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6 About 3000 years ago ...

A small band of hunters are returning to their village along the coast path. They are startled by a sudden loud, thundering noise.

8 A hundred years ago ...

The village has grown over the years and has now become a prosperous city with a busy sea port.

10 A few years ago ...

Cars and buses take people to work along the city streets as usual, but today there is a strange feeling in the air.

12 Later that day ...

With a deafening roar, the whole city starts to shake violently.

14 Seconds later ...

Inside an apartment, a family find themselves being hurled around their kitchen.

16 At the same time ...

To the alarm of the terrified onlookers, the land itself rises and falls like the surface of the ocean.



18 A few minutes later ...

In a gigantic landslide, tonnes of boulders and soil, together with trees and shrubs, start to surge downhill.

20 Twenty minutes later ...

Listening out for shouts of help, rescuers lift away the rubble. The survivors are hauled to safety.

22 A few minutes later ...

On the sea front, people suddenly notice a massive wave out to sea rapidly moving towards them.

24 Several hours later ...

Fire has broken out in the city. The flames quickly fan out among the stricken city's buildings.

26 The next morning ...

Dawn breaks on a scene of utter devastation. Many buildings are damaged or totally destroyed.

28 Today, a few years later

A party of schoolchildren are visiting a museum. The exhibits tell people all about earthquakes.

30 Glossary

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Introduction

Imagine you are walking along a street in Japan. Suddenly, there is great roar and the ground starts to shake violently beneath your feet. You are in great danger! For the next few minutes, many things happen around you, following on one after the other with frightening speed ...

The story told in this book is like a journey. It is not a journey you can make by plane, car or ship. In fact, you don't have to go anywhere at all. You are about to travel through *time*. With each turn of the page, the time moves forward a few seconds, hours or even years. Each new time—each stop on your journey—is like a chapter in the story. The first violent shaking, the toppling of buildings, the cracks opening up in the ground, the collapse of bridges, the landslide, the vast waves engulfing the shore, the fires sweeping through the devastated city, the rescue of survivors from beneath the rubble, the building of a museum years later to record the events of those fateful moments—all tell the story of the great earthquake.



Look out for the dog. It is a shikoku, a Japanese breed. It appears in all of the illustrations, although it is not always easy to spot.

Use this thumb index to travel through time! Just find the page you want to see and flip it open. This way you can make a quick comparison between one scene and another, even though some show events that took place many years apart. A little black arrow on the page points to the time of the scene illustrated on that page.

The next morning ...

Dawn breaks on a scene of utter devastation. A reporter flies over the city in a helicopter, relaying to his shocked

radio listeners what he can see below. Many buildings are damaged or totally destroyed. Large sections of the elevated roadway have collapsed. Fire and flooding have ravaged much of the city.

But the story is not wholly gloomy. Many buildings, specially built to withstand earthquakes, have remained undamaged. They include a number of old buildings, with their wooden or

paper walls and thatched roofs. And, despite the great ferocity of the quake, most of the city's inhabitants escaped harm. They have spent the night sleeping in tents. For the next few weeks, they will be without electricity and running water, but at least they are alive.



The Transamerica Building in San Francisco is specially designed to withstand even the most severe earthquakes. It is shaped like a slender pyramid and, thanks to special steel supports, its top is strong enough to sway 12 m and still remain intact. In 1989 an earthquake shook California. Its epicentre was 100 km south of San Francisco. Although quite severe, the quake damaged few buildings in San Francisco. Most had been built to resist earthquake shaking.



1000 BC



100 years ago



A few years ago



Later that day



Seconds later



At the same time



A few minutes later



20 minutes later



A few minutes later



Several hours later



The next morning