



The Dolphin People

By Torsten Krol
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Introduction

While fleeing Germany shortly after the end of WWII, 16-year-old Erich Linden and his family are stranded deep within Amazonia when their plane crashes in the middle of the Venezuelan jungle. Luckily for them, they are discovered by the Yayomi, a Stone Age Amazon tribe, who mistake the strange-looking foreigners for freshwater dolphins in human form—a mistake that will keep the family safe from the violent, superstitious natives as long as they can keep up the ruse.

But now the family is trapped in a world unlike anything they've ever known, where their ideas of human equality and elitism are turned completely upside down. Erich embraces his new existence wholeheartedly, but the jungle is a dark, mysterious place, and the family ultimately faces two choices: escape, or die trying. *The Dolphin People* is a madcap, imaginative tale in the tradition of a classic adventure story yet with a skillfully applied modern touch.

Questions for Discussion

1. Individually, how do Erich, Zeppi, Helga, and Klaus cope with the family's new situation with the Yayomi? Whose experience do you most identify with? Who do you think is most justified in the way he/she reacts to the family's new circumstances? Why?
2. Erich's family is kept safe because the Yayomi believe they are dolphins in human form. In other words, they're protected by a myth. What role do myths play in contemporary society? Are they harmful or beneficial?
3. *The Dolphin People* is often referred to as an adventure story. How does it compare to classic adventure stories (e.g., *Robinson Crusoe*, *Lord of the Flies*, *The Swiss Family Robinson*, etc.)? How does it differ?
4. The ending leaves the question of Erich's future up in the air. Is his re-insertion into society likely to be easy? Or is he changed to such an extent that re-assimilation would be difficult? In what ways has he changed?
5. What does Erich's family's experience say about human nature? Does their situation suggest that redemption is possible? Is the ending to their story hopeful? Why or why not?

About the Author

Torsten Krol is the author of *Callisto*. Nothing further is known about him.