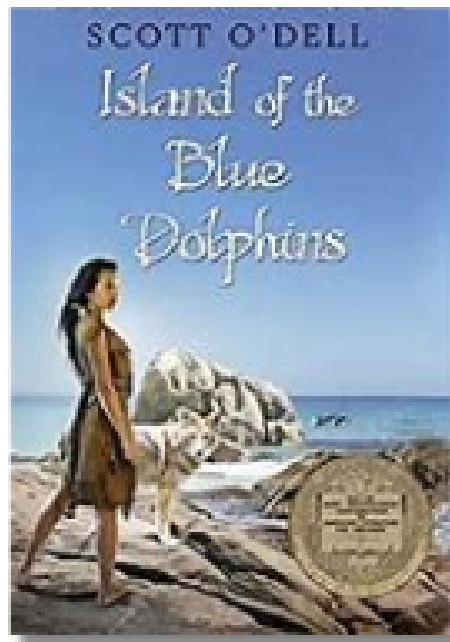


# ISLAND OF THE BLUE DOLPHINS

*Scott O'Dell*



## ***RESOURCE GUIDE***

***Reading + Writing + Analysis***

**NO PREP**

**PRINT & GO**

**Upper Elementary**

# About the Text

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*Island of the Blue Dolphins* is a historical fiction novel based on the true story of a Native American girl who is left alone on an island off the coast of California. The story follows Karana as she learns to survive on her own after her tribe leaves the island. She must find food, build shelter, and protect herself from wild animals. The novel highlights themes of survival, resilience, and independence.

# About the Author

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Scott O'Dell was an American author best known for writing historical fiction for young readers. He wrote over 25 books and is especially famous for *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, which won the Newbery Medal in 1961. O'Dell often wrote about strong female characters and survival stories. His work was inspired by real historical events and locations.

# Section Breakdown

Section 1: Chapters 1–5

- Life on the Island and the Arrival of the Aleuts

Section 2: Chapters 6–10

- Karana Is Left Behind

Section 3: Chapters 11–15

- Learning to Survive Alone

Section 4: Chapters 16–20

- Building a New Life

Section 5: Chapters 21–25

- Friendship, Growth, and Independence

Section 6: Chapters 26–29

- Rescue and Reflection

## Key Themes

- Survival and self-reliance
- Courage and perseverance
- Loneliness and isolation
- Friendship and compassion
- Adaptation and resilience
- Respect for nature

## Before You Read Questions

1. What skills would you need to survive alone on an island?
2. How do people overcome loneliness?
3. What can nature teach us about survival?
4. Why is perseverance important during difficult situations?
5. How can friendships change a person's life?

# *Comprehension Questions:*

## *SECTION 1*

1. Where does Karana live at the beginning of the novel?
2. Why do the Aleut hunters come to the island?
3. What conflict develops between the Aleuts and Karana's tribe?
4. What happens to Karana's father, Chief Chowig?
5. How does the tribe respond after the conflict?

# Quick Discussion

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## Time to Reflect

*How do major losses affect a community's ability to make decisions?*

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# *Comprehension Questions*

## *SECTION 2*

1. Why does the tribe decide to leave the island?

2. Why does Karana jump from the ship?

3. Who is Ramo?

4. What happens to Ramo after the tribe departs?

5. How does Karana react to being alone?

# *Quick Discussion*

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## **Time to Reflect**

*What would be the most difficult part of suddenly being completely alone?*

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# *Comprehension Questions*

## *SECTION 3*

1. Why does Karana decide to build a stronger shelter?

2. How does she gather food and supplies?

3. What dangers does she face while living alone?

4. Why does she begin making weapons?

5. How does Karana become more confident during this section?

# Quick Discussion

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## Time to Reflect

*Why is problem-solving an important survival skill?*

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# *Comprehension Questions*

## *SECTION 4*

1. What motivates Karana to hunt the wild dogs?

2. How does she meet Rontu?

3. Why does Karana decide not to kill Rontu?

4. How does Rontu's presence change Karana's life?

5. What new skills does Karana develop?

# Quick Discussion

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## Time to Reflect

*How can showing kindness change a difficult situation?*

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# *Comprehension Questions*

## *SECTION 5*

1. What role does Rontu play in Karana's life?

2. How does Karana interact with other animals on the island?

3. How does Karana demonstrate independence?

4. What changes occur in her daily routine?

5. What evidence shows that she has adapted to island life?

# Quick Discussion

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## Time to Reflect

*How can friendships help people overcome loneliness?*

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# *Comprehension Questions*

## *SECTION 6*

1. What happens when ships begin returning to the island?

2. Why is Karana hesitant about leaving?

3. What memories does Karana reflect upon?

4. How has Karana changed since the beginning of the story?

5. What happens at the end of the novel?

# Quick Discussion

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## Time to Reflect

*How do difficult experiences help shape a person's character?*

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# *Understanding the Big Ideas*

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## **This story explores:**

- Strength often comes from overcoming challenges.
- Humans can adapt to difficult environments.
- Courage is shown through actions, not the absence of fear.
- Connections with others, including animals, can reduce loneliness.
- Independence develops through experience and perseverance.

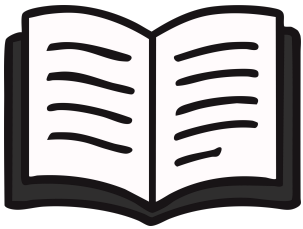
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***Karana experiences many challenges while living alone on the island. Write an essay explaining how she changes from the beginning of the novel to the end. Use evidence from the story to show how she becomes more independent, resilient, and confident.***

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# Extension Activity

**Choose one activity to complete.**



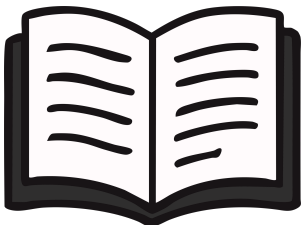
## 1. Survival Guide

Create a survival guide using the skills and strategies Karana uses throughout the novel.



## 2. Island Journal

Write five journal entries from Karana's perspective describing important events in the story.



## 3. Research Activity

Research the true story of the "Lost Woman of San Nicolas Island" and compare it to the novel.

# Final Project

## Choose One

### 1. Island Map Project

Design and label a detailed map of Karana's island showing important locations from the story.

### 2. Character Growth Timeline

Create a timeline showing how Karana changes throughout the novel.

### 3. Survival Shelter Model

Build a model of the shelter Karana creates and explain how it helps her survive.

# Vocabulary

1. Abandon – to leave behind permanently.
2. Isolation – being separated from other people.
3. Perseverance – continuing despite difficulties.
4. Resourceful – able to solve problems using available resources.
5. Harpoon – a spear used to catch fish or sea animals.
6. Shelter – a place that provides protection from danger or weather.
7. Lagoon – a shallow body of water separated from the ocean.
8. Tame – to train a wild animal to become less fearful of humans.
9. Survival – continuing to live despite difficult conditions.
10. Resilience – the ability to recover from challenges and hardships.