

Adventures in
ODYSSEY

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY PRESENTS

16

THE IMAGINATION STATION



Doomsday in Pompeii

MARIANNE HERING • PAUL McCUSKER



Doomsday in Pompeii

BOOK 16

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**FOCUS ON THE FAMILY • ADVENTURES IN ODYSSEY®
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To Chase

—MKH

Doomsday in Pompeii

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Contents

1	Eugene	1
2	The Dog	10
3	Beth	24
4	Pompeii	32
5	Lost?	40
6	The Laptop	50
7	The Soap Shop	60
8	Explosion	68
9	The Old Car	78
10	The Villa	89
11	<i>Cave Canem</i>	97
12	The Temple	104
13	The Tree	112
14	Escape	120
15	The Lava	128
	Secret Word Puzzle	138



Eugene



Gray clouds covered the Odyssey sky. The misty morning drizzle had turned to rain.

Patrick stopped on the sidewalk. He pulled up the hood on his sweatshirt.

Patrick was on his way to the public library to meet Beth. But the rain changed his mind. Whit's End was closer. And more fun.

Patrick took a quick right and jogged to the front door. Suddenly the sky flashed

DOOMSDAY IN POMPEII

orange and white with lightning.

Patrick silently counted, One Mississippi.
Two Mississippi . . .

Boom! The thunder came.

The lightning was less than a mile away.

Patrick pushed open the door. He heard the bell above the door jingle. He also heard a familiar voice.

“Greetings,” said Eugene Meltsner. Eugene often worked at the ice-cream counter at Whit’s End. Today he was fixing a large blender.

There were no other guests in the ice-cream shop. The storm must have kept people at home. He set his backpack under a table. Then he pushed back his hood.

“Hi, Eugene,” Patrick said. “Where is Mr. Whittaker?”

Eugene

Mr. Whittaker, also called Whit, owned Whit's End. He was an older, mysterious inventor.

"Mr. Whittaker is attending a board meeting for the Universal Press Foundation," Eugene said.

"Does that mean he's not here?" Patrick asked.

"Yes," Eugene said. "Mr. Whittaker is required to attend all strategic gatherings."

Eugene liked to use big words in long sentences.

"So he's not here," Patrick said. He wanted to make sure.

"He is not." Eugene smiled. "May I assist you in Mr. Whittaker's absence?" he asked.

"I don't know," Patrick said. "I need help with a report for school. It's about soccer."

"I know more about sports than some

DOOMSDAY IN POMPEII

people suspect,” Eugene said. “Or you could use one of our computers to access the Internet as a research tool.”

Patrick shook his head. “My teacher, Mrs. McNeill, said we can’t use the Internet.”

Eugene asked. “So you may use only books?”

“What else is there?” Patrick asked.

Eugene adjusted his large, round glasses. He picked up the blender. “Well, Mr. Whittaker has created a few options,” he said. “Come with me.”

Eugene led Patrick to the workshop in the basement of Whit’s End. That was where Whit tinkered with many of his inventions.

One of those inventions was called the Imagination Station. It was kind of like a time machine.

“Are you familiar with the Imagination

Eugene

Station?” Eugene asked. He set the blender on a table.

Patrick walked over to the invention. It looked like the front end of a helicopter. “I’ve been in it a few times,” Patrick said, smiling.

“Perhaps we can program the Imagination Station to assist your research about soccer,” Eugene said. “What would you like to know?”

“I’m writing about the very first World Cup event,” Patrick said.

“Ah yes,” Eugene said. “That was in the thirties, I believe. I’ll input the program.”

“Thanks!” Patrick said. He pushed a button, and the door slid open. He climbed inside the machine.

The dashboard twinkled with different colored lights. He sat in one of the two seats. The empty seat reminded him that

DOOMSDAY IN POMPEII

his cousin Beth wasn't there. He felt funny about that.

The cousins had been on many exciting adventures in the Imagination Station. They had opened an ancient Egyptian tomb. They had battled a dark knight. They had even caught a spy for George Washington.

Patrick knew Beth wouldn't mind missing a trip like this. She didn't care about soccer.

Patrick peeked out through the open door.

Eugene stood at a



Eugene

nearby workstation. He tapped the keys on a laptop computer. He said, “The first World Cup was in 1930 in the country of . . .”

“Brazil?” Patrick asked, guessing.

“No,” Eugene said. “Uru—”

Just then, there was a *boom*. The lights in the workshop flickered. Then they turned bright again.

“That was close,” Patrick said. “Are we safe?” He thought about his parents at home. They were probably unplugging all the appliances and technical equipment.

Eugene moved to a wall. He flung open a metal panel. “We have surge protectors for the entire shop,” he said. “Several lightning rods have also been installed.”

Another *kaboom* rocked Whit’s End.

The lights flickered again. This time the room was dark for three or four seconds.

DOOMSDAY IN POMPEII

Then the lights came on and stayed on.

“The city could lose power. But we have a large propane tank outside,” Eugene said.

“The tank is attached to that generator,” Eugene told Patrick. He pointed to a long machine on wheels. “When the electricity goes off, the propane-powered generator kicks in. The emergency power is already hooked up to the workshop. It’s as good as using normal electricity.”

Patrick was impressed. “You guys have thought of everything,” he said.

“We do our best,” Eugene said. He returned to the laptop and began typing. “Are you ready for the first World Cup in Uruguay?” he asked.

Patrick leaned back in the seat. “I’m ready! Just don’t tell me who wins. I want to be surprised.”

Eugene

Eugene chuckled. He pressed a button. The door sealed shut.

Patrick reached forward and pushed the red button.

The machine started to shake. It rumbled. Then he heard a loud sound as if someone had popped a bike tire.

The lights on the Imagination Station's dashboard flashed wildly. The needles on the meters swung back and forth. *Was that lightning?* he wondered.

Suddenly everything went dark.

