A Cyclone Called Celia

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Original illustrations by Kimberly Pacheco

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“Graaandmaaa!” William cried. “Celia’s being really annoying. She’s ruined my game!”
“Oh dear,” said Grandma, peering through the doorway. “I see Celia is feeling very stormy today. She is causing as much damage as a cyclone out there!”

“What’s a cyclone?” William asked.
“A cyclone is a big storm that forms in the shape of a swirling circle over warm oceans,” said Grandma. “It brings heavy rains, big waves and high winds, strong enough to rip out trees by their roots.”
“Wow,” said William. “Cyclones sound almost as annoying as little sisters.”

“They can be,” chuckled Grandma. William looked at Celia again, who was now whirling and twirling around the house, sweeping up sticks and leaves as she danced.
“Do you know how to stop a cyclone, Grandma?”

“Well they can’t really be stopped,” said Grandma. “But the first thing you need to do in a cyclone is to find a safe place to find shelter until they pass.”
William nodded. “OK, Grandma. Maybe while we wait out this little sister cyclone, you can tell me more about real cyclones?”

“Good idea,” said Grandma. “William, if there were a real cyclone, it would be best to take shelter in the middle of the house, where there are no windows. The bathroom is usually the safest room in the house. But, for now, let’s take shelter in the kitchen and see if we can find where Grandpa hid the biscuits. If we’re preparing for a cyclone, we’ll need them for our Emergency Kit!”
“I found the biscuits!” William shouted! “What else do we need for our Cyclone Emergency Kit, Grandma?”

Grandma opened a cupboard and pulled out a box marked “Emergency Supplies”. 
“In this box are the things we gathered last cyclone season. Let’s check them together to see if we have everything we need to be prepared for a cyclone.”
William emptied the box onto the mat and examined the items one by one. There were batteries, a radio, torches, solar panels, tinned food, bottles of water, mosquito nets, and, of course, a packet of biscuits.
William picked up the radio.

“Why is this in here? Do we need to listen to the news when there’s a cyclone?”

“Yes,” said Grandma. “It is important to receive weather reports and updates about the cyclone when it is happening. If we hear news that a cyclone is coming, we will have time to get prepared.”

“Even when the storm has passed and it is safe to go outdoors again, community messages will remind us to be extra careful, to check on our neighbours and to stay away from dangerous things, like damaged powerlines, fallen trees and flood water.”
William looked out the window, imagining what it would look like outside in the middle of a cyclone.

He imagined dark grey clouds and fat drops of rain that splashed sideways onto the windows. His family and their neighbours would need to put boards over their windows to keep out the rain.
He imagined the coconut palms being bent in half by the winds and leaves being juggled high in the air.

He imagined stormy, angry seas. It would be important to tie up their boat!

Even though the real day outside was bright and warm, William shivered.
“Are cyclones scary, Grandma?” William asked, in a small voice.

Grandma was quiet for a moment, remembering different cyclones she had seen throughout her years. “Some of them are, yes. Nature is a very powerful force,” Grandma said. “But so are we.”
“Where we live, cyclones are a part of life and every year we learn extra ways to prepare for them and to help make sure they do as little damage as possible,” said Grandma.

“OK,” said William, puffing up his chest and sitting tall. “I want to help our family be ready for the next cyclone season, Grandma, so I will feel more prepared and not so scared.”
“I know we need an Emergency Kit and I know we need to stay inside and take shelter. I know we need to take our radio and listen for new information about the cyclone. Is there anything else we can do?”
“Yes,” said Grandma. “Before every cyclone season we tidy up our house, and our village, to make sure that there isn’t anything lying around loose — like a branch or a part of the roof — that could be blown around in the strong winds and cause damage or hurt someone.”
“Great!” said William, jumping up. “Tidying up outside is something I can do right now!”
He started to walk towards the door and then stopped.

“Maybe I’ll see if Celia has calmed down and wants to help, too? I can’t hear her anymore…”
When they looked out into the garden, Grandma whispered to William, “When you’re dealing with cyclones — the real kind and the little sister kind — there’s one last, very important thing you should remember...”

“What’s that Grandma?” William whispered back.
“As long as you’re in a safe place and you’re well prepared, the best thing to do is give those wild forces enough time to run out of energy. Eventually, they’ll blow themselves out.”
Let’s play a game!

Mark each square when you have completed the activity!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read an information book about cyclones.</td>
<td>If you need to leave your house in an emergency, where will you go? Ask your family or teacher about your community action plan!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell someone three facts you’ve learned about cyclones.</td>
<td>Do you know what to do if you are inside during a cyclone?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a cyclone action plan with your community.</td>
<td>Do you know what to do if you are outside during a cyclone?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Emergency decision-making tree

Prior to the event of a tsunami, tropical cyclone, flooding, landslide or earthquake, speak with your family and teacher about your community's evacuation building or safe place. Discuss how to respond to possible scenarios, and use the decision tree to help you decide the best course of action.

**Standard operating procedure**

- **Is the building safe?**
  - Yes: Remain indoors in a safe and strong building.
  - No: Evacuate building

- **Is it safe outside?**
  - Yes: Go outside to check for damages.
  - No: Do not go outside until safety advice officially issued.

- **Are the grounds safe?**
  - Yes: Evacuate to higher grounds.
  - No: Evacuate building

- **Is it safe in the community?**
  - Yes: Return to your community.
  - No: Remain on higher grounds until safety advice officially issued.

**Supporting information**

**Emergency kit**
Keep an emergency kit at home for your family.

- **The kit must contain:**
  - Drinking water
  - First Aid Kit
  - Matches
  - Preserved food
  - Radio
  - Torch lamp
  - Batteries

Use the kit only in case of emergency and replace anything that has been used.

**Shelter-in-place**

**Earthquake:**
- Identify safe places where you can protect your head and avoid heavy falling objects.
- Don’t forget an earthquake can cause a tsunami.
- If you feel a strong earthquake, go quickly to higher ground, and listen to the radio for warnings.

**Tropical cyclone:**
- Open louvers on the side of the building, away from wind to reduce the pull force of the wind on the roof.
- Remain calm, stay indoors but clear of doors and windows.
- Remain in the strongest part of the building.
- Do not go outside until safety advice is officially issued.

**Evacuate building**

Assist people with disability and visitors.
Take your emergency kit.
Evacuate to higher ground and move to a safe location.

**Tsunami:**
- Run to a safe place in high ground or at least 2 km inside the island.
- Wait for at least 2-3 hours after the first wave to return to the village.

Listen to the radio for further information or reach out to the emergency contacts.
You can use these questions to talk about this book with your family, friends and teachers.

What did you learn from this book?

Describe this book in one word. Funny? Scary? Colourful? Interesting?

How did this book make you feel when you finished reading it?

What was your favourite part of this book?

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