In this beautiful short story, Ann Tashi Slater will take you on an unforgettable journey. The story takes place in Tokyo, Japan, shortly after the earthquake and tsunami of 2011. You will meet Katie, the protagonist, who is trying to come to terms with what has happened. Thousands are dead. Entire towns have been destroyed. Dangerous radiation is leaking from power plants.

But the disaster hasn’t only torn apart Katie’s country; it’s also torn apart her family. Her parents are behaving strangely, and she worries they will split up. Katie feels alone and isolated. She feels no joy in the things she once did, like hanging out with her friend Hana or running track. She wonders if life will ever be the same. But as she will soon discover, her family is much stronger than she realized.
Close-Reading Questions
“Aftershocks”

1. What do you think Katie means? (inference, page 21)

2. Why might Katie not feel like going for a run? (character, page 21)

3. Why is Kaite’s mom cleaning so much? (inference, page 23)

4. What does this line help you understand? What emotions does it bring up, and why? (imagery, page 23)

5. Explain the symbolism of the earthquake breaking the glass? (symbolism, page 23)
6. Why might Katie bring up continental drift theory at this moment? (inference, page 25)

7. Put this idea in your own words. Then explain how Katie’s thoughts about life’s challenges have changed. (character, page 25)

8. Why is Katie so excited that her mom’s desk is messy? (character, page 25)
Critical-Thinking Questions

“Aftershocks”

1. Why do you think the earthquake had a negative effect on Katie’s parents’ relationship?

2. Do you think Katie and her parents became stronger or grew in some way as a result of the earthquake?
Preparing to Write: “Aftershocks”

**Directions:** Answer the questions below to analyze the meaning of the title “Aftershocks.” The information will help you respond to the writing prompt on page 25. We filled in some information for you.

**The literal meaning of a word or phrase is its original, basic meaning.**

**The figurative meaning of a word or phrase is a more imaginative, metaphorical meaning for that word or phrase.**

For example:

The literal meaning of “closing the door” is—well, closing the door. Used figuratively, “closing the door” can mean stopping or ending something, as in, “Frank is closing the door on the conversation. He doesn’t want to talk anymore.”

**Literally, aftershocks are small earthquakes that follow a major earthquake in the same area. As time passes, aftershocks become less and less frequent, but they can go on for weeks, months, or even years, depending on the size of the original earthquake.**

1. **What are the literal aftershocks that Katie experiences in the story?**

   The literal aftershocks that Katie experiences in the story are the small earthquakes that occur after the large earthquake and tsunami that hit Japan on March 11.

2. **Write down at least two quotes from the story that refer to literal aftershocks.**

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   *Quote 1:*
   
   *Quote 2:*

**Figuratively, aftershocks are the results or consequences of a traumatic or distressing event.**

3. **What are the figurative aftershocks that Katie events in the story?**

4. **Write down at least two quotes from the story that refer to the figurative aftershocks that Katie experiences.**

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Figuratively, aftershocks are the results or consequences of a traumatic or distressing event.

3. What are the figurative aftershocks that Katie experiences in the story?

4. Write down at least two quotes from the story that refer to the figurative aftershocks that Katie experiences.

• “Since the quake they fight all the time and never make up. They’re two galaxies speeding away from each other in deep space.” (p. 21)
"Aftershocks"
Character Thinking Tool

The questions in this activity are about the character of

Katie

1. In the introduction, Katie says, “. . . and yes, we were here for the big one on March 11. I think we survived it, though I can’t say for sure.” What does she mean?

2. A. After the earthquake, how does checking Facebook make Katie feel? Why do you think this is so?

B. Does using social media ever make you feel this way? Explain.
3. How does Katie’s parents’ arguing affect her? How do you know?

4. Analyze Katie’s dream (page 23). What does it reveal about what’s on Katie’s mind?

5. When Katie talks to Ms. Belsky about tectonic plates, she says “But what I don’t get is why the world has to be so sketchy. Couldn’t we manage without fault lines?” What does she mean?

6. Consider how Katie describes the veranda, shoji screens, and sounds outside on pages 22-23. How do her descriptions reflect her emotions?

7. What do you think prompts Katie to finally go on a run? What changes do you begin to see in her as she runs?
Fiction Quiz

Directions: Read “Aftershocks.” Then answer the questions below.

1. On page 22, Katie’s dad says they shouldn’t leave Tokyo without her mom. Then Katie says that the ramen she is eating “is heavy and oily” in her stomach. You can infer that Katie feels
   A relieved to hear they aren’t leaving her mom.
   B very worried about her parents’ relationship.
   C happy to be having dinner with her dad.
   D too full.

2. What is the significance of Paris in the story?
   A It is where Katie’s family always goes on vacation.
   B It’s a safe place Katie’s family can evacuate to if they must.
   C It is where Katie’s mom is from.
   D Katie felt her family was happy and safe there.

3. How does the setting contribute to the mood?
   Choose TWO answers.
   A The threat of aftershocks and exposure to radiation create an ominous mood.
   B The cherry blossoms create a mood of peace and tranquility.
   C The cleanliness of Katie’s home creates a hopeful mood.
   D The empty streets and cold, rainy weather in Tokyo create a gloomy mood.

4. Katie’s decision to go running signifies
   A a desire to escape her troubles.
   B her determination to win the track meet.
   C a change in Katie’s perspective on getting through difficult times.
   D that the threat of aftershocks is over.

5. Which line suggests that Katie’s perspective has changed?
   A “Fat drops of rain splatter against the window then trickle down the glass in a hundred rivers.” (p. 22)
   B “The blooms on the jasmine vines along the veranda railing look blue and cold in the twilight.” (p. 22)
   C “The leaves and branches are all tangled up in a design so complicated it’s exhausting.” (p. 23)
   D “Maybe, just maybe, the universe isn’t designed so badly after all.” (p. 25)

6. Which statement expresses a theme of the story?
   A Things aren’t always what they seem.
   B There is danger in blindly following tradition.
   C There are some things in life we can’t control.
   D Always stand up for what you believe in.

Constructed-Response Questions

Directions: Write your answers in a well-organized response.

7. Compare and contrast how Katie, her mom, and her dad cope with the disaster. Use text evidence to support your ideas.

8. How does Katie change over the course of the story? Support your answer with text evidence.
Fiction Quiz

Directions: Read “Aftershocks.” Then answer the questions below.

1. After the earthquake, checking Facebook makes Katie feel
   A) comforted.
   B) anxious.
   C) cheerful.
   D) bored.

2. Which of the following represents happiness for Katie?
   A) cherry blossoms
   B) fault lines
   C) lattes
   D) Paris

3. Which words BEST describe the mood throughout most of the story? Choose TWO answers.
   A) gloomy: causing feelings of sadness or distress
   B) serene: calm and untroubled
   C) lighthearted: amusing and entertaining
   D) ominous: giving the impression that something bad or unpleasant might happen

4. After which event does Katie begin to feel hopeful that she will get through this difficult time?
   A) returning to school
   B) having coffee with Hana at Starbucks
   C) going for a run
   D) talking to a therapist

5. Which line suggests that Katie is seeing the world in a more positive light?
   A) “Fat drops of rain splatter against the window then trickle down the glass in a hundred rivers.” (p. 22)
   B) “The blooms on the jasmine vines along the veranda railing look blue and cold in the twilight.” (p. 22)
   C) “The leaves and branches are all tangled up in a design so complicated it’s exhausting.” (p. 23)
   D) “Maybe, just maybe, the universe isn’t designed so badly after all.” (p. 25)

6. What do Katie and her parents learn to accept in the story?
   A) the loss of love
   B) the destruction of their home
   C) some things are out of their control
   D) division in their community

Constructed-Response Questions

Directions: Write your answers in a well-organized response.

7. Choose either Katie, Katie’s mom, or Katie’s dad and explain how that character copes with the disaster.

8. How does Katie change over the course of the story? Support your answer with text evidence.
Making Inferences

Making an inference means using clues from the text to figure out something the author doesn’t tell you directly.

**Directions:** Answer the questions or follow the directions that appear in italics to fill in the chart. We completed the first row for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clues</th>
<th>Inference</th>
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| **1.** On page 24, Katie says to her mom:  
“The therapist told me that I shouldn’t keep things inside. That I should tell people what’s going on.” | **Why might Katie share this bit of the therapist’s advice with her mom?**  
Katie wants her mom to stop keeping their family troubles inside and tell her what is going on with her and her dad. |
| **2.** *Find two lines in the story that support the inference on the right.* | **Life in Tokyo is different after the earthquake.** |
| **3.** On page 23, Katie says:  
“In the dream, I was watching the wave crest over me and I could feel the tug of the ocean, the salt spray on my face. I heard the ocean breathing, like when you hold a shell to your ear, and it sounded like the sighs of all those people in Tohoku as their bodies were washed out to sea and their spirits went right to heaven.” | **What can you infer about how Katie is feeling based on this dream?** |
### Clues

**4. On pages 23 and 24, Katie says:**

“Last night I dreamed of a big wave, like this sculpture I saw a couple of years ago at the Rodin Museum when we took a trip to Paris for my parents’ 15th anniversary.”

“Back upstairs, I take out a photo of me and my parents in Paris. I stuck it under my mattress when the glass in the frame broke in the earthquake.”

“. . . a row of sharpened pencils, a stapler, a ruler, a silver Eiffel Tower paperweight she bought from a souvenir shop in Paris.”

**Inference**

*Why does Katie mention Paris so often? What do you think it represents to her?*

**5. On page 25, Katie says:**

“And now I notice there are all these leaves on the veranda—my mom didn’t sweep today—and I realize something was different about her study tonight. The desk was a mess. A wonderful mess! Especially with my dad’s family evacuation plan sitting right in the middle of it all.”

**Inference**

*What is Katie excited about in this moment?*
Aftershocks Contest

In a short essay, analyze the title of the story, which has both a literal and a figurative meaning. Support your analysis with text evidence. Five winners will each get *Up From the Sea* by Leza Lowitz.

Entries will be judged on:

- a clearly stated central idea
- use of supporting text evidence
- good organization and transitions
- grammar, spelling, and punctuation

My name: ________________________

My home phone number: __________ My grade: ________________________

My teacher’s name: __________________ My teacher’s e-mail: ________________

School name: ____________________________

School address: __________________________

City: __________________ State: __________ ZIP: __________

School phone number: __________________

My parent or legal guardian consents to my participation in this contest.

Parent’s or legal guardian’s signature: __________________________

Include this form with your entry and send both to: scopemag@scholastic.com or mail them to: Aftershocks Contest, c/o Scope, P.O. Box 712, New York, NY 10013-0712

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY March 20, 2020!