

Escaping Pompeii

“Boy, wrap those fishes. You’re late again. Third time this week! Do it again and you’re working double,” shouted Mr. Klaudmen, the owner of the fish shop.

“Yes sir”, groaned Marcus as he grabbed the stylus and marked a fish. Marcus Hadrian was a fifteen year old boy, who lived in a city called Pompeii. He had wavy, brunette hair and emerald green eyes that resembled his mother's. Just like his father, he was tall and skinny with freckles sprinkled across his face. He was just like any other boy his age. He loved adventure but he always seemed to find himself in dangerous situations. His adventurous spirit had gotten him into a lot of trouble, mostly with Mr. Klaudmen.

His best friend, however, always helped him out of trouble. Her name was Camilla with long, flowing blonde hair and a structured temperament like his mother. She worked hard, keeping him out of trouble.

After what seemed like forever, Marcus had eventually finished his work and decided to go to Camilla’s house before dinner. He told her about a wagon speeding out of control into a building which caused him to be late.

“I just had to help him, Camilla. I just had to, you know me”, said Marcus.

“That excuse won’t help you finish your work now will it?” asked Camilla sarcastically. “You need to be more responsible and do your work”

Knowing she was right, Marcus ignored her and changed the subject. He told her of an unexplored cave outside of the city he planned to explore and asked her if she would come with him. Knowing what her response would be, he quickly prepared himself for a lecture. She was about to answer when a strange noise that sounded like a “BOOM!” appeared in the sky. They both jumped a little. They waited and listened, but nothing else happened so they went back to their conversation. Little did they know this noise would lead to the biggest change in their lives.

He left Camilla’s house and came home for dinner, still wondering what that noise was about. Marcus ate dinner at a table with his mother and father. He asked them if they had heard the sound, but they had not heard it. He was now truly puzzled.

After dinner, he put on his tunic and went to bed. Just as he was falling off to sleep, he woke up to a noise, familiar to the sound from earlier. Dark, gray smoke filled the air. Marcus, truly concerned, rushed into his parent’s room and warned them of the smoke. Startled, they rushed out of their room to investigate. They told him to stay in the house.

He waited there with anticipation, hoping that this would be some type of adventure. What seemed like ages passed! When his parents did not return, Marcus decided to go outside and investigate. He rushed outside only to find the thrill he had been hoping for.

There, right before his eyes, stood Mount Vesuvius. It was bright red in color and emitting dark, ominous smoke. It looked as if it were shooting fireworks out of the top!

It was then and there that he realized the mountain that they so loved to hike and build houses on was none other than a hot, bubbling volcano erupting and burning the city he so much loved.

“We have to get out of here!”, he thought. He started running toward the gate that led from the city but he stopped in his tracks. He realized that everyone was asleep and had no idea that their beloved city was on fire!

With all his might, Marcus ran the opposite direction towards the center of the city. He was going to warn as many people as he could but first, he had to save his best friend!!!!!!

When he had finally made it to Camilla’s cottage, he knocked on the door and quickly rushed everyone out, but Camilla wasn’t there. Marcus kept searching, intent on finding his best friend. He ran around the city for ten minutes without noticing the smoke getting thicker.

He realized he needed to leave the city, but he could not leave without her. “Where could she be? Where could she be?”

He looked everywhere while the smoke was getting thicker by the minute. Hoping that his parents had already left, Marcus ran past his house. He then realized that Camilla had heard the noise and had left the city a long time ago. She was safe!!!! Then he knew his time was up and the mountain was done waiting to blow. A loud BOOM filled the air. It was now or never to leave the city and never return.

Large sparks flew out of the mountain and landed almost right next to Marcus. He started to run towards the gate. Everyone who was sleeping so peacefully were not so peaceful now. They all left their houses quickly and crowded the gate trying to escape the destruction. Flames were lapping behind them and you could hear glass breaking and booms as houses were falling into shambles.

He could barely make out where he was running to because of the thick, dark smoke. He just kept running, hoping beyond hope that he was running away from the large mountain now spewing the hot lava that was dancing down the sides of the mountain.

He bumped into a few civilians and had fallen a couple times and was still nowhere near the gate. He was desperately trying to escape but suddenly stopped. He had started to think of all those people who could not escape the mountain in time and

was feeling dreadful. He wanted so much to go back and warn them all but he knew that time was not on his side.

The lava was now at the bottom of the mountain, making its way quickly through the city, destroying everything in its path. Despite this danger, he turned back, hoping to help someone. He ran to houses, knocked on doors, yelled down the streets, searching for someone, anyone, to hear him.

The heat was now creeping up on him. There was so much city and so little time. He could not do much, but he did what he could. The heat became unbearable and he finally abandoned his quest. He started running toward the gate as best as he could. It was now or never to leave the burning city. As he made his way to the gate, a group of escaping citizens trampled him and he found himself falling to the ground. His head hit the ground and he saw black enclosing him and the next thing he knew, he was out.

When he woke up, the fire was right next to him. He felt like he was on fire. He looked around and realized that his hand was touching the burning flames. His hand was on fire!!!! He quickly extinguished himself but he was in great pain. Despite this, he knew he had to keep moving.

He got up and ran as fast as he could, the fire beating at his heels. As he was escaping, he kept trying to think of ways to slow the lava and save his cherished city, but nothing came to mind. He would be tired soon, but he couldn't give up. He had made it this far and nothing would stop him from saving his own life.

The lava seemed to be gaining on him. He felt like he was running in slow motion because no matter how fast he ran, the lava was always behind him. He felt like a deer trying to escape the clutches of a wolf running through the woods. The trees fell left and right and he had so many close calls.

He knew that he no longer loved the thrill of danger. He no longer strived to find thrill in every moment. He didn't want to be chased by lions across the savanna or explore jungles or run away from lava spewing from a volcano. At this point, he would give anything to be at home safe in his bedroom knowing he would be alright.

His hand was now throbbing in pain and he was still in the woods alone. When he had no energy left in him and he had almost given up hope that he would be alright, he spotted what he thought was a miracle that would save his life. There before him lie a rushing river. He was so close to the cold refreshing river, but still a great deal away. "I don't think I can make it," he thought. Then, he remembered his family and his friends and a spark of hope lit in his eyes.

He ran with a sudden boost of energy. He would be okay. One more step. Then, the river was upon him. He jumped in and splashed all around, cooling his greatly, burned hand. He swam to the other side of the river as far away from the menacing lava.

The lava reached the river and just when he thought the lava would own the river too, it turned to stone. The bright red turned to a soft brown and you could hear the sizzle as the water worked its magic. He was safe at last!!!!

He dragged himself out of the river and collapsed onto the bank. It was now midnight and he felt himself drift off to sleep, now at peace.

“Is he going to be okay?” asked a familiar voice.

“We won’t know until he is awake,” said another.

His eyes blinked open to see Camilla and his mother sitting right next to him. In awe, they both enclosed him in hugs.

“What happened?” he groaned, still tired.

“The volcano erupted and we found you in the woods” said his mother a tear running down her face.

“Where am I?” he asked.

This time, Camilla answered. “We are in a neighboring town who is taking in survivors like us.”

“You, just like your father, tried to go back and warn everyone.” said his mother.

Marcus noticed that his dad was not in the room. “Where is dad??” Marcus asked, with a little hitch in his throat.

“Your father fought a brave fight and saved many people but he didn’t make it out,” his mother said quietly.

Marcus was devastated! With tears in his eyes, he looked down at his hand, and realized it was missing.

“When they found you, your hand was greatly damaged. They tried everything they could to treat the burn on your hand but nothing worked. It was too far gone so we made the decision to remove it.” said Camilla in a calm voice.

They could both see that this was a lot of information to come at him so they quickly tried to change the subject.

“Everyone keeps telling me my son is a hero and that he saved so many lives, is that true?” asked his mother.

He told them all about what happened and about him saving people and finding the river. It was quite an adventure but he was fine never have another adventure like that again. They talked for a while longer but noticed that his eyes were starting to droop. They decided to let him rest. He embraced himself in his bed and tried to be at peace as he drifted off to sleep.

