Extra training

Reading

Task 247

You are going to read an extract about a doctor involved in a hurricane. For questions 1 - 7, choose the answer (1, 2, 3 or 4) which you think fits best according to the text.

Up until recently, life was fairly uneventful. I grew up in the leafy suburbs of Connecticut before heading south to study at the University of Alabama School of Medicine. While there, I fell in love with southern life and, of course, a southern girl! After graduation, we soon got married and headed west where we both took up positions in 'The Hospitality State', Mississippi. We had a nice life there, but the sleepy city of Jackson never quite felt like a 'home'. My wife missed her parents dearly, so we decided to move closer to them in the electrifying and colourful home of jazz. By August 25th 2005, we were unpacked and living in New Orleans where we felt we were meant to be. If only we had known how 'different' and 'new' this experience would be...

Early in the morning on the 29th August, Hurricane Katrina hit Louisiana. Sure, hurricanes are anticipated because they are notorious in the south. Indeed, some even believe you're not a real man until you've lived through a hurricane. But, in reality, nothing could have prepared me for what was about to come. Think of the strongest wind you could possibly imagine, multiply this by ten. Then add downpours of torrential rain, combined with deafening thunder and violent lightning – this could help you imagine the terrifying situation that was before us. Katrina was the new queen of extreme weather conditions and New Orleans was her kingdom.

She tore mercilessly through the city streets, destroying everything that lay in her path. The sheer destructive force of the hurricane blew out the windows of local homes, businesses and hotels. Beds, desks and other furniture could be seen flying out of windows. Catastrophic winds, coupled with violent downpours, eventually succeeded in destroying the city's water levees, resulting in a huge tidal surge. Water crashed into the city with the strength of a tsunami. Under intense pressure, the city's canals burst their banks and within hours New Orleans was a city underwater.

When Katrina moved on, my wife and I left the fragile safety of our basement. We opened the door not to our kitchen, but to a new world. Our house was a shell; my wife broke down in tears while I stood dazed. From our 'house' in the suburbs, we witnessed the chaos the hurricane had unleashed on a once vibrant city. Suddenly it struck me that, although our material possessions were gone, my wife and I were alive. That was the important thing. The city was devastated, and people were injured and helpless; we could feel sorry for ourselves or we could do something.

I immediately sent my wife and her family to Mississippi as I volunteered my services. Within an hour, the local authorities were ready to escort me into the city. *They were joined by National Guard soldiers who took me to the Louisiana Superdome.* As we opened the main doors, we were met with the sight of thousands of sick and injured evacuees.

I was joined by a small but dedicated group of volunteers, including five doctors and nurses. We began by treating the most seriously injured. Injuries varied from concussion (caused by falling debris from damaged buildings) to serious body wounds. Each weather-beaten victim served as living proof that nobody had escaped the wrath of Katrina. The demand for medical care was huge, something I'd never experienced in the comfort of my old clinic. Sometimes we wanted to complain about the unbearable conditions and at times thought of leaving altogether. The possibility of moving to a smaller venue was discussed but it was not realistic because we were committed to helping as many victims as possible. We opted to stay put and worked tirelessly throughout the following weeks, treating diseases related to contaminated water, hypothermia and a host of other illnesses.

Years later, we are still clearing up the mess. The aftermath of the hurricane left a distinctive scar on our city. Some call New Orleans 'the city that people forgot to care about' but I dispute this. Sometimes I think the authorities could have done more to prevent such huge damage and loss of life but people never stopped caring. Many victims chose not to flee. In the face of a natural disaster,

people helped one another, hospitals gave medical supplies, children donated pocket money and the media made public our city's pain. This unity encouraged us to rebuild our lives. Hurricane Katrina was not a defeat for our city but a victory for its community spirit.

1. Why did the writer and his wife leave Mississippi?

1. They wanted to be nearer to family.
2. Mississipi was too boring.
3. They wanted to live in a more exciting city.
4. They wanted to live further south.

2. What does the writer think about the hurricane?

1. He expected it to come anyway.
2. The thought of the hurricane made him scared.
3. He was not expecting something of such force.
4. A real man would be able to cope with it.

3. Why did the city's water levees give way?

1. Because of a tsunami.
2. Because of a tidal surge.
3. Because of pressure from the flooded canals.
4. Because of heavy rain and strong winds.

4. In the fourth paragraph, what does the writer seem to conclude?

1. That the storm has passed and the worse of the damage has been done.
2. That the hurricane has destroyed everything and caused people to lose their possessions.
3. That his house had been destroyed so it was time to start building a new one.
4. That there were others in need of help and he had to do something about it.

5. In the *underlined sentence*, the writer refers to '*they*', who is he referring to?

1. His wife and her family.
2. Local authorities.
3. The National Guard.
4. Local authorities and the National Guard.

6. What did the medical team decide to do?

1. Move to a place with more bearable conditions.
2. To lodge a complaint about the lack of medical care.
3. Remain where they were and continue to help others.
4. To leave due to the excessive demand on their services.

7. What does the writer disagree with?

1. The idea that the government did not do enough to prevent the disaster.
2. The media's coverage of the hurricane.
3. The notion that people did nothing to help following the hurricane.
4. Children having to donate their pocket money.