

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

Island of the Blue Dolphins

by Scott O'Dell

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OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, the student will be able to:

1. define and give examples of:
simile
metaphor
foreshadowing
inference
2. identify the central themes of this novel, such as dealing with survival, loneliness, courage, family relationships, and cultural differences.
3. recognize and appreciate the use of first-person narrative style.
4. identify examples from the book that illustrate character traits such as courage, determination, ingenuity, and resourcefulness.
5. recognize and appreciate the use of imagery in a work of literature.
6. find topics of interest for further research after reading this book.

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Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. One of the major themes of this book is dealing with survival. How does Karana use the various resources around her to help her survive?
2. What does Karana's reaction to her brother's being left behind on the island reveal about her sense of family relationships?
3. Karana displays much courage, honor, and resourcefulness living alone on the island. Find examples from the book that describe how these traits aid in her struggle to survive.
4. There are many different kinds of plant and animal life, both from the land and the sea, described in this novel. Discuss several ways in which the life on the island provides Karana with shelter, clothing, food, tools, weapons, and even medicine.
5. Another major theme of this book is dealing with loneliness. How does Karana cope with being the only person on the island?
6. Karana interacts with many animals during her long years alone. How do they aid her in coping with loneliness?
7. How does the division of labor between the men and women of the tribe affect Karana once she is alone on the island?
8. Several life-threatening events happen during Karana's time on the island. Find three such events and describe how Karana survives.
9. Oftentimes, Karana feels happy and content living alone. Find passages from the novel that reflect this happiness. How do these passages make you feel?
10. Later in the novel, Karana shares a unique experience with an Aleut girl. How does their interaction differ from those described earlier between Karana's tribe and the Aleuts?

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Study Guide Student Copy

CHAPTER 1

parley – to confer with an enemy

mesa – flat, open grasslands

1. As the opening scene of the book unfolds, what is actually occurring?
2. What literary device does O'Dell employ in his descriptions of the ship and the boy?
3. What is the young girl's reaction upon seeing the ship approach her island?
4. Who has arrived on the ship and how are they described?
5. Why was Karana, the young girl, surprised when her father, the Chief, tells the stranger his "real name"?
6. What is the purpose of the visit from the Aleuts and the Russian known as Captain Orlov?
7. What does the reader learn about previous visits from Aleut hunters to this island?
8. What type of narrator is employed in the story?

CHAPTER 5

shirkers – those who avoid their obligations

1. How many adult males were alive before the battle? How many men died?
2. How do the village handle the dead after the battle?
3. Who is Kimki? What does he tell the tribe?
4. What is the job that Karana is given?
5. Are there other dangers upon this island? If so, what are they?
6. How do the villagers fare with the new tasks of hunting and gathering? Find one sentence in this chapter that answers this question.
7. Do the men welcome the help given by the women of the tribe?
8. How is the mood of the village changed through the winter months?
9. What is Kimki's decision after the winter passes into spring?

CHAPTER 10

omen – an occurrence that is believed to foretell or predict future events

1. After the first winter and spring alone on the island, what is Karana's foremost feeling as this chapter opens?
2. How does Karana fare with fending off the wild dogs around her camp?
3. What is the next big decision Karana makes concerning her stay on the island? Find the quote that describes her feelings about this decision.
4. Why is the canoe difficult for Karana to manage by herself?
5. When does Karana feel afraid?
6. What makes Karana less afraid? Why?
7. Karana's canoe trip away from the island is unsuccessful. What happens that makes her decide to return to the island?

CHAPTER 15

1. How does Karana know that the leader of the pack of wild dogs did not come from the island?
2. What is Karana's first tactic in killing the leader of the pack and the others?
3. How does Karana fare in her attempts to kill the pack leader and the others?
4. Rather than finishing the job of killing the lead dog, what does Karana do instead?
5. What name does she give the dog? What does it mean?

CHAPTER 20

1. After collecting two canoe loads of abalone and hanging them on branches to dry, how does Karana protect the food from the gulls?
2. Find the quote that describes Karana's success in surviving since her return to the island.
3. What does Karana do at Tall Rock?
4. After spotting a sea hawk fly out of one of the many caves on the island, Karana decides to visit this spot. What does she encounter within the cave?
5. What are these figures that Karana discovers? How do they make her feel?
6. Describe Karana's experience in the cave.
7. The day Karana kills the ten cormorants at Tall Rock is a fateful one. What happens? What does Karana do through the night?
8. Who is also with the Aleut hunters?

CHAPTER 25

1. What event occurs in this chapter that indicates much time has passed?
2. How does Karana mark the passage of time?
3. What does Rontu do before dying?
4. What does Karana do?
5. How does Karana honor her friend Rontu after his death?