



# *The Big Wave Study Guide*

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*For the novel by  
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## Synopsis

Kino is a young Japanese boy who lives on a farm high on a mountainside. His best friend, Jiya, lives below in the fishing village at the seashore. Life is filled with hard work and fun moments with his friend. Then the unthinkable happens, and a great tsunami wave changes their lives forever. Jiya's family and village are destroyed, and it takes Jiya many years to overcome his loss and learn that life is stronger than death, we are brave because we must be, and there is much in this life that is wonderful.

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8. Occasionally, Kino got to go fishing with Jiya and Jiya's father. How does Kino describe the experience?

A *simile* is a figure of speech used to describe something through comparison. A simile uses words such as *like* or *as* to indicate that a comparison is taking place. (For example: The carpet was green *like* moss.) Which part of Kino's description is a simile?

### **Thinking About the Story:**

9. Kino would like to stay overnight on the island, but Jiya is never willing. Why?
10. *Personification* is a figure of speech in which an author attributes human qualities to an object, an animal, or an idea; in other words, the author makes something act like a person. Examine Jiya's description of the "old ocean god" and Jiya's idea of why the sea moves and storms. How does Jiya personify the ocean?
11. When they swim back from the island, Jiya's father is waiting. What about this makes Kino wonder?

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15. Read Psalm 23, John 14:1–6, and Romans 8:38–39. What do these verses tell us? Why, then, as Christians, should we not fear death?
  
16. Both Jiya and his father watch the sea anxiously. What does it mean to be anxious? Read Matthew 6:25–34. What do these verses teach us? How would these verses help you or someone else to enjoy life?

### **Optional Activities:**

1. Weave, sew, knit, or crochet a small bag to carry pebbles and special things in like Jiya and Kino did.
  
2. Keep a goldfish or a beta fish as a pet. Your local pet store will have many small bowls and rocks and fish to choose from. Remember to have your parents' permission and to care for your pet daily.
  
3. As a science project, figure out why the fish in the cave glittered. To start, look up and research phosphorescence, luminescence, and bioluminescence.

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people climbing the path up the mountain to safety. Jiya loses his entire family.

7. His father tells him they will not talk, they will give Jiya warm food and rest, they will help him feel he still has a home. They will also tell him that he is the second son the father always wanted.

8. Jiya feels asleep inside and very, very tired. He is unable to think.

*Thinking About the Story:*

9. Fear makes a man weak. Your hands tremble, your feet falter, and your brain cannot tell hands and feet what to do. Opinions will vary.

10. The fathers hoped the wave wouldn't come and that they could save their boats and their livelihood. The family stayed with the fathers because they did not want to be separated.

11. 1) Crying all the time—grief, 2) Crying part of the time, 3) Sitting sad and quiet, 4) Becoming hungry again, 5) Crying only at night, 6) Thinking again, 7) Accepting their death, 8) Weeping no more.

12. Answers may vary, but may mention letting Jiya cry, not making him speak, doing their own work, and living as they always do.

13. a. P, b. S, c. I, d. S, e. P or I, f. I, g. I or S, h. P, i. P, j. P, k. P.

*Dig Deeper:*

14. What they believe: The gods leave man to take care of himself. They test us to see how able we are to save ourselves. What the Bible teaches: The Bible teaches us that the Lord is always with us, nothing can separate us from the love of God and Jesus, we may be tested by circumstances so our faith may grow, but God never tempts us to do wrong or sin. Every good gift is from God.

15. Answers will vary. Kino's father seems to be very wise about how to help Jiya. He does not try to make Jiya act like he is happy when he is not—he is tender and loving toward Jiya. He lets Jiya heal in his heart and his mind and gives him the love of his family.

16. Personal answers will vary.

### *Section Three*

*Vocabulary:*

1. tenderly: considerately, protectively, gently, lovingly; 2. sturdily: resolutely, firmly, vigorously or robustly; 3. persuade: convincing someone to do something or think a certain way by arguing or reasoning with them; 4. stern: hard or severe in manner or character; appearing grim, gloomy, or forbidding; firm or unyielding; 5. delicate: very fine or dainty, frail, easily broken or damaged; 6. scholar: a learned person, a specialist in knowledge

*Questions:*

1. His father tells him that life is stronger than death.

2. The Old Gentleman comes to visit. Uchiyama is Kino's father.

3. Old Gentleman wants to make Jiya his own son, to adopt him.

4. His father tells him to not be so selfish and to allow Jiya to make his own choice about where to live.

5. Kino believes that Jiya will choose to go away.

6. Kino's father tells Jiya that he did not cry before now because he was not fully alive, but today he is beginning to live again. It is now good to let the tears flow.

7. He tells Jiya to see the inside of the castle and all Old Gentleman has to offer before Jiya decides.

8. Setsu comforts him by hugging him and he gets comfort from seeing her happy face.

*Think About the Story:*

9. Answers will vary.

10. Answers will vary, but should mention the money and opportunities that Jiya would have. He could attend a fine school and have fine clothes. It would be for his "own good." Personal answers will vary.

11. Answers may vary, but should mention some of the following: love, family, the friendship of Kino and Setsu, a brother, sister, and mother.

12. Answers may vary, but may mention that Setsu is joyful, fun, loving, and always sees the good in things. She is full of energy.

*Dig Deeper:*

13. Answers will vary.