

I survived extract #2

The Destruction of Pompeii AD, 79 by Lauen Tarshis

Tata was breathing. Marcus could see that. But then why didn't he open his eyes? Why didn't Tata answer when Marcus called his name? The rock seemed to have knocked him into a deep and terrible sleep, and Marcus could not wake him up.

The storm of rocks continued. Flaming boulders whooshed through the sky, their explosions booming all around. Somehow Marcus managed to drag Tata through the rocks. With a strength he never knew he had, he hoisted Tata up the five stairs that led through the temple's open doorway. He laid Tata on the cold stone floor and collapsed next to him.

Hours passed before Tata's eyes finally fluttered open, and even longer before the fog cleared from his eyes and he could sit up. With each passing minute, it seemed, the mountain's fury grew stronger. The booming and whooshing and thundering and pounding had melded together into a bone-rattling roar. The walls of the temple shook and groaned. They were running out of time, Marcus knew. And then suddenly Tata turned to him.

He took Marcus's hand. "My dear son, it is time for you to go," he said.

"I know," Marcus said. "As soon as you're strong enough we can ----"

"No," Tata interrupted. "I'll never make it to the gates. But if you go now you'll still have a chance."

It took a moment for Marcus to understand what Tata was saying: that Marcus should escape by himself.