

# JENNIE HALL

BURIED CITIES,

VOLUME 1:

POMPEII

Jennie Hall

**Buried Cities, Volume 1: Pompeii**

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## **Buried Cities, Volume 1: Pompeii**

**BURIED CITIES**  
**BY**  
**JENNIE HALL**

The publishers are grateful to the estate of Miss Jennie Hall and to her many friends for assistance in planning the publication of this book. Especial thanks are due to Miss Nell C. Curtis of the Lincoln School, New York City, for helping to finish Miss Hall's work of choosing the pictures, and to Miss Irene I. Cleaves of the Francis Parker School, Chicago, who wrote the captions. It was Miss Katharine Taylor, now of the Shady Hill School, Cambridge, who brought these stories to our attention.

## **FOREWORD: TO BOYS AND GIRLS**

Do you like to dig for hidden treasure? Have you ever found Indian arrowheads or Indian pottery? I knew a boy who was digging a cave in a sandy place, and he found an Indian grave. With his own hands he uncovered the bones and skull of some brave warrior. That brown skull was more precious to him than a mint of money. Another boy I knew was making a cave of his own. Suddenly he dug into an older one made years before. He crawled into it with a leaping heart and began to explore. He found an old carpet and a bit of burned candle. They proved that some one had lived there. What kind of a man had he been and what kind of life had he lived—black or white or red, robber or beggar or adventurer? Some of us were walking in the woods one day when we saw a bone sticking out of the ground. Luckily we had a spade, and we set to work digging. Not one moment was the tool idle. First one bone and then another came to light and among them a perfect horse's skull. We felt as though we had rescued Captain Kidd's treasure, and we went home draped in bones.

Suppose that instead of finding the bones of a horse we had uncovered a gold-wrapped king. Suppose that instead of a deserted cave that boy had dug into a whole buried city with theaters and mills and shops and beautiful houses. Suppose that instead of picking up an Indian arrowhead you could find old golden vases and crowns and bronze swords lying in the earth. If you could be a digger and a finder and could choose your find, would you choose a marble statue or a buried bakeshop with bread two thousand years old still in the oven or a king's grave filled with golden gifts? It is of such digging and such finding that this book tells.

## POMPEII



Line Art of Bronze Lamp. Caption: *Bronze Lamps*.  
The bowl held olive oil. A wick came out at the nozzle.  
These lamps gave a dim and smoky light.

## THE GREEK SLAVE AND THE LITTLE ROMAN BOY

Ariston, the Greek slave, was busily painting. He stood in a little room with three smooth walls. The fourth side was open upon a court. A little fountain splashed there. Above stretched the brilliant sky of Italy. The August sun shone hotly down. It cut sharp shadows of the columns on the cement floor. This was the master's room. The artist was painting the walls. Two were already gay with pictures. They showed the mighty deeds of warlike Herakles. Here was Herakles strangling the lion, Herakles killing the hideous hydra, Herakles carrying the wild boar on his shoulders, Herakles training the mad horses. But now the boy was painting the best deed of all—Herakles saving Alcestis from death. He had made the hero big and beautiful. The strong muscles lay smooth in the great body. One hand trailed the club. On the other arm hung the famous lion skin. With that hand the god led Alcestis. He turned his head toward her and smiled. On the ground lay Death, bruised and bleeding. One batlike black wing hung broken. He scowled after the hero and the woman. In the sky above him stood Apollo, the lord of life, looking down. But the picture of the god was only half finished. The figure was sketched in outline. Ariston was rapidly laying on paint with his little brushes. His eyes glowed with Apollo's own fire. His lips were open, and his breath came through them pantingly.

"O god of beauty, god of Hellas, god of freedom, help me!" he half whispered while his brush worked.

For he had a great plan in his mind. Here he was, a slave in this rich Roman's house. Yet he was a free-born son of Athens, from a family of painters. Pirates had brought him here to Pompeii, and had sold him as a slave. His artist's skill had helped him, even in this cruel land. For his master, Tetreius, loved beauty. The Roman had soon found that his young Greek slave was a painter. He had said to his steward:

"Let this boy work at the mill no longer. He shall paint the walls of my private room."

So he had talked to Ariston about what the pictures should be. The Greek had found that this solemn, frowning Roman was really a kind man. Then hope had sprung up in his breast and had sung of freedom.

"I will do my best to please him," he had thought. "When all the walls are beautiful, perhaps he will smile at my work. Then I will clasp his knees. I will tell him of my father, of Athens, of how I was stolen. Perhaps he will send me home."

Now the painting was almost done. As he worked, a thousand pictures were flashing through his mind. He saw his beloved old home in lovely Athens. He felt his father's hand on his, teaching him to paint. He gazed again at the Parthenon, more beautiful than a dream. Then he saw himself playing on the fishing boat on that terrible holiday. He saw the pirate ship sail swiftly from behind a rocky point and pounce upon them. He saw himself and his friends dragged aboard. He felt the tight rope on his wrists as they bound him and threw him under the deck. He saw himself standing here in the market place of Pompeii. He heard himself sold for a slave. At that thought he threw down his brush and groaned.

But soon he grew calmer. Perhaps the sweet drip of the fountain cooled his hot thoughts. Perhaps the soft touch of the sun soothed his heart. He took up his brushes again and set to work.

"The last figure shall be the most beautiful of all," he said to himself. "It is my own god, Apollo."

So he worked tenderly on the face. With a few little strokes he made the mouth smile kindly. He made the blue eyes deep and gentle. He lifted the golden curls with a little breeze from Olympos. The god's smile cheered him. The beautiful colors filled his mind. He forgot his sorrows. He forgot everything but his picture. Minute by minute it grew under his moving brush. He smiled into the god's eyes.

Meantime a great noise arose in the house. There were cries of fear. There was running of feet.

"A great cloud!" "Earthquake!" "Fire and hail!" "Smoke from hell!" "The end of the world!"  
"Run! Run!"

And men and women, all slaves, ran screaming through the house and out of the front door. But the painter only half heard the cries. His ears, his eyes, his thoughts were full of Apollo.

For a little the house was still. Only the fountain and the shadows and the artist's brush moved there. Then came a great noise as though the sky had split open. The low, sturdy house trembled. Ariston's brush was shaken and blotted Apollo's eye. Then there was a clattering on the cement floor as of a million arrows. Ariston ran into the court. From the heavens showered a hail of gray, soft little pebbles like beans. They burned his upturned face. They stung his bare arms. He gave a cry and ran back under the porch roof. Then he heard a shrill call above all the clattering. It came from the far end of the house. Ariston ran back into the private court. There lay Caius, his master's little sick son. His couch was under the open sky, and the gray hail was pelting down upon him. He was covering his head with his arms and wailing.

"Little master!" called Ariston. "What is it? What has happened to us?" "Oh, take me!" cried the little boy.

"Where are the others?" asked Ariston.

"They ran away," answered Caius. "They were afraid, Look! O-o-h!"

He pointed to the sky and screamed with terror.

Ariston looked. Behind the city lay a beautiful hill, green with trees. But now from the flat top towered a huge, black cloud. It rose straight like a pine tree and then spread its black branches over the heavens. And from that cloud showered these hot, pelting pebbles of pumice stone.

"It is a volcano," cried Ariston.

He had seen one spouting fire as he had voyaged on the pirate ship.

"I want my father," wailed the little boy.

Then Ariston remembered that his master was away from home. He had gone in a ship to Rome to get a great physician for his sick boy. He had left Caius in the charge of his nurse, for the boy's mother was dead. But now every slave had turned coward and had run away and left the little master to die.

Ariston pulled the couch into one of the rooms. Here the roof kept off the hail of stones.

"Your father is expected home to-day, master Caius," said the Greek. "He will come. He never breaks his word. We will wait for him here. This strange shower will soon be over."

So he sat on the edge of the couch, and the little Roman laid his head in his slave's lap and sobbed. Ariston watched the falling pebbles. They were light and full of little holes. Every now and then black rocks of the size of his head whizzed through the air. Sometimes one fell into the open cistern and the water hissed at its heat. The pebbles lay piled a foot deep all over the courtyard floor. And still they fell thick and fast.

"Will it never stop?" thought Ariston.

Several times the ground swayed under him. It felt like the moving of a ship in a storm. Once there was thunder and a trembling of the house. Ariston was looking at a little bronze statue that stood on a tall, slender column. It tottered to and fro in the earthquake. Then it fell, crashing into the piled-up stones. In a few minutes the falling shower had covered it.

Ariston began to be more afraid. He thought of Death as he had painted him in his picture. He imagined that he saw him hiding behind a column. He thought he heard his cruel laugh. He tried to look up toward the mountain, but the stones pelted him down. He felt terribly alone. Was all the rest of the world dead? Or was every one else in some safe place?

"Come, Caius, we must get away," he cried. "We shall be buried here."

He snatched up one of the blankets from the couch. He threw the ends over his shoulders and let a loop hang at his back. He stood the sick boy in this and wound the ends around them both. Caius was tied to his slave's back. His heavy little head hung on Ariston's shoulder. Then the Greek tied a

pillow over his own head. He snatched up a staff and ran from the house. He looked at his picture as he passed. He thought he saw Death half rise from the ground. But Apollo seemed to smile at his artist.

At the front door Ariston stumbled. He found the street piled deep with the gray, soft pebbles. He had to scramble up on his hands and knees. From the house opposite ran a man. He looked wild with fear. He was clutching a little statue of gold. Ariston called to him, "Which way to the gate?"

But the man did not hear. He rushed madly on. Ariston followed him. It cheered the boy a little to see that somebody else was still alive in the world. But he had a hard task. He could not run. The soft pebbles crunched under his feet and made him stumble. He leaned far forward under his heavy burden. The falling shower scorched his bare arms and legs. Once a heavy stone struck him on his cushioned head, and he fell. But he was up in an instant. He looked around bewildered. His head was ringing. The air was hot and choking. The sun was gone. The shower was blinding. Whose house was this? The door stood open. The court was empty. Where was the city gate? Would he never get out? He did not know this street. Here on the corner was a wine shop with its open sides. But no men stood there drinking. Wine cups were tipped over and broken on the marble counter. Ariston stood in a daze and watched the wine spilling into the street.

Then a crowd came rushing past him. It was evidently a family fleeing for their lives. Their mouths were open as though they were crying. But Ariston could not hear their voices. His ears shook with the roar of the mountain. An old man was hugging a chest. Gold coins were spilling out as he ran. Another man was dragging a fainting woman. A young girl ran ahead of them with white face and streaming hair. Ariston stumbled on after this company. A great black slave came swiftly around a corner and ran into him and knocked him over, but fled on without looking back. As the Greek boy fell forward, the rough little pebbles scoured his face. He lay there moaning. Then he began to forget his troubles. His aching body began to rest. He thought he would sleep. He saw Apollo smiling. Then Caius struggled and cried out. He pulled at the blanket and tried to free himself. This roused Ariston, and he sat up. He felt the hot pebbles again. He heard the mountain roar. He dragged himself to his feet and started on. Suddenly the street led him out into a broad space. Ariston looked around him. All about stretched wide porches with their columns. Temple roofs rose above them. Statues stood high on their pedestals. He was in the forum. The great open square was crowded with hurrying people. Under one of the porches Ariston saw the money changers locking their boxes. From a wide doorway ran several men. They were carrying great bundles of woolen cloth, richly embroidered and dyed with precious purple. Down the great steps of Jupiter's temple ran a priest. Under his arms he clutched two large platters of gold. Men were running across the forum dragging bags behind them.

Every one seemed trying to save his most precious things. And every one was hurrying to the gate at the far end. Then that was the way out! Ariston picked up his heavy feet and ran. Suddenly the earth swayed under him. He heard horrible thunder. He thought the mountain was falling upon him. He looked behind. He saw the columns of the porch tottering. A man was running out from one of the buildings. But as he ran, the walls crashed down. The gallery above fell cracking. He was buried. Ariston saw it all and cried out in horror. Then he prayed:

"O Lord Poseidon, shaker of the earth, save me! I am a Greek!"

Then he came out of the forum. A steep street sloped down to a gate. A river of people was pouring out there. The air was full of cries. The great noise of the crowd made itself heard even in the noise of the volcano. The streets were full of lost treasures. Men pushed and fell and were trodden upon. But at last Ariston passed through the gateway and was out of the city. He looked about.

"It is no better," he sobbed to himself.

The air was thicker now. The shower had changed to hot dust as fine as ashes. It blurred his eyes. It stopped his nostrils. It choked his lungs. He tore his chiton from top to bottom and wrapped it about his mouth and nose. He looked back at Caius and pulled the blanket over his head. Behind him a huge cloud was reaching out long black arms from the mountain to catch him. Ahead, the sun was only a red wafer in the shower of ashes. Around him people were running off to hide under

rocks or trees or in the country houses. Some were running, running anywhere to get away. Out of one courtyard dashed a chariot. The driver was lashing his horses. He pushed them ahead through the crowd. He knocked people over, but he did not stop to see what harm he had done. Curses flew after him. He drove on down the road.

Ariston remembered when he himself had been dragged up here two years ago from the pirate ship.

"This leads to the sea," he thought. "I will go there. Perhaps I shall meet my master, Tetreius. He will come by ship. Surely I shall find him. The gods will send him to me. O blessed gods!"

But what a sea! It roared and tossed and boiled. While Ariston looked, a ship was picked up and crushed and swallowed. The sea poured up the steep shore for hundreds of feet. Then it rushed back and left its strange fish gasping on the dry land. Great rocks fell from the sky, and steam rose up as they splashed into the water. The sun was growing fainter. The black cloud was coming on. Soon it would be dark. And then what? Ariston lay down where the last huge wave had cooled the ground. "It is all over, Caius," he murmured. "I shall never see Athens again."

For a while there were no more earthquakes. The sea grew a little less wild. Then the half-fainting Ariston heard shouts. He lifted his head. A small boat had come ashore. The rowers had leaped out. They were dragging it up out of reach of the waves.

"How strange!" thought Ariston. "They are not running away. They must be brave. We are all cowards."

"Wait for me here!" cried a lordly voice to the rowers.

When he heard that voice Ariston struggled to his feet and called.

"Marcus Tetreius! Master!"

He saw the man turn and run toward him. Then the boy toppled over and lay face down in the ashes.

When he came to himself he felt a great shower of water in his face. The burden was gone from his back. He was lying in a row boat, and the boat was falling to the bottom of the sea. Then it was flung up to the skies. Tetreius was shouting orders. The rowers were streaming with sweat and sea water.

In some way or other they all got up on the waiting ship. It always seemed to Ariston as though a wave had thrown him there. Or had Poseidon carried him? At any rate, the great oars of the galley were flying. He could hear every rower groan as he pulled at his oar. The sails, too, were spread. The master himself stood at the helm. His face was one great frown. The boat was flung up and down like a ball. Then fell darkness blacker than night.

"Who can steer without sun or stars?" thought the boy.

Then he remembered the look on his master's face as he stood at the tiller. Such a look Ariston had painted on Herakles' face as he strangled the lion.

"He will get us out," thought the slave.

For an hour the swift ship fought with the waves. The oarsmen were rowing for their lives. The master's arm was strong, and his heart was not for a minute afraid. The wind was helping. At last they reached calm waters.

"Thanks be to the gods!" cried Tetreius. "We are out of that boiling pot."

At his words fire shot out of the mountain. It glowed red in the dusty air. It flung great red arms across the sky after the ship. Every man and spar and oar on the vessel seemed burning in its light. Then the fire died, and thick darkness swallowed everything. Ariston's heart seemed smothered in his breast. He heard the slaves on the rowers' benches scream with fear. Then he heard their leader crying to them. He heard a whip whiz through the air and strike on bare shoulders. Then there was a crash as though the mountain had clapped its hands. A thicker shower of ashes filled the air. But the rowers were at their oars again. The ship was flying.

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