

Island of the Blue Dolphin Questions

1. Karana goes through various stages of loneliness during her time on Ghalas-at. Discuss each of these. What is different about each of these stages? What is the same? What conclusions can you draw from these similarities and differences?
2. At the beginning of *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, Karana's beliefs and attitudes are consistent with those of her people. By the end of the novel, however, she has developed a moral code somewhat different from that held by the former inhabitants of Ghalas-at. How and why did this change occur?
3. When Karana is left alone on Ghalas-at, she is only twelve years old. As the novel progresses, she grows and changes in many ways, but in many ways stays the same. Discuss how Karana grows throughout *Island of the Blue Dolphins*.
4. Several scenes in *Island of the Blue Dolphins* are repeated or mimicked later in the story. Choose one or two of these scenes and discuss its significance. How are the two scenes connected? How does O'Dell's use of repetition add to the meaning of the scene? What does this repetition imply in regards to plot development?
5. Karana is very wary of outsiders and intruders to her island. Discuss the idea of trust in *Island of the Blue Dolphins*. Is Karana trusting? Does she become more trusting later in the novel, or less so? What incidents show her trust or lack thereof?
6. *Island of the Blue Dolphins* chronicles the extraordinary story of one girl's survival. Karana must fend and provide for herself totally on her own. Describe and discuss her survival techniques. How is a twelve-year-old girl able to do this alone? What are her defeats and triumphs, her successes and sacrifices?

7. Discuss dolphins as a symbol in *Island of the Blue Dolphins*. What does the title of the novel suggest in light of this symbolism

8. Who comes to the island of the blue dolphins to hunt otter?

- (A) A Californian fur cartel
- (B) Settlers from Virginia hoping to open new trade routes with Karana's tribe
- (C) A Russian and a people known as the Aleuts
- (D) Hunters from Alaska

9. What is Karana's brother's name?

- (A) Rontu
- (B) Ramo
- (C) Chowig
- (D) Won-a-pa-lei

10. What happens when the Aleuts try to leave the island?

- (A) They get into a fight with Karana's people
- (B) They pay for the otter they have killed and make plans to return next year
- (C) They throw a party for the people of Ghalas-at to thank them for being so hospitable
- (D) They attack Karana's village in the night and kill many of her friends

11. Why do the people of Ghalas-at believe Chowig died?

- (A) Because he ate poisonous mushrooms
- (B) Because he swam too far away from the shore
- (C) Because he told his secret name to a stranger

12. Where does Kiki go in the spring after the Aleuts leave Ghalas-at?

- (A) To a land across the sea to the east
- (B) To attack the Aleuts
- (C) To find a new chief for the village

13. What does Ulape put on her face before she leaves the island/

- (A) The mark of her tribe
- (B) Lipstick to attract a boy she likes
- (C) A salve to protect her from sunburn
- (D) A mark that means she is unmarried

14. Where does Ramo go when everyone is on their way to the ship

- (A) Back to the village to get his spear
- (B) Ahead to the beach so he can be the first on the ship
- (C) To the spring to get water
- (D) Back to the spring to get his knife

15. Why does Karana end up back on the island?

- (A) She falls off the ship and washes ashore
- (B) The ship leaves her behind (they forget to take her with them)
- (C) She jumps off the ship to go back for her brother
- (D) She jumps off the ship to go back for her fishing spear

16. Who is in the village when Karana and her brother get back there after being left behind by the ship?

- (A) Chowig
- (B) Foxes
- (C) Matasaip
- (D) The wild dogs

17. What happens to Karana's brother when he goes out to get a canoe?

- (A) He gets lost on his way home and Karana has to go out and find him
- (B) He is killed by the wild dogs

- (C) He finds a new spring
- (D) He meets an Aleut girl

18. Why does Karana hesitate to make weapons?

- (A) Because the laws of her people forbid women to make weapons
- (B) Because she is afraid she will hurt herself
- (C) Because there are no straight trees on the island
- (D) Because she should be gathering food for the winter instead

19. Why does Karana decide to leave Ghalas-at?

- (A) Because she is out of water
- (B) Because she knows the white men will not come soon because it is winter
- (C) Because she knows the white men will not come for her in the summer
- (D) Because she wants to try out her new canoe

20. What does Karana see during her trip on the ocean that helps her get home?

- (A) The stars
- (B) Otters
- (C) The sun
- (D) Dolphins

21. Out of what does Karana make the fence around her house?

- (A) Wooden poles
- (B) Whale bones
- (C) Sea elephant tusks
- (D) Planks from old canoes

22. Where does Karana build her house?

- (A) Near her old village
- (B) On the headland
- (C) Near the wild dogs' cave
- (D) On the beach

23. Why does Karana go to hunt sea elephants?

- (A) She wants to make their teeth into spearheads
- (B) She needs their skin to make clothes
- (C) She has to kill them before they kill her
- (D) She wants to try out her new bow

24. What happens when Karana goes to hunt the sea elephants?

- (A) She accidentally kills two of them
- (B) She kills one with her bow and arrows
- (C) She runs away and loses her spear

(D) Two of the sea elephants get into a fight, and Karana hurts herself avoiding them

25. What does Karana make a special spear to catch?

- (A) Bass
- (B) Foxes
- (C) Wild dogs
- (D) Devilfish

26. Who is Tainor?

- (A) An Aleut girl who comes to Ghalas-at
- (B) An otter Karana nurses back to health
- (C) A bird
- (D) A boy who left the island with the rest of Karana's people

27. What does Karana find in Black Cave?

- (A) A place to store her canoe
- (B) A skeleton playing a flute
- (C) A skirt of Cormorant feathers
- (D) A pack of wild dogs

28. What does Karana tell Tutok before she leaves?

- (A) Her secret name
- (B) Where to find the otters
- (C) How much she liked having a friend
- (D) The way to make a cormorant skirt

29. Who is Rontu-Aru?

- (A) A brown dog that Karana befriends after Rontu dies
- (B) An otter that Karana called Mon-a-nee before she realized it was a girl otter
- (C) Ronu's son, who Karana makes into a pet

30. According to Karana, what sound is like the human voice?

- (A) The lapping of waves on the inside of a cave
- (B) The screeching of gulls
- (C) Nothing in the world
- (D) The sounds Rontu makes when he wants part of Karana's meal