

TAKE ON THE DIORAMA CHALLENGE IN YOUR SCHOOL, LIBRARY, OR STORE

IN PREPARATION

Logistics

Set a date, advertise, and get the word out. For a fun attention-catching display, create a diorama of your home/school/library and put it out beside a copy of *My Life in Dioramas* and a sign or flyer explaining the challenge.

Tara Altebrando's Guide to Gathering Materials

The great thing about making dioramas is that there is no limit to what kinds of materials you can use. You could probably make a diorama without having to shop for a single item. If you look around your home, you'll surely find a shoebox, all kinds of paper, cardboard, tape, scissors and miscellaneous odds and ends that could be reimaged.

However, if you do have a budget and are planning a more ambitious diorama project, here are some recommended materials.

- Ez Shape Modelling clay (non drying/ non bake) or Play-Doh
- Scrapbook paper—for wallpaper and sky and anything really...
- Duct tape in cool patterns (like wood floor finish)
- Tin foil
- Wooden craft sticks (they make people-shaped ones!)
- Construction paper/tissue paper
- Small wooden blocks to build objects (sold at craft stores)
- Glue sticks, Scotch tape, and scissors...
- At a store like Michael's, for example, just wander the aisles looking for inspiration. They sell mini picket fences and fake grass/moss in garden section. I found pads of super thin cork board that are handy (like for sandy/dirt) in scrapbooking section. Feathers. Glitter balls. Whatever you like! Also colored pads of canvas in various colors.

Tell everyone to bring a shoebox and you're good to go!

AT THE EVENT

Start with...

A Trailer

If possible, have the kids watch the book trailer for *My Life in Dioramas* which actually shows other children in the process of creating dioramas. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pj00_CV1AbQ

A Reading

Read an arty excerpt from *My Life in Dioramas*! We recommend Chapter 3, Pages 24-25. (See next page for full excerpt)

Craft!

Pass around these images of author-made dioramas of their books for inspiration. (Search for #DioramaChallenge on social media for full sized photos and interviews about their experience.)



Megan Frazer Blakemore created a scene from *The Friendship Riddle*.



Lisa Pliscou and a scene from *Young Jane Austen: Becoming a Writer*.



Here is Anne Ursu's scene from her book, *Breadcrumbs*. (With a special appearance by her curious cat.)

Share!

If you take photos, put them in your next newsletter and share on social media using the hashtag #DioramaChallenge so the author and publisher can see them. Running Press Kids would be happy to retweet/reblog. If you'd like to send photos and feedback directly, send to Valerie Howlett (address below).



MY LIFE IN DIORAMAS by Tara Altebrando

Illus. T.L. Bonaddio

Running Press Kids; Ages 8 - 12

Hardcover; \$14.95 US; \$18.50 CAN

ISBN: 9780762456819; E-book ISBN: 9780762456826

Publication Month: May 2015

MY LIFE IN DIORAMAS (EXCERPT)

by Tara Altebrando

illustrated by T.L. Bonaddio

CHAPTER 3, PAGE 24-25

We were supposed to go around the room and pick a diorama to write a response to. I liked an underwater seascape I saw, with a tiny scuba diver in a pink suit and a school of fish made out of some kind of shiny gold paper hanging by invisible wire. But then I saw it was Megan’s—she was always taking these spectacular vacations—so there was no way I was going to write about that one. I was impressed by the precision of a diorama that showed a family of four on the Walkway Over the Hudson—a pedestrian bridge that linked our town, Highland, with Poughkeepsie—but it was strangely lifeless and it was Sam Fitch’s. If I picked that one to write about Stella would insist I that I really did have a crush on him (I didn’t!) and never let me live it down.

I kept finding myself drawn back to a diorama of a bear and a shark waging battle in a shallow body of water.

I knew it had to be Naveen’s diorama, so I hadn’t even looked around for his name. Just last week, when we’d been sitting on the sidelines together after being eliminated from a game of elimination volleyball in Gym, he’d asked me, “Who do

you think would win in a battle between a bear and a shark?”

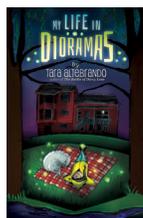
I always tried to give smart answers to Naveen’s questions. “Well, the bear could just grab the shark by the tail and throw it out of the water and that’d be that. But, hmmm. I guess the shark could just bite the bear’s claws off.” Then I decided, “I’m going with shark.”

Naveen had started talking and talking about each animal’s strengths and weaknesses, but maybe there was never a right answer with Naveen. Maybe he just liked to think about things out loud.

As I sat down, I heard Mrs. Nagano say, “But the assignment, Naveen, to be clear, was a scene *from your life*.”

“It is,” he said. “It’s a scene from inside my head, which is very much a part of my life.”

Mrs. Nagano shook her head and smiled and moved on.



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