Darting out from the pitch-black shadows in a chorus of hisses, a tangled cluster of ravenous predators slithered over one another, surveying their surroundings with piercing eyes. Tasting the air with forked, blood-red tongues, some began to glide over the rocky terrain in search of their next victim.

Standing, frozen, seeming stiller than a statue, the iguana could only wait. It dared not move, as its eyes flicked back towards the grinding sound of the grains of sand groaning beneath the snake’s body. Fleeing now would only attract attention, but the snake was looming closer and closer (approaching from behind). Fighting against every natural instinct, the iguana remained motionless, simultaneously paralysed by the desire to survive and the fear of the advancing predator. One snake passed. The hatchling could breath a brief sigh of relief… but there was another. The iguana forced itself to control its nerves: moving was simply not an option. Closer and closer the sinister snake slithered until . . .

TOO CLOSE! The iguana felt the predator’s head glance against its whip-like tail, which forced it abandon its initial plan to appear lifeless and instead erupt with a powerful burst of energy to run for its life. Surging forwards, its four scrawny legs desperately scrambling in all directions, the iguana bolted towards the relative safety of the blackened rocks, as snake after snake emerged out of nowhere to join the pursuit. It needed to be off of the flat sand that was easy for the snakes to glide over; it needed to be on the jagged rocks that could easily cause the snakes to fall; it needed the security that higher ground would offer.

CRUNCH! As the iguana had sharply turned to ascend the rocks, it had been met with a perfectly camouflaged snake that had seized its opportunity. Within milliseconds, the snake had manoeuvred itself into a tight knot around the iguana – aiming to constrict the air out of its lungs and then feast upon the lifeless body. Unwilling to submit to the predator’s wishes, the iguana doggedly forced itself forwards – desperately battling against the scaly constraints that were tightening their grasp.

It worked. A gap appeared as the iguana now fled for the rocks, swiftly digging its razor-sharp claws into the jagged rockface and using its tail to propel itself over the perilous gaps – one wrong step would be fatal. To the hatchling’s left, a ferocious snake lunged forward, its jaw gaping to reveal two immense fangs ready to sink into the iguana’s flesh. Fortunately, the iguana skilfully evaded the attack, but the snake was still mere centimetres behind it. Frantically scurrying, clambering and leaping up and up and up, the iguana made one final attempt to thwart its persistent enemy and flung itself (over a deep, treacherous gap) onto a barnacle-enveloped boulder.

Hearing the hiss that had been haunting him vanish into the depths of the rocks, the iguana marvelled at its miraculous escape.