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Synopsis

Kino is a young Japanese boy who lives on a farm high on a mountainside. His best friend, Jiya, lives below in the fishing village at the seashore. Life is filled with hard work and fun moments with his friend. Then the unthinkable happens, and a great tsunami wave changes their lives forever. Jiya’s family and village are destroyed, and it takes Jiya many years to overcome his loss and learn that life is stronger than death, we are brave because we must be, and there is much in this life that is wonderful.
Section One

(Pages 1–15)
Beginning: “Kino lived on a farm.”
Ending: “We need both farmers and fishermen,” Jiya’s father said.

Vocabulary:
A synonym of a word is another word that has the same or nearly the same meaning as the original word. Select the word from the Word Box that is a synonym for the underlined word or phrase in each sentence below. Then use the underlined word in a sentence of your own to show you know its meaning.

Word Box

reddish    hill    glowing    harvest
holy       hurried    immeasurable    aroma
worriedly  varnished    stepped    bundles

1. The fields that covered the side of the mountain were terraced by walls of stone. ____________________
   Your sentence: _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

2. The Old Gentleman lived in his castle on a knoll outside the village.
   ____________________
   Your sentence: _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

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3. The tabernacle was a sacred place. ____________________
   Your sentence: _________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________

4. The crevice in the ocean floor was fathomless. ____________________
   Your sentence: _________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________

5. The walls of the undersea cave were phosphorescent. ________________
   Your sentence: _________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________

6. The fisherman’s face was ruddy from working in the sun and wind all day.
   ____________________
   Your sentence: _________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________

7. The fragrant odor of fresh-brewed coffee and hot bacon and eggs drifted up the
   stairs. ____________________
   Your sentence: _________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________

8. The black lacquered furniture was brand new. ____________________
   Your sentence: _________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
9. All the children made haste up the hill to meet their friends.

Your sentence: _________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

10. The farmer gathered armfuls of oats and bound them into sheaves.

Your sentence: _________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

11. The young man began to reap the raspberries and place them in his bucket.

Your sentence: _________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

12. The young boy waited anxiously in the waiting room for his dentist appoint-

Your sentence: _________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

Questions:

1. *Looking at the setting:* Where is the fishing village located? Describe the area near the village.
2. Why do the village houses have no windows toward the sea?

3. Who is Jiya?

4. What do Kino and Jiya do on hot, sunny days?

5. What lives on the island?

6. Who lives in the castle?

7. Explain how Kino’s family takes a vacation each autumn.
8. Occasionally, Kino got to go fishing with Jiya and Jiya’s father. How does Kino describe the experience?

A simile is a figure of speech used to describe something through comparison. A simile uses words such as like or as to indicate that a comparison is taking place. (For example: The carpet was green like moss.) Which part of Kino’s description is a simile?

Thinking About the Story:

9. Kino would like to stay overnight on the island, but Jiya is never willing. Why?

10. Personification is a figure of speech in which an author attributes human qualities to an object, an animal, or an idea; in other word, the author makes something act like a person. Examine Jiya’s description of the “old ocean god” and Jiya’s idea of why the sea moves and storms. How does Jiya personify the ocean?

11. When they swim back from the island, Jiya’s father is waiting. What about this makes Kino wonder?
Fact or Opinion:

12. A fact is a true statement about something. It can be proven and is not based on personal feelings. For example, “My bike is red,” is a fact—it can be proved whether it is red. An opinion cannot be proven; it merely states what a person feels or thinks about something or someone. “My bike is best” is an opinion because it cannot be proved. It can be proved that it is bigger, faster, or newer, but not that it is best. One person may think the bike is best, but another may think it is not best.

Below are a number of passages containing thoughts or statements made by characters in the story. For each passage, write an O in the blank if the underlined portion is an opinion or an F if it is a fact.

a. Sometimes he felt the climb was a hard one, especially when he had been working in the lowest field and he wanted his supper. _____

b. “The sea is our enemy,” Jiya replied. _____

c. Sometimes in the evening he came through the castle gate and stood looking out to sea. _____

d. The island was full of sacred deer. _____

e. “We must learn to live with danger,” he now said to Kino. _____

f. In the winter he went to a school in the fishing village, and he and Jiya shared a seat. _____

g. It was an exciting thing to get up in the night and dress himself in his warm padded jacket tied around his waist. _____

h. Then she packed his lunch in a clean little wooden box, cold rice and fish and a bit of radish pickle. _____

i. Fish harvest was much easier than rice harvest. _____

j. It is stupid to plow and plant and cut the sheaves, when I could just come out like this and reap fish from the sea. _____
Compare and Contrast:

13. To *compare* is to show how two things are alike. To *contrast* is to show how two things are different. Compare or contrast the supper manners and customs of Kino’s family to the table habits and customs of your own family.

Write down some of the characteristics of Kino’s family’s supper customs in the left column. Write down the comparable or contrasting characteristics of your family in the right column. One has already been done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kino’s family’s supper customs</th>
<th>Your family’s supper customs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. sit on floor</td>
<td>sit on chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. ______________________</td>
<td>__________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. ______________________</td>
<td>__________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. ______________________</td>
<td>__________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. ______________________</td>
<td>__________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. ______________________</td>
<td>__________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. ______________________</td>
<td>__________________________</td>
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Dig Deeper:

14. Kino asks his father, “Must we always be afraid of something?” How does his father answer him?
15. Read Psalm 23, John 14:1–6, and Romans 8:38–39. What do these verses tell us? Why, then, as Christians, should we not fear death?

16. Both Jiya and his father watch the sea anxiously. What does it mean to be anxious? Read Matthew 6:25–34. What do these verses teach us? How would these verses help you or someone else to enjoy life?

Optional Activities:

1. Weave, sew, knit, or crochet a small bag to carry pebbles and special things in like Jiya and Kino did.

2. Keep a goldfish or a beta fish as a pet. Your local pet store will have many small bowls and rocks and fish to choose from. Remember to have your parents’ permission and to care for your pet daily.

3. As a science project, figure out why the fish in the cave glittered. To start, look up and research phosphorescence, luminescence, and bioluminescence.
people climbing the path up the mountain to safety. Jiya loses his entire family.
7. His father tells him they will not talk, they will give Jiya warm food and rest, they will help him feel he still has a
home. They will also tell him that he is the second son the father always wanted.
8. Jiya feels asleep inside and very, very tired. He is unable to think.

Thinking About the Story:
9. Fear makes a man weak. Your hands tremble, your feet falter, and your brain cannot tell hands and feet what to do.
Opinions will vary.
10. The fathers hoped the wave wouldn’t come and that they could save their boats and their livelihood. The family
stayed with the fathers because they did not want to be separated.
11. 1) Crying all the time—grief, 2) Crying part of the time, 3) Sitting sad and quiet, 4) Becoming hungry again,
5) Crying only at night, 6) Thinking again, 7) Accepting their death, 8) Weeping no more.
12. Answers may vary, but may mention letting Jiya cry, not making him speak, doing their own work, and living as they
always do.

Dig Deeper:
14. What they believe: The gods leave man to take care of himself. They test us to see how able we are to save ourselves.
What the Bible teaches: The Bible teaches us that the Lord is always with us, nothing can separate us from the love of
God and Jesus, we may be tested by circumstances so our faith may grow, but God never tempts us to do wrong or sin.
Every good gift is from God.
15. Answers will vary. Kino’s father seems to be very wise about how to help Jiya. He does not try to make Jiya act like
he is happy when he is not—he is tender and loving toward Jiya. He lets Jiya heal in his heart and his mind and gives
him the love of his family.
16. Personal answers will vary.

Section Three
Vocabulary:
1. tenderly: considerately, protectively, gently, lovingly; 2. sturdily: resolutely, firmly, vigorously or robustly; 3. persuade:
convincing someone to do something or think a certain way by arguing or reasoning with them; 4. stern: hard or severe
in manner or character; appearing grim, gloomy, or forbidding; firm or unyielding; 5. delicate: very fine or dainty, frail,
easily broken or damaged; 6. scholar: a learned person, a specialist in knowledge

Questions:
1. His father tells him that life is stronger than death.
2. The Old Gentleman comes to visit. Uchiyama is Kino’s father.
3. Old Gentleman wants to make Jiya his own son, to adopt him.
4. His father tells him to not be so selfish and to allow Jiya to make his own choice about where to live.
5. Kino believes that Jiya will choose to go away.
6. Kino’s father tells Jiya that he did not cry before now because he was not fully alive, but today he is beginning to live
again. It is now good to let the tears flow.
7. He tells Jiya to see the inside of the castle and all Old Gentleman has to offer before Jiya decides.
8. Setsu comforts him by hugging him and he gets comfort from seeing her happy face.

Think About the Story:
9. Answers will vary.
10. Answers will vary, but should mention the money and opportunities that Jiya would have. He could attend a fine
school and have fine clothes. It would be for his “own good.” Personal answers will vary.
11. Answers may vary, but should mention some of the following: love, family, the friendship of Kino and Setsu, a
brother, sister, and mother.
12. Answers may vary, but may mention that Setsu is joyful, fun, loving, and always sees the good in things. She is full of
energy.

Dig Deeper:
13. Answers will vary.