Name: _____ Date: _____

The Mountain That Rumbled

Reading level 8 (4th grade) · 305 words

Mara lived on a small island with a mountain in the middle. The mountain was a volcano. A volcano is an opening in the Earth where melted rock and gas can come out. Mara's mother was a scientist. Her job was to watch it.

Every morning, Mara's mother checked her tools. "Before a volcano erupts, there are usually more earthquakes under it," she said. "So we listen for them." Most days the tools were quiet. Mara waved at the mountain and ate her breakfast.

One morning the tools began to hum. The ground gave a tiny shake, and then another. Mara's mother spoke to her team on the radio. Then she called Mara over. "The mountain is waking up," she said. "We will follow the plan."

Everyone in town knew the plan. A bell rang in the square, and families took their bags and walked to the buses. Nobody pushed or ran. The drivers counted every family, and the dogs and cats came along in their baskets.

The buses drove to a high green hill on the far side of the island. Mara and her mother spread a blanket on the grass. From there the volcano looked small. It was a blue shape against the sky, with a little puff of ash.

As the sun went down, the mountain rumbled. Melted rock called magma pushed up from deep inside. When it came out at the top, it was called lava. It glowed orange and red against the dark sky. It crept slowly down the slope.

The people on the hill watched quietly. Mara held her mother's hand. "It is beautiful," she said, "and everyone is safe." Her mother nodded. "That is what the plan is for." Later, the lava cooled and hardened into solid rock, and the scientists said it was safe to go home.

Questions

1. What was Mara's mother's job?

A. Driving a bus
B. Watching the volcano
C. Ringing the bell

2. What did the town do when the bell rang?

A. Ran to the mountain
B. Hid in their houses
C. Went to the buses

3. Where did Mara watch the lava from?

A. A green hill far away
B. The top of the volcano
C. The harbor

4. Why did the scientists listen for earthquakes?

A. They sound pretty
B. They are loud
C. They come before an eruption

5. Why was everyone safe?

A. They fought the lava
B. They followed the plan
C. They left the island

6. What does "erupts" mean?

A. Bursts out
B. Falls asleep
C. Gets cold

Words to know

volcano: a mountain that lets out lava
scientist: a person who studies nature
earthquakes: shakes of the ground
erupts: bursts out
lava: melted rock outside
plan: steps to follow

Answer key: The Mountain That Rumbled

1. B. Watching the volcano
2. C. Went to the buses
3. A. A green hill far away
4. C. They come before an eruption
5. B. They followed the plan
6. A. Bursts out