

0. RESCUE! - Story Preface

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9. AFTERMATH of BANDA ACEH QUAKE



Tsunami survivors, on the island of Sumatra, are awaiting supplies from a U.S. Navy helicopter. Image online, courtesy U.S. Navy.

As raging water roared by, Enrique was able to grab hold of a tree. Impossibly, he heard the voice of his middle son: **

I heard Tomas' voice. He was shouting, "Papa! Mama! Lucas! Simon!"

Perched at the top of a tree, around 200 yards away, the 8-year-old child had survived.

About forty minutes later, father and son heard five-year-old Simon (who had recently learned how to swim) calling out. He, too, was clinging to the top of a tree. All three were able to make it to the roof of the Orchid hotel.

Maria's risk-filled journey to safety was far-more complicated. Swirling about in the torrent, she crashed into tsunami-caused debris. When she finally surfaced, she was alone.

Never expecting to see any member of her family again, she grabbed onto a tree. Then Lucas, whom she had last seen going after the beach ball, swept by her amidst the trash-laden water.

The oldest Alvarez-Belón child likened his experience to the end of the world:

I had never seen anything of the scale of that wave. It might as well have been the apocalypse.

When the waters finally calmed, mother and son looked for a safer place than the swamp they were in. Shock had prevented Maria from realizing how badly injured she was, but Lucas was stunned to see his mother moving about, apparently oblivious to pain.

Spotting a large tree, Maria and Lucas attempted to reach a safe place. It was then they heard the cries of a child.

Believing that his father and brothers were dead, Lucas had only one objective in mind - to get his severely injured mother to safety:

I realized if we didn't get out of there, things could go very wrong. I was only ten - I had no idea what was going on. But I really started to see Mum might be dying. She kept going in and out of consciousness.

Maria, however, insisted that they look for the crying child:

What if that child was Simon or Tomas? It was important that I showed my son the right way to behave, particularly as I was dying. You feel it.

The pair found the crying toddler amid the flotsam of the wave. All alone, he was a Swede named Daniel.

When it was safe, local villagers - who had survived the disaster - began to look for others needing help. They found Maria, Lucas and Daniel and took them to a hospital in Takua Pa (the nearest town).

** All quotes, in this chapter, are from an article written by Charlotte Eagar which was published in *The Sun* on 5 January 2013.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/RESCUE-The-Impossible>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/RESCUE-The-Impossible>

Questions 2 Ponder

Why Is It Important to Show a Child the Right Way to Behave?

A mother, who endured a massive tsunami, believes she doesn't have long to live. A doctor, she wants to show her son "the right way to behave, particularly as I was dying."

What Maria Belón is trying to show her son Lucas is that when other people need our help, no matter how desperate our own situation, we must help.

In this specific instance, the massively injured Maria hears a child's cry. Despite her own nearly fatal injuries, Maria insists that she and her son try to find the crying child. They find a young boy named Daniel, from Sweden, amidst the tsunami-caused wreckage.

What did Maria Belón mean when she said:

What if that child was Simon or Tomas [her two other sons]? It was important that I showed my son the right way to behave, particularly as I was dying. You feel it.

Belón and Lucas saved Daniel's life. Thereafter, Maria said that Daniel seemed like another son to her. What would make her feel that way?

If you thought you were dying, do you think you'd be able to divert your attention from saving yourself to saving a child? Explain your answer.

Media Stream



Tomas and Lucas Alvarez Belón

Photo of Tomas and Lucas Alvarez Belón, online courtesy Lucas Alvarez Belón.

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Simon, Tomas and Lucas Alvarez Belón

Photo of the Alvarez-Belón brothers, online courtesy Lucas Alvarez Belón.

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