

Eye of the Storm

Aim

- To stimulate students to read the book.

1 Ask students to read the Blurb (next page). Ask them what they think the story will be like – the ‘mood’ of the story. If necessary ask questions, e.g. Do they think it will be happy? Sad? Exciting? Ask if they have heard stories about people dying in bad weather either in real life or on the news (e.g. the tsunami in December 2005). Ask how they think these types of news stories might affect what they think of *Eye of the Storm*.

2 Ask students for words to describe the weather in three categories – sunny, wintry, stormy – and write their suggestions on the board in lists. Teach extra weather vocabulary as necessary.

Suggested vocabulary: sunny – hot, warm, mild, humid, baking, heat wave; wintry – cold, icy, chilly, bitter, snow, sleet, hail, blizzard; stormy – wet, windy, rain, gale, thunder, lightning, cloudy, pouring with rain.

Next, divide the class into two teams and call out one of the weather words. Students have to give the correct category for the word. The first team to do so correctly gets a point for his or her team.

3 Read Extract 1, which is a description of flying into a hurricane. Ask students to imagine they are pilots who have just got home safely after flying through a hurricane. Tell them to describe what it was like as if they are writing in their diaries. They should try to show how they felt as well as what they could see and hear. When they have finished, ask them to take turns to read their account to a partner. Have they used words which described their feelings?

4 Tell students to read Extract 2, which is a description of Max, a pilot, flying his plane. Ask them to think of adjectives to describe his personality.

Suggested answers: brave, strong, clever, determined, organised.

5 Tell students to read Extract 3, which is how Ikemi (Max’s girlfriend) thinks her father Hiru sees Max. Ask students how Ikemi thinks her father sees Max. Ask them to say which Extract – 2 or 3 – shows the real Max. They may think that they both show us something about Max.

6 Tell students to read Extract 4, which gives us an idea of Ikemi’s life and personality. Working in pairs, ask students to list the facts they learn about Ikemi.

Suggested answers: Her father is Japanese and her mother was American. Her father doesn’t want her to be with Max because he is American. She went to school in America. She is now at university in America. Her mother is now dead, etc.

Next ask students to think of adjectives to describe her personality (teach vocabulary if necessary).

Suggested answers: sad, obedient, dutiful, etc.

Write these suggestions up on the board.

7 Ask students to read Extract 5, which is a description of how Hiru sees his daughter Ikemi. Ask them to write down two or three sentences that summarise what he thinks about Ikemi.

8 Ask students to read Extract 4 again. Do they think Ikemi is right to believe that Hiru will never let her go out with Max?

9 Divide students into pairs again and tell one of the pair to be Hiru and the other Ikemi. Ask them to have a conversation with each other about Max.

10 Ask students to say how they think the story ends. Ask them for different ideas for an ending – a sad ending, a surprising ending, etc.

11 If there are enough copies of *Eye of The Storm* to go round, give them out and tell students to start reading.

Optional extra: Divide students into pairs. Ask one to be Max and the other Hiru. Give them something to talk about – e.g. Max has arrived at Hiru’s house to take Ikemi out to dinner and he is waiting for her to finish getting ready, or Max could be asking Hiru if he can marry Ikemi, etc.

Eye of the Storm

Blurb

A hurricane is tearing across the Atlantic from the west coast of Africa towards the USA. As the hurricane passes through the Caribbean, it destroys everything in its path. In Florida, a man is out in a fishing boat, unaware of the approaching disaster. His daughter, Ikemi, and her boyfriend must confront the hurricane in a desperate attempt to reach her father before it is too late.

Extract 1

Ross Peters thought for a moment. “Well,” he said slowly, “it’s a lot more fun and a lot more frightening than the biggest Disney ride you’ve ever been on. There you are, flying along, and you know you’re going to meet a wall of wind coming towards you at anything up to 200 kilometers an hour. And as well as the winds coming straight at you, there are all the winds inside the hurricane which are going up and down, up and down like elevators in an apartment building.” He smiled. “But once you get inside the eye of the hurricane, it’s amazing. There’s no wind, the sky is a beautiful blue, and the sun shines. It’s hard to believe there are killer winds all around you.”

Extract 2

“Sorry, sir, we didn’t come all this way for nothing. Light a flare. Get ready to catch hold of the life raft line in about two minutes. Out!”

Max looked at Ikemi. “Get the life raft now!” he shouted. Ikemi got up and moved round the seats. The plane was being thrown around by the wind so much, it was difficult to stay standing up. She held onto the back of the seat.

“You’re going to have to open the door. Make sure you hold on and don’t fall out. When I shout ‘Open’ you open the door, and when I shout ‘Drop’, you drop the life raft. OK?”

“OK,” replied Ikemi. She was so afraid, her hands were shaking. She picked up the life raft and stood by the door.

“OK,” said Max, “there’s the flare! This is it! Here we go!” He turned the plane quickly, and Ikemi almost fell over.

“Open the door!” he shouted.

Extract 3

It did not matter to her father that Max was kind. What mattered to her father was what a man said and what he did. Her father thought the most important thing for a man was to be patient, to be quiet, to say nothing, to be brave, to be able to feel pain without talking about it. It was not surprising that he did not like Max. Max was loud, he was noisy, he did not think before he spoke, he was impatient – he was everything her father hated in a man.

Extract 4

“You’re American, Max. I know it’s difficult for you to understand, but my father does not want me to date American men. He says there are too many differences between us, between Japanese and American people, between the way we live and the way we think.”

“What? You can’t be serious!” said Max. “How on earth can your father say that? Your mother was American! He married her, didn’t he? He married an American! How can it be all right for him to marry an American but not for you? It’s crazy!”

Ikemi looked away.

“I don’t know, Max, I just don’t know. But I do know that he isn’t going to change his mind.”

Max shook his head.

“Ikemi, I don’t understand. You don’t agree with your father, do you? Come on! You were born in America! You’ve spent all your life here! You went to American schools and now you’re studying at an American university! You’re American too, Ikemi! You’re the same as me! We’re American and we’re free to choose who we see and what we do! You don’t always have to do what your father wants, you know.”

Ikemi lifted her eyes and looked at Max.

“You’re wrong, Max. I’m sorry. I’m not free. Yes, I do live here, and yes, I went to school here. But my father is Japanese and after my mother died he brought me up. I can’t go against my father.”

Extract 5

Hiru often wished he had gone back to Japan after Elizabeth had died. But by then Ikemi was already doing well at her American school. She had friends, a beautiful place to grow up in and she spoke English much better than Japanese. Hiru had taken her to Tokyo a few times, but she didn’t like the crowded narrow streets, the noise, the food, the long, boring evenings with her Japanese cousins. She always wanted to get back to Florida, to her friends, to the sea, to the free life she enjoyed in America. Hiru began to think that his beautiful daughter was like a fish, swimming free in the ocean. He did not want to catch her and shut her in the narrow streets of Tokyo and small rooms of a Tokyo apartment. She was not a thing to catch and put in a small glass bowl. He did not want to fight her. She needed to be free. So Hiru had decided to stay in Florida.