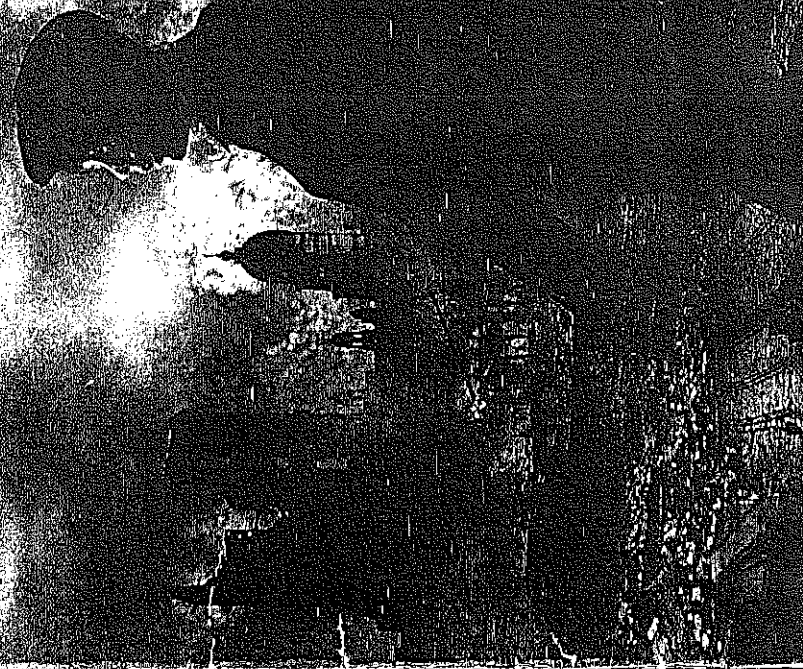


I SURVIVED

THE SAN FRANCISCO
EARTHQUAKE, 1906



by Lauren
Tarshis

SCHOLASTIC

TORY
RSHIS

His entire body began to shake.

But wait.

He wasn't shaking.

The entire house was.

There was a strange sound, like thunder rumbling from deep in the ground.

The trembling got stronger. The noise rose up around them, so loud that it hurt Leo's ears.

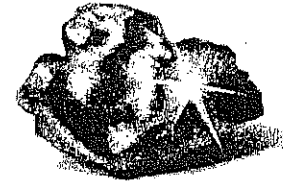
The floor bounced beneath their feet.

"What is it?" Wilkie said.

Morris grabbed Leo by the arm.

"It's an earthquake!" Morris shouted. "We have to get out of here!"

CHAPTER 8



But Leo couldn't run. The shaking was too strong. The floor rose and fell, tossing Leo into the air and dropping him. Plaster rained down from the ceiling and swirling dust filled Leo's nose, eyes, and mouth.

The noise grew louder. It sounded like a hundred freight trains were rushing through the house, their whistles screaming. The shaking stopped for a few seconds, and Leo managed to stand up. He staggered a few steps toward the

front door. But the shaking started up again, stronger than before. Fletch rushed past him. Leo saw him dive through the front doorway.

The rumbling became stronger still. Leo fell again. Now the entire building seemed to be rising and falling, twisting and turning.

Smack! Something hit him on the back, hard.

And then another—*thud*—hit him in the shoulder.

Bricks. They were falling from the ceiling. That huge chimney was collapsing.

Leo had to get out! But he couldn't even stand. He curled himself into a ball, sure he was about to be buried alive.

Suddenly he felt hands gripping his arm. Someone was pulling him forward.

Morris!

They rushed together and leaped toward the door. They landed hard on the sidewalk. And then:

Crack!

Boom!

Bricks poured down, hundreds of them, spilling out the door.

Had they been just a few steps slower, they both would have been buried.

The ground gave one last great shake.

And then it stopped.

The earth was still.

The silence was almost as frightening as the noise had been. Leo lay on his stomach, afraid to move or even to take a breath.

Now what would happen? He'd never been through an earthquake before. He felt sure the shaking would start again.

Morris was right next to him. His face was streaked with dirt and sweat. He had an angry bump just below his eye. Like Leo, he seemed too stunned to speak.

Leo looked in shock at the scene around them.

Was this really the neighborhood he'd been

walking through just minutes before? It looked like a furious giant had marched through the city, jumping over some houses and stomping on others. Bricks, stones, and glass covered the sidewalks and spilled into the street. Some of the rickety houses had collapsed. Others looked like a sneeze would send them crashing down.

People stood on the sidewalks, terrified. Families huddled together. Babies broke the silence with screams. Some people were stretched across the sidewalks, not moving.

Leo looked around at all the crumbled buildings. How many people were trapped? There had to be hundreds buried alive.

Or dead.

Fletch and Wilkie were nowhere to be seen.

Fear rose up in Leo. What would he do now? Where would he go?

It had been hard enough for him to get by on his own before.

How would he survive in this ruined city?

His mind swirled with worry. He imagined himself wandering the ruined streets, scrounging for food like a rat. Not even Grandpop had faced anything like this.

Morris turned to him with a thoughtful expression. "No wonder the dogs were howling," he said.

"What?" Leo said.

"The dogs. Did you hear them howling last night? Animals can sense earthquakes before they happen. They can feel the vibrations of the earth deep underground. I read all about it in a book."

Was Morris serious? Was he really talking about a book as they sat in the middle of an earthquake? This kid was unbelievable!

Leo stood up and shook the plaster from his hair. The ground started to rumble again.

Leo froze, and braced himself.

A crash echoed from down the street — another building caving in.