

1st Narrator: Once upon a time there was a tropical island, known to its inhabitants as "Paradise."

2nd Narrator: And it truly was a paradise, for the island had no large or dangerous animals. Only a gentle climate and beautiful scenery, from the seashore to the highest mountain peak.

3rd Narrator: The island was located in the middle of a vast ocean, deep and bountiful.

4th Narrator: The inhabitants of the island made their living from this ocean. During the day they cast nets into the sea for their food, and at night they slept in simple yet sturdy wooden huts which they built deep in the tropical forests.

5th Narrator: They were all very happy, and never thought about who owned the island or the ocean. They belonged to everyone.

1st Narrator: Then, one day, the inhabitants saw an enormous floating hut, moving across the water toward the island.

2nd Narrator: It was a ship, carrying a colonial expedition from far across the ocean. They had been traveling to a new home, and had discovered the island by accident.

3rd Narrator: Awed by the island's beauty, and welcomed by the inhabitants, the colonists decided to stay.

4th Narrator: Unlike the inhabitants, however, each of the colonists wanted to own a particular piece of the island. They built fences to divide the island, and drew up detailed maps of each person's property.

5th Narrator: Eventually, the inhabitants of the island were fenced out of the forests, and forced to live on the beach.

1st Narrator: Now, the colonists sent a message home with the captain of their ship, to let their friends and families know they were all right. They invited everyone to visit them in their beautiful new home.

2nd Narrator: People came to visit, and were stunned by how beautiful the island was. They told their friends about the island, who told *their* friends, and soon everyone wanted to visit the island.

3rd Narrator: To feed all the tourists, a great fishing industry developed. Unfortunately, the large fishing boats drove the fish far out to sea, and soon the beaches were covered with enormous boat-docks, fish-canneries, and luxury hotels for the tourists.

4th Narrator: The original inhabitants of the island could no longer find food by casting their nets from the shore, and little by little they began to starve.

5th Narrator: Before long, the original inhabitants of the island had disappeared. Some went to work for the colonists; the rest passed quietly into history.

1st Narrator: Many years passed. The colonists led happy lives, living on the beautiful island and providing for the hundreds of tourists who came to swim in the ocean and enjoy the island scenery.

2nd Narrator: Then, one day, the colonists saw an enormous flying hotel, dropping out of the sky onto the island.

3rd Narrator: It was a spaceship, carrying aliens from a far off galaxy. They had been traveling through space, exploring the universe.

4th Narrator: The aliens offered the colonists a trade: diamonds and precious gems in exchange for seawater, which they needed to fuel their spaceship.

5th Narrator: The colonists were thrilled, and said to each other "Sure! There is plenty of seawater to be had, let the aliens have as much as they need."

4th Narrator: So the colonists of Paradise Island told the aliens they were welcome to the seawater, and the aliens thanked them politely for agreeing to the trade.

1st Narrator: The colonists said "You're welcome" and then laughed with glee as the aliens placed baskets and baskets full of diamonds and gems before them. Imagine, all those jewels just for selling some seawater!

2nd Narrator: The next day the space ship moved from the island to hover just above the surface of the ocean. A long hose slithered out of the spaceship, and began slurping seawater.

3rd Narrator: This went on for many, many weeks. The spaceship began to swell.

4th Narrator: After a year, the colonists began to grow worried - the spaceship kept getting bigger, and the ocean was beginning to shrink.

5th Narrator: The fishing boats could no longer reach the docks, and food for the tourists grew scarce. The tourists themselves grew scarce: the hotels were now too far from the seashore for swimming, and the aliens made them too nervous to enjoy the scenery.

1st Narrator: Finally, the aliens announced they were ready to leave. But the colonists were furious, and told them that they couldn't go until they put the seawater back.

2nd Narrator: The aliens refused. After all, they had legally purchased the water from the colonists.

3rd Narrator: The colonists took the aliens to court, to demand that the aliens return the seawater.

4th Narrator: The court had to listen to both sides of the story, because that is the only way to be fair. They asked the colonists to go first.

5th Narrator: The colonists argued that they sold the seawater to the aliens without knowing how much they would take, or what effect it would have on the island. They claimed they did not have to live up to the agreement because the aliens weren't citizens of the island.

1st Narrator: The aliens argued that they had legally purchased the water, and that the agreement was fair. The colonists *could* have asked how much water would be needed before agreeing to the trade, after all.

2nd Narrator: Besides, the aliens said, The island was bigger now, with a *new* seashore and room for *more* hotels.

3rd Narrator: You be the judge. Should seawater be considered property, to be bought and sold?

4th Narrator: Did the aliens try to cheat the colonists? Did the colonists try to cheat the aliens?

5th Narrator: If you were a member of the court, how would you solve the conflict?

Suggested Interpretive Questions:

If the aliens needed so much seawater, why didn't they warn the colonists before making the trade?

Do you think the original inhabitants of the island had any right to the island or the ocean surrounding it?

Why weren't the original inhabitants represented at the court? Who do you think they would have agreed with, the colonists or aliens?

Evaluative and Creative Questions:

Which do you think is more valuable: water, or diamonds and precious gems?

Why is the ocean important to the island? How did it fit into the colonists way of life?

Do we sell seawater or the oceans today? If so, what effect has this had?

What would the new seashore the aliens mentioned have been like? Would the colonists have wanted to build hotels there?