

Novel resource #3:

Escaping the Giant Wave by Peg Kehret

Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers, New York, NY 2003

About the Author – Peg Kehret

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Peg Kehret was born in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, on Nov. 11, 1936. She has one older brother, Art Schulze. She had a happy and normal childhood except for a bout with polio which paralyzed her from the neck down and hospitalized her for nine months. However, she made nearly a complete recovery.

Peg has always loved to write. Before she began writing books for children, she wrote radio commercials, plays, and magazine stories. She also published two nonfiction adult books. Her first book for kids (Winning Monologs for Young Actors) was published in 1985. Since then she has published dozens of popular books for young people.

A funny thing happened to Peg regarding Escaping the Giant Wave. Peg got an e-mail from a reader saying there was a typo in Escaping the Giant Wave. This book was published in 2004 and nobody had noticed this error before, or at least they didn't tell Peg about it. When she opened the book to page 24, she found that the young reader was correct: there was a mistake. You can't even call it a typo because this was clearly a math error!

Before a book is printed, it gets read several times by Peg, by her editor, by copy editors and line editors - and not one of them noticed that BeeBee says five times \$125 equals \$725, when it actually equals \$625.

Peg Kehret has written many books. On her website, if you just click on the book, a detailed summary pops up and you can do this for every book she has written. She has many personal pictures on her website, of her children, grandchildren, and cats. You can go to her blog and see the latest events in her life. The latest ones up are about the birth of a fawn and how she works for the humane society. She sounds like a very loving mom and grandmother who loves nature, as you can see by her home in the country.



Other books by Peg Kehret:

Spy Cat

The Stranger Next Door

**Five Pages a Day:
A Writer's Journey**

Don't Tell Anyone

Saving Lilly

My Brother Made Me Do It

The Hideout

Acting Natural

The Secret Journey

The Blizzard Disaster

Nightmare Mountain

Cages

Danger at the Fair

Winning Monologs For Young Actors

Searching For Candlestick Park

Deadly Stranger

I Am Not Who You Think I Am

Sisters, Long Ago

Small Steps: The Year I Got Polio

Horror at the Haunted House

Terror at the Zoo

Annotation:

Kyle thought that a family vacation in Oregon along the coast of the Pacific Ocean would be a dream come true. Even if his sister BeeBee had to come....and his parents.....and even the bully from school, Daren. He still had never flown before and could not wait to go.

Kyle was left babysitting his little sister at the hotel, while his parents went out on a yacht for business. That is when the vacation became a nightmare! First, an earthquake hit and the hotel caught on fire. Kyle managed to get his sister down the stairs and out of the hotel, amid flames and smoke. He even saw Daren get out safely. Then a tsunami warning hit and Kyle remembered a sign that said to get as far from the beach and as high as possible to avoid the great waves. Kyle told Daren to come with him, but Daren said he was heading to the beach.

Kyle and his sister ran as fast as they could up the steep hill by their hotel. They manage to hang onto a tree as the giant waves smash into them. As this is happening to the characters, you almost feel like you are there with them. Peg Kehret describes the fear so well that you start cheering for Kyle and BeeBee to hold on tight! "I heard trees crash to the ground, and for one awful moment I feared I had made a terrible mistake by staying behind the big cedar tree. What if the force of the water pushed the tree over on top of us, trapping us beneath it?"

Kyle did make the right decision and they both survive and begin down the hill. The joy they felt when they saw their parents must have been amazing. I was lost when I was 8 at King's Island. I can not explain the relief when I saw my mom and dad coming towards me. The author describes the anticipation and dread so well that you do not want to wait to see what happens. Their parents were OK and eventually found them near the burned out hotel. Kyle even faces his fears of Daren, the school bully. He stands up to him and Daren backs down. BeeBee is so proud of Kyle and Kyle is proud of himself also. Standing up to bullies is very hard for children at the middle school level. Peer acceptance is so overwhelming at this stage and Kyle did just the right things. Great read for middle schoolers.

Booktalk:

What is the best vacation you can remember? Beach? Ocean? Sun? Well, Kyle thought he was going on the best vacation ever – Pacific Ocean, Oregon coastline, beach.....and then it turned into a horrifying nightmare!! His parents were out on the ocean on an elegant yacht for the evening and he was babysitting his little sister at the hotel. Ordering pizza, watching a movie,...how easy can it get? All at once the room was shaking and an earthquake had hit. The hotel caught on fire and smoke and flames were everywhere. Kyle did manage to get himself and his little sister BeeBee out without too much harm. Then a tsunami warning hit the beach and fleeing uphill as fast as they could became the next event of the evening. The tsunami wave headed straight for the hill that they were climbing! They found a huge oak tree and decided to hang on to it for life! Will they survive the giant waves? And will they find their parents? Don't stop running until you get to the bookstore to buy [Escaping the Giant Wave](#) by Peg Kehret.

Characters:

The main character is thirteen-year old Kyle. He has been given the chance to fly to Oregon and stay on the Pacific Ocean coast for a family vacation. His younger sister, BeeBee, and his parents are going also. His dad is taking them for the Salesman of the Year event and the adults will get to sail on an elegant yacht for an evening while they are there.

Kyle is a very mature, responsible teenager and therefore, takes care of his younger sister often. He is left in charge of BeeBee when his parents go off on the yacht for the evening. Daren, another 13 year old on the trip, knows Kyle from school. Daren's dad is on the Salesman of the Year trip also. Kyle does not like Daren, who is the class bully, and intends to stay far away from him on the vacation.

Conflict:

Kyle's vacation quickly turns into a nightmare. An earthquake comes and sets the hotel they are staying at on fire! After he successfully gets himself and BeeBee out of the burning hotel, he realizes that a tsunami is coming. The external conflict that Kyle faces is obviously nature. He must fly uphill as fast as possible as the tsunami hits the beach. He must keep BeeBee with him and keep them both from death. Internally, Kyle has to be brave for his little sister even though he is terrified. The children continue running for their lives up the hill to escape the approaching waves!

Conflict Resolution:

Kyle and BeeBee safely hold onto a tree to escape the last giant wave that comes ashore. As they head down the hill they are wondering where are their parents? Did Daren make it away from the tsunami safely? As they near the remains of their hotel, they see their parents running towards them. They could not be more relieved to see their parents and vice versa. Kyle had a run in with Daren before the storm – he let him know that he was no longer to pick on his sister or he would have to deal with Kyle. Kyle felt proud of himself for finally standing up to Daren and he was a little relieved to see Daren alive and fine in front of the hotel.

Genre: This is a very appropriate title for the times—the story of an earthquake followed by a tsunami wave. This is realistic fiction at its best. It is also an adventure story, where the characters are constantly facing situations to escape.

If you like [Escaping the Giant Wave](#), you might enjoy these realistic fiction books:

[Young Man and the Sea \(After Words\)](#)

[Once Upon a Marigold](#)

[Trading Places With Tank Talbott](#)

[Andy Russell, NOT Wanted by the Police \(Andy Russell\)](#)

Other books by Peg Kehret that are exciting realistic fiction are:

[Saving Lilly](#)

[Trapped](#)

[Saving Lilly](#)

[I'm Not Who You Think I Am](#)

Interest Level: 4th-7th grade

Reading Level: 4.7

Read-aloud passages: Chapter 6, pages 64-66

This is the time when “mature” Kyle has to take over. He has no choice but to open the hotel room door and get him and his sister out. The author describes the scene with great adjectives such as ablaze, enormous bonfire, fingers of flames, in a warzone dodging land mines.

Chapter 10, pages 113-117

Kyle and BeeBee are getting ready for another great wave to hit. Kyle has decided that they can not get any higher and are going to stand behind a big oak tree. They hung for life as the wave hit. Kyle’s thought at this moment was “If disaster strikes, I’ve spent my last few moments on Earth hugging and calming my sister’s fear.”

Setting: Present day and time. This story is set along the Oregon coast on the Pacific Ocean. The town is Fisher Beach, Oregon and it is beautiful, with hotels rooms looking over the Pacific Ocean. Hurricanes, tsunamis, and earthquakes are all common to US citizens in this day and time. With Katrina and the tsunami in Indonesia, children are very aware of these natural disasters and would be very intrigued by this book.

Point of View: Third person omniscient is a great way to tell this story. We know how several characters are feeling and this is a very emotional issue so it makes the book more realistic.

Theme: Little did Kyle know, but the theme of his vacation would be **Escaping the Giant Wave**. The entire theme was centered around his braveness and smart thinking skills to help save himself and his sister. It also centered around his braveness to face Daren and stand up to him for himself and his sister. The title is obviously perfect for the book and what Kyle has to face without the security of his parents. He learns a lot about helping others out and speaking what you believe in throughout the book.