



Pushing the Limits of Community Suggested Reading and Discussion Questions

Through this theme, you'll explore the importance of community in the face of large-scale challenges like natural disasters, pandemics, and climate change. As individuals, how vulnerable are we against these dangers? Chances are, we stand a better chance of surviving as a unified force. So people are coming together, maximizing their capabilities as a community to – literally – weather the storm.

Isaac's Storm: A Man, a Time, and the Deadliest Hurricane in History

Erik Larsen, Nonfiction. “September 8, 1900, began innocently in the seaside town of Galveston, Texas. Even Isaac Cline, resident meteorologist for the U.S. Weather Bureau failed to grasp the true meaning of the strange deep-sea swells and peculiar winds that greeted the city that morning. Mere hours later, Galveston found itself submerged in a monster hurricane that completely destroyed the town and killed over six thousand people in what remains the greatest natural disaster in American history--and Isaac Cline found himself the victim of a devastating personal tragedy.” *amazon.com*

- Throughout the novel, several of the characters refer to the past, citing some variation of “It wasn’t always like this.” Does there seem to be any benefit to reflecting on the past or does looking back hinder the characters in some way?
- Given the tools and knowledge the U.S. Weather Service had in 1900, could the Galveston disaster have been prevented? Larsen himself, in an interview says the book is ‘so much about attitude.’ What does he mean?
- Why were Isaac Cline’s warnings so hesitant, as the barometer continued to drop and the storm raced toward the City of Galveston?
- A reviewer in the *New Statesman* said the book had ‘just enough science.’ Do you agree? What parts of the science were new or surprising to you?
- Consider Hurricane Katrina. Are we better prepared for storms and their impact today? Does awareness of potential disaster translate into a different response now as compared to then?
- After a disaster like this, how might you use “old school” technologies or approaches to help solve problems? What about newer, digital technologies? Which are the most helpful in a situation like this?



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