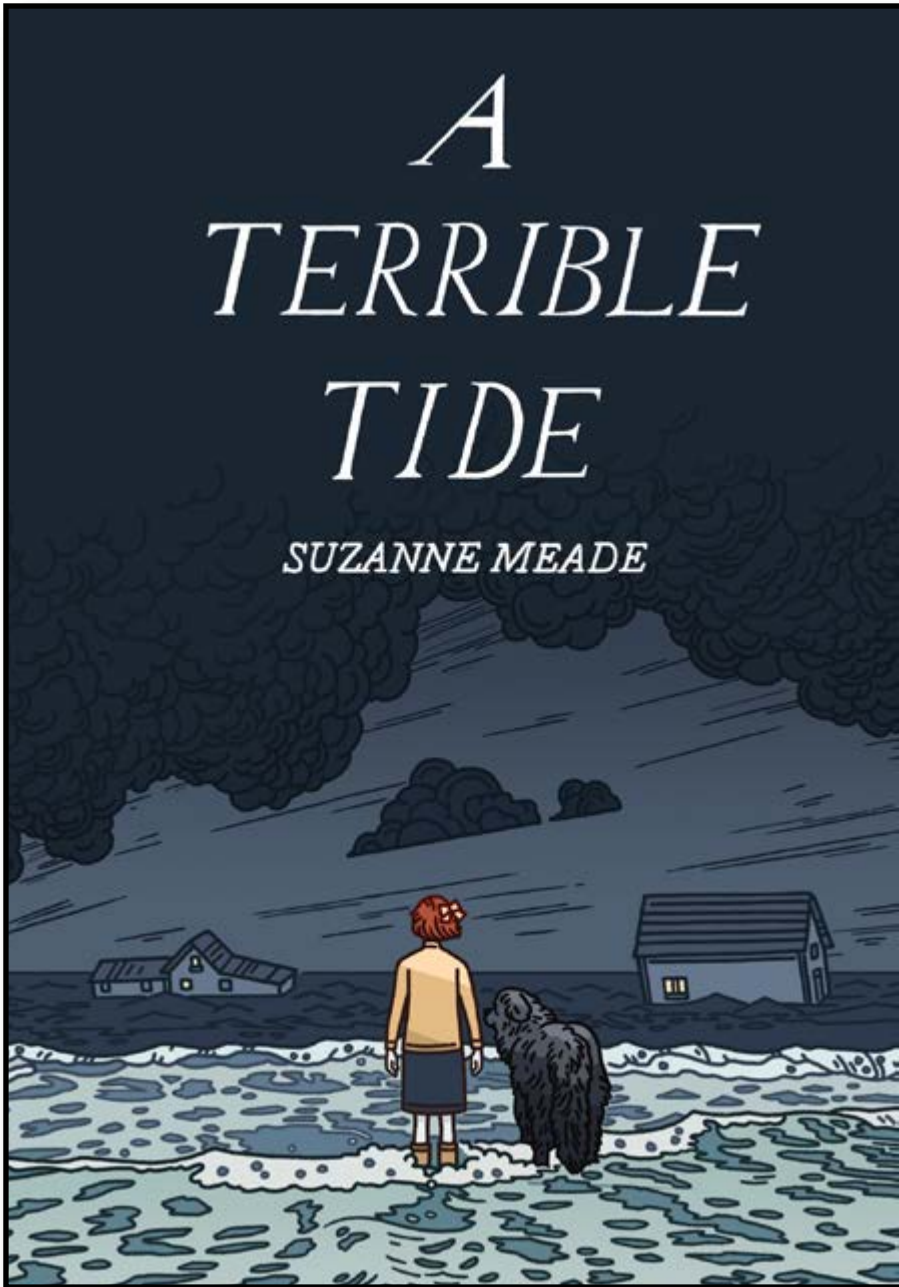


Grades 4 – 7; Ages 8 – 12



A Terrible Tide

By Suzanne Meade

Teacher's Guide

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A Terrible Tide

Author: Suzanne Meade

Summary

This middle grade historical fiction novel tells the story of a tsunami that devastated the Burin Peninsula in Newfoundland on the evening of November 18, 1929. The village of Taylor's Bay named in the story is a real place that was devastated by the disaster, but the characters are fictional.

Celia and her family were celebrating her thirteenth birthday when they felt the unfamiliar sensation of an earthquake. Frightened, the villagers gathered to discuss what was going on. A few hours later a giant wave crashed ashore, smashing houses, boats, and docks, and leaving the villagers in desperate straits. The only telephone was washed away in the flooding, and the only telegraph line had been damaged by a snowstorm a few days before. With no way to contact the outside world, would the residents of Taylor's Bay be able to survive until help arrived?

Learning Opportunities

Character Education	<p>Courage, perseverance, personal relationships</p> <p>How do the characters in the story show courage?</p> <p>Do the relationships between the characters in the novel change? How do they handle conflict?</p>
Literacy	<p>Genre: What is historical fiction? What are the key elements of the genre?</p> <p>Setting: What are some elements that authors use to help readers visualize unfamiliar settings?</p> <p>Is a specific setting always an essential part of a story?</p> <p>Reading strategies: How can you make sense of the unfamiliar words in this novel?</p> <p>What prior knowledge (schema) do you have about earthquakes, tsunamis, or disasters? How can that knowledge help you understand the story and/or the characters?</p>

<p>Science</p>	<p>Forces of nature (earthquake, tsunami)</p> <p>Understanding Matter and Energy—Forces Causing Movement</p> <p>Understanding Structures and Mechanisms—Forces Acting on Structures and Mechanisms</p> <p>Understanding Structures and Mechanisms—Form and Function</p>
<p>Social Studies</p>	<p>Look at the history of communication devices (telegraph, telephone, wireless radio).</p>
<p>Music</p>	<p>Make an ugly stick and use it in a musical performance.</p> <p>Listen to some music from Newfoundland. Talk about common instruments, origins of the music, etc.</p>

Glossary

Because this story is set in Newfoundland, there are a number of words that may be unfamiliar to readers. Newfoundland English uses many words that aren't common in other places. Some of the meanings may be clear enough through context but others are likely not. This glossary is intended to help make the meaning of these unfamiliar words clear.

Chapter	Word	Meaning
1	squish-ways	Sideways, tilted
	fish room	A small hut used for cleaning/ gutting fish
	twiting	Teasing
	flakes	Wooden racks used for drying salt cod
	tallywack	A rascal, a scallywag
	curlew	An ocean bird
	trice	A moment, a few minutes
2	dory	A small flat-bottomed fishing boat that can be rowed with oars or moved with a motor
3	gom	A lout, a fool
	glabaun	A person who is always worrying, usually about unimportant things
4		

5	skiff schooner	A small sea-going boat that can be rowed or sailed A larger sailing boat used for longer fishing trips
6	sleveen	A rogue or rascal
7	the once	In a moment
8	screech	A type of cheap, dark rum made in Newfoundland
9		
10	making a good time ugly stick	Having a party A makeshift musical instrument made from a stick with attached pieces of metal
11	whinging	Whining, complaining
12		
13	hang 'er down come-from-away	Hold on, wait a moment Someone not from Newfoundland
14		
15		

Before Reading

Help establish the setting by looking at where Newfoundland is on a map, and at the Burin Peninsula in particular. Note the location of the towns—all along the coast, but not in the interior. Look for photos of the area as well.

Discussions about communications technology could also be useful here. Make sure the students understand that telephones were very rare in this area at the time.

Discussion/Comprehension Questions

These questions are suggestions for discussions that could happen during the reading of the book.

Chapter 1: An Interrupted Celebration

Why do you think the characters were confused about the tremors?

What do we know about the main character Celia so far?

Chapter 2: Mystery at the Bay

Why did Celia decide to go down the bay? Do you think she made the right decision?

What do we know about Celia's relationships with her family members?

Chapter 3: Afloat

What are some of the dangers of being cold and wet for a long time?

How was Celia feeling while she floated on the ocean? How do you think you would feel if you were in her place?

Chapter 4: Devastation

What did you visualize and think about when you read the description of the town in this chapter? Can you imagine what it would feel like to see your own home like that?

Chapter 5: Not a Boat to be Found

What is Celia's relationship with her father like?

Why do you think Bessie Taylor acts the way she does towards Celia?

Chapter 6: Scavenging

How do we know what Celia is feeling in this chapter? Have you ever felt similar big emotions? What did you do?

Chapter 7: Winnie Wakes

Why do you think Viola is snapping at Celia so much in this chapter?
How do you think you would react if someone was talking to you like that?

Have you ever visited someone who was sick or injured (either at home or in a hospital)? How did you feel?

Chapter 8: The Coastal Path

Do you think Celia and Henry made a good decision in this chapter?

How do you think Henry's injury would be treated today?

Dorothy Cherry was a real person. Can you imagine what her trip along the coast would have been like?

Chapter 9: Duck Stew

Have you ever felt like you were in danger like Celia and Dinah did with the bear? How did you react?

Chapter 10: Making a Good Time

What do you think the expression "making a good time" means?

Why do you think the villagers chose to get together to listen to music and dance, considering the situation they're in?

How do you think Celia and her family felt when Nan showed up at the door?

Chapter 11: The Darkest Hour

Do you think "The Darkest Hour" is a good title for this chapter? Why or why not?

How do you think you'd react to Bessie if you were there?

Chapter 12: The *S.S. Meigle*

What descriptive details help you picture the scene and/or imagine how the characters are feeling in this chapter?

Chapter 13: Nurse Wilcox

What help does the nurse provide to the Matthews family?

Why do you think Celia is worried about Nurse Wilcox interacting with Winnie?

Chapter 14: Decisions

Imagine that you are Celia or Viola, overhearing the conversation between the adults. How do you think you'd feel?

Why do you think Celia runs outside after talking to her parents in the morning?

Chapter 15: New Beginnings

Have you ever had to move a long distance? How did you feel? Were you more excited, like Winnie? Or sad and nervous, like Celia?

If you've never had to move, can you imagine how it might feel?

Literacy Extension Activities

These activities can be done at any point during their reading of the book. They are only meant as suggestions.

1. Imagine that you are a resident of Taylor's Bay. Write a letter or a journal entry describing the earthquake and tsunami and your reaction to it.
2. What do you imagine the characters look like? Draw a portrait of one or more characters based on their description in the book.
3. Consider other points of view. Write a scene from the book from the perspective of a different character. How would it be different from Celia's version?

Research Questions

Make a list of questions together on chart paper, a whiteboard, or a blackboard that can stay accessible. Alternatively, have students, on their own or in groups, choose a question to research and decide how they want to share their new learning (poster, slideshow, booklet, etc.).

- 1. Weather and the environment.** Ask students what they want to know about earthquakes and tsunamis.
- 2. Animals that help.** There are many different animals in this category, like the Newfoundland dogs. Other examples could be guide dogs, rescue dogs, or emotional support animals.

Virtual Class Visits

Invite experts to meet with your class virtually via Skype, MS Teams, Google Classroom, or another video meeting platform. Some ideas could be the following:

- 1. Survivors of tsunamis or other natural disasters.** If possible, invite someone who has survived a natural disaster to speak with your class about their experience.
- 2. East Coast musicians.** Have students find East Coast musicians they like and share their music with the class.
- 3. Author.** Invite Suzanne Meade to meet virtually with your class.

Additional Resources

For more information about the Newfoundland (Grand Banks) Tsunami of 1929, you can explore these links:

<https://www.heritage.nf.ca/articles/politics/tsunami-1929.php>

<https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/nflds/article/view/5887/6897>

<https://earthquakescanada.nrcan.gc.ca/historic-historique/events/19291118-en.php>