



Book Knowledge Organiser – Escape From Pompeii – Christina Balit

Important Information

Plot

The story is based on the true story of the Mount Vesuvius eruption in 79 A.D. which destroyed Pompeii and many surrounding towns and villages. In the story Tranio and Livia try to escape during the unexpected eruption.

Themes

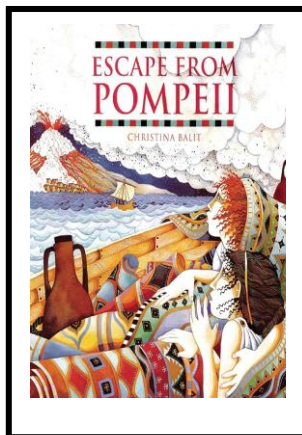
Courage, Fear, History, Kindness, Family and Natural Disasters

Setting

The book is set in Pompeii, a city in southern Italy. The city overlooks the bay of Naples, as well as the volcano Mount Vesuvius, which the Romans believed to be a mountain.

Characters

Tranio	Son of Dion the actor who lives with his parents.
Dion	Actor and father to Tranio.
Livia	The baker's daughter who lives across the street from Tranio.
Masked actors	Masked actors performing a pantomime playing roles such as thieves, devils and acrobats.
Boat captain	a boat captain who unties his boat in which Tranio and Livia are hiding.



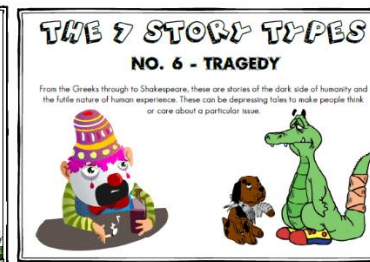
What Can the Book Teach Us?

Life was busy and bustling in Italian cities during the Roman times.

Natural disasters have huge consequences for many.

Quotes

Could anyone feel safer than here, Tranio wondered? Was anything more beautiful?



Name of Book: Escape From Pompeii
Date Published: 2003
Author & Illustrator: Christina Balit
Genre: Historical Fiction

Key Vocabulary

glimmered	a faint, unsteady shining light
taverns	a place to drink alcohol and eat food
district	an area of a town or country
forum	the site of public gatherings, trials, elections and gladiatorial combat in Rome
tremors	a slight, uncontrollable shaking movement
knucklebones	tossing up a ball and trying to pick up as many bones as you can before having to catch the ball in the other hand
strutting	an arrogant walk with a stiff back
acrobats	entertainer who performs difficult gymnastic acts
wander	to walk around in a relaxed way
quivered	tremble or shake in a quick, rapid movement
scenery	painted background of a setting in a theatre
rehearsal	practice of performance ready for the real event
awning	material on a frame used to keep off sun or rain
brayed	the loud noise a donkey makes
moorings	attaching a boat to the land with a rope.
pumice	light volcanic rock formed from lava
molten	heated rock which melts and becomes liquid
cargo	items carried on a ship, often for selling

Context

In A.D. 62, the Campania region of southern Italy was struck by a violent earthquake. Pompeii suffered the greatest damage. However, in A.D. 79, Mount Vesuvius erupted destroying towns and villas, including Pompeii. It is believed the Romans did not know Vesuvius was a volcano. The eruption lasted for only 24 hours, but the city was quickly covered in as much as 6 metres of ash. The city was identified in 1748 and, after hundreds of years of work uncovering it, a third of the city is still buried. The ash literally preserved a moment in Roman history and is now often visited by tourists to see what a Roman city would have looked like, with much of it still intact.