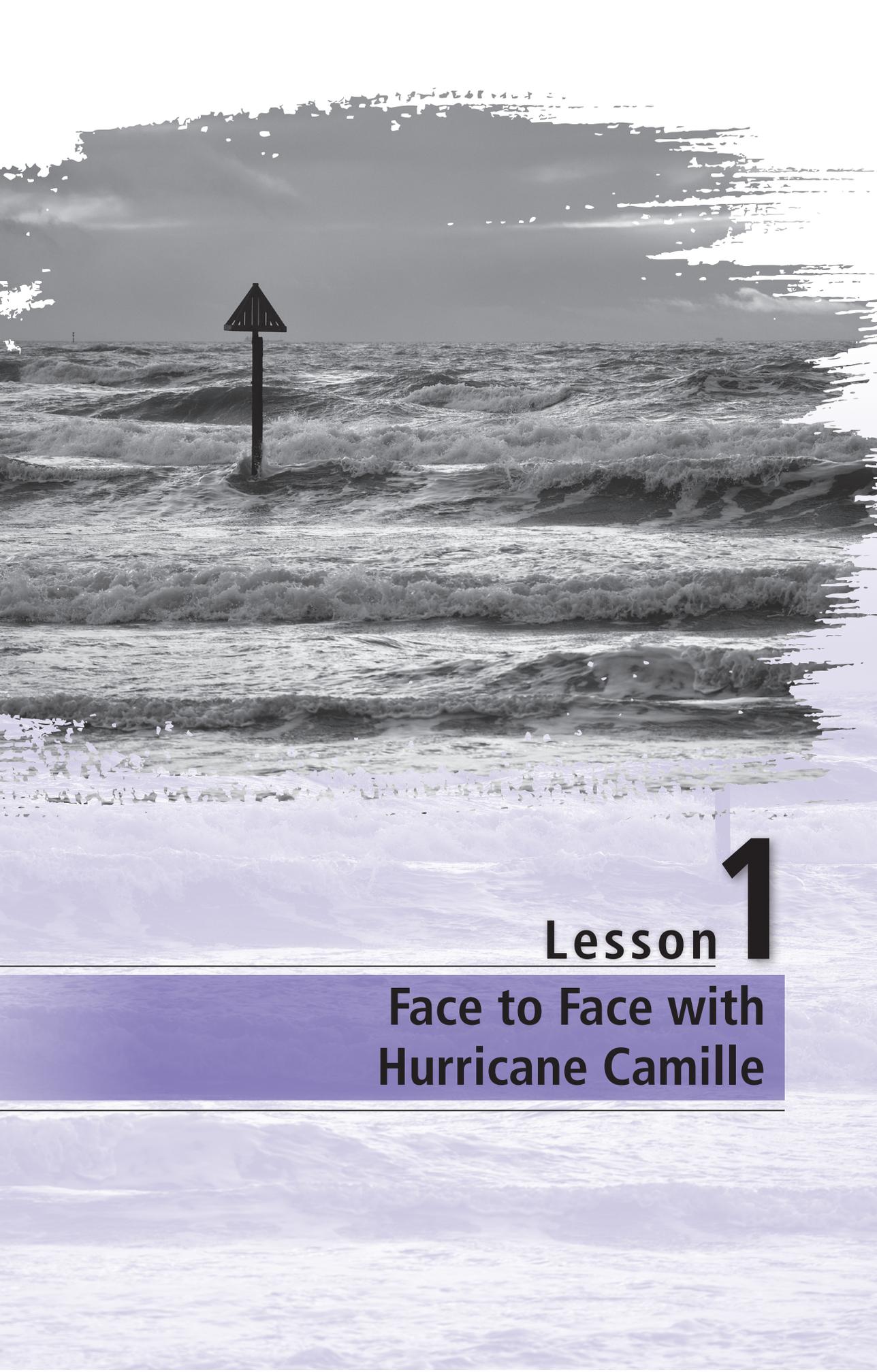


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Lesson 1

Face to Face with Hurricane Camille



Face to Face with Hurricane Camille

Joseph P. Blank

- 1 John Koshak, Jr., knew that Hurricane Camille would be bad. Radio and television warnings had sounded throughout that Sunday, last August 17, as Camille lashed northwestward across the Gulf of Mexico. It was certain to pummel Gulfport, Miss., where the Koshaks lived. Along the coasts of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, nearly 150,000 people fled inland to safer ground. But, like thousands of others in the coastal communities, John was reluctant to abandon his home unless the family—his wife, Janis, and their seven children, aged 3 to 11—was clearly endangered.
- 2 Trying to reason out the best course of action, he talked with his father and mother, who had moved into the ten-room house with the Koshaks a month earlier from California. He also consulted Charles Hill, a longtime friend, who had driven from Las Vegas for a visit.
- 3 John, 37—whose business was right there in his home (he designed and developed educational toys and supplies, and all of Magna Products’ correspondence, engineering drawings and art work were there on the first floor)—was familiar with the power of a hurricane. Four years earlier, Hurricane Betsy had demolished his former home a few miles west of Gulfport (Koshak had moved his family to a motel

for the night). But that house had stood only a few feet above sea level. “We’re elevated 23 feet,” he told his father, “and we’re a good 250 yards from the sea. The place has been here since 1915, and no hurricane has ever bothered it. We’ll probably be as safe here as anyplace else.”

- 4 The elder Koshak, a gruff, warm-hearted expert machinist of 67, agreed. “We can batten down and ride it out,” he said. “If we see signs of danger, we can get out before dark.”
- 5 The men methodically prepared for the hurricane. Since water mains might be damaged, they filled bathtubs and pails. A power failure was likely, so they checked out batteries for the portable radio and flashlights, and fuel for the lantern. John’s father moved a small generator into the downstairs hallway, wired several light bulbs to it and prepared a connection to the refrigerator.
- 6 Rain fell steadily that afternoon; gray clouds scudded in from the Gulf on the rising wind. The family had an early supper. A neighbor, whose husband was in Vietnam, asked if she and her two children could sit out the storm with the Koshaks. Another neighbor came by on his way inland—would the Koshaks mind taking care of his dog?
- 7 It grew dark before seven o’clock. Wind and rain now whipped the house. John sent his oldest son and daughter upstairs to bring down mattresses and pillows for the younger children. He wanted to keep the group together on one floor. “Stay away from the windows,” he warned, concerned about glass flying from storm-shattered panes. As the wind mounted to a roar, the house began leaking, the rain seemingly driven right through the walls. With mops, towels, pots and buckets the Koshaks began a struggle against the rapidly spreading water. At 8:30, power failed, and Pop Koshak turned on the generator.
- 8 The roar of the hurricane now was overwhelming. The house shook, and the ceiling in the living room was falling piece by piece. The French doors in an upstairs room blew in with an explosive sound, and the group heard gun-like reports as other upstairs windows disintegrated. Water rose above their ankles.
- 9 Then the front door started to break away from its frame. John and Charlie put their shoulders against it, but a blast of water hit the house, flinging open the door and shoving them down the hall. The generator was doused, and the lights went out. Charlie licked his lips and shouted to John. “I think we’re in real trouble. That water tasted salty.” The sea had reached the house, and the water was rising by the minute!
- 10 “Everybody out the back door to the cars!” John yelled. “We’ll pass the children along between us. Count them! Nine!”
- 11 The children went from adult to adult like buckets in a fire brigade. But the cars

wouldn't start; the electrical systems had been killed by water. The wind was too strong and the water too deep to flee on foot. "Back to the house!" John yelled. "Count the children! Count nine!"

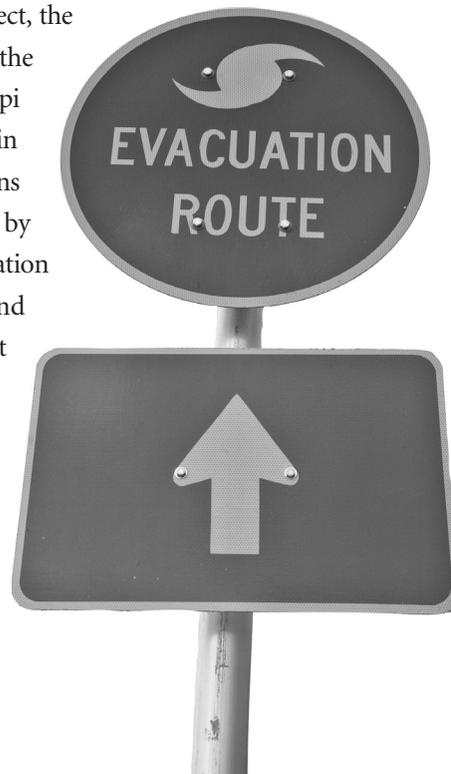
- 12 As they scrambled back, John ordered, "Everybody on the stairs!" Frightened, breathless and wet, the group settled on the stairs, which were protected by two interior walls. The children put the cat, Spooky, and a box with her four kittens on the landing. She peered nervously at her litter. The neighbor's dog curled up and went to sleep.
- 13 The wind sounded like the roar of a train passing a few yards away. The house shuddered and shifted on its foundations. Water inched its way up the steps as first-floor outside walls collapsed. No one spoke. Everyone knew there was no escape; they would live or die in the house.
- 14 Charlie Hill had more or less taken responsibility for the neighbor and her two children. The mother was on the verge of panic. She clutched his arm and kept repeating, "I can't swim, I can't swim."
- 15 "You won't have to," he told her, with outward calm. "It's bound to end soon."
- 16 Grandmother Koshak reached an arm around her husband's shoulder and put her mouth close to his ear. "Pop," she said, "I love you." He turned his head and answered, "I love you"—and his voice lacked its usual gruffness.
- 17 John watched the water lap at the steps, and felt a crushing guilt. He had underestimated the ferocity of Camille. He had assumed that what had never happened could not happen. He held his head between his hands, and silently prayed: "Get us through this mess, will You?"
- 18 A moment later, the hurricane, in one mighty swipe, lifted the entire roof off the house and skimmed it 40 feet through the air. The bottom steps of the staircase broke apart. One wall began crumbling on the marooned group.
- 19 Dr. Robert H. Simpson, director of the National Hurricane Center in Miami, Fla., graded Hurricane Camille as "the greatest recorded storm ever to hit a populated area in the Western Hemisphere." In its concentrated breadth of some 70 miles it shot out winds of nearly 200 mph and raised tides as high as 30 feet. Along the Gulf Coast it devastated everything in its swath: 19,467 homes and 709 small businesses were demolished or severely damaged. It seized a 600,000-gallon Gulfport oil tank and dumped it $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles away. It tore three large cargo ships from their moorings and beached them. Telephone poles and 20-inch-thick pines cracked like guns as the winds snapped them.



- 20 To the west of Gulfport, the town of Pass Christian was virtually wiped out. Several vacationers at the luxurious Richelieu Apartments there held a hurricane party to watch the storm from their spectacular vantage point. Richelieu Apartments were smashed apart as if by a gigantic fist, and 26 people perished.
- 21 Seconds after the roof blew off the Koshak house, John yelled, “Up the stairs—into our bedroom! Count the kids.” The children huddled in the slashing rain within the circle of adults. Grandmother Koshak implored, “Children, let’s sing!” The children were too frightened to respond. She carried on alone for a few bars; then her voice trailed away.
- 22 Debris flew as the living-room fireplace and its chimney collapsed. With two walls in their bedroom sanctuary beginning to disintegrate, John ordered, “Into the television room!” This was the room farthest from the direction of the storm.
- 23 For an instant, John put his arm around his wife. Janis understood. Shivering from the wind and rain and fear, clutching two children to her, she thought, “Dear Lord, give me the strength to endure what I have to.” She felt anger against the hurricane. “We won’t let it win.”
- 24 Pop Koshak raged silently, frustrated at not being able to do anything to fight Camille. Without reason, he dragged a cedar chest and a double mattress from a bedroom into the TV room. At that moment, the wind tore out one wall and extinguished the lantern. A second wall moved, wavered, Charlie Hill tried to support it, but it toppled on him, injuring his back. The house, shuddering and rocking, had moved 25 feet

from its foundations. The world seemed to be breaking apart.

- 25 “Let’s get that mattress up!” John shouted to his father. “Make it a lean-to against the wind. Get the kids under it. We can prop it up with our heads and shoulders!”
- 26 The larger children sprawled on the floor, with the smaller ones in a layer on top of them, and the adults bent over all nine. The floor tilted. The box containing the litter of kittens slid off a shelf and vanished in the wind. Spooky flew off the top of a sliding bookcase and also disappeared. The dog cowered with eyes closed. A third wall gave way. Water lapped across the slanting floor. John grabbed a door which was still hinged to one closet wall. “If the floor goes,” he yelled at his father, “let’s get the kids on this.”
- 27 In that moment, the wind slightly diminished, and the water stopped rising. Then the water began receding. The main thrust of Camille had passed. The Koshaks and their friends had survived.
- 28 With the dawn, Gulfport people started coming back to their homes. They saw human bodies—more than 130 men, women and children died along the Mississippi coast—and parts of the beach and highway were strewn with dead dogs, cats, and cattle. Strips of clothing festooned the standing trees, and blown-down power lines coiled like black spaghetti over the roads.
- 29 None of the returnees moved quickly or spoke loudly; they stood shocked, trying to absorb the shattering scenes before their eyes. “What do we do?” they asked. “Where do we go?”
- 30 By this time, organizations within the area and, in effect, the entire population of the United States had come to the aid of the devastated coast. Before dawn, the Mississippi National Guard and civil-defense units were moving in to handle traffic, guard property, set up communications centers, help clear the debris and take the homeless by truck and bus to refugee centers. By 10 a.m., the Salvation Army’s canteen trucks and Red Cross volunteers and staffers were going wherever possible to distribute hot drinks, food, clothing and bedding.
- 31 From hundreds of towns and cities across the country came several million dollars in donations; household and medical supplies streamed in by plane, train, truck and car. The federal government shipped 4,400,000 pounds of food, moved in mobile homes,



set up portable classrooms, and opened offices to provide low-interest, long-term business loans.

32 Camille, meanwhile, had raked its way northward across Mississippi, dropping more than 28 inches of rain into West Virginia and southern Virginia, causing rampaging floods, huge mountain slides and 111 additional deaths before breaking up over the Atlantic Ocean.

33 Like many other Gulfport families, the Koshaks quickly began reorganizing their lives. John divided his family in the homes of two friends. The neighbor with her two children went to a refugee center. Charlie Hill found a room for rent. By Tuesday, Charlie's back had improved, and he pitched in with Seabees in the worst volunteer work of all—searching for bodies. Three days after the storm, he decided not to return to Las Vegas, but to “remain in Gulfport and help rebuild the community.”

34 Near the end of the first week, a friend offered the Koshaks his apartment, and the family was reunited. The children appeared to suffer no psychological damage from their experience; they were still awed by the incomprehensible power of the hurricane, but enjoyed describing what they had seen and heard on that frightful night. Janis had just one delayed reaction. A few nights after the hurricane, she awoke suddenly at 2 a.m. She quietly got up and went outside. Looking up at the sky and, without knowing she was going to do it, she began to cry softly.

35 Meanwhile, John, Pop and Charlie were picking through the wreckage of the home. It could have been depressing, but it wasn't: each salvaged item represented a little victory over the wrath of the storm. The dog and cat suddenly appeared at the scene, alive and hungry.

36 But the blues did occasionally afflict all the adults. Once, in a low mood, John said to his parents, “I wanted you here so that we would all be together, so you could enjoy the children, and look what happened.”

37 His father, who had made up his mind to start a welding shop when living was normal again, said, “Let's not cry about what's gone. We'll just start all over.”

38 “You're great,” John said. “And this town has a lot of great people in it. It's going to be better here than it ever was before.”

39 Later, Grandmother Koshak reflected: “We lost practically all our possessions, but the family came through it. When I think of that, I realize we lost nothing important.”

(from *Rhetoric and Literature* by P. Joseph Canavan)

Aids to Comprehension

“Face to Face with Hurricane Camille” was first published in *Reader’s Digest* in 1970 and then included in *Rhetoric and Literature* edited by P. Joseph Canavan and published in 1974.

About “Face to Face with Hurricane Camille”

“Face to Face with Hurricane Camille” is a piece of narration. Narration is the telling of a story. This mode of writing is concerned with action and it centers on people, the characters, engaged in some kind of conflict against other people, nature, society or in an inner struggle against themselves. In this story, the conflict evolves between the devastating force of Hurricane Camille and the struggle put up by the Koshaks and their friends for survival. In the conflict between humans and hurricanes, humans cannot stop, change the course of or reduce the ferocity of a hurricane. However, that doesn’t mean they should do nothing but wait passively for the worst to come. Modern science and technology can predict the time of arrival and the scale of such disasters, thus issuing warnings and spreading relevant information. Accordingly, people can get prepared to avoid danger by evacuation. As for the Koshaks, who made a wrong judgment and decided to stay behind, they put up a heroic struggle to protect themselves, especially the children, from the harm of Hurricane Camille. Face to face with this merciless disaster, they never lost hope, but showed great courage, strength of endurance and an unyielding spirit, and above all they helped, cared for and loved each other in moments of danger.

The first few paragraphs of this story are introductory, giving the time, place and background of the conflict. These paragraphs also introduce the characters in the story. The writer builds up and sustains the suspense in the story and gives order and logical movement to the sequence of happenings by describing in detail, and vividly, the incidents showing how the Koshaks and their friends strive to survive the hurricane. The writer describes these actions in the order of their occurrence. The story reaches its climax when the conflict is most intensified. After reaching a breaking point, the

hurricane subsides, and the story's action moves rapidly to its conclusion. In the last few paragraphs the writer tells how the Koshaks and the whole community reorganized their shattered lives, and in the ending paragraph the writer states the theme of the story by quoting the remark of Grandmother Koshak: "We lost practically all our possessions, but the family came through it. When I think of that, I realize we lost nothing important."

Notes

1. **Joseph P. Blank:** Joseph P. Blank is a regular editorial contributor to *Reader's Digest*, especially for the "Drama in Real Life" series. He is the author of *19 Steps up the Mountain: The Story of the DeBolt Family*; *Scoundrels and Scalawags*; *Who Killed Les Wilson*; *A Killer Is Loose*, etc.
2. **Hurricane (Para. 1):** A hurricane is a tropical storm in which winds attain speeds greater than 75 miles (about 121 kilometers) per hour. It is a powerful, spiraling storm that begins over a warm sea, near the equator. When a hurricane hits land, it can do great damage through its fierce winds, torrential rains, inland flooding, and huge waves crashing ashore. These storms are given a different label, depending on where they occur. If they begin over the North Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico, or the Northeast Pacific Ocean, they are called hurricanes. Similar storms that occur in the Northwest Pacific Ocean west of the International Date Line are called typhoons. Near Australia and in the Indian Ocean, they are referred to as tropical cyclones.
3. **Hurricane Camille (Para. 1):** Hurricane Camille hit Mississippi and Louisiana for two days, August 17-18, in 1969. The death toll was 258.
4. **Gulfport, Miss. (Para. 1):** A seaport in South Miss., Gulfport is the second largest city in Mississippi next to the state capital Jackson. According to the 2008 census, the population of Gulfport is 70,055. Much of Gulfport was severely damaged by

Hurricane Camille in 1969 and was again hit by Hurricane Katrina on August 29, 2005. As a result, much of the city was flooded or destroyed.

5. **Las Vegas (Para. 2):** Located in the southeast of Nevada, the city is famous for its gaming casinos and 24-hour entertainment. It is the largest city in the state, named after the natural meadows which served as camping sites on early trails to the West.
6. **Magna Products (Para. 3):** The name of John Koshak, Jr.'s company which designed and developed educational toys and supplies.
7. **Hurricane Betsy (Para. 3):** The hurricane lashed Florida, Mississippi and Louisiana in 1965 during September 7-10, causing the deaths of 74 people.
8. **The National Hurricane Center (Para. 19):** The National Hurricane Center (NHC) is a component of the National Center for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) located at Florida International University in Miami, Florida. It is affiliated to the National Weather Service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce. The mission of NHC is to save lives, mitigate property loss, and improve economic efficiency by issuing watches, warnings, forecasts, and analyses of hazardous tropical weather.
9. **Pass Christian (Para. 20):** The city is located in Mississippi, along the Gulf of Mexico, with a population of 6,579 at the 2000 census. Pass Christian was in the path of two of the worst hurricanes ever to hit the United States—Hurricane Camille in 1969 and Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Both hurricanes caused the nearly total destruction of the city.
10. **National Guard (Para. 30):** (美国) 国民警卫队. The National Guard is a militia or reserve military force organized on a state by state basis. Its members voluntarily enlist for military training and for service in aiding the civil power when called upon by the state governor.
11. **civil-defense units (Para. 30):** Civil defense is a system of warning devices, fallout shelters, volunteer workers, etc. organized as a defense of the population against natural disasters and enemy actions in time of war. The principal U.S. civil defense agency was established in 1950, and in 1961 civil defense functions were transferred to the Defense Department.
12. **The Salvation Army (Para. 30):** (宗教) 救世军. A Protestant religious body devoted to the conversion of, and social work among the poor, and characterized by use of military titles, uniforms, etc. It was founded in 1878 by General Booth in London; now worldwide in operation.

13. **Red Cross (Para. 30):** It is an international organization (in full International Red Cross), founded in 1864 with headquarters and branches in all countries signatory to the Geneva Convention, for the relief of suffering in time of war or disaster.
14. **Seabees (Para. 33):** Members of the Construction Battalions of the Civil Engineer Corps of the United States Navy that build harbor facilities, airfields, etc. Seabees stands for CBs, short for Construction Battalions. Gulfport, Miss., is the East Coast home to the U.S. Navy Seabees.

Words & Expressions

French door (Para. 8)	two adjoining doors that have glass panes from top to bottom and are hinged at opposite sides of a doorway so that it opens in the middle, 法式落地双开门
fire brigade (Para. 11)	or fire company, a body of men organized to fight fires, especially one of a number of such groups constituting a fire department
maroon (Para. 18)	to put (a person) ashore in some desolate place; to leave abandoned, isolated or helpless
moorings (Para. 19)	(often <i>pl.</i>) lines, cables, etc. by which a ship is fastened to the land or the bottom of the sea
vantage point (Para. 20)	a position that allows a clear and broad view
sanctuary (Para. 22)	a place of refuge or protection
festoon (Para. 28)	to adorn or hang with a wreath or garland of flowers, leaves, paper, etc. hanging in a loop or curve
spaghetti (Para. 28)	pasta in the form of long, thin strings, cooked by boiling or steaming and served with a sauce, 意大利面条
rampaging (Para. 32)	rushing violently or wildly about
wreckage (Para. 35)	the remains of anything that has been destroyed or badly damaged
salvage (Para. 35)	to save or rescue materials from a shipwreck, fire, flood, etc.

Exercises

I. Oral Presentation

Make a five-minute presentation in class based on your experience or research.

Suggested topics:

1. Hurricane Katrina
2. My experience of an earthquake (or a flood, or a typhoon, or a bad accident, etc.)

II. Questions

A. Questions on the Content:

1. Why did John Koshak decide to stay although he knew the hurricane would be bad?
2. How did the men prepare for the hurricane? Why was a generator necessary?
3. What made it impossible for the Koshaks to escape?
4. Why did John Koshak feel a crushing guilt?
5. Why did Grandmother Koshak ask the children to sing?
6. What was a hurricane party? What happened to the party goers?
7. What did Grandmother Koshak mean when she said, “We lost practically all our possessions, but the family came through it. When I think of that, I realize we lost nothing important.”?
8. How did the community of Gulfport act after Hurricane Camille was over?

B. Questions on Structure and Style:

1. What is the organizational pattern of this piece of narration? How would you classify the first six paragraphs?
2. What does the writer focus chiefly on—developing character, action (plot), or idea (theme)?
3. What opposing forces make up the conflict?
4. How does the writer build up and sustain the suspense in the story?
5. Why does the writer insert Paragraphs 19 and 20 in the middle of the narration of the hurricane?
6. At what point in the story does the action reach its highest point?
7. Is the last paragraph important? Why?
8. Why does the writer use so many elliptical and short simple sentences? Illustrate your answer with examples.

III. Paraphrase

Explain the following sentences in your own words, bringing out any implied meanings.

1. We're elevated 23 feet. (Para. 3)
2. The place has been here since 1915, and no hurricane has ever bothered it. (Para. 3)
3. We can batten down and ride it out. (Para. 4)
4. The generator was doused, and the lights went out. (Para. 9)
5. Everybody out the back door to the cars! (Para. 10)
6. The electrical systems had been killed by water. (Para. 11)
7. John watched the water lap at the steps, and felt a crushing guilt. (Para. 17)
8. Get us through this mess, will You? (Para. 17)
9. She carried on alone for a few bars; then her voice trailed away. (Para. 21)
10. Janis had just one delayed reaction. (Para. 34)

IV. Practice with Words and Expressions

A. Look up the dictionary and explain the meanings of the italicized words.

1. Since water *mains* might be damaged... (Para. 5)
2. ...*sit out* the storm with the Koshaks. (Para. 6)
3. ...and the group heard gun-like *reports*... (Para. 8)
4. The generator *was doused*... (Para. 9)
5. ...the electrical systems had been *killed* by water. (Para. 11)
6. She peered nervously at her *litter*. (Para. 12)
7. ...it devastated everything in its *swath*... (Para. 19)
8. She carried on alone for a few *bars*... (Para. 21)
9. "Make it a *lean-to* against the wind." (Para. 25)
10. ...before *breaking up* over the Atlantic Ocean. (Para. 32)
11. ...and he *pitched in* with Seabees *in* the worst volunteer work of all... (Para. 33)
12. But *the blues* did occasionally afflict all the adults. (Para. 36)

B. In the text many specific words are used effectively. The following left column contains a list of specific words while there are phrases of general words arranged at random in the right column. Now find the right phrase of general words that matches each specific word in meaning.

Example:

crumble: to break apart into little pieces

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 1. pummel | a. a loud deep cry |
| 2. scud | b. to spread the limbs in a relaxed, awkward or unnatural position |
| 3. roar | c. to push with sudden force |
| 4. scramble | d. to cut or wound with a sweeping stroke as with a knife |
| 5. swipe | e. intense anger |
| 6. skim | f. to beat or hit with repeated blows, especially with the fist |
| 7. perish | g. to go or pass suddenly from sight |
| 8. beach | h. to run or move swiftly |
| 9. slash | i. to climb, crawl or clamber hurriedly |
| 10. sprawl | j. a hard, sweeping blow |
| 11. vanish | k. to ground (a boat) on a beach |
| 12. thrust | l. to throw in a gliding path |
| 13. wrath | m. to die, especially die a violent or untimely death |

V. Translation

A. Translate the following sentences into English, using the words or expressions given in brackets.

- 每架飞机起飞之前必须经过严格的检查。(to check out)
- 居民坚决反对在附近建立垃圾焚烧厂，因为他们担心工厂排放的气体会污染周围的空气。(waste incineration plant, concerned about)
- 在这个地区，生态工程的投资额高达数十亿元。(to mount to)
- 干枯的河道里布满了大大小小的石块。(strewn with)
- 虽然战争给这个国家造成巨大的损失，但当地的文化传统并没有消亡。(to perish)
- 为了建筑现代化的高楼大厦，许多古老的、具有民族特色的建筑物都被拆毁了。(to demolish)
- 在地震中多数质量差的房子的主体结构都散架了。(to disintegrate)
- 他为实现自己的目标付出了最大的努力，但最后美好的梦想还是化成了泡影。(to vanish)

B. Translate the following sentences into Chinese.

1. But, like thousands of others in the coastal communities, John was reluctant to abandon his home unless the family—his wife, Janis, and their seven children, aged 3 to 11—was clearly endangered. (Para. 1)
2. The French doors in an upstairs room blew in with an explosive sound, and the group heard gun-like reports as other upstairs windows disintegrated. (Para. 8)
3. Frightened, breathless and wet, the group settled on the stairs, which were protected by two interior walls. (Para. 12)
4. Everyone knew there was no escape; they would live or die in the house. (Para. 13)
5. A moment later, the hurricane, in one mighty swipe, lifted the entire roof off the house and skimmed it 40 feet through the air. (Para. 18)
6. In its concentrated breadth of some 70 miles it shot out winds of nearly 200 mph and raised tides as high as 30 feet. (Para. 19)
7. Strips of clothing festooned the standing trees, and blown-down power lines coiled like black spaghetti over the roads. (Para. 28)
8. It could have been depressing, but it wasn't: each salvaged item represented a little victory over the wrath of the storm. (Para. 35)

C. Translate Paragraphs 24, 25 and 26 into Chinese.

Read, Think and Comment



Read the passage and think about the following questions:

1. What mode of writing is the following passage?
2. How is the piece organized?
3. What is the function of each of the three paragraphs?

The accident occurred at about 4:30 on the afternoon of September 13, 1848, near the small town of Cavendish, Vermont. A gang of men, under the direction of their energetic and likeable foreman, 25-year-old Phineas P. Gage, were working on a new line of the Ruth and Burlington railroad. They were about to blast a rock that blocked their way, and Phineas himself took charge of the delicate business of pouring gunpowder into a deep, narrow hole drilled in the stone. The powder in place, he rammed in a long iron rod to tamp down the charge.

But the tamping-iron rubbed against the side of the shaft, and a spark ignited the powder. The massive rod, three and a half feet long, an inch and a quarter in diameter, weighing 13 pounds, shot through the hole under the force of the explosion. This terrible missile struck Phineas Gage just beneath his left eye and, in a fraction of a second, tore through his skull, departed from a hole in the top of his head, and finally landed some fifty yards away.

Believe it or not, this was not the end of Phineas P. Gage—at least not of the body that bore his name. He was thrown to the ground, and his feet and hands twitched convulsively; but within minutes, he was conscious again, and able to speak. The other workmen carried him gently to an ox-cart nearby, and he rode for three quarters of a mile to a hotel in town. With little assistance, Phineas stepped from the cart and climbed a long flight of stairs to a room, where his awful wounds were dressed.