



Disaster
SURVIVORS

Slammed by a TSUNAMI!!

by Miriam Aronin

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by Miriam Aronin

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A Wall of Water

On December 26, 2004, carpenter Ari Afrizal was helping build a beach house on the Indonesian island of Sumatra. Suddenly, Ari and the other workers felt the earth shake. Scared, the crew moved away from the house and gathered nearby in the sand. Soon a wave about 3 feet (.9 m) high hit the house. A minute later, Ari and the others heard a loud whooshing sound. An even bigger wave was heading directly toward them. The gigantic wall of water hit the house and destroyed it. The water pushed Ari about 1,500 feet (457 m) **inland**, where he slammed into a mango tree.



Waves similar to this one hit the beach where Ari was working.

The second wave that Ari faced was 30 feet (9 m) high.

Ari was able to grab on to the tree. As he looked around, he saw that some of his coworkers were hanging on to other trees. "I thought the world was coming to an end," he said. Ari tried to hold on tightly, but as the huge wave returned to the ocean, he lost his grip. The powerful force of the giant wave, called a **tsunami**, swept Ari out to sea.

Indonesia



Sumatra is the sixth largest island in the world.

Adrift at Sea

Ari survived his first day at sea by grabbing hold of a wooden plank that he found floating in the water and lying on it. “The sun was hot,” said Ari. “I had cuts all over my body.” Still, he said, “I was not prepared to die.”



The next day, a tiny abandoned fishing boat floated near him. Ari climbed aboard. Even though it was leaky, it was better than the plank.

"I began to lose hope," Ari said. "But I was grateful to be alive." A week later, he found an empty raft and climbed onto it.

Ari's raft

While Ari was on the raft, he ate only coconuts that he found floating nearby. He used his teeth and a piece of wood to open the tough shells.

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About the Author

*Miriam Aronin is a writer and editor.
She also enjoys knitting, dancing,
and avoiding natural disasters.*

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Slammed by a TSUNAMI!

Carpenter Ari Afrizal was helping to build a beach house on the Indonesian island of Sumatra. Suddenly, he felt the earth shake. He heard a loud whooshing sound and saw a gigantic wall of water heading directly toward him. The rushing water dragged him 1,500 feet (457 m) inland. Ari grabbed onto a mango tree but lost his grip as the huge wave returned to the ocean and swept him out to sea. For the next two weeks, he remained alive by floating first on a wooden plank, then on a leaky fishing boat, and finally on a raft that he found drifting nearby.

Look inside to find out more about Ari and other survivors of tsunamis who narrowly escaped death. You'll also discover what causes these huge, deadly waves, where they occur, and—most important—how to stay safe if you are ever on the coast when one strikes.

Blitzed by a Blizzard!

Devastated by a Volcano!

Erased by a Tornado!

Hammered by a Heat Wave!

Leveled by an Earthquake!

Mangled by a Hurricane!

Slammed by a Tsunami!

Struck by Lightning!

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