

Island of the Blue Dolphins



Island of the Blue Dolphins

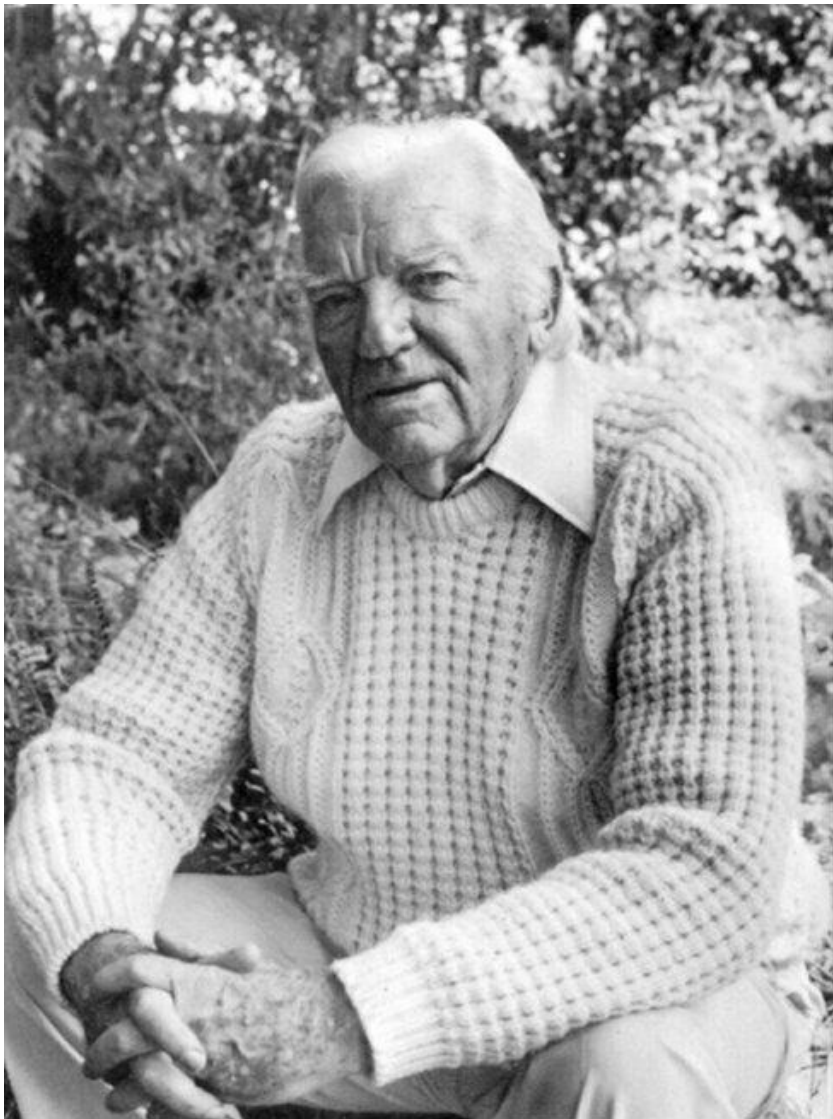
Island of the Blue Dolphins

By: Scott O'Dell

Scott O'Dell

Scott O'Dell had a fascinating life. Born in California in 1898, he was always fascinated by the sea. He did many different jobs before becoming a famous children's author. He worked as a soldier, on movie sets, and even served in World War I, although he didn't see combat. After the war, he worked in the movie industry in Los Angeles, doing things like reading scripts and building sets. But his real passion was writing.

O'Dell published his first book for adults in 1934, but it wasn't until much later in 1960 that he wrote «Island of the Blue Dolphins,» a story inspired by the true tale of a woman named Juana Maria, who lived alone on an island. Initially, O'Dell didn't plan for it to be a children's book, but his friend Maud Lovelace, who was a children's writer, encouraged him to make it one. The book was a huge success, winning many awards and becoming a bestseller.



Island of the Blue Dolphins

After «Island of the Blue Dolphins,» O'Dell focused on writing books for young people. He wrote a sequel called «Zia» and other popular children's novels like «Sing down the Moon» and «The Black Pearl.» He moved to New York with his wife in 1975 and continued writing until he passed away in 1989. His legacy lives on through his timeless stories that continue to captivate readers of all ages.

Themes

Forgiveness and trust

In «Island of the Blue Dolphins,» Karana is alone after her brother Ramo is killed. She faces many threats, including wild dogs and the fear of the Aleuts returning. Instead of seeking revenge, she learns to forgive and trust. This is especially shown in her relationship with Tutok, an Aleut girl. At first, Karana is suspicious because the Aleuts had harmed her people. However, over time, she realizes Tutok is kind and means no

harm. When Karana shares her secret name with Tutok, it shows she trusts her deeply, despite her past fears. This trust leads to a valuable friendship that Karana cherishes throughout the story.

Loneliness and companionship

In «Island of the Blue Dolphins,» Karana goes through different stages of loneliness on the island. When her brother Ramo is with her, she doesn't feel lonely because he is there, and she hopes for rescue. After Ramo is killed, she feels sad but still hopes to be saved. Her deepest loneliness comes during her first winter alone, as she loses hope of being rescued soon. She even tries to leave the island but returns, seeing it as her home.

Her loneliness gets a bit better as she gets used to the island, but it's still there. Meeting Rontu, a dog, gives her someone to talk to, but he can't talk back. When Karana meets Tutok, an Aleut girl, she realizes how lonely she had been because she finally has someone

Island of the Blue Dolphins

to talk with. When Tutok leaves, Karana feels the emptiness more strongly. This need for companionship is a main reason why Karana decides to leave the island and explore the unknown.

Moral Development

In «Island of the Blue Dolphins,» Karana's morals change a lot. At first, she follows her tribe's rules, like not making weapons. She is scared when she first makes weapons but gets braver over time. She even makes a spear for fun, showing she is becoming more independent.

Karana's friendship with Tutok, an Aleut girl, is another big change. Her tribe sees Aleuts as enemies, but Karana learns to trust Tutok and sees her as a friend. This shows Karana can think for herself.

Finally, Karana decides to stop killing animals, which is a big shift from her tribe's ways. She sees animals as like people and chooses not to harm them. Even though her tribe would think this is strange, she sticks

to her belief. These changes show Karana's growth and independence.

Motifs

Repetition

In «Island of the Blue Dolphins,» repetition is an important theme. Events from early in the story happen again later but with different results. For example, when Karana finds Rontu being attacked by wild dogs, it is similar to when her brother Ramo was killed by the same dogs. This repetition makes the reader feel the same emotions. By changing the outcomes, the author shows Karana's growth and changing situations, making the story more emotionally powerful.

Personification

In «Island of the Blue Dolphins,» Karana uses personification to describe the world around her, making it seem alive. For example, she describes waves as if they are giants fighting each other. She also gives human traits to animals, like saying Won-a-nee looks at

Island of the Blue Dolphins

her «reproachfully.» This language shows that Karana sees the world and animals as living beings, similar to people. This perspective becomes more important to her as the story progresses.

Symbols

Dolphins

In «Island of the Blue Dolphins,» dolphins are symbols of good luck and friendship. They appear twice in the story. The first time is when Karana is returning to her island after trying to leave. She believes the dolphins are a good sign and they help her feel less lonely. The second time is at the end when she leaves the island on a ship. The dolphins follow her again, suggesting good things will happen in her new home. The dolphins' presence both times shows they bring positive changes and hope to Karana's life.

Karana's secret name

In «Island of the Blue Dolphins,» Karana explains that secret names have special power. She doesn't

understand why her father told his secret name to a stranger. When her father, Chowig, is killed, people think it happened because he revealed his secret name to Captain Orlov. Sharing a secret name symbolizes trust. So, it is a big moment when Karana tells Tutok her secret name, showing she trusts her.

Tumaiyowit and the underworld

In «Island of the Blue Dolphins,» Tumaiyowit is a god who once lived on earth with Mukat. Mukat didn't want people to die, so he went angrily into an underworld, causing people to die. Tumaiyowit represents death and ancestry. When Karana explores caves under the island, it symbolizes Tumaiyowit's presence and the ancestors who live there.

The Mark of Maidenhood

In «Island of the Blue Dolphins,» the Mark of Maidenhood is a symbol of being unmarried. Ulape makes this mark on Karana's face when they leave the island. When Karana leaves the island years later, she

Island of the Blue Dolphins

also makes this mark. It symbolizes maturity and hope for a new life. For Karana, it also connects her to her tribe and reminds her of the day they left the island.

Plot Overview

«In *Island of the Blue Dolphins*,» Karana and her brother Ramo live peacefully until Aleut hunters arrive, leading to a deadly conflict. Ramo is killed, and Karana is left alone. She awaits rescue but decides to fend for herself when help doesn't arrive. She faces challenges, including wild dogs and the return of the Aleuts. Despite hardships, she befriends a dog, Rontu, and later an Aleut girl named Tutok. She builds a life on the island, caring for animals and surviving alone. Eventually, she leaves the island on a passing ship, ending her solitary journey.

Character List

Karana (Also Won-A-Pa-Lei) - Karana, also known as Won-A-Pa-Lei, is the main character in the story. She's twelve years old when the book starts and becomes

the sole survivor on the island for eighteen years. Despite being alone, she's resourceful and strong, learning to live off the land. While she adapts well to her surroundings, she still yearns for companionship.

Rontu - Rontu is the big gray dog leading a pack of wild dogs on the island. He's different from the others, with yellow eyes and gray fur. At first, he and Karana are enemies, but they become friends after Karana helps heal him from an injury.

Tutok - Tutok is an Aleut girl who arrives on the island with a hunting group. She discovers Karana's home, and they become friends. However, Tutok has to leave with her people eventually. Tutok's arrival reminds Karana of her loneliness on the island.

Ramo (Chief Tanyositlopai) - Ramo is Karana's younger brother, full of energy and pride in his heritage. He is confident and sometimes reckless, which leads to him being left behind when their tribe departs the island. His confidence also gets him into trouble with the wild dogs.

Island of the Blue Dolphins

The Aleuts - The Aleuts are another tribe that hunts otters on Ghalas-at. They cause conflict with Karana's tribe, leading to a deadly battle. Karana sees them as enemies at first but later befriends one of them. They arrive on the island in a boat with red sails.

Ulape - Karana's fourteen-year-old sister, Ulape likes jewelry and boys. Before she leaves the island, she paints the sign on her face that means she is unmarried. Later in the novel, Karana often finds herself wondering what happened to her sister.

Chowig - Chowig is the chief of Ghalas-at, known for his strength and leadership. He distrusts the Aleuts and refuses to let them exploit his people, leading to a conflict that results in his demise.

Captain Orlov - The Russian leader of the Aleut expedition to Ghalas-at, Orlov is snide and deceptive. He is profit-oriented and willing to take what he wants.

Kimki - Chosen as chief after Chowig is killed by the Aleuts, Kimki is an old and venerated member of the

tribe. It is he that goes out alone to prepare a new home for the people of Ghalas-at after their battle with the Aleuts.

Matasaip - Matasip takes over as chief in Kimki's absence, and is in charge the day everyone leaves the island. He is an effective leader, though not very important to the plot.

Nanko - A young man of the tribe that Karana's sister, Ulape, has a crush on. Nanko thought he saw Ramo board the boat the day Ramo and Karana are left behind, but is mistaken.

Tainor - One of the birds Karana tames. «Tainor» is the name of a boy Karana liked before she was stranded on the island.

Lurai - Another of the birds Karana tames. «Lurai» is the name Karana wishes she had had instead of Karana.

Mon-A-Nee (Later Won-A-Nee) - An otter that Karana finds injured after the Aleuts have left her island. Karana

Island of the Blue Dolphins

cares for Mon-a-nee until her returns to the sea, and later sees her with her babies playing in the ocean.

Rontu-Aru - Literally «son of Rontu,» this is Rontu's son, who Karana befriends after Rontu dies. Rontu-Aru is so similar to Rontu that Karana often forgets that they are not one in the same.

The White Men - White men from the country to the east. These people come to bring Karana's tribe away from Ghalas-at. Eighteen years later, a different group of white men take Karana, too. The White men's boat has white sails.

Chapter 1

Island of the Blue Dolphins opens with Karana's memory of the day the Aleut ship came to Ghalas-at. She and her brother Ramo spot the ship approaching the village. A group of the strangers lands on the shore, bringing with them Captain Orlov, a Russian who has come to the island to hunt otter. The chief of Karana's village, Chowig (who is Karana and Ramo's father), parleys with the Russian.

Karana wonders to herself why her father reveals his secret name when introducing himself to Orlov. Every member of Karana's tribe has two names: one they use in everyday life and one that they keep secret. If their second name is overused it will lose its magic. Karana's name for every day use is Won-a-pa-lei, meaning «the Girl with the Long Black Hair.» There is disagreement between Orlov and Chowig regarding a previous hunting trip that caused problems on Ghalas-at, though

Island of the Blue Dolphins

the details of those problems are not revealed. Chowig and Orlov finally agree that they will split the spoils of the hunting trip equally. Karana has been listening to their conversation from a spot on a cliff above the beach. Now, however, a rock falls from the cliff, and Karana, startled, runs back to the village before she can hear any more.

Open-ended questions:

1. How does Karana's observation of her father's interaction with Captain Orlov reflect her curiosity about tribal customs and the significance of secret names?
2. What might the disagreement between Chowig and Orlov regarding the previous hunting trip suggest about the history and tensions between the Aleuts and the people of Ghalas-at?
3. How does Karana's reaction to the falling rock symbolize her role as an observer of events that will shape the fate of her tribe?
4. What other details or events in Chapter 1 foreshadow future conflicts or developments in the story?

Complete the following sentences:

1. The presence of the Aleut ship and Captain Orlov on Ghalas-at creates a sense of for Karana and Ramo.
2. Karana's observation of her father revealing his secret name to Captain Orlov highlights the..... of these names within her tribe.
3. The agreement between Chowig and Orlov to split the spoils of the hunting trip equally suggests a fragile between the Aleuts and the people of Ghalas-at.

Quotations questions:

1. How does Karana's perspective on her secret name reflect her understanding of tribal customs and traditions? («Every member of Karana's tribe has two names...»)

Island of the Blue Dolphins

2. What might the falling rock symbolize in the context of Karana's observation of the interaction between Chowig and Orlov? («Now, however, a rock falls from the cliff...»)

Discuss questions:

1. How does the introduction of Captain Orlov and the Aleuts set the stage for future conflicts and developments in the story?
2. In what ways does Karana's curiosity about her father's interaction with Captain Orlov reveal her growing awareness of the complexities of tribal customs and relationships?