



The Earthquake

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About earthquakes

Earthquakes are the sudden shaking of the earth's surface. They occur along fault lines. The earth's crust is made up of huge plates that are continually moving. Where two plates join there is a fault line and sometimes there is a sudden movement of one plate moving over another. This causes an earthquake. The intensity of an earthquake is measured using the Richter scale. Below 4.0 on the scale there is usually little damage but a 7.0 is a major quake. People can be prepared for a quake by putting together a special kit. This would include: a torch, first aid kit, water, tinned/dried food, extra clothing and blankets, a radio, a whistle.

Summary

Gabriel goes to Silvia Delgado's flat to take her to the cinema, but she has arranged to go to a restaurant with a rich man called Marco. Gabriel goes to the cinema alone and Marco and Silvia go to the restaurant. Suddenly, there is a big earthquake. Silvia, Gabriel and Marco survive, but many people are dead or seriously injured. Silvia's immediate thoughts are for her aging and ill mother and she goes to find her. She returns home to find that her mother is not there, and she goes to look for her in a park. On the way, Silvia discovers that Marco is a horrible man because after the earthquake, he was only concerned about himself and he didn't help anybody else. She later finds her mother in the park and with the help of her neighbours, takes her home. Gabriel is also thinking of Silvia's mother and makes his way to the Delgados' house. When he arrives, he confronts a couple of thieves who are trying to steal Mrs Delgado's jewellery. They run away and he stays

to guard the house. He then helps the rescue workers, despite having a broken arm. In the end, Gabriel, Silvia and her mother are reunited, and Silvia realises that she really loves Gabriel and not the selfish Marco.

Chapters 1–2: Gabriel has arranged to take Silvia Delgado to see a film. He arrives at her flat, red rose in hand, but Silvia says she can't go to the cinema with him that night. Gabriel gets very angry and accuses her of going out with Marco, who he knows is a rich but bad man. He throws the rose on the ground and he decides to see the film on his own. While he is waiting outside the cinema an earthquake strikes. Meanwhile, Marco is in Silvia's flat. The flat is full of expensive things. The Delgados were rich but now they are poor, and Silvia's mother is ill. Marco and Silvia then drive in Marco's fast car to a very expensive restaurant, the Oasis. The manager shows them to their table near the kitchen. Marco gets angry because he wants to be near the dance floor. Silvia is embarrassed and goes to the bathroom, which is outside in the restaurant garden. At that moment, the earthquake strikes.

Chapter 3: The restaurant collapses and there is panic everywhere. Silvia gets to the street and sees people screaming for help. She can't help them because she wants to find her mother. She walks past the cinema, which has also collapsed, and thinks of Gabriel. When she arrives at her building, she discovers that her mother is not in her room.

Chapters 4–5: A neighbour tells Silvia that he saw Mr Garcia putting Mrs Delgado into his car. He doesn't know where they went exactly, but he thinks it was to Liberty Park. Silvia walks towards the park. Meanwhile, Gabriel has survived the earthquake but his arm is broken. He thinks of old Mrs Delgado and decides to go and help her.

Chapter 6: Silvia follows the people leaving the centre of town to the safety of the country. She overhears a couple talking about the Oasis restaurant. The man says that a lot of people were dead, but that the manager was all right. Silvia asks him about Marco, who was with the manager when the earthquake happened. The man says Marco was not hurt but that he didn't thank the people who helped him and was only worried about his car. Silvia understands now that she doesn't love Marco and that she loves Gabriel. Silvia finds her mother with the Garcias in the park and gives her some medicine.



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Chapter 7: Gabriel arrives at the Delgados' flat, but there is no sign of Silvia or Mrs Delgado. Two thieves suddenly run out of the sitting room. The first man goes past Gabriel and Gabriel trips up the second man, who drops a box of jewellery on the floor. Then he sees Silvia's evening shoes that convince him that she is still alive. He decides to stay near the flat to guard it against more thieves and he takes food and water to the rescue workers outside.

Chapter 8: A newsreader on the radio announces that there will not be another earthquake. Mr Garcia puts Mrs Delgado in his car and they all drive to their building. Silvia sees a man lying asleep in front of the door. He is thin, ill and dirty. It is Gabriel. At first he thinks she is a thief because the house is dark and he can't see her clearly. Silvia then takes something out of Gabriel's hand. It is a dead rose, but Silvia thinks it is beautiful.

Background and themes

Forces of nature: The book is set against the background of one of the most destructive forces on Earth. Throughout history, earthquakes have claimed the lives of more people than any other natural disaster.

Courage and selflessness: Both Gabriel and Silvia show great courage in facing up to the terrible situation they are in. They also think about the survival of others. Gabriel and Silvia are both concerned about Silvia's mother because she is old and alone. Marco, on the other hand, cares only for himself or his car and clothes.

Love story: The book is a love story. Gabriel loves Silvia but believes she thinks he is boring. Silvia is impressed by the rich Marco and his fast car until she realises what a selfish, horrible man he is. Both Silvia and Gabriel are tested in a time of great danger, and when she discovers what a good person Gabriel is, she falls in love with him.

Discussion activities

Before reading

- Discuss:** An earthquake is one kind of natural problem some countries have. Put the students in small groups to discuss other kinds of problems. Put their suggestions on the board and add some of your own. Then ask them to consider the following questions: *Do you have these problems in your country? Which countries have these problems? Which of the problems is the worst? What can people do to stop these problems?*

Chapters 1–2

While reading (p. 2, after 'Perhaps she'll go out with me.')

- Role play:** Put the students in pairs and ask them to role play a conversation between Marco and Gabriel about Silvia. Remind them that Marco has a lot of money and is good looking, but he is not a nice man. Gabriel doesn't have a lot of money, but he is a nice man and he loves Silvia. See discussion key for a suggestion of how to begin the conversation.

After reading

- Write and guess:** Put students in pairs and ask them to choose a short paragraph from Chapters 1–2. Tell them to write it again, making five changes to words in the text. Students then read out their paragraphs to the other students, who have to identify the mistakes.

Chapter 3

While reading (p. 12, after 'Firemen and policemen carried people out of the cinema.')

- Write:** Put the students in pairs. Tell them they are journalists who have just arrived at the scene, and they have to write a newspaper article about what they can see. Before they start elicit words from the whole class that they might use in the article and write them on the board. The students can also include an interview with Silvia.

After reading

- Write, ask and answer:** Write '*What did Silvia climb over?*' on the board and elicit the answer (a broken wall). Now tell students to write similar questions about Chapter 3. Students then mingle as a group, asking and answering each other's questions.

Chapters 4–5

Before reading

- Discuss:** In small groups ask the students to discuss their neighbours. Consider the following questions: *Do your neighbours make a lot of noise? Do your neighbours help you sometimes? Do you see your neighbours often? Do you like them?* Then ask them to talk about the problems people can have with their neighbours.

After reading

- Pair work:** Write the following words on the board: *car, park, medicines, ticket, arm, hospital*. Ask the students to talk and write in pairs to say how these words were used in Chapters 4–5.



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Chapter 6

Before reading

8 Pair work: Remind the students that Marco is not a nice man. He only thinks about himself. Ask them to think of as many words that can be used to describe people that are bad. Write their suggestions on the board and add some of your own. Then ask students to make a list of words to describe people who are good and put them on the board. Now ask students to talk to a partner about people they know using some of the words listed. Encourage them to justify their opinions by giving examples of the kinds of things these people do or don't do.

While reading

9 Role play: Put the students in pairs and tell them one is Marco and the other is the man who pulled Marco out of the rubble and tells Silvia the story. The student who is Marco tells the story of the earthquake and says that he was brave and helped people. The other man knows this isn't true and asks Marco difficult questions and makes comments. See discussion key for ideas.

After reading

10 Discuss: Put students in groups to discuss the following questions: *Why does Silvia normally take a bus or a taxi? Do you often take a bus or taxi? Do you like walking? In what other ways do you travel? What problems can you have when you are travelling?*

Chapter 7

Before reading

11 Write and predict: Put the students in small groups and make sure they understand the meaning of the word 'THIEVES.' Then tell them to make a list of all the things that thieves could take from somebody's house. Put their suggestions on the board and ask them to predict what things the thieves are going to take from Mrs Delgado's house.

While reading (p. 33, after 'He took some food and carried it back to the workers.')

12 Pair work: Put the students in pairs and ask them to make a list of all the types of food Gabriel could take from a shop or small supermarket. Tell them they have three minutes to do this. The pairs then read out their suggestions. Put these on the board. The pair with the longest list wins.

After reading

13 Game: 'Fireman' was a profession mentioned at the end of Chapter 7. Brainstorm the class for more professions that they know in English. Put them on the board, adding some they haven't thought of.

Then one student chooses a profession and the rest of the class have twenty questions to guess what his or her profession is. The student can only reply to the questions with a yes, no, or sometimes answer. See discussion key for possible questions.

Chapter 8

Before reading

14 Predict: Write these words on the board: *radio, white cross, another earthquake, a car, thief, dead rose*. Tell the students that these words all appear in the last part of the story, and get them to predict what happens in pairs.

After reading

15 Research: Ask the students to do some research using the Internet, or other sources, for information about big earthquakes that have happened around the world. Students then choose one earthquake and give an oral presentation to the rest of the class. Tell them to include the following information: *When/where did it happen? How many people died?*

16 Group work: Tell the students to imagine an earthquake is going to happen in their town. Put the following things on the board: *mobile phone, money, food, photos, your dog, your cat, water, clothes, bicycle, computer, mp3 player, television*. The group then has five minutes to choose which things would be the most important to take out of their house before the earthquake happens. Students number things 1 to 12. 1 is very important and 12 is not important. Ask them to give their reasons. Put their scores on the board next to the things to see what the class as a whole thought were the most important.

17 Write and listen: Ask the students to write a different ending to the story. This could be a sad ending, a dramatic ending or a happy ending. Students then read out their endings and the class votes on whose is the best.

18 Pair work: Student A chooses one of the drawings from the book and describes the scene to student B. Student B tries to draw the picture from student A's description. Then they reverse roles. How good are the pictures?

19 Discuss: In small groups ask the students to think of all the movies they have seen – or books they have read – that have a disaster as the main theme. Ask them to consider the following questions: *Do you like these films? Why/why not? Where did it happen? Did a lot of people die? Was the film also a love story? What happened at the end?*

Vocabulary activities

For the Word list and vocabulary activities, go to www.penguinreaders.com.