Finch & Co



BERING SEA ESKIMO WALRUS IVORY AMULETIC DRAG HANDLE

A RARE BERING SEA ESKIMO WALRUS IVORY AMULETIC DRAG HANDLE CARVED WITH A TRANSFORMATION FIGURE OF A TOOTHY POLAR BEAR BACKED WITH A HUMAN FACE

EARLY 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 2.5CM HIGH, 2CM WIDE, 4.5CM DEEP - 1 INS HIGH, ¾ INS WIDE, 1¾ INS DEEP

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LITERATURE

IN WINTER, GAME IS BROUGHT HOME OVER THE ICE WITH THE AID OF DRAG HANDLES. BREATHING HOLE SEALING BEGINS AS SOON AS THE ICE IS FIRM ENOUGH FOR TRAVEL. EQUIPPED WITH A LIGHT TOGGLING HARPOON FITTED WITH AN ICE PICK, AND WEARING ICE CREEPERS TO KEEP HIM FROM SLIPPING ON SMOOTH NEW ICE, A HUNTER SETS OUT TO EXPLORE FOR SEAL BREATHING HOLES. THESE ARE OFTEN VISIBLE FROM A DISTANCE BY THEIR DOMED APPEARANCE, THE RESULT OF FROZEN SPRAY AND MOISTURE FROM THE SEALS' BREATH. FINDING ONE, THE HUNTER THRUSTS A LONG STALK OF GRASS DOWN THROUGH THE DOME UNTIL IT COMES TO REST FLOATING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE HOLE BELOW. WHEN THE SEAL APPROACHES, THE HUNTER DETECTS ITS PRESENCE BY THE SOUND OF RISING BUBBLES. HE STEADIES HIMSELF AND WHEN THE STRAW BEGINS TO RISE, HE STRIKES DOWNWARD THROUGH THE SNOW DOME.

WHEN THE SEAL HAS EXPIRED, HE ENLARGES THE HOLE, HAULS THE SEAL ONTO THE ICE AND DRAGS IT HOME USING A SHORT TOW LINE WITH AN AMULETIC HANDLE SUCH AS THIS EXAMPLE TO HELP APPEASE THE SEAL'S SPIRIT.