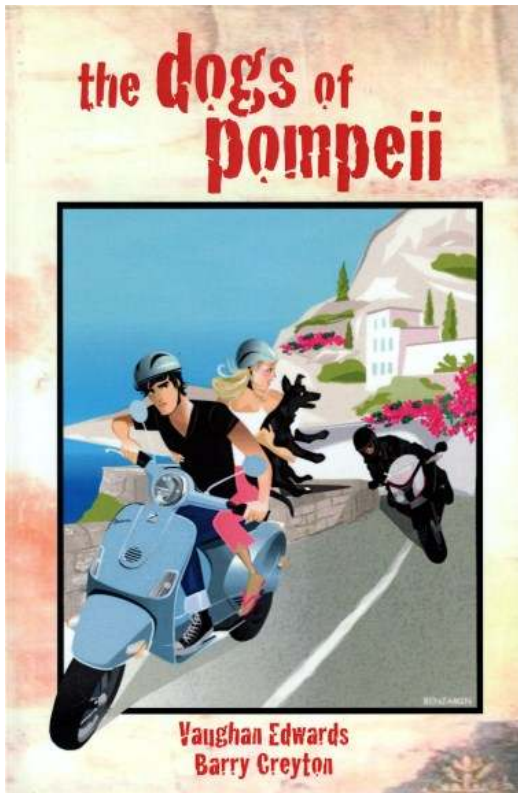


The Dogs of Pompeii Reading Guide

- **Paperback:** 220 pages
- **Publisher:** CreateSpace (December 14, 2010)
- **Language:** English
- **ISBN-10:** 1453859519
- **ISBN-13:** 978-1453859513
- **Product Dimensions:** 8 x 5.2 x 0.5 inches
- **Shipping Weight:** 11.2 ounces
- [PAPERBACK EDITION](#)
- [KINDLE EDITION](#)



CONTENTS

SYNOPSIS

AUTHORS' MOTIVATION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

ABOUT THE BOOK

CHARACTERS AND PLOT

WRITING PROCESS

RESEARCH

THEMES

DISCUSSION POINTS

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

all images copyright

SYNOPSIS



Meet Caroline. She's spending her first summer away from home helping her archeologist uncle excavate a mysterious 2000 year old villa in the ruined city of Pompeii. But when the evil Signor Macchiato threatens to sabotage the project, she faces life-threatening dangers.

Caroline is befriended by Gianni, an Italian boy...



...And Nero, a resourceful stray dog.

They join her in a breathtaking series of adventures – a kidnapping, a heart-stopping motorcycle chase on the sun-drenched Amalfi Cliffs and a fight for their lives a hundred feet above the flames of a blast furnace.

AUTHORS' MOTIVATION

First and foremost, we wanted to write an adventure story with all the elements associated with the genre – action, mystery, suspense, a little romance – and in the telling, to impart some of the remarkable history of the locale, the threat of today's big business to such irreplaceable historic sites, and a little of the Italian language.

Though set in today's Pompeii, the details of the cataclysmic eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD are accurate, as are those of the ruins, the Amalfi Coast, and the streets, towns and houses mentioned in the story.

We hope the reader will be tempted to investigate further the facts that are the foundation for our fiction.

BARRY CREYTON & VAUGHAN EDWARDS
Hollywood, CA. December 2010

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Pompeii

At the peak of the Roman Empire, Pompeii was a wealthy resort town, a thriving seaport on the Bay of Naples and home to 20,000 people. The city boasted two theatres, a vast sports arena, hot and cold public baths, sidewalk cafes serving fast food, markets, a constant supply of pure, fresh water, spacious gardens and grand public buildings and houses, many of which had central heating and even swimming pools.

There was no reason Pompeii should not have continued to prosper throughout the next four centuries of the Roman Empire, except one: Pompeii was built in the shadow of one of the world's largest and most deadly active volcanoes, Mount Vesuvius.

In the early afternoon of August 24th, 79 AD, Vesuvius exploded with a force that sent molten rock and scalding ash 20 miles into the sky at the rate of 100,000 tons per second. The fallout killed many of the inhabitants and those who survived the initial blast were either suffocated or instantly incinerated by one of the three ensuing pyroclastic flows – waves of 700 degree (F) heat and poisonous gas which traveled down the sides of the volcano at 60 miles per hour.

After the primary eruption, which lasted for eighteen hours, the volcanic activity continued for three days, burying the city under 40 feet of debris. Then the ash and pumice cooled and solidified and there was no evidence that a city had ever existed.

Pompeii lay forgotten for centuries until it was accidentally discovered by a farmer digging a field in the eighteenth century. When excavation began, it became apparent that the eruption had captured a moment in time. Under the solid pumice were perfectly preserved buildings and artifacts, beautiful statues and frescoes whose colors were as vivid as the day they were painted.



Today, two thirds of Pompeii is uncovered and excavation continues – a slow, painstaking process often hampered by lack of funds. But those dedicated to uncovering this astonishing city continue with a passion, while Vesuvius, visible from every corner of Pompeii, looks on.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The Dogs

It's hard for any tourist visiting Pompeii to ignore the vast number of stray dogs who live in the ruined city. Many visitors have photographed them for personal web sites. They're scruffy, dusty mutts, but all seem happy, healthy and friendly. Some hang around hoping for a handout from a grazing tourist, some escape the afternoon heat by taking a nap in the shade of a column or an enclosed building, some trot up and down the cobbled streets with their own agenda. It was discovered that the tour guides pool money to feed the dogs – an interesting reflection of the Roman law that protected dogs from ill-treatment in ancient Pompeii.



As for the role dogs play in protecting property, little has changed in two thousand years. At the entrance to the 'House of the Tragic Poet' is the famous mosaic pavement depicting a growling Molossian, a breed of dog now extinct, restrained by a chain. Underneath are the words 'CAVE CANEM' – Latin for 'BEWARE OF THE DOG'.

On their first visit to Pompeii, the authors lunched at a sidewalk café outside the ruins and witnessed a small black dog with a carefully rehearsed begging act. This consisted of a calculated mournful expression coupled with a very slow tail-wag. He went from table to table hoping for a morsel of food. Occasionally a waiter chased him and the dog waited out of sight until the waiter was busy elsewhere, then returned to beg at another table.



On several occasions, the authors have driven the length of the Amalfi Drive, the most beautiful scenic drive in the world – 40 miles of hairpin bends carved into the steep, high cliffs overlooking the southern peninsula of the Bay of Naples.



On one of these excursions, ahead of their car was a motor scooter, one of hundreds negotiating the hair-raising twists and turns. Standing on the footboard of the scooter was a dignified Labrador Retriever. Head held high, he took the terrifying curves without flinching, merely leaning with the scooter when necessary. The sight of this dog, along with the friendly strays seen in Pompeii and the little black begging dog, suggested a title – it seemed like a good start: THE DOGS OF POMPEII. In time, a story evolved and seemed a natural fit for an adventure for young adults.

CHARACTERS AND PLOT

THE GIRL: Caroline, a girl of fifteen from New Jersey on her first visit to Italy.

THE DOG: Nero - a street-smart dog with a tendency to get into trouble.

THE BOY: Gianni - a teenage Italian boy who draws out the cultural differences between America and Italy as well as teenage gender issues.

THE ADULTS: Professor Garibaldi, Caroline's archaeologist uncle and his colleagues provide the adult point of view, often in conflict with teenage logic.

THE VILLAINS: Signor Macchiato, a ruthless businessman determined to destroy the ancient site for its real estate value, and his murderous henchman, Monocolo.

THE THUGS: Luigi and Bottiglione bumble their way around Pompeii capturing Pompeii's dogs on Macchiato's orders.

Nero the dog has been brought up by Fiammetta, the cook at the sidewalk restaurant. Her addiction to old movies on TV has rubbed off on Nero whose idol and role model is Humphrey Bogart.

The Professor's team, along with Caroline and Gianni, search for a Greek statue made of bronze, which has been buried for two thousand years. Historians suppose it to be one of the most beautiful figures ever created, and as an archaeological treasure, beyond value.

Macchiato is determined to destroy all evidence of the statue to further his plans to turn the excavation site into a theme park.

Meanwhile, the dogs of Pompeii are systematically removed from the city by the thugs and tagged for extermination.

Caroline, Gianni and Nero ride Giovanni's motor scooter in a perilous high-speed chase on the Amalfi Drive, as Monocolo tries to run them off the cliffs and into the sea.

The statue is stolen and Caroline is kidnapped by Macchiato – her escape aided by Nero.

An attempt is made on the professor's life.

Ultimately, in their efforts to save the statue from destruction, Caroline and Gianni are suspended a dizzying 100 feet above the flames of a blast furnace in which Macchiato intends to melt the statue.

THE WRITING PROCESS

Two voices tell the story: Caroline, committing the events to her journal, and Nero dictating his memoirs for canine posterity.

The authors contributed equally to the first person narrations of both Nero and Caroline. The writing process was concentrated into a three month period in which the authors spent eight hours a day at their respective keyboards, writing, rewriting, appending and eliminating, until the story was distilled into the right shape, the appropriate length and a form in which the plot constantly moves forward.

"All writing is rewriting" said Neil Simon – and the authors of *THE DOGS OF POMPEII* agree wholeheartedly. Often, one writer transferred a chapter to the other's computer and vice versa – then each would rewrite and refine the other's work. Sometimes, elements became superfluous and were eliminated – an entire chapter which seemed to hold up the plot was deleted prior to the initial publication of the first book by Random House – while other elements were added before the current publication by CreateSpace.

RESEARCH

Though the catastrophic events of 79 AD are told in only one chapter, they underline much of the present-day story and character motivation. The authors read countless histories of Pompeii to ensure the accuracy of this chapter, and consulted many maps to validate the geography of the area. Some illuminating books and essays on the psychology of dogs served to justify a great deal of Nero's thinking and behavior.

Some of the dogs in *The Dogs of Pompeii* leave the city to avoid being trapped by the dog catchers – an echo of the facts preceding the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD. While the human residents of the city ignored the warning earth tremors, the animals did not. The birds, and those dogs who were not restrained by chains, fled the city and it's supposed that some survived. The famous dog in the CAVE CANEM pavement, being chained, most likely perished.

THEMES

The story covers themes such as:

BIG BUSINESS and the destructive effect short-term profit can have on the environment and everyday human values.

CULTURE CLASH between American and European – Caroline and Gianni don't always see eye to eye. At first there's suspicion and mistrust, but as they join forces to solve a problem, they find common ground and mutual respect.

THE VALUE OF EXPLORING HISTORY – Two quotes used in the novel support this:

Gibbon: *'There's no better way of judging the future than by the past.'*

Santayana: *'Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.'*

It's appropriate to add one by Cicero: *'To know nothing of what happened before you were born is to remain forever a child.'*

THE VALUE OF LOYALTY between human and human and dog and human.

THE BENEFIT OF BEING BILINGUAL is best summed up by a line attributed to Charlemagne: *'To know another language is to possess another soul'* – in other words, to understand another culture and another point of view.

Italian phrases are sprinkled throughout the book. The authors have appended the text with a glossary and pronunciation guide in which these are explained.

DISCUSSION POINTS

THE NATURE OF VOLCANOES – Could you have survived the Pompeii eruption? How?

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES – Caroline is thrust into another culture where values are different to the ones she knows. How would you react to being in a country where you knew little of the language? Would you attempt to learn their language, or try to make them understand yours?

BIG BUSINESS – Does it enhance your life or erode it? Is there good ‘Big Business’ as well as bad?

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DOG AND MAN – How long has this been going on? How did it come about? Are dogs of benefit to mankind? How? Do we really understand dogs – do they really understand us?

THE VALUE OF ARCHAEOLOGY – How important is it to know the history of this or any past civilization? What do we learn from ancient artifacts? How can we apply knowledge of the past to the present?

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

The following web sites offer an introduction to Pompeii, past and present:

THE OFFICIAL SITE OF THE SUPERINTENDANT OF ARCHEOLOGY OF POMPEII

<http://www.pompeiiisites.org/>

THE DISCOVERY CHANNEL

<http://dsc.discovery.com/convergence/pompeii/pompeii.html>

PICTURES AND HISTORY OF POMPEII – a private site

<http://www.jhauser.us/pictures/history/Romans/Pompeii/>

PHOTOS OF POMPEII taken by tourists

<http://www.roman-empire.net/articles/article-017.html>

PHOTOS OF POMPEII by visitors

http://wings.buffalo.edu/AandL/Maecenas/italy_except_rome_and_sicily/pompeii/thumbnails_contents.html

EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT OF 79AD ERUPTION

<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/pompeii.htm>

POMPEII – STORIES FROM AN ERUPTION

<http://www.fieldmuseum.org/pompeii/index.html>

THE DOGS OF POMPEII is the first of three adventures featuring Caroline, Gianni and Nero. The others are:

NERO GOES TO ROME

NERO AND THE LOST CITY

* * *