

Hurricane katrina and new orleans



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Answer to question two: Zeitoun chose to stay in New Orleans during hurricane Katrina, like he did during every storm. He saw no need to evacuate, their house was not near any levees and besides, it was three feet above the ground. Since Zeitoun and Kathy ran a painting and contractor company they had many job sites and houses to look after. During the storm their equipment could cause harm to clients' property. Staying in New Orleans, Zeitoun could watch over these properties and over their own house. In that way he could fix any damage immediately, which would prevent major damage to the house.

Near the end of the book Zeitoun realizes that there might be another reason for him to stay in New Orleans: " Was there not some wish that he might honor his brother, his family, his God, by doing all he could ..." (page 264). After the hurricane he is satisfied and even thankful that he had stayed in the city. He felt like he was needed and that his choice to stay in the city had been God's will. But then he gets arrested and feels guilty he stayed in the city. He puts his family through suffering, since they do not know whether he is dead or alive.

Zeitoun admits that he had lost perspective and had expected and hoped too much from staying in New Orleans. Since the evacuation was mandatory the people who stayed in the city, just like Zeitoun, were not allowed to be there. Therefore, you could say that they can only blame themselves for being arrested. However, the police men who arrested those people should have asked them why they stayed in town. There should have been an investigation whether they were plunderers or not. I can imagine that they

would like to do this investigation a few days after the hurricane since the main priority is to rescue people.

Still, this investigation should have taken place within a few days and during those days the men who acted like Zeitoun should have been treated kindly. I think that what happened to Zeitoun is due to the chaos after the hurricane and the lack of one authority that has an overview and bears responsibility for all the helping and security organization that went to New Orleans. Yet, the jailors should have taken their own responsibility and treated Zeitoun and the other prisoners more kindly. Answer to question three: The things that happened to Zeitoun, his arrest and the days in jail, are horrible.

Luckily, he is able to put strength out of his faith and the fact that he knows that Kathy and the children are safe and among friends. Kathy, on the other hand, does not have this certainty about Zeitoun. Before his arrest, she cannot reach him when she wants to, except at noon when Zeitoun is near a phone. Besides, Kathy has access to all kinds of media where terrible things about New Orleans are reported. On the other hand, Abdulrahman is in New Orleans and does not notice these things like crime and murder. After his arrest Zeitoun is not able to answer the phone which worries Kathy.

She does not know where her husband is and after seeing all the terrible things on the television she cannot help suspecting the worst. Besides her own grief she has to deal with that of her children as well. I found this very well written in the passage where she is in the car driving towards Yuko on page 119, due to all the questions her children are asking about their father she just snapped and could not drive any further. Further, she also has to

deal with Zeitoun his family who is calling her and even judging her for not going back to New Orleans to look for him.

This must have given her a lot of stress. Overall, I believe that Kathy is suffering from more Post-Traumatic stress than Zeitoun because she was left in the unknown after Zeitoun's arrest, while he could gain strength out of the fact that Kathy and the kids were safe and could help him get out of jail. This novel has certainly changed the way I see the United States. I was shocked by the way people are treated when they are suspected for terrorism. These people are not even given a chance to explain themselves in an interview, just based on their looks and suspicious behavior they are said to be terrorists.

Further, the passage on page 175 about the crime in the Superdome really spoke to my heart: "... people that have been in the Superdome for five days watching dead bodies, watching hooligan's killings people, raping people. " Before reading this book I could not imagine anything like this happening in the United States, which is such a modern and developed country. Answer to question four: I would say that the emotional loss is the most significant in the book, thereafter the financial and then the physical loss. Zeitoun, Kathy and their kids have no health problems caused by the Hurricane.

During his time in jail Zeitoun suffers from pain in his side but this pain left after his release. Further, the storm and the levees breach caused a lot of dirt in, and damage to, the house. Still, the most important things like photos and the computer were saved by Zeitoun during the storm, since he stored them on the second floor of the house. Therefore, I believe that the physical

loss is the least significant. Zeitoun and Kathy probably had a lot of costs repairing their own house, their office and the number of houses they own for rent. Besides, they had to buy a new van.

However, after the storm Kathy and Zeitoun began to buy houses and made some good transactions. In the book it is told that, they could buy a house in their neighborhood for half the value of the house before the hurricane. Since their business is running well after the hurricane, I do not think the financial loss is the most significant, as I already mentioned, I believe that this is the emotional loss. During Zeitoun's stay in prison the conditions there took a toll on his psyche and he could not think clearly any more. Luckily, there are no signs of psyche problems after his release.

Of course he thinks about his time in jail and how horrible he was treated but the problems for Kathy are far worse. I found it hard to read how the absence of Zeitoun and his treatment had affected her; how she cannot focus on things anymore and feels fearful that something will happen to her family. Due to her lack of sharpness she cannot handle all the paperwork for their business. Further, there was an example in the book of a situation in which Kathy could not understand English any more. Therefore, the emotional loss is the worst.

All material things that got lost can be replaced, financial costs could be paid for due to the well working business they own, but these emotional hurts cannot be easily recovered. Answer to question six: After Hurricane Katrina, Zeitoun wants to rebuild New Orleans. He realizes that it might be easier to tear every building down and start over again, but Zeitoun wants to rebuild

by saving. I agree with him, tearing every building down and start over using clear land results in the loss of historical details. I do not like cities without old buildings, streets with only modern new houses do not tell stories.

It are those old buildings that contribute to the atmosphere of a city. Looking at these buildings, people will realize that the city has survived many disasters, and the residents can gain strength out of that. This belief is very well explained in the book and therefore, I will quote a passage: "... what is building, and rebuilding and rebuilding again, but an act of faith? (...) Who could ever again deny he belonged here? If he needs to restore every home in this city, he will, to prove he is part of this place. " (Page 325). This is also part of the reason why Zeitoun wants to rebuild.

After his release from prison he is even more proud and happy to be free and in his city New Orleans. The city where he was married, where his children were born and which is the place of his dreams. He believes that everything that happened to him was a test of God, he has faith and so he rebuilds. Like the quoted passage said, building is an act of faith. Rebuilding the city, he can make it even better than before the hurricane, therefore he works every day, to rebuild the city and forget about the dark time that passed over the city.

Like is said in the book: " This has been the pattern of his (Zeitoun's) life: ludicrous dreams followed by hours and days and years of work and then a reality surpassing his wildest hopes and expectation. "(Page 325). I think that rebuilding the city and making it even better helps Zeitoun to forget about what happened to him, how bad he was treated during the days after

the storm. Rebuilding the city he can take his mind off these things and focus on moving further, realizing his dreams and overcome the dark days of hurricane Katrina.

I believe that it will also give him the feeling that he is part of the city and that he belongs there, that he is not a terrorist but a hard working American citizen. Answer to question seven: When I encounter an obstacle I will work even harder to overcome it. During my life I have overcome many obstacles, two of them are important to me and really gave me that "touch the rock" feeling Kathy describes in the book. Facing an obstacle, I think about one of these two experiences and I will gain strength out of them. The first obstacle I will briefly describe was a physical one, and I was about eight years old when I faced it.

On a family holiday in France, we were about to see the finish of the "Tour de France", an important cycling contest. This finish was on the top of the Mont Ventoux and I, as the youngest one in the family, was having some trouble getting there. The climb to the top of the mountain cost me a lot of effort. A few hundred meters before the top I did not want to climb any further, my father encouraged me to walk further, and since I did not want to let my family down I did it. I climb all the way to the top of the Mont Ventoux. Standing here made me feel so proud and strong, every time I have a physical obstacle to overcome, I think back at this walk and it reminds me that I can do more than I think if I just push through. The second experience I would like to talk about did not even happen that long ago. It was in my first year of college, that is three years ago. I had an oral exam for one of the hardest courses I have ever had during my college years. I managed to push

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myself to study very hard, for two weeks all I did was study for that one exam and not without results, I got an A.

Every time I think of this exam, it makes me so proud. I know now that I can push myself to work very hard. That I am able to do things that I did not think were possible, getting an A for one of the hardest courses in my study really was a great experience. I think that knowing that I am able to overcome physical or study relate obstacles will help me at Utah State University. I will not stop when facing an obstacle, but I will only work harder to overcome it and get that amazing feeling of pride and happiness.