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6 25,000 years ago

With a loud explosion, a volcano which will one day be known as Vesuvius erupts.

8 The year 500 BC

Vesuvius has not erupted for many years. The soil is fertile and crops grow very well.

10 24th August AD 79 10 am

It is a busy morning in the Roman town of Pompeii.

12 Two hours later ...

There is a deafening explosion: shooting up into the air from Vesuvius' summit is a dense, black cloud.

14 One hour later ...

Pumice starts to rain down on Pompeii.

16 Later that afternoon ...

Many roofs have started to collapse under the weight of falling pumice.

18 Early next morning ...

A glowing red cloud rolls threateningly down the slopes of Vesuvius towards Pompeii.



20 One year later ...

Where there was once a prosperous city now there is a barren landscape.

22 More than 1000 years later ...

Lying under its thick blanket of volcanic ash and pumice, Pompeii has been forgotten for many years.

24 The year 1785

Wealthy people from all over Europe visit the ruins of Pompeii.

26 A hundred years later ...

The ruins of Pompeii are gradually being excavated from the deep layers of pumice and ash.

28 Today

Visitors flock to see the ruins of Pompeii.

30 Glossary

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Introduction

Imagine you are in southern Italy thousands of years ago. The scene is dominated by a large volcano blasting ash into the air. One day the eruption will stop and calm will return. Then, many years into the future, a Roman city named Pompeii will be built on the fertile plains beneath that same volcano, known as Vesuvius. The city is a picture of peace and prosperity until one sunny August morning ...

The story told in this book is like a journey. It is not a journey you can make by plane, car or ship. In fact, you don't have to go anywhere at all. You are about to travel through *time*. With each turn of the page, the date moves forward a few hours, days or years. You are still in the same place, but notice how many things change from one date to the next. Each time—each stop on your journey—is like a new chapter. The eruption, the falling pumice and ash, the blast that obliterated the city, the years that passed before the ruins were discovered—all tell the story of Pompeii.



Use this thumb index to travel through time! Just find the page you want to see and flip it open. This way you can make a quick comparison between one scene and another, even though some show events that took place many years apart. A little black arrow on the page points to the time of the scene illustrated on that page.

People in Pompeii wrote messages, called graffiti, on walls. They included advertisements of things for sale and declarations of love!

24th August AD 79 10 am

It is a busy morning in the Roman town of Pompeii. In the square outside the Temple people gather to buy their groceries. Yet not everything seems to be right. Some of the animals are uneasy. A dog barks and

strains at his leash.

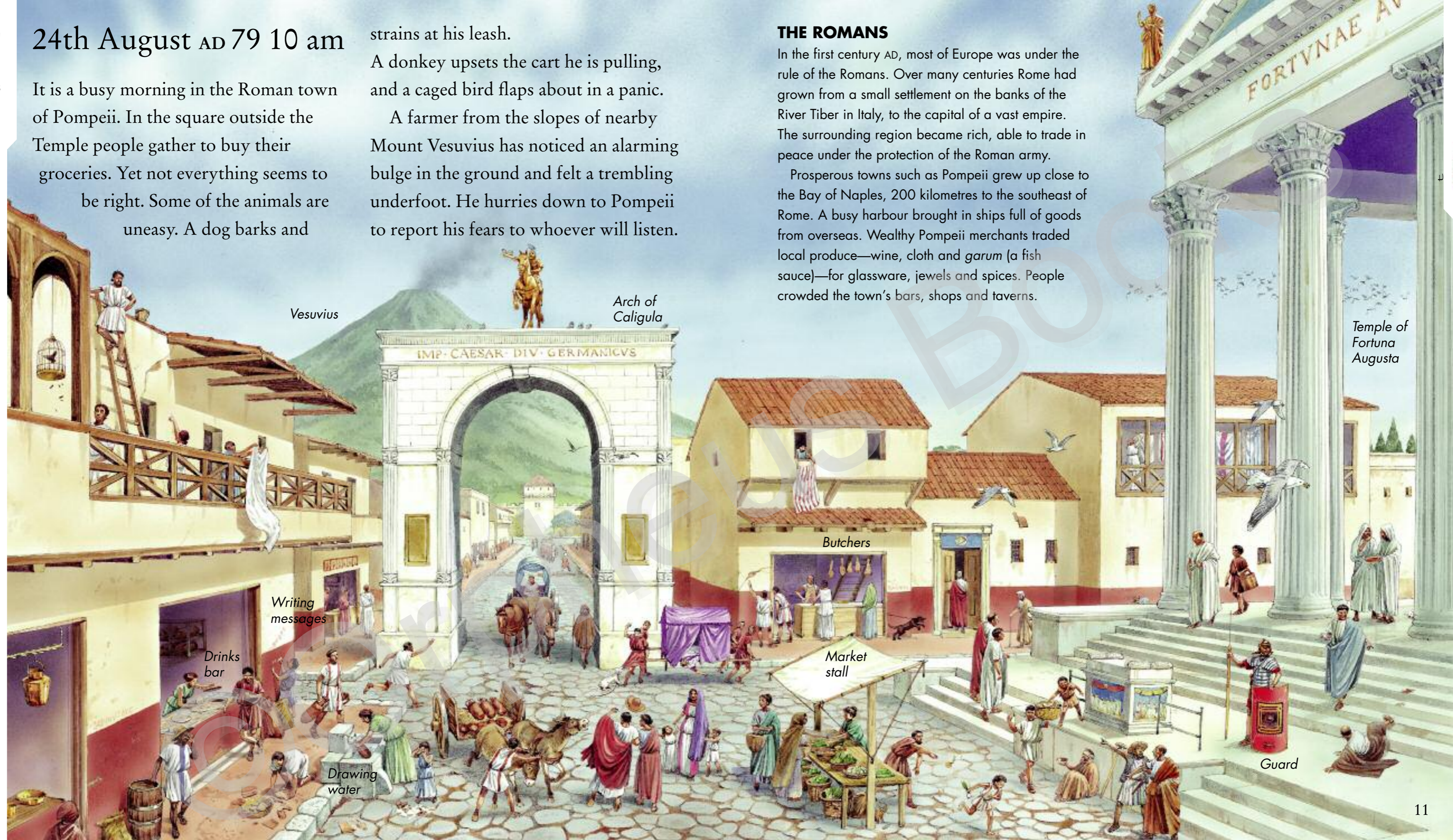
A donkey upsets the cart he is pulling, and a caged bird flaps about in a panic.

A farmer from the slopes of nearby Mount Vesuvius has noticed an alarming bulge in the ground and felt a trembling underfoot. He hurries down to Pompeii to report his fears to whoever will listen.

THE ROMANS

In the first century AD, most of Europe was under the rule of the Romans. Over many centuries Rome had grown from a small settlement on the banks of the River Tiber in Italy, to the capital of a vast empire. The surrounding region became rich, able to trade in peace under the protection of the Roman army.

Prosperous towns such as Pompeii grew up close to the Bay of Naples, 200 kilometres to the southeast of Rome. A busy harbour brought in ships full of goods from overseas. Wealthy Pompeii merchants traded local produce—wine, cloth and *garum* (a fish sauce)—for glassware, jewels and spices. People crowded the town's bars, shops and taverns.



25,000 years ago



500 BC



24 Aug AD 79 10 am