating at 8:05
- brush my teeth at 8:06
- wash my face at 8:07
- go downstairs at 8:08
- put my shoes on at 8:10
- go to the car at 8:11
- drive to the bookstore which takes 10 minutes
- get to the bookstore at 8:21
- leave the bookstore at 12:00
- dad takes me to the museum to stay with mom at the museum at 12:03

- stay at the museum with mom until 18:05
- drive home
- get home at 18:16
- eat dinner at 18:31
- finish eating at 18: 47
- walk to watch orcas for 37 minutes
- come back to the house at 19: 24
- go to my room to write in my journal until 20:07 (which I'm doing right now because this is my journal, where I'm supposed to write about what I do everyday and parts of my days that I found interesting and want to remember even though I remember everything anyways)
- read my book until 20:57
- go to bed at 21:01 but sometimes later because sometimes I can't shut my brain off and it keeps me from falling asleep

That's an example of a list, that's my everyday list. My dad printed it out for me so I can't check things off the list every day so that I feel organized. My favorite part of the day is looking for orcas.

Every day, at 18:51 I walk out of our house and down to the edge of the property where we have little beaches and rocks that I sit on. I sit on my favorite rock that is flat and comfortable because there aren't any spiky things on the ground that bother me and touch my butt. Mom and dad built a bench for me but it's not very comfortable so I don't like to sit there. When I'm down on that rock, at the edge of the pacific ocean, and look out at the horizon, waiting to hear the whistling and splashing sounds that the orcas make. Sometimes I don't see any of the orcas. That makes me sad. Those are the days that I don't journal or read before sleeping and I don't talk or eat anything until I go to the museum and look at the board to make sure all the orcas are still on the board. Most days I do see them and that makes me happy and excited. My mom says that I shouldn't be sad when I don't hear or see them and I shouldn't worry because the ocean is very big and we know they are alive and well with the board at the museum. I know that when I don't see them, they are still well but sometimes I start thinking about all the evil people who capture them and exploit them and it makes my stomach feel empty and my head starts to feel tight like it's getting really small and I start thinking that my brain won't have enough room inside my head.

Chapter 6:

Today I went to the bookstore and when I got to the museum I saw that Inez's card was still missing so I decided that I should solve what happened. I don't go to school like all the other kids. My whole life I have been homeschooled by my mom and my dad. I don't have any friends but sometimes I talk to the visitors at the bookstore or the museum. I spend every day with my parents. The morning with dad at the bookstore where I stay in the cushion area because no one bothers me. Sometimes dad lets me try to handle things in the store as my siblings do but he says they're harder for me. When I get to the museum I do the same and sometimes I get to explain things to the visitors and mom says that it's an exercise for me to help me in social situations. She says that if I ever get nervous talking to someone, I should think of them as a visitor at the museum who is asking me a question about orcas that I need to

answer. It's hard for me to imagine that though because they aren't visitors at the museum and we aren't talking about orcas.

Chapter 7:

The first step in the finding orca project is ruling out as many people as possible. First I talked to my mom. I saw her at the cashier and no one was visiting the museum so I went to talk to her. She was surprised when I started talking to her because I usually don't. But then I told her about Inez. "oh sweetie I saw that but you know the board is only there for visitors to see. I explained to you that the research facility had all the current information. Inez's card probably fell off or one of the visitors took it as a memory" she said. "why would a visitor take the paper that was presenting Inez to everyone, that's against the rules"

"yes, it is". I then asked, "how do you know Inez is ok? What if someone took her and captured her in a marine park?"

"If something bad happened to her, we would know. Dorothea, everything is going to be ok. Ok?" She said, trying to reassure me.

"ok."

I know she wasn't lying because I know my mom cares about the orcas. Even more than me! But whoever took that paper needs to be punished and they need to learn their lesson so I'm going to find out who it is.

Later when we picked dad, Marjorie, and August up from the bookstore. In the car, I had to wear my headphones because the sound of the car driving against the road makes me want to scream. When we arrived home, we started eating dinner. We were eating pasta with vegetables on the side. It wasn't my favorite thing to eat so I stopped and decided to question the rest of my family on their whereabouts on Tuesday.

"Can everyone tell me where they were between Monday, August 6th at 18:51 and Tuesday, August 7th at 12:07 pm?" I asked.

"How the hell am I supposed to know where I was at those exact times?" Said, Marjorie

To that, I suggested that she should start journaling because it helps remember everything you do during the day and she got angry at me and called me an idiot before leaving the table.

"Marjorie!" exclaimed mom and dad in unison

August then spoke up and said, "Dorothea, between 6:51 pm and 12:07 pm on August 7th I was in bed or at home reading Daisy jones and the six by Taylor Jenkins read, why do you want to know where we all were?"

"I can't tell you just yet, I need to know where everyone was!"

My dad sat up and started " I went to bed right after saying goodnight to you at around 9:00 pm and woke up right before you did. I went to work with you and didn't leave the store until lunchtime when mom came to pick you up. Is that good? Can you tell us what this is about?"

"Yes thank you and no I need moms answer"

"Ok, ok! same as dad, went to bed after you did and woke up at 7:00am to start making breakfast and have coffee with dad. I left the house with you and your dad and walked to the museum from the store, and started my shift at 8:30 am. I did all of my usual tasks around the museum like welcoming

visitors, I think it was a slow day so not that many people came in that day and I mostly stayed at the cash register putting in orders for the merchandise.”

“Ok, were there any unusual people that came in that day”

“Umm, Marjorie did actually, she came in during her break at the store and said she wanted to say hi and come look around since she hadn’t been in in a long time”

“When was her break?”

“I think it must have been at around 10:00 to 10:15 that morning. Why are you so interested in where we all were on Tuesday honey?”

This information had changed everything, I knew that I needed to talk to Marjorie and find out why she would go to the museum. She always says she hates orcas, which I remember specifically because she gets really angry when I talk about them. I left the table and walked to Marjorie's room. I heard mom call out to me as I walked up the steps. Marjorie stays on the top floor of our house so I was quite tired when I reached her door. I knocked and she yelled “what the hell do you want Dorothea, I don't want to participate in your little game”

I didn't understand why she thought I was playing a game but I needed to know why she came to the museum so I opened the door and asked “why did you come to the museum during your break Marjorie, you hate orcas and you hate the museum so why did you come?”

“It's not the orcas or the museum that I hate, it's you and your constant obsession over some animal who thinks killing is a game”

“you have never listened to anything I've told you, they are very interesting animals, why were you at the museum Marjorie?”

“Dorothea, get out! I don't want to talk to you, please just leave me alone”

This made me so angry that I started to scream, I don't know why but I was screaming as loud as I could and I didn't stop until I felt Marjorie push me as she ran past me.

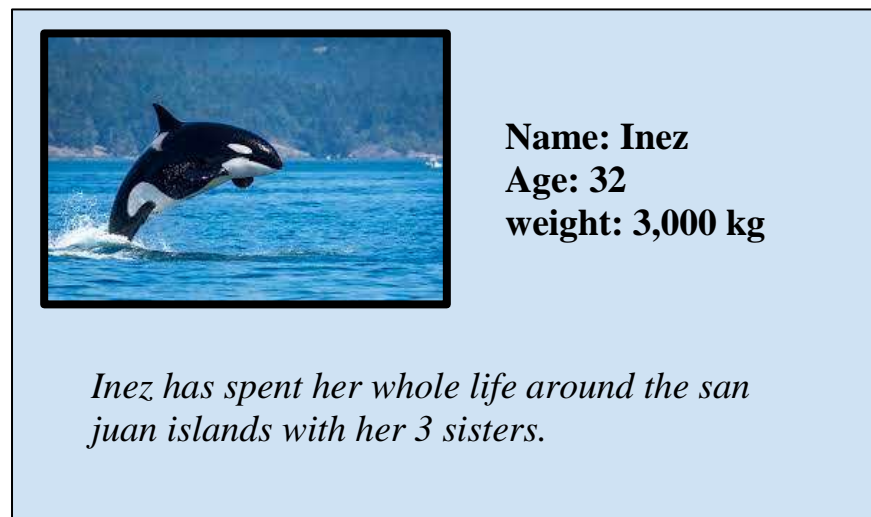
Chapter 8:

As I woke up the next day, I realized my head hurt but I couldn't remember everything from last night and I didn't understand why I was in my parent's bedroom. I looked over to see Marjorie sitting in the reading chair but when she saw me, she got up and left. Her face looked twisted, unlike how it usually does but I couldn't quite figure it out. Mom and dad came and explained that I had taken a fall after Marjorie passed me and that the doctor advised me to stay in bed for a little while before going out. They told me they were going to work with Marjorie but August would stay with me and call them if I needed anything. Before mom left, I asked her to check on Inez. As I heard their car leave I started to feel sick because I was thinking about Inez and how she wasn't up on the board anymore and Marjorie never explained why she went to the museum. But then I realized she was gone. I got out of bed and stood there for 10 minutes because I was waiting for my head to stop hurting. Finally, I climbed up the stairs to where her room was. As I walked in, everything looked normal and I didn't know what to do. I started lifting things because, in detective books, the protagonists usually look under things. After 7 minutes I found a notebook under her bed. At first, I thought it would be a journal and even though I knew I should never read someone else's diary, I opened it and found a list of numbers. it looked like this:

1. (317) 585-5961
2. (378) 296-2472
3. (958) 273-6975
4. (246) 545-6143
5. (797) 946-5016
6. (371) 328-2891
7. (202) 609-9576
8. (751) 336-5848

They looked like phone numbers. I continued flipping through the pages and as I was putting it back, a thick rectangular piece of paper fell out. I picked it up and saw that the card was Inez'

Chapter 9: the card looked like this:



Chapter 10:

I was still staring at the card when I heard August calling my name. I got up, still holding onto the tiny piece of paper as I walked down.

“Dorothea, get in here, mom texted saying something happened to one of the orcas!”

“What did she say” I said feeling like my heart was beating faster than usual, I think that means that I was either scared or worried

“she said the research facility caught a private orca poaching group working on capturing Inez, she says she needs to talk to you”

I reached over to take the phone, my breathing was very fast so I had to use the breathing exercise that my dad said to use when this happened. I heard my mom on the phone, it sounded like she was talking to someone off the phone, I heard her say “We need to check the camera footage” and “we can't let them do this”

I called her name and she started speaking into the phone again. “Dorothea, how are you feeling? Inez might be in trouble, the research facility just called to tell us her tracker has been malfunctioning, what do you know about her card? Did you find anything out?”

“I found the card”

“What?! where?”

I thought about telling her about Marjorie but I wanted to confront her first so I hung up.

“Dorothea” yelled August “Why did you hang up?”

“Because I need to talk to Marjorie, can you take me to her?”

“What, why? you're supposed to be resting” he said with a sigh.

“ Please august”

“Ok ok but you owe me a 30-minute nap period”

We got in the car and it was 10:07 am. We drove and we got to the bookstore at 10:28 am. I got out of the car and walked 18 steps until I got to the door. I opened it, covering my ears so I wouldn't hear the bell. I spotted her as she looked up and noticed me walking towards her. She looked down at my hand and saw that I was holding Inez's card. “Did you go through my room, you rat?” she said.

“I'm not a rat, I am a human being and yes I did”

“you aren't allowed to do that, that's an invasion of my privacy Dorothea”

“Why do you have this card, I know Inez is in trouble, did you do something to her?”

“FINE, YES I DID!” she yelled as I felt dad coming to stand by my side.

“Marjorie, what is going on? Mom just called me about you doing something to an orca!” whispered dad, trying to remind everyone that we were still in the bookstore. I looked up at Marjorie, her eyes were moving around like she was looking at dad and then at me, dad, and then me, dad, and then at me. her mouth turned upside down like an angry face.



I watched her as she opened her mouth, her face seeming to get redder and redder before saying, “I've been working with an orca poaching organization for 5 months now.

Chapter 11:

I imagine this is what it feels like to go blind. I felt like if I opened my eyes I wouldn't see anything, it would just be blank. so I kept my eyes closed, blocking out everyone's voices. As I closed my eyes, instead of muffled yelling, I heard the sound of the ocean's waves and the splashing as the orcas jumped out of the water. Instead of seeing my father and my brother argue with my sister because she

has become cruel, I saw the color blue. not the obnoxious color blue, but the beautiful sparkling blue you see in the ocean. I saw the crops moving with the wind and the bright yellow sun turning into a warm, pink, and orange mix lowering itself under the ocean's water.

Chapter 12:

When I opened my eyes, it was dark out and I was sitting on the ground. Marjorie had a red face and tears were rolling down her cheeks as if she were to be sad which didn't make sense because how could she be sad? She was evil. As I watched her cry for 12 minutes, no one noticed I opened my eyes. Then, Marjorie turned to me and tried to start talking but before she could open her mouth, mother interrupted “Dorothea honey I know you are upset with your sister, and we understand that but you should know that we have talked to her for a long time while you rested and she explained everything and helped us call off the capturing of Inez. They found her unharmed and rebooted her monitor. I just want you to understand that although Marjorie did some very bad things, she might deserve a second chance, will you listen to her?”

I paused for 31 seconds to consider everything she said and decided “yes I will listen to what Marjorie has to say to excuse her horrifying mistakes.”

“Dorothea-” started mom before Marjorie intervened “no, it's ok mom, I deserve that”

She slowly moved to sit down in front of me and said, “Dorothea, I'm sorry for what I almost did, I have learned from my mistakes and I have realized why I did all those terrible things. I don't mean to excuse them but as I discussed everything with mom, dad, and August, I realized that it might help you understand why I did them. As you know, I graduated high school last year and I'm starting my second year of college soon so I have been very stressed lately because I have no idea what I want my future to look like. I found myself feeling jealous that you were so passionate about so many things, like orcas! you never stop talking about them and I admire that, I truly do, but at the time I was envious. I wanted to do something. I thought for some reason that it would make me feel better but now I realize that hurting others doesn't make you hurt any less. Dorothea, I want you to please understand that if anyone ever hurts you, it's probably because they are hurting inside and want to take out their anger on you. I know it's hard for you to listen to me right now, I understand that. but I hope one day you can forgive me because I truly am sorry for everything I have done. I decided to join you in mom at the museum to show you how much I regret it all. I hope you can accept this because I might need you to re-explain all your orca facts to me.”

Chapter 13:

I stopped writing after that day because the case was solved. I found out what was happening to Inez and who was behind it. It's been 278 days and Marjorie has worked on regaining everyone's respect

and trust. She helped call out the secret organization and they got in trouble. She has been working on figuring her future out, one step at a time.