

RAFT BUILDING CHALLENGE!!



Do you think you can build a raft completely from natural materials that will last in a storm carrying animals on it?

Have a look at the challenge below to find out more.

We need to tell you a story first. A story about a land far away and lizards...

'Look over there. Yes, there in the ocean. There's some floating plants with a few twigs. It's a raft of some kind. With a few animals...wait... iguanas on it. They can't swim, can they? They're land reptiles!'

And, that's how it all began. I may be a marine iguana, but my ancestors used to live on land. A long, long, time ago. We're talking around 8 million years ago...and there was an awful storm. Thunder, lightning, waves crashing and rolling. And the land iguanas of the South American continent, surprised everyone by floating out onto the violent seas on small pieces of vegetation: like little grassy boats. They were holding on for dear life with their small claws, because none of them could swim.



Unfortunately, some drowned. It was very sad. They never got to see land or their loved ones ever again. But others did.

Those lucky land iguanas were so happy to see land. They scurried here and there, looking for food. Boy, were they hungry. This was a new place and they didn't know

what to do. There didn't seem to be much around. And there were new animals and birds that wanted to eat them. It was terrifying. The iguanas had to hide, but also search for food or they would starve to death.

My land iguana ancestors started to eat the land plants they could find, trying a bit of cactus. It was tasty. But there just wasn't enough. Iguanas were competing for the same food. When you're hungry, you can get pretty angry...so there were iguanas fighting one another for food.

The stronger ones with sharper claws won. Others decided to look elsewhere for food. It was then that a group of iguanas tried something new. What was this slimy plant on the rocks near the sea? Surely there's no harm in trying it, they thought. They licked it a little, took a bite...yum!

You know what it was, don't you? My favourite foods, red and green algae, of course. Delicious. Land iguanas today are missing out on such a treat. But this meant there was no competition for food anymore.

These algae-eating land iguanas were my true ancestors...they learnt to swim to find more algae. Those that were bigger, could swim better, those that had flatter faces, and longer claws (and cling to rocks), could eat more algae. These were the iguanas that survived and their strong characteristics were passed down generations.

And over the millions and millions of years, we became a new species...the marine iguana. That's me! I'm one proud marine iguana.

I still call other land iguanas my cousins, because we are related. We all have a common land iguana ancestor.

Our lives are still hard, but it's an easy life compared to what our ancestors went through. We cannot imagine what it was like for them, having to struggle so hard to survive. Can you?



Now you have read the story you are ready for the challenge!



Challenge Task!

Now you have read the story of 'A Dragon's Tale,' your task for today is to design and make a raft using natural materials. Your raft must be able to float and even withstand a few waves that you make! You could design your own iguana out of modelling clay or plasticine and put it onto the raft if you like!

Test your raft building skills and see if will survive the stormy seas!

Send a picture or explanation of how you made your raft – did you iguana survive the 'Journey Impossible?'

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