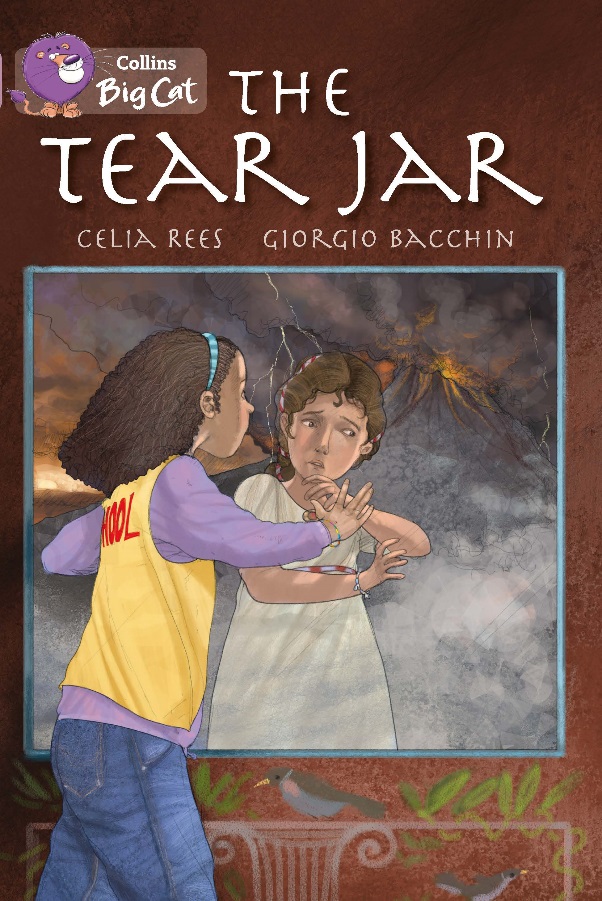


The Tear Jar

# **Pages 39–41**

An extract has been selected to mimic the challenge of a reading comprehension paper.

Below are example questions that model some crucial question-types, followed by teaching suggestions (shown in purple font) which pre-empt potential pitfalls and misconceptions. As with all resources, apply professional judgement to guide your use of these examples; you may want to devise similar, or indeed entirely different, questions for other parts of the book.

# **Page 39**

## Which words suggest that Livilla had behaved without thinking?

If children don’t know the words *impulse* and *defiance*, demonstrate how a good answer can be developed from the context: Draw attention to the fact that *Livilla had acted* (in the text) means the same as “Livilla had behaved…” from the question; note also *She hadn’t thought*… This links with the phrase in the question: “without thinking”. These together help to locate the phrase, *on impulse and out of defiance.* Double-check against even vague recollections by the children of those two words from other contexts.

# **Page 39**

## …but out here, everything was different…

## In the lines that follow, what mood is created – and how?

Reread the rest of that paragraph together and ask for immediate reactions. If children grasp the horror / terror, ask them to look again at how the author made them feel that; if they don’t, model the extraction of facts and ask them to put themselves in the scene – how would these things make them feel?

* The darkness is growing
* Rocks and ash are falling
* People are screaming and crying out for help
* An old lady is trampled by other people
* A mother loses grip of her child’s hand, and the child disappeared

Ask them: if these things were happening around you, how would they make you feel?

Discuss also the importance of the victims singled out for particular description: why an old lady? Why a mother losing hold of her child?

# **In the same paragraph**

## How is the crowd like a whirlpool?

First, establish the fact: the child disappeared.

If the children don’t know what a whirlpool is, don’t tell them; coach them through working it out: what’s a pool? What’s it made of? What’s “whirling"? What might it mean when a pool whirls?

Now, what would happen to a leaf in a whirlpool? We should know that it would disappear, because the child disappears *like* it!

The whirling water causes the leaf to disappear; the crowd causes the boy to disappear. So what can we say about the crowd? Look back at the rest of the paragraph for further evidence.

# **Pages 40–41**

## Why is Afranius particularly shocked?

Reread the two pages and check basic comprehension: what was Afranius expecting? *His master’s ship*. How do we know he was shocked? He ran *even faster*. Demonstrate that the reader shouldn’t be side-tracked by the description of the ship; it’s the fact that it isn’t there that is crucial to this scene.

But the question uses the word “particularly”, so we must go deeper with the answer: the ship belongs to his master, so Afranius is a servant or slave – as such, he is aware that the ship might not wait for him…but surely his master would wait for his own daughter?

# **Independent work suggestions**

1. Children read the whole of *The Tear Jar* and summarise what each chapter is about in no more than 10 words per chapter.
2. While reading the story, children record unfamiliar words – but don’t allow them to look up meanings; instead the children must infer from context (using the techniques you have taught earlier – see above). Have children record how they have arrived at these meanings using evidence from the text.
3. Throughout the story, have children note, “I know that *X* is feeling *Y* because on page… the author has written… This tells the reader that…”
4. Have children compose true or false questions to ask each other; e.g. Lena is from Vesuvius –true or false?