



I Survived True Stories: Five Epic Disasters by Lauren Tarshis

This book is a “Best of the Best” pick from our Winter Book Fair.

I Survived True Stories: Five Epic Disasters

by Lauren Tarshis

Scholastic, 2014. 176 pages

Reading Level: Middle Grades, 8-10

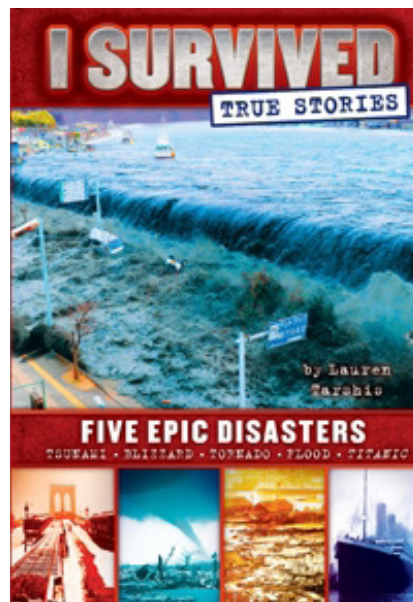
Maturity Level: 3 (ages 8-10)

Cautions: Worldview (see second paragraph)

Overall Value: 3.75 Moral/worldview: 3.5 Artistic: 4

Nonfiction, Middle Grades, Entertainment, Education, History

Fans of the popular I SURVIVED historical fiction series by Lauren Tarshis will find her latest nonfiction endeavor just as exciting. Tarshis’s cliffhanger prose keeps readers on the edge of their seats and is accompanied by photographs, timelines, and other bits of historical data (such as a timeline of the five worst blizzards in history to accompany the story of the Children’s Blizzard). These events *really* happened, and they aren’t the usual events in school history books. Tarshis picks events that will be of high interest to elementary and middle school readers (um, a molasses flood?!) and focuses on the heroic children survivors. Sometimes, in fact, it is the very schoolchildren in the story whose quick thinking “saves the day.” A quick read, this is a good book both for advanced younger readers as well as reluctant older readers. Back material includes bibliographies



with many more child-friendly resources to explore.

A note of caution: Unfortunately, like many secular accounts of “miraculous” survival stories, much is attributed to human quick thinking, heroic actions, and just plain luck rather than any mention of a Creator God who controls these very natural disasters and often miraculously preserves his children. In addition, in the very interesting section on

the recent tsunami that struck Japan, there is a brief paragraph covering the biggest tsunamis in history which, according to Tarshis, occurred some sixty-plus million years ago. Rather than writing off a fascinating historical book like this one, take the time to talk with your children and remind them that the biblical *flood* no doubt would have left historical/natural evidence of massive tsunamis even though we might disagree with the dating of that evidence.