**3c Page 39 READING TEXT**

Intermediate Student’s Book

Life

Love and death in the sea

The sea has almost killed me a couple of times. It wasn’t her fault; it was mine, for not respecting her. I still remember the last time, a stormy day off the Costa Brava of Spain, in early summer 2008. Every time I think about it, my heart races and my guts jump to my throat.

The cove where I used to swim every day was hit by a storm with strong eastern winds. The turquoise, transparent waters of summer quickly transformed into a dirty soup of sand and cold grey water. Unfriendly waves were breaking in chaotic patterns. But beyond the surf zone the sea seemed swimmable. In a moment of Catalan bravado, I put on my swimming suit, mask and fins, and got into the water. It was crazy, but I did it. I swallowed mouthfuls of sand and salt while I was trying to break through the surf zone. Unpleasantly fighting, I swam – I still don’t know why – for twenty minutes. The storm got worse and I decided to call it a day. I turned to swim back. Then I realised I couldn’t get to the beach.

Waves were breaking all around me. I tried to bodysurf one wave to the shore, but it collapsed suddenly and took me down under the water. When I surfaced to take a breath, I turned around and a second wave hit me just as hard, taking me down again. I hit the sandy bottom. I pushed myself up, but once again, waves were coming and I couldn’t rest or breathe. I was caught in the surf zone, with waves pushing me out and a current pulling me in. I wasn’t getting any closer to the beach.

The sea is our mother, sister and home, and as such I love her. We get so much from the sea. She gives us life, oxygen, food. She regulates the climate and she in the sea makes ours a wonderful life. We should thank the sea, the ocean, every day. Without the ocean and all the life in it, our planet would be much poorer. But on this day, I was having a hard time feeling grateful.

After a few more attempts, I decided to let myself go and give up the fight. I took a deep breath. The next wave took me down and forward. I hit the bottom with my back. I rolled over, hit my head, and after what seemed the longest minute of my life, I found myself lying in a foot of water. I scrambled out of the water and onto the beach. I’d got out, but I had lost my mask, snorkel and one fin. My whole body was sore, as if a gang of boxers had punched me viciously. I sat on the beach, breathless, watching the sea and feeling lucky to be alive. I walked back home slowly, ears down like a beaten dog.

Some days the sea wants us and some days she doesn’t. Since that day, I have not been to the sea when she does not want me. I have learned my lesson. I now thank the sea every day the surface is calm, the waters are clear and diving is easy. And I ask for forgiveness every time I dive and see no fish.

bravado (n) /brəˈvɑː.dəʊ/ false bravery

cove (n) /kəʊv/ a small bay on the coast

gang (n) /gaŋ/ a group of people, usually has a

negative meaning

grateful (adj) /ˈgreɪtfəl/ thankful and appreciative

guts (n) /gʌts/ stomach or intestines

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