

DISASTER ALLEY



“Welcome to DISASTER ALLEY!” the announcer said over the loud speakers. Jonah, Logan, and Callie had just stepped into the newly opened section of Real World Adventures, a theme park where kids and adults could pretend to do exciting things....things that some people did in real life. They could pretend to be a firefighter, a race car driver, a fighter pilot, or a crane operator. The possibilities were endless.

In the new section, visitors could experience natural disasters. Thankfully, brothers Jonah and Logan had never been in such a sudden catastrophe, like an earthquake, landslide, or hurricane. Callie, their cousin, had once felt an earthquake, but it wasn't a big one.

“Let's do the earthquake ride first!” Callie said. The brothers agreed. They had always wondered how it would feel to have the ground shaking beneath them.

Turns out, the earthquake “ride” wasn't really a ride. Instead, the attendant led them inside the doorway of a real-looking house. Then, moments later, the floor shook hard! An announcement said, “An earthquake is now happening. Drop and Cover!”

Callie, Logan, and Jonah dashed under the dining table. It was really scary! Finally, the shaking stopped. An announcement said, “The earthquake has ended. Please proceed to the exit at the back door.”

They exited into an exhibit on earthquakes. Logan stopped to study a display on landslides. Here, he found that earthquakes or heavy rains could make rock and dirt move rapidly downhill. A video, playing in the background, showed an entire house flowing downhill during a landslide. What a disaster!

“Now let's do the Mountain Mine Cart!” Jonah said. This one was actually a ride! The roller coaster went up the side of a mountain. It looked just like a real mountain, but it was built by people. Its steep

sides seemed to rise out of the earth's surface. Real World Adventures was filled with realistic landforms like that.

The cart took them slowly up and around the side of the mountain. When they neared the top, they felt heat. They discovered the mountain wasn't just a mountain. It was a volcano! And it was about to erupt!

This fake volcanic eruption didn't actually spew hot lava and gas from its vent, but it seemed real to them. The cart started racing down the mountain with the lava chasing after them. It was quite thrilling! Once near the bottom of the mountain, the cart followed the river into a canyon. The cart did a quick splash in the water as they entered the canyon's deep narrow passage through solid rock. The cliffs on both sides of the canyon showed layers of rock that had been worn away, over time, by the river.

After exiting the Mountain Mine Cart ride, Logan said, "I want to do the dune buggies now!" Jonah and Callie agreed. This ride didn't involve any disaster. It was just for fun! They were called dune buggies because they rode up and over sand dunes! Logan drove his up the highest mound of sand and down the other side. It was so much fun! As Callie chased Logan up the next dune, she wondered if these sand dunes had been made by the wind like the real ones seen in the desert.

Now, it was time to meet their parents at the entrance. A good time was had by all. In fact, it had been a blast. They only hoped the "natural" disasters in Disaster Alley would never be experienced in real life!

Did you know... that when rivers reach a big lake or an ocean, they begin to deposit sediments and other materials? This makes a special triangular landform called a delta.

Focus Words

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| landform | delta | canyon |
| sand dune | landslide | volcanic eruption |
| earthquake | mountain | natural disaster |