

The Living

AUTHOR: Matt de la Pena

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GENRE: Adventure, thriller

SETTING: cruise ship and Hidden Islands

SUMMARY:

This is a story of a boy named Shy who is trying to earn some cash over the summer by working on a cruise ship. Shy wants to help his family with medical bills stemming from his grandmother's affliction with an unknown virus. This story is divided into three distinctive sections, the beginning of the cruise, the storm and evacuation and finally the island.

The cruise begins with Shy dreaming about the man who jumped overboard on his last cruise and how he was not able to save him, and then flows seamlessly to an earthquake in California that results in a tsunamis' effect on their cruise ship. The weather quickly goes from bad to worse and the whole boat is evacuated because they have been hit by the tsunami. Shy is now responsible for an evacuation boat and is worrying about his friends.

The plot continues to climax when Shy wakes up to find one of the men in his boat has disappeared. An island is seen! Shy and his friends stumble upon one of the Lasco Tech's Hidden islands. Other survivors welcome them there and take them to a luxurious hotel, where they are fed and given a room to rest in. Shy begins to think that this is not a safe island even though all the survivors are told that a rescue boat will be arriving in the afternoon.

BOOKTALK:

Image yourself on a cruise boat, not as a passenger, but as one of the crew taking care of all those wealthy, impolite passengers. It is your job to make sure everyone gets equipment and towels that they need for the recreation deck. But there's a problem- you can't get a previous passenger out of your head- a passenger who jumped overboard on your last cruise. That man slipped through your hands to his death.

You feel like you are being followed, your cabin has been ransacked, and a wealthy man is trying to set you up with his daughter by asking you to dinner with them. The weather is changing and suddenly a huge storm is coming straight for the ship. Can Shy stay alive, follow the captain's orders and figure out who is out to get him? This is an action packed adventure, mystery , survival story that will leave you wanting more....

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH: <http://mattdelapena.com/bio>

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/contributor/matt-de-la-pena>

<http://mattdelapena.com/>

Matt de la Pena's first book was published in 2005 and he now has several acclaimed young adult novels to his credit. He received his BA from the University of the Pacific and his MFA in creative writing from San Diego State University. He lives and teaches creative writing in New York. He has received numerous awards including ALA-YALSA Best Book for Young Adults and an ALA-YALSA Quick Pick for Reluctant Readers.

Teaching resources:

Teachingbooks.net: <http://www.teachingbooks.net/tb.cgi?tid=36918>

Interview with de la Pena- http://www.loc.gov/bookfest/author/matt_de_la_pena/

Other books written by the author:

Ball Don't Lie

Mexican WhiteBoy

We Were Here

I Will Save You

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How does the earthquake affect the cruise ship and everyone on-board?
2. What were the Hidden islands and what was their purpose?
3. Shoeshine appears throughout the book. Shy comments that maybe he is a genius. Why does Shy think this?
4. How does the author introduce discrimination and social injustice into this story?
5. Shy is a young bi-racial working class kid. How do his experiences affect the way he sees and interprets the world around him? How would you interpret the same situations?
6. Shy's relationships change throughout the story. Describe his interactions with Cassandra and Carmen.
7. Discuss the ethics of what was going on at the Hidden Islands relative to medicine, profit and society.

LITERARY LINKS OR ACTIVITIES

Language Arts

- Compare and contrast Shy and Addison. How does race and social economical class affect who they are?
- Write a descriptive passage about how you would feel as a passenger on the cruise ship during the tsunami.
- *The Living* is written as a personal narrative from Shy's point of view. Choose one of the main characters and write a personal narrative from their point of view.

7.RL.2.1 Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what a text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text

7.RL.2.2 Analyze the development of a theme or central idea over the course of a work of literature; provide a detailed summary that supports the analysis.

7.RL.2.3 Analyze the interaction of elements in a work of literature (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

7.RL.3.2 Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a work of literature.

8.RL 2.1, 2.2, 3.2

Science

- Research California's geography vs. Indiana's and discuss why earthquakes are a threat to each region.
- How big is a typical cruise ship? How much does it weigh?
- Estimate how long it would take for the ship to sink in a storm such as the tsunami in *The Living*.
- Estimate approximately how many passengers and crew a cruise ship would hold. How many life boats does a ship carry and about how many people fit in each life boat?
- Research what a tsunami is and how it would affect a cruise ship.
- Research the geology of the San Andreas Fault and earthquakes in California.

- How does a medication become approved for human use? What is the process and how long does it usually take?

6-8.LST.7.1: Conduct short research assignments and tasks to answer a question (including a self-generated question), or test a hypothesis, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

6-8.LST.7.2: Gather relevant information from multiple sources, using search terms effectively; annotate sources; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation (e.g., APA or CSE).

6-8.LST.7.3: Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Challenging Words

Hysterical, rhythmically, tourniquet, foundation, tsunami