

talk  
to  
me!

LET'S TALK EMPOWERMENT. LET'S TALK ENGLISH

## Moments

### 6. Weathering the Storm in Ersama

by  
Harsh Mander

#### 1. Summary

This story written by Harsh Mander, is set in Orissa, when a terrible cyclone hit the state, leaving many homeless and dead. It is about a 19-year-old boy called Prashant, who survived the cyclone. It then follows his journey back to his village in search of his family and is finally reunited with them at the Red Cross Shelter. It shows us how he heals himself and the surviving villagers by organizing volunteers to clean up the village, taking care of the orphaned children, and the widows. He organizes food supplies and tries to make sure that the surviving villagers find purposes in their lives. It is a story of Prashant's determination and will to heal and be healed.

#### 2. Something Interesting

##### What is a Cyclone?

A **Cyclone** is a tropical storm with strong winds blowing in a large spiral around a relatively calm center known as the 'eye'. At the strongest level, the cyclone can create winds of up to 150 miles per hour. It is formed over warm water. The eye can extend up to 50 Km and the hurricane may cause damage for hundreds of kilometres. A cyclone is the same as a hurricane or a typhoon. The name differs depending upon the location of the storm. In the Atlantic and Northeast Pacific, the term hurricane is used. In the Northwest Pacific it is called a typhoon and in the South Pacific and Indian Ocean it is called a cyclone.

Watch the damage caused by a typhoon in Hong Kong in 2018. Click on the link below.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AeLYre\\_yCA8&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AeLYre_yCA8&feature=youtu.be)

### 3. Vocabulary

1. **Devastated** – completely destroyed  
The entire island was **devastated** by the tsunami.
2. **Dreadful** – causing great fear and terror; terrible  
Her father's death was a **dreadful** thing to happen to her at such a young age.
3. **Marooned** – to be left somewhere where you cannot get away  
He was left **marooned** on the island after the shipwreck.
4. **Headquarters** – centre of operations  
The army **headquarters** are located at the other end of the town.
5. **Coastal** – the area where land meets the sea  
Goa is one of the most visited **coastal** regions in India.
6. **Menacing** – dangerous and harmful  
The man walked **menacingly** up to her.
7. **Gathered** – to bring together into a group or place  
They all **gathered** their belongings and set off on their journey.
8. **Fury** – extreme and violent anger  
The **fury** of the storm was visible the next morning.
9. **Witness** – to see or hear personally  
I was there to **witness** the devastation and destruction.
10. **Incessant** – unceasing; continuous  
The **incessant** rain flooded the roads.
11. **Ancient** – very old  
The **ancient** statue was stolen from the museum.
12. **Uprooted** – destroyed, or displaced, or removed, or pulled up from the roots  
The trees and the houses were **uprooted** in the storm.
13. **Crashed** – made or caused a loud noise; or to break, or smash into pieces  
The cars **crashed** into each other causing a huge jam.
14. **Swiftly** – moving with great speed / fast  
She worked **swiftly** and made sure everything was done on time.

15. **Swirled** – moved around and around quickly, or to make something do this  
The paper boat **swirled** in the water before it drowned.
16. **Mortar** – material used for joining bricks together  
They used **mortar** to make sure their house was sturdy.
17. **Survive** – remained alive  
I am so happy she **survived** the storm.
18. **Velocity** – a measure of how fast something moves in a particular direction  
The high **velocity** of a cyclone can cause a lot of damage.
19. **Terror** – the feeling of being very frightened  
The math teacher filled the minds of the students with **terror** before the exam.
20. **Crazed** – mad, behaving in a dangerous and uncontrolled way  
The **crazed** bull ran through the fields destroying the crops.
21. **Destruction** – the act of destroying  
The **destruction** caused by the cyclone left many dead in the village.
22. **Wrought** – brought about  
The cyclone **wrought** great damage and destroyed the homes of many villagers.
23. **Cyclone** – a violent tropical storm / tornado  
Coastal areas are prone to **cyclones**.
24. **Surge** – a strong forward movement, or rush, or sweep  
The crowd **surged** forward to see the famous actor.
25. **Reduced** – became less or made less  
The landlord has **reduced** the rent of the flat.
26. **Refuge** – shelter, protection  
They took **refuge** in the school after the storm destroyed their house.
27. **Glimpse** – to see something for a very short time  
We only got a **glimpse** of the Prime Minister from the balcony of our house.
28. **Raging** – violent, angry  
News of the **raging** fire in the market made the headlines.

29. **Fractured** – a break or state of being broken  
Their relationship was permanently **fractured** after the fight.
30. **Bloated** – swollen or puffed up  
**Bloated** and decomposing corpses piled up, one on top of the other after the war.
31. **Carcasses** – dead bodies of animals  
The decomposing **carcasses** smelt horrible, making it hard to breathe.
32. **Corpses** – dead bodies  
The **corpses** were carried away to a mass grave.
33. **Disguise** – to change appearance or cover up the truth  
She came up with a very clever **disguise** for the fancy dress party.
34. **Tender** – loving, gentle; soft and easy to cut  
The woman picked up the orphaned child very **tenderly**.
35. **Trapped** – to be caught  
We got **trapped** in the heavy rainfall on our way back.
36. **Starving** – suffering from severe hunger  
The animals were **starving** by the time they were found.
37. **Several** – more than two but less than many  
There were **several** children standing at the bus stop.
38. **Huddled** – to gather or crowd together closely  
They **huddled** closely together before the game began.
39. **Froze** – hardened into ice or felt very cold  
The homeless children **froze** in the bitter, cold winter.
40. **Bereaved** – lost a close relation or friend through his/ her death  
Friends helped the **bereaved** wife feel less lonely.
41. **Ceased** – stopped  
They **ceased** being partners after the fight.
42. **Recede** – to become further and further away  
Even painful memories **recede** after some time.
43. **Determined** – decided, or settled, or resolved  
She was **determined** to attain her goal despite all the difficulties.

44. **Situation** – condition or place  
The **situation** was so dangerous that she had no choice but to go home.
45. **Dangerous** – risky or unsafe  
The situation was extremely **dangerous**, so she needed to be extra careful.
46. **Pleaded** – begged, asked for something in an emotional way  
She **pleaded** with her daughter to finish her homework.
47. **Equipped** – to provide with  
He made sure his daughter was fully **equipped** with clothes and books before she left for college.
48. **Sturdy** – strong  
They built a **sturdy** house, so it wouldn't get damaged in the monsoons.
49. **Expedition** – a journey for a specific reason  
Everyone gave money to help him on his **expedition**.
50. **Swollen** – bloated, or inflated, or puffy  
Her foot was **swollen** after the fall.
51. **Journey** – travel from one place to another  
They both set off on their **journey** together.
52. **Constantly** – not changing/ regularly  
She is **constantly** crying in pain.
53. **Locate** – to find  
We were unable to **locate** the farm.
54. **Shallow** – not deep  
The children swam in the **shallow** end of the pool.
55. **Waist** – middle part of the human body, above the stomach  
They went **waist** deep into the sea.
56. **Progress** – growth, development; moving towards a goal  
Her **progress** impressed her teacher greatly.
57. **Relieved** – free from anxiety, pain or fear  
She was **relieved** to see her daughter unhurt.
58. **Waded** – walk in water  
They **waded** through the water to get to their school.

59. **Macabre** – horrible, ghastly  
The play was so **macabre** that the audience was scared.
60. **Catastrophe** – a sudden and widespread disaster  
The government blamed the **catastrophe** on the carelessness of the people.
61. **Eventually** – finally, ultimately  
**Eventually**, they will find a way out of this mess.
62. **Remnants** – small remaining quantities  
The **remnants** of the feast were enjoyed by the stray dogs.
63. **Belongings** – goods, or property, or things, or something that belongs  
They advise you to take care of your **belongings** in the busy marketplace.
64. **Mangled** – badly crushed or damaged  
His **mangled** body was discovered in the morning by passers-by.
65. **Twisted** – to wind or intertwine  
She **twisted** the wires tightly around each other.
66. **Visible** – that can be seen  
She was **visible** from a distance.
67. **Shelter** – something protects you from bad weather or danger  
She found **shelter** from the rain under the flyover.
68. **Maternal** – having the qualities of a mother / pertaining to mother  
Her **maternal** aunt brought her lots of gifts for her birthday.
69. **Outstretched** – to stretch or to extend  
She stood there with **outstretched** arms to welcome her daughter back home.
70. **Brimming** – to be full to the rim or edge  
She was **brimming** with joy when her daughter won the cup.
71. **Miracle** – a wonder or marvel; considered as a work of God  
The fact that he survived the accident was an absolute **miracle**.
72. **Extended** – made something bigger or longer  
I have a lot of members of my **extended** family living abroad.

73. **Anxiously** – worriedly  
She **anxiously** looked everywhere for her phone.
74. **Scanned** – examined  
She **scanned** the room anxiously looking for her friend in the crowd.
75. **Motley** – consisting of many different types that do not appear to go together  
A **motley** collection of people gathered at the scene of protest.
76. **Battered** – to beat continuously or hard, or to damage by beating  
We **battered** the door with rods in order to break it down.
77. **Desperate** – very serious or bad; very great or extreme  
He was in a **desperate** state by the time he reached the shelter.
78. **Grief** – great sadness  
She was overcome with **grief** at the loss of her husband.
79. **Tumult** – uproar of a disorderly crowd; confusion  
The police had to be called to calm the **tumult** caused by the protestors.
80. **Organised** – to make arrangements for something to happen  
She **organised** them in groups of five to make sure the work got done on time.
81. **Pressurise** – to strongly persuade someone to do something they do not want to  
His friends are trying to **pressurise** him into going for a holiday with them.
82. **Merchant** – store keeper  
The **merchant** kept the goods locked up even when there was a shortage, and people were starving.
83. **Delegation** – a person or group chosen to represent another or others  
The Government sent a **delegation** to the village to assess the damage caused by the cyclone.
84. **Succeeded** – to achieve something that you have been aiming for  
They **succeeded** in cleaning the streets before the President's visit.
85. **Triumphantly** – rejoicing over success or victory  
The Indian team **triumphantly** ran a victory lap around the grounds.
86. **Rotting** – decaying or spoiling  
The vegetables were **rotting** in the heat.

87. **Reluctant** – unwilling  
They were **reluctant** to join the protest.
88. **Bellies** – stomachs  
The children kept crying as their **bellies** were empty.
89. **Volunteers** – persons who performs a service willingly, or without pay  
The **volunteers** worked hard so the NGO wouldn't shut down.
90. **Filth** – dirt  
There was so much **filth** on the streets after the festival.
91. **Urine** – waste product excreted by the kidneys  
There was a horrible smell of **urine** in the air.
92. **Vomit** – to eject from the stomach through the mouth  
He has a bad case of food poisoning and that's why he was **vomiting** all night.
93. **Utensils** – vessels used in the kitchen  
Every night she washed the **utensils** to help her tired mother.
94. **Deputed** – appointed, assigned  
She was **deputed** as the government's representative in her village.
95. **Communicate** – exchange knowledge, information, feelings or thoughts  
For a successful relationship, it is very important to **communicate** with each other.
96. **Airdrop** – to drop from an aircraft  
They had to **airdrop** supplies to the flooded areas.
97. **Orphaned** – a child whose parents have both died  
Many children were left **orphaned** after the cyclone hit the town.
98. **Polythene** – plastic  
Even though there is a ban on **polythene** bags, people still use them.
99. **Mobilized** – to organize or prepare something, such as a group of people, for a purpose  
The army was **mobilized** when it was feared that there would be a terrorist attack.

- 100. Secure** – to get something, sometimes with difficulty; also to be safe  
We tried to **secure** a loan for the farmer at a low interest rate.
- 101. Recognised** – knew someone or something because you had seen or heard him or her or experienced it before  
She could be **recognised** from a distance because of her red hair.
- 102. Sinking** – moving down  
They could do nothing to save the ship from **sinking**.
- 103. Persuade** – to make someone do or believe something by giving them a good reason to do it or by talking to that person and making them believe it  
She was **persuaded** to marry the rich landowner's son.
- 104. Initial** – first  
The **initial** reports from the scene of fire were very scary.
- 105. Institutions** – organisations or establishments  
Special **institutions** have been set up around the country to provide free education for the poor and deserving.
- 106. Resisted** – opposed, stood against  
They **resisted** arrest because they said they were innocent.
- 107. Stigma** – mark of social disgrace  
In the olden days a widow carried a social **stigma**.
- 108. Loneliness** – feeling of being alone  
**Loneliness** is a big problem for old people.
- 109. Community** – a group sharing common interests or characteristics  
It is very important to be in touch with one's **community**.
- 110. Foster** – to bring up, or raise, or encourage  
It is very good to **foster** orphaned children.
- 111. Wounded** – hurt, injured  
He was badly **wounded** in battle.
- 112. Spirit** – a way of thinking, feeling or behaving  
Team **spirit** is very important in cricket matches.
- 113. Healed** – restored to health / made healthy  
She was finally **healed** after going to the doctor for several weeks.

**114. Handsome** – good-looking  
He has grown up to be a very **handsome** man.

**115. Youthful** – young  
He is a **youthful** and hard- working man.

#### 4. Questions

1. **What havoc has the super cyclone wreaked in the life of the people of Orissa?**
2. **How has Prashant, a teenager, been able to help the people of his village?**
3. **How have the people of the community helped one another? What role do the women of Kalikuda play during these days?**
4. **Why do Prashant and other volunteers resist the plan to set up institutions for orphans and widows? What alternatives do they consider?**
5. **Do you think Prashant is a good leader? Do you think young people can get together to help people during natural calamities?**

#### 5. Talk About It

Talk about the preparedness of the community for a natural disaster.  
(You can talk about evacuation plans and rehabilitation; permanent safe shelters; warning systems; relief efforts; building materials to withstand cyclone/ flood/ earthquake, i.e. safe housing; peoples' organisation of their own rescue; the survival instinct, etc.)

#### 6. Suggested Reading

- 'A Home on the Street' by Harsh Mander
- 'Paying for His Tea' by Harsh Mander
- *Eton Munda Won the Battle* by Mahasweta Devi