I am writing this story for anyone in the future who may stumble across it, and also to help keep me from going insane. I will tell you what I know has happened so far, or at least what I remember. Last I remember, I was sitting in my high school history class. We were learning about ancient Rome, specifically the ancient city of Pompeii. In the middle of the lecture, I began to feel nauseous and dizzy so I stood up to go to the school nurse. As I was walking towards the door, the dizziness intensified and my vision went black. Next thing I know, I woke up in what was some sort of back alley with cobblestone roads and buildings. There was what looked like a huge mountain in the distance and people somewhere nearby speaking however they are not speaking English, yet I could still understand them. I slowly stood up and walked out onto a main road.

There were small houses and buildings along the street. Painted on these buildings was what looked like graffiti, completed in vibrant colors. The graffiti seemed like advertisements. Some of them sponsored candidates running in local elections and others had announcements regarding upcoming games and events.[[1]](#endnote-1) The streets also had many vendors lining the street selling a variety of food. I walked up to one particular vendor selling vegetables from his cart and pointed to the mountain looming in the distance. “What is the name of that mountain?” I asked him. He informed that it was Mount Vesuvius. I knew that Mt. Vesuvius was no mountain, it was a volcano. I also knew that it was the one that erupted and destroyed Pompeii. I thanked him and moved on, beginning to panic even more and curious to find out the year. As I was weaving through the crowd, I saw a familiar face. It made me stop in my tracks because when I saw the man, the name Julius popped into my mind and I knew I had seen him before. However, I was extremely confused by this because I just woke up here and I did not think it possible to know anyone here. I had never seen him before yet I had the strongest feeling that I have and I knew his name somehow. When he saw me, he shouted, “Lucia! My wife”, and came running towards me. I could barely comprehend what he just said. Wife? This means I am married to him. It was safe to assume Lucia was my name. I began feeling faint again but Julius, somehow my husband, caught me in time before I fell. I guess I have my own life and family here. I did not think this was possible. I must’ve been dreaming so I tried pinching my arm to wake myself up. He could tell I was not feeling well so he went over to a local shop and bought me some bread and goat’s milk to eat in order to restore my energy.[[2]](#endnote-2) After I ate, Julius pulled me up and informed me we must go to the baths in the forum.

We began walking towards the giant marble arches in the distance that marked the forum. As we walked, I noticed out of the corner of my eye one man and one woman that were following us. They looked lower class so I quietly asked Julius who they were. He laughed at me like I was crazy and told me that they were our slaves, of course. We entered the forum and headed towards a building with multiple doors which was the forum baths. Before entering, Julius turned towards the female slave and said, “Domitia, keep a close eye on Lucia. She is not feeling well today”. Domitia must have been her name. Julius and his slave headed into one door and Domitia and I went in another.

We walked through a narrow corridor that lead us into a changing room. There were several women already in there undressing and putting their clothes into wardrobes. I looked up and noticed that the ceiling had a skylight and there were beautiful decorations all around the ceiling and walls. I slowly undressed, just now realizing that the clothes I was wearing fit the time period and were not the clothes I was wearing from my last normal memory at school. We entered through a door in the changing room into a square room with a circular pool in the center. I entered the water with Domitia following. The water was absolutely freezing. We stayed for a few short minutes before moving on. The cold was painful. The next room we entered was the warm bath. We stayed here longer than the cool bath. This room was just as beautifully decorated as the last. There was beautiful stucco artwork on the walls and ceilings and a lot of marble. I followed the lead of a woman who entered the bath right before us. She got up to leave and I waited a few seconds before moving on as well. I was not sure how long we were supposed to stay in one of the baths. The third and final room was the hot bath. I enjoyed this one the most, it reminded me of hot tubs back home. The only difference was that everyone was naked, and this was not home. In this room, there was also a small cold bath in case anyone needed to cool off.[[3]](#endnote-3) After some time, we redressed and left the baths and headed back into the forum, where Julius and his slave were waiting.

The forum was fascinating. The architecture and artwork was astonishingly beautiful. The forum was also full of different religious temples, public buildings, and the economic buildings. I could not stop looking around in awe as we walked through it. We headed back out of the forum and down a few smaller roads. We returned to what I believed to be our home in the Villa of the Mysteries.[[4]](#endnote-4) There was artwork all over the place. One painting in particular caught my eye. It was of a woman kneeling on the ground holding a cloth that is covering a veiled phallus and there is a torch on her shoulder lighting up the scene. Underneath her rested a basket of some sort.[[5]](#endnote-5) I could not tell if she had just placed the cloth over the phallus or if she was about to remove it. I wandered through the house, taking in all the artwork and design of our kitchen, living room, dining room, and then out into the garden. The floors were a beautiful mosaic and there was marble everywhere. Due to the huge amount of artwork in homes and outside and in the city, I could tell that it played a huge role in society. All of the décor appeared to be very well thought out and specific. I noticed that a lot of artwork included the God, Dionysus. In the garden, there were several statues of Dionysus. There were also many paintings of the God in different rooms throughout the house.[[6]](#endnote-6) Mixed in with the artwork, I was surprised at the number of portraits of women.

After settling in, Domitia came up to me and asked if it was okay if she and Sergius went out to play Trigon.[[7]](#endnote-7) I must have looked confused when she said the name Sergius because she then pointed to Julius’s slave. Sergius must be his name. I did not know what trigon was, but I allowed them to go play anyways. They went outside and meet with what seemed like another slave. The three of them began playing a ball game of some sort. They had multiple balls and they began throwing and catching them.[[8]](#endnote-8) The three of them all stood in a triangular formation and began throwing the balls towards one another. I was intrigued by this game so I watched through a window in our house. Spectators, whom looked like other slaves, came out and began watching and cheering them on as they played. One slave would write in the sand with his finger every now and then which seemed like he was keeping score of this particular ballgame. I tried to catch on to how the game worked. It seemed that every time one of them dropped a ball, the other players got a point. They all looked so happy and were laughing at each other and taunting one another. I caught myself laughing at time watching them play. There was a part of me that wanted to go out and join them, but I did not think it was the socially acceptable thing to do considering only the slaves were playing.

We stayed at our home for what felt like a few hours. I did not have any clock to read the time. I began to cry a little bit because I missed modern technology and modern food. I had no idea how long I would be stuck here. Later in the day, Julius and I decided to walk back to the forum to purchase some goods. I was beginning to get hungry and I believe it was somewhere around dinner time. The sun was low in the sky and the temperature was cooling. He wanted to purchase food and I was looking to purchase some new jewelry. Domitia and I split off from Julius and Sergius and began looking at the many things vendors in the forum were selling. After a few minutes with no luck, the ground started trembling. People started screaming and ran out from buildings in the forum, while others ran inside buildings for protection. The shaking intensified and everyone panicked thinking it was an earthquake. I knew what was about to happen. I looked up towards Mount Vesuvius and saw what I did not want to see. Black smoke was billowing out of the volcano and chunks of rock began shooting out and raining down on Pompeii as Vesuvius began to erupt. I looked around frantically for Julius and his slave but I could not find them in the sea of frantic people. I grabbed Domitia's hand and told her to run. We joined the wave of people running away from Mount Vesuvius as lava began firing out of the volcano. The lava was moving down at an extremely fast rate and it had already reached Pompeii. The lava and ash began swallowing the city. The lava was moving faster than people could run so many civilians had already died. I still had no sight of Julius and I was still clutching onto Domitia. I stopped and looked behind me and saw the lava was even closer. People were falling and screaming. I saw women clutching their children to their chests trying to get away. Some were hiding in buildings and behind other structures hoping it would shield them from the lava. I witnessed people falling into fetal position as the lava washed over them. I was horrified because I knew how this would end. I did not know how I got here and I did not want this to be the way I died. I wanted to see my real family one more time. I wished I was back to my real home in modern day times. I began sobbing and Domitia then began pulling me away from the lava. As soon as I turned around, I saw Julius running towards me, Sergius nowhere to be seen. Julius grabbed my other arm and we began running again. The lava was quickly approaching us and time was running out. Volcanic rocks were raining down around us. A rock roughly the size of my fist came down and hit Domitia in the head and she fell down. I screamed and turned around but it was too late. People running behind us already trampled over her and she was gone. My hand slipped from Julius’ grip and he got lost in the crowd. The lava was only a few feet back from me at this point. I panicked and started sprinting and pushing through the crowd in an attempt to catch back up with him. As I ran, I noticed a little boy running through the crowd screaming for his mother. He saw me and must have mistaken me for his mother because he ran straight at me with his arms wide open. I did not have time to react and he grabbed my leg before I realized it. I flew forward and landed on my chest. I tried to get up but people kept running over top of me. I looked back and saw the little boy staring at me, pure terror on his face. The lava washed over him and I closed my eyes so I did not have to watch. I screamed and pulled myself into fetal position as I felt the searing pain hit my feet and travel up my body.

I felt a cold hand touch my forehead. I opened my eyes and jolted awake. I was back, back in my school and back in normal time. I looked around me and took in my surroundings. I was back in my high school and I was laying on a cot in the clinic. The school nurse felt my forehead and got me a glass of water. I was still panicking from fear of what just happened. She could tell I was confused so she explained what happened. When I stood up in my history class feeling sick, I fainted and hit the back of my head against another student’s desk. Everything that just happened to me must have all been a dream. I decided to keep it to myself and not tell anyone what I experienced. If I told my parents, they would probably send me to a psychiatric hospital.

1. Steven L.Tuck, “Scheduling Spectacle: Factors Contributing to the Dates of Pompeian ‘munera’”. *The Classical Journal* 104 (2). (The Classical Association of the Middle West and South, 2009), 123–43. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Keith Hopkins, *A World Full of Gods: The Strange Triumph of Christianity* (New York: The Penguin Group, 1999), 11. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid., 17-19. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Karen Polinger Foster, 2001. “Dionysos and Vesuvius in the Villa of the Mysteries”. *Antike Kunst* 44. (Vereinigung der Freunde Antiker Kunst, 2001), 37–54.  [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Ibid., 38. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Shelley Hales, “Dionysos at Pompeii”. *British School at Athens Studies* 15. (British School at Athens, 2007), 335–41. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Rebecca R, Benefiel, “Amianth, a Ball-game, and Making One's Mark CIL IV 1936 and 1936a”. *Zeitschrift Für Papyrologie Und Epigraphik* 167. (Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, Bonn (Germany), 2008), 193–200 [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Ibid., 193. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)