Eleven-year-old Barry never thought he was brave. But when the storm of the century strikes New Orleans, Barry must find the courage to survive.

By Lauren Tarshis, from her book series “I Survived”

Scene 1

N1: It is August 28, 2005, New Orleans, Louisiana.
N2: The Lower Ninth Ward neighborhood.
N3: Barry Tucker and his best friend, Jay, are sitting on Barry’s front porch.
N1: They see Abe Mackay and his killer dog, Cruz, down the block.
Barry: Hide! That dog can kill a person with one bite!
Jay: That can’t be true.
N2: Barry wishes he weren’t so scared of everything.
N3: Barry’s dad appears at the front door.
Dad: That hurricane’s getting nasty. Come and pack up, Barry. We’re leaving town.
Jay: Are you serious? There hasn’t been a major hurricane in New Orleans in 40 years.
LOOK FOR WORD NERD’S 8 WORDS IN BOLD

Courage: How do Barry’s feelings about his own bravery change during the play?

RINA
Dad: There’s a mandatory evacuation.
Barry: Where are we going?
Dad: Houston. To your cousins’.
Jay: Where will my grandma and I go? We don’t have a car.
Dad: They’re opening up the Superdome stadium for folks without cars. I’m sure everything will be fine.
N1: Through the open door, they hear the news playing on the radio.
Radio Announcer: That’s right. This storm is a monster. Get out while you can!

**Scene 2**

N2: Barry tries to stay calm as he helps his little sister, Cleo, pack a bag.
Radio Announcer: Hurricane Katrina is now a Category 5 storm, folks. Winds 175 miles an hour. It’s time to—
Mom (switching off the radio): OK, we heard you. We’re leaving.
N3: Suddenly, Cleo starts wailing and throws up on the floor.
N1: Barry’s mom wipes Cleo’s face.
Mom: This girl is burning up! We can’t drive all the way to Houston with a sick child. And we can’t take her to the Superdome like this.
N2: Dad turns on the TV.
Newscaster 1: There are already ten thousand people inside the Superdome and thousands more are lined up around the block.
Dog Owner (on TV): They wouldn’t let me in with my dog. They say no pets.
Newscaster 2: The real concern here is the levees, those big walls of dirt and concrete that protect us from all the water that

**Suffering at the Superdome**

For those unable to leave New Orleans, the Superdome was the only place to find shelter. More than 30,000 people suffered for days in extreme heat and filthy conditions with little food or water.
surrounds New Orleans. Some say the levees aren’t strong enough for a big storm.

Dad: Barry, the wind is kicking up. Come help me board up the windows.

N3: As afternoon turns to evening, the wind starts to moan and then howl. Rain pounds down on their roof.

N1: Barry tries not to be afraid. He closes his eyes and sinks deep into the couch.

**Scene 3**

N2: A strange whooshing sound jolts Barry awake.

N3: He stands up as the front door flies open.

N1: A wave of water sweeps into the house, knocking Barry off his feet.

Barry: Daaaaad!

Dad: I’m coming! Grab my hand.

N2: Dad splashes through the water, pulling Barry toward the staircase.

Dad: Hurry! The water is rising fast.

N3: They run up the stairs and see Mom carrying Cleo.

Mom: Did the levee break?

Dad: I hope not! But it looks like the Mississippi River is flooding the whole neighborhood.

Barry: Could all that water really come into our house?

N1: Water begins to rise up their stairs.

Dad: We need to get onto the roof.

Barry: How?

Dad: Through the attic. Come on.

N2: Dad pulls open the hatch and they climb the rickety stairs to the tiny, dark space.

1. Entire neighborhoods were destroyed in the hurricane. 2. Billions of gallons of water gushed into the city when the levees failed. 3. In some neighborhoods, people were stranded for days until help arrived. 4. Tens of thousands of dogs, cats, and other pets were left behind after the storm. Many were rescued weeks later by hundreds of volunteers from around the country.

N3: Dad locates an ax in a dark corner.

N1: He smashes the blade into the ceiling again and again to make a big hole.

N2: The wind screams and rain pours in.

Dad: I’ll go first. Barry, you come next.

N3: Barry gasps when he sticks his head out into the storm.

N1: The rain comes down hard, stinging his face like a million bees.

Dad (shouting): Stay down on your stomach! Cleo, you’re next.

N2: Cleo climbs up, but the wind knocks her forward.

N3: Barry manages to grab her and pull her back.

N1: Before Barry can lie flat again, a gust of wind throws him forward.

N2: He falls through the air and is swept away in a gushing tide.

**Scene 4**

N3: Barry struggles to stay afloat.

N1: Sharp pieces of wood and metal smack and scrape him as they fly by.

Barry (screaming): Dad! Mom! Cleo!

N2: The wind screams back at him.
Barry is shocked to see a house floating toward him. He reaches up and grabs hold of a window frame, careful of the jagged glass.

He climbs in, relieved to be out of the flood. But then he hears ferocious barking. Barry realizes that he’s in Abe’s house. Barry (to himself): That’s Abe’s killer dog! I have to get out of here!

But then Barry hears a whimpering howl. The dog sounds terrified, not deadly.

Barry hesitates, fighting his fear. He has nowhere to go. And besides, the dog needs help.

Barry: OK, Cruz! I’m coming!

Barry wades through the water and climbs up the tilting stairs. Cruz’s leash is tied to Abe’s bed. Barry cautiously unhooks it.

Cruz leaps up and licks Barry’s chin.

Barry: You’re not really a killer dog, are you?

Cruz nuzzles Barry’s leg. Barry pats his head.

Suddenly Cruz bounds over to the edge of the room, where the side of the house has been ripped away.

Barry follows and looks into the sky.

Barry: It’s a helicopter! Cruz! We’re being rescued!

Barry waves at the pilot.

Eighty percent of New Orleans was flooded, with some parts under 15 feet of water. Experts had warned for years that a hurricane could flood the city.

Barry: Here! Here! We’re here!

The helicopter hovers for a minute and then rises and flies away.

The helicopter winds have stirred up the water. The house starts to rock violently.

Barry hears a loud splash. Cruz has fallen into the water.

Barry: I’m coming, Cruz!

Barry jumps in after him.

Barry: It’s a helicopter! Cruz! We’re being rescued!

Barry: I know. That was scary. But we’re OK.

But they aren’t OK. The water is filled with...
Barry needed a lot of courage to survive the hurricane. Using details from the play, write a letter from Barry to his friend Jay about his experience and how he stayed brave. Send your entry to “Katrina Contest” by Oct. 15, 2011. We’ll send 10 winners Lauren Tarshis’s book about Hurricane Katrina. See page 2 for details.