

# I SURVIVED HURRICANE KAT

## CHARACTERS

\*Narrators 1, 2, 3 (N1, N2, N3)

\*Barry Tucker: an 11-year-old boy

Jay: Barry's best friend

Dad: Barry's dad

Radio Announcer

Mom: Barry's mom

Newscasters 1 and 2

Dog Owner

Nell: a helper

Woman

Boy

Headline Reader: reads headlines and scene numbers

\*Photo-Caption Reader: reads captions

\*Indicates large speaking role

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.



**Courage** How do Barry's feelings about his own bravery change during the play?



LOOK FOR WORD NERD'S **8** WORDS IN BOLD

# 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:** Daaaaaad!

**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.



## A City at Risk

New Orleans sits in a “bowl” that is surrounded by water. It has always been vulnerable to flooding. Barry’s neighborhood, the Lower Ninth Ward, was badly flooded during Hurricane Betsy in 1962 and among the hardest hit by Katrina.



N3: 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.

N1: He climbs in, relieved to be out of the flood. But then he hears ferocious barking.

N2: 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!

N3: But then Barry hears a whimpering howl. The dog sounds terrified, not deadly.

N1: Barry hesitates, fighting his fear.

N2: He has nowhere to go. And besides, the dog needs help.

Barry: OK, Cruz! I’m coming!

N3: Barry wades through the water and climbs up the tilting stairs.

N1: Cruz’s leash is tied to Abe’s bed. Barry cautiously unhooks it.

N2: Cruz leaps up and licks Barry’s chin.

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

N3: Cruz nuzzles Barry’s leg. Barry pats his head.

N1: Suddenly Cruz bounds over to the edge of the room, where the side of the house has been ripped away.

N2: Barry follows and looks into the sky.

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

N3: 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!

N1: The helicopter hovers for a minute and then rises and flies away.



## Scene 5

N2: The helicopter winds have stirred up the water. The house starts to rock violently.

N3: Barry hears a loud splash. Cruz has fallen into the water.

Barry: I’m coming, Cruz!

N1: Barry jumps in after him.

N2: He swims over to Cruz and grabs on to him.

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

N3: But they aren’t OK. The water is filled with

**toxic** chemicals. It stings their skin.

**N1:** Barry sees an upside-down car poking through the water. He kicks toward it as hard as he can, towing Cruz.

**N2:** They scramble onto it. Barry hears barking and howling throughout the neighborhood.

**N3:** Barry and Cruz sit slumped together for hours. They are tired and thirsty. Mosquitoes swarm all around them.

**Barry:** At least we're together, Cruz.

**N1:** After night falls, Barry looks up to see a motorized rubber raft coming toward them.

**Nell:** Well, look at you, brave soul. Where is your family?

**N2:** Barry looks around at the endless water. His eyes fill with tears. Is he really brave?

**Nell** (*patting Cruz on the head*): I'm Nell. How about some water for you and your friend?

**N3:** Barry and Cruz gulp down the water so quickly they are practically choking.

**Nell:** Climb in. I'll take you to the St. Claude Avenue Bridge. People there will help you.

**N1:** Barry pictures a tent with doctors and nurses and police officers ready to help.

**N2:** Nell weaves the little boat through the maze of uprooted trees and **wreckage**.

**N3:** People stranded on rooftops call to them.

**Woman:** Help us! We've got a baby here!

**Boy:** We're hurt. Please help!

**Nell:** I'll come back for you. Hang on!

**N1:** Barry sees a worried look on Nell's face.

**Nell:** Thousands of people are stranded in the Lower Nine. I've already picked up more than 30 people.

**N2:** Barry sees the bridge in the distance. There is a large crowd of people looking anxious, but no tent, no flashing lights or police cars.

**N3:** Just little boats, like Nell's, letting people off and heading back out into the water.

**N1:** Nell pulls up to a ramp under the bridge. She looks into Barry's eyes.

**Nell:** You'll be OK here. You're strong.

**N2:** Barry doesn't feel strong. His body shakes as he climbs out of the boat with Cruz.

**N3:** He wonders what happened to his family.

**N1:** Suddenly he hears a familiar voice.

**Dad:** Barry! Barry!

**N2:** Dad, Mom, and Cleo run to Barry and throw their arms around him.

**N3:** Barry holds on to them tightly.

## Scene 6

**N1:** A month later, Barry and his family are in their new apartment in New York City.

**Barry:** People here are always asking me about Hurricane Katrina. It's like I'm a superhero or something.

**Mom:** You were mighty brave, honey.

**Dad:** Let's remember how lucky we are. If I hadn't been offered a teaching job here, we'd be homeless like thousands of our neighbors.

**Barry:** I know. But I miss Jay and all my friends.

**Dad:** You gained a new one.

**N2:** Barry reaches down and pets Cruz, who is snoozing at his feet.

**Mom:** I'm sorry that Abe couldn't keep his dog, but I'm glad Cruz is part of our family now.

**Barry:** Do you think we'll ever get back to New Orleans?

**Dad:** It's going to take time to rebuild our city. But we'll go back someday. One day soon, we'll go home. 🍷

## WRITE TO WIN!

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.

