



## BOOK STATS

Grade Level Equivalent: 2–4

Ages: 8+

Lexile Measure®: 680L

Pages: 104

Genre: Historical Fiction, Adventure

Subject/Theme: Survival, Courage, Disasters

Common Core State Standards	Reading	Writing	Listening & Speaking	Language
Grade 2	RL.2.1, RL.2.3, RL.2.7	W.2.1, W.2.2	SL.2.1, SL.2.2, SL.2.5	L.2.4, L.2.5
Grade 3	RL.3.1, RL.3.3, RL.3.4, RL.3.7	W.3.1, W.3.2	SL.3.1, SL.3.4, SL.3.5	L.3.4, L.3.5
Grade 4	RL.4.1, RL.4.3, RL.4.4	W.4.1, W.4.2	SL.4.1, SL.4.4, SL.4.5	L.4.5, L.4.6

# OVERVIEW

## Book Summary

People said it was unsinkable. But when the Titanic slams into an iceberg in the middle of the night, 2,229 passengers face a terrifying life-or-death situation. Among them are 10-year-old George Calder, his younger sister Phoebe, and his young but wealthy Aunt Daisy.

The year is 1912. George and Phoebe are sailing back to America with their aunt on the largest and most beautiful ship in the world. During the voyage, George explores the ship, learning about its maze of rooms and secret passageways. Although he gets in trouble with his Aunt Daisy for his exploits, that doesn't keep him from trying to find a mummy in the storage room. While there, George meets a dangerous stranger and hears the sound of the iceberg ramming into the Titanic.

He runs back to his room to discover that Phoebe has disappeared. George and Aunt Daisy search for Phoebe while the rest of the ship's passengers begin to realize that the ship is sinking with only enough lifeboats to save a fraction of them. After George locates Phoebe, he helps his aunt, sister, and two friends escape from the ship's hold. However, George is turned back from getting on the lifeboat. His new friend Marco helps him jump clear of the ship, and they are rescued, after a freezing ordeal, by the *Carpathia*.

This compelling story brings to vivid life the swift and deadly sinking of the Titanic as seen through the eyes of a 10-year-old boy.

## Teaching the Book

Young George Calder stares death in the face as he feels the Titanic sinking under his feet. This riveting historical story portrays the courage and determination of a boy who survives one of the worst disasters of the twentieth century. The book provides an opportunity to discuss the conflicts that move the plot forward, as well as, the author's use of figurative language. Students will engage in activities ranging from tracing the Titanic's route to creating a front-page newspaper report of the Titanic's sinking.

**Theme Focus:** Survival

**Comprehension Focus:** Analyze Conflict

**Language Focus:** Figurative Language

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lauren Tarshis is the editor of Scholastic's *Storyworks* and *Scope* magazines, and the author of the critically acclaimed novels *Emma-Jean Lazarus Fell Out of a Tree* and *Emma-Jean Lazarus Fell in Love*. She says she decided to write the I Survived series—not because of the actual disasters—but because of the courage and determination to survive that young people can show in the face of disaster.

Tarshis lives in Westport, Connecticut and can be found online at [www.laurentarshis.com](http://www.laurentarshis.com).

# Get Ready to Read

## Pre-Reading Activities

**Exploring the Titanic** Ask students what they know about the Titanic. To build their background knowledge about this historic disaster, project the “Facts About the Titanic” from the back matter of the book (pages 99–101) on a whiteboard or screen. Ask different volunteers to read the facts, one at a time.

If you want to show students visuals of the Titanic, the wreck, and the aftermath, go to [History.com](http://History.com) for its thorough, interactive coverage. Show students a tour of the ship, the animated video of the impact with the iceberg, and the rescue of the passengers by visiting: <http://bit.ly/Zkz53h>.

**Preview and Predict** Ask students to study the illustration on the cover of the book. What moment does the illustration picture? Where are some of the passengers? Who might be the boy at the foreground of the picture?

## STORIA ENRICHMENTS

This Storia e-book has the following enrichments to enhance students’ comprehension of the book.

- Word Scramble (2)
- Do You Know?
- Word Twister (2)
- Who Said It?

## Vocabulary

**Figurative Language** While most of the book is written in spare and straightforward language, author Lauren Tarshis punctuates her descriptions of life on the Titanic with dramatic metaphors and similes. Remind students that a metaphor is a comparison between two unlike things. A simile is a comparison between two unlike things using *like* or *as*. Both figures of speech create a surprising or distinct picture in readers’ minds.

Distribute copies of **Resource #1: Language Cards** on page 7 to students.

Ask students what is being compared in the first metaphor that appears on page 3 of the story. How does the metaphor help describe what George heard?

“Even more terrible sounds filled the air. . . . A bellowing sound, like a giant beast dying a terrible death.”

Clarify that the author is describing what George hears as the Titanic is sinking. She compares the bellowing sound of the ship taking on water to a giant beast dying a terrible death. Ask students to imagine this sound as they look at the illustration of the ship sinking on the cover. Then tell students to watch for other examples of metaphors and similes as they read and to use the text to understand the comparisons.



## BIG QUESTION

**Critical Thinking** Ask students to think about this question as they read and to be ready to answer it when they have finished the book. Write the question on chart paper or have students record it in their reading journals.

**How will George survive the sinking of the Titanic?**

## As You Read

### Reading the Book

**Modeled Reading** Read aloud pages 1–3 from the first chapter of the book, asking students to follow along. Then prompt them to ask and answer questions about the read-aloud. For example: When does this scene take place? Where does it take place? From whose point of view is the story being told?

**Independent Reading** Assign students to read *I Survived the Sinking of the Titanic* independently. Before they begin, read aloud the time and place that the action in Chapter 2 begins. Explain that this is a flashback in time from Chapter 1.

### Comprehension Focus

**Analyze Conflict** Explain to students that a plot is the series of events in a story. For the plot to be exciting and interesting, it must have conflicts that cause the action to rise and fall as the story proceeds. Conflicts are between a person and another person, between a person and nature, or between a person and society. Conflicts are also between a person and himself or herself. When a conflict ends, it is called the resolution.

Use the graphic organizer on page 8, **Resource #2: Analyze Conflict** to model for students how to analyze the conflicts in the book. Project the page on a whiteboard or pass out copies to students.

**Model:** What conflict does George face at the beginning of the story? He is in trouble because he slid down the railing of the grand staircase on the Titanic and shocked the other passengers. His Aunt Daisy is upset because he broke the rules of society. So, I'll write down that this conflict is between George and society. It is resolved by George saying he will behave in the future.

Guide students to fill in the organizer by reading the conflict, deciding who the conflict is between, and writing how the conflict is resolved. Explain that answers may vary since some conflicts involve more than one group and are resolved in more than one way. Encourage students to share their answers and discuss them.

## After You Read

### Questions to Discuss

Lead students in a discussion of these focus story elements.

**1. Historical Fiction** How does the author reveal that the time period of the setting is 1912? How

do people in the story dress differently than they do today? How do George and Phoebe act differently than kids do today? What other clues in the story tell you that the year is around 1912? (*Sample answers: Women and girls wear long dresses and fancy hats. George talks about the New York Giants baseball team. People cross the Atlantic on big ships.*)

**2. Analyze Conflict** What is the conflict between George and his father at the beginning of the book? How is that conflict resolved by the end of the book? What does George learn about his father and himself? (*Sample answers: George disappoints his father by not getting good grades and getting into trouble. This may be because they both miss George's mother. At the end, George realizes he is like his father and his father realizes how much he loves George after almost losing him.*)

**3. Figurative Language** Choose a character or event from the book and describe it by creating an original metaphor or simile. Write a sentence that draws a comparison. Then explain what characteristics you are comparing. (*Sample answer: The iceberg cut through the Titanic's hull like a frozen dagger.*)

## WORDS TO KNOW

### Figurative Language

Pass out copies of **Resource #1: Language Cards**. Read each metaphor and ask students to refer to the corresponding page numbers of the book. Discuss the meanings of the metaphors and similes with the class. Then ask students the following questions:

Is the figure of speech a metaphor or a simile?

What two things are being compared?

Do you think it is an effective metaphor or simile? Why or why not?

Encourage students to record and share other examples of figurative language from the book.

## Questions to Share

Encourage students to share their responses with a partner or small group.

**1. Text-to-Self** What do you think your plan of action would be if you were on the Titanic?

**2. Text-to-World** There were only 16 lifeboats on the Titanic. Women and children from the top decks were saved first. Do you think this would happen today? Why or why not?

**3. Text-to-Text** The story is told through the point of view of George, a 10-year-old boy. How would it have been a different story if told through the point of view of Aunt Daisy, or the captain of the ship, or Marco?

## Extension Activities

### Reading/Writing Connection

**What Do You Think?** Reread the text about Robert Ballard and the Titanic wreck on page 101 with students. Ask students questions about their opin-

ions of the piece such as: Do you think the Titanic should be brought to the surface or left in peace? Why do you think this? Discuss their different opinions about the issue. Then have students write an argument paragraph about the question. Direct them to state their opinion or claim, and to back it up with at least three reasons.

Don't forget the



## BIG QUESTION

**Critical Thinking** Give each student an opportunity to answer the big question. Encourage students to support their answers with details and evidence from the text. Remind them that there is more than one right answer.

**How will George survive the sinking of the Titanic?**

## Content Area Connections

**Engineering** **How Ships Float** Challenge students with an interest in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) to research how large ships like the Titanic, weighing almost 50,000 tons, are able to float. Ask them to report their findings to the class, using graphic aids to explain the science behind buoyancy.

**Geography** **The Titanic's Voyage** Ask students to research the route the Titanic took on its one and only voyage. History.com has a detailed map showing the iceberg field and the route at <http://bit.ly/UGvi8y>. Ask students to report their research by drawing the Titanic's route including its point of departure and destination, the iceberg field, where it sank, and the location of the *Carpathia*. If possible, have students show the route using a whiteboard and Google Earth.

**Music** **Oh, They Built the Ship Titanic . . .** This traditional song about the Titanic has long been a favorite scouting, camping, and bus-riding group song. Students will enjoy singing it again or learning it for the first time. Because it belongs to the folk tradition, there are many different

variations, several of which can be found on the Internet. Two with music and video accompaniment are found at <http://bit.ly/Z2NTo0> and <http://bit.ly/UVLcRc>.

**History** **Finding the Titanic** The Titanic made the headlines again in 1985 when explorer Robert Ballard discovered the wreck of the ship at the bottom of the ocean. Provide students with book or web resources to learn more about the remains of the Titanic and what is happening to those remains.

## BIG ACTIVITY

**Extra, Extra, Read All About It!** Have students act as journalists and write a front-page story about the sinking of the Titanic. Show them some actual front pages from the time by visiting the Huffington Post at <http://huff.to/W0s3jb>. Make copies of the **Big Activity: Extra, Extra, Read All About It!** on page 5 and distribute to students. Explain the different parts of a newspaper front page: newspaper name, big headline, dateline, article, and photographs or illustrations. Post the students' front pages in the classroom.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **BIG ACTIVITY:** Extra, Extra, Read All About It!

Create a newspaper front page to report the sinking of the Titanic.

NEWSPAPER NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

HEADLINE: \_\_\_\_\_

ARTICLE: \_\_\_\_\_

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DRAWING OR MAP:

CAPTION: \_\_\_\_\_

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## READ MORE AND LEARN MORE

Use these books and other resources to expand your students' study of the book or theme.

### Author/Series Connections



#### **I Survived #2: I Survived the Shark Attacks of 1916**

*Lauren Tarshis*

**Ages:** 8–10

**Grades:** 2–4

**Lexile Measure®:** 610L

**Pages:** 112

It's the summer of 1916, and Chet Roscow is just as captivated as everyone else along the Jersey Shore by the local news. A great white shark has been attacking and killing people up and down the Atlantic coast, not far from Chet's hometown of Springfield, New Jersey. Then one day, swimming with his friends, Chet sees something in the water. . . . This thrilling second book in the I Survived series will keep readers turning pages to find out Chet's fate.

**Available as a Storia e-book**



#### **I Survived #3: I Survived Hurricane Katrina 2005**

*Lauren Tarshis*

**Ages:** 8–10

**Grades:** 2–4

**Lexile Measure®:** 590L

**Pages:** 112

Hurricane Katrina is headed for New Orleans, pushing a powerful storm surge toward the low-lying city. Barry's family knows the storm is coming, but his little sister is critically ill, and they can't risk evacuation. At first it seems that the Ninth Ward will be safe. But when the levees are breached, the rising waters sweep Barry away from his family. The airwaves are calling it the Storm of the Century . . . and if Barry is to survive it, he'll have to survive it alone.

**Available as a Storia e-book**



#### **I Survived #4: I Survived the Bombing of Pearl Harbor 1941**

*Lauren Tarshis*

**Ages:** 8–10

**Grades:** 2–4

**Lexile Measure®:** 620L

**Pages:** 112

Eleven-year-old Danny Crane is alone on his favorite beach in Hawaii when World War II officially hits the United States—and his world is torn apart. Now he must find the courage to make his way home in the midst of the bombs, the smoke, and the destruction of a day that will live in infamy! **Available as a Storia e-book**



#### **I Survived #6: I Survived the Attacks of September 11, 2001**

*Lauren Tarshis*

**Ages:** 8–10 **Grades:** 2–4 **Pages:** 112

On the morning of September 11, Lucas sneaks into Manhattan and heads down to the firehouse of Ladder Company 177. He wants to talk to his Uncle Benny, his father's best friend and fellow firefighter. But as Lucas and Uncle Benny stand outside talking, a plane flies low overhead—and soon nothing will ever be the same again. As the plane hits the World Trade Center tower, the men of Ladder 177 swing into action. And when another plane hits the second tower, Lucas can't wait around the firehouse any longer—he's got to go find his dad. He starts walking downtown—right toward the burning towers.

**Available as a Storia e-book**

### Theme Connections



#### **Titanic: Voices from the Disaster**

*Deborah Hopkinson*

**Ages:** 9–13

**Grades:** 4–7

**Lexile Measure®:** 1040L

**Pages:** 304

Weaving together the voices of Titanic survivors and witnesses of the disaster, critically acclaimed author Deborah Hopkinson brings the horrors of that terrible voyage to life for today's students. Readers will meet various passengers and crew members—from nine-year-old Frankie Goldsmith to the brave seaman William Murdock. The book includes photos of the ship and its passengers; a glossary, timeline, and survivor bios and letters; and tips on how to be a Titanic researcher. **Available as a Storia e-book**



#### **Miracle Pets**

*Allan Zullo*

**Ages:** 8–10

**Grades:** 3–6

**Lexile Measure®:** 1050L

**Pages:** 128

**Guided Reading Level:** S

Have you ever heard about the dachshund that was snatched up by an eagle, but fought back in midair? Or about the two pigs that escaped from a sausage factory, leaped into an icy river, and swam to safety? And what about the pet cat who was trapped for two months under the concrete floor of a new building under construction? Inside this riveting book, readers will find these and more incredible true tales of brave animals who overcame life-threatening situations.

**Available as a Storia e-book**

To find PDF versions of the Storia teacher guides and links to purchase the related books, visit:

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/ereading-resources/>

Even more terrible sounds filled the air. . . . A bellowing sound, like a giant beast was dying a terrible death. (p. 3)

The wood was so shiny and polished, curving around like a ride at the fair. (p. 13)

"I'm not letting you out of my sight," she announced. . . . "I'm your guardian angel." (p. 17)

Thinking about Mama was like standing close to a fire. Warm at first. But get too close and it hurt too much. (p. 41)

The cat dropped the branch and came after him, like a shadow with glowing eyes. (p. 31)

The shaking got stronger and stronger, the noise louder and louder, like thunder exploding all around them. (p. 39)

People fell, toppling like dominoes. (p. 61)

The water was so cold it felt like millions of needles were stabbing him. (p. 74)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## RESOURCE #2: Analyze Conflict

Identify each conflict. Is it person vs. person, person vs. nature, person vs. society, or person vs. self? Then write how the conflict is resolved.

Story Conflict	Conflict Between	Resolution of Conflict
George gets in trouble for sliding down staircase.	vs.	
George meets scar-faced man in baggage room.	vs.	
George has to get his family and friends out of the bottom deck before it floods.	vs.	
George has to find the courage to save himself from sinking ship.	vs.	
George survives icy waters and helps Marco into boat.	vs.	