

# What Happens in Disasters!

A COMPILATION OF REAL ACCOUNTS  
FROM SURVIVORS OF DIFFERENT NATURAL DISASTERS



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# Foreword



Delivered by Br. Armin A. Luistro FSC

Our communities are exposed to many natural and human-induced hazards which, if not properly anticipated, could lead to disasters. It is important that the capacity of people and communities be honed to reduce the risks brought by such threats.

Through the stories of actual survivors of disasters narrated in this book, you are able to educate learners about the diverse classifications of disasters and the mitigating efforts to avoid loss because of such catastrophes. As we empower the children for preparedness, we hope that this awareness be brought home and be shared to their respective families. More than the understanding of disasters within the confines of the school, vigilance within every home would ensure more lives saved.

Furthermore, empowering the youth to secure themselves would significantly reduce the personal level of risk to hazards. Rather than being mere recipients of assistance, the children and youth may take a proactive role in disaster education -- sharing this information with their peers and engaging their families to prepare for situations of emergency.

Let us always continue with efforts to reduce exposure to hazards, decrease vulnerability and increase capability to keep our learners, schools and communities safe.

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## The Day the Earth Shook Violently



What's the best way to spend a sunny Saturday morning? For 7-year old Joel, it's playing with a paper airplane in the yard.

"Nnneaoooww! Shhhhhhhuuuush! Nnneaoooww! Whooooosh!" went Joel as he threw the plane and watched it glide through the air.



Only Joel was outdoors. Everyone else was at the dining table. Papa was reading the newspaper. Mama was cutting up vegetables for lunch. Nina, Joel's elder sister, was listening to her pocket radio.



Joel threw the plane into the air. It got stuck in a tree across the yard. So he walked to the tree to climb it and to get his toy.





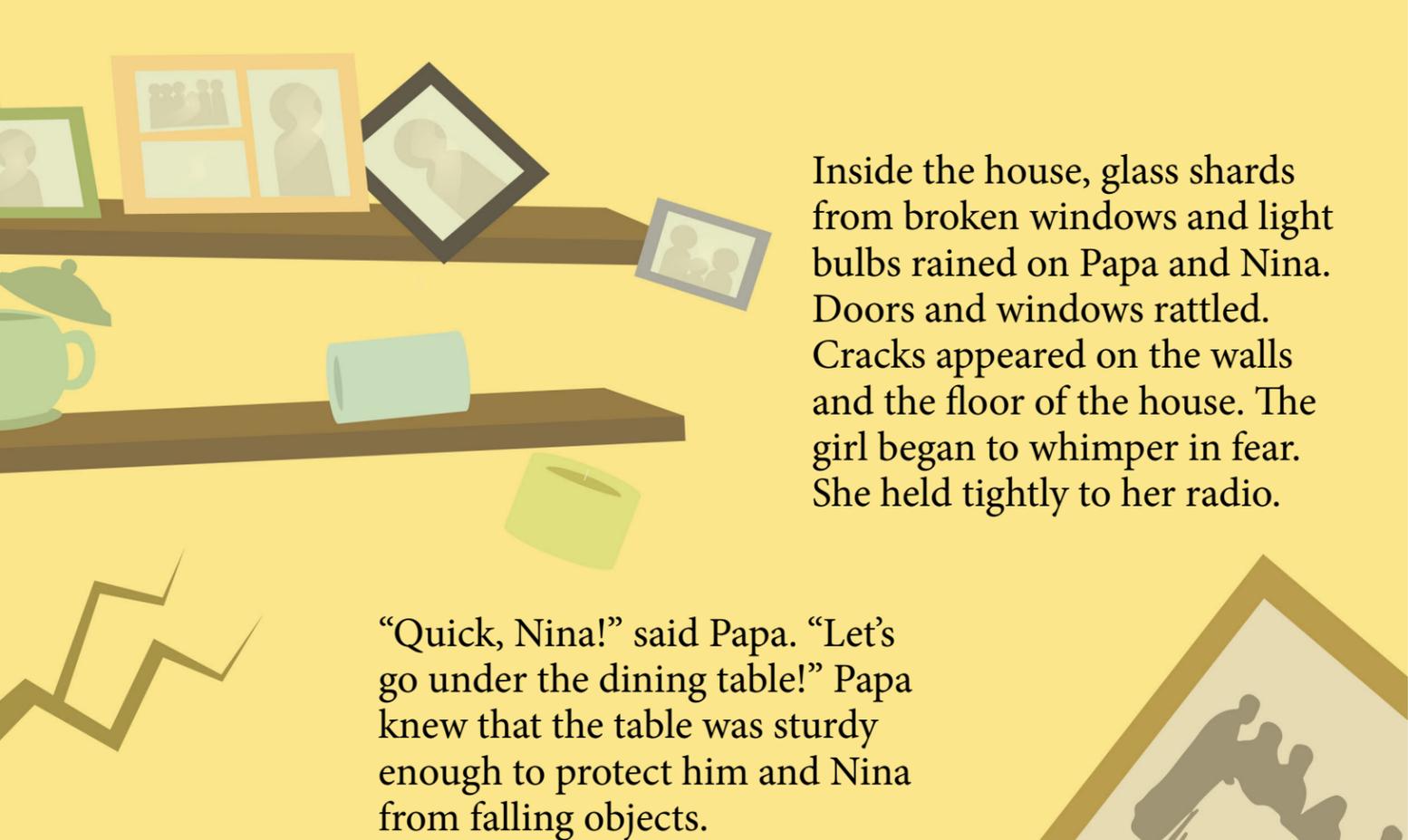
He took a few steps. Suddenly, the ground shook violently. It moved from side to side and then up and down. A loud rumble filled the air.

“Mama! Papa! What’s happening?!” shouted Joel. He fell to the ground and began to cry.

Joel wanted to go to his family. He tried to get up, but the ground was shaking so hard that he kept falling down. His hands and knees hurt.

“It’s an earthquake, Joel!” shouted Mama. “Stay there! I’m coming to get you!”

Mama ran out to the yard. But the ground shook so hard that she kept falling down. She could not get near Joel.



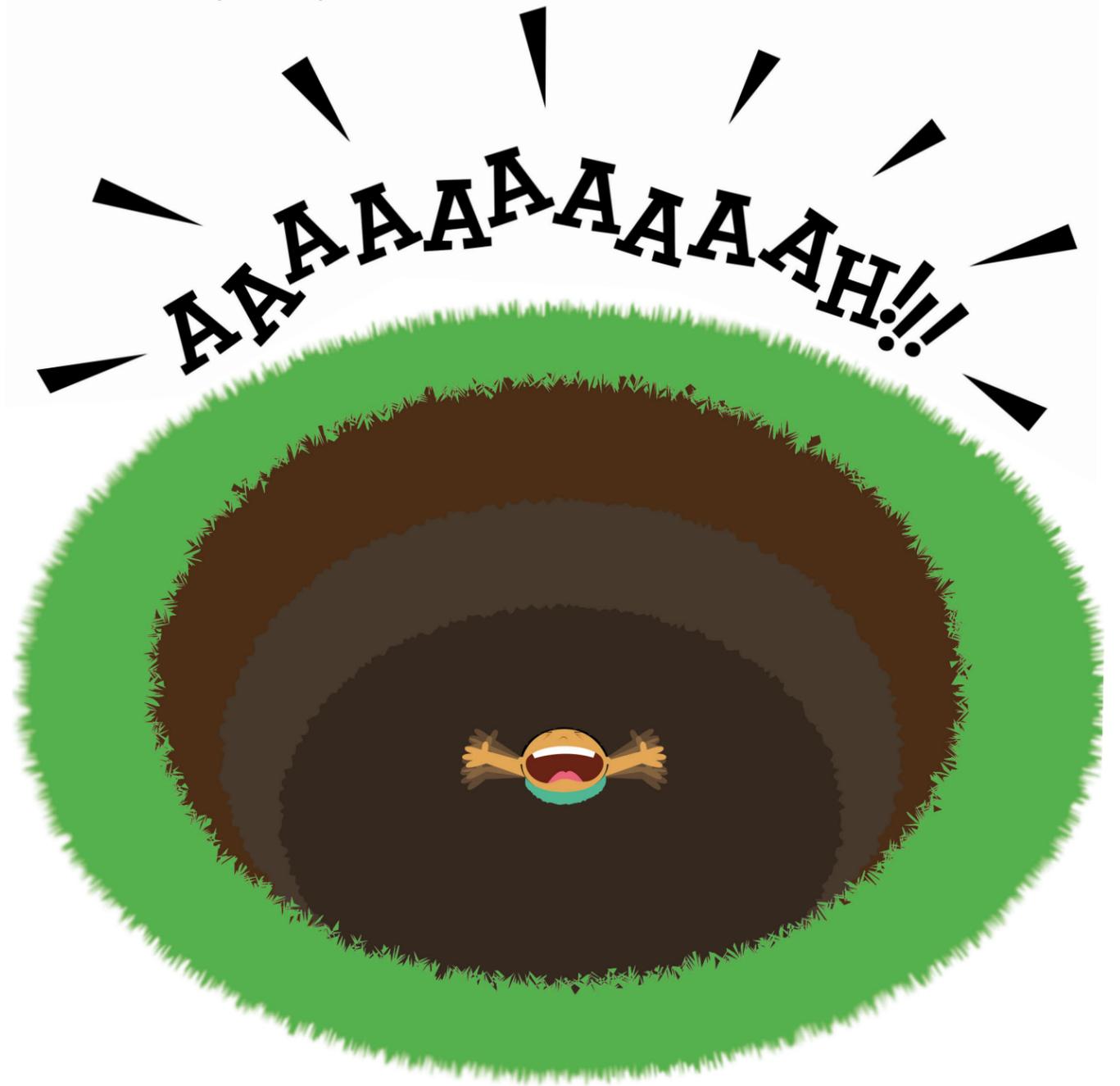
Inside the house, glass shards from broken windows and light bulbs rained on Papa and Nina. Doors and windows rattled. Cracks appeared on the walls and the floor of the house. The girl began to whimper in fear. She held tightly to her radio.

“Quick, Nina!” said Papa. “Let’s go under the dining table!” Papa knew that the table was sturdy enough to protect him and Nina from falling objects.

“We’ll stay here until the ground stops shaking,” said Papa.



Out in the yard, the ground beneath Joel opened and swallowed him up. The hole was big enough to swallow a car.



“Aaaahhhh!” shouted Joel. “Mama, help me! Help me!” he cried. Then he fainted.

Mama watched in horror but still couldn’t get near Joel. The ground was still shaking hard.



Finally, the earth stopped moving.

Papa ran to their nearest neighbor to ask for help. Mama and Nina kneeled on the ground near the huge hole.

“Hang on, Joel!” they shouted. “Help is on the way!” they assured him.

Papa came back shortly with a few men. They brought rope and a shovel. The men tied a rope around Papa’s waist and lowered him into the hole.



He carefully removed the loose soil around Joel. When the boy was free, Papa tied a rope around Joel’s waist and the men pulled Joel up.



The men gently laid the boy and Papa to safety. Mama cradled Joel in her arms. He was dusty and covered with cuts and scratches.

“Wake up, son!” Mama said, while patting the boy’s cheeks. “Please wake up!”



After a few minutes, Joel opened his eyes. "Mama!" he cried.



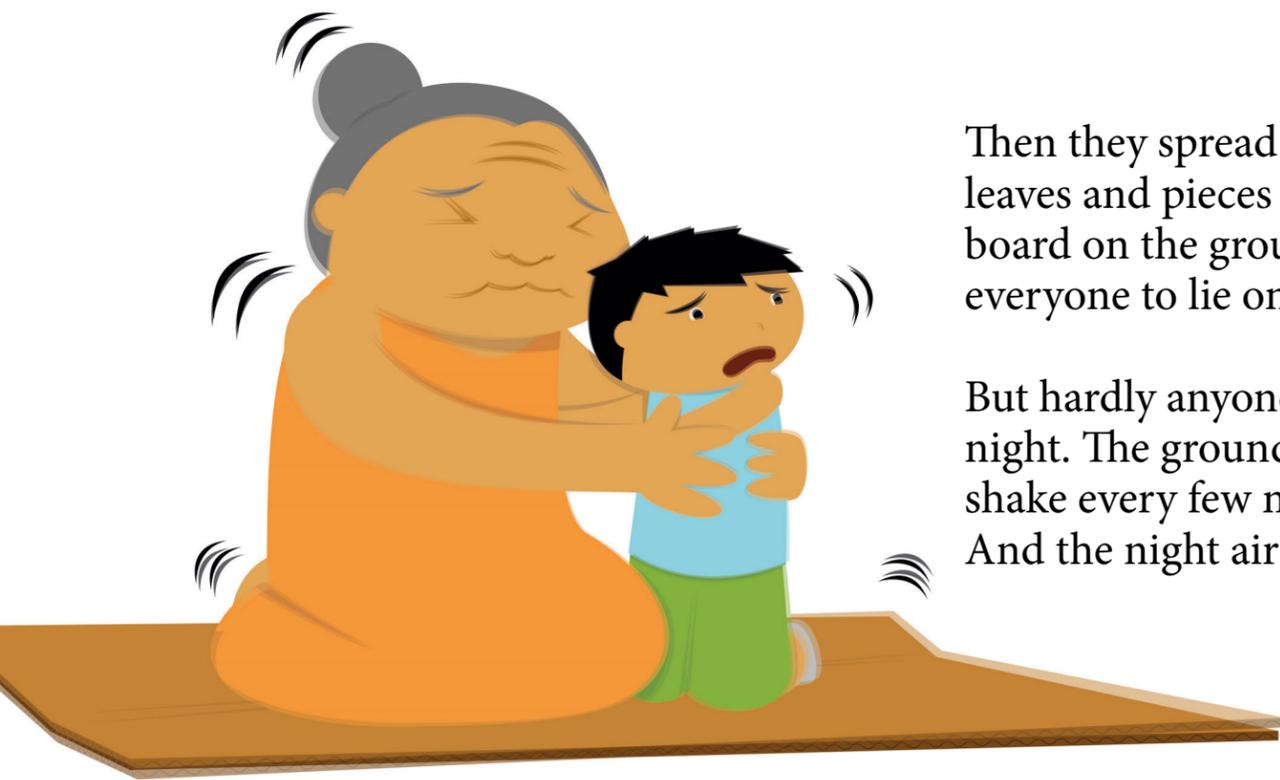
The boy was all right! Everyone shouted for joy! The whole family hugged Joel and then cleaned his wounds.

Later that day, Joel Joel and his family went to the plaza. Many townspeople gathered there. They were afraid to go back to what was left of their damaged homes. Some people collected coconut leaves and built shelters.



At the plaza, the townspeople started cooking supper and ate together. After eating, some people used guava twigs to clean their teeth. They had no toothbrushes.





Then they spread banana leaves and pieces of cardboard on the ground for everyone to lie on.

But hardly anyone slept that night. The ground would shake every few minutes. And the night air was cold.

The next day, rumors spread that a tsunami—or a big wave—was coming. They began to panic.



Joel and his family stayed calm. They and the other townspeople listened to the news on Nina's radio.



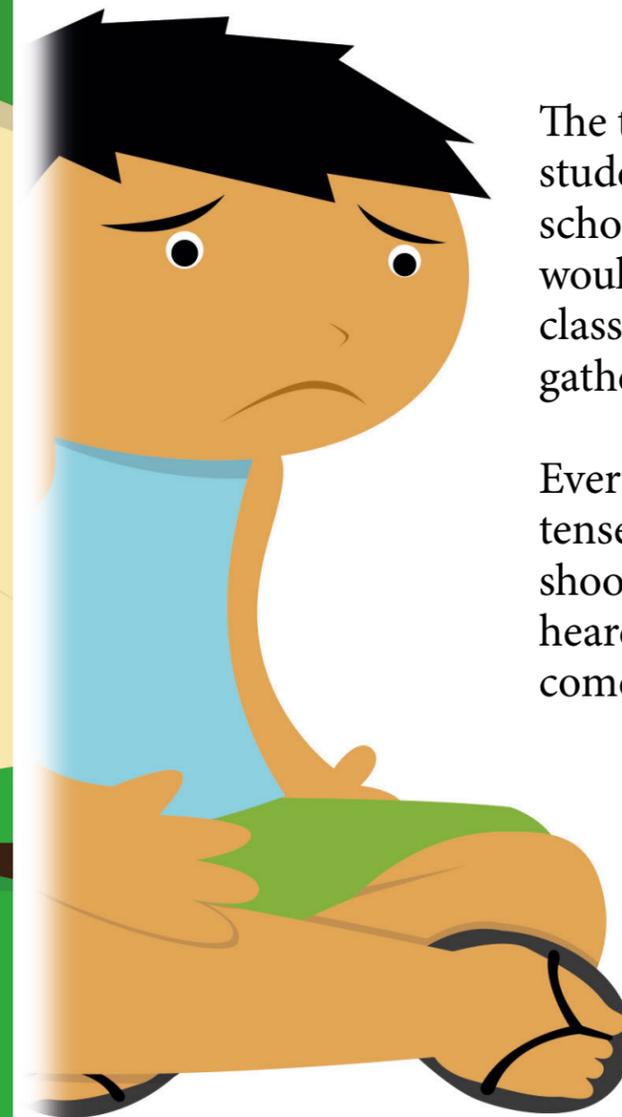
“Attention, everyone!” they heard an expert say. “There is no tsunami! No big wave would come to destroy the island.” Everyone then breathed a sigh of relief.

Two weeks after the earthquake, Joel, Nina, and their fellow students went back to school. They saw that the walls and windows of many schoolrooms cracked during the quake. And there were big holes on the floors of some rooms.



The teachers and the students set up tents in the schoolyard. These tents would be their temporary classrooms. Everyone gathered in the tents.

Everyone felt tired and tense. The ground still shook and they sometimes heard a rumbling sound come from the ground.





The teachers thought that sharing stories would help the children feel less afraid and better able to go back to their lessons.

“Children, would you like to share your stories about what happened to you during the quake?” asked one teacher. The children said yes.

Joel volunteered to go first. “The earth shook so hard!” he said. “I felt like a basketball being dribbled.”

Some of his wounds had not yet fully healed. Other children narrated how they, too, were hurt during the quake.



In contrast, many children, like Nina, were unharmed. They stayed safe during the quake by ducking under a sturdy table. They stayed there until the ground stopped moving.

“That’s what we do during an earthquake drill here in school, remember?” asked one teacher. The children nodded.



Everyone agreed that holding earthquake drills is important. The drills will help them better prepare for the next earthquake.

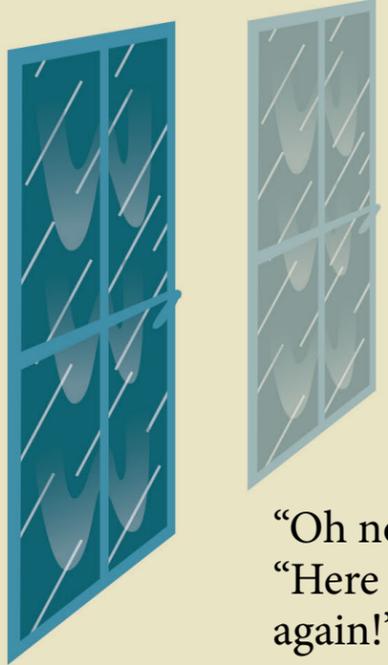
# What Lurks in the Floodwater?



“Plip! Plop! Plip! Plop!” The sound of light rain falling on the tin roof woke Clara up.

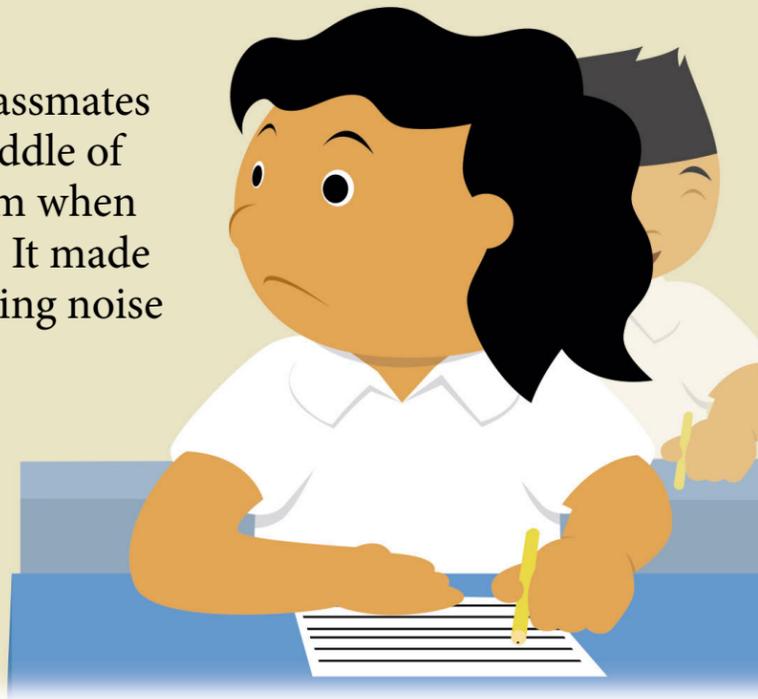
The Grade 2 pupil quickly got out of bed. Today was the day of her exam.





She and her classmates were in the middle of taking the exam when heavy rain fell. It made a loud drumming noise on the roof.

“Oh no!” they groaned.  
“Here comes the flood again!”



The school is in an area that is prone to floods. Soon the street in front of the school was flooded. In a few minutes, the water was knee-deep.



The children saw the flood. They began to worry.

“I hate walking in the smelly water!”  
said one girl.



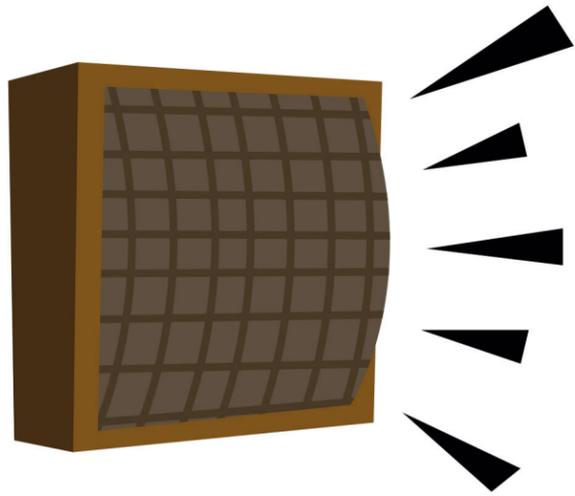
“I don’t want to get my shoes wet!”  
said one boy.



Their teacher asked them to calm down. “We all know what to do when it floods,” he said.

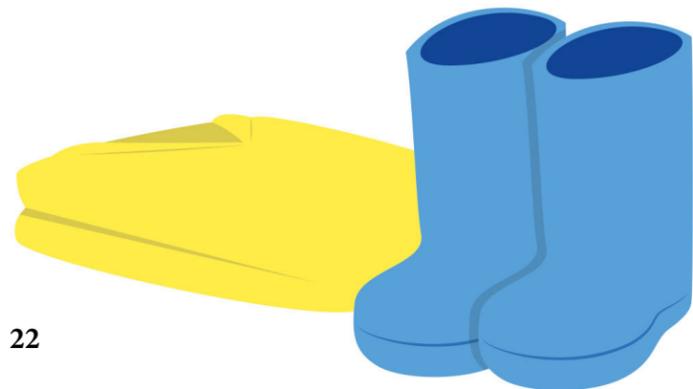
Clara and her classmates settled down to finish the exam. Then they passed their papers.





After a few minutes the school's loud speaker announced the suspensions of classes.

Clara waited for her mother who arrived shortly wearing a raincoat and a pair of rain boots.



Clara wore the yellow raincoat and blue boots that her mother brought. She wanted to stay dry and she knew that the floodwater is filthy.



As she and Mama walked home, they saw many candy wrappers

and plastic food containers floating on the murky and smelly water.

Clara has an elder brother named Dino. He used to play in the floodwater. Then, a year ago, he got really sick.

“Mama, remember when Dino was sick?” Clara asked her mother. “What was the disease called again?”

“Leptospirosis,” replied Mama. “He got it from wading in the floodwater.”



Clara wanted to remember the disease that kept Dino in the hospital for two long weeks. To pay his medical bills, Papa and Mama had to find extra work.



And they all had to save money. No one in the family bought any new shoes and clothes for a long time. Since then, Dino stopped playing in the floodwater.

Dino was home when Clara and Mama got there. He attends classes during the afternoon.

Since classes were suspended, he stayed home and was safe and dry.



Though Clara and Mama wore boots, their feet still got wet. So they washed their feet well with soap and water.





Dino set the table for lunch. Mama ladled out rice and hot chicken tinola. The three said a prayer, and then they ate a hearty lunch.

# The Typhoon that Swept Us Away



“Rrrriing! Rrrriing! Rrrriing!”  
rang Mama’s cell phone.

It was Aunt Dolly. She wanted to know when Mama, Papa, and Bert were going to the evacuation center. A typhoon was coming.

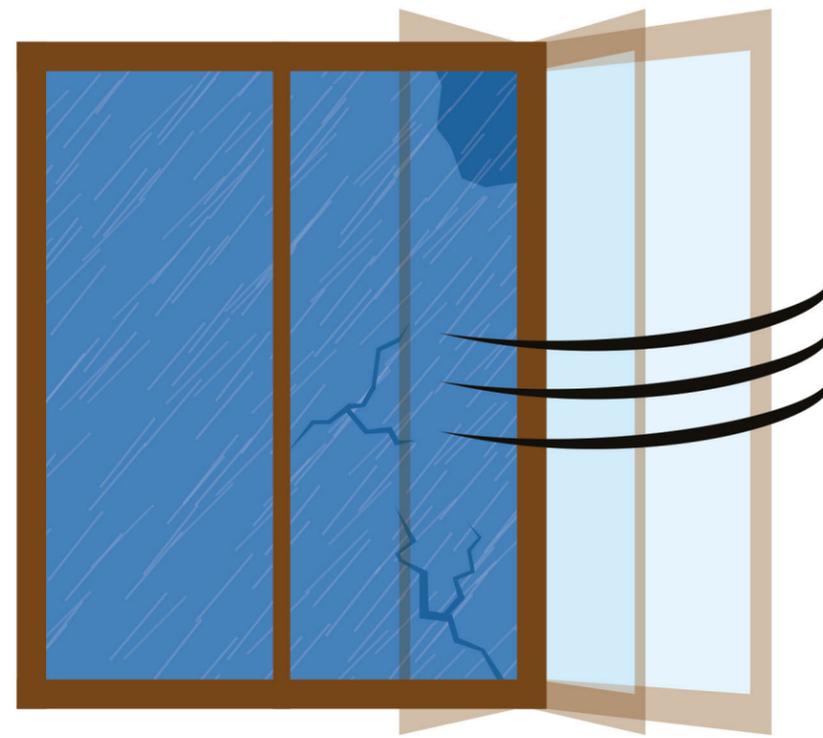


“Don’t worry about us, Dolly,” Mama told her sister. “We’re used to typhoons. And our house has thick cement walls. We’ll keep you posted.”



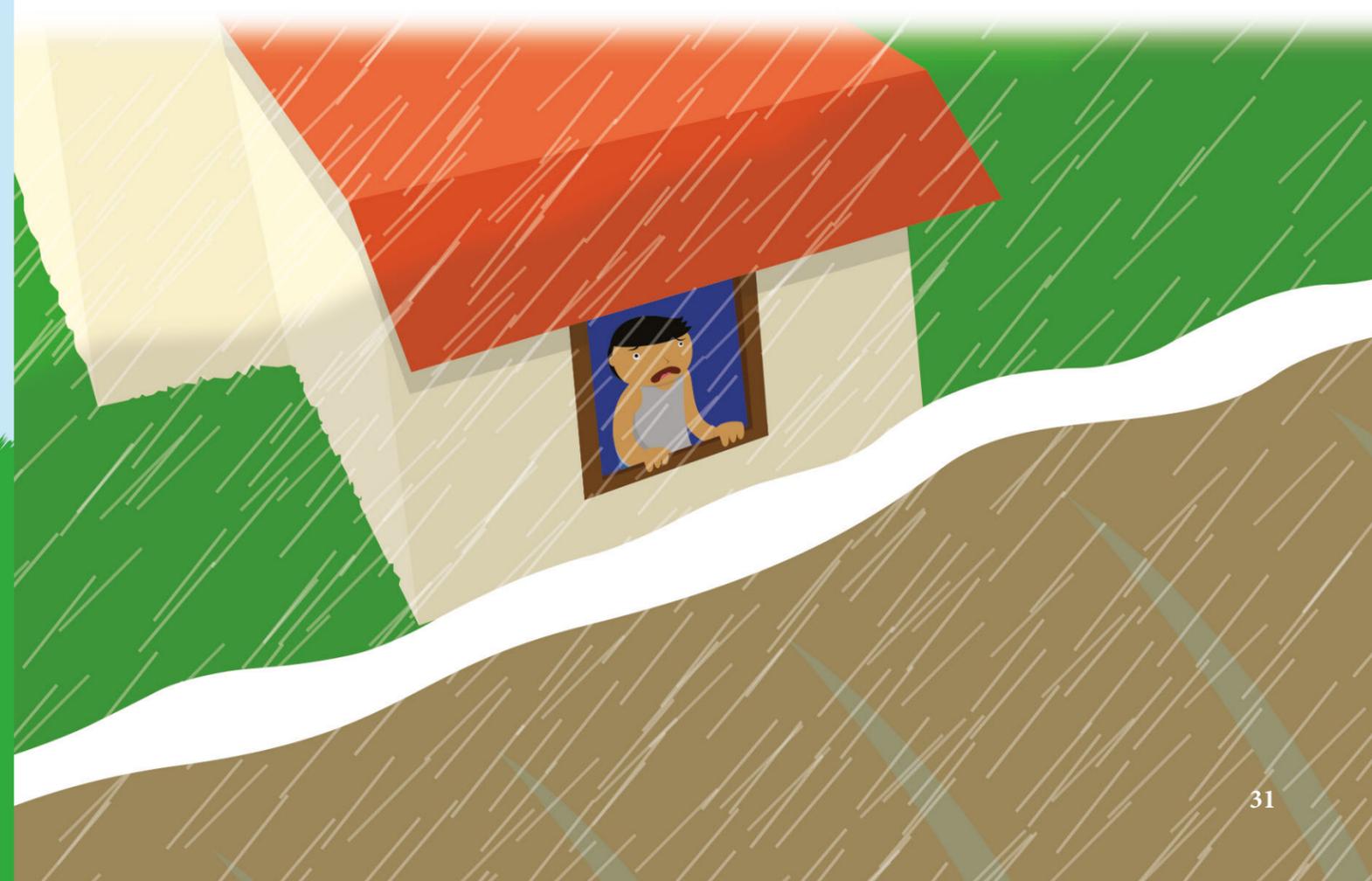
Bert and his parents live on an island that is often visited by typhoons. The storms brought strong winds and heavy rains. Yet their house still stood.

Mama and Papa were sure that the family would be safe there. Also, they were afraid that if they all left, someone might break into their house and steal their valuables.



While Bert and his family was asleep, the wind blew one of the windows, shattering the glass.

Bert woke up with a start. He knew it was morning. But what was that crash? He went to the windows. In the next instant, he saw a terrifying sight. A giant wall of water was rushing toward their house!



Bert closed all the windows in a hurry but it was no use. "Crash! Boom!" All the windows burst open! Dark and dirty water rushed inside the room.



"My books!" They were gifts from Aunt Dolly, who knew that he loved to read.

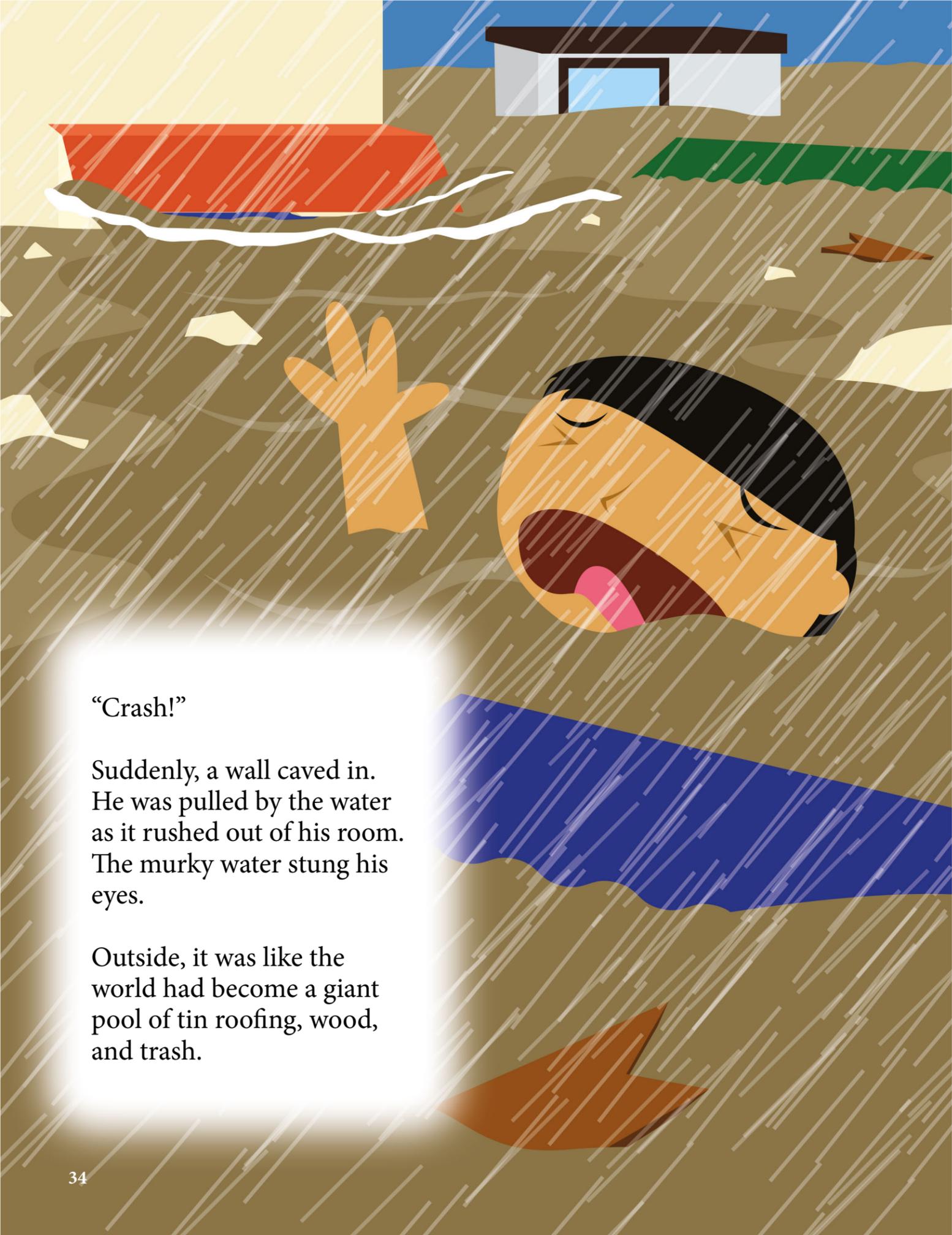
"My laptop!" cried Bert. It was a Christmas gift from his parents.

Bert desperately tried to save his things.



But the water quickly rose, ruining the laptop, books, and everything else in the room. Bert's room was flooded. Only a few inches remained between his nose and the ceiling! His feet could not touch the ground! If he stayed in the room, he would have drowned.





“Crash!”

Suddenly, a wall caved in. He was pulled by the water as it rushed out of his room. The murky water stung his eyes.

Outside, it was like the world had become a giant pool of tin roofing, wood, and trash.

“Help! Help!”

It was Mama’s voice! Bert followed the sound. He found her clinging to the high wall beside their house.



“Mama!” shouted Bert.

“Bert! Thank goodness you are alive!” cried Mama.

They both held on tightly to the wall. Bert didn’t see his father anywhere. So he called out for him.



“Bert! Mama!” Papa shouted. “I’m up on the roof!”

He helped Mama and Bert get on the roof. “We’ll be safe up here,” said Papa. But soon their house started falling apart.

The rushing water peeled away the roofing. It swept away the walls.

Bert and his parents struggled to swim to a big mango tree beside the house and clung to it. Otherwise, the water would have swept them away, too.



After many hours, the water went down. But there was nothing left.

After the typhoon, there was very little food to eat and water to drink on the island.

At night, they all gathered coconut leaves and made shelters because the evacuation center was already full.

Papa had an idea. They left the island to go to his brother in the next town. "There's food and water there," said Papa.

Bert and Mama agreed. It was the only way they would survive.

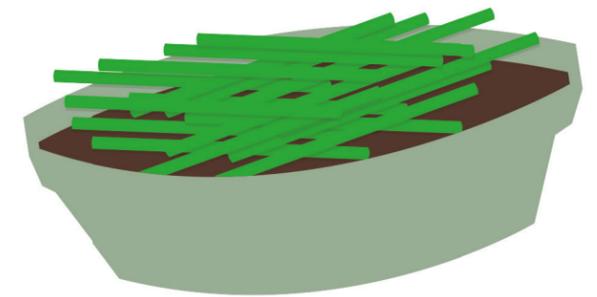
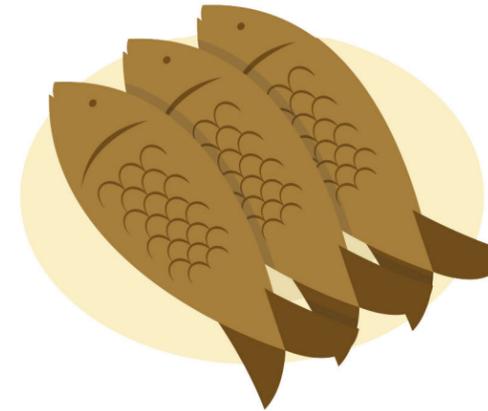
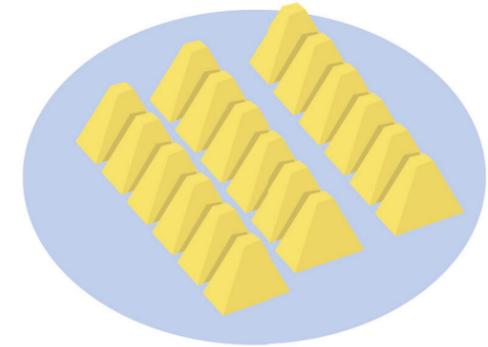
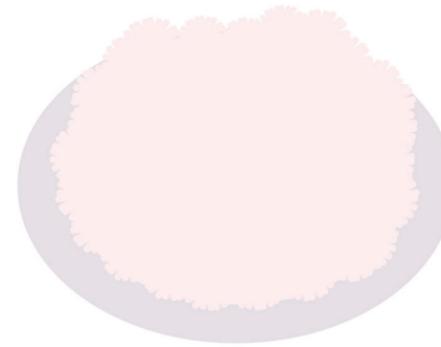
They walked an entire day to reach the house of Bert's uncle. It was damaged, too. Though he and his big family welcomed Bert and his parents, the house was too small for all of them.



Suddenly, the phone of Bert's uncle rang. It was Aunt Dolly! She wanted to talk to Mama. Aunt Dolly said, "Come and stay with me. My home is your home."

Mama's eyes filled with tears. She gratefully accepted Aunt Dolly's invitation.

Bert and his parents were so tired and so hungry when they got to Aunt Dolly's house. She met them with open arms and a hot meal. They ate their fill of rice, fish, vegetables, and fruits.



Then Aunt Dolly asked, "Why didn't you leave your house before the typhoon hit?"

"We thought our house was strong enough to protect us from the storm," replied Mama and Papa sadly. They also said that they wanted to keep an eye on their things.

"But the typhoon took everything away from us," cried Mama. "Now, we have nothing!"

They all fell silent. Then Bert said, “Don’t be sad, Mama and Papa! We’re still alive! And we have relatives who love us.”



His parents embraced him. “Our lives are worth more than anything money can buy, Bert,” they said. “The next time there’s a typhoon, we will think of our safety first.”

Bert and his parents lost many of their things during the typhoon. But they still had each other. Together, the three of them can rebuild their lives.



# The Volcano Blows Its Top



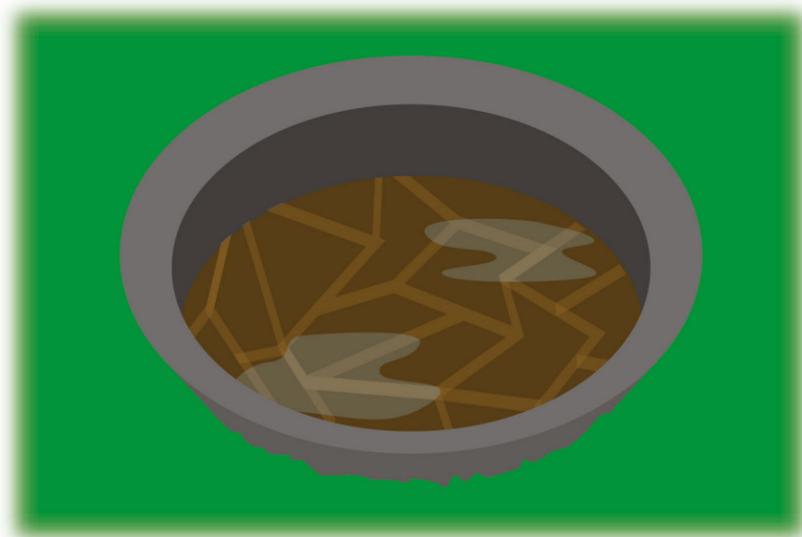
It was a very hot evening. Mark and his mama, Bonnie, had just eaten supper. The 12-year-old boy was washing the dishes. Water was trickling out of the faucet.

“Try to save water, Mark,” said Bonnie. “The well’s almost dry.”

“Yes, Mama,” said the boy. “I’ll save the dish water and use it to water my garden.”

Bonnie is the captain of a barangay at the foothills of an active volcano. She was worried.





The extreme heat was drying up the village wells.

It was so hot that hundreds of snakes slithered down the volcano's flanks.



And clouds of steam had been billowing from the glowing crater for the past few weeks.

These were all signs that the volcano might erupt. As barangay captain, Bonnie also learned through seminars that in case the volcano would erupt, prompt action would save many lives. So she called the mayor on her cell phone.

“Good evening, mayor,” she said. “What’s the latest news on the volcano, please?”

The Mayor replied that the latest bulletin from the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology says the volcano may erupt soon. “Let us evacuate everyone in the barangay,” the mayor said.

“OK, mayor!” Bonnie replied. “I will alert everyone that we need to leave our homes right away and go to the evacuation center.” She thanked the mayor for the update and ended the call.





“Will the volcano erupt, Mama?” asked Mark. He was scared. He had never seen a volcano explode before.

“It might, son,” said Bonnie.



She called the other barangay officials and updated them on the latest bulletin. Then she opened the box where she kept a two-way radio and a megaphone. They were part of the disaster preparedness kit of the barangay.

He readied their emergency bag and went straight to the plaza. Mark remembered what his mother told him.



The bag was already packed. Their important papers, clothes, food, toiletries, pocket radios, flashlights, blankets, and money were in it. Mark also got his schoolbag. His books and notebooks were in it.



“I’ll see you there in two hours then. Take care,” his mother said.

She gave Mark a hug. Then she left the house.



Bonnie and her fellow barangay officials went around the village. They told the villagers that the volcano might erupt and that everyone needed to leave their homes.

In two hours, military trucks would pick all of them up from the plaza and bring them to the evacuation center.

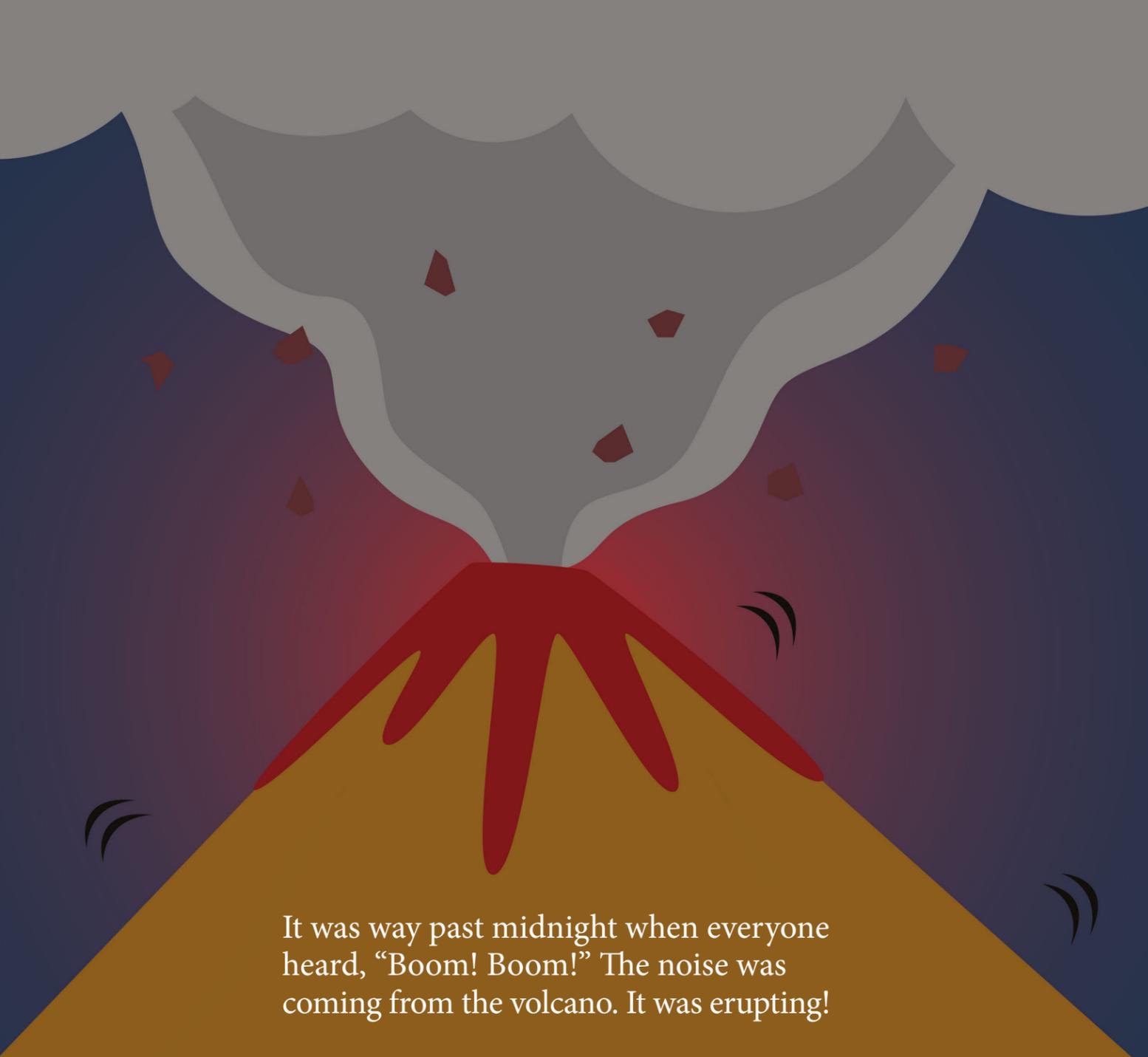
The villagers hurried home to get their emergency bags and followed the warnings. They learned their lesson when many people refused to leave and died during the eruption.



At the plaza, people rode the trucks that brought them to the evacuation center.



At the evacuation center, people laid mats on the floor to sleep on.



It was way past midnight when everyone heard, “Boom! Boom!” The noise was coming from the volcano. It was erupting!

Everyone went to the windows. They saw huge, fiery rocks being spewed from the volcano. When they fell to earth, they gave off showers of sparks. Glowing lava flowed down the volcano’s sides.

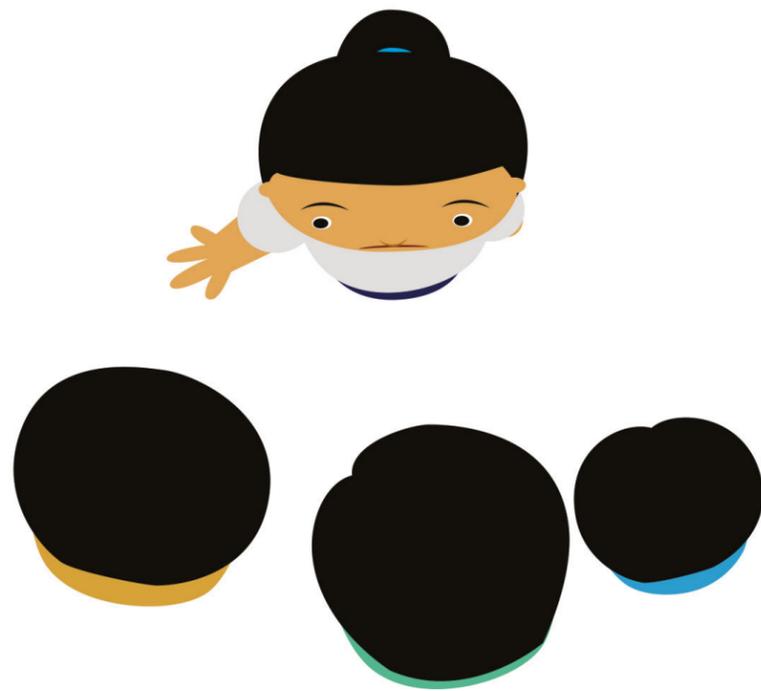
Many children started crying and their parents tried to calm them down. Some people started to pray.

Bonnie held Mark tightly. “Don’t worry, son,” she said. “We’re safe here.”

As volcanic ash fell, the air was filled with the smell of sulfur. “I can’t breathe, Mama,” said Mark. Bonnie got a towel, wet it, and told him to put it over his nose. She and everyone else did the same thing.



The next day, Bonnie asked the villagers to form teams. “Let’s take turns cooking food, fetching water, and cleaning our rooms,” she said. “It looks like we’ll be here for a while.”



She was right. It was two months before the volcano calmed down. Mark tried to read his books and do his lessons. But he really missed going to school.



Some children got sick with fever, cough, and colds. The medicines and first-aid kits brought by many villagers came in handy.



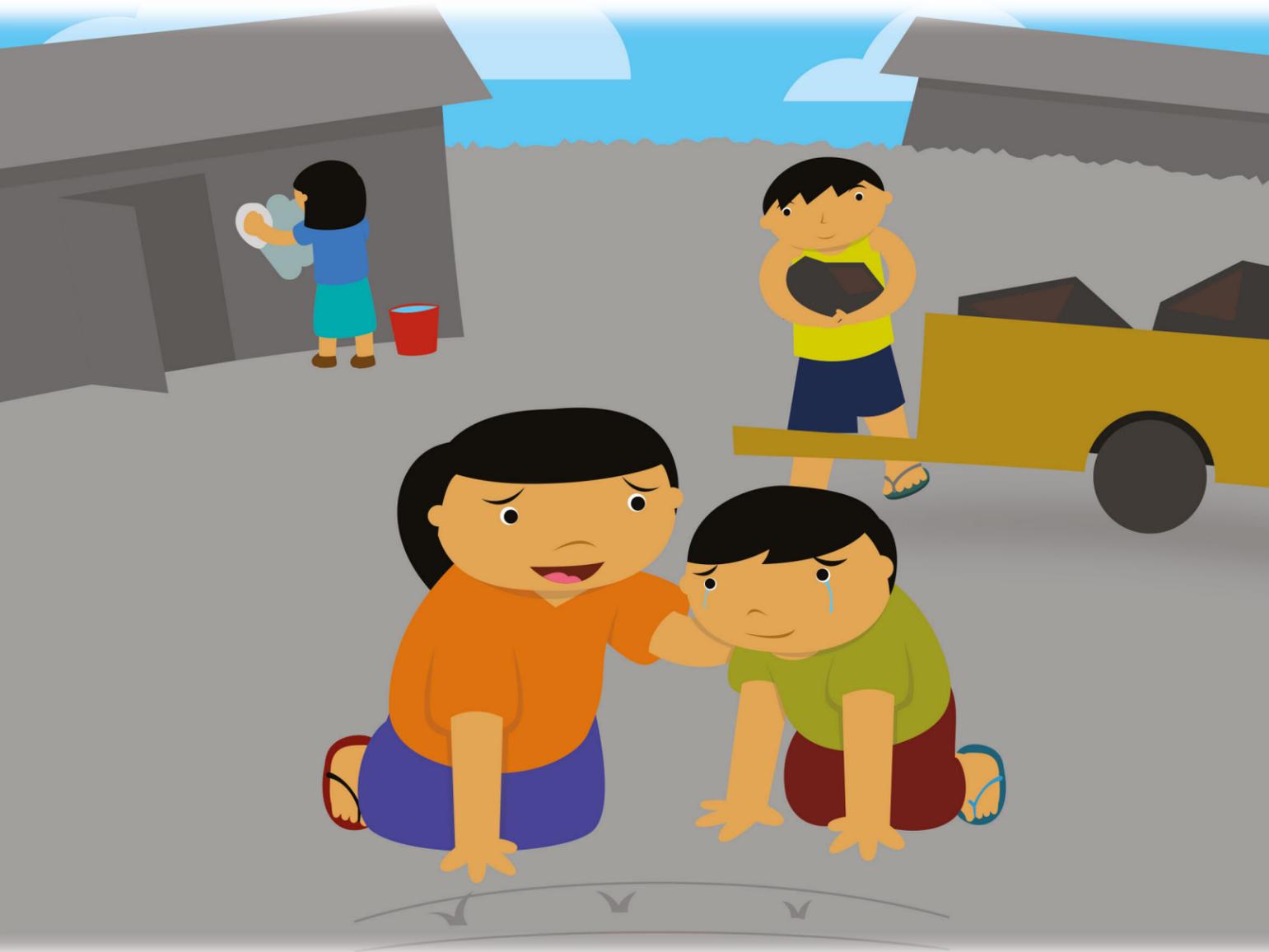
Finally, the day came when the mayor said that they could all go home. “Yes!” cried Mark. “I can’t wait to see my garden!”

The villagers quickly packed their things. Then they all got into the trucks that would bring them to the village.

They were shocked at what they saw there.

Huge rocks—some as big as tricycles—had crushed a few houses. Volcanic rocks also smashed the windows and left holes in the roofs of many houses. Ash covered the ground.

“My garden!” cried Mark. All the plants he had lovingly tended were covered in ash. He burst into tears.



“There, there, son,” said Bonnie as she patted his shoulders. “It’s all right. We will plant another garden.”

Around them, their neighbors were already starting to rebuild their lives. They were sweeping the ash from their yards. Some were cooking meals. Others were forming teams to fix the church roof that was destroyed in the eruption.

Together, the people in the village would rise again from the ashes.

## Vocabulary Words

Whimpered	Rumbled	Murky	Prone	Shattered
Slither	Prompted	Erupt	Evacuate	Billowed

1. The dog \_\_\_\_\_ when it was hungry and had no food to eat.
2. The shaking of the ground \_\_\_\_\_ us to leave the town immediately.
3. Smoke coming from the crater of a volcano is a sign that it is about to \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ water was filled with garbage.
5. He is \_\_\_\_\_ to sickness because he does not take his vitamins.
6. The thunder \_\_\_\_\_ so we knew that there was a storm coming.
7. The glass was \_\_\_\_\_ because of the stones that people threw.
8. We studied the proper way to \_\_\_\_\_ during our drills in class.
9. I saw a snake \_\_\_\_\_ away in the grass.
10. The smoke \_\_\_\_\_ out of the neighbor’s chimney.

## Questions to Think About

1. What did the people feel during and after the disaster? Why?
2. What should children do upon hearing that there is a hazard warning?
3. What should you immediately do when you realize that there is a disaster?
4. How should people prepare for a disaster before it happens?

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Bugho Primary School  
Banlasan Elementary School  
Sohoton Primary School  
Canguha Elementary School  
Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary  
Baras Elementary School  
San Joaquin Central  
San Joaquin National High School  
San Roque Elementary School  
Camalig North Central School  
Anoling Elementary School  
Tumpa Elementary School  
Mi-Lsi Elementary School

What happens during a volcanic eruption?  
An earthquake? How about during a typhoon?

Discover the different kinds of natural disasters that happen in the Philippines through the eyes of actual survivors.

These true-to-life stories will revisit and educate young learners on how different disasters affect a community and how being ready for them will always help in time of need!



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