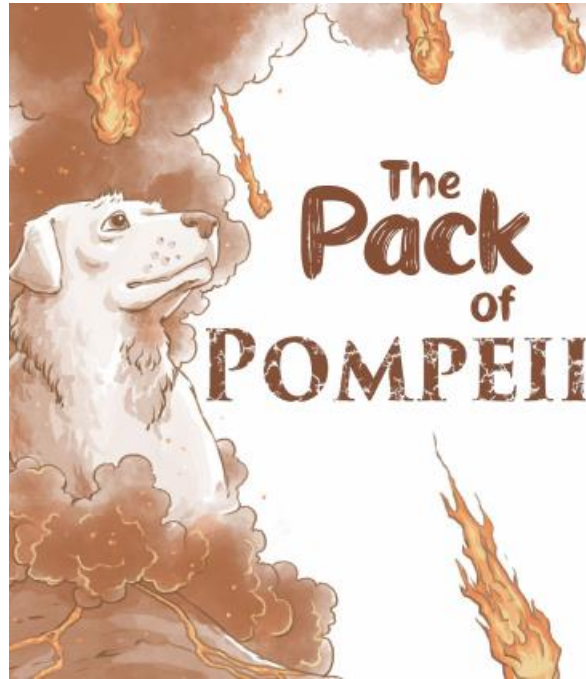


Reading – Wednesday 24th February



Task 1: Read the text on the next page for today's reading, all of Chapter 5.

Key words:

- Frantic – hurried, over the top
- Fury – wild or violent anger
- Dominates – have the power over someone or something
- Descends – move or fall downwards
- Splutter – short spitting or choking sounds
- Symphony – elaborate, loud piece of music
- Debris – scattered pieces of rubbish or remains

Use a dictionary, or the online dictionary, below to find the definition of any words that you want clarifying.

<https://kids.wordsmyth.net/we/>

Five

Grey flakes fall from the clouds, thick and fast now, as though the sky itself is breaking into pieces and tumbling down to the ground. My frantic paws barely skim the unploughed earth as I race towards the town and I'm just yards from a vegetable patch when –

BOOM.

The mountain roars. The sound fills my insides as though it is rolling through every dog, tree, rock and two-leg: a heavy, impossible sound that I feel in my bones. The mountain's fury tears great claw marks across the earth and bundles me off my feet, pulling down walls and toppling olive trees. I pant desperately through the dust, and dart away just in time to avoid a wooden roof as it slides downwards and crumbles on impact with the ground. I feel my legs trembling and I wonder if Claudia was right – maybe I *should* be saving myself.

Steeling myself, I glance back at the fields that were once my home...

...and the sight of what dominates the sky roots me to the spot.

The Gentle Mountain is no longer a mountain. Its top has gone and, in its place, there is a huge cloud of flying rock and darkness, reaching up and claiming the sun, creating instant nightfall. Dark descends upon the town of Pompeii.

It takes an age for my eyes to finally get used to the sudden blackness. I can hear the two-legs screaming behind the walls of the city, though I can barely see it through the grey snow that falls across my face and makes me splutter.

It would be easy to turn on my hind legs and sprint for safety. I could catch Alba and Claudia and we could be free and clear of the danger before darkness consumes this place – but that is not my path. Today, without really understanding why, I have decided to treat the two-legs as family, too.

When I see orange flickers appearing in the dark city, I clamber across toppled buildings and creep inside the town's walls towards them. A symphony of terrified shrieks and painful cries hustle me through the narrow streets and it is impossible to know where to look first – there are many two-legs and, everywhere I look, they are in desperate need of help. During my brief spell up on the hills, the situation in town has become much more serious.

I cower beside what was once a small home, panting to catch my breath. It is now just a pile of rocks and splintered wood. The roof has vanished, too – its wooden beams are split in two and the tiles are snapped and crushed. I think that some two-legs might be trapped beneath what remains – I can hear muffled coughing and panicked voices. Neighbours try to reach them but the rocks are too heavy and the pile is too high. The grey flakes fall thick and fast, settling on the ground and everything above it like a blanket, and I shake myself to remove the weight of it.

Many two-legs are carrying burning sticks for light as they run through the spaces between debris, but all of them seem blinded by panic and tears. I bark at them to push them towards the water for safety but they cannot hear me, or choose not to. So, I push on through the chaos and round the next bend to find the home of the shepherd and the young two-leg, their pack –

The building lies in ruins.

Walls have buckled, shaken loose from their foundations; the door lies flat upon the grey-dusted ground. The falling dry snow gives the wreckage the odd impression of having been there a very long time already. Roof timbers are piled high and it is impossible to see what is underneath.

I growl at myself, angry and sickened that I might have arrived too late. The young two-leg was so small – just a pup. Have they escaped? I stare at the nearby crowd, but see no familiar faces.

Then, from inside, I hear sobbing.

Peering desperately through the darkness and between running legs, I see that there is a gap in the ruined wall where the door used to be and it's big enough for me to squeeze through. Stumbling with every tremor of the ground, I wriggle in among the debris and follow the pitiful sound.

In a back room, recoiling from the mountain's wrath behind a broken wooden board, is the young two-leg. She is alone and the dirt staining her face is broken by wet tear tracks. When she sees me, she yelps. I think she is pleased that I'm here; her home is smashed to pieces and there is no sign of the shepherd or the rest of her pack.

"Come!" I bark, and more floating flakes catch in my throat. "We can't stay here."

As gently as I lift newborn goats when the wolves attack, I put my teeth around the girl's wrist and pull her from the shelter. She resists at first, but then seems to understand and lets me lead her. Hardly bigger than me, she squeezes out into the street –

– where a new danger awaits us.

The mountain cloud is dropping hot rocks like a storm of smoking hailstones. Pieces of the tremendous mountain – stones which have watched over me since I was a pup – race towards the ground, big and small; one rolls towards my feet and I can see the hot air rising from it in the two-legs' torchlight. Raised fur across my shoulders warns me that time is against us – the Gentle Mountain has betrayed us all.



Task 2: Vocabulary –

Match the correct word to the correct definition. Use a dictionary or online dictionary to help you, <https://kids.wordsmyth.net/we/>

Chaos
Familiar
Wrath
Clamber
Sobbing
Buckled

Well known, knew it before.
Loud, noisy crying.
Climbing in a tiring way.
Bend and give way under a weight.
Complete disorder and confusion.
Extreme anger and rage.

Challenge: Can you find the meaning to any other words you are unsure of in Chapter 5?

Take a photo of your work for your teacher on Class Dojo.