

NOW OR NEVER

Pompeii 79AD, the sun shone bright streaks of light through the scattered clouds, turning the sky surrounding the city an amber shade of orange and causing bright twinkles along the waves of the city. Merchant ships from all around the Mediterranean Sea could be seen from all angles of the Gulf of Naples. The streets around the market area were packed to the brim with townspeople, tradesmen, farmers, even some soldiers who were on leave for the day. Pompeii was a busy, lively city where you might meet a trader from the Far East, India or Arabia trading rare artefacts from his country or hear news on a stormy day that a merchant ship full of valuable goods had run aground by the beach and was ripe for looting. The busyness in Pompeii was very different today. Yes, there were a couple of merchant ships from the Far East or elsewhere for the townspeople to barter and haggle with, for the stunning beautiful artefacts from the far east, but the main reason was because recently Mount Vesuvius had been shaking the towns and valleys in somehow a more powerful and ominous way and many farmers, powerful townspeople and merchants were evacuating the city with their families and close

friends or employees. For many suspected that the increases in rumbles and cracks from Mount Vesuvius might mean that the Gods' plans for this region of the great Roman Empire were not good. Others who could not afford to leave the area around Mount Vesuvius or those whose fate would be terrible if they left their land just prayed and left more gifts at the temples or shrines as their only way of preventing the inevitable from happening. Aneans never was the religious type of person who would swear that they would do anything for the sake of the gods and all that complicated stuff that he would hear the older men say whenever he visited a shrine. It wasn't that he was unfaithful to the will of the gods, it was just that the thought of gods and all the legends of the gods and the great power they wielded never really popped into his head as often as other people he knew . Aneans was in his study examining the philosophy of Aristotle when the ground around him began to rumble and crack and he began hearing the screams of passers-by. He stepped outside upon his balcony gripping the wall with every step. He gazed down on the street below, watching as people began sprinting in the direction of the port. Others just watched in horror in the direction of Mount Vesuvius. Earlier on one of the pots on the shelf beside his table had fallen and smashed on his

head when the shaking started so when Aneans stood in horror gazing down on the street he could see black blobs on the edge of his eyes and could not focus on anything for that long . Aneans slowly turned his head up, and there it was Mount Vesuvius. An ominous cloud hung over the mouth of the volcano with much lava flowing out through the sides and cracks of the volcano. The edge of the city was hit with a dust cloud which sent a powerful shock wave in the direction of the port. Aneans could just figure out what was happening when the shock wave broke the support beams of his balcony causing him to fall down to the street . Barely half a minute later a dust wave sent Aneans smashing into the side of a pillar breaking his ribs . Aneans opened his eyes and groaned in pain. On his side of the street he could make out the top of the volcano and he could spot boulders shooting out of the top of it. He desperately tried with all his remaining strength to lift himself up off the ground but it was pointless as his ribs were broken and even if he could run how long would it be until one of those boulders from the volcano would crush him into nothing. He kept on convincing himself that he was just having an anxiety attack and that he could make it if he ran like he had never run before. He repeatedly said to himself “come on it’s now or never” but by this point he was

the only one on the street and he felt a terrible fear worse than anything he had ever experienced in his life. He just lay there petrified, waiting for the inevitable to happen. Less than a minute later he watched in horror as the street beyond his feet began being smashed to bits by boulders. He made one last desperate attempt to stand onto his feet but he couldn't. As he watched the boulders smash closer he cried out to himself one last time "COME ON, IT'S NOW OR NEVER!"

The End.