

The Explorer – Katherine Rundell

Y5 Reading 18.5.20 – Chapter On The River

It was almost completely dark when they found somewhere to moor; a place where the bank didn't rise too steeply from the river, and where the trees didn't look so much like an army ranged on the bank. Lila steered the raft towards land, and Fred jumped ashore.

'I'll check there aren't any caiman marks,' he said.

'I'll come too,' said Con.

'No,' said Max. He gripped her ankle. 'Stay with me.'

Con flushed, and swallowed a smile. She stayed. Fred walked through patches of trees, his heart beating in his ears, swinging a stick ahead of him through ferns, sniffing for the smell of anything recently killed.

1. What does the word 'moor' mean?
2. What makes Con smile?
3. Why does Fred wave a stick in front of him?

They travelled on for another day and another night, the river carrying them at their own pace on its silver back. None of them spoke much. They watched the sides of the banks, waiting, alert, tense. On the morning of the third day they had barely cast off when it started to rain. Max was sitting staring out at the splashes rebounding on the river, when he let out a scream.

'Sharks! Lila! Sharks!'

'Where?' Lila grabbed Max's wrist. 'Hold on to me,' she said. 'Don't move.'

Fred looked around. There was only the expanse of water and the thrum of falling rain.

'There are no sharks in the Amazon, Max,' he said. 'You don't have to worry.' But even as the words were leaving his mouth he saw what Max had seen: a fin, rising up out of the water.

Con screamed. Lila let out a hiss. Fred froze. He said, speaking through rigid jaws, 'Max. Come away from the side of the raft.'

Then the fin dipped, disappeared, and out from the water leapt an arc of pinkish-grey body, curving against the rain and the thunder-coloured sun.

'A dolphin!' said Lila. Her whole face was transformed.

1. What does Max think he's seen in the water? Why is this not possible?
2. Why do you think Lila's face transforms when she sees it 's a dolphin.
3. Can you summarise in 5 words how Fred was feeling in this extract?