

### **UNDER A POLE STAR READING GROUP QUESTIONS**

- 1) Do you think Flora realises or enjoys her status as a role model/ heroine for women like Mindy?
- 2) Do you think a whaling ship is a suitable place to bring up a child? Would you have enjoyed living on a ship for months at a time at the age of twelve? How about the whaling aspect – blood, blubber and oil everywhere, and the horrible smell?
- 3) Flora first starts to become aware of her sexuality on board the *Vega*, but it is suggested that it is something she has always been in touch with without openly acknowledging. Does this surprise you?
- 4) When they are discussing star names, Flora's father suggests people invented monsters because they had never been whaling. Do you think it's true that large or strange-looking animals like whales satisfy that need for monsters, or would people have invented them anyway?
- 5) What did you think of the whaling scenes? Do you think whaling, in an age before petrol or widespread gas light, was justified?
- 6) We learn a lot about ice in these chapters, from weeping icebergs to ice flowers to the 'concrete sea', not to mention the strange sounds 'like a menagerie of animals in various stages of distress'. Did this versatility come as a surprise to you? Has it affected how you picture the Arctic?
- 7) When the whalers are stranded in the ice for the winter, they form a community despite being in competition with each other during the whaling season. Did this surprise you?