



# A Fisherman and His Dog

Puerto Rico

Once there lived an old fisherman in San Juan. Don Manolito was his name. He was tall and thin, with a headful of greying, silver hair. He had a sad, childlike smile. Don Manolito lived in a little hut at the edge of town. No one really knew how he came to settle in San Juan. Some people said he had come from a remote part of Puerto Rico, sorrowful and broken-hearted after the death of his beloved wife. **(1)**

Don Manolito was a man of few words. He was kind and friendly, but he had no close friend except for his dog, Taino. Taino was a quiet, gentle creature with shining black hair and long, pointed ears. Whether Don Manolito was going to the market place or walking around town, Taino always accompanied him, running or walking by his side, with his ears perked up, his tongue hanging out. Whenever a visitor came to Don Manolito's hut, Taino would sit at Don Manolito's feet, a silent listener to the conversation. **(2)**

Don Manolito usually went fishing several days a week, and he never set sail without Taino walking with him to the edge of the sea. There, Taino would remain until Don Manolito came rowing his boat back in the evening. **(3)**

Don Manolito always saved the best fish for their evening meal. Soon after they returned home, the delicious smell of food filled the air. And anyone who came through their door at that moment was sure to get a warm welcome and a good meal. To the people of San Juan, the sight of Don Manolito and Taino setting out for the seashore in the morning and coming back in the evening, and the delicious smell of food which followed their return became a

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ritual, a part of the natural rhythm of life. It was like the ebb and flow of the ocean, sunrise and sunset, the waxing and waning of the moon. **(4)**

One morning, soon after Don Manolito's boat had vanished from sight, the sky gradually covered itself with dark clouds. As the sun grew dimmer and dimmer and the wind gathered strength, the silence was broken now and then by the rumbling of distant thunder. People ran in every direction to finish their errands before returning to the protection of their homes. Fishermen came rowing furiously ashore, bringing tales of a storm raging fiercely at sea. **(5)**

In no time at all the seashore was empty, except for Taino. As the thunder rumbled louder, and the sky grew darker, Taino sat patiently and looked out to sea, waiting for Don Manolito to come rowing his boat ashore. But there was neither sight nor sound of Don Manolito or his rowboat. **(6)**

While Taino was waiting, the storm burst over the town with flashes of lightning and explosions of thunder. And the sea roared in response, sending towering waves crashing upon the shore. Taino was swept off his feet again and again as the waves rushed upon him. Finally he threw himself into the sea and swam all the way to a rock jutting out of the roaring waters. The storm raged all evening and far into the night. **(7)**

Taino kept his vigil, high on the rock jutting out of the stormy water. Hour after hour, he sat there, looking out to sea and waiting for Don Manolito to come rowing his boat ashore. But there was neither sight nor sound of Don Manolito or his rowboat. **(8)**

As night slowly brightened into dawn, the storm gradually ended and the roll of thunder grew more and more distant until it was silent. The ferocious sea was silenced and everywhere in San Juan life went back to normal. Yet high on the rock above the waters, Taino remained sitting, looking out to sea and waiting for Don Manolito to come rowing his boat ashore. But there was neither sight nor sound of Don Manolito or his rowboat. **(9)**

Suddenly someone pointed at the rock and a shout went up, followed by another and another. Soon, from one end of the shore to the other, exclamations of amazement rose to the heavens. Quickly the fishermen jumped into their boats and rowed as fast as they could towards the rock. "It's Taino!" cried a fisherman who had rowed ahead of the rest. And soon all were shouting; "It's Taino! It's Taino!" But why and how Taino came to be on that rock was a mystery none could understand. **(10)**

Then they realized that Don Manolito had not been seen since rowing out to sea the day before and that Taino had been sitting on that rock through the storm and through the night, waiting for his friend. A chill ran down their spines and they all fell silent, for they knew then that Don Manolito had been caught up in the terrible storm and would never come back. **(11)**

"Let's take Taino back to shore, for he must be cold and hungry," said one of the fishermen as he climbed onto the rock. But when he laid his hands on the dog to pick him up, he cried out in dismay. Taino had turned to stone! The sad news of Taino's transformation spread through San Juan and the whole island. **(12)**

The people who knew Taino and Don Manolito in person and who lived through those fearful days have long gone out of this world. Memory of the storm which overwhelmed Don Manolito at sea is lost in the mists of time. San Juan has grown into a bustling metropolis. But on a rock off the coast of the modern city, a dog of stone still sits, looking out to sea in silent testimony to the greatest friendship ever to unite a fisherman and his dog. **(13)**

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### ***Connecting to the story***

*Think about and discuss these questions:*

Do you think dogs are the best pets? Why?

What are the most important characteristics of a good friend?

## **Glossary**

*(Numbers refer to the paragraph number)*

### **Words and phrases**

set sail (3), v. — begin a trip by sailboat, putting up the sail

waxing and waning of the moon (4), n. — the change in the moon over a month from the dark of the moon to the full (round) moon and back to the dark of the moon (wax = grow, increase; wane = shrink, decrease)

ebb and flow (4) — the fall and rise of the tide, the changing level of the sea (to ebb = to fall, to go down; to flow = to rise, to come up)

kept a vigil (8), n.

— watched or waited for something or someone

### **Phrasal verbs and verb-preposition combinations**

perked up (2) — became alert, attentive, awake

setting out for (4) — beginning a trip to, starting to go to

jutting out (8) — sticking out

## **Additional Vocabulary**

*Do you know these words and phrases?*

\_\_\_ hut (1)

\_\_\_ shore (7)

\_\_\_ broken-hearted (1)

\_\_\_ to be swept off one's feet (7)

\_\_\_ dimmer (5)

\_\_\_ amazement (10)

\_\_\_ ashore (5)

\_\_\_ dismay (12)

\_\_\_ lightning (7)

\_\_\_ to overwhelm (13)

\_\_\_ towering (7)

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