



EMERGENCY WEATHER

Zeke has to stay with his aunt and uncle in Lower Hutt after a landslide takes his East Coast home off its foundations. Allie puts her drought-ridden Otago dairy farm out of her mind and catches a plane to the capital city. Stephanie wonders why she's sitting around a table at the Ministry for Resilience – again.

In *Emergency Weather*, three people find themselves in Wellington as the climate crisis crashes into their lives. A giant storm is on its way – what will be left of the city when it's over?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tim Jones is a poet, author and anthologist who lives in Te Whanganui-a-Tara / Wellington. He was awarded the New Zealand Society of Authors Te Puni Kaituhi O Aotearoa Janet Frame Memorial Award for Literature in 2010 and the NZSA Peter & Dianne Beatson Fellowship in 2022. His recent books include poetry collection *New Sea Land* (Mākarō Press, 2016) and climate fiction novella *Where We Land* (The Cuba Press, 2019). His poem 'Restraints' was included in *Ōrongohau | Best New Zealand Poems 2022*. His novel *Emergency Weather* was published by The Cuba Press in October 2023.



PLOT OUTLINE

Emergency Weather follows three characters whose fates intertwine one autumn in the very near future as the climate emergency gets worse. Allie is an Otago farmer whose husband is cracking under the strain of drought and debt. Zeke just wants to play games, but when a major storm hits his family's rural East Coast home, his life is upended. Scientist Stephanie's comfortable life with her partner Miranda is shadowed by her knowledge of approaching doom.

The storm that begins the novel uproots Zeke and his family from their homes. Allie's home is still standing, but when her husband takes his own life, her future is thrown into question. Stephanie has the capacity to act, but she's sunk deep in climate despair.

Zeke ends up in the Hutt, where he meets teenage climate activist Caity. Stephanie's attempt to tell the truth to a Government climate roundtable goes wrong when she tells more of the truth than is politically acceptable. Allie grieves her husband and plots her escape from the farm.

While Stephanie and Miranda escape for a tramping trip that soon turns dangerous, Allie decides to accept her brother-in-law's offer of a break in the big city. Zeke and Caity grow closer in the aftermath of an attempt to expose a climate criminal.

The Minister for Resilience – who is Allie's brother-in-law – decides to have one last try to get buy-in from the big emitters. They choose a venue on Wellington's waterfront – not ideal when two storm systems collide over the city and a monster storm develops. While Stephanie tries to make things happen inside the room, Caity and Zeke's crew of climate protesters arrive to try to disrupt this gathering of climate criminals. Meanwhile, after a holiday romance, it's time for Allie to face a return to the farm – but the storm has other ideas.

As the storm strikes, survival becomes everyone's priority. Can they work together to find safety, or will the climate have the final say?

Emergency Weather is a thrilling novel that puts three people in the path of the climate crisis as it hits Wellington head-on. How will they react? Will they choose to deny, delay, or act? This is a novel of a near future that's rapidly becoming the present.



THEMES AND ISSUES

Climate change

Flooding

Sea-level rise

Tramping

Relationships

Teenage attraction

The natural environment

Politics and protest

Natural disasters and survival

Tourism

Climate activism

Farming and agriculture

BEFORE READING

1. What do the cover design and the title tell you about the story?
2. If a big storm hits your school or your community, what steps would you need to take to survive?
3. In groups, discuss what the five biggest risks that climate change poses to your community. Can you identify any areas in your neighbourhood which have been affected by climate change?
4. In recent years, many young people have taken part in protests calling for more climate action. What do you know about these protests?

CHARACTERS

1. Think of three adjectives to describe Zeke, Stephanie and Allie.
2. Describe at least one challenge faced by Zeke. How does Zeke deal with this challenge and what do you learn about him from this?
3. How does Zeke develop and change during the novel? How does his relationship with Caity affect him?
4. Did your view of Allie change during the novel?
5. Stephanie finds herself in some life and death situations. Does she learn anything from the earlier situations that help her during the climax of the book?
6. Which character do you most identify with, and why?
7. Which character do you admire the most, or dislike most strongly? What is it about the character that makes you feel that way?



8. At the climax of *Emergency Weather*, many of the characters are placed in serious danger. How does their reaction to the danger they're in reveal the characters' strengths and weaknesses?
9. Imagine you are going to adapt part of the novel for a school drama or video. Create a character sketch and costume for one of the main characters based on descriptions in the novel.
10. Choose a character in the novel and write a monologue from their point of view which describes how they feel at the end of the novel. What do they hope for? What scares them most? How do they feel about other characters who matter to them?

LANGUAGE

1. The novel is narrated from the perspectives of three different characters. Why do you think the author chose the points of view of these three characters to tell the story from?
2. What other books or stories do you know of that are told from multiple points of view?
3. Third-person narrative is used in this novel – that is, the narration uses pronouns such as she, he, his, her, they, their. Select a passage from the novel and identify the features of third-person narrative. What are the effects of using third-person narrative?
4. Take the passage you selected in language exercise (3) and rewrite it in first-person narrative, which typically uses pronouns such as I, we, me, my, mine, us, ours. What are the effects of changing the narrative from third person to first person?
5. There are different types of third-person narrative. This novel uses close third-person narrative, where the viewpoint is close to the points of view of the main characters. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this type of narrative?
6. The structure of a narrative often – but not always – is divided into a beginning, middle and end. Does this novel have a beginning, middle and end? If so, what features of the novel help you to know where one section ends and the next begins?
7. How does the final chapter of the novel relate to the overall structure of the novel?
8. How does the author show the passage of time in this novel?
9. In Chapters 12 and 14, what language features – for example, nouns, verbs, adjectives, images, metaphors, similes, sentence structure – are used to convey the wildness of the natural environment and the dangers Stephanie and Miranda are facing?
10. From the title onwards, weather plays an important part in this novel. Find three passages from the novel that describe different types of weather. What words or techniques does the author use to show the reader what it's like to experience this sort of weather?
11. Find a passage in the novel where tension is high. What language features does the author use to build up tension?
12. Find a passage of dialogue in the novel. How does the author show how characters are feeling through the words and sentence structures they use?



ACTIVITIES

1. Search the web for information on the 1968 *Wahine* Storm (Cyclone Giselle), or another major storm to hit Aotearoa, such as Cyclone Giselle or Cyclone Bola. Write down six things that happened during, or as a result of, the storm you chose.
2. Stephanie and Miranda go on a tramping trip in a remote part of the South Island. List ten things you'd pack to take on a tramping trip.
3. Zeke and his whānau survive a landslide that affects their house. Unfortunately, landslides are quite common in Aotearoa. Research a recent New Zealand landslide that affected people, and find out what damage it caused.
4. Allie's first attempt to travel to Wellington is blocked by flooding. Not far from where Allie's farm is located in the novel, the small town of Kelso was abandoned due to persistent flooding. Research why a decision was made to abandon the town. Is the place you live vulnerable to flooding?
5. Dunedin Airport (also known as Momona Airport) and Wellington Airport both feature in the novel. What role do airports, and aviation, play in climate change? Is anything being done to reduce the climate impacts of flying?
6. Allie and Stephanie, two of the main characters in the novel, have very different views of farming, farmers, and dairy farming's role in climate change. What do you think the future of dairy farming is in an era of accelerating climate change?
7. Zeke's older sister Grace thinks that their community will miss out on Government flood relief because many of the people who live there are poor and Māori. Do you think she's right? Why, or why not?
8. There are journeys by foot, car, bus, train, boat and plane in this novel. Write 2–3 paragraphs describing either the best journey or the worst journey you've ever been on.
9. Zeke is a keen gamer, and some of the things he learns while gaming prove useful in real life. What's your favourite game, and have you learned anything useful in real life while playing it?
10. Write a short opinion piece on climate change. The audience for your opinion piece is Minister Matt, Allie's brother-in-law. You are trying to convince him to take urgent climate action. What action do you activate, and how will you convince him to act?
11. Now imagine that you are one of the rangatahi speakers at the film screening in Chapter 17. You ask Minister Matt for one minute of his time to discuss an issue that really matters to you, and he says yes. What will you say in a minute to persuade him?
12. How could your own school, or your community, reduce its greenhouse gas emissions? Write an emissions reduction plan for your school or community.



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 1

1. What does the author do in Chapter 1 to get you engaged in the story?

CHAPTER 2

1. Zeke finds himself in danger in the game he's playing, and then in real life. How does the author show the similarities and differences between the game situation and the real-world situation?
2. This chapter introduces us to Zeke's younger and older sisters. What does the reader learn about each of his sisters in this chapter?

CHAPTER 3

1. The chapter begins with Stephanie and Miranda in a nightclub. How does the author show the difference in the two characters' reactions to being there?
2. Although Stephanie and Derek don't always agree, they are old friends. Make a list of their similarities and differences, as revealed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4

1. The Minister for Resilience, Matt Scott, makes a speech in this chapter, although the reader only 'hears' parts of it. What features of persuasive language does the Minister include in his speech?
2. At the end of the chapter, Zeke waits for and then boards a bus to take him far from home. How does the author use description and dialogue to show Zeke's anxiety about the journey?

CHAPTER 5

1. In this chapter, Stephanie's grief about the future of the planet is tangled up with her feelings about getting old – in contrast to the happiness and activity of those around her. How does the author contrast the external world and Stephanie's inner feelings in this chapter?

CHAPTER 6

1. Allie spends the first part of this chapter trying to write a speech. When you need to write a speech or presentation, what techniques do you use to get started?
2. This chapter is our first introduction to Jacqueline, Allie's mother-in-law, who we see from Allie's point of view. Why do you think Allie doesn't like Jacqueline, and Jacqueline doesn't like Allie?



CHAPTER 7

1. In the part of this chapter before Zeke leaves Naenae, what verbs, nouns and adjectives does the author use to show that Zeke is feeling lonely and out of place?
2. In the conversation between Zeke and the police officer, how does the police officer use language to demonstrate and reinforce his power over Zeke?

CHAPTER 8

1. After she sees that the Taiari Plain is flooded, Allie decides to keep driving in an effort to catch her flight. Based on the information in this chapter and what you know about flooding, should she have kept driving, or should she have turned back sooner?

CHAPTER 9

1. In this chapter, we see Stephanie giving a speech, and hear part of what she says. Use what you know about persuasive speech to rewrite Stephanie's speech and make the same points more effectively.
2. In the discussion after Stephanie's speech, do you think the other participants in the meeting are saying what they really think?

CHAPTER 10

1. Zeke is clearly attracted to Caity as soon as he meets her. On the basis of their interaction in this chapter, what do you think Caity thinks or feels about Zeke?
2. Think about a concert or gig you've been to, or seen video of. Write three sentences describing how you felt before, during and after it.

CHAPTER 11

1. How does the author show that time is passing very slowly for Allie during her visit to Jacqueline's house? List three different ways the author shows this.

CHAPTER 12

1. Based on the description of the tramping trip in this chapter, do you think the author has himself done this trip? List reasons for your answer.
2. Towards the end of the chapter, when Stephanie and Miranda are beginning their descent, what features and descriptions of the environment does the author use to increase the tension?

CHAPTER 13

1. The chapter begins 'New hair, new me.' To what extent, if any, do you think that's true?
2. Write a character description of Jason based on what we actually learn about him in this chapter – as distinct from what Allie feels about him.



CHAPTER 14

1. What do we learn about Miranda from her actions in this chapter?

CHAPTER 15

1. Allie and Jason go to a play, but Allie decides to leave at the interval. What is it about the play that makes Allie want to leave?

CHAPTER 16

1. Zeke compares himself unfavourably to Luke near the start of this chapter. If you had to make a list of Zeke's good qualities to cheer him up, what would you put on that list?
2. Do you think it's (a) fair and (b) a good idea to call out specific individuals for their role in the climate crisis?
3. In your view, why does Caity kiss Zeke?

CHAPTER 17

1. Stephanie's social anxiety strongly affects her during the event at the Beehive theatre. How do the descriptions and dialogue in this scene emphasise her anxiety?
2. 'Like all the best movies, *Rangatahi Rebellion* had a three-act structure.' Based on your experience of watching movies, do you think that's true?
3. At dinner, Stephanie and Miranda overhear Allie complaining about the way farmers are portrayed in *Rangatahi Rebellion*. Do you think it would have been good if Allie and Stephanie interacted in this chapter? Why, or why not?

CHAPTER 18

1. Why do you think Allie is angry with Jason after he tells the story about the woman who ran away from him?

CHAPTER 19

1. What do you learn about the members of Caity's family from this chapter? Write a one-sentence description of each family member.
2. Imagine you have been reading *Hell in a Handbasket* and you have to write a 100-word book report on it. What would you say?

CHAPTER 20

1. If you were Allie, would you have abandoned the SUV and gone off to catch the bus?

CHAPTER 21

1. If Caity had seen who assaulted her, should Zeke have tried to take any action, and if so, what?



CHAPTER 22

1. Do you think Stephanie is right that climate action in New Zealand is 'all too little and all too slow'?
2. Does Stephanie do the right thing by letting the protesters inside the building?
3. Did the ending of this chapter surprise you?

CHAPTER 23

1. If a disaster struck, do you think an airport would be a good place to survive it?

CHAPTER 24

1. In this chapter, how are Zeke's and Stephanie's actions affected by their previous experiences in the novel?
2. This chapter features various characters who've spent much of the novel disagreeing with each other working together to get to safety. Do you think that's a realistic portrayal of how people would behave in a disaster?

CHAPTER 25

1. How does this chapter help bring the story to a resolution? Would it make any difference to your enjoyment of the novel if this chapter was omitted?
2. Write a scene in which Caity meets Zeke and his whānau, six months after the events of this novel conclude.

Class sets of *Emergency Weather* are available from
www.thecubapress.nz or email hello@thecubapress.nz

