

Preparing to Read

SKILLS FOCUS **Literary Skills** Analyze credibility in literature. **Reading Skills** Make generalizations.

The Dog of Pompeii / Pompeii / Zlateh the Goat / Trial by Fire

Literary Focus

Literary Criticism: Evaluating a Story's Credibility One of the main tasks of a literary critic is to evaluate whether the characters and plot in a story are **credible**, or believable. Readers expect a story's characters to act the way real people do. Even if the characters are aliens or young wizards, you want the characters' actions to make sense. A plot should also be credible, growing naturally out of the actions of the characters. If a plot has too many coincidences or if the chain of causes and effects is weak, then the plot is *contrived*, or artificial, and it won't hold your interest.

Reading Focus

Making Generalizations A **generalization** is a conclusion drawn from examples or evidence. You combine evidence in the text with prior knowledge to come up with a broad statement that expresses a truth about what you've read—your generalization.

Into Action For each selection, use a chart like this to record details that seem (or don't seem) credible—and explain why. You'll use your charts to make generalizations about the selections.

Title of Story: "The Dog of Pompeii"

| Detail about character or plot | Credible or not credible? | Why? (based on my own knowledge) |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Bimbo takes total care of Tito. | Credible | Dogs are companions for people who are blind. |

Writing Focus

Think as a Reader/Writer

Find It in Your Reading "The Dog of Pompeii" and "Zlateh the Goat" both contain realistic details. As you read, list the details that add to the credibility of the characters and the plot.



Reader/Writer Notebook

Use your **RWN** to complete the activities for these selections.

Vocabulary

The Dog of Pompeii

ambitious (am BIHSH uhs) *adj.*: eager to achieve something. *The ambitious citizens wanted to make their city famous.*

proverb (PRAHV urb) *n.*: short, wise saying that expresses a truth. *"Haste makes waste" is a proverb.*

revived (rih VYVD) *v.*: awakened; brought back to life. *The splash of water revived him, and he opened his eyes.*

Zlateh the Goat

penetrated (PEHN uh tray tihd) *v.*: pierced; made a way through. *Sunlight penetrated the clouds.*

cleft (klehft) *adj.*: split; divided. *Goats have cleft hooves.*

chaos (KAY ahs) *n.*: total confusion or disorder. *The storm created chaos outside Aaron's shelter.*

exuded (ehg ZOO dihd) *v.*: gave off. *The hay exuded warmth.*

Language Coach

Verb Forms What do the words *revived*, *penetrated*, and *exuded* above have in common?



Learn It Online

For a preview of "The Dog of Pompeii," see the video introduction on:

go.hrw.com

L6-399

Go



Louis Untermeyer

(1885–1977)

Reviving an Old World

Louis Untermeyer described the writer's job as the "struggle somehow to revive an old world, or create a new one." As a child, he loved to read, but he dropped out of high school to work in his family's jewelry business. He didn't become serious about writing until he met the poet Robert Frost in 1915. They became lifelong friends, and it was Frost who encouraged Untermeyer to write.



Robert Silverberg

(1935–)

The Future and the Past

Robert Silverberg has written hundreds of works in many genres. One of the world's most famous science fiction writers, Silverberg has also written nonfiction about archaeology and history—especially the history of people and places long vanished.



Isaac Bashevis Singer

(1904–1991)

"Time Does Not Vanish"

Nobel
Prize
WINNER

Isaac Bashevis Singer was born in a village like the one in "Zlateh the Goat." As a boy, he read constantly and was curious about everything. Both of his parents were skilled storytellers. Singer watched and listened, carefully storing in his memory scenes, people, and incidents he would write about later in his life. His stories earned him the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1978.

Preview the Selections

In the short story "The Dog of Pompeii," you'll meet **Tito**, a boy who is blind, and his faithful dog **Bimbo**. Both characters live in ancient Pompeii, the Roman city that was buried by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79.

Next, you'll read "Pompeii," a nonfiction historical account of the same event—the eruption of Vesuvius.

In "Zlateh the Goat," you'll read about a boy, **Aaron**, and his adventure when he takes the family goat, **Zlateh**, to market.

Finally, you'll read "Trial by Fire," a nonfiction article that tells the story of a brave mother cat, **Scarlett**, who saves her kittens from a fire.

Think About the Writers

Why do you think these writers write about people and places that "used to be"?



Cave Canem (Beware of Dog).
Ancient Roman floor mosaic from Pompeii.

THE DOG OF POMPEII

by **Louis Untermeyer**

Read with a Purpose

Read “The Dog of Pompeii” to find out how the bond between a boy and his dog is tested during one of the greatest natural disasters in history.

Build Background

The setting of this story is Pompeii, an ancient Roman city that was buried by a volcanic eruption in A.D. 79. The story combines the fictional story of Tito and his dog Bimbo with facts about the actual historical event. The volcano that destroyed the city of Pompeii also preserved it. In the eighteenth century, archaeologists began excavating Pompeii. As they uncovered the city captured in time by the ash that buried it, they brought the past to life. Today, you can visit Pompeii and see the city as it was nearly two thousand years ago.

Tito and his dog Bimbo lived (if you could call it living) under the wall where it joined the inner gate. They really didn’t live there; they just slept there. They lived anywhere. Pompeii was one of the gayest of the old Latin towns, but although Tito was never an unhappy boy, he was not exactly a merry one. The streets were always lively with shining chariots and bright red trappings; the open-air theaters rocked with laughing crowds; sham¹ battles and athletic sports were free for the asking

1. **sham**: make-believe.

in the great stadium. Once a year the Caesar² visited the pleasure city and the fireworks lasted for days; the sacrifices³ in the forum were better than a show.

But Tito saw none of these things. He was blind—had been blind from birth. He was known to everyone in the poorer quarters. But no one could say how old he was, no one remembered his parents, no one could tell

2. **Caesar** (SEE zuhr): Roman emperor. The word *Caesar* comes from the family name of Julius Caesar, a great general who ruled Rome as dictator from 49 to 44 B.C.

3. **sacrifices**: offerings (especially of slaughtered animals) to the gods.

where he came from. Bimbo was another mystery. As long as people could remember seeing Tito—about twelve or thirteen years—they had seen Bimbo. Bimbo had never left his side. He was not only dog but nurse, pillow, playmate, mother, and father to Tito. **A**

Did I say Bimbo never left his master? (Perhaps I had better say comrade, for if anyone was the master, it was Bimbo.) I was wrong. Bimbo did trust Tito alone exactly three times a day. It was a fixed routine, a custom understood between boy and dog since the beginning of their friendship, and the way it worked was this: Early in the morning, shortly after dawn, while Tito was still dreaming, Bimbo would disappear. When Tito awoke, Bimbo would be sitting quietly at his side, his ears cocked, his stump of a tail tapping the ground, and a fresh-baked bread—more like a large round roll—at his feet. Tito would stretch himself; Bimbo would yawn; then they would breakfast. At noon, no matter where they happened to be, Bimbo would put his paw on Tito’s knee and the two of them would return to the inner gate. Tito would curl up in the corner (almost like a dog) and go to sleep, while Bimbo, looking quite important (almost like a boy), would disappear again. In half an hour he’d be back with their lunch. Sometimes it would be a piece of fruit or a scrap of meat, often it was nothing but a dry crust. But sometimes there would be one of those flat rich cakes, sprinkled with raisins and sugar, that Tito liked so much. At suppertime the same thing happened, although there was a little

less of everything, for things were hard to snatch in the evening, with the streets full of people. Besides, Bimbo didn’t approve of too much food before going to sleep. A heavy supper made boys too restless and dogs too stodgy⁴—and it was the business of a dog to sleep lightly with one ear open and muscles ready for action. **B**

But, whether there was much or little, hot or cold, fresh or dry, food was always there. Tito never asked where it came from and Bimbo never told him. There was plenty of rainwater in the hollows of soft stones; the old egg woman at the corner sometimes gave him a cupful of strong goat’s milk; in the grape season the fat winemaker let him have drippings of the mild juice. So there was no danger of going hungry or thirsty. There was plenty of everything in Pompeii—if you knew where to find it—and if you had a dog like Bimbo.

As I said before, Tito was not the merriest boy in Pompeii. He could not romp with the other youngsters and play “hare and hounds” and “I spy” and “follow your master” and “ball against the building” and “jackstones” and “kings and robbers” with them. But that did not make him sorry for himself. If he could not see the sights that delighted the lads of Pompeii, he could hear and smell things they never noticed. He could really see more with his ears and nose than they could with their eyes. When he and Bimbo went out walking, he knew just where they were going and exactly what was happening.

4. **stodgy** (STAH jee): heavy and slow in movement.

A Read and Discuss What’s the author telling you in these opening paragraphs? What’s his attitude toward his characters?

B Literary Focus Literary Criticism Are the characters in this story—Tito and Bimbo—believable so far? Why or why not?

“Ah,” he’d sniff and say, as they passed a handsome villa,⁵ “Glaucus Pansa is giving a grand dinner tonight. They’re going to have three kinds of bread, and roast pigling, and stuffed goose, and a great stew—I think bear stew—and a fig pie.” And Bimbo would note that this would be a good place to visit tomorrow. **C**

Or, “H’m,” Tito would murmur, half through his lips, half through his nostrils. “The wife of Marcus Lucretius is expecting her mother. She’s shaking out every piece of goods in the house; she’s going to use the best clothes—the ones she’s been keeping in pine needles and camphor⁶—and there’s an extra girl in the kitchen. Come, Bimbo, let’s get out of the dust!”

Or, as they passed a small but elegant dwelling opposite the public baths, “Too bad! The tragic poet is ill again. It must be a bad fever this time, for they’re trying smoke fumes instead of medicine. Whew! I’m glad I’m not a tragic poet!”

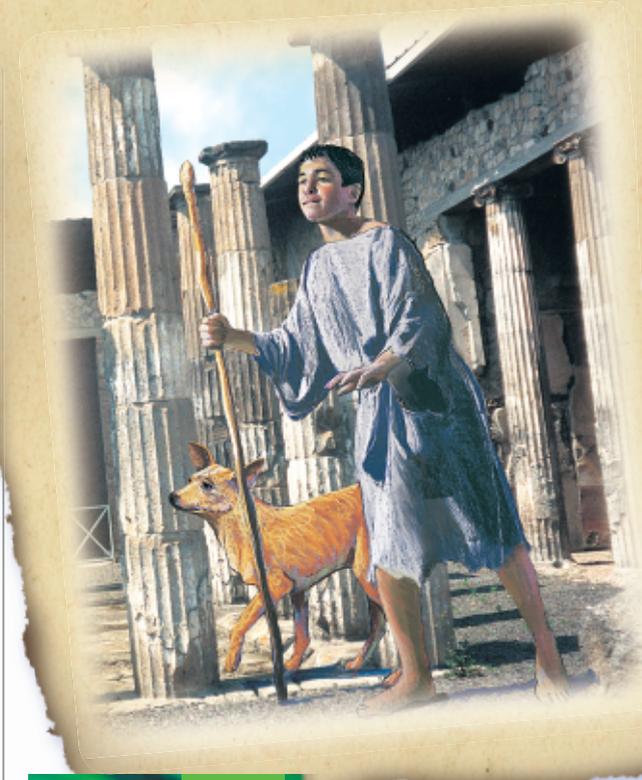
Or, as they neared the forum, “Mm-m! What good things they have in the macellum⁷ today!” (It really was a sort of butcher-grocer-marketplace, but Tito didn’t know any better. He called it the macellum.) “Dates from Africa, and salt oysters from sea caves, and

5. **villa**: large house.

6. **camphor** (KAM fuhr): strong-smelling substance used to keep moths away from clothing. Camphor is still used for this purpose.

7. **macellum** (MUH sehl uhm): market, especially a meat market.

C Read and Discuss Why does Bimbo think this villa would be a good place to visit tomorrow?



Analyzing Visuals

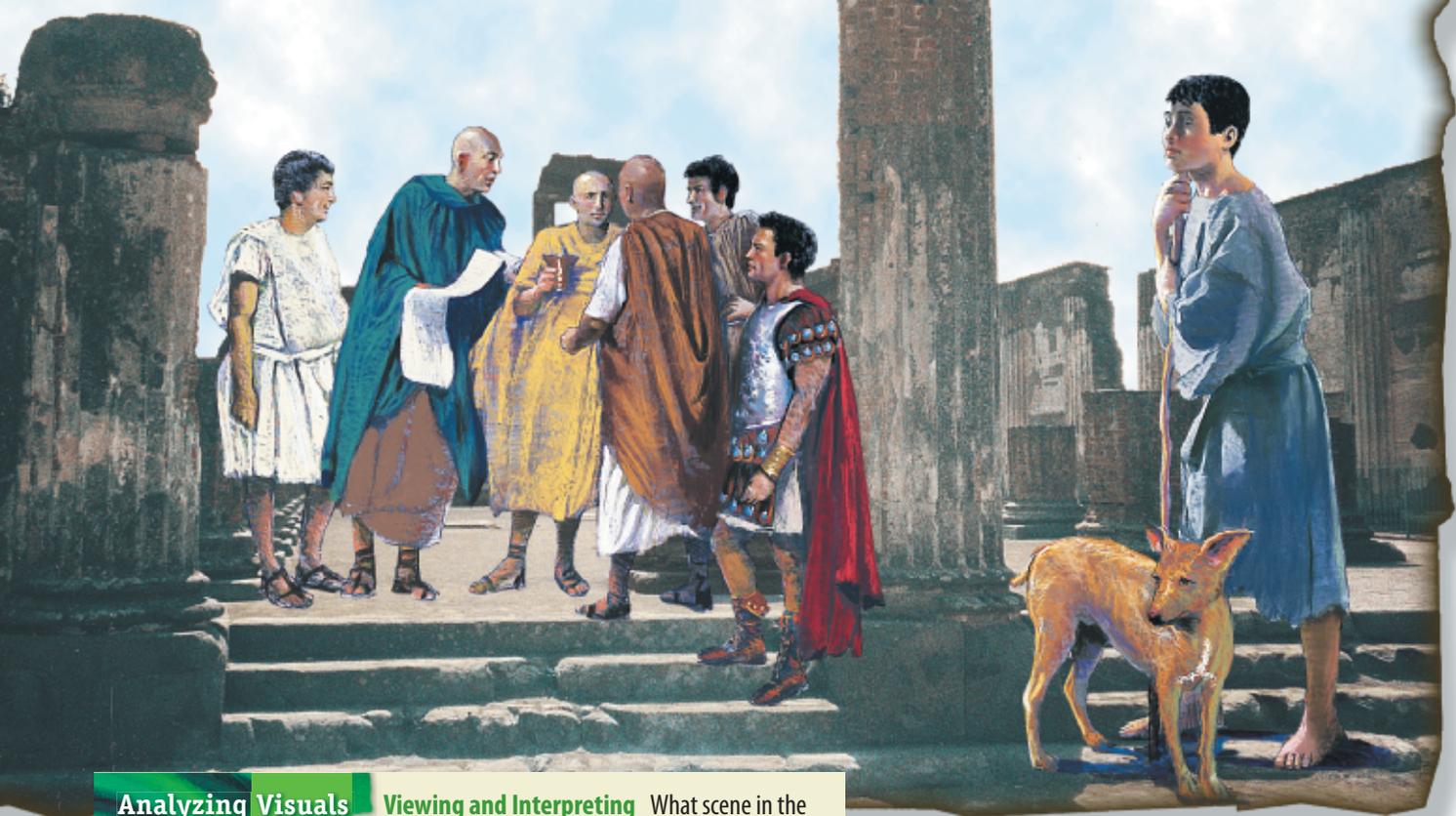
Viewing and Interpreting

What does this illustration show about the relationship between Tito and Bimbo?

cuttlefish, and new honey, and sweet onions, and—ugh!—water-buffalo steaks. Come, let’s see what’s what in the forum.” And Bimbo, just as curious as his comrade, hurried on. Being a dog, he trusted his ears and nose (like Tito) more than his eyes. And so the two of them entered the center of Pompeii. **D**

The forum was the part of the town to which everybody came at least once during the day. It was the central square, and everything happened here. There were no private houses; all was public—the chief temples, the gold and red bazaars, the silk shops, the town hall, the booths belonging to the weavers and jewel merchants, the wealthy woolen market,

D Reading Focus Generalizations From what Tito is describing, what generalizations can you make about life in Pompeii?



Analyzing Visuals **Viewing and Interpreting** What scene in the story does this picture illustrate?

the shrine of the household gods. Everything glittered here. The buildings looked as if they were new—which, in a sense, they were. The earthquake of twelve years ago had brought down all the old structures and, since the citizens of Pompeii were **ambitious** to rival Naples and even Rome, they had seized the opportunity to rebuild the whole town. And they had done it all within a dozen years. There was scarcely a building that was older than Tito.

Tito had heard a great deal about the earthquake, though being about a year old at the time, he could scarcely remember it. This particular quake had been a light one—as

E

earthquakes go. The weaker houses had been shaken down, parts of the outworn wall had been wrecked; but there was little loss of life, and the brilliant new Pompeii had taken the place of the old. No one knew what caused these earthquakes. Records showed they had happened in the neighborhood since the beginning of time. Sailors said that it was to teach the lazy city folk a lesson and make them appreciate those who risked the dangers of the sea to bring them luxuries and protect their town from invaders. The priests said that the gods took this way of showing their anger to those who refused to worship properly and who failed to bring enough sacrifices

E Read and Discuss What details have you learned about life in ancient Pompeii from this account of Tito and Bimbo's walk through the city?

Vocabulary **ambitious** (am BIHSH uhs) *adj.*: eager to achieve something.

to the altars and (though they didn't say it in so many words) presents to the priests. The tradesmen said that the foreign merchants had corrupted the ground and it was no longer safe to traffic in imported goods that came from strange places and carried a curse with them. Everyone had a different explanation and everyone's explanation was louder and sillier than his neighbor's. **F**

They were talking about it this afternoon as Tito and Bimbo came out of the side street into the public square. The forum was the favorite promenade⁸ for rich and poor. What with the priests arguing with the politicians, servants doing the day's shopping, tradesmen crying their wares, women displaying the latest fashions from Greece and Egypt, children playing hide-and-seek among the marble columns, knots of soldiers, sailors, peasants from the provinces⁹—to say nothing of those who merely came to lounge and look on—the square was crowded to its last inch. His ears even more than his nose guided Tito to the place where the talk was loudest. It was in front of the shrine of the household gods that, naturally enough, the householders were arguing.

"I tell you," rumbled a voice which Tito recognized as bath master Rufus's, "there won't be another earthquake in my lifetime or yours. There may be a tremble or two, but earthquakes, like lightnings, never strike twice in the same place."

8. **promenade** (prahm uh NAYD): public place where people stroll.

9. **provinces**: places far from the capital, under Roman control.

"Do they not?" asked a thin voice Tito had never heard. It had a high, sharp ring to it and Tito knew it as the accent of a stranger. "How about the two towns of Sicily that have been ruined three times within fifteen years by the eruptions of Mount Etna? And were they not warned? And does that column of smoke above Vesuvius mean nothing?"

"That?" Tito could hear the grunt with which one question answered another. "That's always there. We use it for our weather guide. When the smoke stands up straight, we know we'll have fair weather; when it flattens out, it's sure to be foggy; when it drifts to the east—"

"Yes, yes," cut in the edged voice. "I've heard about your mountain barometer.¹⁰ But the column of smoke seems hundreds of feet higher than usual and it's thickening and spreading like a shadowy tree. They say in Naples—"

"Oh, Naples!" Tito knew this voice by the little squeak that went with it. It was Attilio the cameo cutter.¹¹ "They talk while we suffer. Little help we got from them last time. Naples commits the crimes and Pompeii pays the price. It's become a **proverb** with us. Let them mind their own business."

"Yes," grumbled Rufus, "and others', too."

"Very well, my confident friends," responded the thin voice, which now sounded curiously flat. "We also have a proverb—and

10. **barometer** (buh RAHM uh tuhr): instrument for measuring atmospheric pressure. Barometers are used in forecasting changes in the weather.

11. **cameo cutter**: artist who carves small, delicate pictures on gems or shells.

F Read and Discuss What is going on at the forum? What didn't people at this time understand about earthquakes?

Vocabulary proverb (PRAHV urb) *n.*: short, wise saying that expresses a truth.

it is this: *Those who will not listen to men must be taught by the gods.* I say no more. But I leave a last warning. Remember the holy ones. Look to your temples. And when the smoke tree above Vesuvius grows to the shape of an umbrella pine, look to your lives.”

Tito could hear the air whistle as the speaker drew his toga about him, and the quick shuffle of feet told him the stranger had gone.

G

“Now what,” said the cameo cutter, “did he mean by that?”

“I wonder,” grunted Rufus. “I wonder.”

Tito wondered, too. And Bimbo, his head at a thoughtful angle, looked as if he had been doing a heavy piece of pondering. By nightfall the argument had been forgotten. If the smoke had increased, no one saw it in the dark. Besides, it was Caesar’s birthday and the town was in a holiday mood. Tito and Bimbo were among the merrymakers, dodging the charioteers who shouted at them. A dozen times they almost upset baskets of sweets and jars of Vesuvian wine, said to be as fiery as the streams inside the volcano, and a dozen times they were cursed and cuffed. But Tito never missed his footing. He was thankful for his keen ears and quick instinct—most thankful of all for Bimbo.

They visited the uncovered theater, and though Tito could not see the faces of the actors, he could follow the play better than most of the audience, for their attention wandered—they were distracted by the

scenery, the costumes, the byplay,¹² even by themselves—while Tito’s whole attention was centered in what he heard. Then to the city walls, where the people of Pompeii watched a mock naval battle in which the city was attacked by the sea and saved after thousands of flaming arrows had been exchanged and countless colored torches had been burned. Though the thrill of flaring ships and lighted skies was lost to Tito, the shouts and cheers excited him as much as any, and he cried out with the loudest of them.

H

The next morning there were two of the beloved raisin-and-sugar cakes for his breakfast. Bimbo was unusually active and thumped his bit of a tail until Tito was afraid he would wear it out. The boy could not imagine whether Bimbo was urging him to some sort of game or was trying to tell him something. After a while, he ceased to notice Bimbo. He felt drowsy. Last night’s late hours had tired him. Besides, there was a heavy mist in the air—no, a thick fog rather than a mist—a fog that got into his throat and scraped it and made him cough. He walked as far as the marine gate¹³ to get a breath of the sea. But the blanket of haze had spread all over the bay and even the salt air seemed smoky.

He went to bed before dusk and slept. But he did not sleep well. He had too many dreams—dreams of ships lurching in the forum, of losing his way in a screaming crowd,

12. **byplay**: action taking place outside the main action of a play.

13. **marine gate**: gate in a city wall leading to the sea.

G Literary Focus Literary Criticism What attitudes among the men does this conversation reveal? How does this scene contribute to the development of the plot?

H Reading Focus Generalizations Based on what you’ve learned in these last two paragraphs, what generalization can you make about Tito?

of armies marching across his chest, of being pulled over every rough pavement of Pompeii.

He woke early. Or, rather, he was pulled awake. Bimbo was doing the pulling. The dog had dragged Tito to his feet and was urging the boy along. Somewhere. Where, Tito did not know. His feet stumbled uncertainly; he was still half asleep. For a while he noticed nothing except the fact that it was hard to breathe. The air was hot. And heavy. So heavy that he could taste it. The air, it seemed, had turned to powder—a warm powder that stung his nostrils and burned his sightless eyes.

Then he began to hear sounds. Peculiar sounds. Like animals under the earth. Hissings and groanings and muffled cries that a dying creature might make dislodging the stones of his underground cave. There was no doubt of it now. The noises came from underneath. He not only heard them—he could feel them. The earth twitched; the twitching changed to an uneven shrugging of the soil. Then, as Bimbo half pulled, half coaxed him across, the ground jerked away from his feet and he was thrown against a stone fountain. **I**

The water—hot water—splashing in his face **revived** him. He got to his feet, Bimbo steadying him, helping him on again. The noises grew louder; they came closer. The cries were even more animal-like than before, but now they came from human throats. A few people, quicker of foot and more hurried by fear, began to rush by. A family or two—then a section—then, it seemed, an army

broken out of bounds. Tito, bewildered though he was, could recognize Rufus as he bellowed past him, like a water buffalo gone mad. Time was lost in a nightmare.

It was then the crashing began. First a sharp crackling, like a monstrous snapping of twigs; then a roar like the fall of a whole forest of trees; then an explosion that tore earth and sky. The heavens, though Tito could not see them, were shot through with continual flickerings of fire. Lightnings above were answered by thunders beneath. A house fell. Then another. By a miracle the two companions had escaped the dangerous side streets and were in a more open space. It was the forum. They rested here awhile—how long, he did not know. **J**

Tito had no idea of the time of day. He could feel it was black—an unnatural blackness. Something inside—perhaps the lack of breakfast and lunch—told him it was past noon. But it didn't matter. Nothing seemed to matter. He was getting drowsy, too drowsy to walk. But walk he must. He knew it. And Bimbo knew it; the sharp tugs told him so. Nor was it a moment too soon. The sacred ground of the forum was safe no longer. It was beginning to rock, then to pitch, then to split. As they stumbled out of the square, the earth wriggled like a caught snake and all the columns of the temple of Jupiter¹⁴ came down. It was the end of the world—or so it seemed. To walk was not enough now. They must run.

14. Jupiter: the supreme god in the religion of the Romans.

I Read and Discuss What is causing these peculiar sounds? Why is Bimbo reacting like this?

J Read and Discuss What is happening now?

Vocabulary **revived** (rih VYVD) v.: awakened; brought back to life.

Tito was too frightened to know what to do or where to go. He had lost all sense of direction. He started to go back to the inner gate; but Bimbo, straining his back to the last inch, almost pulled his clothes from him. What did the creature want? Had the dog gone mad?

Then suddenly he understood. Bimbo was telling him the way out—urging him there. The sea gate, of course. The sea gate—and then the sea. Far from falling buildings, heaving ground. He turned, Bimbo guiding him across open pits and dangerous pools of bubbling mud, away from buildings that had caught fire and were dropping their burning beams. Tito could no longer tell whether the noises were made by the shrieking sky or the agonized people. He and Bimbo ran on—the only silent beings in a howling world.

New dangers threatened. All Pompeii seemed to be thronging toward the marine gate and, squeezing among the crowds, there was the chance of being trampled to death. But the chance had to be taken. It was growing harder and harder to breathe. What air there was choked him. It was all dust now—dust and pebbles, pebbles as large as beans. They fell on his head, his hands—pumice stones from the black heart of Vesuvius. The mountain was turning itself inside out. Tito remembered a phrase that the stranger had said in the forum two days ago: “Those who will not listen to men must be taught by the gods.” The people of Pompeii had refused to heed the warnings; they were being taught now—if it was not too late. **K**

Suddenly it seemed too late for Tito. The red-hot ashes blistered his skin, the stinging vapors tore his throat. He could not go on. He staggered toward a small tree at the side of the road and fell. In a moment Bimbo was beside him. He coaxed. But there was no answer. He licked Tito’s hands, his feet, his face. The boy did not stir. Then Bimbo did the last thing he could—the last thing he wanted to do. He bit his comrade, bit him deep in the arm. With a cry of pain, Tito jumped to his feet, Bimbo after him. Tito was in despair, but Bimbo was determined. He drove the boy on, snapping at his heels, worrying his way through the crowd, barking, baring his teeth, heedless of kicks or falling stones. Sick with hunger, half dead with fear and sulfur fumes, Tito pounded on, pursued by Bimbo. How long, he never knew. At last he staggered through the marine gate and felt soft sand under him. Then Tito fainted. . . .

Someone was dashing seawater over him. Someone was carrying him toward a boat.

“Bimbo,” he called. And then louder, “Bimbo!” But Bimbo had disappeared.

Voices jarred against each other. “Hurry—hurry!” “To the boats!” “Can’t you see the child’s frightened and starving!” “He keeps calling for someone!” “Poor boy, he’s out of his mind.” “Here, child—take this!”

They tucked him in among them. The oarlocks creaked; the oars splashed; the boat rode over toppling waves. Tito was safe. But he wept continually.

“Bimbo!” he wailed. “Bimbo! Bimbo!” He could not be comforted. **L**

K **Read and Discuss** What are you picturing from the words in the last few paragraphs?

L **Literary Focus** **Literary Criticism** Is the story of Tito and Bimbo believable? Explain whether it is possible to believe that such a boy and such a dog really existed at this time in history.

Eighteen hundred years passed. Scientists were restoring the ancient city; excavators¹⁵ were working their way through the stones and trash that had buried the entire town. Much had already been brought to light—statues, bronze instruments, bright mosaics,¹⁶ household articles; even delicate paintings had been preserved by the fall of ashes that had taken over two thousand lives. Columns were dug up, and the forum was beginning to emerge.

It was at a place where the ruins lay deepest that the director paused.

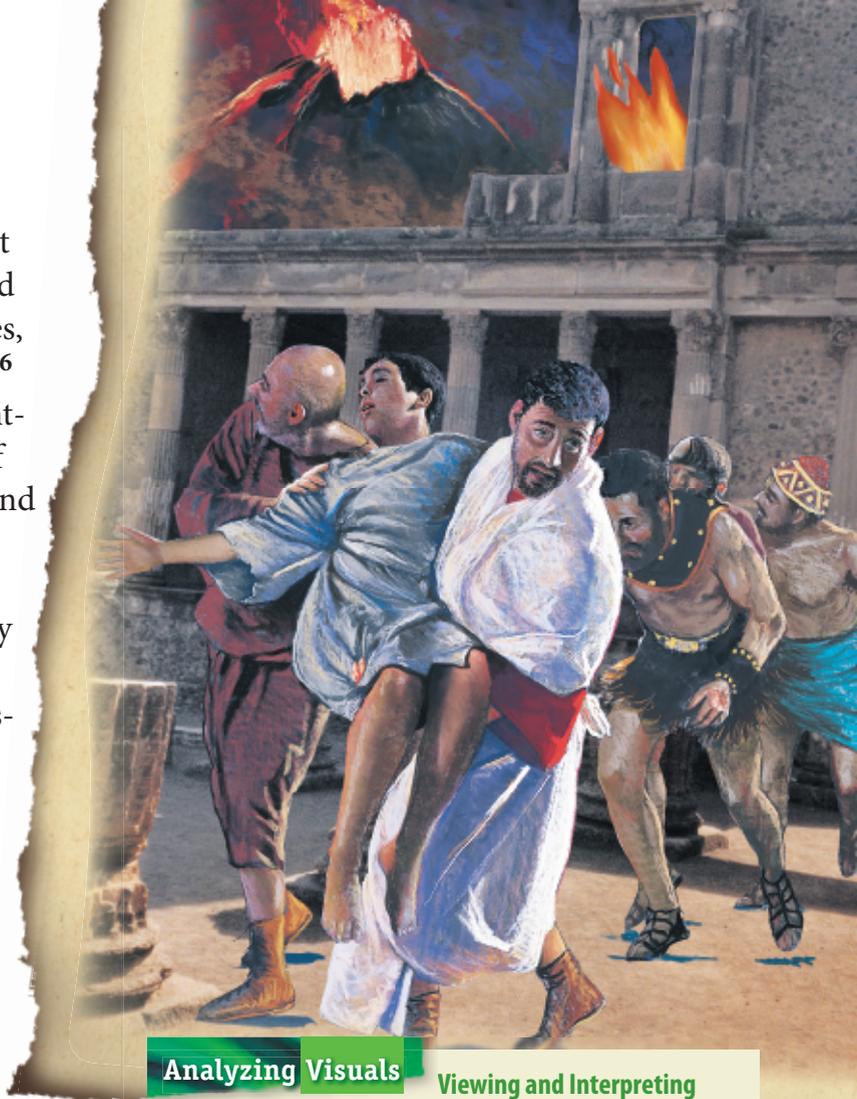
“Come here,” he called to his assistant. “I think we’ve discovered the remains of a building in good shape. Here are four huge millstones that were most likely turned by slaves or mules—and here is a whole wall standing with shelves inside it. Why! It must have been a bakery. And here’s a curious thing. What do you think I found under this heap where the ashes were thickest? The skeleton of a dog!”

“Amazing!” gasped his assistant. “You’d think a dog would have had sense enough to run away at the time. And what is that flat thing he’s holding between his teeth? It can’t be a stone.”

15. **excavators** (EHKS kuh vay tuhrz): diggers; here, archaeologists.

16. **mosaics** (moh ZAY ihks): pictures or designs made by inlaying small bits of stone, glass, tile, or other materials in mortar.

M Reading Focus Generalizations What generalization can you make about Bimbo based on what you’ve read in this story? How does this generalization relate to his credibility as a character?



Analyzing Visuals

Viewing and Interpreting

What is happening to Tito here? How does this illustration show the chaos that follows after the volcano’s eruption?

“No. It must have come from this bakery. You know it looks to me like some sort of cake hardened with the years. And, bless me, if those little black pebbles aren’t raisins. A raisin cake almost two thousand years old! I wonder what made him want it at such a moment.”

“I wonder,” murmured the assistant.

N Read and Discuss What is this part about? The scientists are wondering why the dog would want a raisin cake at such a bad time. What strikes you about this?