

Grade 5
January 28, 2014

Alone on an Island

It's dark, scary, and there is nothing around except rocks, trees, and dirt. The air is thick and cold, the moon is as bright as a freshly changed lightbulb. The stars are like millions of fireflies lingering in the night sky. Does this description remind you of something? If it does, it probably reminds you of the wilderness. Have you ever been alone in the woods? It's assumably scary, right? Well this also describes what life was like for Karana, a 13 year old girl who was abandoned on an island. In Scott O'Dell's book, Island of Blue Dolphins, to stay alive, Karana had to be persistent. In the following paragraphs, I will show the reader how Karana's tenacious spirit gives her the keen instinct to do anything she can to keep Ramo, her little brother, alive. I will also write about the everlasting ambition for Karana's need to sail east to her tribe. Lastly, I'll show how Karana had to make weapons, how she had to fight a devilfish, and how she had to fight an earthquake. Let's start now.

You're rocking side-to-side, water so salty it makes your lips shrivel sprays in your face and people are trying to hold you back because you are trying to get off a boat. Your brother was left behind and you must reach him. Right now you are Karana, a 13 year old girl leaving her island without her sibling. Karana was mulish about rescuing Ramo when he was left behind by a white man's ship. Karana's perseverance was evident when Scott O'Dell writes, on page 39, "I walked across the deck and, though many hands tried to hold me back, flung myself into the sea." She made it safely to the shore. This was assiduous because Karana, although people were trying to stop her, was steadfast to get to her little brother, Ramo, who was left behind by a ship taking her tribe to what they believed to be a better terrain, America. Later, on page 48, Karana

was determined to keep Ramo alive by gathering food to feed them both, as shown in this quote, “I gathered gull eggs on the cliff and Ramo speared a string of small fish in one of the tide pools.” Lastly, on page 48, when Karana wanted to avenge her brother’s death, vows to herself that “someday I would go back and kill the wild dogs in the cave.” This showed that she wouldn’t let the death of her brother go without action. In the outcome, Karana could’ve easily survived on the island alone as long as she was persistent.

Sitting on the ground, sand between your toes and the sun shinning in your face, you’re regretting your decision to jump off of a boat which would’ve taken you to a better land. You can presumably infer that this is what it was like for Karana after Ramo died. In this paragraph, I will write about the persistence it took Karana to attempt to reach her people. Karana wanted to reach the mainland that Kimiki, her tribe’s new chief, progressed towards on his voyage. Therefore, she retrieved a 6 person boat, which was very heavy, and managed to carry it all the way to the water, which was quite the distance, on a rocky shore. You can find this quote on page 61. “I chose the smallest, which was still very heavy because it could carry six people. The task that faced me was to push it down the rocky shore into the water, a distance four or five times its length.” As you can see from this quote Karana will do anything to get to her family and will let nothing stop her, even something very heavy. After her failed voyage, there was an earthquake which left Karana’s canoe in shambles. As a result, she needed to be dedicated to rebuilding it with what little pieces of wood she could scavenge. Thus, when Karana found most of her canoe she said, “I found the remains of my other canoe. It had been washed far back in the cave and I could not get it out, so I went back to the south cliffs and hunted among the piles of kelp until I had enough pieces of wood, counting what I already had, to begin the building of

another.” (Pg 172). After struggling to gather pieces, Karana was able to recreate a canoe which will be her way back home, “When I had sorted out the planks and shaped them, the work went fast, so that by late spring I was ready to finish the seams.” (Pg 172). As blatantly shown throughout the paragraph, Karana will do anything to give herself an advantage to get reach her people no matter what it takes.

Your brother was killed, your religion says that you’re not allowed to make weapons and you exceedingly want to avenge your brother’s death, right now you’re in the same situation as Karana. First off, Karana needed weapons, so although her tribe’s religion says that she could be killed in the process, she was tireless in making weapons which could greatly benefit her. More importantly, she would be able to avenge her brother’s death by killing the pack of wild dogs on page 54. “I made up my mind, no matter what befell me, I would make the weapons.”

Subsequently, when trying to catch a devilfish later in the book, although she was being injured, she was untiring to catch that squid, shown in this quote on page 121. “I did not feel it cutting into my hands, though they bled.” Lastly, near the end of the book, there was an earthquake and Karana was obstinate to not let the earthquake kill her and the loved ones remaining on the island, “The basket fell to the ground. Not knowing what I did, thinking foolishly that another wave was upon me, I began to run. But it was a wave, a wave of earth, and it rippled under me along the cliff.” (Pg 170).

You’re back on a boat, after a traumatizing experience with nature. You have come face-to-face with death one too many times, wearing an ugly blue sun dress while watching dolphins wave good-bye and the island you grew up on slowly being eaten by a mist of depression; depression that has eaten at you for many years. Having dé ja vu of leaving loved

ones. Your heart has been locked in steel chains of sorrow, feeling like you will never feel happy again. Not even by those that you missed the most. I guess what I'm trying to say is that it takes persistence even to overcome simple things, like depression. And it's even a difficult task for people like Karana.