

The Forgotten Island

by ReadWorks

When Lina awoke, she was alone on the island. The air was cool and bullfrogs croaked. It was that brief moment when the sun had set but the stars hadn't yet appeared. The whole sky was an indeterminate shade of deep blue, as though the moon were a nervous actress afraid to take her place on the stage. Lina rubbed her eyes and looked around.

"Hello?" she called. "Cesar? Marie?"

There was no response.

The moon was rising now, shedding light on the island. They had always called it "The Forgotten Island" because no one but them seemed to remember its existence. It wasn't on any of the maps they could find, and the park rangers didn't know about it. But its obscurity didn't bother the island. It just kept on existing. Lina secretly loved that the island was a secret between the three of them-her, Cesar, and Marie.

Lina remembered the day they had found the island. The Tennessee River was long and had several tributaries. In the hot summer days when there was no school, they would take Marie's father's boat down the river, exploring the side streams. It was two summers ago that they discovered The Forgotten Island.

But now Lina was alone, and it was night. Swimming in the river at night was dangerous. The river was treacherous, moving at a lazy pace most of the time but able to change into a roaring torrent within a few short minutes. Lina heard a far-off boom. Thunder. Of course.

She sighed. It was her own fault she was stuck in this situation.

"Come on, Lina, let Marie steer," Cesar had said. Marie was two years older than Lina, but much more timid and unsure on the water. Lina had given Marie the rudder, only to watch her move the boat around aimlessly in circles. In the end, Lina had snatched the rudder back to steer them to the island. Marie had sat to the side, silent and with tears slowly sliding down her cheeks. Marie always did know how to win sympathy.

They had argued then, and Cesar took Marie's side, the same way that Cesar always took Marie's side. Lina had exploded and yelled at them to just leave. So they left. Afterwards, she paced the island, looking into the horizon, watching for the boat to return. Eventually she grew tired of waiting and lay down in the sand. The summer heat was oppressive, the air thick with moisture that stuck in your throat every time you took a breath. She had assumed Cesar and Marie would wake her up when they returned. She would apologize and everything would be fine. Except now it was nighttime, with a storm approaching, and she was all alone on the island.

"Lina. Get a grip."

Just saying the words out loud made her feel better, stronger. Lina saw the first flash of lightning. She counted the seconds-one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten-before she heard the boom of thunder. The thunder was louder now as the storm neared. She pulled her jacket around her

chest tighter. If it were storming, no one would be able to bring a boat to find her on the island. If Cesar and Marie were stuck on the river during the storm, they might be in even more danger than she was.

The Tennessee River could be fickle in the summer, and this was just the type of storm that could bring about a surge of rapids. Lina felt the first cold raindrop slide down her neck, and her mind returned to her own predicament. At least Marie and Cesar had each other. She was stuck on this narrow slice of land by herself. She just hoped she didn't become as forgotten as the island.

"Stay calm, stay calm, Lina," she said, but this time she said it silently, in her head. Thunder boomed loudly in the distance. What were her options? She could try to swim to shore, but she had never been the strongest swimmer, and the river's current was already quickening as the rain began to fall harder. She could wait out the storm in the hopes that by morning someone would come to retrieve her. She made her way to the beach on the east side.

She slid down to the beach, quietly. Lina knew this island, and she knew how to move without startling the birds that nested in the grass. She reached the beach and lay down. Now there was no sound but the bullfrogs and the steady patter of raindrops.

Suddenly, Lina spotted something in the water. It was Marie's father's boat, and inside it were Marie, Cesar, and Marie's dad himself. As the boat approached, it became clear that Marie's dad was the one steering through the turbulent river. Lina breathed a deep sigh, expelling her anxiety, and went running toward the water, waving her hands frantically. She saw the expressions on the faces in the boat turn, simultaneously, to relief.

It was proving difficult for Marie's dad to reach the edge of the beach; the wind kept turning the boat away from the sand, pulling the boat's nose back. In her gratitude and eagerness to get off the island, Lina jumped into the river. Only once she was submerged in the icy water did she stop to think: If Marie's dad couldn't battle the current in his boat, how would she be able to? But before she could panic or take so much as a single stroke, she had already drifted up to the side of the small vessel. A cluster of arms reached into the water for her own, and hauled her up and out. She smiled weakly at Marie's dad and, without a word, clutched Cesar and Marie in a cold group hug. They didn't seem to mind becoming wet.

The summer continued, and Lina and Cesar taught Marie how to steer the boat. But they never returned to the island. There were other side streams to explore.

obscurity

 ob · scu · ri · ty

Advanced Definition

noun

1. the state or condition of being dark or dim.

It was impossible to make out the man's face in the obscurity of the cellar.

2. the state or condition of being unknown.

As an artist, he was rescued from obscurity when one of his works turned up in a famous collection.

3. that which is obscure.

Spanish cognate

oscuridad: The Spanish word *oscuridad* means obscurity.

These are some examples of how the word or forms of the word are used:

1. They had always called it "The Forgotten Island" because no one but them seemed to remember its existence. It wasn't on any of the maps they could find, and the park rangers didn't know about it. But its **obscurity** didn't bother the island. It just kept on existing. Lina secretly loved that the island was a secret between the three of them-her, Cesar, and Marie.
2. The new research center at the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum will give the public a chance to learn more about those players and hundreds of others who toiled in baseball **obscurity**.

treacherous treach · er · ous

Advanced Definition

adjective

1. betraying or likely to betray trust; traitorous; faithless.

The treacherous officer betrayed his general.

2. dangerous; risky.

The sea was treacherous in the storm.

These are some examples of how the word or forms of the word are used:

1. Imagine being able to travel inland in this fine state of New York without having to risk the **treacherous** Appalachian Mountains.
2. **Treacherous** seas prevented them from venturing further south.
3. They needed to pass over **treacherous** mountains and rivers that were unfamiliar to them. To complete the job, Lewis and Clark relied on the language and negotiation skills of a Native American woman.
4. Ken Sims is a volcanologist. For most of the year, he teaches and works in a lab at the University of Wyoming. His field studies take him far away, though, to some of the most **treacherous** spots in the world.
5. Few places are more **treacherous** than the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in Africa. For two decades, near-steady warfare has claimed millions of lives in the area.

turbulent tur · bu · lent

Advanced Definition

adjective

1. in a state of agitation, unrest, or turmoil.

turbulent thoughts

turbulent water

2. marked by episodes of unrest, turmoil, violence, or the like.

The period from 1789 to 1799 was a turbulent one in French history.

3. tending to act violently or aggressively; unruly.

Spanish cognate

turbulento: The Spanish word *turbulento* means turbulent.

These are some examples of how the word or forms of the word are used:

1. The rise of the hippie subculture was one development in a very **turbulent** era of major social change, war, riots, and assassinations.
2. That's why we're a magnet for the world: for those who dodged bullets and gave their lives coming over the Berlin Wall and others, only a few of whom avoided death, coming in tiny boats on **turbulent** oceans.
3. Many saw him as the man who had saved the country from a **turbulent** past.
4. The four years Adams served as President were very **turbulent**. The French Revolution was going on in Europe. This struggle, and other European wars following it, caused many problems for Adams.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What is The Forgotten Island?

- A. an island in the Mediterranean Sea that has sunk below the surface of the water
- B. an island that is said to exist in the Pacific Ocean but has never been found
- C. an island in the Tennessee River that almost nobody knows about
- D. an island off the coast of Florida that was once inhabited but is now deserted

2. Which character does Marie have a conflict with in the story?

- A. Cesar
- B. a park ranger
- C. Lina
- D. her dad

3. Read these sentences from the text.

Come on, Lina, let Marie steer,' Cesar had said. Marie was two years older than Lina, but much more timid and unsure on the water. Lina had given Marie the rudder, only to watch her move the boat around aimlessly in circles. In the end, Lina had snatched the rudder back to steer them to the island. Marie had sat to the side, silent and with tears slowly sliding down her cheeks. Marie always did know how to win sympathy.

Based on this evidence, why does Marie cry?

- A. She is upset that Cesar has not been given a turn to steer the boat.
- B. She is upset that Lina takes the rudder back.
- C. She is upset that Cesar has come along with her and Lina.
- D. She is upset that Lina is younger than she is.

4. Read these sentences from the text.

The Tennessee River could be fickle in the summer, and this was just the type of storm that could bring about a surge of rapids. Lina felt the first cold raindrop slide down her neck, and her mind returned to her own predicament. At least Marie and Cesar had each other. She was stuck on this narrow slice of land by herself. She just hoped she didn't become as forgotten as the island.

'Stay calm, stay calm, Lina,' she said, but this time she said it silently, in her head. Thunder boomed loudly in the distance. What were her options? She could try to swim to shore, but she had never been the strongest swimmer, and the river's current was already quickening as the rain began to fall harder. She could wait out the storm in the hopes that by morning someone would come to retrieve her. She made her way to the beach on the east side.

How is Lina feeling in these two paragraphs?

- A. Lina is feeling concerned about her safety.
- B. Lina is feeling furious at Marie and Cesar.
- C. Lina is feeling guilty about how she treated Marie.
- D. Lina is feeling proud of herself.

5. What is a theme of this story?

- A. The best way to resolve a disagreement with someone is to talk about it with that person.
- B. A person's age is less important than a person's level of ability.
- C. Even when friends get into fights, they still care about each other.
- D. A person's level of ability is less important than a person's age.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

Suddenly, Lina spotted something in the water. It was Marie's father's boat, and inside it were Marie, Cesar, and Marie's dad himself. As the boat approached, it became clear that Marie's dad was the one steering through the turbulent river. Lina breathed a deep sigh, expelling her anxiety, and went running toward the water, waving her hands frantically. She saw the expressions on the faces in the boat turn, simultaneously, to relief.

It was proving difficult for Marie's dad to reach the edge of the beach; the wind kept turning the boat away from the sand, pulling the boat's nose back.

What does the phrase "the boat's nose" probably mean?

- A. the front of the boat
- B. the left side of the boat
- C. the right side of the boat
- D. the back of the boat

7. Read these sentences from the text.

They had argued then, and Cesar took Marie's side, the same way that Cesar always took Marie's side. Lina had exploded and yelled at them to just leave. So they left.

How could the last of these sentences be rewritten without changing its meaning?

- A. Consequently, they left.
- B. Specifically, they left.
- C. Primarily, they left.
- D. Namely, they left.

8. What do Lina and Cesar teach Marie to do at the end of the story?

9. Describe the conflict between Lina and Marie in this story. Support your answer with evidence from the text.

10. Explain whether the conflict between Lina and Marie is resolved by the end of the story. Support your answer with evidence from the text.
