

Novel Resource #4

Title: Escaping the Giant Wave

Author: Peg Kehret

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About the Author

Interesting Facts, Background, Anecdotes

Longtime author, Peg Kehret, has written novels in a variety of genres, not just children's literature. Her first adult book was published in 1979, and her first children's book in 1985. She has written books of monologues, action/adventure children's stories, and a personal memoir. Her personal memoir, about her own childhood battle with polio called Small Steps, was even quoted in print in a polio exhibit at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C.

Peg Kehret was born in Wisconsin and then moved with her family to Minnesota when she was eight. It was at this time that she was stricken with

polio and paralyzed for many months. However, she made a complete recovery and was able to continue living a full life attending college, getting married, and adopting two children. She then moved with her husband and her children to the state of Washington, where she still lives today.

Peg Kehret has won numerous awards for both her children's novels and adult works as well. Many of her children's books have won state awards around the country, including the Young Hoosier Book Award for three of them!

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Author's Connection to the Book

Peg Kehret has lived most of her adult life in the state of Washington, the same region of the country where Escaping the Giant Wave is set. The idea for this novel came to her while she and her husband Carl were vacationing on the coast of Oregon. They noticed a tsunami warning sign, like the one she writes about in her book, and signs for evacuation routes. Like most people she thought tsunamis were unique to Asia and Hawaii, so she was intrigued to learn that tsunamis could occur so close to home.

She began doing some research, which included several more trips to the Oregon coast, and began writing the story of Kyle Davidson and the giant wave.

Other Books Written by Peg Kehret

The Ghost's Grave, Abduction, The Stranger Next Door, Saving Lilly, The Secret Journey, The Hideout, Small Steps: The Year I Got Polio

Recommended Reads By the Same Author

Abduction, The Hideout, The Stranger Next Door, The Blizzard Disaster, The Secret Journey

Annotation

Kyle Davidson can't wait to go on vacation. His dad won a trip to Oregon and the whole family gets to go! He's eager to spend his days on the Oregon coast hunting for seashells at the beach, hiking in the woods, and enjoying delicious room service meals. Soon Kyle finds out, though, that his class bully is also going on the same vacation with his own parents. And because of this bully and a string of disasters, Kyle's vacation turns out very differently than he envisioned.

One night while his parents leave him in charge to babysit his little sister back at the hotel, an earthquake occurs. He and his sister make it through, but then have to make it out of the hotel, which is on fire! Narrowly escaping the flames, and reluctantly rescuing his classmate along the way, Kyle and his sister make it outside. But now there's a tsunami on the way! Kyle's responsible decision-making moves them out of harm's way as the tsunami's giant waves pummel the Oregon coast. Barely missing the tsunami's destruction, Kyle and his sister trek back down to the coast and thankfully find out that their parents, his classmate, and some friends they made along the way are safe.

Escaping the Great Wave by Peg Kehret is full of themes and topics that both kids and parents and teachers alike will appreciate. The adventures of a young boy escaping deathly situations are sure to capture the imagination of its younger audience. And teachers will love the science connection to natural disasters. Still parents will be able to discuss with their children the bullying endured by the main character.

This exciting story is a must-read for action adventure enthusiasts. The uncertain outcomes of each disaster will keep the reader turning page after page until the very end.

Booktalk

For those of you who love a good adventure story- this is the book for you. You won't be able to put this book down as you read the story of Kyle Davidson in Escaping the Giant Wave by Peg Kehret.

Kyle's dad and his family, who are from Kansas, win a vacation trip to the coast of Oregon. While his parents are out for the night on a dinner cruise, Kyle and his little sister Beebee stay back at the hotel for what they

think will be a relaxing night of television, pizza, and milkshakes. But as the next twenty-four hours unfold, Kyle's responsibility and survival skills are tested as he and Beebee fight to endure a rumbling earthquake, a blazing fire, and a potential tsunami, not to mention a menacing bully.

Will Kyle be able to keep himself and his eight-year-old sister safe from this string of disasters? And will they ever see their parents again? You'll definitely want to read this book to find out what happens to this brave thirteen-year-old.

Characters

Kyle Davidson- The main character and a thirteen-year-old boy from Kansas. He is a responsible boy, but can be a bit of a wimp. Through this disastrous experience he grows into a brave and confident boy.

Beebee Davidson- Kyle's eight-year-old sister. She is smart, inquisitive, and loves anything having to do with money and finances.

Mr. Davidson- Kyle's dad. He wins a Salesman of the Year award and a vacation trip to the Oregon coast.

Mrs. Davidson- Kyle's mom. She accompanies her husband with their children on the vacation to Oregon.

Daren Hazelton- Kyle's classmate and a real bully. He has bullied Kyle by punching, kicking, and insulting him all through school. He also goes to Oregon with his family.

Norm- An old man from Oregon that Kyle and Beebee meet on the way up the hill. He is married to Josie. Norm survives the tsunami.

Josie- An old woman from Oregon and Norm's wife. She also meets Kyle and Beebee on the hill, but does not survive the tsunami.

Pansy- Norma and Josie's yippy, but intuitive, little dog.

Conflict

Kyle struggles in this novel with two conflicts. The first conflict is external- he struggles with the forces of nature. He has to be strong to survive several disasters, including an earthquake, a fire, and a tsunami, that could claim his life and the life of his sister. Another external struggle is with one of the characters. He can't stand up against his bullying classmate, Daren Hazelton, who constantly harasses Kyle with punches and insults, even while they are on vacation!

Conflict Resolution

With brave decision-making and good survival skills, Kyle keeps himself and his sister alive as they overcome an earthquake, a fire, and a tsunami. He survives the earthquake by instructing his sister to cover her head as he does, the hotel fire by using good direction sense to find the exits and wet towels to avoid breathing in smoke, and the tsunami by moving to higher ground.

After enduring harassment and ungratefulness from Daren on this vacation, Kyle finally stands up to the bully, telling him to back off. While they never become friends, Daren no longer bullies Kyle when they return to Kansas.

Genre: Adventure/Survival Fiction

If You Liked The Stupendous Dodgeball Fiasco You'll Love....

Hatchet by Gary Paulson

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

Call It Courage by Armstrong Perry

Young Man and the Sea by Rodman Philbrick

The Sign of the Beaver by Elizabeth George Speare

Interest Level

Grades 4-6

Reading Level

Grades 4.3-4.7

Read Aloud Passages

1. Chapter 4, Pages 46-48

The earthquake occurs while Kyle and Beebee are in the hotel room. The whole floor is being lifted up and down. Their belongings are falling off beds and dressers. Pieces of the ceiling are falling in. Kyle and Beebee are trying to cover their heads for protection.

2. Chapter 8, Pages 84-86

Kyle's mom and dad are on the cruise and they've just found out that an earthquake has hit the town where their children are staying. It is a very intense moment as the parents try to find the captain to ask about returning to shore to find out if their kids are safe, only to learn that the captain has decided to go farther out to sea to keep the passengers safe from the tsunami.

Setting

Escaping the Giant Wave takes place in modern time in a vacation town on the coast of Oregon. Fishers Beach locations, the beach, hotel, and wooded areas just inland, are the sites of all the action in the story.

Point of View

The point of view comes in first person limited omniscient form for part of the story. Then it switches to third person limited omniscient and then back again to first person limited omniscient.

Theme

The message that Kehret conveys is the idea of standing up for yourself and ‘being a man’ when you are put into tough personal situations, such as disaster, tragedy, and bullying. Making smart decisions is a key theme of this novel. The main character goes from being a not-so-assertive boy to a responsible, confident young man when faced with tough decisions and a string of hardships.

The title, Escaping the Giant Wave, refers to the climax of the story. Kyle has overcome two disasters already, the earthquake and the fire, but the main event of the story is the tsunami that is heading toward the Oregon coast. Kyle must decide the best way to keep he and his sister safe by getting out of the tsunami’s path.

Across the Curriculum

Subject Area Connections

Science- As a class, make a KWL chart on large paper. Have the students take turns filling out what they know about tsunamis after they’ve read the novel in the K section of the chart, then take turns writing questions about tsunamis that they still want to find the answers to in the W section of the chart. As a whole class (using a computer and LCD projector) or individually (using a mobile computer lab), research the answers to their questions and write the information in the L section of the chart.

Materials: large paper
markers
computer(s) and LCD projector
resources: www.noaa.gov/tsunamis.html
<http://www.ess.washington.edu/tsunami/index.html>

Indiana Academic Standards Met With This Activity
-Language Arts 3.2.2, 3.2.3, 3.2.6, 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 5.2.1, 5.2.3, 5.2.5,
6.2.7
-Science 3.1.4, 3.1.5, 3.2.7, 4.2.6, 4.3.5, 5.1.2, 5.3.11, 6.2.6, 6.2.7,
6.3.10

Math and Art- Teach about ratios and equivalent ratios. Talk about the estimated height of the Totem Pole Inn (the book said it was three stories tall) compared to the estimated height of the first tsunami wave that the characters watched completely rise up and over the inn. Write the two heights in ratio form and then write equivalent ratios. Using the equivalent ratios, build models of the Totem Pole Inn and the tsunami wave out of clay to demonstrate the size of the tsunami and understanding of ratios. Paint the model with acrylic paint and display in the room.

Materials needed: Escaping the Great Wave by Peg Kehret

Pencil and paper
Calculator (optional)
Modeling clay
Acrylic paint

Indiana Academic Standards Met With This Activity
-Math 3.1.8, 3.6.1, 4.2.4, 4.5.1, 4.7.1, 5.2.1, 5.2.3, 5.2.6, 5.7.1, 5.7.5,
6.2.4, 6.2.6, 6.2.7, 6.7.1
-Art 3.8.1, 3.8.2, 3.9.2, 3.10.1, 3.13.12, 4.8.2, 4.9.2, 4.13.2, 5.8.2,
5.9.2, 5.10.5, 5.13.1, 6.7.2, 6.8.2, 6.9.2,

Resources

National Geographic Tsunami; Killer Wave, DVD, 2005, National Geographic Company

-This video will help students have a visual understanding of what a tsunami is, how and where they form, and the destruction they can cause.

Walker, Nikki; Tsunami Alert! Crabtree Children's Books, 2005, New York, NY

-This book will help young readers understand how a tsunami is formed, warning systems for tsunamis, and how to stay safe during a tsunami.

Activities

Could You Survive?

In small groups, have students reread sections from Escaping the Giant Wave by Peg Kehret that tell about Kyle's hike inland, about when the second wave hit, and about their hike back down to the coast. (pages 74-75, 95-109, 110-121, 122-123, 127-132)

Discuss with the whole class all the obstacles Kyle and his sister endured, such as scratched arms, muddy clothes, hunger, thirst, etc. Instruct the students that they will be creating survival kits to help individuals be prepared for the next time an earthquake brings a tsunami.

Each group will brainstorm a list of needed supplies. All supplies will need to fit into a small backpack. The group will need to bring in samples of these supplies in a backpack (for example, they can bring one bandage to represent packing a box of bandages) and as a group they will present their survival kits to the class, explaining their reasons behind each of the supplies.

Indiana Academic Standards Met With This Activity

-Social Studies 5.5.1

-Language Arts 3.7.6, 3.7.7, 3.7.8, 4.7.5, 4.7.8, 4.7.9, 4.7.11, 5.7.5, 5.7.13, 5.7.11, 6.7.4, 6.7.6, 6.7.7, 6.7.12, 6.7.14

Create Tsunami Waves

Discuss with the whole class what they know about how tsunamis are formed. They should understand that tsunamis are caused by earthquakes.

Divide students up into groups of three and give each group a rectangular plastic box halfway filled with water, a rubber mallet, and some plain drawing paper.

Instruct the students to take turns lightly striking the table that the plastic box is on with the mallet. This represents an earthquake occurring.

The first time the student should strike the edge of the tabletop at the front of the box. The groups should observe the type of waves created in the water and draw what they see on a piece of paper. They should label this diagram a “P wave.”

Next have a student strike the edge of the tabletop on the side of the box. Again, the group should record the waves they see and label this diagram and “S wave.”

Finally, have one student strike the top of the table top with the mallet, drawing the waves they see. They should label this diagram the “L wave.”

Discuss with the class which strike caused the biggest wave. They should see that the L wave was the biggest. Explain that the P wave was caused by a primary strike, the S wave was caused by a secondary strike, and the L wave was caused by a surface strike. A surface strike, or earthquake close to the surface, causes the largest waves, or tsunamis.

Indiana Academic Standards Met With This Activity

-Science 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.1.4, 3.1.5, 3.2.6, 3.6.3, 4.1.3, 4.6.3, 5.2.4, 5.2.8, 5.3.11, 6.3.10, 6.3.22, 6.7.2

Discussion Questions

Prereading Questions

1. What are some facts you know about a tsunami, its causes, and its effects?
2. Have you ever been on a vacation and something went wrong or the vacation didn't turn out as you expected? Explain.
3. What would you do if you were stuck in a building during an earthquake?
4. Have you ever been bullied? If so, what did you do about it?

During the Reading Questions

Chapter 1

1. What are Kyle's four summer goals? In your opinion, rank them in order from most important to least important. (p. 2-3)

2. Describe Kyle's sister Beebee. How is she different from most eight-year-old girls? (p. 6)

Chapter 2

1. Why hasn't Kyle stood up to Daren or told on him for bullying in the past? What do you think would happen if Kyle told on him now?
2. Do you think the Frontier Lodge was correct in putting their guests up at the Totem Pole Inn across the street? Why or why not? (p.22)

Chapter 3

1. Now that we know what a tsunami is, what do you think some of its effects could be if one hit Fisher Beach? (p.29)
2. Why do you think Kyle told his mom that Daren smokes instead of telling her the truth? (p.36)

Chapter 4

1. Why was Beebee on the elevator? (p. 41)
2. If you were Kyle, would you take Beebee and hike inland or stay in the hotel? (p.50)

Chapter 5

1. Kyle thinks the big bang they heard might have been a transformer blowing up. Based on the context, what do you think a transformer is? (p.52)
2. What do you think about Daren's reaction to the fire when he woke up? (p. 61)

Chapter 6

1. Read the last sentence on page 64 (it continues onto page 65). What kind of figure of speech is "fingers of flame?"
2. In your opinion, who made the better decision- Daren for staying at the beach to avoid possible forest fires or Kyle for heading inland to avoid a possible tsunami? (p.70)

Chapter 7

1. Who did Kyle and Beebee meet as they hiked up and inland? (p. 76)
2. What was the mooing sound that Kyle and Beebee heard? (p.77)

Chapter 8

1. How does the book's point of view change at the beginning of chapter 8? (p. 82)
2. Do you really think Daren stayed at the beach because he was brave? Explain. (p. 91-93)

Chapter 9

1. Find an example of a simile on page 99 and write it below.
2. Describe the emotions and feeling you would have if you saw the tsunami scene that Kyle saw. Use precise, colorful adjectives, not common words such as "scared." (p. 101-102)

Chapter 10

1. How did Kyle and Beebee stay safe from the second giant wave? (p.113-117)
2. Describe what it means when Kyle thinks, "My words floated away like soap bubbles," on page 119.

Chapter 11

1. What do you think happened to Daren and Norma and Josie?
2. What do you think happened to the Elegant Empress?

Chapter 12

1. How are emergency workers able to communicate if the phone lines are down? (p. 144)
2. Did Kyle accomplish his summer goals? Explain. (p.146)

Postreading Questions

1. What is the theme of the novel? (What message is the author trying to convey; sometimes called the moral of the story)
2. How did Kyle change as a person from the beginning of the story to the end?
3. How did Kyle and Daren's relationship change from the beginning to the end of the story?

4. Describe your favorite part of the story.
5. Who was your favorite character in the story?
6. Is there anything you would have done differently throughout the story if you were Kyle?

Language (Spelling/Vocabulary)

devious- (adj.) sneaky, tricky (p.4)

nonchalant- (adj.) calm, cool; with an attitude that says you really don't care
(p. 17)

revolting- (adj.) disgusting, appalling (p. 21)

scaffolding- (n.) structures, such as ladders and platforms, set up along the sides of buildings that are under construction so that construction workers can work up higher on the building. (p. 22)

tsunami- (n.) a giant wave, usually caused by an earthquake (p. 29)

premises- (n.) on the property or at the location (p. 64)

incline- (n.) an upward hill (p. 74)

accompanied- (v.) to go together at the same time (p. 82)

jeers- (n.) shouts and yells intended to make fun of something (p. 94)

imperative- (adj.) absolutely necessary; extremely important (p.112)

premonition- (n.) a vision of something that will happen in the future (p. 113)

remorse- (n.) a guilty feeling about something you did or did not do (p. 124)

Bibliography

www.pegkehret.com The website of the author of Escaping the Giant Wave.

<http://www.doe.state.in.us/standards/welcome.html> Indiana's State Academic Standards

www.imbd.com International Movie Data Base website

www.powells.com Website for reading reviews and buying books

<http://school.discovery.com/lessonplans/programs/dynamicearth/> Discovery Education website with science-related lesson activities

